



UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

Office: (306) 752-2288 Email: melfortuc@sasktel.net

Website: www.melfortunitedchurch.com

Worship Time: 10:30 AM

Ministers: All of us

Worship Leaders: Ryan, Rachelle, Alexis and Will Heavin

Music: Jodi Allen Corbett

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Mavis Busby

Caretaker: Faye Greier

ORDER OF WORSHIP

**April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday - Year B**

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

As we gather for worship today, we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANNIVERSARIES & CONCERNS:

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed!

Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed!

Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed!

Hallelujah!

Lighting the Christ candle

The risen Christ lives today!

All: We are witnesses to these things.

We sing praise to God incarnate.

All: May Christ's love burn within us!

OPENING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

God of grace and power,
we have longed and prepared for this joyous day:
on Ash Wednesday we humbled ourselves before you,
on Maundy Thursday we learnt a new commandment,
on Good Friday we cried at the foot of the cross,
on Holy Saturday we kept vigil,
and on this Blessed Sunday we rejoice in the risen power of
love, hope, and new life.

Make this rising real in our own lives.
Let us be people of love, hope, and new life.

Let us be people of joy.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

HYMN (VU 166) *"Joy Comes With the Dawn"*

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE: *(in unison)*

God of grace,
despair, pain, and fear are part of life;
sometimes we let them guide us.
Sometimes we let them hold us back from living your way,
and we lose sight of your strong love.
Help us be a brave and holy people,
living beyond fear.
Teach us to trust in your steadfast love.
Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

This is the good news:
God raised Jesus from death,
turning sorrow into joy and
despair into hope.
Hallelujah!

PRAYER RESPONSE (MV 64) *"Because You Came"*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

SPECIAL MUSIC:

*“Easter Hallelujah” by Leonard Cohen, Performed by Chris Corbett,
Accompanist Jodi Allen-Corbett*

*“People Arise” by Martin and Lantz, Performed by Melfort United Church
Choir, Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v1t1TqTggo>*

MINUTE FOR MISSION: “Part 2 – Jesse’s Story”

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

HEBREW READING:

Acts 10:34-43 *Peter’s Speech.*

GOSPEL READING:

John 20: 1-18 *The Empty Tomb.*

HYMN (VU 352) “I Danced In The Morning”

SERMON: “Traditions” by Ryan Heavin

A child, watching their mother prepare supper, asks, “Mom, why do you cut the end off the ham and put it on top before you cook it?”

“Because that’s how my mother prepared it.”

The child goes to her grandmother and asks the same question.

Grandmother replies, “Because that’s how my mother prepared it.” The child walks into the living room and ask great grandma, “Why did you cut the end off the ham and place it on top before you cooked it?”

The great grandmother replies, “because at the time, that’s the only way it would fit in the pot I had.”

When does contemporary become tradition? When does a new novel thing become traditional? At some point, all activities, processes, actions that were ‘brand new’, ‘cutting age’, ‘outside the box’ eventually becomes ‘old school’, ‘tried and true’, and traditional.

I come from a large family with its own traditions. As far back as I can remember, Christmas Eve was spent in Tisdale in my grandparents’ house, with all sorts of cousins, aunts and uncles, gathered together. We ate, played games, ate, put on Christmas concerts and ate. Later, that same gathering moved to my grandparents’ church. I don’t remember if it was to accommodate more people, or if it was more hosting than my grandparents wanted to handle. It was still eating and Christmas concerts and games and laughter, but the tradition shifted. Later yet, the gathering moved to my parents’ home. It brought different cousins and more aunts and uncles, but laughter was still a constant. As time has crept on, the gathering has moved to my siblings’ dwellings in southern

Saskatchewan. Some grandparents have passed, parents are now grandparents and great grandparents, cousins are parents, even nephews and nieces are parents! With this time of COVID, our family has tried to adapt in order to maintain our connections with seasonal holidays. Using Zoom meetings, a group video 'phone call', we actually had family from Florida to the Yukon and points in between conversing face to face. Because of the sheer geographic distance, this wouldn't have been achievable with our traditional family get together. Our church services have had to adapt to gathering restrictions as well. With Facebook Live services, YouTube recordings of anthems and incorporation of technology into Sunday worship, we maintain our connection to our local church family as best we can. It even allows us to include those long-time members of our congregation that no longer live in Melfort, yet can still participate in Sunday worship with us. This wouldn't have happened without the change from traditional church services. I say a big hello to Mrs. Noreen Tremblay, my kindergarten teacher! A family is not a place but is the group of people you accept and cherish, just like a church is not a place but your own Christian family. And traditions within these families can be molded and adapted to be as inclusive as possible.

