



**Celebrating
177 Years**



May 21, 2023

Melville United Church

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Pastoral Care Number

519-843-3841

Melville United Church
May 21, 2023

Presiding today - Rev. Tom Watson
Music Ministry: Suzanne Flewelling

Prelude

Welcome

Good morning! We gather in community today, both in person and virtually.

Since we're gathering on the May holiday weekend, and it's the time of year when nature is breaking out all around us, we're going to celebrate Nature in our worship. We will have a mix of songs, readings and poetry, all designed to celebrate the beauty of Nature.

Announcements

- **Our wonderful custodian Bob Mitchell is retiring at the end of June.** We want to recognize and thank Bob for his many years of service to Melville. On Sunday, June 25th in the Parlour after the worship service there will be a reception to honour Bob. We invite you to attend and celebrate with us. We are collecting money for a gift for Bob. If you want to contribute, please see Ralph Rainford. Thank you.
- **Broadview subscriptions are now due.** It is time to renew your subscription for another year. This wonderful magazine is available for the low price of \$25.00 (same as last year). Please see Ralph Rainford to renew or to sign up for a new subscription.
- **Garden Team:** We have our first crop of kale, lettuce, and spinach already planted in the garden (the garlic is looking fantastic!). Our regular meetings take place every **Monday around 6:00pm** (unless it's raining). If you would like to join us, we would love to see you! The next few weeks will be mostly weeding and clean-up until the weather warms up enough for more planting (no experience needed). For more information, please speak to us on Sunday or contact ogilvielms@gmail.com
- Come out and join us for the **Melville's Plant, Baked Goods and Meat Pie Sale on May 27th** from **9:00am-2:00pm!** This fundraising event will feature a variety of fresh plants, savoury frozen meat pies, and delicious baked goods that you won't want to miss.
- **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. Donations can be dropped off at the office Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00-3:30. For more information or if you have large items to donate please contact Lorna Bevcar.
- 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 today!**

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

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 (based on words from VU Hymn 301)

Before the earth had yet begun its journey round the burning sun...

Before a seed of life had stirred, there sounded God's creating word.

In that bright dawning of the world, ere ocean surged or wind unfurled...

The vaults of heaven with praises rang, the morning stars together sang.

Thus when creation's God did take the clay of earth our form to make...

God willed that to our race belong the gifts of music, word and song.

Let us praise our living, creating God.

Hymn — For Beauty Of Prairies (VU 303, tune VU 223)

1. For beauty of prairies, for grandeur of trees,
For flowers of woodlands, for creatures of seas,
For all you created and gave us to share,
We praise you, Creator, extolling your care.

2. As stewards of beauty received at your hand,
As creatures who hear your most urgent command,
We turn from our wasteful destruction of life,
Confessing our failures, confessing our strife.

3. Teach us once again to be gardeners in peace;
All nature around us is ours but on lease;
Your name we would hallow in all that we do,
Fulfilling our calling, creating with you.

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

Creator God, the hills of our earth shout as they stand tall, the rivers sing as they journey to the seas, the birds of the air surround us with melodies, the sun warms, the rains water the earth and give hearty growth. Great is our world, abundant in beauty...and we have come to offer praise. Amen.

Hymn — We Praise You For The Sun (VU 225)

1. We praise you for the sun, the golden shining sun,
That gives us healing, strength, and joy,
We praise you for the sun.

2. We praise you for the rain, the softly falling rain,
That gives us healing, strength, and joy,
We praise you for the rain.

3. We praise you for your love, your patient, endless love,
That gives us healing, strength, and joy,
We praise you for your love.

Children's Time

Several years ago, I wrote a song called "Who Will Call the Rain?" Then Neil Kernohan, an organist friend, put it to music.

This morning, I'm going to read the words, and then sing a piece the song.

Poem: "Who Will Call The Rain?" by Tom Watson

When you gaze upon a waterfall or drift in a canoe,
Or catch a ray of sunshine on a glist'ning drop of dew,
Do you think about the gift of grace within each water store,
And of how much poorer we would be on a day there was no more?

When you ride upon a horse's back or play with kitten new,
Or watch the great apes frolic in their playful rendezvous,
Do you think about the wonders that abound in Nature's scheme,
And reflect on all the things that show our God's creative dream?

