



**Celebrating
177 Years**



July 2, 2023

Melville United Church

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Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

Chair of Church Council

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Summer Office hours (July & August)

E-Mail

Web Site

Pastoral Care Number

Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

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Melville United Church

July 2, 2023

Presiding today - Rev. Tom Watson

Music Ministry: Suzanne Flewelling

Prelude

Welcome

Good morning! Welcome to worship at Melville United Church. And a belated Happy Canada Day! How wonderful to be together on this summer Sunday morning—both in person here in the sanctuary and online.

Announcements

- **Kids' Church** is on a summer break and will gather again September 10. During the summer books and independent activities will be available in the sanctuary. Have a great holiday!
- **Summer office hours (July & August):** Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday 9:00am - 3:30pm
- **Garage, Plant & Bake Sales** are finished for the time being. We are pleased to have sent over \$6000 to Melville's General Fund, representing the two weekends! Thank you to all who: Donated, Worked, Baked, Gave Plants, and who Shopped at Melville!
- Please Welcome Our New Custodian: The Property Committee is pleased to announce that **Suzanne Flewelling** will be expanding her role at Melville and is being hired as the contract custodian, effective July 1, 2023. For the past year she has already been one of our part time custodians, so that Bob Mitchell could reduce his work hours at Melville.

As Bob retires, we thank him for his years of custodial service at Melville and wish him well in his retirement. Blessings Bob.

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

Birds chirping in the trees as we awake...

Flowers filling our gardens with colour...

A much needed rain when crops are thirsty...

Golden sunsets to crown a summer day.

Reminders of the wonders of God's world...

And the beauty of this country called Canada.

Let us gather in praise of our Creator God.

Hymn: Morning Has Broken VU 409

1. Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!

2. Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3. Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning,
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day!

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

Gracious and generous God, we give you thanks for this summer day, and for all its beauty and blessings. We give you thanks for holiday times, for moments of quiet and moments of spirited play, for relaxation and recreation, and for all the possibilities that come our way. May our worship generate within us an appreciation for all of life, and grace us with faith and hope. We gather in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: Jesus, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love VU 593

(refrain) Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,

Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends,
Silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them. (refrain)

2. Neighbors are wealthy and poor,
Varied in color and race,
Neighbors are near us and far away. (refrain)

3. These are the ones we should serve,

These are the ones we should love,
All these are neighbors to us and you. *(refrain)*

4. Loving puts us on our knees,
Silently washing their feet,
This is the way we should live with you. *(refrain)*

Ministry of Music: *Oh, A Song Must Rise* performed by Suzanne Flewelling & Tom Watson

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Sermon: "The Meaning Of Commitment"

After church on Sunday morning, Jimmy announced to his mother, "Mom, I have decided to be a minister when I grow up."

"Why, that's wonderful, Jimmy," said his mother, "but what made you decide that?"

"Well," replied Jimmy, "Since I have to go to church on Sunday morning anyway, I figure that it will be a lot more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit still and listen!"

This morning's gospel reading is a strange collection of 4 events.

Event 1: Jesus and his followers are on their way to Jerusalem, making their way through the various towns and villages. They draw near to a Samaritan village, so some of the advance troops go on ahead, to help the Samaritans prepare for Jesus' arrival...only to have the people of that village say, "Sorry, we'd sooner that Jesus not come here."

The reaction when the advance troops report back is as expected. The disciples are furious. "Jesus, do you want us to call down fire from heaven and burn that Samaritan village up?" Only to have Jesus reply, "No, it's okay. We'll just go somewhere else."

"But, Jesus, even Samaritans know that it's only common courtesy to welcome visiting dignitaries. This is an offence!"

Something like our asking King Charles not to bother coming on any more royal tours of Canada...just stay in England and play polo or something.

The disciples are outraged. And you can see them rubbing their hands with glee. "Might just as well deal with 'em now, Jesus! Burn the lot of them out!"

But Jesus calmly replies, "Remember what I have told you: don't sweat the small stuff. Just leave them alone. We have bigger and more important things to do."

"But, Jesus, we thought following you mattered! That's why we're here! If there is some kind of reward for following...and we certainly thought there was...should there not be some kind of punishment for not following. And those folks are about as big a not followers as we've seen."

And Jesus says, 'No, let's just get on with what we're about.'

