



**Celebrating
177 Years**



July 23, 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
Faith Formation & Youth	Naomi Flint
Ministry of Music Team	Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber
Office Administrator	Lynda Rivet
Custodian	Suzanne Flewelling
Chair of Church Council	Allan Hons
Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain	Alison Rainford, Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint
Summer Office hours (July & August)	9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Wed.-Fri.
E-Mail	secretary@melvilleunited.com
Web Site	www.melvilleunited.com
Pastoral Care Numbers	519-843-3841

Melville United Church

July 23, 2023

Presiding today - Rev. Tom Watson

Music Ministry: Suzanne Flewelling

Prelude

Welcome

Announcements:

- **UCW Meat Pies** are available for purchase after the service or order by contacting Marg Frayne 519-843-3274 or margfrayne@hotmail.com Only **\$5.00** each, cash or cheques made payable to Melville United Church UCW.
- Help is needed with the PowerPoint and sound on **August 27th**, and possibly on **September 3rd**. Barry can provide training to anyone interested before those dates. Please contact Barry Rawn brawn@cogeco.ca
- **We are in need of welcomers and counters.** Onsite training will be provided. Excellent benefits. Please see Ralph Rainford to volunteer.
- **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

Land Acknowledgement

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 (*adapted from the writings of Ann Weems*)

Up and up the stairs of time, the pilgrims climb...

No matter what...they climb.

Filled with faith, they climb...one more time...

Always one more time.

One more time to praise their God.

Hymn: Praise the Lord with the Sound of Trumpet VU 245

1. Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,
Praise the Lord with the harp and lute,
Praise the Lord with the gentle sounding flute.
Praise the Lord in the field and forest,
Praise the Lord in the city square,
Praise the Lord anytime and anywhere.

Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine,
Praise the Lord in the dark of night,
Praise the Lord in the rain or snow or in the morning light.
Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,
Praise the Lord on the highest hill,
Praise the Lord, never let your voice be still.

2. Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal,
Praise the Lord with the pipe and string,
Praise the Lord with the joyful songs you sing.
Praise the Lord on a weekday morning,
Praise the Lord on a Sunday noon,
Praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.
Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow,
Praise the Lord in the time of joy,
Praise the Lord in the every moment, nothing let your praise destroy.
Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet,
Praise the Lord in your work or play,
Praise the Lord everywhere in every way!

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

Gracious God, we come to worship holding our hopes and dreams in the pockets of our hearts. Sometimes we are afraid to take them out—for fear we will lose them. Can we share our hopes and dreams with you, God? Can we share them with each other? Can we make them real? Be with us now in our worship, as we think about these things. Amen.

Litany of Celebration *(adapted from the writings of Ann Weems)*

Our lives are filled with things to celebrate!

I celebrate the sun that brings bright summer days.

I celebrate music — the gift of melody.

I celebrate laughter — the gift of fun.

I celebrate children...and playing together.

I celebrate the wagging of a dog's tail, the gentle purring of a kitten.

I celebrate baking...banana bread, muffins, chocolate chip cookies.

I celebrate aromas — carrots steaming, a roast in the oven.

I celebrate campfires, and roasted marshmallows, and fresh fish.

I celebrate walking on a sandy beach...and wading in the water.

I celebrate soft voices, kindness shared.

I celebrate birth — the wonder, the miracle of new life.

I celebrate the church...and being here in this place.

I celebrate us...and being together in worship.

Hymn: This is the Day **VU 412**

1. This is the day, this is the day,
That our God has made, that our God has made.
We will rejoice, we will rejoice,
And be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day, that our God has made.

2. Open to us, open to us,
Your gates, O God, your gates, O God;
We will go in, we will go in
To your holy place, to your holy place.
Open to us your gates, O God;
We will go in to your holy place.
Open to us, open to us, your gates, O God.

3. You are our God, you are our God;
We will praise your name, we will praise your name;
We will give thanks, we will give thanks
For your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.
You are our God; we will praise your name;
We will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God; we will praise your name.

