

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &  
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH  
SUNDAY, APRIL 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

2

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God  
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**REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE**

Central: Welland

*“What the World Needs Now.....Is Love”*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Generous God,  
may the gifts we return to you  
cause your name to be celebrated  
among the nations.  
May the lives that we live  
cause your name to be celebrated  
in all generations.  
May our offerings be signs of our praise to you,  
forever and ever. Amen.

**PRELUDE AND WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Love one another, my friends.

**For God is love in us.**

Love even the stranger well.

**For God is love in us.**

Love sister and brother and child.

**For God is love in us.**

Love one another, my friends.

**For God is love in us.**

**OPENING HYMN: #395 Come In and Sit Down**

**REFRAIN: Come in come in and sit down**

**You are a part of the family**

**We are lost and we are found**

**And we are a part of the family**

**1** You know the reason why you came,

Yet no reason can explain

So share in the laughter and cry in the pain,

For we are a part of the family

God is with us in this place

Like a Mother's warm embrace

We're all forgiven by God's grace

For we are a part of the family **R**

**2** Children and elders middlers and teens

Singles and doubles and in-between

Strong eighty-fivers and streetwise sixteens

We are a part of the family

Greeters and shoppers longtime and new

Nobody here has a claim on a pew

And whether we're many or only a few

We are a part of the family **R**

**3** There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine

We are the branches Christ is the vine

This is God's temple it's not yours or mine

But we are a part of the family

There's rest for the weary and health for us all

There's a yoke that is easy and a burden that's small

So come in and worship and answer the call

For we are a part of the family **R**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious and Loving God, we are grateful that you have called us  
together this day, drawing us from darkness to the glory of your light.

Holy Spirit that surrounds us, you are the tender love that welcomes all  
people. Like a mother, you nurture your children, giving them life,  
teaching them to love. May our spirits rejoice at the good news you have

for us today. Open our hearts to your love, for we ask this in Christ's Name. AMEN.

## ANTHEM

## CHILDREN'S TIME

## CHILDREN'S HYMN

## LITANY/READING

Reader 1: (to Reader 2) Look at all these people!

Reader 2: I'm looking (glances around the room)

Reader 1: What do you see?

Reader 2: People. All kinds of people.

Reader 1: What else do you see?

Reader 2: Some people are smiling. Hey, somebody just yawned! Looks like someone else is dozing off. Somebody's got something else on their mind.

Reader 1: What else do you see?

Reader 2: Well, I see people who have come here to worship.

Reader 1: And...

Reader 2: I see people who seem to be waiting for something

Reader 1: All of us are waiting for something. Sometimes waiting is lonely; sometimes we wait in groups. These people are here waiting for God's word for them. Some of them will hear it clearly; but for others it won't be quite so evident.

Reader 2: Jesus' disciples were always waiting for a word, weren't they!

Reader 1: Yes. The word of the Resurrection came as a surprise; the words about discipleship, you know "feed my sheep", came as a challenge; now Jesus offers the word of love as a commandment. Love one another as I have loved you.

Reader 2: That's true, but it's not easy.

Reader 1: You're right. It is not easy. That's why we are here: to discover how to love one another with compassion, peace, and forgiveness. That's what God wants us to do...to take care of each other; to listen, to be present, to help where we can.

Reader 2: Sounds good to me. I'm glad I'm here today, with this group of seekers. I'm not so alone. Thanks.

**HYMN:** They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

We are one in the Spirit,

We are one in the Lord,

We are one in the Spirit,

We are one in the Lord,

And we pray that all unity  
may one day be restored:

**Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians  
by our love, by our love.**

**Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.**

We will walk with each other,

We will walk hand in hand,

We will walk with each other,

We will walk hand in hand,

And together we'll spread the news

That God is in our land. **Refrain**

We will work with each other,

We will work side by side,

We will work with each other,

We will work side by side,

And we'll guard each one's dignity

And save each one's pride: **Refrain**

All praise to the Father,

from who all things come,

And all praise to Christ Jesus,

His only Son,

And all praise to the Spirit

Who makes us one: **Refrain**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** John 13:31-35

<sup>31</sup> When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him,<sup>[a]</sup> God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

<sup>33</sup> “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

<sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

#### **And Selected Verses....**

1 Corinthians 13:4: “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.”

Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Psalms 36:10: “Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up against them.”

