



***Celebrating  
178 Years***



**October 26, 2023**

Melville United Church

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

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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

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**Melville United church**  
**Sunday October 29, 2023**

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

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

Good morning! Welcome to worship at Melville United Church. How wonderful to be together—both in person here in the sanctuary and online.

**Announcements:**

**If you are worshipping with us for the first time, welcome!** Please join us for refreshments and conversation in the parlour after the service.

- **Cozy Closet:** Join us at Melville United Church for a **FREE warm clothing** event for everyone! We have coats, hats, mitts, sweaters, boots, and more to keep you cozy this winter. **November 4th** here at Melville, where individuals can come in and choose what they need.
- **2023 Christmas Gift Program** – Please consider a financial donation to support needy children, families and independent youth in our community. The Social Justice & Outreach team will buy gift cards for families to buy necessities and a wish or two for their family members for Christmas. You can donate money by dropping it off at the church, emailing [secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com) with an e-transfer or use one of the specially labelled envelopes that will be available in the sanctuary. Please clearly indicate the donation is for the Christmas Gift Program. **Donations are requested by November 7th** so we can confirm how many children we will support. Don't worry, any donations received after that date will also be appreciated ... and used to support Christmas for youth!
- The King is coming to Melville **November 18th at 7:00pm!** Join us for an unforgettable evening with the incredible **Elvis Tribute Artist**, [Garry Wesley](#) Tickets are \$25. See Lorna Bevcar to get yours! Tickets are also available by contacting the office 519-843-1781 or visit The Bookery 191 Saint Andrew St. W or Echoes Fergus 240 St. Andrew St. W.
- The music series **“Mid-Day Music at Melville”** presented by pianist Brad Halls returns on **Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m.** at Melville United Church in Fergus. Brad continues his musical journey through the past 100 years of the Broadway musical, and Wednesday's concert features classic songs from the Broadway seasons between 1932 and 1934. On Broadway, these seasons featured songs by Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern among others. These enduring songs include *Easter Parade*, *Autumn in New York*, *Anything Goes* and many more. There is no admission cost for these concerts, but a voluntary donation to Melville United Church to help keep the heat on and the piano tuned is always appreciated.
- **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.

- The **Food Bank** is in need of donations, more than ever. Please consider bringing donations of nonperishables, toiletries, or a gift card, to church. Baskets are located in the sanctuary. **Items most needed are:** pasta sauce, Chunky soup (Habitant), small canned soup, pasta side dishes, canned vegetables, canned tomatoes, canned fruit, cold cereal, peanut butter, juice, jam, canned salmon, and canned pasta (beefaroni, etc.).
- **Attention all students! Remembrance Day Poster and Literacy Contest.** Entry forms and competition details are available for pick up at the Fergus Legion Club Room 500 Blair St., Fergus - weekdays after 2:00pm & weekends after 12:00pm.

**Financial update:**

	Jan – Sept 2023	Jan – Sept 2022	Jan-Sept 2021	Jan-Sept 2020
<b>Revenue</b>				
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Thank you again for all your contributions!

*Kaillie Rawn*  
Treasurer

**Land Acknowledgement**

Let us take time to acknowledge the peoples who have lived on and stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

God, help us to be thankful, and to become better neighbours and stewards that we might continue to honour these lands.

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

I light a candle  
in the name of the God who creates life,  
in the name of the Christ Presence who loves life,  
in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.

## **Call to Worship**

We are called to be one...

**One in God's heart—together, apart.**

We are called into life...

**Called into life by the love of our God.**

We are one in our God!

**Let us worship the God who calls us as one.**

## **Hymn: We Are One VU 402 (verses 1, 2, 4)**

1. We are one as we come, as we come, joyful to be here,  
In the praise on our lips there's a sense that God is near.  
We are one as we sing, as we seek, we are found;  
And we come needful of God's grace  
As we meet, together in this place.

2. We are one as we share, as we share brokenness and fear,  
In the touch of a hand there's a sense that God is here.  
We are one as we care, as we heal, we are healed;  
And we share warmth in God's embrace  
As we pray together in this place.

4. We are one as we hear, as we hear, heart and hand unite;  
In the word we receive there's a sense that God is light.  
We are one as we leave, as we love, we are loved;  
And we seek justice in God's ways  
As we move together from this place.

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

**Joyfully, we come to this place—called together as one people, hearts and hands united as one community of faith. We come to share our need for the grace of human companionship, as we walk the various journeys that are our lives. As we are here together in this place, embrace us with your presence. In the spirit of Christ. Amen.**

## **Hymn: Soil of God, You and I MV 174**

1. Soil of God, you and I, stand ready to bear  
Seeds of faith nourished by God's tender care.  
Growing in everyone for here God is found.  
All stand together, we are...Holy ground.

2. Soil of God, you and I, now ready to be  
Part of God's promise, for others to see.  
Open to everyone for here God is found.  
All stand together, we are...Holy ground.

3. Soil of God, you and I, now called to rebirth,  
Joining as partners with all of the earth.  
Living in harmony for here God is found.  
All stand together, this is...Holy ground.

## Children's Time

**Ministry of Music: "Whispering Hope"** *Suzanne Flewelling, Mary Duggan, Rev. Tom Watson*

### **Scripture Reading: Exodus 13:13-23**

Moses went again up into the mountain and said to God, "Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people."

God said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Moses continued, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us?"

Then God said, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name."

Moses asked, "Show me your glory, I pray."

And God replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," God said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live. See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

### **Sermon: "Life in Our Town...Living Takes Courage"**

Well, it's been a busy week in Our Town. Fall tends to bring on a sense of urgency—an awareness that before too awfully long it will be time to batten down the hatches for another Ontario winter. So, people are scurrying around, getting caught up on things they need to do before the snow begins to fall.

On Friday, on his way out to morning coffee at Al's Café, Hank Vickers said to Mildred, "Jack Cameron's picking me up to go play in a cribbage tournament this afternoon. I'm sure you'll have the leaves raked out of the flower beds this morning, so you won't have much to do after lunch. I was thinking it'd be the perfect opportunity for you to take the car and get the winter tires put on. That way you'll beat the rush."

You see...Hank likes to be sure that Mildred doesn't wait until the last minute to do stuff. Most folks in Our Town are like that. They scurry around and keep ahead, because they've learned the hard way that if they don't, life will sneak up and give them a good wallop.

Quite different from the folks in the next town over. They rarely scurry around. But that's to be expected, I suppose; they're Presbyterians. And Presbyterians aren't scurriers. They're more the procrastinator type...so don't seem to mind getting a good wallop every once in a while.

Now, as you will recall, something that had the folks in Our Town all in a dither for a bit was a spat that sprung up between Bridie Stevenson—Our Town's most avid gardener—and Mabel Barnes.

Bridie grew tired of having to hoe her zucchini rows by hand, so she thought of hooking up a drone to a Roomba vacuum cleaner and guiding it with her iPad. It was one of those ideas that was absolutely brilliant...until it went south.

When she was learning how to use the drone, it got away on her and crashed through Mabel Barnes' bathroom window just as Mabel was having a shower. Mabel blew a fuse. She decided to take up a petition to have the Council prohibit the flying of drones anywhere within the town limits.

When she was going door to door, to get signatures for her petition, she knocked on the door of Lyle and Evelyn Roper. When the door opened, there stood an elderly woman bent over almost double. It was Hattie Dunsmore, Evelyn Roper's aunt.

During conversation, Mabel learned that Hattie is so bent over because she has bent spine syndrome. It's incurable, and painful, and since it's not covered by insurance she has to pay almost \$400 a month for medication.

The conversation with Hattie Dunsmore left Mabel Barnes with a lot to think about. She finally decided that, compared to Hattie's problems, her bathroom window getting smashed was a pretty minor thing. So she called off her petition, and nothing ever went to Council. Case closed.

For several days, it was the topic of considerable conversation among the old guys at coffee time at Al's. Some of them agreed that drones were dangerous, so maybe Mabel was right in thinking they should be banned...but most said they heaved a sigh of relief when she called off her petition. Because it was forcing people to choose up sides, and was therefore dividing the town.

When Frank Birstead went home from lunch on Friday, he talked it over with Myrtle. "Quite something, Myrt...Mabel's backtracking like that. Kinda surprised me, actually."

Myrtle rocked back and forth in her rocking chair for a few minutes, then said, "Have you considered, Franklin, that it took a lot of courage for Mabel to call off her petition?"