Ministry of Music: "Take These Wings" by Don Besig & Steve Kupferschmid performed by
Suzanne Flewelling, Rene Crespo & Rev. Tom Watson

Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:24-30

Jesus put before them another parable: The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.

The slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?"
He answered, "An enemy has done this."

The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

SERMON: "Life in Our Town... Learning to Live with Weeds"

Well, it's been a busy week in Our Town. Although, when the weather's as hot as it's sometimes been lately, people feel busy even when they're standing still.

Bridie Stevenson, Our Town's most avid gardener, has really been feeling the heat. Last Monday afternoon, Bridie was complaining to her neighbour, Freda Nugglesworth, about how she's worn right out from hoeing weeds out of her zucchini rows. Not only that, it seems to Bridie that the hot weather has meant there are more weeds than usual this summer.

"But," said Bridie, "adversity is the mother of invention. I woke up yesterday morning with an idea."

"And what would that be, Bridie?" asked Freda.

"Well," replied Bridie, "you know those Roombas that do vacuuming? I can buy one of those and have Pete, over at the garage, weld some sharp claws on the bottom of it. ... Can't you just see it weaving in and out of a row, Freda? Clipping all those weeds off like magic. Just fire it up, let it go, and sit in the house and watch it work."

Sounds great," Freda said, "but I have two questions: one, what powers the Roomba...and two, what happens when the Roomba gets to the end of a row?"

"Well, Freda," replied Bridie, "the first question's easy: those Roombas have a rechargeable battery, so power's not an issue.

"As for the second question—what to do when it gets to the end of a row—here's what I thought about. I could get one of those GPS gizmos that farmers use on their tractors to make sure that rows are planted straight. They're connected to a satellite. When the Roomba gets to the end of a row, just have the GPS turn and reposition it."

"I get it, Bridie, but...but wouldn't that be expensive?"

"Freda, you've put your finger on the problem. The Roomba's not bad. I can get a decent one of those at Best Buy for \$299. But the GPS unit would cost me at least 5,000 bucks. That's quite a bit just to handle the weeds in a few rows of zucchini. So I'm still trying to figure out a better solution."

Bridie and Freda talked on as they finished their coffee. Bridie stood up and headed for the door to go home. She was just putting her hand on the doorknob when she stopped, turned, and said, "Freda, I've got it! Why didn't I think of this before? I'll get a drone!"

"A drone!" Freda said. "How in the world would that help?"

"Simple, Freda! Connect the Roomba to the drone by WiFi. When I want it to change rows I'll just reposition the drone." Bridie clapped her hands together in satisfaction, and headed for home.

When she got home, she went on Amazon, and found a huge selection of drones for sale. She settled on an NMY A6 Pro Drone. It operates by remote control, comes complete with a 2K Camera, has 2.4G WiFi transmission, and its flight time is 40 minutes. Cost \$179.

It was delivered Wednesday afternoon. So Bridie's good to go now. All for a little over 500 plus tax, when you add in 50 dollars for Pete to weld the claws on the bottom of the Roomba.

Thursday morning, when Milt Prosser sat down for coffee, with the rest of the old guys at Al's Café, he said, "Say, I wonder if you guys know anything about this. I drove past Bridie Stevenson's house yesterday afternoon and I could hardly believe what I saw...Bridie was out there in her yard flying a drone! Wonder why she'd have a drone?"

Jack Cameron said, "Lula was talking to Bridie last night on the phone and got the whole story. Apparently she got the drone to help weed her zucchini."

The old guys had a big chuckle over that, and then talked on for a while about a lot of things...but mainly about Bridie and her ingenuity.

When Frank Birstead went home for lunch he told Myrtle all about it. Myrtle rocked back and forth in her rocking chair for a few minutes, and then said, "People sure do get hung up about weeds, don't they, Franklin?"

Frank replied, "They have good reason to, Myrt. Weeds are a terrible nuisance."

"This is a fascinating subject, Franklin. Pastor Willy was talking about weeds last Sunday in his sermon."

"That's a new one, Myrt. Pastor Willy must really have been low on ideas last week to be doing a sermon about weeds."