Ephesians 4:31-32: “All bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

#### **MESSAGE: By Our Love....**

Love can be a very complicated thing,

It’s true. The world will know we are Christians by our love for one another. It comes right from Jesus’ mouth, the Founder of the whole movement and the essence of love. In fact, according to the Gospel of John, this is the only commandment Jesus explicitly identified for His disciples, which includes you and me by the way, and insisted that it be kept. This is a “new command” (v. 34). What’s new about it? Love has always been around. I can’t think of a time when love wasn’t around in some form or fashion.

I got to thinking yesterday about all the songs I know that have “love” in their titles. OK you know what’s coming. Remember all those songs from way back when? I can hear Diana Ross and The Supremes singing: “Baby Love”; “Stop in the Name of Love”; “You Can’t Hurry Love.”

How about The O’Jays and “Love Train”? The Beatles sang, “All You Need Is Love.” One song marked Elvis Presley’s return in 1972, “Burning Love.” And then, “What the World Needs Now Is Love Sweet Love.” Long before there was a Billboard chart ranking the hits, there was love. During Jesus’ earthly life there was love. After Jesus ascended to the Father, there was love. Prior to Jesus becoming flesh, there was love. Love has always been around.

So why is this a “new command”? Because the people of God did not have love for one another like they should have had. This phrase, “new command,” appears only four times in the whole of the Bible and all of them are in John’s writings — here in John 13 and then in 1 John 1:7, 1 John 1:8, and 2 John 5. All of them are in the context of love. These words in John 13 serve as a bridge, connecting a great word on greatness — expressed in an humble action of Jesus, washing the dust off His disciples’ feet there in the Upper Room on the Thursday evening before He was crucified the next day — with another great word, one of farewell and encouragement to His disciples. On this, He laid it out for them. He basically said, “I’m giving you a new commandment, which really isn’t new, but it is. You, who are My disciples, love each other. You, who believe in Me, love each other. You, who are My followers, love each other. You, who are members of My church, love each other.”

This command to love one another is new because of the kind of love it is. It’s not a selfish love that says, “This is what I want. Give it to me if you love me.” There was and still is a lot of that kind of love. The kind of love to which Jesus refers is a self-sacrificial love. It’s the kind of love that was exemplified in Jesus through His public and private ministry as He formed His disciples into a community of believers. It’s also the kind of love that was exemplified in His Passion as He suffered and died for those believers and the entire world. The love we are to have for one another is of the self-sacrificial brand. It is love that is committed. It is love that doesn’t have a self-serving agenda.

Have you ever read the book written by Salvomir Rawicz. *The Long Walk* is one of the most incredible stories. Rawicz was a soldier in the Polish Army when the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, thus beginning World War II. In retreat from the Germans, he inadvertently crossed the Polish border into Russia, where he was captured by the Russians and charged with being a spy. After several months of brutal interrogation, he was tricked into signing a confession

stating that he was a spy. He was sentenced to 25 years hard labor in Siberia. He, along with hundreds of other prisoners, was transported by train some 3,000 miles east, then chained to a truck and forced to walk 1,000 miles north into the bitter cold of the Artic Circle where the labor prison was located.

Upon arrival he began to plot an escape. Over the next six months, he planned his get-away and during this time, six others joined him. On an appointed evening, the six escaped and headed south for India. Shortly after their journey began, they encountered a 19-year-old woman, who was also on the run. Her parents had been brutally murdered by the Russians. Eight of them joined together in a collective journey to freedom. This is a heart-wrenching true story. Some of them didn't survive the 3,000-mile trek south that takes more than a year to complete — through the bitter cold in Siberia and the Himalayas and the blistering heat and drought of the Gobi Desert.

