



**Good Friday, March 29, 2024**

Melville United Church  
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Melville United Church

March 29, 2024

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*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson*

*Ministry of Music: Colleen Weber*

## **Prelude**

## **Greeting**

ONE: The grace of Jesus Christ be with you all.

**ALL: And also with you!**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this time of worship on this Good Friday morning! We gather in person here in Melville sanctuary, and also online. We come to worship on one of the holiest days of the church year.

## **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.

- **Job Opportunity** at Melville United Church for a **part-time Youth Leader**. The candidate will be responsible for leadership and resources in areas of Christian Education for children and youth. The successful applicant will lead Kids' Church on Sundays and plan/attend regular Youth Groups. The Youth Leader will work in collaboration with our ministry team. For the Position Profile and information about applications please email [mrthdncn@gmail.com](mailto:mrthdncn@gmail.com)
- **Search Team Update:** We're busy finalizing the "job description" for a long-term supply minister for Melville. Our thanks to those who have contributed to the process, and for the support, encouragement, and prayers. All is appreciated! Confidentiality is critical for this process, so we won't be sharing many details. Our work looks at the effort, support and caring that our congregation gives to our members and our community. Joyfully, it is abundant. So many people generously share their time, talents, and treasures; living our mission and values. This is an exciting time for Melville! Change often comes with anxiety and discomfort. Melville's history shows we have the heart for it. ❤️ With thanks, Jane O'Leary (chair), Heather Halls, Chris Hopewell, Lara Johnston, Alison Rainford, David Ogilvie.
- **UCW meat pies** are available \$5 each. Buy after church or contact Marg 519-843-3274 or [margfrayne@hotmail.com](mailto:margfrayne@hotmail.com)
- The music series "**Mid-Day Music at Melville**" presented by pianist Brad Halls returns on **Wednesday, April 3rd** from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m. at Melville United Church, Fergus. 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 the Broadway seasons between 1981 and 1987, Come and enjoy selections from hit productions such as “Little Shop of Horrors”, “La Cage aux Folles”, “Big River” and the blockbuster hits “Cats” and “Les Miserables”, among others. Come and enjoy classic Broadway selections such as “I Dreamed a Dream”, “Somewhere That’s Green”, “Muddy Water”, “Memory”, 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.

Please note that this season of “Mid-Day Music at Melville” will conclude with the performance of April 10th and will resume again on the first Wednesday of October this coming fall, when Brad will lead a similar 100-year trip through “Music from the Movies”. Thank you to our very loyal and growing audience for your support of this concert series, and for your generous contributions to our host, Melville United Church for the use of their beautiful space.

- **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.
- Join the **Watoto Children's choir** as they sing, dance, and share their stories of restoration and hope. Bethel Baptist Church, 675 Victoria Terrace, Fergus **April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6.30pm**. Enjoy this **Free Concert** featuring music from the new album, “Better Days – There Is Hope”. Promotional Video: [Better Days Watoto](#)
- The **Annual Meeting** will be held on April 14<sup>th</sup> with a lunch to follow in the Chapel and Parlour

### **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**

A man...lonely...bleeding...trudges up a barren hill called Golgotha.

**It will be the last walk of his life.**

*[silence]*

On his back he carries a cross.

**At the top of the barren hill, some soldiers take the cross and put it in its place in the ground.**

*[silence]*

There are sounds...hammers...nails.

**The man cries out: "My God! My God...!"**

*[silence]*

Then the man hangs his head.

**"It is finished." He breathes his last.**

### **Hymn VU #149 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**

1. When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ, my God:  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

3. See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small:  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

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

**God of love and gentleness, it is hard for us to understand such a scene as Golgotha. In a world of wonder and beauty, it is hard to comprehend the darkness and brokenness of this day. All we can do is be here...to sense it...to remember it...and to be changed because of it. Amen.**

**Reflection — “Souvenirs”** (adapted from the writings of Ann Weems)

Last Sunday, we waved palm branches as we entered the holy city of Jerusalem. Stars were handed out as souvenirs of our pilgrimage. We tucked them next to our hearts and continued on our journey.

When we got to Friday, we heard the sounds—in, and in, and in, the nails were driven.

In the terror of the thunder and the controllable sobbing, we dropped our stars.

Now...beneath the cross, we pilgrims kneel, the ground strewn with broken stars.

Godforsaken.

**Hymn VU #144 Were You There (vv. 1, 2, 3 and 5)**

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

3. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

**Ministry of Music — “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” - Suart Townsend, arr. Mark Hayes**

**Gospel Reading — John 19:13-30**

Pilate brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!”

Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews', but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfil what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. And that is what the soldiers did."

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **MEDITATION: "Peace I Leave With You"**

"It is finished," Jesus said. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The last words that the gospel writer John records as Jesus saying from the cross. "It is finished."

In an earlier conversation, Jesus told his friends—the disciples—that he wouldn't be with them much longer. They became concerned. As we all do when we know that we are about to lose someone we love. None of us are good at endings. Neither were they.

But Jesus comforts them with these words: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. So do not let your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid."

Peace I leave with you.

Roland Perdue, an American Presbyterian minister, describes a scene we all know:

Dinie looked at her mother. A soft breeze ruffled the top of her mother's dress. It gave Dinie the impression her mother was breathing. She wasn't. She was dead. Her body was in the casket. We were at the graveside. The casket was open. Some of us had not seen her for a long time.

Dinie rubbed her mother's shoulder, and said, "I'll see you in heaven, Mom." Then turning away she said to the rest of us, "Mother and I were at peace. At the end, we were at peace."

The wind ruffled the mother's dress again. They closed the casket. I cleared my throat. I read:

Let not your hearts be troubled;  
Believe in God, believe also in me.

