



***Celebrating
178 Years***



January 14, 2023

Melville United Church

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Melville United church
Sunday January 14, 2024

Presiding: Rev. Tom Waston
Ministry of Music: Suzanne Flewelling

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.

- **UCW meat pies** are available now. \$5 each. Buy after church or contact Marg 519-843-3274 or margfrayne@hotmail.com
- The music series “**Mid-Day Music at Melville**” presented by pianist Brad Halls returns on **Wednesday, January 17th from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m.** here at Melville. Brad will continue his musical voyage through the last 100 years of the Broadway musical, and on this coming Wednesday, he will present selections from classic musicals from 1950 and 1951, including two of the most popular and enduring of all musicals, *Guys and Dolls* and *The King and I*, among others. Enjoy classic songs such as *I’ve Never Been in Love Before*, *Luck Be a Lady Tonight*, *Hello Young Lovers*, *It’s a Lovely Day Today* 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.
- **Wednesday Jan 17th Remit information and discussion. Two sessions 10:00am and 7:00pm in the Chapel regarding the National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada.**
In 2022, at General Council 44, the National Indigenous Council proposed that the church identify and remove any structural barriers that would prevent the development and sustaining of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada. When any requested change in church structure will alter the Basis of Union of *The Manual*, as this will, a Category 3 Remit is required.
[This remit](#) asks if the church will agree to remove these structural barriers so that the Indigenous Church can determine its place and structure within the United Church. The 44th General Council authorized this remit to test the will of the church with respect to this change.
Approval of this remit will enable the creation of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada. This would acknowledge Indigenous peoples’ rights to their own spiritual identities and to self-determination, and would be consistent with the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle’s [Calls to the Church](#) and [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).
The remit requires a vote by every regional council and each pastoral charge’s governing body. Information about the remit, as well as voting cards, were sent to every regional council and each pastoral charge on March 10, either through email or Canada Post. Voting

will take place between March 15, 2023, and March 31, 2024. Abstentions are considered a vote against the remit.

The results will be reported to the Annual Meeting of the General Council of the United Church in October 2024.

Posted in

[Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice](#), [Journeying Indigenous Pathways](#)

- **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
- **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.
- The **Centre Wellington Mobile Market** is a local, volunteer-run food rescue organization which has a combined goal of supporting food security while reducing the amount of good food that is wasted. Using nutritious, safe for consumption ingredients that have been offered to by local retailers, farm markets, Second Harvest and the Centre Wellington Food Bank, a team of volunteers cook and prepare individual main course meals that are then frozen and delivered to residents in Fergus, Elora and Belwood on Wednesday afternoons, free of charge. Much of the food preparation takes place in Melville's kitchen.

Individuals may request 3 meals per week. The meals available each week are posted on the Centre Wellington Mobile Market Facebook and Instagram pages. For families with 3 or more in their household, they offer a family bag of groceries on a weekly basis. Please call 519 -843-1781 x 126 or email cwmobilemarketmeals@gmail.com to request meals. MEAL REQUESTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAYS AT 5 PM FOR THEM TO BE READY FOR DELIVERY THAT WEDNESDAY. For more information contact Sue McPhedran and Morgan Short at cwmobilemarket@gmail.com.

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:

Through the turning of the seasons...

As one morphs into the next;

Through the hastening of days...

As each day brings new adventures, new opportunities;

God is with us.

No matter what we experience, God is part of it.

In this sacred place, let us pause and give thanks to God.

Hymn: Sing Praise to God (tune 220) VU 221

1. Sing praise to God, who has shaped and sustains all creation!

Sing praise, my soul, in profound and complete adoration!

Gladsome rejoice—organ and trumpet and voice—

Joining God's great congregation.

2. Praise God, our guardian, who lovingly offers correction,

Who, as on eagle's wings, saves us from sinful dejection.

Have you observed, how we are always preserved

By God's parental affection?

3. Sing praise to God, with sincere thanks for all your successes.

Merciful God ever loves to encourage and bless us.

Only conceive what godly strength can achieve:

Strength that would touch and caress us.

4. Sing praise, my soul, the great name of your high God commending.

All that have life and breath join you, their notes sweetly blending.

God is your light! Soul, ever keep this in sight:

Amen, amen never ending.

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

We sing praise to you, O God, for this day, for this sacred place of worship, for family members and friends who surround us. May all that we experience here be like a door opening to something new, so that we encounter the days to come with faith and hope. We gather in the name and spirit of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: Draw the Circle Wide MV 145

refrain Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.

