

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, JANUARY 24th, 2021**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of Pastoral
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Norval



The fish sign dated from the beginning of our era and was invented by the first Christians. At that time, the Romans ruled in much of the world. Because believing in one God and recognizing one Lord, Jesus Christ, was forbidden (it posed a threat to the worship of the emperor), Christians in the Roman empire had to be careful with their statements. They searched for everyday symbols that would not immediately stand out, but that had enough to say to encourage each other. The fish was such a sign. It is a symbol of Jesus Christ.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Gather this day in silence and hope

P: We wait for God's word for us.

L: Let your hearts and spirits be open.

P: God is our strength and salvation.

L: Wait patiently for the Lord.

P: With willing hearts and spirits we wait for the Lord.

OPENING HYMN: #236 Now Thank We All Our God

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart, and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

- 2 O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
with ever-joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills in this world and the next.
- 3 All praise and thanks to God for all that has been given,
the Son, and Spirit blest who dwell in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be, evermore.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you are our light and our salvation. Living in your presence, we have nothing to fear. Open our hearts to your word this day. As we hear the story of the call of the first disciples, make us ready to follow Jesus on whatever path he leads us. Cast aside our fears and doubts, and teach us to trust wholly in you. For we ask this in Jesus' Name, AMEN.

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S SONG

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We listen to the stories of the call of the disciples and find them interesting but unrealistic. When we look at our own lives, we believe that we could not leave everything to follow someone we didn't know. We have many responsibilities and ties which keep us from following. But God is persistent. God understands our confusion and doubts. And God continues to call us to be in ministry and mission in this world. It may not mean leaving everything behind, but it does mean being willing to serve wherever God calls us. That's hard. We want to place conditions on service, and usually those conditions are "if we have time", "if we have energy"; " if we can just try serving God for a little while to see how it all works out". Still God calls to each of us. Discipleship is difficult. Forgive us, patient and persistent Lord, for the very many times we turn our backs on serving you and focus on our own comforts. Forgive us when we look the other way when people are in need. Forgive us our angry attitudes and actions which hurt rather than

heal. Wrap your arms around us, healing our wounds, binding us to you. Gently move us into service in your name. AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

(Jonah 1:1-17 suggested reading)

Jonah 2: verses 1,10

2 ^{1[a]}From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.

10 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Jonah 3:1-5

New International Version

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Jonah 3:10

10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Mark 1:14-20

New International Version

Jesus Announces the Good News

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **15** “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **17** “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” **18** At once they left their nets and followed him.

19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. **20** Without delay he

called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

MESSAGE

God’s Calling...

God says GO! Jonah says NO! God sends a storm to remind Jonah who is in charge. Jonah is thrown overboard by the others on the ship. Jonah makes the choice to keep trying to run from God. And you know what happens when Jonah is thrown overboard—slurp—swallowed by the big fish. We don’t know what happens—we just know he was in there for 3 days . When I was a child, I use to imagine Jonah sitting in there building a little fire—I guess I thought the fish had swallowed some sticks. So, Jonah could use those little sticks to build a fire. Don’t ask me how he got that fire started.

When the fish spits Jonah up on dry ground, you can almost see Jonah walking on the beach and God voice coming to him loud and clear "Can you hear me now?!" Jonah saying yes God.. I hear you. You see what I mean. Finally Jonah was able to proclaim: “I’ll do what I promised I’d do! “

It isn’t just Jonah’s story. Jonah isn’t the only person who has tried to run from God. Jonah isn’t the only one whose plans have been interrupted by God. This is more than a story about Jonah. It is our story. It is about all of us. It’s about you. It’s about me.

So, I hope that you will begin to think about what this story means to you today, as I’ve tried to think what it means to me today. I want to discover something new about how this story speaks to me now, not how it spoke to me as a child or 30 years ago. What word does God have for my life today? What word does God have for your life today? Listen for the word of God for your life in this story today.

JONAH’S STORY IS OUR STORY—

Think about this ... Have you walked in Jonah shoes, have you walked in the disciple’s shoes...God says drop everything and follow me...or God says “Go that way!” And what do we say...

“We’d really like to but we have too much to do right now. Check back later, OK?”

We must understand that it doesn’t matter...Jesus says I see your labors and knows your gifts... **we say...**

“Jesus that doesn’t work on us. We have bills to pay and work to do.” Jesus says back to us...Have faith, place your trust in me.**Our response is...** **“everyone else seems to let us down. How can we be sure h won’t do the same?”** And Jesus saysto us... take the risk. Place your lives in my hands. I can handle all your problems.Through bright days and dark nights, everywhere, all the time. I will not abandon you.

So,I truly believe that Jonah’s story, the disciple’s story is your story and my story. God has said to all of us GO! Drop your nets and follow me... Jonah says NO! And I am sure there was a time or still is that say NO! or not now!

God sends a storm to remind Jonah who is in charge. How many times have you experienced a storm in your life and then you came to a new realization, as did Jonah: “Nothing is going to harm me, God is with me.”

And when the ugly circumstances of life finally throws you up on solid ground, you can almost hear God say, "Can you hear me now? Wake up now, you can make a new choice... one that leads to new life!"

We have been called by God. The calling may not be a big thing like finding the cure for cancer. The call may be as simple as moving in a new direction, taking another journey of faith so that you can continue in your spiritual growth. The call may be to renew a commitment in a relationship or to look at who really are and where your faith is taking you.

I believe that whatever God has called you to, God will not set you up to fail. God will go with you every step of your new journey. So, today it’s your choice ... you can do it the easier way or the hard way.

HYMN: I Will Make You Fisher’s of Men

I will make you fishers of men
Fishers of men, fishers of men
I will make you fishers of men
If you follow me
If you follow me, if you follow me
I will make you fishers of men
If you follow me

Hear Christ calling come unto me
Come unto me, come unto me
Hear Christ calling come unto me
I will give you rest, I will give you rest, i will give you rest
Hear Christ calling come unto me
I will give you rest

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

"Lord, you have come to the lakeshore, looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones....The words from this lovely hymn paint pictures of hard-working people, going about their daily tasks when they are confronted by Jesus. This same Jesus, who long ago called to those first disciples, calls to us each today. Our "lakeshores" are different. They are the places where we work and where we live. Yet in this song, Jesus is coming for each one of us, just as we are and inviting us to follow him humbly. We have lifted the names of loved ones today in prayerful petition for God’s healing love. We have uttered in our hearts names and situations that it would break our hearts to speak. And God hears all our cries and responds in love. This is one of the faithful works of the church; the work of prayer, asking for God’s healing mercy and blessings. As we have offered our prayers, let us also offer our lives, trusting in God’s love and call to us, responding with confidence. For it is in Jesus’ Name we pray. AMEN.

LORD’S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #574 Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love

- 1 Come let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true, tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.
- 2 Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came, joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,

sharing their sorrow and shame,
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam? why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
Come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

SENDING FORTH

As the disciples walked with Christ so long ago, walk with Christ in your hearts and spirits. Feel the power of the Holy Spirit guiding your path. Know the love of God which is poured out for you and rejoice. Go in peace and may God’s peace go with you.

CHORAL AMEN

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Did Noah Fish?

A Sunday school teacher asked, “Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing while he was on the ark?”

“No,” replied Johnny. “How could he fish with just 2 worms?”