



***Celebrating
180 Years***



October 19, 2025

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church
Sunday October 19, 2025**

*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson
Ministry of Music: Colleen Weber*

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship

There is a time for all things...

A time to work and a time to play...

A time to rake leaves, and a time to watch the geese fly high overhead...

A time to pause and reflect upon the goodness of life.

And so we pause in this place of worship...

And give thanks for God's abundance!

Hymn — All Praise to You VU 297

1. All praise to you, O God of all creation:
You made the world, and it is yours alone.
The planet earth you spun in its location
Amid the stars adorning heaven's dome.
We lease the earth but for a life's duration,
Yet for this life it is our cherished home.

2. With wondrous grace you clothed the earth in splendor,
With teeming life you filled the sea and land.
Instill in us a sense of awe and wonder
When we behold the bounty of your hand.
Then when we hear the voice of bird or thunder,
We hear the voice our faith can understand.

3. To tend the earth is our entrusted duty,
For earth is ours to use and not abuse.
O gracious God, true source of all resources,
Forgive the greed that wields destruction's sword.
Then let us serve as wise and faithful stewards
While earth gives glory to creation's Lord.

Gathering Prayer:

Gracious God, who has fashioned all that surrounds us, who clothes the hillsides with colours, who guided the birds on their annual migratory journeys, and who graces each of our lives with an abundance of good things: we come now in a time of refreshment and renewal. Bless us with a sense that you are at all times present in our lives. Amen.

Children's Time: Who swallowed Jonah? You can't run away from God.

Ministry of Music — Appalachian Meditation *by Donald Lee Moore*

Reflection — Forty Days in Vegas

Thanks to Ann Ward and the children for a wonderful play about the story of Jonah.

In that story, God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, which was known in its day as "Sin City"—a place of wickedness and depravity.

The place that is known today as "Sin City" is Las Vegas. The nickname originated in the early 1930s—the days of Al Capone and all the gangsters— due to the legalization of gambling and the growth of casinos. The city was actually started by a group of mobsters.

So, I tried to imagine somebody from Toronto being asked by God to go to today's Sin City, Las Vegas, and clean the place up.

Jonah Brown lived in Toronto. He was a freelance journalist and had spent a lot of time exposing corruption. He lived in a small apartment, surrounded by stacks of notebooks and half-drunk coffee cups. He was always doing research and writing something.

One morning, he got an email from a mysterious sender: "Go to Las Vegas. Tell the people there to change their ways."

Jonah blinked. Las Vegas? The City of Sin? The city of neon lights and slot machines? "No way I'm doing that!" he shouted at his computer. He put the email into his Spam folder and went for a walk.

But when he got back, the message was there again. And it kept coming. Every day. Same words. Same mysterious sender. "Go to Las Vegas. Tell them to change their ways."

Jonah panicked. He booked a flight—not to Vegas, but to Vancouver. He figured if he went far enough west, maybe the message would stop.

On the plane, turbulence hit hard. The seatbelt light blinked. Passengers screamed. Jonah felt the guilt rise in his throat. Somehow, he knew this wasn't just a weather problem—it was a warning.

He stood up, trembling. "It's me," he said to the flight attendant. "I'm the reason this is happening."

"What are you talking about?" she asked, grabbing hold of the overhead bin to stabilize herself.

"I'm running from something I was told to do. I need to get off this plane! Now!"

They thought he was having a breakdown. The pilot made an emergency landing in Boise, Idaho. Jonah was escorted off the plane and into a holding room at the airport.

There, he sat alone. No phone. No laptop. Just silence.

Three days passed.

Jonah prayed. Not the kind of prayer you whisper before a job interview. The kind that comes from deep within. "I'm sorry," he said. "I'll go. Just get me out of this."

On the third day, the door opened. A security guard handed him his things. "You're free to go," she said. "No charges. Just...just go!"

Jonah didn't ask questions. He booked a ticket to Las Vegas.

When he arrived, the city was buzzing. Tourists, gamblers, influencers live-streaming their every move. Jonah walked straight to the strip, climbed onto a bench, and began to shout:
"You've got 40 days to change! This city's headed for collapse.!"

People stopped. Some took videos with their cell phones. Some pointed at him and laughed. But word spread. A local news station picked up the story. Then a podcast. Then a viral TikTok video.

And something strange happened. People began to listen.

Casino owners were the first to pay attention. They pledged to donate profits to recovery from gambling addiction. Influencers started promoting mental health instead of luxury brands. Even the mayor issued a city-wide day of reflection.

Jonah watched it all unfold from a motel room, scrolling through headlines. He should've been thrilled. But he wasn't. He was angry.

"I knew you'd forgive them," he muttered. "I knew that in the end you'd go soft."

He rented a car, left the city and drove into the desert. Parked his car under a billboard. The sun blazed. Jonah sulked.

Then, a miracle: a food truck pulled up out of nowhere. The driver handed Jonah a cold drink and parked nearby, shading his car from the sun.

Jonah smiled. For the first time in days, he felt peace.

The next morning, the truck was gone. The sun returned, hotter than ever. Jonah cursed the heat. Cursed the truck. Cursed the city.

And then he heard it. A voice. Not booming. Not dramatic. Just...calm.

"You cared about that food truck. You didn't build it. You didn't pay for it. But you were grateful for the food, and for the shade it offered from the heat. Should I not care about a city full of people who are finally trying to change?"

Jonah was stunned. He sat in silence.

The desert stretched before him. The city glimmered in the distance.

And somewhere inside, something shifted.

Hymn — Take, O Take Me as I Am MV 85
(verses 2 and 3 composed by Tom Watson)

1. Take, O take me as I am.
Summon out what I shall be;
Set your seal upon my heart
And live in me.

2. Guide, O guide me when it's dark,
Speak the truth that sets me free;
Lift my eyes when hope feels dim
And live in me.

3. Hold, O hold me in your love,
Shape my soul with mercy's flame;
Write your promise deep within,
And live in me.

(repeat verse 1)

Take, O take me as I am.
Summon out what I shall be;
Set your seal upon my heart
And live in me.

Sharing our Joys and Concerns

- **Birthdays**

- Karen Smillie celebrates on October 19th
- Elmer Shortt celebrates on October 22nd
- Joyce Keizerwaard celebrates on October 25th

Poem — When Autumn Leaves Fall *by Tom Watson*

When autumn leaves fall...

When autumn leaves drift
 down, they're like memories
in motion—subtle reminders
 that all things change.

Despite being an oasis of bright,
 sunny days and cool, crisp nights,
autumn is the signal that summer
 is drawing to an end, and soon
what falls will be snowflakes—
 pure, white, silent.

Our own lives mirror this
autumnal transition, bringing
back memories of all those
who, in quiet or bold ways,
shaped who we are.

We're drawn to reflect on those
wonderfully precious earlier days,
pause, and say a heartfelt prayer
for how blessed our lives have been.

And so, when autumn leaves fall...
we fall into gratitude.

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 — Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love VU 593

(refrain) Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,
Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends, silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them. *(refrain)*
2. Neighbors are rich and poor, varied in color and race,
Neighbors are near and far away. *(refrain)*
3. These are the ones we should serve, these are the ones we should love,
All these are neighbors to us and you. *(refrain)*
4. Kneel at the feet of our friends, silently washing their feet,
This is the way we should live with you. *(refrain)*

Benediction

Blessed with the grace of our faith...

May we be strengthened to serve.

We go forth to be a light in our world...

Serving with love and courage.

Go in peace.

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, within, around, above.

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

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude — Though I May Speak (*Colleen Weber & Tom Watson*)

1. Though I may speak with bravest fire,
And have the gift to all inspire,
And have not love, my words are vain;
As sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

2. Though I may give all I possess,
And striving so my love profess,
But not be given by love within,
The profit soon turns strangely thin.

3. Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
Our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
By this we worship and are freed.

Welcomers: Mary Lloyd, Annie Denny

Counters: Allan Hons, Phil Brown

Worship Schedule

October 26 th	Melville's Anniversary	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
November 2 nd	21 st after Pentecost	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
November 9 th	22 nd after Pentecost	Rev. Tom Watson
November 16 th	23 rd after Pentecost	Rev. Linda Butler

Council Meeting Nov. 5, & Dec. 3. Please reach out to a Council member if there is a concern or question to be shared with Council.