

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 27th, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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First Sunday after Easter

“Jesus meets us in fear, offers peace, and sends us forward ... even through doubt.”

OFFERING PRAYER

Risen Christ, you breathed your Spirit into your disciples and sent them into the world. Now breathe your Spirit into these gifts and into us. Use what we bring to proclaim your peace and grace. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed!

Leader: Behind locked doors, in places of fear, the Risen Christ came speaking peace.

People: We are not alone. Jesus stands among us.

Leader: In times of doubt, Jesus offers his wounds for us to see and touch.

People: We believe—help our unbelief!

Leader: Let us worship our risen Lord!

All: Alleluia! Amen.

OPENING HYMN: #187 The Spring Has Come

1 The spring has come let all the church be part of it!

The world has changed, and God is at the heart of it!

New light, new day, new colour after winter grey.

New light, new day, the spring has come,

let all the church be part of it!

2 The sun is warm, let all God's children play in it!

The world expands, let's spread the Gospel way in it!

New leaf, new thrust, new greening for the love of Christ.

New leaf, new thrust, the sun is warm, let all God's children play in it

3 The spring has come, new people are the flowers of it.

Through wind and rain, new life is in the showers of it.

New bud, new shoot, new hope will bear the Spirit's fruit.

New bud, new shoot, the spring has come,

new people are the flowers of it!

OPENING PRAYER

Risen Christ, you come to us through locked doors and fearful hearts.

You offer peace, not as the world gives, but a peace that restores,

renews, and sends. Come among us now. Speak to our doubts.

Strengthen our belief. And send us out as your witnesses. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

LITANY: When We Doubt, Jesus Meets Us

Leader: When we are unsure, when questions swirl in our hearts, when faith feels distant or confusing...

All: Jesus, you do not turn away. You come close with peace.

Leader: When we wonder if your promises are really true, when we need to see, to touch, to know for ourselves...

All: You do not shame our doubt. You welcome our searching.

Leader: Like Thomas, we want to believe, but we also long to understand. We want to follow, even when we're afraid.

All: Jesus, you breathe peace into our fear and love into our questions.

Leader: You show us your scars—not to prove us wrong, but to help us see that your love endures through pain.

All: You meet us where we are, and you still call us blessed.

Leader: You do not wait for perfect faith. You send us out with open hands and hearts.

All: Thank you, Jesus, for grace greater than our doubts, for peace deeper than our fear, and for love that never gives up.

Leader: Let us go forward—not with all the answers, but with the courage to keep believing, and the peace of Christ in our hearts.

All: Amen.

***CHORUS: #20 “BECAUSE HE LIVES”**

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,

Because He lives, all fear is gone.

Because I know He holds the future,

And life is worth the living, just because He lives. X2

SCRIPTURE READING: John 20:19-31

John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among

them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

MESSAGE: "Faith Beyond Fear"

It was evening on that day—the first day of the week. The stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty. Mary Magdalene had told them, “I have seen the Lord.” And yet, the disciples were hiding behind locked doors.

Why? Because resurrection doesn’t immediately erase fear. Because good news sometimes feels too good to be true. Because even when life is breaking through, grief still lingers.

“The doors were locked for fear of the Jews.” And behind those doors sat confusion, sorrow, and questions: “What now?” “Was it real?” “Are we next?”

And then—without knocking, without turning the handle—Jesus came and stood among them.

Could you image the look on the disciples faces and then when Jesus spoke ...

His first words weren’t “I told you so.” They weren’t “Why didn’t you believe Mary?” No reprimand. No lecture.

Just this ... “Peace be with you.”

In the middle of the chaos, Jesus speaks peace. Not a surface-level peace. Not a “don’t worry, be happy” peace. This is shalom, wholeness, restoration, calm in the storm, and strength in the fear.

“Peace be with you,” he says, and then shows them his wounds.

Not to prove a point, but to connect. His peace isn’t disconnected from pain—it flows through it. His risen body still carries the scars of crucifixion. Because resurrection doesn’t erase the wounds—it redeems them.

Then something powerful happens.

Jesus breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” He commissions them: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Just imagine: the same disciples who were hiding in fear now become the ones sent to carry hope. Not because they’re fearless, but because they’re empowered. Not because they have it all together, but because Jesus believes in them.

Fear didn’t get the last word. Jesus did. “Peace. Spirit. Go.”

Now we move to the second part of the text. The Doubt of Thomas (and ours)

Now, let’s talk about Thomas.

He wasn’t there that night. Maybe he was grieving differently. Maybe he just needed space. When they told him what had happened, he couldn’t take their word for it.

Unless I see. Unless I touch. Unless I know for myself.

