



**Celebrating  
178 Years**



**June 16, 2024**

Melville United Church  
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Melville United church  
Sunday June 16, 2024

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*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson*

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Call to Worship**

In the beginning was diversity...

**Puddle and creek, mountain and valley, dandelion and daisy, blackbird and sparrow, fox and cow, you and me...**

And it was good!

**But, from the beginning, diversity confused us. We created categories—races, ranks, religions...**

Colours, classes, creeds, languages, looks, learning...

**And divisions came to be!**

In this place, we attempt to honour diversity...

**To celebrate difference, to embrace all within the sacred, unending, circle of love.**

**Hymn — "Circle of Love" (from "All God's Children Sing")**

*(refrain)* The circle of love goes around and around.

The circle of love goes around.

Reach out, grab a hand; someone needs you,  
and the circle of love goes around.

1. Listen, people are crying, wond'ring why they've been denied.

Stop, reach out; someone needs you,

And the circle of love goes around. *(refrain)*

2. Look, people are searching, afraid of the journey alone.

Stop, reach out; someone needs you,

And the circle of love goes around. *(refrain)*

3. No one can travel life's road all alone.

We all need a hand now and then.

Reach out, you'll find someone who cares,

And the circle of love goes around. *(refrain)*

**Gathering Prayer (in unison):**

**It is good to be alive! To share life with each other in this wonder-filled and continually evolving universe. To be embraced by all that surrounds us, and to be held in your peace and grace, O God. Be with us as we express our gratitude in this time of worship. Amen.**

**Hymn — Faith of Our Fathers**                      **VU 580**

(men sing verse 1)

1. Faith of our fathers, living still  
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,  
O how our hearts beat high with joy  
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to you till death!

(women sing verse 2)

2. Faith of our mothers, daring faith,  
Your work for Christ is love revealed,  
Spreading God's word from pole to pole,  
Making love known and freedom real.  
Faith of our mothers, holy faith!  
We will be true to you till death!

3. Faith of our sisters, brothers too,  
Who still must bear oppression's might,  
Raising on high, in prisons dark,  
The cross of Christ still burning bright.  
Faith for today, O holy faith,  
We will be true to you till death!

4. Faith born of God, O call us yet,  
Bind us with all who follow you,  
Sharing the struggle of your cross  
Until the world is made anew.  
Faith born of God, O living faith,  
We will be true to you till death!

**Children's Time: Puppet Show "The Lion and The Mouse" - a story about Kindness**

**Ministry of Music — Love at Home** *music by J.H. McNaughton, arranged by Sally DeFord*

**Scripture Reading — Mark 4:26-34**

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

## **Sermon — "The Importance of Small Things"**

Just a few weeks back, we celebrated Mother's Day. Some now prefer to call it Christian Family Sunday.

Regardless of what you call it, I grew up with a Mother's Day tradition of wearing a flower to church that day. The flower would be coloured if your mother was still living, white if she was deceased.

Today, we call Father's Day. In Europe the celebration of a day each year to honour fathers and their role in society, dates back to the middle ages.

In North America, it took much longer to catch on. Finally, in 1909, Sonora Smart Dodd—who along with her five brothers was raised by her father alone—attended Mother's Day in a church, and became convinced there should be a Father's Day as well. She persuaded the Spokane, Washington, Ministerial Association to celebrate Father's Day. It would take place on the third Sunday in June each year.

When Father's Day first began being celebrated nationwide, people took the same "wear a coloured or white flower to church" tradition, as was already used in Mother's Day celebrations, but that tradition never stuck. Apparently the reason was that people were afraid Father's Day would become too commercialized. Well, we surely can't let that happen, now can we!

So I'm thinking of starting a tradition of carrying around some binder twine and baling wire on Father's Day, as something by which to remember my Dad. Dad was a farmer and that's all you needed in those days—you could fix anything with binder twine and baling wire. Duct tape hadn't been invented yet.

It would be a little something we could do to symbolize our gratitude for the old geezers that played at least a small role in bringing us into the world, and did a whole bunch of little things that helped make our lives what they are.

Notice I said, "a whole bunch of little things."

In the parable we read this morning, Jesus puts the emphasis on little things. For example, a mustard seed. It's the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it grows up it becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth branches so large that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.

I've often noted that what we remember most about other people isn't the grand accomplishments of their lives, it's the little things that loom large.

For example:

- How they treated other people.
- How kind they were.
- How truthful and trustworthy they were.
- Whether they were a loner or a team player.