"No, I don't think so, Franklin. It's right there in the Bible. The parable about the wheat and the weeds. And about how the gardeners wanted to pull up the weeds but Jesus said just to let everything grow together."

Frank scratched his head. "So according to that parable, Myrt, Bridie's just supposed to let the weeds grow?" said Frank. "Really!"

"That's one way of looking at it, Franklin, but stick with me for a minute. Willy invited us to see the parable as a metaphor. The wheat and the weeds are a metaphor for different kinds of people, and Pastor Willy said we need to learn to live with each other...even with those folks we don't like—the folks who seem like weeds to us."

With that, Myrtle Birstead got up from her rocking chair and headed for the kitchen. "Time for lunch, Franklin. I'll go fix our wieners and beans."

Well, that's the news from Our Town for this week. At least, from the stories that I've heard.

Myrtle Birstead mentioned Pastor Willy Flugel...you know who she meant...Willy's the pastor over at The Church of the Reluctant Apostle. Myrtle said that last Sunday Pastor Willy was talking about the parable that we read today—the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

The householder plants a field of wheat, but when the wheat comes up the weeds appear as well. The workers are concerned about the weeds so they go to the householder and ask if he'd like them to cut the weeds out, but the householder says to leave them alone and let them grow. Why? "Because," he says, "when you cut out the weeds it's likely you'll cut out some good grain as well."

Now, any farmer I know doesn't like weeds. My Manitoba farmer son-in-law, Wayne, grows 600 acres of grain. This year, his bill for herbicides to keep weeds down is \$15,000.

How, then, do we make sense of the householder in Jesus' story telling the workers to just leave the weeds alone and let them grow?

Here's the thing. Remember, this is a parable. And parables aren't to be taken literally. So, let's, as Myrtle Birstead suggested, look at the parable as a metaphor for different kinds of people.

There are people we like, and people we don't like. Generally, the people we like are those who are most like us, and the people we don't like are those who are different.

The people we like...they're the wheat in Jesus' story. The people we don't like...they're the weeds.

What to do about the weeds? In other words, what to do about the people we don't like?

The workers say: pull them out. The householder says: let them grow.

Jesus says to let the wheat and the weeds grow together. Why? Because a predominant theme in Jesus' messages was about being inclusive, about learning how different folks need to learn to live together.

"Imagine what it would be like," Jesus said, "if we concentrated on how we are similar, rather than how we are different."

"Imagine a world," Jesus said, "where race and skin colour and creed didn't matter."

"Imagine a world," Jesus said, "where Jews and Samaritans saw each other as equals.

Remember, they do, after all, drink water from the same well."

"Imagine a world," Jesus said, "where goodness comes from unexpected persons...where somebody who we would least likely expect is the Good Samaritan who stops to help the person who lies injured at the side of the road."

What to do about the weeds? "Imagine a world," Jesus said, "where the wheat and the weeds grow side by side."

Recently, Julia and I went to see "Casey and Diana" at the Studio Theatre in Stratford. The play is set in 1991, when Princess Diana made a historic visit to Casey House—a hospice centre established in 1988, and one of the first hospices in the world to provide support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The play graphically illustrates the contrast that existed.

Some in a family feared they might catch the dreaded Aids disease if they were in contact with their family member who was a patient in Casey House, so they just stayed away.

One patient's mother went so far as to disconnect her phone so she wouldn't have to speak to her son if he attempted to contact her.

The pain and isolation those patients felt was palpable.

The HIV/AIDS patients were, to most people...well, just weeds.

And into the centre of all the pain and isolation came Princess Diana. She shook hands with a Casey House resident who was covered with Kaposi sarcoma lesions. Within days, the photograph of that touching moment appeared on the front pages of newspapers around the world, putting a human face on a pandemic shrouded in cultural anxiety and homophobia.

