



**Celebrating  
180 Years**



**December 28, 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](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com)  
[www.melvilleunited.com](http://www.melvilleunited.com)

**Melville United Church  
Sunday December 28, 2025**

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

**Prelude**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**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**

Today, as this old year draws to a close, we pause to reflect...

**To ponder the year gone by—its challenges and its successes.**

Still fresh in our minds are those wonderful sprinkles of grace...

**Uplifting moments, times when love carried us through.**

For all that was, and all that is to come, God.

**Hymn — Arise, Your Light Is Come VU 79**

1. Arise, your light is come!

The Spirit's call obey;

Show forth the glory of your God

Which shines on you today.

2. Arise, your light is come!

Fling wide the prison door;

Proclaim the captive's liberty,

Good tidings to the poor.

3. Arise, your light is come!

All you in sorrow born,

Bind up the brokenhearted ones

And comfort those who mourn.

4. Arise, your light is come!

The mountains burst in song!

Rise up like eagles on the wing,

God's power will make us strong.

**Gathering Prayer:**

**Creator of all the years and seasons of our lives, we gather in this sacred place near the end of another year. Our hearts are filled with thanks for the days that have been, and with hope for days that await us. Bless our gathering in worship this morning. Amen.**

## **Hymn — All Poor Ones and Humble                      VU 68**

All poor ones and humble and all those who stumble,  
Come hastening and feel not afraid,  
For Jesus our treasure, with love past all measure,  
In lowly poor manger was laid.  
Though wise men who found him  
Laid rich gifts around him  
Yet oxen they gave him their hay,  
And Jesus in beauty accepted their duty,  
Contented in manger he lay.

(refrain) Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him,  
Our service he ne'er can despise,  
Whose love still is able to show us that stable,  
Where softly in manger he lies.

2. The Christ Child will lead us,  
The Good Shepherd feed us  
And with us abide till his day.  
Then hatred he'll banish,  
Then sorrow will vanish,  
And death and despair flee away.  
And he shall reign ever,  
And nothing shall sever  
From us the great love of our King.  
His peace and his pity shall bless his fair city,  
His praises we ever shall sing. (refrain)

## **Children's Time**

**Ministry of Music — When the Saviour Jesus Christ, (or good Joseph, listen to me) by French Noel by Jean-Francois Dandrieu**

## **Reading — John 1:1-5, 14 Reader: Alison Rainford**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## **Sermon: Life in Our Town...Home for Christmas**

Well, it's been a busy week in Our Town. Perhaps not quite as busy, for most folks, as it was before Christmas but for others, the busyness of the Christmas season continues after that special day.

On Friday morning at coffee at Al's Café, Pastor Willy Flugel—Willy's the pastor over at The Church of the Reluctant Apostle—was telling the other old guys how busy he'd been. "A service last Sunday, and then Christmas Eve on Wednesday, and now it's Friday already. Which means it's only two days until I have to do another service. And I still have to work out this Sunday's sermon."

Jack Cameron said, "Didn't you speak over at the Presbyterian Church in Pine Hollow a couple of weeks ago?"

"Yes, I did, Jack."

"Well, couldn't you use the sermon you gave over there?"

"Well, not really, Jack. You see that was before Christmas. And, anyway, another couple from this congregation went along with Etta and me, so those three people have already heard that sermon."

"I don't see that as a problem, Willy," replied Jack, "just explain to the folks that you're taking them back to something that happened a couple of weeks before Christmas, and apologize to those who have heard the sermon before for the re-run."

"Hmm," said Willy, "that sure would help out...save me quite a bit of time too..."

Now I get the point of all that discussion. So I'm going to take a tip from it, and tell you that I wrote this morning's Life in Our Town story to tell at an event at Trinity United in Guelph.

And I also apologize to the three people who already heard the story...and hope they won't mind the re-run.

The story takes place two weeks before Christmas. At the time when people were busy buying gifts for special folks on their list.

However, in Our Town, Christmas isn't just about gifts—it's about remembering what matters. And that's really what this story is all about.

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So here's the time setting...two weeks before Christmas. I invite you to think back to that, if you will.

As is often the case, Hank Vickers is once again stuck over just the right gift to get for Mildred.

The problem is that Mildred is...as they say...gettin' on...so she really doesn't need much. As a matter of fact, Hank has been suggesting lately that they need to do a household purge—get rid of stuff they never use.

So he went around the house and made a list of Mildred's excesses.

- Boxes of old pictures of relatives.
- A slew of knickknacks—their main purpose...gathering dust.
- Dishes they never use.
- Dresses Mildred hasn't worn for 5 or 6 years.
- Shoes—racks of shoes.
- Sweaters. 43 sweaters. Some of them he couldn't remember Mildred ever wearing.

