



***Celebrating
178 Years***



**December 24, 2023
Family Service 11:00am**

Melville United Church

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

Mailing address: PO Box 41, Fergus, ON N1M2W7

519-843-1781

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

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

Lynda Rivet

Suzanne Flewelling

Allan Hons

Alison Rainford 519-843-3841

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

secretary@melvilleunited.com

www.melvilleunited.com

Melville United Church
December 24, 2023
Family Worship Service – at 11:00 a.m.

*Presiding: Rev. Felicia Urbanski,
with Martha Duncan, Colleen and Mercedes Weber
and the Melville Choir*

Welcome

Come in, sit down and make yourselves comfortable. We're glad you're here. We want to share a story with you. It's a story you might know well; one you may have heard before. Today, we want to tell you this story with something else we all know well, our alphabet. But first...

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.

- **Free Electric Stove** available. It's a fully functional electric stove from our main kitchen. If you or someone you know is in need, please contact the office or Barry Rawn at brawn@cogeco.ca to arrange pickup.
- **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
- Join us on **December 29th at 1:00pm** in the Fellowship Hall as we **celebrate the life of Les Johnston**. The Johnston family extends their gratitude to our Melville family for the cards, visits, and condolences. This informal gathering will provide an opportunity for anyone wishing to share comments or anecdotes in remembrance.
- Join us for **Coffee Hour - December 31st** following Sunday Service for a festive New Year's Eve get together! Enjoy pizza, mock champagne, and cookies.
- **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
- **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 or 519-843-1781
- **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.

- The music series “**Mid-Day Music at Melville**” presented by pianist Brad Halls will take a two-week break over Christmas and New Year’s, and our regular Broadway repertoire will return on Wednesday, January 10, 2024.
- **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.
- Thank you for your donations to the **Food Bank** there is an ongoing need of nonperishables, toiletries, or a gift card. Baskets are in the sanctuary.
- **Volunteer Tutors Needed!** Join the Reading Rocks program by the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County. Support children's reading skills one-on-one. Program runs **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm**, at JD Hogarth Public School from **Feb 5th to Apr 10th**. Training provided. Contact Lynda at LDAWOC@gmail.com or apply 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 of the Advent Wreath:

In this season of expectant waiting, we hold our breath.

We yearn for love that makes us whole.

When we feel lonely,
when we feel alone,
when we feel abandoned,
when we don't feel lovely,
when we don't know where to turn,
when we despair,

God settles into our hearts, loving.

We can feel God's awesome love within,

and we trust with growing confidence.

Even when we feel lonely, or ugly, or sad,
we know that God is always there for us.

And we light the flame of love, as we await the Baby Jesus.

(The fourth Advent candle is lit)

Sung Response: *(VU #6, A Candle is Burning, vs. 4)*

A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

Opening Prayer:

Please repeat after me –

Thank you God for your goodness...

Thank you for Christmas lights and food...

Thank you for the birth of your Son, Jesus...

for coming from Heaven to be with us....

Light in the darkness...

Hope to the hopeless....

We celebrate your love today....

Amen.

Children's Time:

The ABC's of Christmas (adapted from Erin Klassen)

A is for an Angel, Gabriel, who began the story with a greeting:

“Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty. Beautiful inside and out! God be with you!”
(Luke 1.28, *The Message*)

B is for Bethlehem, where our story takes place. People traveled from far and wide to arrive in the city; it was a very busy place.

C is for a census (that's a counting of all the people) the reason so many people filled the city of Bethlehem.

D is for the donkey that carried a family on their long journey to Bethlehem to be counted.

E is for exhausted, that's how everyone felt when they arrived – tired from all the travelling.

F is for family: Mary and Joseph and their new baby Jesus, who was born that night in Bethlehem.

Carol: VU 91 – *The First Nowell*

1 The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

3 And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

G is for the Good News about to be shared with all the earth. This is what was said:

Scripture Reading: *Luke 2.8-16*

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger.

H is for herds, all the animals that were present in the stable, and the flocks of sheep in the field with the shepherds when they heard the good news.

I is for our imaginations, stirred by this story!

Carol: VU 58 - *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

1 Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is born for all.
Christ the babe is born for all!

2 Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping vigil till
the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you.
Christ the babe was born for you!

J is for joy the excitement and happiness that a new baby, and now, this special night brings.

K is for kindness, shown by the innkeeper that night, allowing a tired family to stay in the stable when there was no room in the inn.

L is for the love we share with one another all through the year and especially at Christmas.

M is for the manger, it is usually used to hold food for animals, but this time it held the baby because he had no crib.

Carol: VU 69 - *Away in a Manger*

1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

N is for Noel, another word for Christmas. It means new birth, that's what happened in our story, and it happens every year.

O is for offering, there were many gifts for the baby; we even have some to share now!

Sharing Our Gifts

- **Introduction to the Offering**

- **Sung Response:**

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb.
If I were a Wise man, I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

From "In the Bleak Midwinter"

- **Offertory Prayer**

Carol: VU 74 - *What Child is This?*

- 1 What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
 This, this is Christ the King,
 whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 haste, haste to bring him laud,
 the Babe, the Son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
 This, this is Christ the King,
 whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 haste, haste to bring him laud,
 the Babe, the Son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
 This, this is Christ the King,
 whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

P is for prayer and praise and pondering, all different ways people reacted the amazing thing that happened. We pray and praise and ponder together:

Prayers of the People

Q is for quiet, the deep peace that Christmas brings – knowing that God is with us.

R is for revelation, God showing us who God is - in a little baby born one night.

S is for one special star that shone bright in the night showing wise ones the way to Jesus.

T is for trust, the confidence we have in God.

U is for unity, all different people brought together tonight to celebrate God's love!

Choir Anthem, with flute: "Sing Alleluia"

(words by Don Besig and Nancy Price and music by Don Besig)

V is for vulnerable, a little child needs to be cared for, protected—that's our job.

W is for wonder—our amazement at the beauty of how much God loves us.

Carol: VU 71 - *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime*

- 1 'Twas in the moon of wintertime,
when all the birds had fled,
that mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:
 Jesus your King is born,
 Jesus is born,
 in excelsis gloria.

- 2 Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender babe was found,
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high: R

- 3 The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on
the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. R
- 4 O children of the forest free,
the angel song is true,
the holy child of earth and heaven
is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy: R

X is for Xmas, the x is actually the symbol for Christ – it is the first letter of the Greek word “Christós”.

Y is for You! here to celebrate and worship.

Z is for zeal, the passion with which we share the Good News and God’s love, tonight.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Duet, with flute: *“Silent Night, O Holy Night” – Martha and Felicia*

Carol: VU 67 - *Silent Night, Holy Night (vs 1)*

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Blessing

Household Prayer:

On this Christmas Eve be with me and all my loved ones, Lord. Let me be present in each moment today, my eyes open to signs of your love all around me. (For Kids) God, thank you for my day today. Thanks for my family who loves me and thanks most of all the gift of Jesus. Amen.

Worship Schedule

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