

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 21st, 2024**

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

New Vision

Welcome! We worship this Sunday with planet Earth. We join the Psalmists and rejoice with Earth. We sing with Earth, our planet home spinning through space. We celebrate Earth as a sacred place, a sanctuary filled with God's presence.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of Creation, we are thankful for your awesome work in creation, you have weaved all of life together, and it is very good. We are grateful for all that protects and cares for your good works: the sunlight and water that sustains life, the earth that grounds and nourishes life, and the earth-beings that care for and protect life. We ask your blessings on these offerings we offer here and on the actions of those across the church and beyond during this Earth Week. Amen

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Whether we live near mountains or in the prairies—

All: We are one in Christ.

One: Whether our winters are balmy or our summers are cool—

All: We are one in Christ.

One: Whether we live near the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Ocean or somewhere in the middle—

All: We are one in Christ.

One: Whether we live in urban dwellings, nestled in the suburbs, or surrounded by a rural landscape—

All: We are one in Christ.

One: In a spirit of unity, caring for each other and the whole of creation—

All: We are one in Christ.

OPENING HYMN: #226 For The Beauty of the Earth

1 For the beauty of the earth,
 for the glory of the skies,
 for the love which from our birth
 over and around us lies,

**God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.**

2 For the beauty of each hour
 of the day and of the night,
 hill and vale, and tree and flower,
 sun and moon, and stars of light, **R**

3 For the joy of human love,
 brother, sister, parent, child,
 friends on earth, and friends above,
 for all gentle thoughts and mild, **R**

4 For each perfect gift sublime
 to our race so freely given,
 graces human and divine,
 flowers of earth and buds of heaven, **R**

OPENING PRAYER

As we gather, we are thankful for your Creation: for light and darkness; for air, wind, and sky; for earth and sea; for seeds, harvests, and plant life; for sunlight, moonlight, and starlight; for every living creature, swarming, flying, creeping, and grazing; for our lives. In our actions, meditations, and prayers, may we honour and celebrate your very good Creation, as we seek wisdom on how to share our gratitude and love in good and healing ways. Amen.

ANTHEM: Take My Heart by Roger Summers

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Creator God, we come before you in a time of crisis. We know that much of your creation struggles; we begin to see and acknowledge the changes around us; we search for the causes and the cures and the collaborative ways we can commit to care for creation. We want to do what's right but we don't always know what that is or agree how best to do it. Help us learn what we must, listening to the diverse voices of creation itself. Help us understand and love what you have loved and called "very good." Enliven that understanding, we ask, to allow ourselves to be moved to act as we should and to halt actions that harm. Guide us as we try to discern how best to truly listen to each other as well as creation and heed your call. We ask for forgiveness where we have taken too much or cared too little, for hearts willing to listen and change and will to follow through. May the knowledge of your presence and the assurance of your love shape our time here and always. We pray in your name, Amen.

CHORUS: God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall

1 God sees the little sparrow fall, it meets his tender view;
if God so loves the little birds, I know he loves me too.

**Refrain: He loves me too, he loves me too, I know he loves me too;
because he loves the little things, I know he loves me too.**

2 He paints the lily of the field, perfumes each lily bell;
if he so loves the little flow'rs, I know he loves me well. **[Refrain]**

3 God made the little birds and flow'rs, and all things large and small;
he'll not forget his little ones, I know he loves them all. **[Refrain]**

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm 104

God the Creator and Provider

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
3 you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
4 you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.
5 You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
6 You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
11 giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.
12 By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
15 and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.
16 The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
17 In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coney.
19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
20 You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.

- 21 The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- 22 When the sun rises, they withdraw
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 People go out to their work
and to their labor until the evening.
- 24 O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

Thanks be to God! This morning, as we consider and sit with this scripture and the invitation to all of us, will you join in prayer with me, please....

God, on this day we join with the Psalmist of old, with our hearts proclaiming: “for the beauty of your earth, for the wonder of each hour, for the joy of ear and eye and heart and mind, and the joy of human love, and for thyself best gift divine, who to the world was so freely given, for that great, great love of thy in peace on earth and joy in heaven.” Indeed, Lord of all, to you, we raise, this our hymn and our lives of grateful praise. Amen.

MESSAGE: Ruler’s or Steward’s

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’ (Genesis 1:1)
‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.’ (Psalm 24:1)

The earth does not belong to us – it belongs to God! It is a gift from God, a home that we share with the rest of creation. But with this gift comes responsibility.

In Genesis 1, God instructed humans to ‘rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground’, and to ‘fill the earth and subdue it’ (Genesis 1:26, 28). This passage has sometimes been used to justify abuse of the earth.

Some people believe that the instruction to ‘rule’ over the earth means we have absolute authority over creation. In this view, nature is a resource for humans to benefit from economically, whatever the environmental impacts. This theology has allowed Christians to chop down tropical forests to fill the air with pollution from industrial plants

and to pollute rivers with waste products from mines as we dig for precious metals.

But other parts of scripture take us in a different direction, like the second creation account in Genesis 2. In verse 15, humans were placed in the Garden of Eden and instructed to ‘work it and take care of it’. In other words, God has given us the responsibility to act as stewards of his creation ... to care for, manage, oversee and protect all that God owns. What an honour and privilege!

This does not give us free licence to exploit and abuse God’s earth. We aren’t owners, but stewards, and we need to act in the owner’s best interests, treating his ‘property’ with respect. We must not use it in a way that causes harm to our neighbours. One day we will have to give an account to God of how we have loved our neighbours, which includes how we treated his earth.

When we forget our responsibility to be wise stewards, creation suffers. The earth can no longer cope with the demands humans place on our natural resources. Our waste and pollution are poisoning the air, soil and water. If we continue to exploit and abuse God’s earth, what will be left for future generations to inherit?

As stewards, we need to act in the owner’s...God’s best interests, treating his property with respect. We must not use it in a way that causes harm.

When faced with major global issues – such as climate change and pollution – it is easy to become overwhelmed.

We might say: ‘It’s not my fault. Leave it to the politicians.’ We might think: ‘Who cares if I use plastic bags or throw litter out of the car window? I am only one person ... what difference will it make?’

Beware of the highly contagious ‘why bother?’ disease. The way we look after the environment is a moral and spiritual issue. What we do in our daily lives does matter. The immediate consequences of our actions might not be felt by us, but they will most certainly affect someone else. God sees and honours the efforts we make, even if they seem small to us. And together, we can make a difference.

HYMN: #291 All Things Bright and Beautiful
R: All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

- 1 Each little flower that opens,
 each little bird that sings,
 God made their glowing colors,
 God made their tiny wings. **R**
- 2 The purpleheaded mountains,
 the river running by,
 the sunset and the morning
 that brightens up the sky; **R**
- 3 The cold wind in the winter,
 the pleasant summer sun,
 the ripe fruits in the garden:
 God made them every one. **R**
- 4 The rocky mountain splendour,
 the lone wolf's haunting call,
 the great lakes and the prairies,
 the forest in the fall; **R**
- 5 God gave us the eyes to see them,
 and lips that we might tell
 how great is God our maker,
 who has made all things well. **R**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Creating God, For the care that we can give and receive as your creatures, we give you thanks, as we reflect on the mystery of our fragile planet, we celebrate the wonders of Earth as our home. Help us to discern how we have polluted our planet and to empathise with the groaning of creation beneath us. Teach us to sense the presence of God pulsing through Earth as a living green blue sanctuary. Teach us to love Earth as our home. In the name of Christ, the Word of God, who is the creative impulse in all creation. Amen.

We gather these prayers with the prayer Jesus taught us...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #510 We Have This Ministry

- 1 We have this ministry
 and we are not discouraged;
 it is by God's own power
 that we may live and serve.
 Openly we share God's word,
 speaking truth as we believe,
 praying that the shadowed world
 may healing light receive.
 We have this ministry, O God, receive our living.
- 2 O Christ, the tree of life
 our end and our beginning,
 we grow to fullest flower
 when rooted in your love.
 Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay,
 called to serve by your grace,
 different cultures, different gifts,
 the young and old a place.
 We have this ministry, O God, receive our giving.
- 3 The yoke of Christ is ours,
 the whole world is our parish;
 we daily take the cross,
 the burden and the joy.
 Bearing hurts of those we serve,
 wounded bruised and bowed with pain,
 Holy Spirit, bread and wine,
 we die and rise again.
 We have this ministry O God, receive our loving

SENDING FORTH

**All: As we experience each tree, each flower, each bird, each bee,
 and each human, let us feel our God reflected in creation. As we
 look upon God's world, let us share the love of Christ. As we love**

one another, may your Spirit give us the strength we need to care for each and every part of creation.

Pause...

Leader: Wiggle your toes! Remember, we are richly blessed!

Our cups overflow! We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

We have all that we need to live fully, love deeply and be all that we are created to be. Remember that we live and move and have our being

In God Who is our Saviour. Who lives and moves and has being in with and through us. Amen.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Sunday, April 21st: Join us at Hagersville in the sanctuary at 7pm to watch the series “The Chosen”.

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

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

Thursday, May 9th: Scrapbooking setup at Hagersville in the afternoon/evening. All help is appreciated.

Saturday, June 1st: High Tea at Hagersville from 12pm-2pm. Join us for an afternoon of sandwiches, scones, tea & desserts. Cost is \$20/person in advance. Etransfer available: dalebvecero@hotmail.com. Text or call Dale at 905-515-6908 to reserve your seat.

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

Sunday Humour

Running To Church

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Sunday School class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!

Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!'

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again!

As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!'

My Dad Makes Big Money

Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, 'My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him \$50.'

The second boy says, 'That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him \$100.'

The third boy says, 'I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!'

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