



February 18, 2023

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church
Sunday February 18, 2024

Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson
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 \$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, February 21 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 1962 and 1963, including “*Oliver!*”, “*She Loves Me*”, “*Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*”, and “*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*” among several others. Enjoy wonderful songs including “*As Long As He Needs Me*”, “*The Sweetest Sounds*”, “*What Kind of Fool Am I?*”, “*Once Upon a Time*” and more.
- **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.
- **Habitat for Humanity is seeking volunteers!** For more information visit habitatgw.ca/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@habitatgw.ca
- **World Day of Prayer Friday March 1st, 2024, 2:00 P.M.** at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Fergus. The service was written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Palestine. The Theme: I Beg you Bear With One Another in Love. Guest Speaker: Rev. Peter Bush. Time of fellowship will follow the service. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.
- **Learn how to make Baiao De Dois & Brigadeiro Sunday, February 24th 4:30-6:00pm.** Chef Mariana hosts from her kitchen in Sao Paulo Brazil to teach you how to make 2 super easy and delicious Brazilian recipes at home. \$42 per computer connection. Raising funds and awareness for the work of Michael House. For more information or to register please visit www.michaelhouse.ca

- **TCOW Sleepover March 22-23, 2024** - Parkminster United Church, Waterloo. TCOW is hosting a fun sleepover event for youth (grade 8-12+) and Youth Leaders for a fun event full of good, games, community, faith, and learning! For more details visit <https://www.waterlootcow.ca>

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

Let us come together in a time of inspiration and hope...

In this place of companionship, comfort, support...

In this place where we contemplate the wonder and the grandeur of life, and the spark of God that exists in each of us...

In this place where we are all welcome, where strangers become friends, where God's grace is felt by all who enter.

Hymn: Let Us Build a House MV 1

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live.

A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace.

Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

(refrain) All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

2. Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true.

Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace.

Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

(refrain) All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

3. Let us build a house where love is found, in water, wine and wheat.

A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space,

As we share in Christ the feast that frees us;

(refrain) All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

4. Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone.

To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face.

Let us bring an end to fear and danger;
(refrain) All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

5. Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard.
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word. Built of tears and cries
and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace. Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter;
(refrain) All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

God of all time and seasons, source of the spark of our lives: we have drawn together in this place—this place where all are welcome. We come to take our turn in the telling of your story, and to declare your truth, your grace, your hope for the world. Gather us now in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: I've Got Peace Like a River VU 577

1. I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

2. I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.

3. I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.
I've got love like an ocean, I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.

Children's Time

Ministry of Music: Be Not Afraid *performed by Suzanne Flewelling*

Scripture Reading — Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Sermon: Magic Moments

I want to talk a bit this morning about magic moments.

Today's scripture reading points to such a magic moment. Several of them actually.

- When John was baptized, the heavens were torn apart and the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove.
- Then a voice from heaven blesses Jesus.
- No sooner has he been blessed than he's driven into the wilderness to live among the wild beasts...and he's waited upon by angels...and he's there 40 days and 40 nights. (Interesting to note that the 40 days is the same length of time Noah was on the Ark)
- Next, when Jesus comes out of the desert, he went about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

Now, I have to tell you that I, personally, can't take these things literally. Only metaphorically. Truth is, I don't think they're meant to be taken literally. They are the stuff of personal inspiration.

Have you ever seen something that if you were asked to explain it in any rational sense you'd be hard pressed to do so? Have you ever, as the poet William Blake said, seen the world in a grain of sand, or heaven in a wild flower, or held infinity in the palm of your hand, and glimpsed eternity in an hour?

Have you ever held a new-born child in your arms, looked closely at the face that slept in your keep, and saw the great parade of ancestors that came and went before this one?

Moments like that are sheer magic. And you can't explain them, or you end up explaining them away. They just are. They're yours. Yours to experience and enjoy in the same way that Mark writes about what happened at Jesus' baptism.

In the Prologue to his book entitled *Boy's Life*, author Robert McCammon. he says the following:

I believe in magic. I was born and raised in a magic time, in a magic town, among magicians. Oh, most everybody else didn't realize we lived in that web of magic, connected by the silver filaments of chance and circumstance. But I knew it all along.

When I was twelve years old, the world was my magic lantern, and by its green-spirit-glow I saw the past, the present, and into the future. You probably did too; you just don't recall it.

See, this is my opinion: we all start out knowing magic. We are born with whirlwinds, forest fires, and comets inside us. We are born to sing to birds and read the clouds and see our destiny in grains of sand. But then we get the magic educated right out of our souls.

We get it church-ed out, spanked out, washed out, combed out. We get put on the straight and narrow and told to be responsible. Told to act our age. Told to grow up. And you know why we were told that? Because the people doing the telling were afraid of our wildness and youth, and because the magic we knew made them ashamed and sad of what they'd allowed to wither in themselves.

After you go away from it, though, you can't really get it back. You can have seconds of it. Seconds of knowing and remembering. When people get weepy at movies, it's because in that dark theatre the golden pool of magic is touched, just briefly. Then they come out into the hard sun of logic and reason again and it dries up, and they're left feeling a little heart-sad and not knowing why.

When a song stirs a memory, when motes of dust turning in a shaft of light takes your attention from the world, when you listen to a train passing on a track at night in the distance and wonder where it might be going, you step beyond who you are and where you are. For the briefest of instants, you step into the magic realm. That's what I believe.

Do you know what Robert McCammon is talking about there? About life having its moments of magic?

They come to us, in these lives of ours, many different kinds of moments. Most of them are routine, mundane, trifling. But every once in a while, there come other kinds of moments that are far from routine, mundane, trifling. And when they come we are much blessed. Magic moments.

I wonder good many of you have enjoyed being on stage? In a choir? In a musical production? In an amateur play?

For me, personally, and I know for others too, there is nothing quite like appearing on stage in front of an audience and hearing people laughing and enjoying themselves. I've written about 20 musical comedies over the years, and been in many others, and those show-time moments are sheer magic.

The moments that make up getting there aren't nearly as magical. They are plain hard work. Weeks of hard work. Doing wonderful at one rehearsal, plowing a worn out furrow at the next. Times of exhilaration and times of doubt, all rolled into one another. But you work hard, and then, you've got it all together...and you finally stand here on stage...and wow!

In a similar vein, Robert Fulghum tells a story about the time he was invited to conduct the Minneapolis Chamber Symphony Orchestra in the playing of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The only symphony he had ever conducted was in his mind while standing in his living room, but he had always wanted to do it, so he accepted the invitation.

The conductor came to see me. "Just how well do you read an orchestral score, Mr. Fulghum?"

I replied, "I don't read music at all. Is that really a problem?"

There was a long pause in the conversation, while the conductor explained that most professional conductors wouldn't even attempt Beethoven's Ninth until they had years of experience.

He went on to explain about timing, and how you can't be even as much as a half-second out, and how you must have the whole score in your head. "In sum," he said, "what you want to do is...is...is...so...so...completely..." He couldn't find the words.

"But I really want to do this," I pleaded.

Another long pause in the conversation. He finally said, "We're in deep..." you know the end of that phrase. Here we were—the season would begin with the tacky idea of a chamber orchestra doing part of Beethoven's Ninth with an amateur wannabe at the podium.

When you sit out there in a great concert hall and these handsome, beautiful, formally dressed, talented people walk purposefully onto the stage with their shining instruments, they seem like minor gods, with not a care in this world. But when you go to rehearsal, you will see a raggedy bunch of people not unlike those you see in a checkout line at a supermarket.

They come to work, do their job, and go home. Since they are overworked and underpaid, you quickly learn that the beautiful black outfits you see from the audience are, upon closer examination, likely to have been assembled from the local thrift shops. They musicians all have children, wives, husbands, homes, hopes, dreams, and all the rest.

First rehearsal. For the very same reasons that everything goes haywire sometimes, everything also works sometimes. Like this time. It wasn't great but we got it done.

What impressed the real conductor was my apparent lack of reliance on the score. I never once looked at it. Yet I seemed to anticipate every entrance of every instrument. He couldn't believe it.

"It's nothing," I said, "if you watch them, just before they are about to play, they hold up their instruments in the ready position and you just wave at them—COME ON IN—and they do. I thought you knew that."

He was always checking the score. He'd never noticed. Professionals don't know everything!

First two of 3 nights. I came on stage from the second row in the audience. I explained to the audience that I represented everybody there who had always wanted to conduct. And I apologized for not carrying a baton, because every time I had used it in rehearsal I had thrown it into the chorus.

I stepped up onto the podium, inhaled enough oxygen to induce hyperventilation, and gave the downbeat. For better or worse we were off. I experienced an adrenaline rush and had the orchestra moving like a runaway train. Truthfully, those performances weren't good, or consistent, or even competent. The plus was that every member of the audience felt as if they might have conducted at least as well. Pretty much the same the second night.

Final night. The hall was packed. A black-tie evening. I couldn't do it. By then I knew that just doing it barely well enough to get through was an insult to the greatness of the music and the talent of the musicians. So I slowly climbed onto the stage, turned to the audience and talked about Beethoven's great cry of "Yes!" that is contained in this music. Then I explained that the music deserved more than a wannabe conductor, turned and asked the real conductor to come forward.

The orchestra stood, the maestro lifted his baton, and Beethoven carried us away. It was the orchestra's finest night. Everybody—musicians, conductor, music and audience—was united. Where was I? Standing with the orchestra.

Beethoven lived! We lived! Nothing could have been grander. When that music rumbled down the hill of the heart like a landslide, people cheered their lungs out, pounded their hands together, threw flowers...and yes, wept. What a night! What a world! What a life! YES! A magic moment.

Blessed are all of us when we have magic moments. Whether they are moments of uncontrolled hilarity, or moments of spontaneous wonder and joy, or moments when we're on stage and we realize that we really can do this...those moments are magic. Enjoy them! They are the stuff that add the spice to our wonderful lives. YES!
Amen.

Hymn: Eat This Bread VU 466

1. Eat this bread, drink this cup,
Come to me and never be hungry.
Eat this bread, drink this cup,
Trust in me and you will not thirst.

2. Come and eat, come and drink,
You are welcome here at this table.
Come and eat, come and drink,
This table's been set for you.

We Celebrate at the Table

The Invitation to the Table

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to our God!

Let us give thanks to God!

It is right to give God thanks and praise!

The Consecration of the Elements

On the night that Jesus was betrayed he took bread and broke it, saying, "This is my body which is about to be broken for you. As often as you gather to share this bread, do it in remembrance of me." (A piece of bread is broken)

After they had shared the bread, he took the cup of wine and poured it saying, "This is the wine of the new covenant. As often as you gather and share from this cup, do it in remembrance of me." (Wine is poured from the pitcher into a glass or goblet)

Sharing the Bread and Wine

People will come forward to receive the communion elements.

POEM: A Blessing *by James Clarke*

May the winds stirring outside your

window enter your breath-filling
body, carry you like a new bird
coming into flight into the clean, sunlit
air of mountains, beyond the reach of
fear, where you can kiss the sky—
knowing it will love you back—your
body warms with trust, and you can
fly forever.

Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

- **Birthdays**
 - Sydney Parkin celebrates today!
 - Lexie Martin celebrates on Wed Feb 21st
 - **Peggie Dickie celebrates 98 years on Fri Feb 23rd**

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: Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God VU 356

1. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and God's righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Hallelu, Hallelujah.

2. Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and you shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Hallelu, Hallelujah.

3. We do not live by bread alone, but by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Hallelu, Hallelujah.

Benediction

As we leave this place, and go our separate ways...

May we find in each moment we live something of wonder...

An awareness of the joy and blessing that often comes in the most unexpected of ways...

And an awareness of the holy within us and around us.

Let us go in peace...

And may the spirit of the living Christ go with us.

Amen.

Postlude: May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You *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, John Cuming

Counters: Patty Foster, David Gohn

Worship Schedule

February 25	Lent 2	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
March 3	Lent 3	Rev. Marion Loree
March 10	Lent 4 / Pie Day	Rev. Tom Watson
March 17	Lent 5	Rev. Tom Watson
March 24	Lent 6 / Palm Sunday	Rev. Felicia Urbanski