Let’s be honest: most of us have a little Thomas in us. We want our faith to be real, not rehearsed. We want to wrestle with the hard questions, not just repeat the easy answers.

And what does Jesus do? Eight days later, he comes back just for Thomas. He doesn’t scold. He invites.

“Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.”

And Thomas falls to his knees: “My Lord and my God!”

That’s a pretty big thing to say. It means he believed, deep down, with his whole heart.

His doubt led him to a deeper faith. And Jesus says something just for us: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” That’s us. We haven’t seen with our eyes, but we have felt his presence. In quiet prayers. In a whispered peace. In the community that carries us. In the Word that reminds us.

So here we are once again, first Sunday after easter wondering how does all of this apply to us

This story teaches us something powerful about faith. Faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is following Jesus even when we’re unsure. Faith is staying in the room long enough for Jesus to show up. Faith is hearing “Peace be with you” when everything around us says “Panic.”

Jesus still enters locked rooms. He still speaks peace into anxious hearts. He still invites us to believe, even through our questions. He still sends us out, not perfectly polished, but Spirit-filled and ready.

So whatever fears you carry— Whatever doubts are still lingering— Whatever locked doors you’ve shut tight—

Jesus is not afraid of them. He comes in anyway. He comes with scars and breathes peace. He comes with grace and gives purpose.

So, when you feel unsure—remember Thomas. When you feel afraid—remember those disciples. When you wonder if Jesus will show up—remember the locked room.

Because the good news is: Jesus still shows up. Jesus still says, “Peace be with you.” And Jesus still believes in you.

And he sends us out ... as disciples to share the new ... He is Risen!!!

HYMN: It is No Secret

1. The chimes of time ring out the news, another day is through
Someone slipped and fell, was that someone you
You may have longed for added strength, your courage to renew
Do not be disheartened for I have news for you

R: It is no secret what God can do, what He's done for others
He'll do for you, With arms wide open
He'll pardon you, it is no secret what God can do

2. There is no night for in His light, You'll never walk alone
Always feel at home wherever you may roam
There is no power can conquer you, when God is on your side
Just take Him at His promise, Don't run away and hide **R**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day. We believe he appeared to the disciples, bringing peace and purpose. Though we have not seen him, we love him. Though we do not see him now, we believe in him. We rejoice with a joy that is indescribable and glorious. Thanks be to God!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of resurrection power,
 You meet us in our fears, our doubts, our locked rooms.
 You breathe peace into our anxious hearts
 And call us to believe again.
 So we come now, with open hearts and voices lifted,
 To pray for the world, for one another, and for your church.
(Pause)
 Risen Christ, you entered the room where the disciples were hiding in fear.
 Come into the rooms of our world still locked by conflict, division, and violence.
 Bring your peace to places torn by war,
 To cities crying out for justice,
 To homes broken by anger or silence.
 You breathed your Spirit upon the disciples and sent them into the world.
 Breathe on your Church today.
 Strengthen our faith, ignite our courage, and send us to be bearers of peace and hope.
 Make us bold in witness and gentle in love.

You met Thomas in his doubts, not with judgment but with grace.
 Help us to bring our questions to you without fear.
 Walk with all who wrestle with belief, who long to see and touch and know you.
 Grant them glimpses of your love that open the heart to wonder.
 You showed your wounds to your friends,
 A reminder that even in resurrection, pain is remembered and transformed.
 We lift to you all who suffer—those who are sick, grieving, isolated, or afraid.
 Touch them with your healing presence.
 Where there is conflict—bring your calm.
 Where there is grief—bring your comfort.
 Where there is doubt—bring your grace.
 You promised a blessing to those who believe without seeing.
 May we live as people of that blessing—

Trusting in your goodness, living in your grace,
 And proclaiming with joy: **"My Lord and my God!"**
 May we now join together in the words Jesus taught us to Pray

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #173 Thine Is the Glory
 1 Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
 endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.
 Angels in bright raiment, rolled the stone away,
 kept the folded grave-clothes, where the body lay.

R: Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son,
 endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.

2 Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!
 lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
 Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
 for the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting. **R**

3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
 Life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
 make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
 bring us safe through Jordan, to thy home above. **R**

SENDING FORTH

Go now as people who have seen the Risen Lord. Do not be afraid.
 Speak peace, live grace, and believe—even through your doubts.
 And may the God of peace, the Risen Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, April 29th: Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at 9:30am. All are welcome!

Thursday, May 8th: Scrapbooking setup in the afternoon/evening. Please see Susan if you are interested in helping.

Wednesday, May 21st: Official Board meeting at 1:30pm at Springvale.

Saturday, May 24th: High Tea celebrating Hagersville's 150th.

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