Let this be our song: no one stands alone.

Standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

1. God the still-point of the circle, 'round whom all creation turns;

Nothing lost but held forever in God's gracious arms. refrain

2. Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small;

Let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call. refrain

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger, than we've ever dreamed before; Let the dream of Christ be in us, open every door! *refrain*

Children's Time

Ministry of Music: Instrumental Medley – Precious Lord, Take My Hand, I Need Thee Every Hour, I Have Decided to Follow Jesus. *Performed by Rev. Tom Watson and Suzanne Flewelling*

Scripture Readings:

1 Samuel 3:1–10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

John 1:43–51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you come to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said

to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

Sermon: When The Light Goes On...

Barbara Brown Taylor lives on her own farm in Georgia with, as she says, her husband Ed and a wide variety of other creatures. Barbara Brown Taylor is an incredibly gifted and articulate Episcopalian minister.

A brilliant writer, she's also the author of 12 books. In an article entitled *Call* she talks about her growing up in rural Kansas, in a small house on an old corn field where the west wind blew so hard that everything in the yard grew towards Missouri...and on those stifling summer afternoons when tornadoes twirled in the far horizon, the sky turned an eerie, ominous green. Here is an excerpt from that article...

My upbringing—by a southern Methodist mother and a Midwestern Roman Catholic father—was a contentedly secular one. Although my parents did present me for baptism in the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church as an infant, that medieval event proved so traumatic for them that we did not attend church for the next 7 years, and neither of my younger sisters were baptized until they were adults.

My mother's explanation is simple: "That priest took you out of my arms, going on and on about your sinfulness, my sinfulness, and I thought, 'This is all wrong.' You were the best thing I had ever done in my life. And I could not wait to get you out of there."

By the time I was seven, and there were 5 of us, my parents decided to give the church another try. We had moved twice by then and were all feeling the need to sit still among people who were more stable than we.

After the Roman Catholics, the Methodists were the next logical choice, and before long we had found a whole congregation of them—way out in the Ohio countryside, in a white frame church with a matching parsonage and apple trees in the yard.

The pastor was a kind young man with no family of his own, who soon became a regular guest at our supper table. I grew to adore him. He was vital and funny and could catch an airborne fly with one hand. He listened to me when I talked, and let me lead him on tours of my projects around the house. He seemed able, when he looked at me, to see not only a child but a person, and I loved him for it.

One Sunday he asked me to sit up close to the pulpit. He wanted me to hear his sermon, he said, and as I listened to him talk about the beauty of God's creation and our duty to be awed by it, all of a sudden I heard him telling the congregation about a little girl who kept tadpoles in a birdbath so she could watch over them as they turned into frogs...and how her care for those creatures was part of God's care for the whole world.

It was as if someone had turned on all the lights! Not only to hear myself spoken of in church, but to hear that my life was part of God's life, and that something as ordinary as a tadpole connected the two. My friend's words changed everything for me. I could no longer see myself, or the least detail in my life, in the same way again.

When the service was over that day, I walked out of it into a God-enchanted world—where I could not wait to find further clues to heaven on earth. Every leaf, every ant, every shiny rock, called out to me—begging to be watched, to be listened to, to be handled and examined.

I became a detective of divinity—isn't that a marvellous phrase: *a detective of divinity*—collecting evidence of God's genius and admiring the tracks left for me to follow: locusts shedding their hard bodies for soft, new, winged ones...prickly pods of milkweed spilling silky white hair...lightning spinning webs of cold fire in the sky, as intricate as the veins in my wrist.

My friend taught me to believe that these were all words in the language of God—hieroglyphs given to puzzle and delight me even if I never cracked the code.

Later on, we moved from Ohio to Alabama, and there was no more church for several years, until I went with some of my friends to the 6th grade Confirmation class at an Episcopal church. Everything that happened there on a Sunday morning galvanized me: the hymns, the prayers, the communion (which I watched from a distance with feelings bouncing back and forth between desire and fear).

At the age of 12, I took to organized religion like a pig to mud, which makes me wonder if puberty does not unlock some doors of the soul along with those of the body. What was happening to me physically was so amazing that I was open to mystery at every other level of being as well...and what I wanted, I got.

