



**Celebrating  
177 Years**



**April 30, 2023**

**Melville United Church**

300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9

Mailing address: PO Box 41, Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

519-843-1781

Team Ministry

Minister of Worship, Pastoral Care & Outreach

Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Youth Faith Formation

Naomi Flint

Ministry of Music Team

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

Office Administrator

Lynda Rivet

Custodian

Robert Mitchell, Suzanne Flewelling

Chair of Church Council

Allan Hons

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Alison Rainford

Office hours

9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. T., Th. & F.

E-Mail

[secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com)

Web Site

[www.melvilleunited.com](http://www.melvilleunited.com)

Pastoral Care Number

Patty Foster 519-820-4531

**Melville united church**  
**Sunday April 30, 2023**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

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*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson*  
*Music Ministry: Colleen Weber*

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

Good morning! We gather in community today, both in person and virtually. Printed copies are distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person.

For those who are joining us online, we invite you to have a candle or tea light available for the lighting of the Christ candle.

**Announcements:**

- **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.
- **Mental Health Sunday - May 7<sup>th</sup>.** Our Social Justice & Outreach team will lead a service focused on mental health in our community. We are excited to share that **Neil Dunsmore** will be our guest speaker. A 28-year member of Melville, many of us know he is a talented storyteller! Author of the book *Reflections in the Ripple*, Neil is a mental health advocate who completed a 531 km journey to start a conversation around mental health and suicide, and to erase the stigma that prevents so many from reaching out for help.
- Save the Date **May 27<sup>th</sup>** 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.
- 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 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](http://GiftsWithVision.ca) today!**

### **Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that this land on which we gather for worship is the traditional land of the people of Petun, Haudenosaunee, 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 and the Haldimand Treaty, 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**

Let us hear again, the ancient sacred words of our ancestors in faith:

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness, not even the darkness of death, has overcome it.

**Praise be to Christ, our light and our salvation.**

### **Call to Worship**

We come to this place of worship...

**To exercise our faith...**

To enjoy the companionship of each other...

**To share our stories, our music, our joy...**

To raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving.

**Let us praise God together in this holy place.**

### **Hymn: Come, Let Us Sing**

**VU 222**

1. Come, let us sing to the Lord our song:

We have stood silently too long;

Surely the Lord deserves our praise,

So joyfully thank God for our days.

2. O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;  
God's living waters will never fail.  
Surely the Lord will help you to stand,  
Strengthened and comforted by God's hand.

3. You dwell among us and cause us to pray,  
And walk with each other following your way;  
Our precious brothers and sisters will grow  
In the fulfilling love they know.

4. Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing  
To the desire of all living things.  
Come, all you creatures, high and low;  
Let your praises endlessly flow.

#### **Gathering Prayer (in unison):**

**God of life, God of each new awakening morning: We come here in response to your call deep within us—a call to be alive to each new day, a call to be open to life's surprises, a call to experience new joy and hope. In the spirit of Christ, we gather in this time of worship. Amen.**

#### **Hymn: The Church is Wherever God's People**

**VU 579**

1. The church is wherever God's people are praising,  
Singing God's goodness for joy on this day.  
The church is wherever disciples of Jesus  
Remember his story and walk in his way.

2. The church is wherever God's people are helping,  
Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.  
The church is wherever God's people are sharing  
The words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

#### **Children's Time**

#### **Ministry of Music**

#### **Scripture Reading — Luke 24:13-22**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these

things took place."

### **Scripture Reading — Acts 2:42–46**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

### **SERMON: "Passing the Mantle"**

"Well, Tom, the mantle is yours to wear now," my Uncle Harold said.

My father had died the day before, and Uncle Harold was reminding me how one generation moves on and passes the mantle to the next.

It's something for which we're never fully ready. Oh, we're ready when we're 16. Because by the age of 16 we know pretty well everything there is to know...at least, we know a whole lot more than our parents do...but then, sometime later, reality sets in and our 'knowing' is suitably adjusted, and we realize just how far we still have to go. Funny how that works, isn't it?

A few days later, standing at the graveside, with the late January winds off Lake Erie blowing cold across my face, the mantle felt pretty heavy. And I wondered if I was up to wearing it.

Dad had always been there. Wise. Understanding. Supportive. Insightful. Someone to lean upon, check with. It took at least 6 months for it fully to sink in that my father was not going to be there anymore.

He was a farmer by occupation, but did other things too. Among those other things he was an auctioneer, and on our piano sat a picture of him conducting an auction sale at somebody's farm. Several times a day, I walked by this picture. Bigger than life and twice as real. And I would think, "I must go and phone Dad...about this or that." Halfway to the phone, I would catch myself and say, "What's wrong with you? Why can't you realize he's no longer here."

On the other hand, there is that sense that he's still here—more than 40 years later. Not physically, of course, but here in thought, here in understanding, here when I reach into those old pockets in the mind and wonder, "What would Dad think about...this or that?"

You have heard the old saying, "Don't believe everything you hear." Author Robert Fulghum has a quote: "Don't believe everything you think." And we shouldn't. Because our thinker sometimes misses the mark. It's always good to get a second opinion. And one way is to appeal to the wisdom and insight of those who travelled this way before us.

What would Mom or Dad...or someone else wise and respected...think about this or that?

Does anybody here know what I mean by all this?

I think it was this way with the early church. The mantle had been passed to them that day on Golgotha hill. And they had had a tough time of it ever since. Jesus' death had been a crushing blow. Here was the long promised Messiah who was going to usher in the new age—the new age when all evil would cease and good would finally run the world. But this long-awaited one had been crucified. What to do now? How to pick up the pieces and keep going?

What kept them going in the early days was the belief that Jesus was coming back soon. After all, God would not allow the Messiah to be killed, so soon—very soon...any day now—God would once again intervene in history, rescue the righteous, punish the evil-doers, and Jesus would return to set up his kingdom. Some suggested that Jesus promised that himself—that he would return.

But then the promise began to drag its heels, and time continued its slow, inexorable plod towards some far-off, unknown future...and Jesus did not come back. So they had to re-interpret their belief in the light of this absence. If Jesus was coming back, it certainly wasn't going to be anytime soon.

And by the time the Jesus story began to be written down, many years had passed. More than 30 years in the case of Mark's gospel. As much as 70 or even 80 years by the time John's gospel was produced. And life wasn't getting any easier for these early Christians. In fact, life was getting tougher by the day. Persecution. Oppression. The mantle on their shoulders was weighing heavier still.

They plodded along, day after day, down the dusty roads to Emmaus or some other place, or they gathered in secret upper rooms.

They had learned the hard way that life can be cruel. Brutally cruel. Because we live in a world where the best sometimes get crucified.

My grandson Lindsey and his wife LeeAnne live in Edmonton. LeeAnne's a sports trainer. A couple of years ago, she went through a very tough time, when several athletes they were working with died in tragic circumstances. 20-year-old Cole died of cancer. 16-year-old Zoe was killed in a car accident. Then, only a month later, 16-year-old Markus, who worked out at LeeAnne's gym, was also killed in a car accident.

It weighed heavily on LeeAnne. She wrote to me:

"It seems so tough for me to think about the young lives that I have been so grateful to cross paths with but now they're gone. But even more, how it affects the even younger kids, friends and teammates.

"This week our boss stressed structure and routine, but with care, awareness and understanding. We know that working out can be one of the best forms of stress relief and breakthrough. And it has been. I wasn't sure if the kids were going to still come in for workouts after Markus' accident, but they did.

"On Tuesday one young athlete cracked. It was the last part of the workout—conditioning/sprints. During it, I could tell that in his mind he was somewhere else. Afterwards he got on the exercise bike and put his head down. I approached him, put my hand on his shoulder, and the tears came. I had him walk outside with me to get some fresh air, and he just

vented. It is one of those moments you can't prepare for but he was appreciative afterwards. Markus' funeral is tomorrow...just so tragic...

"My boss, my biggest mentor, said it best: 'It's not easy. We grow with these kids through the good and the bad. We wouldn't change it for anything. We are blessed to be a part of these kids' lives and help them be their best. Keep driving forward and be grateful for the influence we get to have.'

"That has stuck with me. When I get upset thinking about the loss of the three young people, I also realize I am so fortunate to be in the line of work that I am. I love what I do and the interactions with the athletes... through the good and the bad."

See, there's the key. Focus on what you can do. Focus on why you're there.

That's what the early Christians finally did. They started to focus on why they were together as a group of Christians in the first place. We get a glimpse of that in the piece that we read this morning from the book of Acts.

They were there because they were drawn to the personality of this unique man, Jesus—what he taught, what he stood for. They remembered how he talked about the kingdom of God being among them—meaning that life, no matter what happens, is always filled with unlimited new possibilities. A new day was about to dawn, a new heaven and a new earth were on the way.

They remembered that he said that he would always be with them in spirit, that they were his people. And he left them with one calling: to love one another. Because he loved them, they also were to love one another. And in their love for one another he would always be with them. And somehow it was enough to keep them going.

It was enough because it was encouragement. It was affirmation. It was assurance that somebody believed in them and, no matter what they encountered, they would not encounter it alone. Jesus would be with them. Physically there or not, seen or unseen, he would be with them. And that was enough.

Powerful stuff—the knowledge that somebody else is there for you, believes in you, an unseen presence standing in your corner for you. Powerful stuff. Powerful enough to carry you a thousand miles.

I learned it again myself a while back when I was having a few tough days and a friend said, "Remember this...I am as near as a phone call or a text message."

All of us need the encouragement that comes from stuff like that. For all of us know that just a quarter inch behind this 'self-confident, I can take on the whole world' external veneer lurks a person who, on good days, is really just trying to do his best and, on some other days, has a hard time tying up his shoe laces.

But..."Remember...I am with you." And we can make it.

Small boy. A small boy named Danny. Going out for his first little league ball game. Excited as can be. So excited he can't eat his supper. Wants to get going. Gets up from the table. Grabs his baseball glove. Pounds the pocket. Wants to get out there and play the game. Enthusiasm.

Excitement. All of that is real. But what about that little place way down deep inside that whispers, "Are you really sure you're up to this?" That's real too.

But then Mommy says, "Soon as I finish the dishes I'll be over to the park to watch your game. Don't worry; I'll be there to watch you." And as soon as Danny hears that, those secret whispers inside of him don't have a chance. "Thanks, Mom!" And he puts his cap on and runs out of the house and down the walk. Cap's on backwards, like he sees the big boys wear them.

"Remember...I'll be there."

Teenage girl. Walks on stage and sits down at the piano. It's the annual music festival. Places her fingers on the keys. Takes a deep breath. She knows the piece by heart. She's played it perfectly the last 230 times. Nothing to worry about. Except for the tremble in her knees.

Just before she hits the opening chord, she looks out at the audience and there, in the very front row...her Dad. He said he'd be there. He looks at her, winks, and gives the 'thumbs up' sign. She smiles. She checks her fingers again and hits the chord. And by the time she's in the 4th bar it would take a seismometer to find any tremble in her knees.

"Remember...I'll be there."

That's what kept those early Christians going. The resurrection sense that Jesus was with them. Sitting in the stands, giving the thumbs-up sign from the front row. He was no longer there...but he was really there. "Remember...I will be there with you." And they lifted their shoulders and wore the mantle as best they could.

I have sometimes thought, "How lucky we are not to have lived then. In a day when it was a risky thing to be a Christian. Aren't we fortunate not to face the things they faced?"

Trouble is that kind of thinking is foolish. Because those folks were really no different from you and me, and we from them. Just people trying to make the best of unpredictable lives in an unpredictable world. Trying our best to cope with things different in context but little different in content.

No matter how old we are, we're still the little boy with the ball glove, or the teenage girl at the piano. Or the church congregation trying to figure out how best to be the church in our day and time. Knees trembling, wondering whether or not we're up to it, called to live forward.

My daughter, Valerie, and son-in-law Wayne live on a farm in southwest Manitoba. They grow grain, so they have grain bins. One of the problems with grain bins is that they attract mice. So cats come in pretty handy.

Several years ago, they got three kittens. Three cats should be able to take care of the mice. As soon as the kittens got old enough, they put them outside.

One of the three cats, Ruby, took to the mousing task immediately. She lives out in the shed. Only comes to the house once in a while.

The other two, Janie and Jodie...well, let's just say that you might as well put two turtles out



there, because the turtles would catch more mice than Janie and Jodie. Not only don't they like mousing, it has to be a really fine day to get them to go outside.

So I ask Val and Wayne why they keep those two useless cats. "They're nothing but ornaments," I say. "Yes," Valerie replies, "they're nothing but ornaments, but I keep Janie and Jodie...because I love them."

Know what? In the same way, God loves us. God believes in us. God sends us into the world because God believes we can make a difference. Did you hear that? God believes we, together as the church, can make a difference!

The mantle has been passed! To the likes of you...and me.

**Hymn: I Have Called You by Your Name** **MV 161**

1. I have called you by your name, you are mine;  
I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.  
I will not abandon you; all my promises are true.  
You are gifted, called, and chosen; you are mine.

2. I will help you learn my name as you go;  
Read it written in my people, help them grow.  
Pour the water in my name, speak the word your soul can claim,  
Offer Jesus' body given long ago.

3. I know you will need my touch as you go;  
Feel it pulsing in creation's ebb and flow.  
Like the woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt,  
Hold the hem of Jesus' robe, then let it go.

4. I have given you a name, it is mine;  
I have given you my Spirit as a sign.  
With my wonder in your soul, make my wounded children whole;  
Go and tell my precious people they are mine.

**Sharing our joys and concerns**

**Poem — "The Lonely Things" (by Rod McKuen)**

The silent rain that falls, the meadowlark,  
The winter wind that calls the lovers from the park,  
The sad and bitter song December sings,  
These are the lonely things.

The sun behind the clouds, the starless night,  
When you're alone in crowds the need for sudden flight,  
The empty loneliness that parting brings  
These are the lonely things.

A taste of love too soon gone wrong,

The sad mistaken heart that heard the sirens song...and sang along.

The waves that drum the shore at morning light,  
The friends that come no more to try and make things right  
The hopes that fly too soon, as though on wings,  
These are the lonely things.

## **Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus**

### **Minute for Mission - Moose Hide Campaign Day 2023**

May 11, 2023 is Moose Hide Campaign Day, a day when all Canadians are invited to take a stand against violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and 2S-LGBTQIA+ people.

The Moose Hide Campaign is an Indigenous-led grassroots movement of men, boys and all Canadians who are standing up against violence towards women, girls, and 2-Spirit people. It was started to bring attention to the large number of Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered along Canada's infamous Highway of Tears in British Columbia.

The heart of the Moose Hide Campaign is the pin – a small square of moose hide offered as a medicine for a social illness impacting all Canadians – namely domestic and gender-based violence against women and children, and particularly indigenous women and children. It acts as a symbol of solidarity in standing up against the violence in Canada.

Wearing the moose hide pin signifies a commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in your life and speak out against gender-based and domestic violence. It is a concrete way to spark conversations and build commitment and capacity to address this critical issue.

The United Church has shared its belief that “everyone, created in the image of God, has a right to be treated with respect and protected from harm.” Members, friends, and communities of faith are asked to share that belief, to combat violence, and to call for justice by participating in the [Moose Hide Campaign](#).

See the Social Justice section of Melville's website for more information and links to the campaign.

### **Offering Invitation**

#### **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.

### **Offering Prayer:**

### **Hymn: Deep in Our Hearts MV 154**

1. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
Telling Creation that we are one.

2. Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;  
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,  
Justice and peace in harmony.

3. Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,  
Flowing to freedom like a stream.

4. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
Telling Creation that we are one.

### **Benediction**

May our lives be blessed according to the depth of our love...

#### **The persistence of our faith...**

Our willingness to be compassionate...

#### **And in proportion to our yearning to be free.**

Go in peace!

### **Postlude**

#### **Household Prayer:**

Wondrous God, I am in awe that you would choose to be born among us, revealing your divineness enlivening the ordinary things of my life.

I thank you for the gift of Jesus who walked among us, wept with the suffering and raged in anger at the injustices of his day. I thank you for the vision you etched in his heart, a fullness of righteousness for all the world.

I thank you that he called others to follow that they too might know the joy of new life. As Jesus' disciple, help me to walk in the way. Help me to carry the vision in my heart, however discouraged I get. Help me to see through eyes of faith, my life, my relationships, the world you so love. Help me day by day, in my words and deeds to reflect your light. Through your wisdom and Spirit, may I grow in my capacity to love you, my neighbour, and myself, as you so love. Amen.

### Worship Schedule

May 7	Mental Health Sunday	Social Justice Committee
May 14	Christian Family Sunday (Mother's Day)	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
May 21	7 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	Rev. Tom Watson
May 28	Day of Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson