

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 14th, 2024**

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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

Lynnville

“Even as the risen Christ appeared to those first disciples, so Christ is present with us now. Let us pray for open minds and ready hearts to hear and receive the word of God.”

OFFERING PRAYER

Author of life and Giver of all gifts,
we thank you for the many blessings of our lives.
Receive now these gifts
and transform them
with the power of your love.
May they become witnesses to your resurrection,
proclaiming your power and forgiveness
in our community and throughout the world.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

MINUTE FOR MISSION

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Fear hung over the disciples as a dark cloud.

P: Huddled in the upper room, they spoke in soft whispers, afraid of the sound of their own voices.

L: Lightning flashed in their souls.

P: Christ, the Risen Lord, was standing with them, eating with them, talking with them.

L: Where doubt had reigned, hope now grew.

P: Where fear and panic had laid claim, faith was again planted.

L: Come, let us worship the God of great miracles.

P: Joy and Celebration ring in our hearts!

L: Come, let us raise our voices in song!

P: Let us offer our hearts and souls to God in prayer and praise.

All: As we worship her this morning!

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 of Light and Mercy, be with us this day as we again hear the stories of faith and sight. Help us to believe in your abiding presence with us, both in our darkness and in the light which you bring. Give us courage and strength to witness to your resurrection. For we offer this in Jesus' Name, AMEN.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

READING

Reader 1: What does it take to be a witness of Jesus?

Reader 2: As far as I can see, it means that you are willing to stand up and speak about your faith; you are willing to live a life of compassion for others in honor of Jesus.

Reader 1: Yeah, but what does that mean, exactly?

Reader 2: Well, for one thing, you are not afraid to admit you're a follower of Jesus. Even if people think that you are crazy. It doesn't mean that you have to be obnoxious about it, just honored to follow the One who brings eternal life.

Reader 1: I don't think I would be able to do that. I'm not a good public speaker; not like the preacher, or the Sunday School Teacher, or the other folks who lead in worship here.

I don't have a clue what I would say or do. It's not that I don't want to be a witness, it's just that I'm not good enough to do that kind of work.

Reader 2: That's just the point. Jesus did not have an application you had to fill out. He just said, Come, Listen, Learn, Care, Share, Speak from your heart. Look at who He chose to have around him - a bunch of fishermen, tax collectors, people with questionable backgrounds, as well as some of the "regular" folk. He placed love in their hearts; and courage in their souls. He'll do the same for you.

Reader 1: You think so?

Reader 2: Sure. That's what He promised, and he's never backed down from his promises.

Reader 1: OK, I'll give it a try.

Reader 2: You can do it. Just be yourself.....after all, that's who Jesus loves and depends on!

***CHORUS: #91 "GREAT ARE YOU, LORD"**

Holy Lord, Most Holy Lord, you alone are worthy of my praise,
O Holy Lord, Most Holy Lord, with all of my heart I sing:
Great are You, Lord, worthy of praise;
Holy and true, great are You, Lord, Most Holy Lord. (X 2)

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 24:36-48

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

MESSAGE: Potlucks, Comfort Food and Faith

While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Luke 24:41-42
Whenever the world threatens to overwhelm, when I find myself engulfed in stress, or when I simply don't have words to speak my heart's confusion, there is always one constant that can make life just a little bit better: comfort food.

Yes, I can mind-over-matter my way to a healthy diet most of the time, but there is nothing like some homemade mac and cheese, a good and greasy grilled cheese sandwich, or roast beef and mashed potatoes to reduce anxiety and provide relief from stress. Sure, the fix is a temporary one, but it tastes really good going down. We humans hunger for comfort and security. The traditional comfort foods of our childhood both fill our bellies and hug our hearts.

I suppose that may be one reason our faith communities of faith specialize in plentiful potluck dinners.

I can't remember ever going to a church potluck and not finding a overabundance of taste sensations and calorie-laden goodness spread like a crazy quilt of love and hope. Yes, you know what I mean, how food fuels the body and made with love the central ingredient in almost

any dish. When we lack words, we bring food. When we wish to dispense comfort and care, it often comes in the form of casseroles and hot dishes, bread or brownies, all seasoned with the spirit of love and garnished with a sprig of hope.

It is precisely this reality that makes the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus so appealing to me. Wherever there is food, you'll find God. Jesus breaks the bread after walking the Emmaus Road, and Jesus shares a shore-side fish broil with his still dazed and confused disciples. He shares fuel for the body and gives fuel for the faith. Both hunger of body and soul are satisfied in the presence of the risen One. Jesus provides both comfort food and true soul food—a plate of plenty for the hungry heart.

Indeed, the fearful faithful were empowered and equipped for ministry and mission through word and meal on that Galilean beach long ago, and we know from story, scripture, and tradition that they took the faith and ran with it. They spread it far and wide, boldly and sometimes at great cost. We today are recipients of that same faith and the Spirit-filled results of those early meals with Jesus.

