



April 27, 2025

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

Ann Ward

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

Lynda Rivet

Suzanne Flewelling

Lara Johnston

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

April 27, 2025

Presiding: Social Justice and Outreach

Ministry of Music: Colleen Weber

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle, reminding us that God's light shines among us and we are called to carry that light into the world.

Opening Prayer:

God of Love, we see terror and conflict, destruction and death; there is no end in sight.

You know what we seek, Loving God: peace and justice for our world.

You call us to support the peace bringers with words of encouragement.

You call us to name the evil-doers and clearly show their intent.

You call us to protect the vulnerable and be their friends.

You call us to confront the powerful and support the persecuted.

Your words tell us to "protect the environment of planet Earth," and this rings true for us.

Your words tell us "enough food for every child," and we will help it happen.

Terror and conflict, injustice and despair are alien to you, Loving God.

We are with you, and it will not just be words. We will act to bring change, change that is so desperately needed.

Amen.

Opening Song – Only Borrowed *music by Brad Halls, lyrics by Paul Caldwell, 1992 recording by Paul Caldwell and Brad Halls background vocals by The La Jeunesse Girls Choir*

Prayer for Reconciliation and Assurance of God's Love:

God of promise and purpose,

You set before us a dream of your new heaven and Earth,

And we recognize that it calls for transformation.

But we confess that we don't want transformation;

We want easy fixes.

We want the change, but not to do the changing.

Forgive us, O God,

For asking for change but not being willing to do the work.

Forgive us for accepting the status quo, and for our roles in holding it up.

Forgive our ways of thinking and acting that avoid transformation.

Create in us hearts made new by your mercy and love,

and move us to work toward your vision of a new heaven and Earth. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

In the kin-dom of God, all are loved for who they are, not what they do;
In the kin-dom of God, all are forgiven for what they do, and don't;
In the kin-dom of God, all are welcomed and fed by God's grace and hope.
Forgiven, loved, sent forth—we are not far from the kin-dom of God!
Thanks be to God. **AMEN.**

Hymn – For the Fruit of All Creation VU 227

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
Silent growth while we are sleeping;
Future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.
In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
Most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Children's Time

Ministry of Music: Touch the Earth Lightly *words and music by Colin Gibson and Shirley Erena Murray, arranged by Albert Mendoza*

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:35-40

For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me. Then these just will ask, 'When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you? The ruler will answer them, 'The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did this for me.'

Scripture Readings: James 1:2-4 and 2:14-17

Think of it as pure joy, my sisters and brothers, whenever you face trials of any sort. You understand that your faith is put to the test only to make you patient, but patience too has its practical results – it's to make you fully mature and lacking in nothing.

My sisters and brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save. If any are in need of clothes and have no food to live on, and one of you says to them,

“Goodbye and good luck. Stay warm and well-fed,” without giving them the bare necessities of life, then what good is this? So it is with faith. If good deeds don’t go with it, faith is dead.

Message: Actively Responding

Lately, I’ve been wondering if I’m the only one finding life a bit scary.

There are fears about our climate and our economy. Both are contributing to increased food insecurity. Access to health care is challenging. We have political conflict and increasing intolerance. Canada and the world are in the grips of a mental health crisis.

There is so much change and uncertainty.

But ... it’s not new!

Today’s readings tell us that similar issues existed in Jesus’ time. The passages speak of hunger, thirst, illness, a lack of clothing, being a stranger, and even being imprisoned.

Melville itself began as a result of a deep disruption 180 years ago. Our earlier congregation lived and worried through many major events, like World Wars, The Great Depression, disease and Famine. *100 years ago, the United Church was formed, and Melville weathered that change. Our United Church continues to change and evolve and has a new Call that reflects our purpose in such a time as this; Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and **Daring Justice**.*

Justice is what we’re raising up today. Social Justice.

- Justice is when the gifts of God’s people come together to seek the transformation of the world.
- Daring justice is when we respond to the world in faith, not out of fear.

Melville knows that the one constant, to help us face times such as this, is FAITH.

As Rev Tom Watson told us, “faith has nothing to do with being sure about tomorrow. Faith is quite the opposite. Faith means heading out into life with our faces to the wind. Not being sure of tomorrow but knowing that is where we must live.”

Faith and Social Justice, are the tools Melville uses to help ourselves and others get through tough times.

As we heard in the reading from James, “So it is with faith. If good deeds don’t go with it, faith is dead”.

So, how can Melville **actively respond** in such a time as this?

Let’s start with the climate.

Today, we are celebrating **Earth Sunday**. Let’s listen to our Moderator’s message.

[Moderators Earth Day video](#)

As you heard, we are called to more than “care for creation”; we are called to take action.

How can Melville actively respond to address climate concerns?

- We can hold **Faithful Climate Conversations**, using the guides provided on the United Church website, to talk about actions our congregation would like to take. **AND**
- We can donate to **Mission and Service** to help support global partners addressing hunger eradication. It's important to remember that those who are least responsible for climate change around the world are the most negatively impacted by it. Our help is needed.

Food Insecurity is becoming a major concern for us locally.