- How they always sought to do the right thing, not the easy thing.
- How they reacted to some unexpected calamity.

Most of you know this story because I've told it before. It's about my father. Dad was a farmer. 100-acre general farm, and he also had 16 dairy cows. The cows were his main source of income.

In the spring of 1960 the barn burned down...and all the cattle perished in the fire. 40 minutes. 40 minutes was all it took to wipe out his main source of income.

I was devastated. For him. The next morning we stood by the pile of still-smouldering ashes. I said, "Dad, what are you going to do now?"

"Not sure yet," he replied, "I guess I'll have to do something different."

It was a life-lesson for me. Something that has always stuck with me. Dad couldn't do anything about yesterday. What was done was done. All he had control over was how he reacted, and how he went about creating a new tomorrow.

So, as each of us goes about creating tomorrow, whatever it will be, it's helpful to remember that in the midst of all else:

- Be kind. You'll never regret being kind.
- Always say "thank you." They're the most powerful words in the English language.
- And few things are more important than the phone call to a friend, checking in and asking a simple, "How are you?"
- Or how about this, "I'm so glad you're my husband, my wife, my partner, my friend."

In a way, these seem like little things, but they're the biggest things in the world.

A week or so ago, Julia and I watched a movie called "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Pie Society." Super movie. The setting is the island of Guernsey, after the Second World War. Guernsey is the second largest of the Channel Islands, located in the English Channel between England and France.

The story is essentially about love and friendship, and the importance of those two things in our lives.

In one touching scene, Jeanette is leaving Guernsey to return to London. Ursula gives Jeanette a big hug and says, "Please come back. I don't have many friends; I don't want to lose you as a friend."

It's a poignant reminder of the importance of friendship in our lives.

In a delightful piece in Winnie-the-Pooh, author A. A. Milne writes:  
Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind.  
"Pooh!" he whispered.

"Yes, Piglet?"

"Nothing," said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

Why not do this? Right now, right in the midst of this worship service, while we prepare to share in communion together, reach out, take the hand of the person next to you and say, "I just wanted to be sure of you."

That's communion in its finest sense: people connecting. I just wanted to be sure of you.

**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**

**Sharing the Bread and Wine**

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

*Our prayers this morning begin with a liturgy called "Moment of Connection" by Maureen Kiloran. Imagine a scene at a park bench in a city.*

Here is where it all begins. It cannot be otherwise.

**Here we have come to listen. Here we have come to hear.**

An old woman sat here yesterday on this park bench, a brown bag at her side, her eyes sparkling as children frolicked on a carousel.

**"Nice day," I said.**

"You're right," she said. And smiled.

**We built a bridge and sat there silently.**

A policeman came, took the brown bag, and led the woman away.

**I said nothing. There was nothing to say.**

And the world moved on. Pain and joy were strangers once again.

**And yet, here in this moment of connection, is where it all begins. It cannot be otherwise.**

The city's named, and nameless, stories are what we are to hear.

**Someone's child is hungry.**

Someone has lost a job.

**Someone's marriage hurts so much there are no words.**

Someone needs a friend.

**The stories come. Oh, pray that we may hear, and we may tell.**

Pray that we may bridge city streets...with caring...

**That we may give and receive the blessing of love.**

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

- **Birthday**
  - Lara Johnston celebrates on Thurs June 20<sup>th</sup>
- **Anniversary**
  - Morven & Ken McCorquodale celebrate 64 years on Mon June 17th

### **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 —Small Things Count VU 361**

1. Small things count, so Jesus said:

    cups of water, crumbs of bread,

Small things done because we're kind

    count as big things in God's mind.

2. Small things make the big things grow:

    yeast that bubbles in the dough,

Puffs that fill a big balloon,

    notes that make a happy tune.

3. Every hair that's on our head,

    every sparrow, Jesus said,

God takes care of, counts and knows,

    God loves us from top to toes!

### **Benediction**

As we leave this place, and go into the week to come...

**May we held together by the love of God...**

Clothed with the nature of Jesus the Christ...

**And reinforced by the strength of the spirit.**

We go in peace.

**Amen.**

**Postlude — Trumpet Tune** *Music by Henry Purcell, arranged by John F. Wilson*

**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.

**Welcomers:** Lorna Ziegler, Alison Rainford

**Counters:** Karen Smillie, Lynne Lamb

**Worship Schedule**

June 23	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
June 30	6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson
July 7	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
July 14	8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson