

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29th, 2023**

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Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Pastor Peggy Bartlett
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Barton Stone-Mount Hope

God cares for us, and we are called to show God's love by caring for one another! As Jesus shows us, the requirements are very simple: Love God fully, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

OFFERING PRAYER

As you have poured your healing love into our lives, O God, we now offer these gifts to you. Let them be used in ministries of peace and justice through the work of this church in your world. AMEN.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

God, we know you are with us.

From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

You have showered your love upon all generations, since the beginning of time.

The love of Jesus Christ shines in our lives.

Guide us now through this time of worship,

From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

May our worship strengthen and empower us

to share the gospel and to proclaim the good news with boldness.

The love of Jesus Christ is at work in the world!

OPENING HYMN: #409 Morning has Broken

1 Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3 Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you command us to remember that the first commandment is to love God with all that we are, our hearts, souls, minds and spirits. The second is equal to this in that this love is to be extended to our neighbors. We are to love as we wish to be loved. Help us to adopt these commandments so that when we encounter times of difficulty, we are again reminded of your everlasting love for us. AMEN.

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Everlasting God, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Since the creation of the world, you have nurtured us with your love. And yet we shamefully acknowledge that we do not always share your love with others. We are selective about who we choose as neighbors. . . only those who are clean, who look like us, who talk right, who seem safe. Loving God, teach us to love you more fully. For in loving you, our lives will show love to all others, even as your love encompasses all your creation, in all generations. We pray in the name of your greatest gift of love, Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHORUS: #227 Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus
 Turn your eyes upon Jesus
 Look full in his wonderful face
 And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
 In the light of his glory and grace x2

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46
 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 You yourselves know, brothers and sisters,^[a] that our coming to you was not in vain, ² but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³ For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵ As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; ⁶ nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, ⁷ though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle^[b] among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ⁸ So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Matthew 22:34-46

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷ He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The Question about David's Son

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² "What do you think of the Messiah?^[a] Whose son is

he?" They said to him, "The son of David." ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit^[b] calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴ 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"'? ⁴⁵ If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

MESSAGE

Matthew 22:34-46 The Greatest Commandment of All

Loving your neighbour as yourself is found eight times in the Bible. Not once. Not twice. Eight times. Loving your neighbour as yourself is so important to God that He not only repeats Himself, He makes it a command. And not just one in a list of many commands. Jesus coupled the command to love your neighbour as yourself with loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

James calls it the royal law. It sounds beautiful, and it is when we obey it.

But loving your neighbour as yourself isn't always easy. That's why God made it a command. He knew we'd struggle. Making it a commandment is actually to our benefit. How is that? We have to do it on purpose, be intentional about it. Sometimes even out of our need. So, what does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself... Too begin to love your neighbour as yourself, you need to know two things: you need to know what love is and that you are loved. The Bible tells us "this is love. Not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent his Son as a propitiation..." (1 John 4:10). You are the object of this love. God loves you. Knowing this is imperative. And not just loved in a general kind of way, but deeply loved and unconditionally loved. We tap into this when we understand that God loved us first. He's the source of our love. God loved us even before Jesus gave Himself for us. God the Father is the source of all love. Before we can give this love, we need to receive it for ourselves. You can't give what you don't have. To love your neighbour as yourself as commanded, you need to measure correctly. The measurement within this command is "as yourself". To love your neighbour as yourself you need to love yourself. This is not easy; many times, we see our faults we don't see the person that God

created us to be. We need to overcome that. It's not easy but can be done.

Learning to love ourselves prepares and helps us to love our neighbour. Next step, Loving your neighbour means showing grace. Knowing God is love and that this love is for you is not enough. It needs to be developed. Imagine if you had a field of good soil and a bag of top notch seeds. Would they produce a crop all by themselves? No. The seeds must be planted and cared for. Grace is the same, it takes the seed of God's love and the soil of our heart and creates fruit for the kingdom of God.

Loving your neighbour means acting with compassion. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbour?" He responded with a story: the Good Samaritan. Even those who have no love for God see the value of the story. What is the bottom line of this story? Who did Jesus say was being a neighbour? The one who had compassion.

Compassion is not simply a warm fuzzy feeling in our hearts. Compassion does something. A heart that's moved by compassion cannot sit idly by while someone suffers a need. Loving your neighbour as yourself is being moved to help to the full extent of your ability. Loving your neighbour means serving them.

Serving from the heart is kindness in action. Kindness is one of the attributes of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13. The funny thing about kindness, though, is you can do acts of kindness without kindness residing in your heart. If the kind thing is done out of duty, then it isn't love.

Loving your neighbour means speaking kindly.

The childhood rhyme about stick and stones versus words is not true. Words build up or tear down. God created the world using words. The Bible says Jesus is the Word (John 1:1). To love your neighbour as yourself is to use words to build them up. Speaking words of encouragement to someone who's down is the most obvious example but there are others.

Loving your neighbour means making allowances for other people's humanity.

We live in a day and age when offense is as common as breathing. Criticism is running rampant. Love is not easily offended or critical. Everyone does dumb things; no one is always right or knows everything. We're all a work in progress.

Loving your neighbour means sharing in their joys and sorrows. The Bible says we are to "rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15).

And the hardest of all is ... Loving your neighbour means forgiving. Forgiveness is a big deal to God. The Bible says He planned it for us from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

Forgiveness is an important aspect of human life. It is the act of letting go of negative feelings such as anger, resentment, and bitterness towards someone who has wronged you. Forgiveness is important because it can help you to move on from the past and to heal emotionally. Jesus is forgiveness, he is the foundation and gift of forgiveness to all who accept and believe.

But Forgiveness can be difficult, especially when we have been deeply hurt by someone. However, it is important to remember that forgiveness is not about excusing someone's behavior or forgetting what they did. Instead, it is about acknowledging the harm that was done and choosing to let go of any negative feelings towards the person who caused the harm. Simply said... "Letting go and letting God".

HYMN #603 In Loving Partnership We Come

- 1 In loving partnership we come,
seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive;
we freely offer them to you.
- 2 We are the hands and feet of Christ,
serving by grace each other's need.
We dare to risk and sacrifice
with truthful word and faithful deed.
- 3 Loving community we seek;
your hope and strength within us move.
The poor and rich, the strong and weak
are brought together in your love.
- 4 In loving partnership, O God,
help us your future to proclaim.
Justice and peace be our desire,
we humbly pray in Jesus' name.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In the midst of frightening times when words of war soar to the heavens and anger seems to be the way to treat others and to respond to difficulty, be with us, merciful God. We do not want to live in these hideous ways. We seek your peace and healing love. Our hearts are filled with concern for our families and friends as well as those in far off lands who face great times of difficulties, illness, mourning. We share the names of those for whom we seek prayers knowing that you hear our cries and respond in love. Let us pray silently for a minute then offer the names of these dear ones. [Silent Prayer].

Yet in the midst of darkness your light of joy abounds within us as we share those moments which have caused us to rejoice in delight and love. Let us pray silently for a minute and then offer instances of joy that we have encountered this week.

[Silent prayer.]

Lord of hope and peace, we have brought before you the names of dear ones on our hearts. Some of the names have been uttered out loud in the congregation; others are whispered in our hearts. Be with all of us, O Lord. Heal our wounds. Direct our lives in pathways of peace. These things we offer in Jesus' name. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: #560 O Master Let Me Walk with Thee

- 1 O Master, let me walk with Thee
in lowly paths of service free;
tell me Thy secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.
- 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.
- 3 Teach me Thy patience, still with Thee
in closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sure and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong.

- 4 in hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broadening way,
in peace that only Thou canst give,
with Thee, O Master, let me live.

SENDING FORTH

God's love is sending us forth into the world in ministries of peace and justice. We have received forgiveness and been showered with God's gracious love. Go in peace, bringing hope to this hurting and angry world. AMEN.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Sunday, October 29th: Please join us for a showing of "The Chosen" at Hagersville at 7pm in the Sanctuary. This will be continuing each Sunday.

Monday, October 30th: Coffee time at Hagersville from 10am-12pm.

Tuesday, October 31st: Coffee time at Springvale starting at 9:30am. All are welcome.

Friday, November 10th: Soup Lunch at Hagersville from 11:30am-1pm. Cost is \$10 per person and includes soup, bun & cookie. Soup kinds will be chicken noodle, hamburger, ham & cabbage and cauliflower. This will be a take-out only event. To order, please call 905-768-3729 by October 18th at noon.

Sunday, November 12th: Church Council meeting at Hagersville after worship with potluck lunch.

Saturday, November 25th: Please join us at Hagersville United Church for High Tea from 12pm-2pm. Cost is \$20 per person, in advance if possible. Call or text 905-515-6908. E-transfer can be sent in advance to dalebvecero@hotmail.com.

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

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

