** MELROSE UNITED CHURCH **

86 Homewood Avenue  Hamilton, Ontario  L8P 2M4

905 522 1323[*melrose@melroseunited.ca*](about:blank)

[*www.melroseunited*](about:blank)*.ca* 

[www.facebook.com/melroseunitedchurch](about:blank)  
 Instagram: @melroseuc

Youtube channel: Melrose United Church Virtual Service



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| Minister: | Rev. Sonia Ireson |
| Music Director:  Family Ministries Coordinator:  Custodian:  Office Administrator: | Alexander Cann  Meg Chalmers  Kevin Geluch  Lorraine Lowry |

 **Sunday, February 5, 2023 **

**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

#  GATHERING IN COMMUNITY 

 Indicates a time to stand, if you are able.

# 

PRELUDE –

🟏 OPENING HYMN – *Now Thank We All Our God VU 236*

## WELCOME AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

One: The land on which we worship and serve God each week was first inhabited and cared for by the people of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe who are covered under the Upper Canada Treaty. For thousands of years, they walked on and treated the land with respect.

May we continue with respect, by living our lives moving gently in creation, listening, learning, and striving to be

people of reconciliation.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Jesus says “You are the light of the world.” Let your light

shine for all to see.

**All: We come into the light of Jesus Christ, ready to answer God’s call, joyful to serve and to witness.**

***Christ Candle is lit***

CALL TO WORSHIP (Gill Le Fevre)

One: In the pews, or at home, remind us, O God, that worship is more than showing up.

**All: Inspire us, O Comforter, that our hearts may recognize your presence in worship.**

One: Through prayers and readings, remind us, O God, that worship is more than sharing words.

**All: Awaken us, O Teacher, that our hearts may receive your word for us.**

One: In this worship space, remind us O God, that worship is not something just to be observed.

**All: Engage us, O Saviour, that our hearts and lives may proclaim and enact our relationship with you. Amen.**

CHORAL INTROIT – Jesus, Stand Among Us VU 398, v.1

PRAYER OF APPROACH (Susan Lukey)

**All: What do you ask of us, O God? What do you require that we do with our lives? On your behalf, the prophet Micah responds, “To do justice, love kindness, and to journey humbly with God.” May these words be enlivened for us in our worship today and unfold into our living, today and always. Amen.**

HYMN – *Jesus Bids Us Shine VU 585*

A TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US

Who was Matthew?

** HEARING AND RESPONDING TO THE WORD **

Reader: Catherine Clase

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (Beth Johnston)

(\*\*Please note, do not repeat Prayer for Illumination, instead use words below)

One: I invite you into prayer as we prepare to hear God’s Holy Word.

In a world that has grown stale, in a time of despair and shadows, enlighten us, O God. Through the writings of prophets and leaders, light our paths and add flavour to our lives. Prompt us to allow your ways to shine in our lives so that others may be led to come and experience it for themselves. Amen.

A LESSON FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 58:1-12

**\*\* Background to be read by reader before Scripture –**

**The prophet, Isaiah, delivers an indictment against the people of Judah and instructs them on the nature of true fasting. It is God who speaks in this passage. The people appear outwardly religious and try to draw near to God but their motives are self-serving and their acts are empty. The kind of fast that God requires is not absence of food, but reaching out to those in need.**

“Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”

One: May God bless the reading of This Holy Word

**All: Thanks be to God!**

Psalm 112

**Refrain: The just shall trust in God alone**

Blessed are those who fear God,

Who greatly delight in God’s commandments.

Their descendants will be might in the land,

The generation of the upright will be blessed.

Riches and plenty shall be in their house,

Their righteousness enduring forever.

They are light in the darkness for the upright,

Being gracious, compassionate and just.

It goes well with those who lend generously,

Who conduct their affairs with justice. **R**

For the righteous will never be shaken;

They will be kept in remembrance for ever.

They will not live in fear of bad news;

With resolute heart they trust in God.

Their heart is steady and they do not fear;

In the end they will see their enemies’ downfall.

They distribute freely to the poor,

Their righteousness enduring forever;

They will hold up their heads in honour. **R**

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST: Matthew 5:13-20

**\*\* Background to be read by Reader before Scripture –**

**Last week we heard the Sermon on the Mount read known as the Beatitudes. It contains 9 prescripts by God that denote blessedness for states that exist contrary to the power structures of the normal society. Jesus is imagining and commissioning an alternative society in which we are asked to be perfect as God is perfect. Today’s scripture builds on and expands the call to discipleship.**

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

One: Let us respond in faith to the Gospel of our Lord!

**ALL: Praise be to Jesus Christ!**

REFLECTION: Tasty and Bright!

ANTHEM – Blessed Jesus, At Thy Word S. Drummond-Wolff

INVITATION TO OFFERING

One: We offer our gifts to God in various ways – through PAR deductions, E-transfers, and envelopes we leave here at the door in collection plates, so that it may teach us to live as disciples: creating peace, not war, building bridges, not destroying, learning understanding, not division. We thank the people of Melrose for their ongoing support to the work of this congregation both inside and outside these walls.

* HYMN – *O Jesus, I Have Promised VU 120*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Holy God, we pray for the well-being of your creation: our choices wreak havoc on the world you have made and put your planet in peril. Guide our patterns of consumption for the flourishing of all creation and for generations yet unborn. Loving God, help us to turn our hearts toward you.

We pray for the welfare of the world: You have blessed us with every skill and gift for nurturing the common good, yet our self-centered ways incline our hearts toward evil. Strengthen us to work together for the mutual benefit of neighbours near and far and for the life and prosperity of your reign on earth. Loving God, help us to turn our hearts toward you.

We pray for the health and vitality of the church: You command us to honour you by loving one another, yet all too often there is quarreling and jealousy among us. Help us to live your law of love as we seek to grow into the full stature of Christ. Loving God help us to turn our hearts toward you.

We pray for all who suffer and are in need; We pray for all who are sick and are dying; We commend all of life to you, O God, knowing that you hear our prayers and answer them according to your will.

We offer our prayers in a moment of silence for those things that weigh heavy on our hearts, our loved ones, our friends, our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing – we offer them up to you God, for your compassionate answer in love.

Silence …

We pray for our sister church, St. Andrews in Brantford, for their minister, their lay leaders, and their congregation that they   
may be upheld in the ministry and discipleship of Jesus Christ.

We pray for our congregation of Melrose, for those who come out to worship, and those who listen at home, and those who find other things that interfere with their drawing close to you. May your Holy Spirit fill them with your loving peace. We pray for all those who are in need of your special ear. Today, we pray for Vic, Rod, Doreen, Ted and Val, Olga, Scott. We commend these dear ones to your tender care. Amen.

We pray in the words of Jesus.. from our original version

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**Hallowed be thy name,**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done**

**On earth, as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,**

**And forgive us our trespasses,**

**As we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**But deliver us from evil:**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory**

**Forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING FORTH**

## CLOSING HYMN –O Day of God, Draw Nigh VU 688

* COMMISSIONING

One: Jesus said to let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Let your light shine so that others see Jesus in you. Open your eyes to see the world through your compassion, and your mind to understand the world through your wisdom, and your heart to receive the world through your love. Amen.

* CHORAL BENEDICTION –Amen VU 971
* BLESSING

One: May God keep us in our going out and our

coming in;

In our lying down and our rising up;

In our work and in our leisure;

In our laughter and in our tears;

Until we meet again. Amen.

POSTLUDE –