I was having trouble. My voice sounded as if it would crack at any moment. I was too close to the family to be professional, I loved them too much not to be professional. I pushed the emotion aside for a moment.

In my Father's house are many rooms.

Dinie and her mother were at peace. At the end. The rest of us? What if some of us were not at peace? Was there still room for us in God's house of many rooms?

Peace I leave with you;  
My peace I give to you;  
Not as the world gives do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Peace? Left with us? Where is it?

A teenage daughter is having difficulty. She leaves home. Falls in with a bad crowd. Moves in with someone. Peace? Let not your hearts be troubled?

A son is dying of chemical dependency right before your eyes. Peace? Let not your hearts be troubled?

Nobody understands your divorce. You don't understand your divorce. All you know is that it's better than your marriage. Fearful? Afraid?

You don't have to ask.

You expect your mature years to be restful and settled. You have plans for what to do with all the time you will have after retirement. Suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, death cancels out your spouse. Alone. New responsibilities. Bills to pay. Insurance companies to contact. Commitments to meet or change. You look into the dark and mutter to yourself, "My God, I miss her...or him."

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

For heaven's sake, come on! Why not? Why not be troubled? Why not afraid? In this world, troubled hearts are a dime a dozen!

And peace? We look for it everywhere. Peace of mind. Peace of conscience. Peace with neighbours, friends, children, parents, spouses. Peace between neighbouring countries...or between people within the same country.

The peace that the world can give is important! You know the kind of peace I mean:

- The peace that is associated with enough money in the bank to look after unexpected emergencies.
- The peace that follows a satisfactory medical check-up.
- The peace that comes from knowing that our kids are safe and secure when we send them off to school in the morning.
- The peace that allows us to walk along our city streets without fear.

That kind of peace is important. We yearn for it!

But to be able to look life squarely in the face, and still be at peace when none of these qualities are present...the ability to face the dark moments of the soul when the peace that the world can give is nowhere present—that's a different kind of peace entirely.

And yet...and yet...that's the kind of peace of which Jesus speaks.

No, it's more than speaks it! He gives it.

Peace I give to you.

My own peace I give to you.

A peace which the world cannot give—that's the peace I give to you.

What Jesus gives is a strong and bold affirmation that, in the face of everything—even death on a cross—we can be at peace. Not because there's any certainty that everything will turn out alright, but because God wills that kind of peace in us! Peace in general cannot do that for us.

There is a wonderful passage in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* that gets at this. Caddy and Dilsey are talking about why Maury has changed his name.

"His name's Benjy now," Caddy says.

"How come it is?" asks Dilsey. "He ain't worn out the name he was born with yet, is he?"

"Benjamin came out of the Bible," says Caddy. "It's a better name for him than Maury."

"How come it is?" asks Dilsey again.

"Mother said it is," replied Caddy.



"Huh!" retorts Dilsey. "Name ain't goin' to help him. Hurt him, neither, I spose. Folks don't have no luck changin' names. My name been Dilsey since fore I could remember, and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me."

"How will they know it's Dilsey, when it's long forgot?" asks Caddy.

"It'll be in the Book, honey." Dilsey replies. "Writ out!"

Caddy: "Can you read it?"

Dilsey: "Won't have to. They's read it for me. All I got to do is say I's here!"

"All I got to do is say I' se here. And they will know."

Using different language, isn't that the same as Jesus said? He told his friends, "I go to my Father's house. That house that has many rooms. And I will come and get you and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."

A bold universal announcement! There is a place where we are known! The place of God. The place of eternal peace.

"I'se here, God. It is finished. And I am at peace." And he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

We spend much of our lives looking for the kind of peace that the world gives. But in the man on the cross we find the peace that the world can never give—the peace that lasts for eternity.

So, let not your hearts be troubled.

Be at peace.

### **Hymn VU #142 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (vv. 1 and 4)**

1. Jesus, keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain,  
Free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain.

In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,  
Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

4. Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,  
Till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river.

In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,  
Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

### **Offering Invitation**

**Offering Hymn: VU # 541 Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow**

**Offering Prayer:**

**Our Good Friday Prayers**

**Reflection — “God Weeps”** (from More Voices, #78)

God weeps...at love withheld, at strength misused,  
at children’s innocence abused...  
And till we change the way we love...God weeps.

God bleeds...at anger's fist, at trust betrayed,  
at women battered and afraid...  
and till we change the way we win...God bleeds.

God cries...at hungry mouths, at running sores,  
at creatures dying without cause,  
And till we change the way we care...God cries.

God waits...for stones to melt, for peace to seed,  
for hearts to hold each other's need,  
And till we understand the Christ...God waits.

**Solo — "He's Been There"** by Jelaire Richardson (Soloist: Lucy Gouthro)

**Hymn VU #182 Stay With Us Through the Night**

1. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us through the pain.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger, till the morning breaks again.

2. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us through the grief.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger till the morning brings relief.

3. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us through the dread.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger till the morning breaks new bread.

*the sanctuary candles are now extinguished  
the cross and Bible are covered with a black cloth*

**Benediction**

The candles go out. And we take our leave, to watch and wait in other places...

**Until we return on the third day hence.**

In the meantime, we will continue to listen for the voice of God, which will once again pierce the silence of this dark day with the sounds of new life.

**And the whole world will proclaim the good news of Easter!**

**Amen.**

*We leave the sanctuary in silence.*

### Worship Schedule

March 31	Easter Sunday	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
April 7	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter/Baptism	Rev. Marion Loree
April 14	Social Justice	Martha Duncan
April 21		Rev. Jeff Hawkins

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