Not surprisingly, we are also empowered and equipped for ministry and mission through word and meal. We hear scripture read in the assembly and the word of God proclaimed in ways that help us live out our faith in everyday life. We gather around Christ's table for bread and wine.... that has no need of "super-sizing" to satisfy our hungry hearts there. A piece of bread and a sip of wine shared in community as mysterious as it might seem, that bread and wine renews us.

And what a wondrous proof of life this was for the disciples gathered there. There was no booming voice from heaven, no earthquake, wind, or fire, but with the simple act of Jesus being with his people in person, talking with them, letting them touch him, and eating with them. Here in these moments Jesus provided the ultimate definition of what following him meant – that living out faith in him was to be done in community, in togetherness with him and with each other. But more even that proving that he was alive and with them, there is also an interesting dual relationship that happens here as well – an action and a reaction. The disciples feed Jesus, and then Jesus proceeds to feed them – with the word in scripture. This feeding of the disciples by the fed Jesus serves to provide both the cause for his appearance with them and the meaning and purpose that was to be served. Jesus went on to explain that his

coming to dinner with them was not merely to prove the reality of his resurrection, but that there was a reason and a purpose behind it all. That reason, the cause of his appearance among them, was according to Jesus to fulfill scripture. He not only opened their minds to understand the scriptures, but also pointed out how what he had said when with them before about everything written about him in the Law and the Prophets (in scripture) must be fulfilled, and was indeed being fulfilled by his very presence with them. Not only was Jesus' resurrection real, he pointed out that it was no accident, that it was anticipated and foretold in scripture. This gives the reality of it all infinitely more depth, doesn't it? Moreover, there is a subsequent purpose, not to be overlooked or forgotten. "You are witnesses to these things", Jesus told those disciples, and tells us today. We are, in our turn to the continuing presence of Christ among us.

To that small band of his gathered faithful the risen Christ said, "Touch me and see." To us who come here to meet the risen Christ, he still says, "touch me and see." "How can we?" we protest, "it's too long ago and too far away!". To those who in joy still wonder and have trouble believing, Christ also asks, "got anything to eat?", and we say, "yes, but how can we feed you?" How indeed? Well, he's told us how to do that as well. "As you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me", Christ reminds us, and it is very simple. Touch him, through the gentle holding of a hand, comforting someone from grief and pain. Feed him, through the filling of a plate with food for someone. Clothe him, with the gifts of socks, shoes, sweaters, coats – and above all, dignity. Remember we are the hands and feet of Christ, go out and serve.

HYMN: #644 I Was There to Hear your Borning Cry

- 1 I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.
- 2 I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
in a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell.

- 3 When you heard the wonder of the word,
I was there to cheer you on;
you were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.
- 4 If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk till rising sun.
- 5 In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young.
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
- 6 When the evening gently closes in
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
with just one more surprise.
- 7 I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord of Dawn and Darkness, how grateful we are for your loving mercies. You saw our fear and doubt, our suspicion, our mistrust, and you banished them from our lives, replacing them with hope, peace, love, and joy. You called us to be your witnesses, to all the world, unafraid of what others might think or say about us. We have been invited out of our darkened hideaways, into the light of your world as emissaries of hope and justice, peace and compassion. Be with us, as we participate in ministries of healing and hope through this church, in our community, region, nation, and world. Give us courage and strength to be your disciples in all the circumstances of our lives; for we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #371 Open My Eyes, That I may See

- 1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready my God, Thy will to see,
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!
- 2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready my God, Thy will to see,
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!
- 3 Open my mouth, and let me bear,
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;
Open my heart and let me prepare
Love with Thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
Ready my God, Thy will to see,
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

SENDING FORTH

Go in courage and peace, proclaiming the Risen Lord to all! Be those who bring hope and justice to a hungry and hurting world! The peace of the Lord is with you now and forever.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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**Please bring in paper products for the
Hagersville Food Bank!**

Announcements

Tuesday, April 16th: Coffee Time at 9:30am at Springvale. All are welcome

Thursday, April 18th: Ham & Turkey Supper at Springvale United from 4 p.m.-6 p.m. Adults: \$25.00, Children: \$12.00. Take-out only Meal includes: Ham, Turkey, Scalloped Potatoes, Stuffing, Corn, Coleslaw & Pie. Please call or text Shirley at 905-981-5455 to reserve your tickets.

Friday, April 19th: Soup Lunch at Hagersville from 11:30am-1pm. Cost is \$10/person. Takeout Only. Kinds of soup include: chicken noodle, hamburger, potato chowder & pasta fagioli (bean). Ticket price includes your choice of soup, bun & a cookie. Please call 905-768-3729 by April 18th to reserve tickets.

Sunday, April 28th: Welcoming Service at Hagersville for our new congregation members from St. Andrew's Presbyterian. Followed by potluck lunch & time of fellowship.

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