When the whales swim away, who will move the sea?
When the lions fade, who will prowl the plain?
When the eagles fall, who will guard the sky?
When the trees are gone, who will call the rain?

When the springs up in the sky have dried and the heavens cry no more,
What will wash our planet clean so its beauty we adore?
When the lions cease to prowl and the eagles cease to soar,
When the whales and dolphins no more dance up and down the ocean floor...

Watch the osprey bring its young their food, to their perch in treetop high.
Watch the leopard races the desert, and old turtle leisure by.
Watch the hawk, borne by wind's thermals glide above the mountain crest,
And then you'll understand why we must protect God's good gifts lest...

When the whales swim away, who will move the sea?
When the lions fade, who will prowl the plain?
When the eagles fall, who will guard the sky?
When the trees are gone, who will call the rain?

A few Sundays ago, Bunny Russell mentioned a poem called "Vestigia."
It's very fitting for today's service. Here are the words.

Poem: "Vestigia" by Bliss Carman

I took a day to search for God,
And found Him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw His footprint in the sod.

Then suddenly, all unaware,
Far off in the deep shadows, where
A solitary hermit thrush
Sang through the holy twilight hush –
I heard His voice upon the air.

And even as I marveled how
God gives us Heaven here and now,
In a stir of wind that hardly shook
The poplar leaves beside the brook –
His hand was light upon my brow.

At last with evening as I turned
Homeward, and thought what I had learned

And all that there was still to probe –
I caught the glory of His robe
Where the last fires of sunset burned.

Back to the world with quickening start
I looked and longed for any part
In making saving Beauty be ...
And from that kindling ecstasy
I knew God dwelt within my heart.

Hymn: It's a Song of Praise to the Maker MV 30

1. It's a song of praise to the Maker, the thrush sings high in the tree.
It's a song of praise to the Maker, the gray whale sings in the sea.
And by the Spirit you and I
Can join our voice to the holy cry
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

2. It's a call of life to the Giver, when waves and waterfalls roar.
It's a call of life to the Giver when high tides break on the shore.
And by the Spirit you and I
Can join our voice to the holy cry
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

3. It's a hymn of love to the Lover; the bumblebees hum along.
It's a hymn of love to the Lover; the summer breeze joins the song.
And by the Spirit you and I
Can join our voice to the holy cry
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

4. It's the chorus of all creation; it's sung by all living things.
It's the chorus of all creation; a song the universe sings.
And by the Spirit you and I
Can join our voice to the holy cry
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

An afternoon in April. Settling down for a short nap on my living room chesterfield. Before drifting off, I am watching, out our 8th floor condo window, the clear sky above, and a few clouds that drift slowly by. From that came the following poem, "The View From An April Day."

Poem — "The View From An April Day" by Tom Watson

The wispy clouds flow gently by,
Held aloft on breaths of air
That constitute a celestine sky,
On an April day, so clear and fair.

It's still cold in our northern clime,
But gently 'round us Nature wakes

And dons its springtime countenance,
As winter's cloak it slowly shakes.

It's an idyllic day to contemplate
The beauty that in our world abounds.
There's so much grandeur to celebrate
In this universe, so glory crowned.

The seasons, they each come and go—
The eternal recurrence, the ceaseless incarnation—
They wax and wane, ebb and flow,
Earth's patient, persistent, regeneration.

So treasure this, our blue planet home,
Treat it kindly, this shining, extraordinary, place.
Preserve its pristine beauty for all time to come,
To be enjoyed by each succeeding race.

Hymn — Touch The Earth Lightly VU 307

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.

A few years back, on a night in early May, somewhere around 10 PM, at our trailer near Parry Sound, I heard the frogs singing from a pond in a nearby greenbelt area. From that came the thought that led to the following poem, "Nature's Symphony."

Poem: "Nature's Symphony" by Tom Watson

Early May

A still clear night

The frogs' croaky chorus fills the air:

A symphony of Nature.

In our wondrous world, sights and sounds caress the senses.
When we're hushed enough we hear them—
The soothing sound of a waterfall rippling over rocks,
The gentle whistling of the wind through lofty poplars.
Or, by times, their shrillness startles:
The sudden sharp crack of a thunderstorm
The violent boom of a frost quake.

