



JESUS MAFA. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48282> [retrieved March 9, 2023]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

March 12, 2023

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
March 12, 2023
Third Sunday of Lent

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

I greet you in the name of the one who is living water and who blesses us with living water, Jesus the Christ.

We gather in community today – March 12, 2023 virtually and in person. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person. We encourage people to come out to worship in the sanctuary. There is ample room to socially distance, and you are welcome to wear masks or not as is comfortable for you.

For those who are joining us online or by reading, we invite you to light a candle or tea light.

We gather on this third Sunday of Lent, a season when we are invited to introspection, reflection and simple living.

Announcements

- **The organ needs your help.** Our beautiful Melville pipe organ is in need of repair. We have carefully completed repairs and general maintenance. As you are aware things break. There have been issues with the Swell expression for several years now. At this time the Swell expression is beyond repair and needs to be updated and replaced with a new louvre drive motor. The cost to restore the Swell expression with a new motor will be \$3000.00. Please consider making a donation for this very worthwhile project in order for Melville to continue enjoying this wonderful organ. For the many ways to donate, please consult the Melville web site. For further information contact Ralph Rainford 519 843-3841. Thank you for helping.
- People continue to suffer as a result of the earthquakes that struck **southern Türkiye (Turkey) near the border with Syria**. People need emergency shelter, blankets, mattresses, clean water, food, and hygiene items. We join Mission & Service partners the Middle East Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and the Humanitarian Coalition to show tangible support for the people of Türkiye and Syria. You can be a part of these efforts by donating now at <https://united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/earthquake-turkiye>. Thank you for your generosity.
- **UCW Meat Pies are available for purchase after the service from Marg Frayne. Only \$4.50 each, cash or cheques made payable to Melville United Church UCW.**
- **St. Patrick's Day Friday Coffee Hour:** Please remember to wear your GREEN on **Fri. Mar. 17th at 10am**. We will be using Melville's Teacups and Saucers in the Parlour. Joyce Keizerwaard's daughter is planning on bringing her up from Milton, to join us. See you then!
- **"MID-DAY MUSIC AT MELVILLE" presented and performed by pianist BRAD HALLS**
"Mid-Day Music at Melville" returns on Wednesday, March 15 from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m. Pianist Brad Halls will present songs written by famous film composer James Van Heusen. Van Heusen wrote many hit songs, we will feature his music both on March 15 and March 22. Our first performance on March 15 will feature songs he wrote largely with lyricist Johnny Burke

including such enduring songs as “Polka Dots and Moonbeams”, “Imagination”, “Moonlight Becomes You”, “Like Someone in Love” and the Oscar winning song “Swingin’ on a Star”. The following week on March 22, the show will highlight songs by Van Heusen written with lyricist Sammy Cahn. There is absolutely no admission fee for the performance, but a voluntary contribution to Melville to keep the heat and lights on and the piano tuned is always welcome.

- **Wednesday, March 22 at 7:30 pm** join us at **Rockwood Stone UC** or on **Zoom** for **Advanced Care Planning – Who Will Speak for You** with guest speaker **Rosslyn Bentley**. Rosslyn will present an overview of Advance Care Planning (ACP) in Ontario and the “Speak Up” campaign as well as the many resources available on-line and in the ACP workbook.

Sign up on Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/spring-wellnessseries-2-advanced-care-planning-who-will-speak-for-you-tickets-521143362827?aff=ebdssbdestsearch> If you don’t have access to a computer and plan to attend in-person, you can leave a message at 519-856-4160.

- We're excited to invite you to our **annual congregational meeting on Sunday, March 26th**. There will be a short service at 11 and the meeting will take place immediately afterward in the Sanctuary. Coffee, juice, and light snacks will be provided. [Click here](#) to view the report online. Printed copies will be available on Sunday at the back of the Sanctuary, or you can come by the church during office hours and pick one up.
- **VON invites you to join SMART (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) Gentle Exercise Program Classes** at Melville **Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 am** as there are available spots. The 10:30 class is fully booked. Call Danielle to register 519-803-0144.
- **Friday or Sunday Coffee Time** – We encourage people to sign up to host either a Friday or a Sunday Coffee Time. It is not difficult! We’d be pleased to show you how. Sign-up sheets are at the Parlour Door. Please speak to Lorna Bevcar or Marg Frayne.
- **Donations to Garage Sales:** If you know of anyone moving, down-sizing or de-cluttering, please keep Melville and our Garage Sales in mind.
- As more and more people find their dollar shrinking, and having to decide between rent and three meals a day, the demand for food bank assistance rises. We ask you to prayerfully consider if you are able to **support the Food Bank**, either with a donation of food, or financially. Food bank use is up 35% over the last three years. The food bank has also calculated that a basket of food and goods that cost \$39.85 in 2021 now costs \$50.83, a 27.55% increase in one year. The Food Bank is asking for your financial support at this challenging time.