"Courage, Myrt?" asked Frank. "Why do you say it took courage?"

"Well, Franklin, doing the right thing always takes courage. Mabel Barnes came to see that she had got in a snit over something fairly minor...and for the sake of good relationships in the town, she had to eat a little humble pie. That's never easy. It takes courage."

With that, Myrtle got up from her rocking chair. "My goodness, Franklin, where's the morning gone? It's time for lunch already. 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.

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In her discussion with Frank, Myrtle Birstead raised the proposition that doing the right thing

takes courage.

Barbara Brown Taylor takes that thought further: "It takes a lot of courage to be a human being." Taylor writes:

I have been holding a new goddaughter this week, and she does not know yet how much courage is needed. Just 7-weeks-old, she has eyes the colour of the ocean. Looking into them, it is easy to see that she does not yet know anything about arthritis, or thunderstorms, or depression.

She does not lie awake at night worrying about her relationships, or her job, or her death.

There is no fear in those sea-blue eyes. She sleeps and eats, and sighs when she is full. Her world is as wide as her mother's arms, and as safe. That is all she knows.

But she will learn more. She will learn that bees sting, and roses have thorns, and that other children push and throw rocks. She will learn that having a fever is like being set on fire, and that when your parents decide to move to another state there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.

She will learn that other things happen. Your mother dies, you lose your job, the doctor finds a spot on the X-ray...and it's like being trapped inside a car when the brakes fail. In a split second, everything changes. One moment you are comfortably and safely in command of your journey, and the next you are being flung down the road in an expensive piece of machinery that will not stop.

We cannot choose all the circumstances of our lives. All we can really choose is how to respond to them...and that is why it takes courage.

Hear that again:

"We cannot choose all the circumstances of our lives. All we can really choose is how to respond to them...and that is why it takes courage."

Does anybody here know what Barbara Brown Taylor is talking about?

Ask Fred. He knows. He's decided that he has to move his life in new directions. Change his old habits and patterns. Find new ways of dealing with the things that threatened to tear his life to bits. He will make it, but it takes courage.

Ask Patrick. He knows. Things were going great until about 3 or 4 years ago when he started to be plagued by depression. Try as he might, he couldn't shake it. He couldn't work...just couldn't face his job. Then he had a heart attack. And now he lies in a hospital coronary care bed. He'll recover. Maybe he'll even be a lot better now. But it will take courage to get there.

Ask Marlene. She knows. Her husband died a few months ago. And now she has to move to another city to get the job she wants. It means uprooting. Not only herself but her two children. A fresh start in a strange place. It will take courage.

Ask Joanne and David. Their daughter has been having a dickens of a time. Got in with the wrong crowd. Trouble at school. Other problems too. Joanne and David have been incredibly

supportive...but the daughter will have to do most of the work herself. And that takes courage.

You and I—all of us—know what it means to live out there in that world where bees sting and roses have thorns, and the brakes fail on the life-car we've been driving.

And sometimes...sometimes it would be a lot easier if somebody else would just take over and manage things for us. Make all our decisions. Guard us. Guide us. Protect us.

Ask the people of Israel about this. They were on such a high when they left Egypt. Across the Red Sea, and free. Off to new lives in a new place. God's chosen people! But then the food and the water runs out, and they start grumbling, and nothing's working right anymore, and they're scared.

"Moses, did you bring us out of Egypt so that we would perish in the desert—out here in this scorching heat? And where is this God you said would lead us to the Promised Land? Tell us, Moses...if you can!"

So Moses seems continually caught between the people and God. Continually running to God for some sign that God is still with them on their journey.

Yes, there's manna on the ground one morning, and on another there's water from a rock in the middle of nowhere. And these things restore the people's confidence for a while. But then they fall away again.

Because it's a frightful thing to be faced with the prospect of going it alone without God. Especially when you have only a vague idea of where you're heading. And especially when there's no tangible evidence that God is with you anyway.

So you'll remember that they built that golden calf idol thing, so they at least had some tangible god to worship. And when Moses smashed it, they challenge him to go and get God to appear—show them that God really is in charge of this journey. Because it's very clear to them that they themselves are not!

