



# Melrose United Church Fall Newsletter

OCTOBER 2017

## Board Update - A Place of Connection

Welcome home. Whether Melrose represents a new chapter in your personal story, or whether your story has been interwoven with that of Melrose over time and even over generations, I'm very glad that you have found a home here. Rev. Gardner's thought provoking message has prompted me to reflect on the central place that Melrose holds for me in my life: a place of connection. Melrose offers connection on many levels: an inner connection to a deeper spiritual self, as well as connections for me and my family to a community of faith, our local community of Hamilton and beyond to a national United Church of Canada, and to communities of need across the globe, and also a connection to a storied church past and a yet to be written future.

Each Sunday, Melrose invites me in to a deeper connection along my own spiritual journey. As I reflect on Jesus' story so beautifully depicted in our stained glass windows, or revealed in an inspiring homily, or uplifted in song, I have an opportunity to renew my faith and consider how it is, or isn't, expressed in my daily life. At Melrose I also feel fortunate to have a connection to you, to members of a community of faith with whom I share common values, beliefs, and aspirations, and with whom I can and do share life's joys and, sometimes, struggles.

Through Melrose, I have an opportunity, whether through Mission and Service givings or UCC Emergency Fundraising efforts, through our community events or renting to tenants who share our values, to connect meaningfully to both my local community and more broadly to national and international causes that need our collective support. At Melrose, I am part of a connection to a time when churches like ours were regularly filled to capacity and the centrality of the church to family and communal life was unquestioned. And I am also, as are we all, fundamentally connected to a present in which we together must explore, determine, and shape the next chapter in our church's journey. As you know, we are presently in Interim Ministry. Webster's Dictionary tells me that interim means an interval, a state in time between two things. We are between a past and a future we have yet to write. What will that future look like? How will it be informed by our sense of connection to our own spiritual journeys, to each other, to our mission and vision, our faith, and to the needs of our local and broader communities? I don't presume to have the answers to these questions. But I'm confident that we will find them together.

Welcome home. I hope that, like me, you also find here a place of deep connection.

Cheryl Evans  
Chair, Official Board



## Retirement Announcement

This fall Melrose says farewell to two of our staff members – Lee Stallard retired as head custodian as of August 31st. Pam Kovacek retired as Administrative Secretary on Tuesday September 5th. We appreciate everything that both of these staff members have contributed to the well being of Melrose United Church.

# Welcome Back!

by Rev. Dr. Philip Gardner

One of the advantages of clergy vacations is that they usually involve time spent outside the cloistered church environment, time that includes interaction with people for whom that church environment is completely foreign -- or even negative. Sometimes, when people discover my vocation, I'm find myself treated to a barrage of criticism laced with helpful suggestions about what is wrong with the church and why, in contemporary Canadian culture, it is in decline. I've discovered that the list of reasons for staying away from the church (at least among those who continue to call themselves Christian) usually contains some of the following: Some churches are clubby and exclusionary or they have completely lost touch with the realities of contemporary existence. Some are boring and predictable, other churches are partisan and doctrinaire, and fail to offer any nuanced reflection. Yet others are concerned with the comfort of members and pay little attention to what goes on beyond the walls. Worship is archaic and it fails to engage. In a recent article, "Choosing Church," commentator Marilyn McEntyre counters this list with one of her own that offers some reasons why *connecting* with a church community is a healthy and good thing to do. As we stand on the verge of another busy season, it might be helpful to reflect on why we think Melrose is a good place to be and what might be done to make it better.. Here is a distilled version of Marilyn's list:

***A healthy church will help you get over yourself.*** One of the primary aims of good worship is to invite us into a story much larger than our



own. Personal wealth and the wealth of the nation will be re-examined with a critical eye. Shared prayers of thanksgiving will not only reflect, but also awaken, gratitude. In a healthy church people's needs are made known and other people organized to help meet those needs. In a healthy church you begin to recognize yourself as someone with gifts to give—time, money, energy, expertise—and you begin to want to give them, because the grace that comes with giving is suddenly so startlingly apparent.

***A healthy church will allow you to acknowledge guilt and experience forgiveness.*** It may not seem that acknowledging guilt would be a particularly attractive reason to attend church, but you find, if you do it, that it's amazingly restorative. Most of us carry around guilt like a stone in a pocket. Sometimes you get so used to its weight you stop even noticing it. So it can take a long time, if you're leading what seems to be a decent and innocuous life, to get to a place where guilt becomes pain and you long for forgiveness. When you do get there, a healthy church is a good place to go.