There are traditions that are borne out of joy. Melfort just hosted its 93rd annual Music Festival, albeit in a restructured format from the previous 92 festivals. There were no live audiences watching, but performers still selected and practiced and polished and presented music and speech arts like it was a regular festival, were adjudicated and given feedback just like the traditional festival. Awards and bursaries were still given out and the final concert still took place, just virtually. Thanksgiving - how do you not have turkey at Thanksgiving? Unless you're a goose or ham and scalloped potatoes or a barbeque family. Some of my in-laws have a tradition of a fondue Thanksgiving. Easter has associated eggs with the emergence from the tomb and resurrection of Jesus. Eggs were formerly a forbidden food during the Lenten season, so people would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration. Last Sunday, the church hosted a Baptismal service, a symbolic action that signifies the new life God gives us as we become a member of faith community and church family. The sign of the cross on the baptized forehead with holy water or anointed oil receives the individual as a beloved child of God and the laying of hands is an expression of the acceptance of the church family to help in the spiritual growth of the precious child of the Lord.

There are traditions that are associated with loss and grieving. Remembrance Day has been honoured and celebrated not just as the end of the Great War but also as a day devoted to the emotional cost of conflict globally in the past, present and, unfortunately, the future. We adorn the poppy, observe a minute of silence, recite the moving poem 'In

Flanders Fields', by Dr. John McCrae, and stand in reverence to the performing of The Last Post. As Easter is a celebration of rebirth and resurrection, the days leading up to Easter are solemn reminders of the sacrifice and cost of that rebirth. We participate in Communion, the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. As written in the Song of Faith, we perform the sacrament of Holy Communion to remember not only the promise but also the price that Jesus paid for who he was, for what he did and said, and for the world's brokenness. I recently attending a virtual Catholic funeral. As a non-Catholic I was unfamiliar with the structure and the repetition, prayers and prayer responses, choral responses and the hand and body gestures within the service. But I understand how that repetitive structure and the memorized responses can be a source of calming solace to someone who may be grieving. Tradition can be relieving.

Church has many other traditions. whether it be with the layout of the service, responses to prayers, or traditional music. Growing up in this church, I always remember the advent hymn being "Light the advent candle one, now the waiting has begun". I don't even think its in the current version of Voices United. Hymn 7 'Hope is a Star', which I enjoy, is now what we commonly use for the Christmas season, but the change happened I guess so seamlessly, I don't remember when it did! On a recurring basis, the United Church takes it turn helping lead worship services at Parkland and Nirvana. Being the only church with a choir, our gift of voice and song is warmly received. We usually perform a prepared anthem but the crowd favourites are usually the time-honoured hymns. The Old Rugged Cross, Amazing Grace... one service I remember lasted an extra 20 minutes because of requests thrown out from the audience. It was really quite enjoyable. Incorporating new music into services challenges us and enriches us, but returning to old traditional hymns can help enliven others with memorable classics.

We use the Lord's Prayer in our church service and teach it to our Sunday school kids to memorize.

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses.

As we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

I didn't really recognize the value or feeling that this prayer can have until I was part of my first Parkland service. There were some members of the congregation that appeared to be asleep or contemplating inwardly or, because of medical issues, were unaware of the outside world. But once we started reciting the Lord's prayer, and many of those that I thought

were uninvolved with the service recited it along from memory. It really struck a chord with me the value of the memorized recitation, how the Lord's Prayer can find a common centre with us, and within us all.