Most needed items (as of March 9th):

Pasta Sauce	Mac & Cheese Side Dishes	Chunky Soup (Habitant)
Small Canned Soup	Pasta Side Dishes	Canned Vegetables
Cold Cereal	Peanut Butter	Juice
		Jam
		Canned Salmon

Well-stocked with:

Pasta	Spaghetti	Tomato Soup	Canned Chickpeas and Lentils
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- **Save your Used Stamps from Incoming Mail:** Cut off your used stamps, leaving a 1/2” border around them and give them to Marlene Tosh or put them in the Stamp Box on the shelf in the Cloak Room, where the Lift is on the main floor of the church. Marlene tidies them up and takes them to the Bible Society, to buy bibles. You can do this year-round!
- **Gifts with Vision: A Giving Catalogue from The United Church of Canada**
 - Give meaningful gifts that make a difference with [Gifts with Vision \(opens in a new tab\)](#)! Each year's gift catalogue gives a glimpse of the breadth of our Mission & Service ministries and programs.

- *Gifts with Vision* has gift ideas to suit every interest, budget, and person. It's a great way to celebrate special occasions and honour loved ones!
- The gift catalogue is updated online regularly, and is fully refreshed every fall. It is also distributed in print with *Broadview* magazine, and mailed to each pastoral charge.
- **To order gifts, be inspired, or learn more, visit GiftsWithVision.ca (opens in a new tab) today!**

I invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.

Land Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, Gathering: Pentecost 1 2022, p.33. Used with permission.*

We acknowledge that this land on which we gather for worship is the traditional land of the people of Petun,

Haudenosaunee, (Hoe-day-no-show-nee)

Anishinabewaki,

Mississaugas of the Credit,

Odawa and

Mississauga nations.

We acknowledge that we live on this land as people who have agreed to share the care and use of this land as a result of treaties—the Simcoe Patent-Treaty 4, 1793 and the Haldimand Treaty, 1784—that outline the rights and responsibilities associated with our place in this land. May we be people who remember this with thanksgiving and respect.

Lenten Tenebrae *Won Hur, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2023, p.66-68, alt. Used with permission.*

Four candles are lit, as well as the Christ candle.

We live in a world of many divisions: class, gender religion, race, and politics.

It is not easy to risk our vulnerabilities in order to get to know someone who seems different.

Though God welcomes all peoples, invites the gifts of all nations,

and celebrates the uniqueness of each culture, we live in poverty when we remain separated.

Our lines of separation diminish our togetherness and diminish our humanity.

Like the Samaritan woman at the well, we are thirsty for a drink that will quench our deepest yearnings.

We long to drink deeply at the well.

Yet, we remain thirsty and we live a life of quiet desperation.

The third candle is extinguished.

Response: Don't Be Afraid

MV90

OneLicense #A-740237

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Let us pray.

**O Christ, you said, "Ask, and it will be given to you;
search, and you will find;**

knock and the door will be opened for you."

**Therefore, O God, we pray that you will quench
our deepest thirst for acceptance, love and peace.**

Fill our cup with your spirit till it overflows.

May we drink to our heart's content at your well.

**May we live a life of blessings
by giving to others what you give to us with generosity, courage, and hope.
Amen.**

Hymn: Touch the Earth Lightly VU307 OneLicense #A-740237

- 1 Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.
- 2 We who endanger, who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!
- 3 Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.
- 4 God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
using us gently and making us one.