Now, the phrase that I want to pick up on from that is this: It was as if someone had turned on all the lights!" On that Sunday morning, in that small Methodist church in Ohio, the words of that minister turned on all the lights for Barbara Brown Taylor. And she began to see the world, and herself, in brand new ways. And she was never the same again.

When the light goes on. Have you ever had it happen to you? A moment of awakening. A moment of discovery. A moment of realization. Perhaps, as in Barbara Brown Taylor's case, some words from a preacher. Or perhaps, at some point in your life, some words from a parent, or a teacher, or a friend.

Two of my friends in Brantford are retired medical doctors. One was a general practitioner, the other an Internal Medicine specialist. A few years back, I asked each of them what made them decide to become doctors.

The GP said he had always wanted to become a doctor. In fact, he couldn't ever remember thinking about wanting to become anything else.

The other, the Internal Medicine specialist, told a quite different story. He said he was always hyper-active as a child. Couldn't sit still. School work always came easy for him, and he would get his work done and then bother everybody else.

But, by the time he got to grade 8 he became more interested in bothering everybody else than in doing his school work. And his marks suffered. And he'd have to stay in after school, and write some inane thing on the blackboard 1001 times.

Do you remember ever having to do that? Lucky you!

One day in grade 8, when he was writing away one of these meaningless phrases endless times on the blackboard, the teacher stopped him. She sat him down for a chat. She said, "Now, you're a very smart young boy, but if you don't start applying yourself, you're going to have a very difficult time of things. Not only that, if you don't start applying yourself you'll be lucky to get out of Grade 8."

That day the light went on! He thought about what the teacher said. He took it seriously. He started applying himself and never looked back. Well, he never stopped being hyper-active, and he still is to this day, even though he's now retired. Can't sit still. But what that teacher said changed his life.

"So," I asked him, "at that moment you decided you wanted to become a doctor?"

"No, that didn't come until much later."

In University he took a dual degree in Math and Science. In his final year, he thought that research in entomology would be interesting. But, he also applied to medical school to give himself additional options. And he was accepted at Medical School."

"So that's when you decided to become an Internal Medicine Specialist?"

"No, that came later."

When he was interning in Montreal. Those whom he admired the most were the Internal Medicine Specialists.

"You never thought of being a surgeon?"

To which his wife responded, "Oh, that'd be cute. You ever see him try to fix stuff? Really messy. Parts all over the place. Nothing works, or even fits, when he's done. He'd go in to take out somebody's appendix and slash away half their liver at the same time."

The point is that, for him, the lights went on twice. The first time: back in Grade 8 when the teacher talked with him. The second time: when he watched the doctors at work in the hospital in Montreal and decided to emulate those whom he admired the most—the Internists.

Have you ever had it happen to you? You heard just the right words? Or you took notice of the best example? And you decided to follow.

But, truth is the right words can be spoken, or the best example can be laid out right in front of us...and we don't hear, or we don't see. At least, not right away.

That's what happened to me. I've probably told you this before. About when I was a young boy—say between the ages of 9 and 15—and the minister at our church would say to me, all too frequently it seemed, "Thomas, you should become a minister when you grow up."

Foolish old man. What in the world is he talking about!

So I didn't hear him. At least, I didn't really hear him. Until I was 35 or so.

It was as if there was a huge time delay in my switches. Like when you turn on one of those fluorescent lights and it doesn't come on for quite a while, because it takes some time for the gas in the bulb to light up.

But then, one day, the light came on. And here we are. For better or worse, here we are.

Most of the time, it's better. But there can be "worse" patches too.

Remember Barbara Brown Taylor referring to her friend, the Methodist minister in Ohio who awakened her to the beauty of God's world. Let me read a little bit more of her story about her captivation with his approach to religion and church, and how much she learned from him.

I was a willing student until the day I lost my teacher. At first all I knew was that something was wrong. Threat hung in the air as it had on those dark, eerie, ominous afternoons in Kansas, but this time it was not the weather.

Civil Rights had come to Ohio—a phrase that made adults talk loudly and lose their tempers. They chose sides and defended them. They wanted my friend, the minister, to choose sides too, and he did. The doors of the church were open, he said. He would stand there to make sure they remained open, he said.

So that is where they hung him. In effigy. A grotesque stuffed figure that bore no resemblance to my friend, swaying in the heat. Shortly after that he packed and left town.

That day I lost the innocence of my childhood. That day was when I began to understand that God's call was not only wonderful but also terrible...that the bright gleam I pursued through the woods and fields behind my house had another dimension I knew nothing about. It had sharp edges to it. It was capable of cutting deep, and those who reached out to grasp it had best be prepared to bleed.

"Samuel! Samuel!" The words rouse the boy Samuel from his attempts to sleep. "Eli must be calling me," he thinks. But no, Eli didn't call.

"Samuel! Samuel!" But Eli didn't call that time either.

"Samuel! Samuel!"

Four times he hears the voice. And then the light goes on. It's not Eli calling him, it's God—God calling Samuel to be a prophet.

Andrew is standing on the road one day when Jesus walks by. Jesus turns to him and says, "Andrew, follow me."

The next day, on his way to Galilee Jesus sees Philip standing by and he says, "Philip. Follow me."

The next day, Nathanael. "Nathanael. Follow me."

Peter, Andrew, Nathanael, James, John...and others: "Follow me!"
The light goes on and they follow.

It won't always be easy for any of them.

Samuel had huge disappointments during his lifetime as a prophet.

Peter, Andrew, Nathanael, James, John, and the others found it was not easy to follow Jesus. There would be huge disappointments there too. Especially on the day they nailed Jesus to that ugly little cross on that ugly little hill outside Jerusalem.

As Barbara Brown Taylor says, "God's call can be both wonderful and terrible. And those who reach out to grasp it had best be prepared to bleed." But that's all part of life. When the light goes on we're never sure exactly what that will mean and where it will lead. But follow it we must.

I have no idea what God might be calling you to do today, or tomorrow, or whenever. I don't know what new path you might be invited to walk.

I have no idea what God might be calling this Melville United Church to do, or be, in the days ahead. I don't know what new path this church might be invited to walk.

I don't even know any of that for myself.

I do know that if I am present to the moments of my life, if I am open to what they have to say, if I pay close enough attention...there will be something of God in them. God trying to turn a light on in me...and in you.

And when the light goes on, we lose our innocence of our childhood... and we have to decide what to do about it.

Amen.

Hymn: I, the Lord of Sea and Sky VU 509

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

refrain Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them. Whom shall I send? refrain

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? refrain

Poem: The Child in the Rubble by James Clarke

During an Advent worship service from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, The Rev. Marty Molengraaf referred to the idyllic Nativity Scenes that many Christians have in their homes during the Christmas season. All those Nativity Scenes show peace and tranquility.

Landmark Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem created a simple Nativity scene for Christmas 2023: Jesus enters the world amid a pile of rubble in Gaza.

My poet-judge friend James Clarke wrote the following poem as a reflection on that Nativity scene.

The Child in the Rubble (a Christmas meditation)

I am the child of a broken
home, closer to you than your skin.
Your reality is my reality.
I am the child in the rubble.

I am not imprisoned in the
web of time; I am what is within
you and what is without.
I am the child in the rubble.

Look at me, your plight is mine,
your weakness is my weakness,
I share your suffering.
I am the child in the rubble.

I will bring love where there is
hatred, peace and forgiveness
where there is war. I am
the light in your darkness.
I will always be...
the child in the rubble.

Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

- Birthdays
 - Bruce Perkin celebrates on Thurs Jan 18th
 - Barbara Lynden celebrates 91 years on Sat Jan 20th
 - Mary Lloyd celebrates on Sun Jan 21st

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: O For A World VU 697

Words from Stephanie Clinton's blog. An Oklahoma mom.

Last Sunday in church, we sang this hymn as a closing song. The thing that immediately struck me is how inclusive it is. There is no mention that only Christians will live in this world. Goods are shared with everyone, equality for everyone, everyone's misery is relieved. God's reign of peace is for everyone. The author of this song speaks to a God who is bigger than war and hate, hunger and inequality. A God who is bigger than religion and who can save us from ourselves.

1. O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.
2. O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.
3. We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.
4. The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.
5. O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

Benediction

As we leave this sacred place and time, may God bless us:

With saints to tell us stories...

With angels to surprise us...

With friends to encourage us...

With strength, and joy, and courage...

All the length and breadth of our days and nights.

Amen.

Postlude: Turn the World Upside Down by Linnea Good. Performed by Suzanne Flewelling and 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.

Welcomers: Barb Gregory and John Cuming

Counters: Kaillie Rawn and Norm Porritt

Worship Schedule

January 21 st	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	Rev. Marion Loree
January 28 th	4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Rev. Felicia Urbanski