



**May 18, 2025**

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church**  
**Sunday, May 18, 2025**

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*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson*  
*Ministry of Music: Suzanne Flewelling*

**Prelude**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**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**

Throughout all our days, God has been with us...

**Guiding us, holding us fast.**

Throughout all our days to come, God will be with us...

**Continuing to nurture us, and lead us to new times.**

As we gather for worship this morning, God is with us...

**We celebrate the God among us—past, future, and present.**

**Hymn —Great Is Thy Faithfulness VU 288**

1. Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;  
There is no shadow of turning with thee;  
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
As thou hast been, thou forever will be.  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided  
Great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided  
Great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—  
Wondrous the portion thy blessings provide.

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed thy hand hath provided

Great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

### **Gathering Prayer:**

**Faithful, ever-present God, in the midst of our daily lives, we are continually faced with new choices and possibilities. Creativity and hope bubble up and surge, bringing to birth opportunities to lift, fascinate, and challenge our minds, our bodies, our relationships. May we live into each new moment with faith and hope. Amen.**

### **Hymn — I Am the Dream      MV 106**

1. I am the dream and you the dreamer.

I am the song and you are the rhyme.

You are the tune sung in every silence.

You are the now in the endless stream of time.

2. I am the bell and you the silence.

You are the yearning I cannot curtail.

I am the blest and you the blessing.

You are the wilds in which I lose my trail.

3. You are the word and I the echo.

You are the leader and I am the led.

You are the joy and I the laughter.

You are the Rock on which I lay my head.

### **Children's Time**

#### **Ministry of Music — Speak, O Lord** *by Keith and Kristyn Getty*

#### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:1-5** *reader Mary Lloyd*

Today's reading is part of a very long reading in the gospel of Matthew. Jesus is up on the mountain, teaching the crowds of people.

Jesus said, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For the judgment you give will be the judgment you get, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

"Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye but do not notice the log in your own eye?

"Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye."

### **Sermon: "Life in Our Town—Why Are Specks So Easy To See?"**

Well, it's been a busy week in our town. With a few days of wonderful weather lately, thoughts of spending more time outdoors runs through everyone's mind. Pastor Willy Flugel—Willy's the pastor over at The Church Of The Reluctant Apostle—and his wife Etta have a trailer in a park in the Muskokas, so Willy dropped into Casey's Hardware the other day to pick up some black fly and mosquito repellent to take up with them when they go to open up for the year.

"How much you need, Willy?" asked Casey.

"Well," replied Willy, "black flies can be thick this time of year. Better give me a couple of cases. That should at least get us through a weekend."

Hank Vickers was also into Casey's hardware the other day. Mildred had been out working up their backyard garden, getting it ready for planting. Hank remembered that last year the rows of beans and carrots weren't as straight as Mildred used to get them. He figured that with Mildred's advancing years, her eyesight wasn't as true as it once was...so he dropped into Casey's and picked up a laser level.

He gave it to her on Wednesday night at supper. He said, "Here, Mildred, you'll find this to be a big help."

Mildred looked at it kind of puzzled and said, "What is it, Hank? What's it do?"

Hank's eyes beamed as he explained it to her. "It's an electronic self-levelling rotary laser level, Mildred. Made by Johnson. Top of the line. Has GreenBrite technology."

"What's GreenBrite technology, Hank?"

"It produces a green ray, Mildred. 400% brighter than those cheap red light laser levels. Not only that, it has an electronically-controlled dual slope feature. And...you'll love this Mildred...it makes a beeping noise when you've gone beyond the self-levelling range."

Mildred was still puzzled. "And why is that important, Hank?"

"It means, Mildred," explained Hank, "that if you have a row of beans or carrots that's longer than the range of the level, it will let you know so you can adjust accordingly."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mildred. The picture was slowly dawning upon her. "I'm supposed to use this in the garden!"

"You got it, Mildred. Just think...no more crooked rows!"

"How much this thing cost, Hank?"