We are in the midst of a very different period of life, with a tiny shimmer of light at the end of a tumultuous tunnel. There are some that have had great changes and adjustments. There are some that have experienced great joy but more that have experienced loss. We hold close to traditions for their calming reassurance and become anxious when they are lost or even changed. But much like the darkness we feel on Good Friday, there is light on Easter Sunday. In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 28, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and later to his disciples and tells them, "Do not be afraid". During this time of COVID, when we feel isolated, out of sorts, disconnected – Jesus is again telling us: do not be afraid. That tradition may seem obscured at times but is ever present.

I would like to close with one more thought on tradition. I just finished re-reading a book by Canadian author, Pierre Berton. Over 100 years ago, there was an event that happened that broke from tradition and galvanized this country. For 2 ½ years, the British and French forces had been stalemated by the German army. The battlefield had been scarcely moved an inch for 2 ½ years. For the first time ever, all 4 Canadian divisions formed the line on the front during the First World War, including Clinton McPhee, a private of the 4th division, 11th brigade, 198th Battalion – the Nova Scotia Highlanders. My grandfather. Traditional tactics of warfare had failed time and again. But command, far from harm's way were unwilling to adjust to mechanization. Machine gun and artillery. Armed tanks and airplanes. It took CANADIAN officers willing to adjust tactics and break from that tradition to find success. In a period of a few hours, the 4 Canadian divisions pushed through German defenses and forced them into full retreat, the first really decisive victory of the Allied forces. The battle was Vimy Ridge. The time of the battle – about 4 hours ago on Easter Sunday, 1917. Lest we forget.

OUR RESPONSE

OFFERING:

As we continue to worship together remotely, we remind you the work of our church continues. You can offer your gifts by sending an e-transfer to melfortuc@sasktel.net, or by mailing or dropping off your offering to the church office.

OFFERTORY HYMN (MV 182) "Grateful"

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: *(in unison)*

The risen Christ lives today, present to us
and the source of our hope.

In response to who Jesus was and to all
he did and taught, to his life, death,
and resurrection, and his continuing presence
with us through the spirit, we celebrate him
as the Word made flesh, the one in whom God
and humanity are perfectly joined,
the transformation of our lives, the Christ.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE:

As purple gives way to gold,
hear our prayers for times of suffering,
in a world that is unjust for too many.

All: May we live towards wholeness.

As thorns give way to crowns,
hear our prayers for oppression in our land
by trade that is imbalanced.

All: May we live towards liberation for all.

As tombs give way to gardens,
hear our prayers for worries
that keep us from flourishing in your care.

All: May we live towards your shalom.

As yesterday gives way to tomorrow,
hear our prayers for the future
that holds too much uncertainty or loneliness.

All: May we live towards your vision.

SENDING FORTH

HYMN (MV 138) *“My Love Colours Outside the Lines”*

COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:

May the love of the risen Christ nourish and sustain us.
May the eternal light of the world renew and inspire us to lives
of care and compassion. May we go forward and be the body of the
risen Christ. Amen.

CHORAL BLESSING (MV 209) “Go Make a Difference”

PRAYER RESOURCES:

**Seasons of the Spirit – Seasons FUSION Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2020–2021; The United Church of Canada Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2020–2021, Year B, Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission*

NEXT WEEK’S (April 11, 2021) READINGS

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH

Pastoral Care - Contact Information

Should you need emergency pastoral care please call Ron Nielsen @ 306-921-7794 or 306-752-4119.

Notice of Death

Kathleen (Kaye) Evelyn Meier

Date of Death: March 19, 2021

Please keep the family in your prayers

Transfer or Applying for Membership

If you wish to transfer or apply for membership in our church, please contact the church office or a member of the Membership Committee.

Changes to Contact Information

If you have changed your address or phone number, please advise the Church Office so that we can keep your information current. Thank you!

FundScrip for April

The FundScrip deadline for April is Thursday, April 28th. It will be ready for pickup on Thursday, May 6th.

Stewardship Seconds

As stewards, how do we respond to the good news of Easter, remembering the angel’s words “Be not afraid”?