

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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◆ Sunday November 8, 2020 ◆

**Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost
Celebration of Remembrance Day**

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

* indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

◆ GATHERING ◆

PRELUDE -Bouree, *Lute Suite #1* J.S. Bach
Chris Palmer, guitar

*OPENING HYMN - *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* VU 883

*1 Comfort, comfort now my people;
speak of peace; so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning under sorrow's load.
Cry out to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover
and their warfare now is over.*

*2 For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling all to true repentance,
since God's judgement now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.*

*3 Then make straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits a holy reign.
For the glory of our God*

*now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.*

WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Our world cycles through wars and uneasy peace, unable to settle into love of neighbour and enemy as oneself.

All: Christ's message to love one another falls on many deaf ears, yet we give thanks to God for the light of Christ that brings his divine peace, while continuing to shine on our chaotic world.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The measure of people's heart is this: Do we remember the sacrifices of the past; do we work for peace in the present; do we declare hope for the future?

All: And so, we come now before God to name as our dream God's reign of shalom, to commit ourselves to the cause of peace, and to remember. Let us worship God.

OPENING PRAYER (said together)

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle, the strength to be forgiving, the patience to be understanding, and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the ability to dream and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead people to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole lives, our thoughts and energies, to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all people were created. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US
Story: "The Story of the Poppy"

◆ SERVICE OF THE WORD ◆

Reader: Ken Holden

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Holy God, there are many good inspirational books that inform us and help us to find our way, but none has stood the test of time in giving us our grounding like the Bible. We ask that you guide us in our understanding as we hear the familiar words read, and that you give to us new vision and hope for its use in our lives. Amen.

WISDOM OF ISRAEL: Joshua 24: 1-3a, 14-25

One: Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors – Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor – lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac; "Now

therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God." But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

PSALM – Psalm 78:1-7

One: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,

things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children;

that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children,

so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

REFLECTION: Lessons Passed On! Psalm 78:1-7

The Psalmist, Asaph was a musician of David's era. He wrote this psalm, the longest of the 150 psalms recorded in the Old Testament. His intention was to pass on the lesson that history must not repeat itself. It is in reference to unbelief in God. Its choice here today also allows us to think about lessons learned from the past, to remember and contemplate the horrors of war.

The psalmist admonishes us to learn from the past and teach those in the present and still to come in the future, so that they will not forget.

This is a wisdom psalm that has as its central theme the goodness and kindness of God.

Incline your ears – give me your attention. I have something important to say to you, he begins. What you are about to hear is nothing new, it has been passed down through the generations. In fact, it is not just a friendly story, it is everyone's responsibility to pass it on to the next generation.

God is worthy of our adoration and gratitude; God's strength and power surpasses all; God uses that strength and power in active assistance to His people.

The message is still applicable today as it was in the time Asaph wrote it. The emphasis is upon the importance of seeing and understanding the hand of God in our lives as God moves towards bringing about the fulfillment of the kingdom of heaven, and sharing that knowledge so that others may benefit. The hope and memory that are recounted are intended to instill obedience to God. If we have learned our lessons well, we want to pass them on so that mistakes will not be repeated.

I'd like to close with a song that tells us about the foolishness of war. It was written in the 1960s as an anti-war song by Denis Lambert and Brian Potter and sung by Original Caste. Maybe some of you will remember it – It's called One Tin Soldier
Listen, children, to a story that was written long ago
'Bout a kingdom on a mountain and the valley-folk below.

On the mountain was a treasure buried deep beneath the stone
And the valley-people swore they'd have it for their very own.

Chorus - Go ahead and hate your neighbour Go ahead and cheat
a friend

Do it in the name of heaven, you can justify it in the end.
There won't be any trumpets blowing come the judgment day
On the bloody morning after one tin soldier rides away.

So the people of the valley sent a message up the hill
Asking for the buried treasure tons of gold for which they'd kill.
It came an answer from the mountain with our brothers we will
share

All the secrets of our mountain all the riches buried there.

Chorus

Now the valley cried with anger "Mount your horses! Draw your
sword!

And they killed the mountain-people so they won their just
reward.

Now they stood beside the treasure on the mountain, dark and
red

Turned the stone and looked beneath it "Peace on Earth" was all
it said.

Chorus

We hear, we remember, but we have not learned our lessons well
with the recounting of the memories of the two Great World Wars
and the other battles that have been fought since then. It is our
responsibility as parents and elders to teach our young - Love
and obedience of God first, followed by country pride and
loyalty, and family values. Only then, will succeeding

generations make the right choices based on what they have learned from what has gone before. Amen.

★HYMN – *Your Hand, O God, Has Guided* VU 274, verses 1, 3 & 5

*1 Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock from age to age;
the wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page.
Our forebears owned your goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness:
one church, one faith, one Lord.*

*3 Through many days of darkness,
through many scenes of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely
to guard your people's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, earth restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one church, one faith, one Lord.*

*5 Your mercy will not fail us,
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us,
the victory shall be won;
and then, by earth and heaven,
your name shall be adored,
and this shall be our anthem:
one church, one faith, one Lord.*

THE GOSPEL – Matthew 25: 1-13

One: "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

One: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Praise to you, O Christ!

INVITATION TO OFFERING

One: We are blessed to have freedom from oppression, to have the ability to worship in peace. We give gratefully what we are able in the work of the church within the world. Thank you for your continued support.

*OFFERING HYMN -*God of All Good*

VU 539

1. God of all good, our gifts we bring to you,

*Use them your holy purpose to fulfil;
tokens of love and pledges brought anew
that our whole life is offered to your will.*

POEM – For The Fallen

Lawrence Binyon

(written in 1914, a few weeks after the outbreak of the
First World War)

One: With proud thanksgiving a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were,
Spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill:
Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into mortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;

They sit no more at familiar tables at home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

...

Presentation of the Wreath - Tim Webb

Two Minutes of Silence

IN FLANDERS FIELDS – John McCrae

Read by Tim Webb

One: 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.

SOLO – The Minstrel Boy,
Celine Cascanette, mezzo-soprano

T. Moore

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

All: Remembering is our responsibility, O God.

One: We remember those who have died for the cause of
freedom.

We remember those who have served, and who today serve
in our military.

We support the peacemakers. We work to counter the
powers of fear and darkness.

**All: Our remembering is valuable. Learning from the past can
lead us to the right action.**

Remembering is our responsibility, O God.

One: We remember men and women of the armed forces who
suffer trauma and disabilities from war.

We remember the families of military personnel who wait,
and who deal with the effects of war on their loved ones.

We remember civilians who suffer and die in the midst of
conflict.

We remember those for whom illness drags on.

We remember those who can no longer remember because of
memory loss.

We remember those who have lost a loved one for whom the
pain of loss will not go away.

We support healers and pastoral care-givers and front-line
workers who provide for us during this time of Pandemic.

All: Our remembering is valuable. Learning from the past can lead us to right action.

One: We pray for our community of Melrose, for Loretta, for Vic, for Jeff, for Cheryl and Tim and Chris and Nicola in the passing of their mothers. We pray for those outside our church community that have been impacted in many adverse ways from our months of isolation. Lord, we ask that you be with them in the ways that each one needs. We pray for those in our circle who are grieving, who are recovering from illnesses, who are struggling with imperfect relationships, for all those that we hold in our hearts we raise up to you for their safekeeping.

(Quiet reflection)

Followed by The Lord's Prayer (said together)

**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 that
Trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.**

*CLOSING HYMN – *Who Would True Valour See* John Bunyan

*1. Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
Here's one will constant be,
Come wind, come weather
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent*

*His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

*2. Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.*

*3. Since Lord, thou dost defend
him with his spirit,
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
I'll fear not what men say,
But labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.*

COMMISSIONING

One: May we use the blessing of peace to calm our troubled spirits and our troubled world. Reach out to others, show them that God's love for them is everlasting, and there is peace for them each and every second of every day. Amen.

BENEDICTION

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 - O Canada

*O Canada!
Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.*

*With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!*

*From far and wide,
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

*God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.