



November 9, 2025

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church
Sunday November 9, 2025**

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

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship (*from a Remembrance Day poem by Tom Watson*)

The poppy worn...scarlet...red...

A reminder of war...comrades dead.

The wind blows cold across the place...

Where they are laid—silent, sacred space.

The trumpet sounds...shrill and clear...

An echo of the pain of war...the cost of fear.

A call from God for us to find...

New paths to peace...our wars to end.

Hymn — Make Me a Channel of Your Peace VU 684

1. Make me a channel of your peace:

Where there is hatred let me bring your love;

Where there is injury, your healing power,

And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

(refrain) O Spirit, grant that I may never seek

So much to be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love with all my soul.

2. Make me a channel of your peace:

Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;

Where there is darkness, only light,

And where there's sadness, ever joy. (refrain)

3. Make me a channel of your peace.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

In giving to all that we receive,

And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Prayer of Approach:

Gracious God, this is a day upon which we gather to remember. By poppies worn, by Last Post played, by names of loved ones and friends lost, we remember. But remembering is not complete without a search for new ways. Show us those ways. Help us remember forward to

a world restored. Make us channels of your peace. In the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Children's Time

Ministry of Music — A Pittance of Time *by Terry Kelly (Colleen Weber, Barry Rawn and Tom Watson)*

Reading — Isaiah 2:2-4 *reader John Cuming*

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Reflection — John McCrae's Gift

Janet McCrae smiled as she proudly showed her newborn son, John, to her husband, David. The date was November 30, 1872. The place—Guelph, Ontario, where David carried on the family wool business.

Janet had inherited a love of poetry from her father, a Presbyterian minister, and spent many hours reading to John, and his young brother and sister. But as she did, she would not realize that, one day, John would write a poem which would find its way into the hearts of people the world over.

After public school, John went to Guelph Collegiate Institute. By this time, he had acquired his father's interest in military things, so he joined the Highland Cadet Corps and became a bugler and, later, a gunner in the local militia.

John was a talented student, with a desire to become a doctor. His academic record won him a scholarship to study at the University of Toronto. So, at the age of 18, he was off to University of Toronto, and there became close friends with a girl named Alice McRae. Unfortunately, Alice was stricken with one of the dread diseases of the time—typhoid fever. And when she died, it was John's first personal encounter with death.

In a letter home to his mother, John writes of his feelings.

Dear Mom:

Her name was Alice. She was beautiful. A friend.

And now she's gone. Forever.

Alice's death touched John so deeply that he was never to marry.

By the age of 27, Dr. John McCrae was assistant pathologist at Montreal General Hospital. But then, in 1899, the Boer War began in South Africa, and he volunteered for service.

As an officer, he was clever and popular. But, once again, he was in close contact with all too much

death, and was glad to see the end of the war, upon which he returned to Montreal, to continue his work as a doctor.

Six foot tall, 180 pounds, with a natural smile that lit up any room he entered, and a great knack for telling stories, John was well-liked by everyone he met.

But, in 1914, World War I was once again to bring war into his life. Very soon, John was aboard a ship, bound for England. He was appointed surgeon to the First Brigade of the Canadian Artillery Corps...and then it was off to Flanders, France, where his unit took part in the battles of Ypres.

Life in the trenches was cold, dirty, horrible. Sometimes the dead or wounded actually rolled down the bank, into his dugout, from above. While he dressed hundreds of wounded, others filled nearby burial plots with the bodies of dead soldiers. It was a situation that he could only describe as a nightmare.

But it was here, in the nightmare trenches of Ypres, that John McCrae was to write the poem for which he is still remembered, over a century later.

Early on the morning of May 3, 1915, tired in body, sick of the fighting, John sat in his bunker. For 17 days, he had been on the firing line, without ever taking off his clothing. The enemy bombardment was steady and unrelenting.

From his position on the road along the canal, McCrae wrote a letter home:

"I saw all the tragedies of war right here. A wagon, or a bunch of horses, or a stray man, would get to the road just in time for a shell. One could see the absolute knockout. Or worse yet, at night one could hear the tragedy—a horse screaming, a soldier moaning."

The night before, a close friend had been blown to bits by an 8-inch shell. Now, as he sat in the early morning sunshine, he could hear the larks singing between the crash of the guns. He could see the rows of crosses in the nearby cemetery. And, in between the rows of crosses, the ground lay thick with scarlet poppies.

With that scene in his mind, McCrae he was moved to write:

In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row..

We'll hear the rest of the poem later. It's a staple for a Remembrance Sunday.

The poem was short. 15 lines. But the words of "In Flanders Fields" capture the great contrasts of his surrounding environment.

Beautiful poppies blowing between the rows of crosses.
Gunfire drowning out the songs of the larks.

And from the graves of those who have died, McCrae imagines a torch being passed to those who will now take up the quarrel with the foe, and prevent their death from being in vain.

McCrae sent his poem to a British weekly magazine called The Spectator, but they declined to publish it. However, many months later, Punch, a comedy magazine did, and "In Flanders Fields" quickly became a hit with soldier and civilian alike.

