** MELROSE UNITED CHURCH **

86 Homewood Avenue  Hamilton, Ontario  L8P 2M4

905 522 1323*melrose@melroseunited.ca*

*www.melroseunited**.ca* 

www.facebook.com/melroseunitedchurch
 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, May 21, 2023 **

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**Ascension Sunday**

#   GATHERING IN COMMUNITY 

PRELUDE -

## WELCOME AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH

OPENING HYMN – Crown Him with Many Crowns VU 211

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.

LITURGY OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

***Christ Candle is already lit***

One: Let us consciously bring ourselves into the presence of Jesus

 Christ.

**All: We follow his light, his example, his truth and his way, for when we do, we are right with our inner selves and in alignment with God.**

GATHERING WORDS

One: Come into this sanctuary with open minds and open hearts, ready to be in God’s presence.

**All: Let us leave behind our worries and our cares that weigh us down, and be ready to see with new eyes and new ears the words of the Spirit of Truth.**

One: Take the time to reflect on your week, to be grateful for the times of showing kindness and compassion.

**All: Let us reassess our moments of missing the mark, of not living up to our potential, or letting impatience and annoyance control our thoughts. Let us worship God not only with our words, but also with our all our actions today, and as we go about our new week.**

PRAYER OF APPROACH

**All: Loving God, we stand before you this day unable to hide our imperfections, souls bared and ready to be refilled with your essence. Create in us, desire to keep you at the centre of our entire life. Walk with us daily, as we vow to walk with you. Lead us through the trials that come our way. Help us to make wise decisions and to live our Christianity openly so that all may see we are Jesus’ followers and your children of light. Amen.**

A TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US

HYMN: The Spring Has Come VU 187

CHILDREN’S TIME -

**Hearing and Responding to the Word**

Reader: Seth Preston

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: May we hear the Spirit’s truth for us this day in the hymns

 and scripture and words of the message, that you would

 have us hear, Holy God, of all creation and life. Amen.

A LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS: 1:6-14

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

**Following Jesus’ death and resurrection, he spent forty days speaking to his apostles (previously known as his disciples) about the Kingdom of God. The beginning of the Book of Acts brings the promise of the Holy Spirit.**

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James’s son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

One: The Word of the Lord

 **All: Thanks be to God!**

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 VU 787

Notes for Reader: Psalm is responsive as printed below

Refrain: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

Arise, O God, let his enemies be scattered;

let those who hate you flee before you.

**Like drifting smoke disperse them;**

**Like wax melting in the fire,**

**let the wicked perish at your presence, O God.**

But let the righteous be glad and exult before you;

Let them rejoice with exceeding joy.

**Sing praises to God’s holy name;**

**Male a highway for the One who rides the clouds;**

**Be joyful and exult in God’s presence R**

Guardian of orphans and protector of widows,

O God, in your holy dwelling.

**You give the lonely a home in which to live;**

**You lead the prisoners out to prosperity;**

**But the rebels must live in a wasteland**

When you went out at the head of your people,

when you marched through the wilderness,

**the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain,**

**before you, God of Sinai, God of Israel.**

You sent down a generous rain;

You refreshed your heritage when it languished.

**There your people found a home,**

**Which in your goodness you provided for the poor. R**

Sing to God, dominions of the earth;

Praise the One who has dominion,

**The One who rides through the heavens, even the primal heavens,**

**The One whose voice is the mighty thunder.**

Acknowledge the power that is God’s,

Whose majesty is over Israel, whose strength is in the skies.

**You are awesome, O God, as you leave your sanctuary,**

**Bringing power and strength to your people.**

Blessed are you, God of Israel.

**Blessed are you. R**

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST: John 17:1-11

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

**Jesus has spoken to the disciples in preparation for his leaving telling them that the Spirit of Truth will remind them of all things and continue to be with them when he is gone. He says their sorrow in his absence will turn to joy and he will pray for peace for his disciples.**

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

”I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

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

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

REFLECTION: After Departure, What Now?

ANTHEM - O God, King of Glory H. Purcell

INVITATION TO OFFERING

One: All that we have has been provided by the Hand of God. For some, it is much; for others, it is little. We take what we have, and offer a portion back in service to the Kingdom of God. Our offerings will now be presented.

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

One: Gracious God, take these gifts as a representation of our faith and our works. We offer ourselves in your service, our time and our talents; we share from our pool of finances what we are able. Receive all our gifts that come willingly in the service of your world. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Loving God, we wait for our world to change. We wait for Russia to cease their hostility in Ukraine, and for an end to loss of life and destruction of their infrastructure.

We wait for an understanding between Israel and the Arab nations.

We wait for countries all over the world to find ways to settle differences, and curb their desire for domination.

We wait for the world to change, but we do not wait patiently. We will see what we can do to hasten change.

Loving God, we wait for the plight of the suffering to change.

Waiting for treatment in emergency departments; waiting for a dreaded diagnoses; waiting for results of a job interview.

Waiting for conflicts in families to resolve; waiting for those who are bullied to be treated fairly; waiting, and hoping for the best.

Loving God we wait for things within our church to change.

Waiting for a renewed interest in attending church; waiting for volunteers to surface; waiting for finances to balance our over-taxed budget; waiting for a clear direction from the Holy Spirit on how we can best serve our church as disciples of Jesus. May we see what will help us hasten the change that is needed.

Holy God, help us to develop our spiritual lives so that we may live our best life. Help us not to judge ourselves or others without a balance of facts. Help us to be more patient with those around us.

As we wait for change, may we take steps to improve and move forward in our growth.

God, you journey with us through our waiting; you encourage and support us; help us to accept change where it is needed; guide us in directions you would have us take for the sake of your Kingdom.

We pray this day for the congregation of Linden Park Community, for their minister, their lay leaders, and their people, that they may be supported in their work of the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

We pray for our community of Melrose, for Doreen, Olga, Ted, Rod and Neil and all those others that we hold in the silence of our hearts and we lift up to you now for their safekeeping….

Silence…

LORD’S PRAYER

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 brad,

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- Awake, O Sleeper VU 566

COMMISSIONING

One: With hearts overflowing with gratitude, we go out into our homes and the world intent on being ambassadors of your love. Go now in peace.

CHORAL BENDICTION - Go Forth for God VU 418, v. 4

 BLESSING

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 –