Diana showed that there were people—total outsiders—who cared. Her kind and compassionate visit helped change public attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

In a recent weekly blog, I wrote about seeing the "Casey and Diana" play. In response, Randy Hall, a reader from North Carolina, wrote:

This reminded me of a mission trip to Haiti in the late 1980s. We were taken to a hospital and hospice founded and staffed by The Sisters of Charity, Mother Theresa's organization. Most of those in the hospital were dying of AIDS. It was still early in the knowledge of the disease and it was unknown how the disease could be spread. So we were told to be careful in how we approached the patients.

"I specifically remember a man sitting on the edge of his bed. He was emaciated, so sick and pitiful. Our group greeted him in Creole. But then several of us reached out our hands to shake hands with him. It was then that his face lit up into a broad smile. If only for a moment, death was chased into the shadows and he knew joy. So did we.

"Our efforts did not make headlines. I'm glad that Diana's did. But by a simple act of compassion and connection WE WERE CHANGED!"

Who was changed? Hear that again. Randy Hall says, "We were changed." The people who reached out to touch the weeds were changed.

In his program notes for "Casey and Diana," Artistic Director Antoni Cimolino's included these words: "To borrow a cliché of our times—we're all in this together."

That's, I think, what Jesus underlines in his parable. Let the wheat and the weeds grow together, because, in the end, we're all in this together.

Randy Hall was one of those who, one day, took a risk, and reached out to those who most folks saw as weeds. The result? His words: "We were changed."

What to do about the weeds? Get to know them. Learn to live with them. It changes us. It changes US.

Hymn: Like a River of Tears MV 98

1. Like a river of tears your love pours upon us;
Like a sunshine of blessing your grace will sustain us;
Like a star-studded sky your spirit shines o'er us,
Renewing our spirits with courage and faith.

2. Like a bird in free flight by windows around us;
Like a wind in the forest that breathes life among us;
Like a phoenix that's rising from ashes around us,
Renewing our spirits with vision and grace.

3. Like a pillar of cloud you promise to guide us;
Like a bright firey bush you come to speak to us;
Like a calm cooling breeze your spirit breathes in us,
Renewing our spirits with loving embrace.

4. Like a lover's caress your spirit revives us;
Like a song of the soul you come to be with us;
Like a prayer of the heart you heal and restore us,
Renewing our spirits, the future to face.

Poem: "Priceless Moments" by James Clarke

It's not the grand gestures you recall,
but the feeble elder who stoops to pick
up the lemons you spilt at the fruit stall,
the hirsute driver in the red pickup who
lets you cross at a busy intersection, the
harried mother, with a child holding a doll,
who opens a door to allow you to enter
a mall because she sees you need help.

These small temples of kindness make holy
the fleeting hours, knit people together
in community, help us to remember that
the quality of our lives is not measured
by the number of breaths we take, but by
the moments that take our breath away.

Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus

Sharing our joys and concerns

- **Birthdays**

- Patty Duncan celebrates 64 years on Mon July 24th
- Elsie Lively celebrates 90 years on Tues July 25th
- Diane Maloney celebrates on Sat July 29th
- Rev. Tom Watson celebrates on Sat July 29th

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

Reflection

Hymn: Day is Done VU 433

1. Day is done, but love unfailing dwells ever here;
Shadows fall, but hope, prevailing, calms every fear.
God, our Maker, none forsaking, take our hearts, of Love's own making,
Watch our sleeping, guard our waking, be always near.

2. Dark descends, but light unending shines through our night;
You are with us, ever lending new strength to sight;
One in love, your truth confessing, one in hope of heaven's blessings,
May we see, in love's possessing, love's endless light!

3. Eyes will close, but you, unsleeping, watch by our side;
Death may come, in love's safe keeping still we abide.
God of love, all evil quelling, sin forgiving, fear dispelling,
Stay with us, our hearts indwelling, this eventide.

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: "Love Changes Everything" by Andrew Llyod Webber performed by Suzanne Flewelling and René 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

July 30	9th after Pentecost	Rev. Felisha Urbanski
August 6	10 th after Pentecost	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
August 13	11 th after Pentecost	Rev. Felisha Urbanski
August 20	12 th after Pentecost	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
August 27	13 th after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson