



**Celebrating  
178 Years**



**December 17, 2023**

Melville United Church

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

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Team Ministry

Minister of Pastoral Care

Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

Chair of Church Council

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Office hours

E-Mail

Web Site

Rev. Marion Loree 519-835-8605

Martha Duncan

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Lynda Rivet

Suzanne Flewelling

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Alison Rainford 519-843-3841

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

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**Melville United Church**  
**December 17, 2023**  
**Advent III – A Christmas Cantata**

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*Presiding: Rev. Jeff Hawkins*

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**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.

- Melville is looking for a new **Kid's Church Leader**. If you are someone you know has a passion for helping kids lead a just and spiritually enriching life, then please contact Lynda in the office at 519-843-1781 or [secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com). We'll be in touch.
- **The Newsletter is out.** Our latest Melville newsletter should be in your home by now. Some went out on the grapevine and others were hand delivered or sent by Royal Mail. If you usually receive yours electronically and it has not arrived, please check your spam file and or trash. If you cannot find it, please contact the church office and inform our administrator Lynda and we will make it right. If you are not on the grapevine, please help us to keep our postage costs down by adding your name. Questions or concerns, please see Ralph Rainford.
- **Church envelopes** are ready for pickup at the back of the church. If you don't see your envelopes or would like some, please contact Lynda in the office [secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com) or 519-843-1781
- **Memory Angels:** Our Memory Angels will be decorating the Sanctuary this season, in memory of our loved ones. Those who have had Angels in the past can renew your Angel with a minimum donation of \$5 each. Those who are new to this can have a handmade Paper Angel decorate the Sanctuary, with an inscription on the skirt, dedicating this Angel in memory of your loved one, from you, for a minimum donation of \$5. Your year-end statement will include this donation. The Angels stay at Melville safely packed away, until the next season. These Angels bring comfort and meaning to the Melville families during the season, knowing we are remembering our loved ones. Please contact Patty Duncan.
- **UCW meat pies** are available now. \$5 each. Buy after church or contact Marg 519-843-3274 OR [margfrayne@hotmail.com](mailto:margfrayne@hotmail.com)
- **Rides needed for seniors:** Can you help? Rides to Wed Piano Concert (Noon - 1pm), Friday Morning Coffee (10 - 11am), and Sunday Service (11am - Noon). Please speak to Lorna Bevcar
- The music series "**Mid-Day Music at Melville**" presented by pianist Brad Halls returns on **Wednesday, December 20 from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m.** at Melville United Church in Fergus. Brad is taking a short break from his musical trip through the history of the Broadway musical, to celebrate the music of Christmas. On December 20 enjoy secular and sacred favourites such as *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, *Silver Bells*, *White Christmas*, *Joy to the World*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas* and several others. Christmas is certainly a "sing-along" season, and lyric sheets will be provided to encourage everyone to join in many of the selections. After Dec. 20, "Mid-Day Music" will take a two-week break over Christmas

and New Year's, and our regular Broadway repertoire will return on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. 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.).
- The **Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County** is seeking individuals for the Reading Rocks program, where volunteers will work one-on-one with children to enhance their essential reading skills. The program runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at JD Hogarth Public School, spanning from February 5th to April 10th. Training is provided, and those interested can contact Lynda at [LDAWC@gmail.com](mailto:LDAWC@gmail.com) for more information or fill out the volunteer tutor application at <https://form.jotform.com/203084991501251>

### **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 Advent Candle (Advent III):**

In this season of expectant waiting, we rejoice,  
**dancing the choreography of joy and grace.**

In the dance we find partners:  
the old and the newborn,  
the wounded and the weary,  
the tattooed and the plain,  
the dreadlocked and the bald,  
all the genders and expressions.

**Divine choreography weaves us into complex patterns of connection.**

Rooted in joy, regarding each person as worthy,  
embracing each soul as God's beloved,  
**joy flames into grace-filled celebration of diversity.**  
*(The third Advent candle is lit.)*

### **Sung Response: A Candle is Burning VU6 verse 3**

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,  
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.  
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow  
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

**Call to Worship:**

Hear ye, hear ye, good people!

**What news?**

Good News, which shall be for all people!

**Good? How?**

See the anointed one comes!

**We reach for the presence of God.**

We are thirsty for the water of peace,

The light of hope, the wind of joy,

And the ground of love.

Good news! The Anointed One comes!

The Anointed One comes from God,

Whose love for us is everlasting!

**Gathering Prayer (in unison):**

**Holy God in heaven, our hearts are warmed by the season of Christmas. We love the sights and sounds, the joys and lights, the gifts and the gatherings, the family times, the traditions and tearful nostalgia. For all of us gathering, we pray that this retelling of the Christmas story, the story of your infinite love for all humankind, will captivate our hearts. May Jesus, our Saviour, be our focus and may the Holy Spirit give us a fresh perspective of your sovereign purpose. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.**

**Hymn - There's a Voice in the Wilderness VU18, verses 1 and 3**

- 1     There's a voice in the wilderness crying,  
          a call from the ways untrod:  
prepare in the desert a highway,  
          a highway for our God!  
The valleys shall be exalted,  
          the lofty hills brought low;  
make straight all the crooked places  
          where God, our God, may go!
- 3     But the word of our God endureth,  
          whose arm is ever strong;  
God stands in the midst of nations,  
          and soon will right the wrong.  
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
          the lambs so gently hold;  
to pastures of peace will lead them,  
          and bring them safe to fold.

## A CHRISTMAS CANTATA

### First Reading

*“Unto Us a Child is Born” - Words and Music by John Carter, sung by the Choir*

### Second Reading

*“When Will the Little Babe Come?” - Words and Music by Ruth Elaine Schram, sung by the Men’s Chorus*

### Third Reading

*“Was It a Night Like Tonight?” by Greg and Carol Tornquist, sung by Spirit Sings*

### Fourth Reading

*“Hope Was Born This Night” by David Frey, sung by Spirit Sings*

### Fifth Reading

*“Beautiful Star of Bethlehem” words by Adger M. Pace, music by R. Fisher Boyce, arranged by William J. Gaither and Ben Spear - sung by the Men’s Chorus*

### Sixth Reading

*“Sing Alleluia” words by Don Besig and Nancy Price, music by Don Besig - sung by the Choir*

### **Meditation: HEADING TO OUR BETHLEHEM**

*“Hurry on Down to Bethlehem” words by Nancy Price and Don Besig, Music by Don Besig sung by the Choir, Men’s Chorus and Praise Team*

### **Sharing Our Joys and Concerns**

- Birthdays
  - Cecily Ricketts celebrates on Fri Dec 22nd
  - Doreen Broome celebrates on Sat Dec 23rd

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

### **Offering Invitation**

### **Offering Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter VU55, verse 4**

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.

**Offering Prayer:**

**Closing Hymn: Angels, from the Realms of Glory VU 36**

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story,  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
    come and worship, come and worship,  
    worship Christ, the newborn King.
  
- 2 Shepherds in the field abiding,  
watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
yonder shines the infant Light: R
  
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations;  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations;  
ye have seen his natal star: R
  
- 4 Saints before the altar bending,  
watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending,  
in his temple shall appear: R

**Commissioning and Benediction**

**Postlude**

**Worship Schedule**

December 24 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 am	Advent 4- Family Christmas Morning	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
December 24 <sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm	Advent 4-Candles, Communion, 7 Music	Rev. Ruth Brown
December 31st	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas	Rev. Jeff Hawkins