Our **Centre Wellington Food Bank** continues to see unprecedented demand for food support.

Last year at the Food Bank

- **1049** individuals were served; and **315** of those were new clients (that's 30% of all individuals in 2024)
- **328** children were supported
- **3888** total visits from households
- **just over 224,337 lbs** of food was provided to the community in 2024.

The Food Bank is partnering with other organizations to help expand access to food across the township; looking for creative ways that reduce barriers such as transportation or limited hours. We'll be sharing more information about their Food Pantries in the weeks ahead.

How can Melville actively respond to address food insecurity in our community?

We can take action all year! The Social Justice Team will ensure all donations are delivered.

- We can fill up the hamper in the Sanctuary on a regular basis. Copies of the Most Needed list are available in the hamper, and on the Social Justice table at the back of the Sanctuary.
- Provide financial donations so the Food Bank can purchase meats and perishable items, and cover overhead costs.
 - You can donate funds through Melville, using a giving envelope or an e-transfer request to the office.
- Provide support to Melville's Thyme with God Community Garden. We'll be hearing more on this next week during the Mission Story. **AND**
- In the Fall, we can continue Melville's incredible financial support to the Food Bank's Christmas Gift program for children & families, and Independent Youth. That program also provides food.

Another impact, from all of the uncertainty, is to **Youth Mental Health**.

Many Youth have families that are being impacted. The older ones are wondering what the future will hold for them.

Ensuring they have the skills and supports they need, to face difficult times, is critical.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a great resource for Youth here in our community.

The Grove Hub – Fergus provides a safe, inclusive space for youth aged 12-26 to hang out, to access free health services and a variety of supports like homework help, exam prep and housing. They ensure that help is not just available—but accessible, compassionate, and, in some cases, life-changing. The demand for support services is higher than ever before.

Let's take a video tour through the facility.

[Tour of the Grove Hub Fergus site](#)

You can see that it's a great facility and the kids have done a lot of work to make it their space.

How can Melville actively respond to ensure Youth have the mental health supports they need?

Again, we can provide support all year long.

- We can provide financial donations for The Grove Hub – Fergus programs and supports. **AND**
- We can donate items from their Wish List for arts programs, sports activities, things needed for the site, and hygiene products. Copies of the list are available at the back of the Sanctuary.

Melville has a wonderful Faith Community. And we are called to live our Faith through **ACTIONS**. We are called to recognize trials as a test of our Faith.

And we are called to **Daring Justice** in such a time as this.

Melville describes itself as being on a "journey together, as a faith community, seeking justice, serving others with love and kindness and walking humbly with our God".

Let's keep seeking social justice ... and be daring in our efforts!

A heartfelt thank you from Melville's Social Justice & Outreach team for all of the wonderful support that we receive.

Sharing our Joys & Concerns

Mission Story: Supporting a Rights-Based Approach to Growing Food

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kin-dom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Offering: In our offering we share the measurable treasures of time, talents and resources. We are also asked to commit to sharing the immeasurable gifts of forgiveness, grace, compassion, acceptance and loving concern with each other and with ourselves.

Offertory Hymn – Grant Us, God, the Grace VU 540

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.

Offering Prayer:

May these gifts help to build the community of care and compassion that we hope to create. A world where all are cared for without stigma or judgement. Where all have access to food, homes and support systems needed to survive and thrive. May they be a legacy of justice, hope, faith and most importantly love. Thank you for the many gifts you have given to us. May we use them freely and lovingly for daring justice. Amen.

Parting Hymn – Will Your Anchor Hold VU 675

- 1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?
 We have an anchor that keeps the soul
 steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
 fastened to the rock which cannot move,
 grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

- 2 It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow. R

- 3 It will surely hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;
on the rising tide it can never fail
while our hopes abide within the veil. R

- 4 When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore. R

Closing Prayer/Benediction:

God, we thank you for the hope of a new day and a fresh start.
We give thanks for the reminder that “it’s ok to not be ok” and
that it’s better to tell the truth about what’s really going on for us,
to get support and help, then to suffer in silence and alone.
We thank you God that you never give up on us even when we feel
like giving up on ourselves.
We are grateful for this faith community where we can experience
sacred welcome, inclusion, support, and engagement for all.
Bless us as we share your love with others, furthering an end to
the stigma and shame often felt by those in need.
Let us go forth and live as the call to the church invites us to do, as people
whose deep spirituality draws them ever closer to God, the eternal,
whose bold discipleship reflects their life as followers of Jesus Christ,
and whose commitment to daring justice is a sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence

and power of transformation.

Amen.

Postlude

Welcomers: John Cuming, Alison Rainford

Counters: Karen Smillie, Phil Brown

Worship Schedule

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| May 4 th | 3 rd Sunday of Easter | Rev. Linda Butler |
| May 11 th | 4 th Sunday of Easter | Rev. Felicia Urbanski |
| May 18 th | 5 th Sunday of Easter | Rev. Tom Watson |
| May 25 th | 6 th Sunday of Easter | Social Justice & Outreach |