



## Celebrating 180 Years



**November 23, 2025**

### Melville United Church

300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9

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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

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**Melville United Church**  
**Sunday, November 23, 2025**

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

**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**

Life is a journey. A journey of becoming.

**In our journey, we move from one moment to the next.**

We pause, once in a while, to be filled with wonder at the passing of time...

**And at the delicate beauty that surrounds us as seasons turn.**

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

**And give thanks!**

**Hymn — Morning Has Broken VU 409**

1. Morning has broken like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!

2. Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3. Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

**Gathering Prayer:**

**Gracious God, as we gather here this day, we give thanks for the beauty held in the very heart of life—in each new morning, in our relationships, in every step of life's journey. Help us to treasure all of it, and to look with faith and hope to each new day. Amen.**

### **Hymn — Each Blade of Grass MV 37**

1. Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,  
The waves that sweep across a distant shore,  
Make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,  
A forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,  
Make full the circle of God.

2. Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,  
The buzz that echoes from a honeycomb,  
Make full the circle of God.  
Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry outstretched hand,  
The wind that leaps and sails across the land,  
Make full the circle of God.

3. Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,  
The joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,  
Make full the circle of God.  
Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,  
All form the beauty of this vast array,  
Making full the circle of God.

### **Children's Time**

#### **Reading — Luke 17:5-10** *reader Bob Foster*

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

"Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table?' Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?'

"Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"

#### **Sermon — Doing What We Ought to Do**

The other day, I was recalling a time when I served on the Chancellor's Council of Victoria University in Toronto...and Michael Enright came as guest speaker to a meeting.

At the time, Michael Enright was the host of CBC's Sunday Edition. I really enjoyed that program, so after lunch I had a 5 minute conversation with him, during which I said, "You know, Michael, sometimes I hate to go to church on Sunday mornings because I have to miss your program."

He said that a short time ago he received an e-mail from a minister in Weyburn, Saskatchewan who said that he wants to move the service into the parking lot so that the congregation can listen to Enright on their car radios, as an alternative to his sermons.

Now, I don't want to give you any ideas. I just thought it was an interesting approach.

So who among you, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done."

At first blush, that's a tough text to work with. The notion of our being slaves just doesn't sit comfortably. So let's try it this way.

Everyone here will know that by the time children are...say, 3 years old...they're well on their way to developing a mind of their own, and it comes out in interesting ways.

When my great-granddaughter, Remy, was almost 3, her mother Katie said to her, "Remy, come with me for a few minutes. You need to get your pyjamas on." To which Remy replied, "Not yet, mum, I have to tell Dad something, okay!"

That kind of situation, between a parent and a young child, is just ripe for a stand-off. Because, after all, the parent is supposed to be the boss...right...and the child is supposed to obey...right?

It's not exactly the same as a master/slave relationship, but it certainly is one of authority versus whatever you take to be the opposite of authority—obedience, I suppose.

Katie handled the situation quite calmly. She allowed Remy to go and tell her dad whatever it was that was on her little mind. Then she quietly took her by the hand and into another room to do what she had suggested needed doing in the first place.

But, as I said, those kinds of situations provide the ground for stand-offs.

The late Milton Erickson was an American psychiatrist and psychologist specializing in family therapy. He wrote the following story.

One Sunday, my wife Betty and I were reading the newspaper. Our young daughter Kristi—who was about 2 and a half at the time—walked up to her mother, grabbed the newspaper and threw it on the floor.

Her mother said, "Kristi, that wasn't very nice. Pick up the paper and give it back to Mommy. And tell me you're sorry."

"I don't has to!" replied Kristi.

Other members of the family gave Kristi the same advice and got the same reply from her: "I don't has to!"

So I told Betty to pick up Kristi and put her in her bedroom. I lay down on the bed and Betty propped Kristi on the bed beside me. Kristi looked at me contemptuously. She started to scramble off, but I had hold of her ankle. She said, "Wet me woose."

I said, "I don't has to."

That lasted 4 hours.

She kicked and struggled. Pretty soon she freed one ankle. I got hold of the other. It was a desperate fight—like a silent fight between 2 titans. At the end of 4 hours, she knew that she was the loser and said, "I go pick up the paper and give it to Mommy."

And that's when the axe fell. I replied, "You don't has to."

She threw her brain into higher gear and said, "I go pick up the paper. I give it to Mommy. I tell Mommy sorry."

And I repeated, "You don't has to."

She shifted into full gear. "I pick up paper. I want pick up paper. I want to tell Mommy sorry."

I said, "Okay. Fine."

It's against that kind of backdrop that we have to understand today's reading.

So who among you, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done."

Eventually we have to come, as little Kristi did, to the realization that we do something not because somebody ordered us to do something, but because we want to do it.

In his parable, Jesus asks, "Which one of you would say to your slave who has just come in from tending the sheep, 'Hey buddy, take a load off and sit yourself down in my chair while I go fix some grub and wait on you hand and foot?'"

"And which one of you would thank a slave simply for doing what you commanded him in the first place?"

"Of course, you wouldn't do any such thing! Which is why when you follow all that I have commanded you to do, you say, "Right on! We are only following orders."

And what were Jesus' orders? That his followers should go out and love the world in his name—be kind, and forgiving, and humble, and show compassion, and care for each other, and treat our neighbour the same way we would like to be treated.

When we finally get that, we don't do it because we have been ordered to do it, but because we see it's what we ought to do.

The one giving the orders is not some tyrant master...and not even a parent struggling to maintain control over a child...but Jesus himself—the one who loves the world enough to give himself up for it.

We don't "has to do" anything. But if we love him, and love the people he came to serve, we will do what Jesus commands without hesitation.

Milton Erickson's story continues. We pick it up 10 years later.

Ten years later, says Erickson, my 2 younger girls yelled at their mother. I called them and said, "Go stand on the rug. I don't think it's nice to yell at your mother. Stand there and think it over and see if you agree with me."

Kristi said, "I could stand here all night."

I continued writing on a manuscript upon which I was working. An hour later, I turned to Kristi. Even one hour is tiring. I turned back and said, "Even the hands of the clock seem to be moving slowly."

Half an hour later than that, I turned again and said, "I think that was a very stupid remark you made to your mother. I don't think it's right to yell at your mother that way."

She collapsed in my lap and said, "Neither do I." And she began to sob.

Ten years had gone by. Kristi was 12 now. Ten years between these 2 disciplining sessions.

I disciplined her once more, when she was 15. Three times only. No more was ever needed. And it was only out of love for her that those disciplines took place.

Who's serving whom?

You and I are those who go out to serve each other, and the world around us, not because we have to, because it's the thing we ought to do...because of the love of the one who calls us to be his followers.

**Anthem — With Heart and Hands** by John Rutter

*Congregation is invited to sing along with the choir in the last part:*

Now thank we all our God,  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom this world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.  
Amen.

**Sharing our Joys and Concerns**

- Birthdays
  - Nancy Kruger celebrates on Nov. 24th

**Poem — The Quieting Month** *by Tom Watson*

November's muted breath  
    soothes our souls in the interlude  
beyond autumn's final blaze—  
    a landscape pared to essence,  
bare branches etched in sky.

The wind no longer dances,  
    it lingers, low and knowing.  
Fields rest, frost-laced,  
    and the earth begins its inward turn,  
a slow descent into silence.

We gather stories,  
    trace the outlines of memory  
in the early dusk.  
    Evenings are filled with  
gratitude and longing.

This month's grace of  
    stillness unveils the beauty  
of what remains  
    when all else falls away—  
each breath a quiet vow  
    to hold, to honor, to begin again.

**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 — We Are Marching VU 646**

1. We are marching in the light of God,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, marching, marching,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, marching, marching,

We are marching in the light of God.

2. We are living in the love of God,  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living in the love of God,  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living, living, living,  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living, living, living,  
We are living in the love of God.

3. Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba, hamba,  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba, hamba,  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

4. We are dancing in the joy of God,  
We are dancing in the joy of God.  
We are dancing in the joy of God,  
We are dancing in the joy of God.  
We are dancing, dancing, dancing,  
We are dancing in the love of God.  
We are dancing, dancing, dancing,  
We are dancing in the love of God.

### **Benediction**

As we go our separate ways from this time of worship...

**May we hold tightly to each other...**

Keeping alive faith and hope for each new day that comes...

**And trusting the gracious spirit of God to guide us always.**

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 — Go Gently, Go Lightly** *performed by Colleen Weber & Tom Watson*

**Welcomer:** Doreen and Larry Broome

**Counters:** Allan Hons, Phil Brown

**Worship Schedule**

November 30 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> of Advent	Rev. Linda Butler
December 7 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> of Advent	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
December 14 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> of Advent	Rev. Felicia Urbanski
December 21 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> of Advent	Rev. Linda Butler

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