Each season brings its particular orchestration:
In spring, the reassuring lilt of the robin,
The wheezing greenfinch,
The mysterious screech owl,
The chatty sparrow,
The tch-tch-tch of the humming bird at the window feeder,
The blackbird switching from territorial cry to a melodious pink-pink-pink,
While, inside, the contented calico cat thrums as it rests on his lady's chest.

In the heat of summer, the starling shrieks at August noon,
By the evening campfire a friendly chipmunk grins and begs for camper's treat,
While red squirrel scolds from nearby tree,
And in the dead of night, raccoon chortles his curdling cry.

The cricket chorus breaks the Autumn silence.
The ever vigilant hunter hawk spots his prey and issues a hoarse scream.
On the ocean, the water whooshes as the whale cracks the surface,
While a soaring seagull barks in a sun dried sky and plunges for plankton.

As the snow begins to lather the landscape
The wild winter birds form a backyard congregation—
The high-pitched ho-hoo of the chickadee,
The wild throaty cadence of the cardinal,
The petulant blue jay swooping in to announce his dominance,
While, on the ground, the mourning dove engages her mate in cooing pillow talk.
All of these, and many more, form a soundscape
That surrounds us and holds us enthralled:
Nature's symphony.

Hymn — Each Blade of Grass MV 37

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 outstretched 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.

Sharing our joys and concerns

- Birthdays:
 - Gary Sproule celebrates on Mon May 22nd
 - Bunny Russell celebrates on Sat May 27th

Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus

(beginning with a paraphrase of Psalm 8 by Jim Taylor)

My God, my God, how wonderful you are!

I look up to the skies, and I see you there.

On a starry night, your glory splashes across the skies.

I gaze into your infinite universe, and I wonder who I am in the grand scheme of things.

I am but a speck of dust in your created order, but a second in the great clock of creation,

Yet you have shared the secrets of this universe with all humans;

You have trusted us to look after the earth on your behalf.

Grant us the wisdom, and the insight, to take care of all this wonderful planet on which we live.

Minute for Mission:

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:

Mid-March, 2020. That's when Covid shut down our world as we had previously known it. Do you remember how it was? It shut down Melville Church, and other churches too. We wondered where the virus might strike...and if it might strike us. It was a scary time.

I wondered where the hope lay. And in response to that thought I wrote the following poem.

Poem: "Listen to the Meadowlark" by Tom Watson

Like a thief in the night
the deadly virus came—
time suspended, life upended,
the world staggers under
its weightless frame.

Throughout the land, medics—
time-worn, exhausted—race to
save, while lab researchers toil
around the clock to find a cure.

Outside the care home, body bags
gather in a heap.

Down the street, a little girl asks her
weeping mother, "What's wrong, mommy?"

But just as despair squeezes its dark glove
around our hearts, and we wonder if lilacs
will ever bloom again, or lovers stroll
once more in the April sun...
the single, shrill clarion call of the
meadowlark cleaves the cloak of
darkness, enlivening our spirits. And
it's enough...just enough...
to hope again.

Hymn – God Who Gives To Life Its Goodness VU 260

1. God who gives to life its goodness,
God creator of all joy,
God who gives to us our freedom,
God who blesses tool and toy:
Teach us now to laugh and praise you,
Deep within your praises sing,
Till the whole creation dances
For the goodness of its King.

2. God who fills the earth with beauty,
God who binds each friend to friend,
God who names us co-creators,
God who wills that chaos end:
Grant us now creative spirits,
Minds responsive to your mind,
Hearts and wills your rule extending
All our acts by Love refined.

Benediction

Let us embrace the wonders of our lives with expectation and imagination...

Taking time to be still so that God’s peace can wash over us like waves washing over stones...

Rounding the rough edges off insurmountable worries to leave tiny, insignificant grains of sand...

And smooth shining love.

Go in peace!

Postlude: "Cotton Jenny" by Gordon Lightfoot, performed by Suzanne Flewelling, Barry Rawn, & Rene Crespo

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 28	Day of Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson
June 4	Trinity Sunday	Rev. Tom Watson
June 10	Eko Gemah Fundraising Concert	
June 11	2 nd after Pentecost	Rev. Felisha Urbanski