

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th, 2023**

2

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Pastor Peggy
Bartlett Cell: 905-317-5275 Email: info@hsupc.ca
Website: www.hsupc.ca

Church: Hagersville- 905-768-5863 Springvale- 905-768-1501

.....
REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Maple Grove

Advent 2 – Peace

Lord, in the midst of our busy time, when we are in the rush to Christmas, you burst into our lives with the tantalizing promise of something new. Open our hearts and spirits to the glorious possibilities of hope and peace to come. Help us to prepare our lives to receive you. We thank you for all the blessings you pour on us and for the privilege we have in sharing these blessings with others. Be with us all this day and all these days that we may serve you better by helping others in need.

Offering Prayer

Lord God, you have shown us your glory:
in your holy word, in the blessings of our daily lives,
and in the promise of your eternal kingdom.
You share your glory with us, giving us the power to live
in holiness and godliness. Your loving patience gives us hope
as we await the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ.
In gratitude and thanks, we offer you our hearts, our lives,
and all that we have. Use these gifts, we pray,
to prepare your way of salvation and to establish your realm of peace.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND

CELEBRATIONS

GATHERING WORDS

The world is dark and cold.

We look for signs of your coming.

The world is hungry for righteousness.

We look for signs of your coming.

The world yearns for your love.

We look for signs of your coming.

OPENING CAROL: #71 Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

1. 'Twas in the moon of wintertime,
when all the birds had fled,
that mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain:

Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria.

2. Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender Babe was found;
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round,
but, as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high:

3. The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on
the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.

4. O children of the forest free, the kin of Manitou,
the holy child of earth and heaven is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace and joy.

OPENING PRAYER

God of winter and starlight, you have promised us your presence: to live among us, to right all wrongs, to bring good things to all who wait for your new day. In these dark days, we look for signs of your coming: the sounds of children at play, the music that fills our hearts with anticipation, the company of all who serve the last and the least. Make us at home with righteousness, that we may be ready to walk in your holy ways. Amen.

ANTHEM**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - PEACE****Lighting the Advent Candle**

Reader 1: Today we light two candles- the first Candle is called HOPE and it is a reminder that God's promises are true.

Reader 2: The second Candle is called PEACE, God's gentle loving peace for our lives.

Reader 1: We seek God's peace in this time of stress.

Reader 2: Come, all is ready. Let the light of these candles, called HOPE and PEACE, bring brightness to your spirits.

[The first and second Advent Candles are lighted]

Prayer shared by All: As we journey toward the cradle once again may they represent all those children who journey with us. Those searching in Hope and those searching for peace. We thank you God as you prepare us once again for the arrival of the Prince of Peace.

Amen

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN: Verses 1 & 2 of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel that mourns in
lowly exile here until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

**CHILDREN'S TIME – PRESENTATION OF WHITE GIFTS
(VIDEO IS PLAYED WHILE WHITE GIFTS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD)****PRAYER FOR WHITE GIFTS****PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of love and kindness, you have promised to renew our lives, to be with us in a new heaven and new earth—a realm where steadfast love and faithfulness embrace forever.

We are afraid of your promised coming. We cling to rules we understand: the rules of privilege and power.

We are afraid of a world of true justice and peace, afraid that you will change the way things have always been.

As we wait for you to live among us, we confess our unwillingness to see that you have always been here.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

In God's love and mercy, we are given each new day for the healing of the world. In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

CHORUS: #132 Behold, Bless Ye the Lord

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless, bless ye the Lord. 2x

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Peter 3:8-10, Isaiah 40:1-5,10,11 & Mark 1:1-3

2 Peter 3:8-10

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.^[a]

Isaiah 40:1-5,10,11

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD^[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.^[b]

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

Mark 1:1-3**John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^[a] the Son of God,^[b] ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"^[c]—

³ "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"^[d]

MESSAGE

From the loudspeakers in the Malls and Markets, we hear the warning "Only 19 more days until Christmas", and our hearts race and many of us are filled with the annual anxiety of gathering and gifting! Help, we cry. But the voices blaring become more strident. Prepare the way for the big sales, those you can't afford to miss, (and if the truth were to be told, those you can't afford to attend). Get as much as you can! Don't disappoint anyone! Help, we cry.

Is it any wonder that this season which should be the most beautiful is the most difficult for many! John, the voice crying in the wilderness, says "Prepare the way for the Lord!" He doesn't say, become exhausted in your preparations; wear yourselves to a frazzle in trying to please everyone. Instead he says: "Open your hearts – remove the obstacles". Take a few minutes to breathe – a deep cleansing breath and as you breath in, ask for the Lord's presence, and when you exhale, expel the negative things which are crowding your life – let them go. "Prepare the way for the Lord! Make straight highways, free of bumpy spots, for the entrance of God"

This is a season for hope and peace, not for deep anxiety! When we are so filled with stress, either from family expectations or self-imposed expectations, we are clogging up the highway. When we believe that bankrupting our budget to find the "right" gift is the way to go, we place deep pot holes in the middle of the road. Take time to be together – to sit down together and laugh and feel the joy of the One who comes to bring you new life. Jesus did not come to place pressure on your life – he came that we may know about God's tender love for each one of us.

Breathe deeply! Let God's love flood into your lives. Feel the joy of the season! Experience those moments of peace and hope which are given for you. For Jesus is coming to you, each one of you, with healing love and transforming power.

We know that the prophet John was a special messenger to tell people that there was someone coming after him, much greater than he, who would make their lives very different! This person would bring hope and peace to all those who felt that there was nothing that they could do, but suffer. For, you see, the people had suffered for a long, long time. Many of them thought that God no longer cared about them. But John came to them and said that they should prepare their lives to receive the One who was to come and we know that One as Jesus.

Today many people are discouraged and wonder where God is. I believe that God is present with us all the time and that we can see it in small ways, such as a smile, a hug, someone who listens to you when you need to talk, when a song comes on the radio that uplifts you. God's spirit is in each of you. You can be those who prepare the way for the Lord, just as John cried out in the Wilderness and as Isaiah spoke of the coming of the Lord. These days we all need to pray that God is in our world, reaching out to all God's people. Are you ready to be the ones who will help prepare the way? God needs your faith and love and needs you to tell others about God's love by the way you act and the attitudes you have. May our voices be heard in the wilderness a voice that will be singing songs of praise and joy! Join that voice! Let the world ring with the good news of God's Love and Christ will come again. AMEN.

CAROL: #75 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

1 While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
an angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

2 "Fear not," said he for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind
"glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

3 "To you, in David's town, this day
is born of David's line
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

4 "The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all simply wrapped in swaddling clothes
and in a manger laid."

5 Thus spoke the angel. Suddenly
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:

6 "All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
to those on whom his favor rests
goodwill shall never cease."

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

How things will change on the day of the coming of the Lord! Every valley will be lifted up and all the mountains will be made into a plain. Equality will exist for all God's people. O God, we long for that day of hope and peace. We strain our ears to hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness of our lives; the wilderness of despair and discouragement; the wilderness of anger and fear; the wilderness of alienation and selfishness. The voice cries to us to make ready the pathway for our God, to remove the obstacles which we have placed there; to respond with acts of compassion rather than react in violent ways. Lord, attune our ears to hear the voices of those who cry out in their need. Open our hearts to respond in caring ways. Teach us again the great truths about how we should live as your children. Forgive our failings and help us to try again and again to be the kind of faith-filled people you would have us be. As we cry to you, offering the names of loved ones who are sick, who mourn, who are lost, who live in anguish and in anger, keep us mindful of the ways in which we can be of help. Likewise, as we rejoice with all those who are happy, who dance with delight at the wondrous gifts you have given, remind us that joy and peace is what we all seek and what we can accomplish. In the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, we offer this prayer. AMEN

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING CAROL: #48 Hark the Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. [Refrain]

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

SENDING FORTH

God is bringing light to our darkness. We are called to go into the world, confident in God's loving presence, to serve others in need. Go, bringing hope and peace to this darkened world. Go in God's love.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

.....

Announcements

- Monday, December 11th:** Coffee time at Hagersville from 10am-12pm.
- Tuesday, December 12th:** Coffee time at Springvale starting at 9:30am. All are welcome.
- Friday, December 15th:** Hagersville Santa Claus Parade at 6pm.

- Sunday, December 17th:** Candlelight Service at Springvale at 7pm.
- Sunday, December 24th:** Morning Worship Service at Springvale at 9:30am. (Only one service in the morning)
- Sunday, December 24th:** Christmas Eve Service at Hagersville at 7pm
- Sunday, December 31st:** Joint Service at 10:30am at Hagersville. Christmas Sweater Sunday.

Please bring in your paper products for the Hagersville Food Bank