Event 2: And here's where we move from some not-followers to some at least sound-like followers. As they go along the road, somebody says, "Hey, Jesus, I will follow you! I will follow you wherever you go! There's no bigger follower than I am!"

So Jesus says, "Wonderful! But...oh, by the way...just so you know what you are getting into, let me tell you what following means. It means not having a bed to lie on. It means not being sure where your next meal is coming from. It means not having any way to save up for that new four horse chariot you've always wanted. And no roof over your head, and no bed to lie in, means living on the resources of faith, and on the providence of God."

"But, Jesus, banking our whole life on just the resources of faith and the providence of God...isn't that a bit risky? Besides what about all our normal responsibilities?"

"Like what?" Jesus asks.

Event 3: "Well," says one person. "My father has died and I have to go now and bury him. Just as soon as I've done that, I'll come back and follow."

To which Jesus replies, "Let the dead bury their own dead. Our task is to proclaim life!"

Event 4: "Hey Jesus, over here! I'm a follower!"

"Great! Come along then!"

"Okay, I will. Just as soon as I go and say goodbye to my folks back home!"

And Jesus shakes his head, and says, "No one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is ready for the kingdom of God."

In other words, either you do or you don't. Either your heart's in it, or it's somewhere else. You're either part of what's happening, or not. "No one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is ready for the kingdom of God."

Well, all of us know that you can't plow a straight furrow if you're looking backwards. But, my goodness, doesn't Jesus sound pretty harsh on these potential followers?

Whereas just a few minutes ago he told the disciples not to be concerned at all about the people in that Samaritan village who weren't even remotely interested in following, now he tells these interested ones that there's no slack whatsoever to be cut for followers—either shape up or ship out!

And what makes this response from Jesus seem so hard-line is that the most sacred duty a young Jewish person had would be to see to a proper burial for those of his family—it's right there in the commandments: honour your father and your mother.

So, would not honouring your father and mother include going and saying goodbye before you struck out for goodness-knows-where?

The strictness seems both harsh and heartless. "Look, if you want to follow, do it now!"

Truth is, however, that this is no place to be taking Jesus literally. The point of these encounters has nothing to do with whether one goes to say goodbye, or takes time to attend the burial of one's father. The point has to do with choosing your direction and sticking to it.

You're either involved with things that are dead, or you're involved with things that give life. You're either plowing a straight furrow, or just making big ruts in the sod that go nowhere.

And one of life's truths is that all of us come to those points where we have to make decisions about where to from here. Because, like it or not, the show must go on.

George was the featured baritone soloist in the concert. He had finished the first half of his performance when the pain and the shortness of breath struck—they came on as he stood backstage, listening to the choir performing the middle part of the program. He knew what the pain meant—a heart attack.

"There was no one there to help me," George said. "And there was no way for me to tell them I was having trouble. In a few minutes, they'd be waiting for me to come on again, but I wouldn't be there."

And then he thought to himself, "But I must be there. The show must go on." So he went on stage and finished the concert. Then he drove himself to the hospital. Half an hour after the end of the concert, he was in intensive care, attached to all kinds of tubes and meters. But that would be later. For now, "The show must go on."

It may seem like a foolish act of self-sacrifice. Something too idealistic...born out of pride, or ego. But not for George. There came his moment when he had to decide whether he was really part of things or not.

Contrast that to 18-year-old Karl who wrote a love note to his girl friend, Debra.

"Debra, my dearest, I would do anything for you, because of my undying love for you. I would swim the deepest ocean, and climb the highest mountain, just to be at your side. I would crawl across the widest burning desert, and pedal my bike for days, just to see you. Not even the fiercest hurricane nor the deepest flood could keep me away from you."

Then he put the following P.S. on the letter: "I'll be over on Saturday if it doesn't rain."

Can't you see them at the altar on their wedding day? "Do you, Karl, take Debra to be your lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forever?"

"Uhh...well...I think so."

By then, if she has any smarts about her at all, Debra is trying to remember the phone number for the caterers, to call and cancel the meal!

You know what I mean?

- I'd really like to do that, but first I have to do...
- I think what you're doing is really important, and I'd really like to help...but...well, let me get back to you.
- Absolutely. I am committed. Now, I won't be able to make a lot of the meetings, but...

Jesus says, "Know what...no one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is really interested. So, if you're going with us, the time is now. Because life is now!"

It was one of those Habitat for Humanity projects. William, the project director, noticed that one of the crew—Chuck, a man in his 40s—had bandages on his fingers. Being concerned, William asked him if he had injured himself, and if so did he need medical attention.

Chuck replied, "No, I didn't injure myself. I have a disease that causes poor blood circulation, so I have to protect my fingers from damage. This type of work causes my skin to split open, so I have to keep my fingers bandaged."

William suggested that Chuck take it a bit easier, so that it wouldn't be so hard on his hands. To which Chuck replied, "Thanks anyway, but no, I won't take it easier. I only have 4 months to live as it is, and I had to take a massive dose of chemotherapy in order to come and help, but this work is important and that's why I am here. And until I die, I choose to live and help make a difference."

A similar anecdote. A few weeks back, the volunteers at the Art Gallery of Guelph held an "Antique Roadshow" type of event—people could take things and have them appraised by certified appraisers. The appraisers were all there by 10 a.m., and the event ended at 4 p.m.

One of the busiest was a man appraising jewellery. When the event concluded, he remarked that he had to rush off. He had only slept for 4 hours the night before, and when he left he was going for a kidney dialysis treatment.

You could argue that he could easily have opted out of the day. Little sleep. Dialysis treatment pending. But he had made a commitment to be there, and so he was there.

What does making a commitment mean? Jesus gives this answer: You're either involved with things that are dead, or you're involved with things that give life. You're either plowing a straight furrow...or just making ruts in the sod.

Hymn: I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me **VU 575**

1. I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.
I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

2. I'm gonna work so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.
I'm gonna work so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

3. I'm gonna pray so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.
I'm gonna pray so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

4. I'm gonna sing so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.
I'm gonna sing so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

The Sound Of *by Tom Watson*

Listen! Just be quiet and listen!
The waves lap incessantly upon the shore,
The rain patters on the windowpane;
The air pulsates with music.
The sound of life.

A tiny bird, perched on lofty branch,
Waits for just the right moment
Then, in tones shrill, penetrating,
Announces the coming of morning.
The sound of awakening.

Whistles blow. Time cards click in slots.
Factories grind. Machinery moans.
Conveyor belts hum. Filling lines whir.
Fork lift trucks beep and hiss.
The sound of production.

Engines purr, then roar,
The plane slowly turns, taxis down the runway,
Turns again, speeds up, and is soon borne aloft.
People in the terminal wave goodbye.
The sound of travel.

In a small room, a mother lies,
Her newborn cradled gently to her breast.
The baby slowly suckles, is soothed,
Sighs, smiles, stills, and falls asleep.
The sound of contentment.

In another small room on another floor
A much older mother sits alone,
Reflecting on all the years and miles
Travelled with her husband. And now?
The sound of waiting.

In a place formerly abuzz with chatter and laughter,
A man sits alone in an echoing quietness,
Thinking of yesteryear, longing for,
Listening for, something—anything—to disturb...
The sound of silence.

Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

- **Birthdays**
 - Rev. Marion Loree celebrates on Tues. July 4th
 - Glenise Ladd celebrates on Wed. July 5th
 - David Lamb celebrates 75 years on Fri. July 7th
- **Anniversaries**
 - Alison & Ralph Rainford celebrate 53 years on Tues. July 4th

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

Minute for Mission

Hymn: He Leadeth Me VU page #657

1. He leadeth me, O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

(refrain) He leadeth me! He leadeth me!

By his own hand he leadeth me!
His faithful follower I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me.

2. Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom,
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,
By waters still, o'er troubled sea,
Still 'tis my God that leadeth me. (refrain)

3. Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine,
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me. (refrain)

4. And when my task on earth is done,
When by thy grace the victory's won,
Even death's cold wave I will not flee,
Since God through Jordan leadeth me. (refrain)

Benediction

Knowing that we are led by the spirit of God each step we take...

May God's strength keep us strong!

May God's imagination fill us with a sense of creative living!

May God's belief in us help us believe in ourselves!

May God's love hold us fast in faith and hope!

This day and always!

Amen.

Postlude: Something to Sing About/This Land is Your Land Medley performed by Suzanne Flewelling and Barry Rawn

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

July 9	6th after Pentecost	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
July 16	7th after Pentecost	Rev. Felisha Urbanski
July 23	8th after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson
July 30	9th after Pentecost	Rev. Felisha Urbanski