Call to Reconciliation *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1.** Copyright 2013, alt.*

God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Trusting in God's overflowing grace,
let us confess our sin, our shortcomings, our brokenness, all that stands between us and God,
As we share in our Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation (in unison) *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1.** Copyright 2013, alt..*

**O God, you know who we are.
You know everything we have done.
We thirst for things that will never satisfy us.
We commit ourselves to things that will never last.
We worship things that will never bring salvation.**

**Still, you offer us the gift of living water.
Still, you offer us the gift of eternal life.
Forgive us, O God,
and give us this living water,
so that we may never thirst again. Amen.**

Words of Assurance *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word***

Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A Volume 1. Copyright 2013, alt.

This is the good news of God's grace:

Though we were sinners,

Christ died for us.

Though we were enemies of God,

God loved us.

Once we were lost and dead—

now Christ has become our life and salvation.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Children's Ministry:

Hymn: Who Made the Earth and the Heaven

OneLicense #A-740237

Who made the earth and the heaven? –Mighty hands!

Who made the man and the woman? –Awesome hands!

Who made the tree and the garden? –Loving hands!

Who's got the world in mighty hands?

Who made the stars and the children? –Mighty hands!

Who made the stream and the salmon? –Awesome hands!

Who made the lamb and the lion? –Loving hands!

Who's got the world in mighty hands?

Who made the swan and the swallow? –Mighty hands!

Who made the wind and the willow? –Awesome hands!

Who makes today and tomorrow? –Loving hands!

Who's got the world in mighty hands?

Who sent the storm and the thunder? –Might hands!

Who sent the flood and the fire? –Awesome hands!

Who sent the dove and the rainbow –Loving hands!

Who's got the world in mighty hands?

Who loves the man and the woman? –Mighty hands!

Who sent the Lamb and the Lion? –Awesome hands!

Who makes a new earth and heaven? –Loving hands!

Who's got the world in mighty hands?

You've got the whole world—Mighty God!

You've got the whole world—Awesome God!

You've got the whole world—Loving God!

You've got the whole world in your hands!

Prayer of Illumination *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word***

Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1. Copyright 2013.

Living God, through the reading of the Scriptures

and by the power of your Spirit,
may we hear for ourselves the good news,
and believe, because of your Word,
that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. **Amen.**

Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*)

Water from the rock

The Israelites left the desert of Syn to travel by stages, as YHWH had directed them.
They camped at Rephidim, but found no drinking water.

Again they turned on Moses, saying, "Give us drinking water."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test YHWH?"

But the people were thirsty, and complained even more to Moses.
"Why did you bring us out of Egypt
only to make us and our children and our livestock die of thirst?"

Moses appealed to YHWH,
"What am I to do with these people? They are ready to stone me!"

YHWH answered Moses, "Take some of the elders and move to the front of the people.
Take with you the staff with which you struck the Nile.
Go! I will wait for you there by the rock of Horeb.
Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink."

And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders.

Moses named the place Massah, "Testing," and Meribah, "Quarrelling,"
for the Israelites tested YHWH when they said, "Is YHWH with us or not?"

Ministry of Music "Like a Healing Stream" (MV144) – *words and music by Bruce Harding offered by Suzanne Flewelling*

Scripture: John 4:5-42 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*)

Jesus and the Samaritan woman

Jesus stopped at Sychar, a town in Samaria,
near the tract of land Jacob had given to his son Joseph,
and Jacob's Well was there.
Jesus, weary from the journey, came and sat by the well. It was around noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."
The disciples had gone off to the town to buy provisions.
The Samaritan woman replied, "You're a Jew.
How can you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" —
since Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans.

Jesus answered, "If only you recognized God's gift,

and who it is that is asking you for a drink,
you would have asked him for a drink instead,
and he would have given you living water.”

“If you please,” she challenged Jesus, “you don’t have a bucket and this well is deep.
Where do you expect to get this ‘living water’?
Surely you don’t pretend to be greater than our ancestors Leah and Rachel and Jacob,
who gave us this well and drank from it with their descendants and flocks?”

Jesus replied, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again.
But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty;
no, the water I give will become fountains within them,
springing up to provide eternal life.”

The woman said to Jesus, “Give me this water,
so that I won’t grow thirsty and have to keep coming all the way here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband and then come back here.”

“I don’t have a husband,” replied the woman.

“You’re right—you don’t have a husband!” Jesus exclaimed.
“The fact is, you’ve had five,
and the man you’re living with now is not your husband.
So what you’ve said is quite true.”

“I can see you’re a prophet,” answered the woman.
“Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain,
but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where God ought to be worshipped.”

Jesus told her, “Believe me, the hour is coming when you’ll worship Abba God
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
You people worship what you don’t understand;
we worship what we do understand—
after all, salvation is from the Jewish people.
Yet the hour is coming—and is already here—
when real worshippers will worship Abba God in Spirit and truth.
Indeed, it is just such worshippers whom Abba God seeks.
God is Spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to Jesus,
“I know that the Messiah—the Anointed One—is coming and will tell us everything.”

Jesus replied, “I who speak to you am the Messiah.”

The disciples, returning at this point
were shocked to find Jesus have a private conversation with a woman.
But no one dared to ask, “What do you want of him?”
or “Why are you talking with her?”

The woman then left her water jar and went off into the town.
She said to the people, "Come and see someone
who told me everything I have ever done!
Could this be the Messiah?"
At that, everyone set out from town to meet Jesus.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

But Jesus told them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

At this, the disciples said to one another,
"Do you think someone has brought him something to eat?"

Jesus explained to them,
"Doing the will of the One who sent me
and bringing this work to completion
is my food.
Don't you have a saying,
'Four months more and it will be harvest time'?
I tell you,
open your eyes and look at the fields—
they're ripe and ready for harvest?
reapers are already collecting their wages;
they're gathering fruit for eternal life,
and sower and reaper will rejoice together.
So the saying is true:
'One person sows; another reaps.'
I have sent you to reap
what you haven't worked for.
Others have done the work,
and you've come upon the fruits of their labour."

Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus
on the strength of the woman's testimony—
that "he told me everything I ever did."
The result was that, when these Samaritans came to Jesus,
they begged him to stay with them awhile.
So Jesus stayed there two days,
and through his own spoken work many more came to faith.
They told the woman, "No longer does our faith depend on your story.
We've heard for ourselves, and we know that this really is the saviour of the world."

Prayer *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013.*

Mighty and tender God, Great I Am,
you are living water.
As we worship you this day
show us who we are:

John 4:5–42

channels of your love
and vessels of your grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May the words I speak and the reflection that we all share
find a response that is worthy of you,
most Just, most Loving, and most Compassionate God. Amen.

David Sparks, Summerland, B.C.

Reflection: The Gift of Living Water

The encounter between Jesus and the woman at Jacob's well is an almost unimaginable exchange between these two people, given who they are. First, Jesus is Jewish. As a people who had nothing to do with Samaritans, because they believed differently, especially about where God was to be found and worshipped, a Jewish person would not travel through Samaria if any other option were available, which it indeed is. If, by some chance, Jesus is to be travelling through Samaria, and finds himself thirsty, he certainly won't strike up a conversation with a Samaritan, even less so if that Samaritan is a woman. Purity laws mean that men generally converse only with women of their household.

So the fact that a conversation happens at all is astonishing. During the conversation we learn more about the Samaritan woman. We discover that she is at the well at noon, during the very hottest part of the day, when, unsurprisingly, others are not around. Why does she come to the well at this time and alone? Perhaps her conversation with Jesus discloses some of the reason. In response to Jesus' directive to go, call her husband and come back, she states that she does not have a husband. Jesus speaks quickly to this, agreeing that she does not have a husband, but clarifying that she has had five husbands and the one she has now is not her husband. Her status as divorced or widowed or both and now living with a man without the bonds of marriage definitely casts her as an outsider in her community. We don't even know her name.

Not only that, but this woman is a newcomer to faith. She takes only baby steps in her conversation with Jesus. In response to Jesus' mention of living water she says, "If you please, you don't have a bucket and this well is deep. Where do you expect to get this 'living water'?" and "Surely you don't pretend to be greater than our ancestors Leah and Rachel and Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it with their descendants and flocks?"

This is who Jesus speaks with—an outsider in terms of: her gender, her culture, her supposed behaviour with men, and one with a very rudimentary faith.

Our culture tells us that outsiders do not have a place at the table; are not welcome in the boardrooms where decisions are made; need not be treated with respect or deference; can be completely ignored with impunity. What are those outsiders going to do? They have no power, they have no leverage, they have no friends at all, and certainly not in high places, to whom to appeal.

And people with little experience of faith? We hope that our community is a safe and encouraging place to explore faith, but we know people have been burned before, and put off by what they have encountered. We often use words like "welcoming" or "inclusion," but as a document from Affirm United says, "words like *welcoming* or *inclusion* suggest those on the inside have the power to choose to accept those on the *outside*. This makes it sound like an act of charity to welcome those who are different or marginalized. However, it is not *our* place to welcome anyone because the

church is not a private club and we are not the gatekeepers. As soon as one new person comes through the doors, the community becomes a new community.”

So what does Jesus do? He speaks with her, because, as is clear from the whole reading, as Deborah J. Kapp says, “This woman, her community and their welfare matter to Jesus, whether nobodies or not.” And he doesn’t just speak to her, he takes her seriously and accepts her invitation to stay in the village, which he does for several days.

And as far as the woman’s limited experience of faith? Jesus is infinitely patient with her. He is willing to explain his metaphors and to stay with the conversation. This is very different from how he handled the questions of Nicodemus in last week’s reading, leaving the learned Pharisee to puzzle through metaphors and mocking him, that for all his studying, he still doesn’t understand.

As he does so often, Jesus seeks to bring salvation and liberation to this woman who ranks so lowly in the eyes of most people. He seems particularly willing to make his message as simple and uncluttered as is necessary to help her understand. And in comparison to Nicodemus, who goes away to try to work through Jesus’ words, the woman leaves the well, and her water jar, symbolic of her physical need and her isolation, and goes, joyfully, to the community to proclaim the good news of Jesus’ teaching, healing and presence. She becomes an apostle in a way that Nicodemus never does.

At the heart of it all, Jesus loves the woman, and works to that she is restored in her community, that her life is saved. Jesus loves her into fullness of life.

And what about the outsiders and newcomers in our own community? Jesus’ work is not limited to his healing and loving in scripture. Jesus is present with us now, working in us to open our eyes, our minds, our hearts to those in need. Some of those people are sitting right in the pews along with us, and with new insight, we can come alongside each other, listening and sharing, seeing one another for who we truly are, and as we build community together and with Christ, discovering the ways we can help each other to move toward fullness of life. Perhaps that happens while we work on a committee together. Maybe it is while engaging in study with one another. It could be in sharing a community meal and getting to know our neighbour. In all these ways Christ works through us, honouring one another with listening and sharing, loving each one with deep compassion, and helping us to bridge the human gap so that we come to fullness of life.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.
Amen.

Hymn: Once A Woman Seeking Water BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Once a woman seeking water at a well not far from home
Met a thirsty, waiting stranger from a people not her own.
Would she give a drink of water and respond to human need?
Could she know the joy and wonder she, the giver, would receive?

She drew water for the thirsty; Jesus offered something more:
Living water, God's own mercy, love abundant, freely poured.
One, a blessing for the body; one, a blessing for the soul!
Both are gifts of our Creator — gifts that help to make us whole.

Still God's people carry water from their wells and mountain streams;
Still at rivers women gather, sharing labor, sharing dreams.
Still a cup of water given in a dry and weary place
Is a blessing overflowing from the fountain of God's grace.

God, we ask your richest favor on the work we seek to do;
May we gladly share clean water and your living water, too.
May we see the face of Jesus, and how far your love extends,
In the ones we call our partners — no more strangers, now our friends.

Joys and Concerns

- Happy Birthday
 - Allan Hons celebrated his 40th birthday on Saturday, March 11th
 - Trudy Adsett celebrates on Tues. Mar. 14th
 - Suzanne Flewelling celebrates on Sat. Mar. 18th

Preparation for Prayer

Let us practice the art of Praying with our Eyes Wide Open, that in seeing the world and those within it we are called to tend we may be *opening the eyes of our hearts to all in need around us* (Lamont Koerner '81 MDiv God Pause for Thursday, September 16, 2021 from Luther Seminary):

Prayers of the People *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1.** Copyright 2013, alt.*

Call: Wellspring of mercy,

Response: **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying,
Wellspring of mercy, hear our prayer.