Until you've tried it, it's hard to imagine the complete release that can come with full, open-hearted confession. It's certainly possible to give and receive forgiveness without benefit of church. But within the

church a dimension of forgiveness is taught and practiced that is peculiar to Christian worship. Being in a healthy church and reading with others that we have sinned "in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone" may both reframe the pain of guilt and relieve it.

***A healthy church will invite you into countercultural community.***

It won't be an extension programme in civil religion. It won't stamp its seal of approval on "our way of life," whatever that has come to mean to comfortable North Americans. It will "afflict" the comfortable. It won't offer cheap grace. It will help you share—and want to share—accountability for practices that affect the vulnerable. It will expand the repertoire of questions you raise about what is "normal" in the culture you inhabit. A healthy church will look at norms with a critical eye, holding them up to the light of Christ, which involves deep reading of Scripture and deep engagement with biblical ethics. It will lead you to identify with and act on behalf of the disempowered—migrant workers, prisoners, people whose lands and water have been expropriated or contaminated, underpaid labourers, victims of domestic abuse. The list goes on. A healthy church will have the conversation and invite you into it.

*A healthy church will give you access to a treasury of words and music.* It will bring you into a centuries-old conversation that includes the whole "communion of saints." Where else are you likely to encounter words like "blessing" or "grace" or "parable" or "holy?" Where else are you likely to encounter a conversation that takes you to the ancient world and back, bearing gifts for the present, sometimes wrapped in the beauty of antique language? The church is also the guardian of the Bible, a cultural treasure like no other. There are sacred texts in other traditions, to be sure, worth study and reflection. But this one is unique in its multiplicity of sources, its rich, ragged stories, sometimes riddled with gaps, its many literary genres, in the way it gives access to a God who will not be reduced to human dimensions. It is a taproot of Western culture. To study the Bible with people of faith is to see it as a living word, a source of intellectual challenge, inspiration, comfort, uncomfortable ambiguities, and endless insights for people who gather in willingness to accept what

seems to be God's invitation: wrestle with this.

*Healthy churches are places of divine encounter.* The disenchanting who have suffered from warped pieties and the skeptical who haven't met a believer who meets their standard of intellectual integrity may simply not believe this. Nor might a person who has a thriving meditation practice rooted in non-Christian tradition: but a healthy church provides a place, a way, an invitation, and a sacred space in which, if you come with an open heart, you may find yourself, in spite of yourself, practicing the presence of God. Singing is one way to "enter into God's courts." Few places are left where people gather and sing. When we sing we learn viscerally and audibly what it means to be "one in the Spirit." Hearing sacred texts read aloud also brings us into alignment with others who inhabit the same story. It is our story—all of ours—available to be entered and explored. We gather in church because private, silent reading is not enough: we need to hear the living word breathed by a

human voice. And Holy Communion offers a sacred moment of encounter. Each time that we walk forward to receive the sacrament is a new act of consent to God's invitation to participate in divine life: "This is my body. Take. Eat." All of us who labour and are heavy laden come to receive "the gifts of God for the people of God" and find that God's people are also ours.

May your experience of church at Melrose in the coming months be deep and rich and fulfilling!

Blessings,

Philip †

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Melrose derives its name and appearance from Melrose Abbey in Scotland.

## Music at Melrose

A racket for God

The Melrose Chancel choir is a great ministry at our church and a precious service to the community. That sense of service is founded in a sense of fun, and lots of laughs can be heard coming from the chapel on Thursday evenings while we rehearse. We proudly lead the congregation in song, with anthems from five centuries of repertoire.

Back with us as choral soloists this year are Allana Stevenson, and Chris Palmer, who have shared their remarkable gifts with us so freely. Not only do both have truly lovely voices, they are also instrumentalists and good sports to boot about having their various talents called upon.

The choir's biggest focus remains the Candlelight Carol Service, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. In recent years we have organized special choral services on Good Friday, and this year we will continue that trend: mark your calendar now. I should also say that other special things are cooking so stay tuned!

To our many young musicians at Melrose, and there are quite a few of you: there is always a welcoming stage for you here, we are always **thrilled** when you share your talents with us.

Our musical style at Melrose is a holy admixture: music from all genres and times. Last year we performed Bach with cello and flute, enjoyed pieces performed on classical guitar, trumpet, horn, and brass quartet, and of course we heard the choir, soloists,

handbells, harpsichord, piano, and organ.

What a racket! Looking forward to making a noise with you this year.

With thanks, Alexander Cann  
Director of Music



*On January 29, 2017 Melrose was blessed with a beautiful choir for Rev. Dr. Philip Gardner's covenanting service at Melrose.*



## Worship At Melrose

### A few words from the Worship and Faith Formation Committee...

After spending the summer in the relaxed setting of the chapel, the tempo of our congregational life is beginning to pick up with our return to worship in the Sanctuary. This year, we are observing the season of Creation Time (five Sundays in September and October ending on Thanksgiving Sunday) during our worship. You should notice this theme emerging in prayers, hymns and preaching. We will also celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 1<sup>st</sup>. World Communion Sunday is a traditional time to promote Christian unity and cooperation. We are also planning a Pet Blessing in mid-October.

Once our committee has held its first meeting of the season we will plan for each Sunday, including Remembrance Day, and the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup> is the first Sunday of Advent; at Melrose, we will hold our Candlelight Carol service that evening.

We welcome participation of all Melrose worshippers as ushers/greeters, lay readers, communion servers and candle lighters. If you are interested in any of these roles, please speak to Margaret Duff. If you have a friend or neighbour who might be in need of the Melrose worship experience, why not invite him or her to join you at church sometime soon?

Best wishes, Margaret

## NEXT TGIF

**OCTOBER 27, 2017**

Join us for a fun, family friendly evening. All welcome!

**Location:** Parlour and Auditorium

**Time:** 6pm - 8pm

**Bring:** potluck supper item to share / pumpkin to carve

**Dress in your Halloween Best!**

Games and drinks provided.

## Church School and Family Ministries Update

For the past two years Melrose has been blessed with having Michelle Millson as our Child and Youth Coordinator. She was instrumental behind all the Sunday School teaching and organizing. She coordinated the Vacation Bible School, which was successful at Melrose for the past two years. However, now that Michelle has assumed the Church Administrative Duties we are missing her incredible leadership. All parents of Sunday School aged children are asked to consider volunteering to teach Sunday School twice during the church calendar year. Your curriculum would be provided as would all craft supplies. Please support the critical incorporation of children and youth into our Melrose Faith. Our young people need the rich guidance that we can offer. Talk to Michelle, Marilyn Wright or Gwyneth if you are able to provide coverage. We are still searching for a suitable candidate, however in the interim parental involvement is critical.

If you know someone who may be interested in the Family Ministries Coordinator Position please share the posting on our website.



## Financial Update

As of the end of August, donations for Melrose operations are about 5% less than budgeted. There has been a significant increase in monthly Preauthorised Remittance donations, but this has been more than offset by a reduction in weekly donations.

Our income from building rentals are down \$6,000 or 8% from last year. This decline is entirely due to the departure of one tenant (OnCourse). The vacated space has now been leased to Little Learning House daycare, but the gap between the two tenants has resulted in lost income of about \$8,000. As well, the Live On Locke concert series, held during autumn of the past several years, has been discontinued. This series brought in \$4,000 per year. Overall, it now appears that building income this year is likely to be about \$12,000 less than budgeted.

Melrose expenses for staff for the first eight months are close to the budgeted amount, and are likely to remain within budget for the remainder of the year.

In order to prepare the space leased to the daycare, we have spent about \$25,000 on windows, air conditioning, plumbing and other items. These upgrades were needed to meet licensing requirements. Aside from these expenditures, expenses for property, administration and ministry programs have been less than budgeted.

It appears that our deficit for the year may be about \$30,000 greater than budgeted. A proposal will be brought to the September meeting of the Official Board to hold a Congregational Meeting in order to consider the withdrawal of additional funds from the Sustaining Fund in order to cover this deficit.

Ralph Moulton

## Social Justice Committee News

Lots of events are happening that demonstrate Melrose's Compassion in action.

October 1 was the Melrose Sponsored Wesley Urban Dinner. We prepared and served dinner to clients of Wesley Community. A hearty thank you to all the folk who took time out of their Sunday afternoon to work at Wesley. Thanks to all the bakers who donated chocolate chip cookies. Everyone who came to dinner received two excellent cookies each. Leftover cookies were left at Wesley for future use. Serving dinner is an annual event. Wesley urban ministries asks churches in the Hamilton area to take one Sunday per year in reaching out to serve Hamilton's vulnerable population.

## Ministry and Personnel Committee

Some staff changes have occurred at Melrose. Lee Stallard, our custodian, has retired. Darcy Feaver has been on the job during Lee's absence and moves into the head custodian position. Pam Kovacek has retired as Administrative Secretary. Michelle Millson has been mentoring with Pam and will now take on the role of Administrative Secretary at Melrose.. Pam & Lee will be deeply missed and we send them with blessings on their new adventures.

As of October 2nd, Daniel Payne will be working as night custodian on Monday & Wednesday evenings. Welcome to Daniel as part of the church staff.

Everyone is aware of the devastation that has happened in the Caribbean from Hurricane Irma.

The United Church of Canada is issuing appeals for donations to assist those in crisis. "The United Church works with several churches and agencies throughout the Caribbean region.

Our membership in the global ACT Alliance will provide multiple ways that the church can assist people affected by Hurricane Irma. ACT members are organized in various regional and national forums (including the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba) that are working quickly to assist with evacuations and emergency shelter where necessary, and to plan for post-storm responses. In addition, the United Church will assist bilateral partners such as the region-wide Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA), the Cuban Council of Churches,

and the Karl Lévêque Cultural Institute in Haiti as they organize their responses."

The Social Justice Committee will be hosting Coffee Hour on Oct 22 to raise funds for UCC to provide the assistance. Congregational Members should see envelopes in the pews directed to this fund. Envelopes will be in the pews for the month of October. Please consider a small donation to assist in improving lives!

Sooner than we know it, Christmas will be upon us! That means our annual Congregational giving to Wesley Christmas Store. Please consider purchasing a gift for a child or teenager and put it aside to bring to church on November 26 or Dec 3. Wesley will also need gift cards and food donations to bring Christmas Cheer to their clients. Mark this on your calendars now!

## Happy News!

Thanks to all the people who made the Locke Street Festival a success. Jam sales were \$1800.00! What a fantastic amount! The weather was fantastic, sun and no wind. We had a great time (see Melrose Facebook page for pictures). Darcy played her guitar and enticed people to purchase preserves as well. This event is a whole 3/4 year of work. Our faithful jammers start making Marmalade in late January, no easy task!. In June, during the heat of strawberry season, our indefatigable groups of ladies are in the kitchen at Melrose making strawberry jam, strawberry rhubarb jam and other derivatives. The tenacious group returns in August to concoct Chili Sauce, Peach Jam and Chutneys. There are ladies (and likely men)

who work unswervingly creating divine combinations of Strawberry infused with Vanilla Bean and Peach Jam infused with Lavendar Jam. Then the folk who carry all the preserves to Locke Street, set up the stall and sell throughout the day, they are dedicated. We thank you all! All the fruit and jars are donated by people involved with the jamming process. Without their donations our Jam Sale would never exist!



## Prayer Shawl Ministry

The love of knitting or crocheting has resulted



in a prayerful ministry which reaches out to those in need of comfort as well as in celebration and joy. Our shawls are blessed throughout their creation and are offered a final prayer from the Melrose congregation before they are sent on their way. Please join us on the last Saturday of the month, September 30 at 9:30 am in the parlour. Supplies available along with great fellowship.

## WIT -Women in Touch

The pot luck WIT dinners occur 5 times through the year. The first date is October 11 at 6:30pm in the parlour. Shared foods, conversation and a speaker are part of the evening. The October 11 speaker is -- Scott Jones from Micah House.

## Melrose Mistletoe Bazaar



Saturday November 18th at 9:30 am the doors to the auditorium open to our Christmas Bazaar featuring a Book Nook, Handcraft items, Gourmet gifts, Christmas Past items, Jewellery & the well known Cookie Walk. After shopping enjoy a delicious lunch freshly made at our Christmas Cafe. Mark the date in your calendar.



## Men's Breakfast

**When:** Oct 14th & Nov 11th

**Where:** Melrose Parlour

**Time:** 9:00 am (sharp)

**Cost:** \$10.00

**Bring:** Your appetite and friends



## Par - What is it? Is it for you?

PAR stands for preauthorized remittance. This system allows for a regular monthly deduction from your bank account that would go towards either General Operations and/or the Mission and Service Fund. This process allows for regular revenue throughout the year.

Par is easily set up by talking to Ralph Moulton or Michelle in the church office. If you have never thought about this opportunity before, PAR allows ease of giving on a once-monthly basis.

## Summer is fun...and a time to get things done!

Around Melrose we :

1. Shampooed many of the carpets
2. Put a new lawnmower and vacuum to great use
3. Began the process of painting the interior stairs
4. Put up new basic indoor signage to promote easier building flow
5. Put a new garden in beside Norman Slater
6. Hung the beautiful quilt created by the quilters in the chapel
7. Stairs and sidewalk repairs to the Homewood Entrance
8. Stained Glass repairs all over the building

## DID YOU KNOW?

The quilt that hangs in our chapel was made by a group of dedicated quilters who meet at Melrose every Monday afternoon.



## Property Committee

There has been a number of Property projects carried out this summer.

With the welcomed expansion of the Little Learners House space requirements, 2 specific requirements had to be met.

One, that we hope you cannot see from Homewood Ave., was the replacement of the existing tinted glass windows with clear thermopane glass on the west side. This installation was completed by the same company that replaced windows 8 years ago on the east side. The panes of glass look like the same size as the ones on the upper 2 stories due to the strategic use of the muntins or strips resembling the lead separations within the thermopane glass. This is in keeping with the desire not to alter the exterior look of our Melrose edifice. This change was necessary to allow the daycare to meet provincial day care regulations.

Rather than destroying the existing tinted glass panes, some of them were removed prior to the new installation and are being stored for future glass replacement use.

Air conditioning was installed in this area allowing the daycare to operate 12 months of the year. In this case, the compressor is hidden in the window well area and cannot be seen from the street.

The steps and sidewalk at the Homewood Sunday School entrance were extensively restored.

In the Sanctuary, there was a dampness problem starting to appear on the wall under 2 north windows near the vestibule entrance. Two windows have been caulked and sealed from the exterior to correct the situation. At the same time, 2 small panes of stained glass were restored.

We are extremely fortunate to have found a tradesman versed in stained glass restoration.

In the Norman Slater Room, a small leaded glass window that was smashed in a prior break in is being restored using some of the tinted glass that we now have in storage.

Very soon, the seven sets of wood doors and frames in the Sanctuary area will be varnished and colour matched as necessary to prevent further deterioration.

Plaster repairs in various areas are being priced.

To preserve the parking lot pavement, the existing cracks will be cut out and filled with a hot mix material before winter. A partial parking lot fence repair is being considered.

Currently, the interior steps are being repainted with nonslip paint.

These are some of the projects your Property Committee has been expediting during the summer period.

**Every month we receive an update on our monthly carbon offset from our solar panels.**

**Totals for August:**

**Your Carbon Offset for this month: 1.20 tons**

**You have offset the equivalent of: 31 Trees**



*A before and after shot of the window one of the window repairs that took place over the summer. A big thank you to A. Stirling @ Andrew Edward Stirling Stained Glass Repair for his amazing work!*

### Acoustic Blend Café Update

Acoustic Blend Café is getting ready to launch our 2017-2018 Coffeehouse Concert Series. We have two fantastic seasons lined up in both Hamilton and Milton, with seven shows in each location.

In Hamilton we are still in the fabulous auditorium at Melrose United Church, 86 Homewood Avenue. Our Milton location is back in the cozy and charming hall of the Milton Legion on 21 Charles Street. This year we are starting to offer advance tickets at a discount for both locations

and can be purchased by visiting <http://www.eventbrite.ca>. Prices will be \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door which also includes complimentary coffee and tea.

The following Artists will be playing in Hamilton at Melrose. Come out and have a fantastic time!

### Upcoming Dates at Melrose:



September 16  
Sarah Smith



February 17  
Azalea



May 12  
Miles From Nowhere



October 14  
Cheryl Dickson Neal



March 24  
Justin Sawicki



November 11  
Chelsea Crites



April 14  
Tomorrow's  
Headliners

Melrose  
United  
Church  
Fall  
Newsletter

86 Homewood Avenue  
Hamilton, ON

Follow us on social media for regular updates on what is happening at the church –

[www.melroseunited.ca](http://www.melroseunited.ca)

[www.facebook.com/melroseunitedchurch](http://www.facebook.com/melroseunitedchurch)

Twitter: @melroseunited

Instagram: @melroseuc

Minister:  
Music Director:  
Custodian  
Office Administrator:

The Rev. Dr. Philip Gardner  
Alexander Cann  
Darcy Feaver  
Michelle Millson