



**Celebrating
177 Years**



April 16, 2023

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
April 16, 2023
Earth Sunday Service: For the Love of Creation

Presiding: Melville Social Justice and Outreach Team
Music Ministry: Suzanne Flewelling

Prelude

Welcome

We 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 –April 16, 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.

We 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 First Nation, 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 No. 4, 1793 and the Haldimand Treaty, 1784 - that outlined the rights and responsibilities associated with our place in this land.

May we be people who remember this with thanksgiving and respect.

Lighting the Christ Candle: *Gord Dunbar, Gathering: Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2022-2023, p.42. Used with permission.*

(If you are watching this on-line or reading it from a page, I invite you to take a moment to light a candle, centre yourself and prepare to enter into a time of worship and prayer. As you light your candle repeat the following words) The candle is lit. It seems ironic that this tiny flickering flame of the Christ candle is hard to notice in the light of day, the radiated heat unfelt across the room or the digital divide, the subtle aroma of the burning candle impossible to smell more than a short distance away or through our screens. Yet we gather around this light nevertheless, perceiving Christ's living presence all around us, feeling the expansive warmth of Christ's welcome in worship, inhaling the heady perfume of love alive. Come, then, to be embraced by the rainbow spectrum of God's promise, to be enfolded in the unconditional embrace of Christ's companionship, to be empowered by the Spirit's passion for right relation.
Amen

Call to Worship:

Behold, how manifold are God's works!

God has made them all in wisdom.

The earth is God's and everything in it.

Let all of creation praise God's awesome deeds!

Opening Prayer

As we gather, we are thankful for your creation:

for light and darkness;
for air, wind, and sky;
for earth and sea;
for seeds, harvests, and plant life;
for sunlight, moonlight, and starlight;
for every living creature, swarming, flying, creeping, and grazing;
for our lives.

In our actions, meditations, and prayers,
may we honour and celebrate your very good creation,
as we seek wisdom on how to share our gratitude and love in good and healing ways.
Amen.

Opening Hymn: Each Blade of Grass

MV 37

OneLicense #A-740237

1. Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.
Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.
2. Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.
Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.
3. Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.
Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Grace

Creator God,

we come before you in a time of crisis.

We know that much of your creation struggles; we begin to see and acknowledge the changes around us;

we search for the causes and the cures and the collaborative ways we can commit to care for creation.

We want to do what's right

but we don't always know what that is

or agree how best to do it.

Help us learn what we must,

listening to the diverse voices of creation itself.

Help us understand and love what you have loved and called “very good.” Enliven that understanding, we ask,
to allow ourselves to be moved to act as we should and to halt actions that harm.
Guide us as we try to discern how best to truly listen to each other as well as creation and heed your call.
We ask for forgiveness where we have taken too much or cared too little,
for hearts willing to listen and change and will to follow through.
May the knowledge of your presence and the assurance of your love shape our time here and always.
We pray in your name, Amen.

—From *For the Love of Creation, Faithful Climate Conversations*

Children's Ministry

Hymn: Like a Rock

MV 92

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Like a rock, like a rock, God is under our feet.
Like the starry night sky God is over our head.
Like the sun on the horizon God is ever before.
Like the river runs to ocean, our home is in God evermore.

Scripture: John 20:19–31

Jesus appears to the disciples and to Thomas

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Message/Reflection - Earth Sunday: An Invitation to Act, Learn and Pray

Today we celebrate the Earth, Creation. We are so blessed. But it seems that God's Creation needs help. There is so much to discuss about what we can do. Our team would like to start this conversation. So this service is an invitation to act, learn and pray for climate justice as part of ***For the Love of Creation's Earth Week***. The United Church of Canada is a founding member of [For the Love of Creation](#), a national faith-based coalition for climate justice.

Climate change is a huge issue. It impacts us all, including the local eco-systems. The impacts of climate change are not borne equally or fairly between rich and poor, women and men, racialized and non-racialized, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, or older and younger generations. The greatest burden of climate change is falling on people in the Far North and global South—those who have contributed least to the problem. In southern parts of Africa and Asia, already struggling farmers experience risks of crop failures and drought due to extreme weather events. In North America people have suffered losses because of flooding, ice storms and wildfires. Indigenous people in our North are being displaced because of changing water and ice conditions.

Consequently, there has been a growing focus on climate justice, which looks at the climate crisis through a human rights lens and prioritizes responses and solutions that respect the rights and responsibilities of all peoples. Another goal is to expose and call to account the violations at the root of climate change, and move towards equity, justice and right relations with all people and the earth. Climate justice, racial justice, Indigenous justice, gender justice, and economic justice are all interconnected. The challenge is big, the stakes are high, and working together we are stronger.

We, as individuals, might be in different places about climate change, from acceptance and hope to denial, futility, and despair. Whatever our opinion, there is evidence of climate change that is leading to the earth's continued destruction. It's up to us to act, learn and pray for change. It's up to us to help Creation. The Kids are learning as we speak. There are several community, provincial and federal initiatives to read about or to join. Below, you will find a few informative websites. Our team will also make paper materials available if you wish to continue to learn about climate change and how you can act to make a difference.

Melville Garden Team and Their Projects *(Linda Mae Ogilvie)*







Today, we encourage you to act, learn and pray to help our community and others in fighting climate change. To personally touch the wounds of creation, just as Thomas was invited to personally experience and witness Christ's wounds.

We pray that our actions and experiences will lead towards a transformation, hope and renewal of purpose, just as the wounded, risen Christ encouraged the disciples to break free from the status quo and from fear, and to continue Christ's ministry of healing all of creation.

<https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/>

<https://cpj.ca/moving-past-climate-inaction/>

<https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/lessons-from-nature-about-living-with-climate-change/>

Hymn: God of the Sparrow VU 229

1 God of the sparrow God of the whale
 God of the swirling stars
 How does the creature say Awe
 How does the creature say Praise

2 God of the earthquake God of the storm
 God of the trumpet blast
 How does the creature cry Woe
 How does the creature cry Save

- 3 God of the rainbow God of the cross
God of the empty grave
How does the creature say Grace
How does the creature say Thanks
- 4 God of the hungry God of the sick
God of the prodigal
How does the creature say Care
How does the creature say Life
- 5 God of the neighbour God of the foe
God of the pruning hook
How does the creature say Love
How does the creature say Peace
- 6 God of the ages God near at hand
God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy
How do your children say Home

Our Joys and Concerns

Birthdays:

- Rossie Rawn celebrates on Mon. Apr. 17th
- Alison Rainford celebrates on Tues. Apr. 18th

Prayers of the People

Creating God,

For the care that we can give and receive as your creatures, we give you thanks.

For the care of our loved ones and friends in Care Facilities, in hospital or who are dealing with health issues. Thank you.

And we ask for your care and protection over those experiencing poverty, oppression or injustice of any kind.

As you receive the prayers of all creation, receive our prayers... We gather these prayers with the prayer Jesus taught us...

The 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 item – Earth Day 2023

Earth Day is celebrated in communities around the world on April 22 each year. This year, the United Church and fellow members of the For the Love of Creation climate justice initiative are holding a “Together for the Love of Creation” Earth Week.

We often hear messages about the habits we can change and the things we can do to take better care of the earth. In day-to-day life, we hear about bans on single-use plastic, ways to reduce waste in our homes, and the ebbs and flows of Earth hurting and healing—but we can also engage in prayer, learning, and action to achieve sustainable habits and deeper understanding, respect, and hope for earth.

Young people are leaders of transformation in our world. The United Church believes that youth who are involved in climate activism and justice today will become actively engaged adults with the passion and innovation toward improving the future.

A brand-new youth climate program is designed to support the United Church’s strategic objective to “Raise our spirited voice, shifting towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United Church leadership in responding.”

In the summer of 2023, young climate activists will gather for eight weeks to learn from experts in the field of climate justice, both inside and outside the church. The outreach program will have 16 youth employed, alongside two young adult leaders. Participants will have opportunities to meet, gather, act for change, and influence church climate policy. They will work on climate advocacy projects designed to effect change in society and the church. Youth will be supported in moving beyond worry and anxiety about the climate by helping them realize that being part of the solution is a source of hope. At least one of the weeks will be spent in residence, with the Moderator present.

Your Mission & Service gifts support the development and delivery of climate initiatives and educational opportunities.

Thank you for your generosity!

Ministry of Music: <https://youtu.be/lnqAnKy0vzoe>

Invitation to Offering

You are invited at this time to consider the multiple ways that you can give to the life, work, and ministry of this church and the wider church for the sake and love of creation.

Offering Hymn: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow VU 541

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Dedication Prayer: Acting, Learning, and Praying for Climate Justice

God of Creation,
we are thankful for your awesome work in creation,
you have weaved all of life together,

and it is very good.

We are grateful for all that protects and cares for your good works:

the sunlight and water that sustains life,
the earth that grounds and nourishes life,
and the earth-beings that care for and protect life.

God of Creation,

we give thanks for all whose actions care for your good works!

And we ask your blessings on the actions we offer here and on the actions of those across the church and beyond during this Earth Week.

Together,

we are stronger.

As we care for your creation,

provide us with the humility and curiosity needed

to continually learn about the marvels of your works,

and to deepen our understanding of how our actions, good and bad, affect all of creation.

God of Creation,

we give thanks for the opportunity to learn and grow with your good works!

And we ask your blessing on the intentions we offer here today and on the intentions of those across the church and beyond during this Earth Week.

Together,

we are stronger.

Although the journey is hard,

and our hearts might be afraid and filled with doubts, may we continue to act and learn towards climate justice, with the confidence and strength of your presence guiding us.

God of Creation,

receive our prayers for the love of your good works.

And we ask, in your love, to answer the prayers we offer today and the prayers of those across the church and beyond acting together during this Earth Week.

Together,

we are stronger.

May we continue to follow in the way that you are leading with hopeful and daring hearts, until we have reached your commonwealth of justice and peace for all.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: This is God's Wondrous World VU 296

1 This is God's wondrous world,
 and to my listening ears
 all nature sings, and round me rings
 the music of the spheres.
 This is God's wondrous world;
 I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
 God's hand the wonders wrought.

2 This is God's wondrous world:
 the birds their carols raise;

the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.

- 3 This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad!

Commissioning and Benediction

Go and act, for the care of creation. Go and learn, for the sake of creation. Go and pray, for the love of creation.

And may
the care of God enfold you,
the passion of the Risen Christ embolden you,
and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit empower you,
now and forever,
Amen

Changing the Light

Announcements:

- **Many thanks** to the congregation for the cards, wishes and the beautiful prayer shawl. I am grateful for your caring and support. Rev. Lynda
- **Thank you, thank you, thank you.** We have reached our goal of \$3000.00 to make repairs to our organ. Repairs will begin soon. Thanks to all who contributed!
- **UCW meat pies** are for sale and are only **\$4.50 each!** You can pay by either a cheque made out to Melville United Church UCW or cash. Please have the correct change if you can. Contact Marg Frayne @ 519-843-3274 for your order.
- 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.
- **"MID-DAY MUSIC AT MELVILLE" Wed., April 19th - 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m.** Pianist Brad Halls will present music written by the prolific popular songwriter Walter Donaldson. Donaldson composed some of the most popular songs of the last century, including standards such as *"My Blue Heaven"*, *"Love Me or Leave Me"*, *"Yes Sir, That's My Baby"*, *"My*

Buddy" and many more. This music series will continue on Wednesday, April 26, following which we will take a break and resume in October. 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.

- **Knox-Elora Presbyterian Church** presents **Naomi Bristow: The Yodelling Cowgirl!** A celebration of Country, Western and Gospel Music **Friday, April 21 7pm** Tickets \$15.00 and available at Wreckless Eric's, Magic Pebble, or the Knox-Elora church office
- Are you looking for a supportive community to help you on your journey to sobriety? Come join us at the **Fellowship of The Spirit Alcoholics Anonymous meeting!** Our group meets every **Friday evening from 7:30-9:00 in the Fellowship Hall**. We provide a welcoming and non-judgmental space where you can share your experiences, receive guidance, and connect with others who are also striving for a sober lifestyle. Whether you are new to AA or a long-time member, our group is here to support you every step of the way. Don't go through this journey alone - join us at the Fellowship of The Spirit.
- **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. Classes are FREE. Call Danielle to register 519-803-0144.
- **The Community Resource Centre** is looking for **volunteer drivers** to help those in our rural community who don't have the means to get to appointments, work, or education. Volunteer drivers receive \$0.55/km reimbursement. To apply, please visit <https://communityresourcecentre.org/transportation/become-a-volunteer-driver/> or call 519-843-7003 for more information
- Save the Date **May 27th** for **Melville Plant & Bake Sale** more detail coming soon!
- **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, downsizing 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 23rd): 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
- **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](#)! 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. **To order gifts, be inspired, or learn more, visit GiftsWithVision.ca today!**

Worship Schedule

Apr. 23	3 rd of Easter	Rev. Tom Watson
Apr. 30	4 th of Easter	Rev. Tom Watson
May 7	Mental Health Sunday	Social Justice Committee
May 14	Christian Family Sunday (Mother's Day)	TBA