When he showed the list to Mildred, she looked it over, and then said, "Hank, where's the list of your things that we can purge?"

Hank replied, "I really don't have much excess stuff, Mildred. I thought we'd purge your things and go from there."

Right then, by the look on Mildred's face, Hank realized he was in over his head, so he said, "Well, Mildred, it was just a thought."

Anyway, back to Hank's Christmas gift for Mildred dilemma.  
He roams the aisles at Casey's Hardware, looking for ideas.  
Lawnmower blades...seem a bit too seasonal.  
Snow shovel...the one Mildred's using still has life in it.

He pauses for a moment and looks at the kitchen sinks Casey has on sale. But the kitchen sink that Mildred uses was in the house when they bought it, so Hank's sure that every time Mildred does the dishes in it she's somewhat nostalgic...and he doesn't want to spoil that for her.

As you might realize, Hank's a very thoughtful guy.

Anyway, having exhausted the possibilities at Casey's Hardware, including that kitchen sink idea, Hank heads for The Everything But store.

On the way there, Hank thinks back to former gifts he had bought for Mildred.

- The set of socket wrenches...for the small jobs. A matching pipe wrench she can use on the bigger jobs.
- The bottle opener with her name engraved on the handle.
- The lawn edger with the green casing—Mildred's favourite colour.
- The gym membership at Curves—Just for Women—Gym.
- The decorative support hose.
- The kazoo he got Mildred a few years back, when she mused about taking up a musical instrument. Hank figured that just in case Mildred was tone deaf, it was best to start small and work up.

Yes there had been some misses...but there was that big hit when Hank really outdid himself. The "pièce de résistance" gift. The little butterfly tattoo he got Mildred from Alphonso's Body Piercing and Tattoo Parlour in the city.

He pulls up in front of The Everything But store, turns off the ignition, and just sits there. Thinking.

His thoughts take him back in time. To when he first met Mildred. They were only 15 at the time. She had come here with her parents when they emigrated from England. From a quaint little village called Bumbleshire-by-the-Sea. In Lancashire.

They met at Youth Group at The Church of the Reluctant Apostle. Hank was dazzled when he saw her, went home and told his mom, "Tonight I met the woman I'm going to marry."

They talked at the next few Youth Group meetings. Then, about a month or so later, he walked her home after. Then one night Hank got up the nerve to kiss Mildred. On the stairs behind the choir loft at the church.

They were married 5 years later. When they were 20.

"My," thought Hank, "it sure was my lucky day when I met Mildred. All the years we've spent together and she can still knock me over with a single look from across a crowded room. I know I can be an annoying idiot sometimes, but if I have to be an idiot, I want to be her idiot."

Suddenly, Hank's reverie is jolted by the memory of the day last summer when Mildred had to be rushed to the hospital by ambulance. First time he recalls her ever being sick. Hank was scared of what he'd learn when he went into her hospital room when he got there.

Turned out it wasn't life-threatening. Just a run-in with diverticulitis. Thank goodness for that...but it really shook Hank. He realized how much Mildred meant to him.

So instead of going into The Everything But store when he gets out of the car, he crosses the street to another place. Twenty minutes later, he walks out smiling and struts to the car.

When Hank gets home, Mildred's peeling potatoes at the kitchen sink. As he walks in he's whistling. Mildred turns and says, "I don't hear you whistling very often, Hank. What's up?" "Oh, nothing, Mildred. Nothing, really."

He takes an envelope from his coat pocket and lays it on the kitchen table...then walks to the closet to hang up his coat.

When he comes back, he goes up behind Mildred, and gives her a big hug. She turns around and says, "That felt good, Hank! Maybe..."

Hank takes her by the hand and moves toward the kitchen table. When they're both seated, Hank slides the envelope over to her.

"What's this?" Mildred asked.

"It's a Christmas gift, Mildred. Open it."

"But there's still two weeks until Christmas, Hank..."

Hank says, "Mildred...just open the envelope."

Inside is a piece of paper. Folded. As she begins to unfold it, she sees the top of the page: Adams Travel Agency. Her eyes get big. "A travel voucher from Adams Travel Agency? Hank, where are we going?"

"Where you have always wanted to go, Mildred."

"To England!" Mildred gasps. "To England, Hank. To Bumbleshire-by-the-Sea where we came from. The place my folks and I always called Home."

"Right, Mildred, I'm going to take you home for Christmas."

Mildred starts to cry. Big tears running down her cheek. "Oh, Hank. Do you know how much this means to me?"

Hank puts his hand on hers and smiles.

This time, Mildred takes Hank's hand and leads him towards the stairs.

"Where we going, Mildred?"

"Oh," replies Mildred, "I just thought maybe we should get a head start on packing." She snuggles in close to him.