"Well, the regular price of this little honey is two hundred and forty nine bucks," replied Hank. Mildred's eyes widened. "But Casey let me have the store demo for just a hundred and ninety nine." Hank paused to let that sink in and then continued, "Providing that we put a sign in the yard that says:

Garden rows made straighter by Johnson laser level. Available at Casey's Hardware.

Mildred just rolled her eyes. She's used to Hank's way of thinking. "Wow," she said, "only a hundred and ninety nine bucks. That's a terrific deal, Hank. I'm sure this will be way better than putting a stake at each end of a row, and tying some string to the stakes.

"Anyway, those stakes I've been using are getting beat up. So this'll save me having to slip over to the lumber yard to see if they have any scrap I can make new stakes from."

Irony is not Hank's strong suit, so as he headed out the door for coffee, Hank thought to

himself, "What a woman I married! She has such a logical head on her!"

By the time Hank got to Al's Café, the old guys were already into their morning topic of discussion. One that had been ongoing for the past while.

About four months ago, a new doctor—Dr. Namar Ngodo—came to town, and the old guys have been a bit cranked up about him, because...well, mainly because, as his name suggests, he's not from around here. He's...well...different.

You see, you wouldn't describe Our Town as a melting pot. There's been no need to find ways to assimilate a lot of new people into the town's social milieu. Over the past 25 years, there has been just a trickle of newcomers, but Eddie Pletczyk has been the only one who wasn't born in Canada. And the notion of our town becoming a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multiracial, multi-religious, place is the furthest thing from folks' minds.

But now, here in their midst, is Dr. Namar Ngodo. Such a contrast to the norm. Comes, as far as they know, from Algeria. Has a couple of magazines on the table in his waiting room that are in some unknown language. And, of course, he's the only person in town who doesn't have white skin.

In some circumstances, they would be able to view him—with their preconceived suspicions—from afar...if he were, say, a trades-person who just lived here but worked elsewhere...but that's not the case. He's a doctor. Their doctor. The doctor the town Council recruited to come here.

And to top it off, when The Lodge ran an application in The Bugle that read, in part:  
*Make A Difference In Our Town! Join The Lodge! All New Applications Accepted!*  
There was only one response, and that was from Dr. Namar Ngodo.

All of which occasioned a new round of suspicion and controversy. As Fred Bowers said, one morning during coffee at Al's, "Why would he want to become a member of The Lodge? And so soon after moving here? We don't know him, and he don't know us."

They all agreed that old Doc Meadows—who, until he retired last year, had been their doctor for as long as any of them could remember—always said he was too busy to join The Lodge, which left The Lodge brothers—at least some of them—wondering, as Harold Redding put it, "...why this new fella don't just stick to his doctorin' and leave the running of the town to the people who have always lived here."

Of course, Harold Redding had a suspicion about that too, and proposed the possibility that their new doctor was some kind of foreign agent, sent to Our Town to spy on everything that happens...and getting inside The Lodge would be one surefire way to be in the know about everything.

There was some tempering of the conversation one day at coffee, when Eddie Pletczyk became upset enough with what was being said to speak up. Eddie said, "I zink ze problem is that none of you guys have ever been immigrants, zo youse don't know what's like from the other side."

Jack Cameron said, "Aw, Eddie, you're one of us."

"Maybe now," replied Eddie, but it took a while before I quit feeling like ze new guy in town."

Now, regardless of any of this, The Lodge still had to deal with Dr. Ngodo's application. So, at The Lodge meeting the other night, Grant Smithers, who chairs the Membership Committee, presented the application for a decision by the members.

Several members raised concerns. From what I heard, they went along these lines:

- Their practice is to open each meeting with a short devotion. Would Dr. Ngodo expect them to modify their devotions in order to accommodate his religious beliefs, whatever they are?
- Or maybe he doesn't have any religious beliefs at all. Maybe he's so scientific-minded that he's some kind of atheist, and will push for them to do away with their opening devotions entirely.
- They sponsor the community Easter egg hunt. Would he participate in that?
- They give out packages of Licorice Allsorts at Al's Café every Halloween. Maybe he's one of those health nuts who's against giving candy to children.

There were other concerns too. Some of those had to do with the fact that they don't really know Dr. Ngodo very well, which means that maybe The Lodge should have some kind of length-of-residency policy.

But mainly, the concerns had to do with the possibility of their long-held traditions being up for grabs with somebody new coming into The Lodge, and what that might mean for The Lodge long-range. In short, all of the concerns were based on the prospect of change.

There are those, of course, who favour change, and they were of the opinion that, if The Lodge has any hope of keeping from being relegated to the dust bin of history, it's necessary to open things up, and they spoke in favour of accepting Dr. Ngodo's application. There was also the matter of truth in advertising—the ad in The Bugle did say that ALL applications would be accepted so, in their minds, the Lodge's integrity was at stake.

Finally, the President, Lefty Simpson, acknowledged Hiram Jones, who hadn't, to this point, engaged in the discussion. A hush fell over the room as Hiram stood to speak. This would be the end of the discussion because Hiram is always against any change or new idea...and Hiram's opinions carry a lot of weight with the members, especially the more senior ones.

Hiram began. "Well, my fellow Lodge brothers, as you all know, I've, been a member of this here Lodge for more'n 50 years, and my daddy before me." Everybody nodded.

"You'll also remember that I was opposed to this here membership drive in the first place." Everybody nodded again.

"But now, it's resulted in this here application that's before us." Everybody nodded a third time. They had a sense of where this was going.

"Now," continued Hiram. "Several members have spoken tonight...and I have listened carefully to what everybody has said. And I suspect we could talk on and on for quite a while. But, in my mind, I believe it's high time we came to a decision. There's no use draggin' this on any further. So, if the Chair will permit, I'd like to make a motion."

President Lefty Simpson said, "Of course, Brother Hiram. Present your motion." The tension mounted. Hiram stopped and cleared his throat. "I move that we accept Dr. Ngodo's application."

The members were thunderstruck. You could have heard a pin drop. Finally, Harold Redding blurted out, "Hiram, what in the world...?"

"I know, Brother Harold, I know; just hear me out."

"My grandson, Kenneth, has had to go him a few times and really likes him...says he's a top-notch doctor...really knows his stuff."

Hiram stopped and cleared his throat again. "Besides that...years ago...when Clarissa and I were first married...we had some neighbours we really liked. A few of you might remember Scott and Glenda Coulter.

"Well, one day Scott was offered a job in the city—a promotion—so they moved away. That was really bothersome for Clarissa and me, 'cause we feared we'd never again have as good neighbours as Scott and Glenda Coulter. My daddy was still alive and I told him about how this was bothering us so much.

"I have always remembered what my old daddy told me. He said, 'My son, you'll always have good neighbours if you be a good neighbour yourself'."

The members were hanging on every word...especially Harold Redding, because the Reddings had moved in next door to Hiram and Clarissa—into the house vacated by the Coulters—and, over the years, Hiram Jones and Harold Redding had become the closest of friends.

Hiram looked at Harold Redding and smiled. Then he continued. "As my daddy said, it all turned out pretty good. So, maybe if we were to be good neighbours to this new doctor fella...maybe if we just gave him a chance...well, you never know..maybe it'd turn out pretty good too...he might just turn out to be one of the best things ever happened to this here town. And maybe also to this here Lodge."

When Hiram sat down, nobody stirred for a few moments, and then Harold Redding slowly got to his feet. He raised his shoulders and took a deep breath. He paused, took a long look at Hiram Jones, and then said, "Hiram, I never imagined I would be saying this...but...(long pause)...I second your motion." At that point everybody stood and applauded.

President Lefty Simpson said, "Do I take that to mean you all agree with Brother Hiram and Brother Harold's motion?" With almost one voice, they all responded: "We do!" Lefty pounded his gavel. "I declare the motion passed unanimously!"

When Frank Birstead got home from The Lodge meeting, he told Myrtle about the interesting turn of events that night. Myrtle rocked back and forth in her chair for a short time, and then chuckled. "Isn't it interesting, Franklin, how things turn out sometimes? The boys at The Lodge went in search of a speck in Dr. Ngodo's eye and didn't find one."

"Not sure what you mean, Myrt."

"Remember what it says in the Bible, Franklin, that before you try to take the speck out of

somebody else's eye, you should first take the log out of your own?"

"As you know, Myrt, I'm not a big Bible reader," replied Frank, "but it does seem I remember hearing that said. However, what's that got to do with the members of The Lodge?"

"Seems to me, Franklin," replied Myrtle, "that not only the boys at The Lodge, but a lot of other people in town too, were trying very hard to find something wrong with Dr. Ngodo—trying to find the speck in his eye—but once they got past their preconceived prejudices, and were able to remove the log from their own eye, they concluded he might not be that bad after all. If..that is...they gave him a chance."

"Oh, I get it now, Myrt," replied Frank. "You mean it's like the old saying about what goes around comes around."

"Yep," said Myrtle. "And what's most interesting is that it was the old immovable, unchangeable, Hiram Jones who made the difference."

With that Myrtle Birstead got up from her chair. She stopped and chuckled again. "Know what, Franklin. Something else just occurred to me!"

"What's that, Myrt?"

"I've always been fascinated with how it is that light often shines from the most unexpected places!"

She started to move toward the kitchen. As she was going she said, "Hiram Jones and Harold Redding...who'd have thought. And it all had to do with the notion of being good neighbors. In that thought they saw themselves. Good for them! Good for them!"

She stopped and turned around. "Franklin, this calls for a celebration! I'm going to make us an extra helping of wieners and beans for our bedtime snack!"

"Sounds good to me, Myrt," replied Frank. "Sounds good to me. And maybe some of that tasty garlic bread of yours!"

Well, that's the news from our town for this week. At least from the stories that I've heard.

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

- **Birthdays**
  - Gary Sproule celebrates on May 22nd

### **Poem: Peace Invocation** *(from the writings of James Clarke)*

If you should seek a peace that  
cannot be taken away from you,  
find that quiet place deep  
within your soul where lions and  
doves lie down together,  
your brothers and sisters dwell  
free of all division, joined in  
harmony by the inexhaustible  
Spirit. In that sacred place  
nothing is veiled, and the only



happiness is dancing forever  
in pure jubilation around  
the altar of love.

## **Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus**

### **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 — Resurrection All Around Us (tune Ode to Joy VU #232)**

1. Resurrection all around us, hearts arise and leap for joy.  
Hope eternal grows within us, voices silenced now employ.  
Live in joy of new beginnings, live in harmony and love,  
Finding strength to meet each trial, reaching others with a smile.
2. Being human, honouring Jesus, in a covenant of grace,  
Living the divine commandment—one with all the human race.  
Leading strong for peace and justice, silencing the hate and fear,  
Finding ways to work together, keeping voice and vision clear.
3. Celebrate the light within us, love divine and human spark,  
Reaching out to be inclusive, everyone a work of art.  
Light the flame of love around us, echoing through the stars above,  
Holding hands, let peace surround us, being human, being love.

### **Benediction**

May we walk with God...

**And live with God...**

And remain with God...

**Now and forever.**

**Amen.**

### **Hymn — Go Now in Peace**

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.  
God will go with you each hour ev'ry day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.  
Know God will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

**Postlude — Steal Away** (*African-American Spiritual*) — *Suzanne Flewelling and Tom Watson*

**Welcomers:** Vivian and Havey Andrews

**Counters:** Ruth Sproule, Mary Lloyd

**Worship Schedule**

May 25 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	Social Justice & Outreach
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	UCC 100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Rev. Tom Watson & Lisa Leffler
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Trinity Sunday	Rev. Tom Watson

Council Meeting June 4<sup>th</sup>. Please reach out to a Council member if there is a concern or question to be shared with Council.