

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 7th, 2024**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Pastor Peggy Bartlett
Cell: 905-317-5275 Email: info@hsupc.ca
Website: www.hsupc.ca
Church: Hagersville- 905-768-5863 Springvale- 905-768-1501

.....
REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Ryerson: Ancaster

“All that we have belongs to God. As we celebrate our unity as a community of faith and focus our hearts on the risen Christ. We thank God for the opportunity to truly be in fellowship with one another, as we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Lord of Life!”

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous and surprising God,
when we thought that death
had claimed your only Son,
you amazed us with the resurrection.
Surprise us again
with your ability to turn these humble offerings
into gifts that will transform the world
through our witness to your love.
We lay our very lives at your feet, O God,
knowing that you will use us
to proclaim and embody the gospel. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are people of the twenty-first century,
far removed from the upper room.
“**Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.**”

We have put away the festive trumpets, the fancy clothes,
the chocolate bunnies of Easter Sunday. Must the message
of Easter be put away for another year?

“**Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.**”

We still seek the One who offers victory over death,
whose love conquers evil.

“**Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.**”

We gather to worship the risen Christ,
who offers us new life.

“**Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.**”

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

God of the resurrection, we gather this morning as a community of
believers. We come with joy to greet one another and to tell again and
again the amazing news: Christ is risen! Love is victorious over death!
You have given us new life in the name of your Son! May our singing,
praying, listening, and proclaiming be a testimony to the power of your
.

love to make us a new creation as a community of faith.
We pray in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S STORY

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

LITANY (inspired by John 20:24-29)

Thomas said: "Unless I see the mark of the nails and put my hand in his side, I will not believe."

We are often skeptical people, driven by our senses, relying on that which we can hear, see or prove.

Our Lord asks us to see the invisible, to trust in the spirit, to have faith.
Lord, give us faith!

Sometimes we get carried away by our emotions, by wishful thinking and by popular trends that pull us in. Lord, help us to be bold in our beliefs, but also careful as Thomas was. Move us beyond mere trust in ordinary things and open our eyes for spiritual realities.

Jesus said: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

SCRIPTURE READING

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to

them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

MESSAGE: Unlocking Doors – A Sermon on John 20:19-31

A week ago we celebrated the resurrection. There comes a time, however, when we must live the resurrection. That is not always easy. There are days when we prefer to just stay in bed, pull the covers over our head, and close out the world. Some days it seems easier and safer to lock the doors of our house and avoid the circumstances and people of our lives. Some times we just want to run away, hide, and not deal with the reality of our lives.

Every time, however, we shut the doors of our life, our mind, or our heart we imprison ourselves. For every person, event, or idea we lock out, regardless of the reason, we lock ourselves in. That's what has happened to the disciples in today's gospel. It is Easter evening, the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection, the day they saw the empty tomb, the day Mary Magdalene announced, "I have seen the Lord." The disciples are gathered in the house, the doors are locked with fear. A week later they are in the same place. It is the same house, the same walls, the same closed doors, the same locks. Nothing much has changed.

Jesus' tomb is open and empty but the disciples' house is closed and the doors locked tight. The house has become their tomb. Jesus is on the loose and the disciples are bound in fear. The disciples have separated themselves and their lives from the reality of Jesus' resurrection. Their doors of faith have been closed. They have shut their eyes to the reality

that life is now different. They have locked out Mary Magdalene's words of faith, hope, and love. They left the empty tomb of Jesus and entered their own tombs of fear, doubt, and blindness. The locked doors have become the great stone sealing their tomb. They have locked themselves in. The doors of our tombs are always locked from the inside. All this, and it has been only one week.

I wonder, one week after Easter, is our life different? Where are we living? In the freedom and joy of resurrection or behind locked doors. How is our life different after Easter? And if it isn't what are the locked doors of our life, our heart, our mind?

When St. John describes the house, the doors, the locks he is speaking about more than a physical house with walls, doors on hinges, and deadbolts. He is describing the interior condition of the disciples. The locked places of our lives are always more about what is going on inside of us than around us.

What are the closed places of your life? What keeps you in the tomb? Maybe, like the disciples, it is fear. Maybe it is questions, disbelief, or the conditions we place on our faith. Perhaps it is sorrow and loss. Maybe the wounds are so deep it does not seem worth the risk to step outside. For others it may be anger and resentment. Some seem unable or unwilling to open up to new ideas, possibilities, and change.

Jesus is always entering the locked places of our lives. He comes unexpected, uninvited, and sometimes even unwanted he steps into our closed lives, closed hearts, closed minds. Standing among us he offers peace and breathes new life into us. He doesn't open the door for us but he gives us all we need so that we might open our doors to a new life, a new creation, a new way of being. This is happening all the time.

Throughout the storm ravaged south strangers are becoming friends, individuality is giving way to unity, and hope lies in the midst of destruction. Christ stands among his people saying, "Peace be with you," breathing life into what looks lifeless. Every week more than five hundred families are fed at the Uvalde Food Pantry. The boundaries of race, economics, education, and language fall away as guests and volunteers feed each other with food, smiles, conversation, and prayers. In the midst of that feeding Christ enters saying, "Peace be with you. The winds of change are blowing. A few days ago my wife and I visited our son's grave. We stood in silence crying. Sorrow has closed our

doors. Jesus stands in the midst of that sorrow. "Peace be with you." His breath carries us through the day, one day at a time.

Regardless of the circumstances Jesus shows up bringing peace, offering peace, embodying peace. Regardless of the circumstances Jesus shows up bringing life, offering life, embodying life. Life and peace are resurrection reality. They do not necessarily change the circumstances of our life and world. Tornados will still form, the hungry still need to be fed, and loved ones will die. The life and peace of Jesus' resurrection enable us to meet and live through those circumstances. His gives us his peace, his breath, his life, and then sends us out. We are free to unlock the doors of our lives and step outside into his life.

HYMN: #663 My Faith Looks up to Thee

1 My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine.
Now hear me while I pray; take all my guilt away.
O let me from this day be wholly thine.

2 While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide, bid darkness turn to day;
wipe sorrow's tears away; nor let me ever stray
from thee aside.

3 May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire. As thou hast died for me,
O may my love to thee pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord of mercy, it has been a week since the Easter celebration. Our church was beautified with flowers, lovely decorations, beautiful music. It was the kind of Easter in which we could celebrate. But during this week we have slumped back to our old ways. The world, which seems to be too much with us, has claimed our souls. Our resurrection faith has become dim. Let the story of Thomas who wanted more than anything else to see the risen Lord, pour into our hearts, reviving our spirits, giving assurance to our souls. Let fear subside! Replace our doubts with certainty in your love and healing mercies. As we have brought names before you this day, asking for your healing touch, be with us as we also receive that same healing love. Give us joy and courage for all the times

ahead; for we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. AMEN.

LORD’S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #175 This is the Day that God Has Made

**This is the day that God has made!
Rejoice! Rejoice, and be exceeding glad!
This is the day that God has made!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Hallelujah!**

- 1 Christ has conquered death at last,
left the tomb that held him fast!
Gone the sorrow, gone the night,
dawns the morning clear and bright! **R**
- 2 Jesus lives who once was dead,
lives forever, as he said!
Risen now our Saviour, King;
songs of gladness let us sing! **R**

SENDING FORTH

Go now with the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!
Go to share your faith and your lives.
Christ is risen! Alleluia!
Go to proclaim the good news of Easter.
Christ is risen! Alleluia!

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

.....

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. More information to follow.

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

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

