

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26th, 2023**

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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

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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Applewood

Christ ... Ruler of All

Jesus is typically depicted as teacher and philosopher. Like other teachers, he holds a book. His gaze is intent, inquiring, both open and inward. His heavenly blue outer garment and earthy red inner garment symbolize his dual nature. His unique halo is marked by a cross and lettering, roughly translatable as "I am who I am."

Offering Prayer

Good Shepherd, who leads and guides us through all the trials and tribulations of our lives, we bring these gifts to celebrate the ministries of justice and hope in which our church is involved. Be with us and cause us to grow in our faith and our service. AMEN.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Great is the Lord!

P: God has redeemed God's people!

L: Let the heavens shout with joy!

P: Let all the people celebrate God's awesome love!

L: Shout and sing praise to God!

P: For God has healed and restored God's people.

L: Hallelujah!

P: Hallelujah!

OPENING HYMN: #213 Rejoice, the Lord is King

1 Rejoice the Lord is King!

Your risen Lord adore!

Rejoice, give thanks and sing
and triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

2 Jesus the Saviour reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our sins,
he took his seat above. R

3 God's kingdom cannot fail;
Christ rules o'er earth and heaven;
the keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus given. R

4 Rejoice in glorious hope,
for Christ, the judge, shall come
to glorify the saints
for their eternal home.

We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;
the trump of God shall sound, rejoice!

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God, expand our thankful imaginations:

to time beyond our time,

to wisdom beyond our wisdom,

to strength beyond our strength.

As we pray for your coming reign,

remind us that the whole earth

is already yours.

Even as we pray for things not yet seen,

help us celebrate your sure, eternal reign. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S SONG**READING**

Reader 1: I have been so blessed by God. I have a lovely home, great family. I am doing very well in all aspects of my life. God is truly pleased with me! This I know.

Reader 2: I am so talented. There is almost nothing that I can't do. I have been given so many gifts and talents. Everyone says that they wish they had half the talents I do. I try to use these talents as much as possible, so that people can really see what I can do.

Reader 3: I don't need anyone. I am sufficient unto myself. Nobody needs to help me with anything. I don't want to be beholden to anyone. Let other people cry and whine for help. Not me! I can do all that needs to be done by myself. I don't need anyone.

Reader 4: I am frightened, Lord. I need help. There are wonderful gifts you have given me and I try to use them to your glory, but sometimes I fail. I feel as though I am letting others down, and letting you down also. Please lift me, Lord. Please remember me and help me to be strong for you and for others.

Leader: Sometimes we have many of the feelings expressed by our readers. We are sometimes very proud and arrogant, thinking that we know what is best, never wanting to rely on anyone but ourselves. But at other times we cringe in fear. We doubt our gifts and our abilities to use them. Our faith is tested and we wonder if we are equal to the test. Through all of this, the Lord of Life, beckons to us to place our trust in God's loving mercy. May the love of Christ reign in your life now and always. AMEN.

***CHORUS: #47 JESUS, NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES**

Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Saviour, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, Living Word. X2

SCRIPTURE READING: Mathew 25: 31- 46

The Sheep and the Goats

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

MESSAGE: Jesus Came to Dinner

Ruth looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter one more time...

Dear Ruth,

I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I'd like to stop by for a visit.

Love Always,

Jesus

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table. "Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner."

She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Seven dollars and forty cents. "Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least." She threw on her coat and hurried out the door. A loaf of french bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk...leaving Ruth with a grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday. Nonetheless, she felt satisfied as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm.

"Hey lady, can you help us, lady?" Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans; she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags.

"Look lady, I ain't got a job, ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and, frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to. "Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him."

"Yeah, well, OK lady, I understand. Thanks anyway." The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart. "Sir, wait!" The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after

them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag.

"Thank you, lady. Thank you very much!" "Yes, thank you!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering.

"You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one." Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street . . . without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest. "Thank you, lady! Thank you very much!"

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him. She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox. "That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth,

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. And thank you too, for the beautiful coat.

Love Always,

Jesus

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed. PAUSE ...

From our scripture today Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?"

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

So, what this parable is also asking us to see is ourselves in "the least of these." For until we can see our own humanity in the humanity of those in need, we will not see eternal life. This parable is not a cautionary tale about how to avoid judgement at the end of it all. This parable invites us to see the CHRIST in, with, through, and beyond, the least of these.

Let us take no pleasure in the misfortunes of others, whether they be sheep or goats. Let us be Christ to one another, giving and receiving, Love and being Loved, so that together we can create the better world here and now, as Jesus calls us to be.

The parable of the sheep and goats teaches us to stop *looking* for Jesus, stop *wishing* you could see him face-to-face, and start realizing *you see Jesus in every single person you encounter*.

Start seeing Jesus, because he's here, waiting for you to recognize him, to receive him, to accept his forgiveness, to enter into his joy. And when that happens, when you start seeing Jesus in the least as well as the greatest, they won't be 'least' or 'great' anymore. They will become part of *us*, one in Christ. And you may be surprised that, when you see Jesus in *them*, they will be able to see Jesus in *you*.

HYMN: #480 Let Us Break Bread Together

1 Let us break bread together on our knees,
let us break bread together on our knees.

[Refrain:]

When I fall down on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.

2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees. [Refrain]
3 Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees. [Refrain]

COMMUNION

Leader 1: We come a scattered people, tossed about like leaves in a storm.

Leader 2: From the four winds,

People Respond: Gather us in, O God.

Leader 1: We come a worried people, minds filled with headlines of disaster.

Leader 2: From the ends of the earth,

People Respond: Gather us in, O God.

Leader 1: We come a waiting people, yearning to see the face of God.

Leader 2: From the ends of the heavens,

Response: Gather us in, O God.

Leader 1: Joining all the cosmos, the angels of heaven, and the peoples of earth, we come to worship our God.

Leader 2: Gather us in your faithfulness and call us your people once more.

Leader 1: In this crossover moment, the moment of pause between preparation and celebration, heaven's membrane begins to tear and eternity silently spills into time, and we meet you, God. In this crossover moment, the moment of "Aha!" waters part and the songbird sings and promise is fulfilled and belonging confirmed and the Saviour breaks through and a voice calls from heaven whispering to us "My children, My loved ones," and we hear you, God.

Leader 2: In this crossover moment, the moment of bread and wine between prophecy and promise, heaven slips in and waits for us, haunting the Saviour's words over breaking bread and pouring wine, "My body, my blood, my sacrifice, my covenant." We listen to heaven as it steps over from symbol to presence in the breaking and spilling and rending and flowing, the splashing and pouring all around us in this sharing of promise as the whole universe sings...

**People: Holy, holy, God of all power, holy, holy, God of might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the heights!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!
Blessed is the one who is God's Son!**

Leader: From Baptism to Eucharist, from discovery through to journeying, from "Behold!" to "Aha!" our moving through is our thanksgiving as we cross over into this new moment with you. So be it.

WORDS OF COMMUNION

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION ELEMENTS

POST COMMUNION PRAYER (UNISON)

Gracious spirit, today we celebrated our Lord, Christ the King. Next week we begin the season of outward intensity and activity, remind us of the need for inner quiet that requires us to explore the places of wilderness in our lives and the life of our world.

Invite us to a deepening of our prayers that call us into the heart of humanity.

Encourage us to keep our hearts fixed upon you, who reigns over the heavens. May your grace enliven us, strengthen us and defend us, as we await your coming in hope, peace, joy love and glory.

Peggy will continue the prayer...

LORD’S PRAYER

HYMN: #470 For the Bread Which You Have Broken

1 For the bread which you have broken,
for the wine which you have poured,
for the words which you have spoken,
now we give you thanks, O Lord.

2 By this promise that you love us,
by your gift of peace restored,
by your call to heaven above us,
hallow all our lives, O Lord.

SENDING FORTH

The love of Christ Jesus ever enfold you,
the love of God ever encircle you,
the fellowship of the Spirit ever enrich you,
now and evermore!

CHORAL AMEN

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**Please bring in your paper products for the
Hagersville Food Bank 😊**

Announcements

Monday, November 27th: Coffee time at Hagersville from 10am-12pm.

Tuesday, November 28th: Coffee time at Springvale starting at 9:30am.
All are welcome.

Wednesday, November 29th: Springvale will be selling their Pre-Order Cookie Trays with pickup between 4-6pm. Large trays are \$40, medium trays are \$30 and small trays are \$20. Bowls of chili will be available to go for \$10. Available by pre-order, please call 905-537-4188 or 905-768-3910

Sunday, December 3rd: First Sunday of Advent

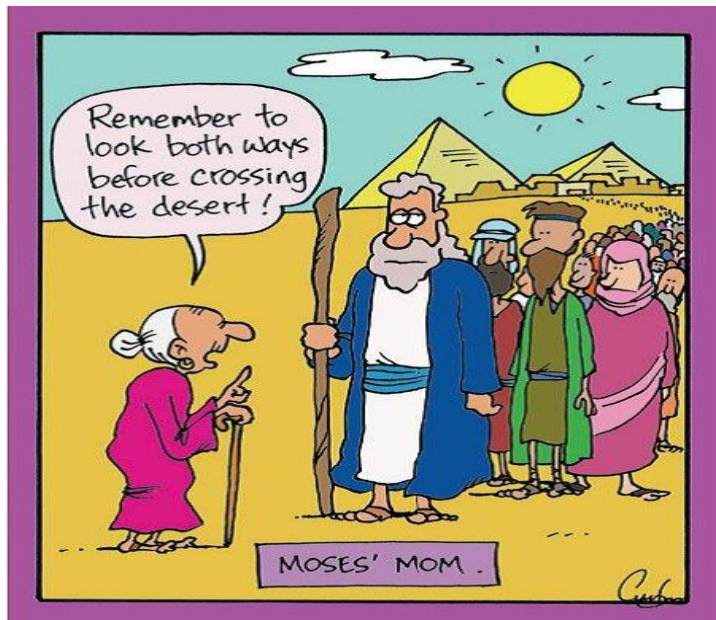
Sunday, December 10th: Second Sunday of Advent – White Gift Sunday

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.



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