As Moina Michael, an American in charge of a YWCA hospital in New York City, thought about the poem, she was struck by the idea of the poppy as a symbol. So she bought some real ones and gave them to people to wear on Armistice Day.

Then Anne Guerin, one of the women in her hostel, took the idea back to France, and set war widows and orphans to work, making artificial poppies to raise funds for areas of their country left devastated by war.

By 1921, the British Legion had picked up the idea. And by 1922, disabled veterans all over the world were being employed to make poppies. And each Remembrance Day since, we wear the poppy, as a symbolic reminder of those who gave their lives for their country, and with the hope for a world of peace that would be given birth by those to whom they threw the torch.

"In Flanders Fields" spoke of reality and hope. Unfortunately, in John McCrae's own life, reality won out. This once cheerful man was so changed by the horrors of war that he was never again the same. His optimistic spirit had been broken.

At the age of 46 he died...just a few months before the end of World War II...his body bearing the effects of life in the trenches, and the poison gas used by the enemy. A tragic end to one whom a stained glass window in McGill University calls, "Pathologist, Poet, Soldier, Physician, Man among Men."

Yes, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, once again this Remembrance Day, we remember. By poem and by poppy, you help us to remember the heroic struggle of Canadians who served with you in World War I, and in other wars since.

And as we remember, you continue to live among us. We remember. We will not forget!

Hymn — Put Peace into Each Other's Hands MV 173

1. Put peace into each other's hands

And like a treasure hold it;
Protect it like a candle flame,
With tenderness enfold it.

2. Put peace into each other's hands

With loving expectation;
Be gentle in your words and ways,
In touch with God's creation.

3. Put peace into each other's hands,

Like bread we break for sharing;
Look people warmly in the eye:
Our life is meant for caring.

4. Give thanks for strong yet tender hands,

Held out in trust and blessing.
Where words fall short, let hands speak out,
The heights of love expressing.

5. Reach out in friendship, stay with faith

In touch with those around you.
Put peace into each other's hands;
The peace that sought and found you.

Sharing our Joys and Concerns

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

A TIME OF REMEMBERING

"10th Highland Light Infantry" — Mark Cripps, piper

Hymn — God! As With Silent Hearts (vv. 1 and 2) VU 527

1. God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind
How hate and war diminish humankind,
We pause, and seek in worship to increase
Our knowledge of the things that make for peace.

2. Hallow our will as humbly we recall
The lives of those who gave and give their all.
We thank you, God, for women, children, men
Who seek to serve in love, today as then.

(NOTE: During this hymn, any veterans of former wars are invited to come to the front for this portion of our worship service)

Anthem — In Flanders Fields *music by Greta H. Hurley, lyrics by Lt. Col. John McCrae*

In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

MOMENTS OF SILENT REMEMBERING

We pause now, to think about all those who were wounded, or died, fighting for freedom for our world.

We remember them and their sacrifice.

Reading of the Honour Roll — World Wars I and II *reader Martha Duncan*

[moment of silence]

We think about those whose families have been changed by war—loved ones killed or permanently handicapped; people forced to flee to safety, never to return to their homes again. We think of their courage, their suffering, and their pain.

We remember them...and pray that the world may turn to peace, and eliminate this human suffering.

[moment of silence]

THE LAST POST — Kaillie Rawn, trumpet

----- [silence] -----

"Flowers of the Forest" — Mark Cripps, piper

ROUSE — Kaillie Rawn, trumpet

Hymn — God! As With Silent Hearts (vv. 3 and 4) VU 527

3. Give us beep faith to comfort those who mourn,
High hope to share with all the newly born,
Strong love in our pursuit of human worth:
"Lest we forget" the future of this earth.

4. So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in power,
Teach us to coax the plant of peace to flower.
May we, impassioned by your living Word,
Remember forward to a world restored.

Lighting the "Peace" Candle

We light this candle as a symbol of our hope for a world of peace. May its light burn brightly, and may other lights join it, until all the earth knows the peace of God.

May it be so. Amen.

Hymn — O God, Our Help in Ages Past VU 806

1. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.
2. Under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.
4. A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone,

Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.

6. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.

Benediction (from the writings of the late Oscar Romero, Archbishop in San Salvador)

Peace is not the product of terror or fear.

Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.

Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.

Peace is the generous contribution of all to the good of all.

Peace is dynamism.

Peace is generosity.

It is right...and it is duty.

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 - O Day of Peace *arranged by Charles Callahan based on JERUSALEM by C.H.H. Parry*

Welcomers: Linda and Norm Porritt

Counters: Mary Lloyd, Phil Brown

Worship Schedule

November 16 th	23 rd after Pentecost	Rev. Linda Butler
November 23 rd	Reign of Christ Sunday	Rev. Tom Watson
November 30 th	1 st of Advent	Rev. Linda Butler
December 7	2 nd of Advent	Rev. Jeff Hawkins

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