So many truths can be drawn from *The Long Walk*. One thing that impressed me was that these eight people expressed love for one another. They were all different and different nationalities. None was selfish. It was one for all and all for one. They were committed to one another — in both life and in death. They moved beyond the sentimentality of their relationship and came to really understand what love was. An amazing Story of Love.

Maybe there is a temptation to get too sentimental about how easy it is to say to our fellow Christians, I love you, I will be there for you, and then walk away until we see them next week., We forget that our journey, and others journeys, too, is a long walk and one that requires more than a passing of the peace each week, or a hand shake or a hug, it being there for times in-between. It is being a reflection of love that Jesus taught outside of the box. Don't misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with greeting each other on Sunday morning. But Jesus was impressing to his followers that we have to reach farther and deeper. It is not easy, it wasn't easy for Jesus, it wasn't easy for the disciples, it hasn't been easy for those who have walked this road before us but all who have understood and encounter the real love that Jesus talks about.

The church is about helping each other — church members loving church members regardless. Anything less isn't church. It isn't

Christian. When we have love for one another, the world will see and know that we are Christians, that we belong to Jesus Christ.

Jesus continues to love you throughout your life span, Jesus will be there when your final days Jesus will come...to wrap you in the warmth of his love. But....until then Love One another.

**HYMN: #595 We Are Pilgrims**

- 1 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
- 2 Sister, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping,  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.
- 5 When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.
- 6 Brother, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

When the news is loudly proclaiming anger, hostility, hatred, we are called by Christ to love one another. How hard that is, O Lord!  
Prejudice abounds in our land, and it is our shame, as we proclaim our

faith in you. You call us to love one another, but we put conditions on that love: some of these conditions regard race, economic status, gender, age, nationality. It is easy to love people with whom we feel comfortable. It is more difficult to love those who are different from us. And that, O Lord, is our dilemma. Teach us how to love and accept the diversity in our land. Help us to treasure each other for the wondrous gifts and talents each person has. Sharpen our ears to hear words of love when whispered and shouted. Tune our hearts to your healing message of acceptance and compassion for all. Help us to be the people of the Resurrection - who have been freed from the bonds of death. We place our lives in your care, merciful Lord. AMEN.

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**CLOSING HYMN: #602 Blest Be the Tie That Binds**

- 1     Blest be the tie that binds  
      our hearts in Christian love;  
      the unity of heart and mind  
      is like to that above.
- 2     Before our Maker’s throne  
      we pour our ardent prayers;  
      our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
      our comforts and our cares.
- 3     We share each other's woes,  
      each other's burdens bear;  
      and often for each other flows  
      the sympathizing tear.
- 4     The glorious hope revives  
      our courage on the way;  
      that we shall live in perfect love  
      in God's eternal day.

**SENDING FORTH**

May the love of God which was lavished upon you by Jesus Christ be in your hearts, your minds, and your spirits as you go forth into God’s world. Be bearers of peace and hope to all you meet, and may God’s peace be with you always.

**CHORAL AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**

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**Announcements**

**Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>:** Join us at Hagersville in the sanctuary at 7pm to watch the series “The Chosen”.

**Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee Time at 9:30am at Springvale. All are welcome.

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

**Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>:** 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.

**Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Hagersville Church Council meeting at 2pm.

**Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>:** Official Board meeting at Springvale at 10:30am.

**Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>:** Mark your calendars for Springvale’s Annual Strawberry Supper! More details to come.

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

# What Does Love Mean?

A few months back I received an email entitled, “What Does Love Mean?” It seems that a group of professionals posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year olds. The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. Listen to some of these.

“When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toe nails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.” Rebecca — age 8.

“Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.” Karl — age 5.

“Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.” Terri — age 4.

“Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.” Bobby — age 7.

“If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.” Nikka — age 6.

“My Mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.” Clare — age 6.

“I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.” Lauren — age 4.

“You really shouldn't say ‘I love you’ unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.” Jessica — age 8.

And here's one of the best.

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four-year-old child whose next-door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his Mother asked him what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, “Nothing, I just helped him cry.”