As they climb the stairs, Bing Crosby is on the radio, singing "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

I'll be home for Christmas,

You can count on me.

Please have snow and mistletoe

And presents on the tree.

I'll be home for Christmas...

Well, that's all the news from Our Town for this week—where sometimes the best gift...isn't a thing at all...but a journey home.

### **Hymn —What Child is This VU 74**

1. What Child is this, who laid to rest,

On Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,

While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ, the King,

Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

The Babe, the Son of Mary!

2. Why lies he in such mean estate,

Where ox and ass are feeding?

Good Christian, fear: for sinners here

The silent Word is pleading.

This, this is Christ, the King,

Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

The Babe, the Son of Mary!

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,

Come one and all to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings;

Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ, the King,

Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

The Babe, the Son of Mary!

### **Sharing our Joys and Concerns**

- **Birthdays**

- Jim Nevett celebrates on Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>

**Poem — The Growing Edge** *by Tom Watson*

When wildflowers fade,  
their seeds rest in the earth,  
    waiting for the breath of spring,  
    waiting for the gift of renewal,  
    waiting for life to begin again.

So too, when one dream dies,  
    another rises,  
    another spreads its wings,  
    another prepares to fly.

As this old year closes,  
we heed the counsel—  
"Look to the growing edge"—  
for the new year stands at the gate,  
a mystery ready to be born,  
    ready to be received,  
    ready to be blessed.

It is a time for wonder,  
a time for hope,  
a time to honour what has been  
and to trust the promise of tomorrow.

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

*(centered this morning in the following "Litany for a New Year")*

O God, who is the same yesterday, today and forever...

**We give you thanks for the year which now passes from our sight.**

Thank you for the joy we felt in those times when we danced and celebrated.

**For babies born, for loving embraces, for times which were glad and also those which were very ordinary, for moments of spontaneous hilarity and moments of silence ... we give you thanks, O God.**

Thank you for comfort in those times when tears ran like rivers down our cheeks.

**For the promise of your presence in times of death and grief, we give thanks. We release unto you those with whom we shared life's journey but who now rest from their labours.**

Thank you for the faithfulness we felt in the season of harvest.

**For burning bushes and mustard-seed moments of truth and enlightenment...for new opportunities that arose...for broken hearts restored...for prayers answered...for bodies healed from illness.**

Thank you for your mercy and forgiveness when we failed you, when we failed others, and when we failed ourselves.

**Heal us from memories of when we gave up too soon, when we did not take seriously the opportunities to make a difference, when we spoke when we should have been silent, and when we stayed silent when we should have spoken.**

Grant us the peace to live with the past. Grant us the faith and hope needed to take on the challenges of the future.

**Grant us the courage to make the most of every moment, and every opportunity, that is**



**presented to us in this wonderful season of TODAY!**

These things we ask in the name of Christ.

**Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **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 — I Am the Light of the World VU 87**

*(refrain)* I am the Light of the World

You people come and follow me.

If you follow and love, You'll learn the mystery

Of what you were meant to do and be.

1. When the song of the angels is stilled.

When the star in the sky is gone.

When the kings and the shepherds have found their way home.

The work of Christmas is begun! *(refrain)*

2. To find the lost and lonely one,

To heal that broken soul with love,

To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,

To feel the earth below the sky above! *(refrain)*

3. To free the prisoner from his chains,

To make the powerful care,

To rebuild the nations with strength and goodwill,

To see God's children everywhere. *(refrain)*

4. To bring hope to every task you do,

To dance at a baby's new birth,

To make music in an old person's heart,

And sing to the colors of the earth! *(refrain)*

### **Benediction**

We leave this place, ready for another new year...

**Listening, envisioning, responding to the call to a new time...**

Reaching out. Creating. Transforming.

**Participating fully in whatever newness that is laid before us.**

**Departing Hymn — New Year Song** *composed by Tom Watson*  
(tune *Auld Lang Syne*)

1 For all the joys that came our way  
Throughout these passing days,  
We raise our voices loud in song  
With thankful words of praise.

2. As to the sadness we still feel  
For those who went away,  
The gift they were to use will stay—  
A sacred memory.

3. And so, as now we turn the page  
Into another year,  
We join our hearts in warmest hope  
For days of peace and cheer.

4. May all we do be blessed by God—  
Faith, hope and love abide.  
With wish-filled hearts we raise this song  
To a Happy New Year!

**Postlude — Angels We Have Heard on High**

**Worship Schedule**

December 28 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas	Rev. Tom Watson
January 4 <sup>th</sup>	Epiphany Sunday	Rev. Jeff Hawkins
January 11 <sup>th</sup>	The Baptism of the Lord	Rev. Tom Watson
January 18 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Rev. Linda Butler

Council Meeting Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4. Please reach out to a Council member if there is a concern or question to be shared with Council.