Saving God,
you are the giver of living water,
the source of deepest compassion,
the fountain of eternal life.

Therefore we pray to you:

Wellspring of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who are thirsty—
thirsty for a life of meaning,
thirsty for a word of grace,
thirsty for a drink of water . . .

Wellspring of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who are weary—
weary from life's long journey,
weary from quarreling and testing,
weary from pain or grief . . .

Wellspring of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who are broken—
broken by sin and suffering,
broken by hard disappointment,
broken by acts of violence . . .
Wellspring of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Living God, through your Spirit,
pour your love into our hearts,
your grace into our lives,
your healing into our world,
until the earth is filled with your glory
as the waters cover the sea;
through Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Minute for Mission: Religion in the Service of Humanity



Credit: WSCF-ME

The entanglement of religion and politics in the Middle East often divides communities and leads to conflict, particularly among young people. “We all agreed that it is important to focus on universal values and ethics, reject extremism, and make the necessary efforts to develop practical formulas for fruitful cooperation,” says Rima Bayan Sleem, a 33-year-old judicial assistant from Chouf, Lebanon.

"We all agreed that it is important to focus on universal values and ethics, reject extremism, and make the necessary efforts to develop practical formulas for fruitful cooperation."

Thanks to your Mission & Service gifts, Rima and 36 other young adults gathered in Beirut, Lebanon, for the World Student Christian Federation-Middle East Region (WSCF-ME) 2021. They participated in an Interfaith Dialogue program that develops leaders skilled in preventing violence and fostering peace between communities.

WSCF-ME's role is to be a mediator of peace and understanding amid all the overwhelming regional issues that include sectarian strife. "The Interfaith Dialogue program's importance lies in the fact that it brings together youth from different religious backgrounds...to engage in a constructive peace-facilitating dialogue," says Mira Neaimeh, Regional Executive for WSCF-ME. "I personally believe that change is done in small steps, starting from our regional gatherings that sow seeds of peace to be reaped in the future."

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Your Mission & Service gifts help leaders in the Middle East and across the world collaborate and promote peaceful dialogue.

The United Church of Canada is strongly committed to working ecumenically with Christians of diverse traditions and with people of other faiths for the common good, particularly in building peace and addressing shared concerns, such as climate change.

Offering Invitation

Giving is an act of worship, an act of relationship, an act of love.
And so, as we worship this God,
 who seeks us in relationship,
 who loved us into being,
we offer our gifts.

Offering Hymn: When We Are Living VU581 OneLicense #A-740237

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God, we belong to God.

Offering Prayer (in unison) *Spill the Beans Resources Team, spill the beans: worship and learning resources for all ages, Issue 34, p. 35. Copyright 2020.*

**Take these gifts,
the work of our hands,
the hopes of our hearts
and bring them to bear
upon the hunger and hurts
of the world.**

Set us free from fear.

Stand us upright in grace.
May our shame and our anger
be transformed
from burdens that hold us back in fear
to gifts that urge us forward in love.

Lead us to the well
and help us to drink deeply.
Amen.

Hymn: O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go VU658

- 1 O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.
- 2 O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.
- 3 O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be.
- 4 O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

Commissioning *Beth W. Johnston, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2023, p.37. Used with permission.*

Let us go from here seeking to proclaim the Good News.

We will seek to show one another where to find life-giving water and abundant love.

Let us go as disciples and servants.

Amen.

Change the Light

Watch. I am going to change the light and I invite you to change your light.

I'm not going to put it out, just change it.

See how it is only in one place?

Change Light and I invite you to change your light at home

Can you see it? Now it is moving everywhere, to everyone, with everyone.

Now everywhere you go today, the light will go with you.

Blessing *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013.*

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
springing up like living water,
fill your heart, and flow through your life.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013.*

God, my maker, hold me this day,
with the same hand that shapes the mountains,
with the same hand that cradles the deep.
Keep my heart soft and supple,
make my faith strong and firm.
Renew me, re-form me, re-create me
into the image of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®] **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013, alt.*

We come to you now, O God,
weary from the day's journey,
thirsty for rest, hungry for peace.
Renew us in your love
and restore us by your grace,
until we find our rest at last
by the river of the water of life. Amen.