So Moses heads once again to the mountain-top to talk with God. Moses begins the conversation. "God, if I have found any favour in your sight, show yourself, so that your people might know you are with us!"

And God says, "Moses, go stand in the cleft of the rock, and my glory will pass by, and you will be able to tell the people that you have seen my glory. But, let's be clear, you will see only my glory; you will not see my face."

So Moses, the story says, covers his eyes with his hand until God has passed by, and then takes away his hand, and Moses sees only the back of God. Because legend has it that no one sees the face of God and lives.

Strange story. When Moses finally argues God into revealing God's self, he sees God only from the back. What kind of sign is this? You want—no not want, need—some sign that God is with you and all you see of God is from the back?



Or maybe it's not such a strange story at all. Maybe it's always the case that we only ever recognize the presence of God from the back. If you'll pardon a pun, it's a matter of hindsight.

Or maybe it's not a pun at all; maybe it's reality—it's only after things are over that we realize God was with us all along.

Because when we're in the thick of things, when we're too busy coping with our fears, it's hard to recognize God. It's only later on that we realize that God was there all along.

Later on, Fred will discover that God was present in the people he talked to along the way. People who understood. People who shared his struggle. People who helped him make it.

Later on, Patrick will discover that God was present in the nurses and the doctors who helped him deal with his heart attack and find new ways of coping with life.

Later on, Marlene will discover that God was present in the people who befriended her and helped her adjust to a new life in a new place.

Later on, Joanne and David will discover that God was present in fresh insights that helped their daughter get back on the right track.

So you and I can continue to make our way through these lives of our own. With courage. Knowing that, in spite of the fact that bees sting and roses have thorns, we can do it. Because God, even though unseen, is profoundly present.

And because God is present, we can always respond to life with courage.  
Amen.

**Hymn: In The Quiet Curve of Evening      VU 278**

1. In the quiet curve of evening, in the sinking of the days,  
In the silky void of darkness, you are there.  
In the lapses of my breathing, in the space between my ways,  
In the crater carved by sadness, you are there.  
You are there, you are there, you are there.

2. In the rests between the phrases, in the cracks between the stars,  
In the gaps between the meaning, you are there.  
In the melting down of endings, in the cooling of the sun,  
In the solstice of the winter, you are there.  
You are there, you are there, you are there.

3. In the mystery of my hungers, in the silence of my rooms,  
In the cloud of my unknowing, you are there.  
In the empty cave of grieving, in the desert of my dreams,  
In the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there.  
You are there, you are there, you are there.

**Poem: "Prayer for Mercy" by James Clarke**

We beg your mercy, Lord, to find our way  
through this swirling life of mystery,  
not knowing where or how to pray.

We've seen the wolves of war at play  
on bloodied fields of human savagery,  
searched for years to find a way

to lift this curse that leads astray  
our world so blindingly,  
not knowing where or how to pray.

Unless You gather in all our days  
in folds of mercy, there is no boundary  
to stop us from our ruthless ways.

O Slow-To-Anger One, Sun of our day,  
brighten our lives with rays of mercy,  
teach Your children to kneel and pray.

Strengthen our souls to sweep away  
the dark that blocks our being free.  
We need Your grace to point the way,  
not knowing where or how to pray.

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

**Sharing Our Joys and Concerns**

- **Birthdays**
  - Marlene Tosh celebrates on Wed Nov 1st
  - Judy Leitch celebrates on Wed Nov 1st
  - George Warden celebrates on Fri Nov 3rd

**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: How Great Thou Art (verses 1, 2, 4) VU 238**

1. Oh Lord, my God, when I, in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.  
*(refrain)* Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. *(refrain)*

3. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art!" *(refrain)*

**Benediction**

We now leave and continue our daily journey that is life...

**With the assurance that God walks beside us.**

God will guide our footsteps.

**God will keep our going out, and our coming in...**

Today and always.

**Amen!**

**Postlude: "You Raise Me Up" Suzanne Flewelling, Mary Duggan, Rev. Tom Watson**

**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.

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*Kaillie Rawn*  
Treasurer

**Worship Schedule**

November 5	Remembrance Sunday	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
November 12	24 <sup>th</sup> after Pentecost	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
November 19	25 <sup>th</sup> after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson
November 26	26 <sup>th</sup> after Pentecost	Rev. Ruth Brown