

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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Love is an all or nothing proposition. Only by loving your enemies as well as your friends do you live as children of the Most High.

OFFERING PRAYER

Source of every blessing, as you sent Joseph into Egypt to save the world from famine, you sent Jesus into our lives to save us from selfishness and greed. For teaching us to treat others as we would have them treat us, we give you our thanks and praise. Bless these gifts, that we have received from your bounty, and send them forth to those in need. Whether they be friend or foe. For all are your beloved children and our sisters and brothers. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come and learn the ways of life.

P: We have come to follow Jesus.

L: Love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you.

P: We have come to follow Jesus.

L: Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you.

P: We have come to follow Jesus.

L: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

P: We have come to follow Jesus.

L: Come and learn the ways of life.

OPENING HYMN: #288 Great is Thy Faithfulness

1 Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou has been thou forever wilt be.

[Refrain:] Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided—
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. **[Refrain]**

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow --
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide. **[Refrain]**

OPENING PRAYER

Inexhaustible source of love and life, be with us in our time of worship as we seek the love it takes to walk in the ways of your Son. Help us love our enemies and bless those who wrong us, for we cannot do so alone. Teach us the joy of treating others with all the same respect and goodness with which we hope to be treated. May our every word and deed make known that we are your beloved children and vessels of your love. Amen.

ANTHEM

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Teacher of hard truths, it is difficult to let go of our anger toward those who prosper through deceit and unscrupulous ways; it is not easy to make ourselves believe that the meek will inherit the earth, when they are being crushed by the unjust systems stacked against them. We long to see the vindication of the righteous and the prosperity of those who work selflessly to bring your realm here on earth.

We yearn for the day when all people will treat one another as they wish to be treated. Help us live into that day, Holy One, even when it is difficult, that your love might shine like the sun through our lives and our ministries. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

When we treat others as we would have them treat us, Jesus calls us beloved children of the Most High. If God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked, how much more will God be kind to those who love the Lord and seek to live the Golden Rule? Rest in this assurance and be at peace know that God is with you each step of the way.

CHORUS “They Will 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 will one day be restored.

Chorus: *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.

Chorus

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 man's dignity and save each man's pride.

Chorus

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

Chorus

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 6:27-38

Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Genesis 45:3-11

³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.^[a]

⁸“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. ¹⁰You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.

Genesis 45:15

¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

MESSAGE: "The Power of Forgiveness: Loving Those Who Hurt Us"

Scripture: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Luke 6:27-38

Here are some common sayings people use when they dislike/hate someone:

- "I can't stand them."
- "They rub me the wrong way."
- "I wouldn't spit on them if they were on fire."
- "They're the worst."
- "I wouldn't wish them on my worst enemy."
- "They make my blood boil."
- "I avoid them like the plague."
- "They're dead to me."
- "Just hearing their name makes me sick."
- "If looks could kill, they'd be six feet under."

One of the hardest commands Jesus gives us is to love our enemies and forgive those who have wronged us. In a world that often encourages retaliation and resentment, forgiveness is seen as weakness. But in reality, it is one of the greatest strengths a believer can have. Today, we heard two powerful examples of Joseph in Genesis 45:3-11, 15 and Jesus' teachings in Luke 6:27-38 to learn how we, too, can embrace forgiveness in our daily lives.

First of all, Forgiveness.... Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery, betrayed him, and caused him immense suffering. Yet, when Joseph finally reveals himself to them, he does not seek revenge. Instead, he asks, "Is my father still alive?" and reassures them, "Do not be

distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life." Similarly, Jesus teaches us in Luke 6:27-28, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

So, you ask how do I attempt to do the same. Here are a few ideas...

- Just as Joseph forgave his brothers, we are called to forgive those who have wronged us.

- Jesus commands us to not only forgive but actively love and pray for our enemies.

- Instead of harboring bitterness, we should trust that God is in control and work toward reconciliation.

Then we must recognize God's authority and trust in his justice. Joseph understood that everything he endured was part of God's divine plan. He says, "So it was not you who sent me here, but God." Joseph saw his trials as a way for God to work through him to save many lives. Jesus reinforces this idea by reminding us in Luke 6:35-36 to "love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great."

Therefore, when we face betrayal or hardship, we should seek God's purpose in our pain.

Remember, holding onto grudges can blind us to the ways God is working through our struggles.

And most of all, God's plan is bigger than our hurt, and He calls us to love as He loves us, even when it's difficult.

In all of this comes reconciliation and love, and giving without measure.

After speaking to his brothers, Joseph does not just forgive them with words, he shows love by embracing them. "And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them." This act of love and reconciliation restored their relationship. Jesus expands on this principle in Luke 6:37-38, teaching us to forgive without judgment and give generously, stating, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap."

Remember that, true forgiveness is not just about saying the words but also showing love in action. Jesus teaches that forgiveness leads to abundant blessings and spiritual freedom. We are called to seek reconciliation where possible, just as Christ reconciled us to God.

Joseph's story points us to the ultimate act of forgiveness, Jesus Christ on the cross. Just as Joseph forgave his brothers, Jesus forgives us and

calls us to do the same for others. Luke 6:36 reminds us, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." If we want to walk in true freedom, we must choose love over hate, forgiveness over revenge, and trust in God's greater plan.

So you know those statements I opened with, let's not find ourselves using them. Instead, if there someone in your life you need to forgive? Pray for God's strength to let go of bitterness and embrace love.

Live out Jesus' teaching by loving, blessing, and praying for even those who have wronged you.

And may we all follow Joseph's example and the teachings of Jesus, extending the love and forgiveness of Christ to those who have hurt us. Amen

HYMN: #684 Make Me A Channel of Your Peace

- 1 Make me a channel of your peace:
 where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
 where there is injury, your healing power,
 and where there's doubt, true faith in you:
- 2 Make me a channel of your peace:
 where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
 where there is darkness, only light;
 and where there's sadness, ever joy.
 O Spirit, grant that I may never seek
 so much to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love with all my soul.
- 3 Make me a channel of your peace.
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 in giving to all that we receive,
 and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE

Leader: Merciful and loving God, You call us to love as You have loved us. In humility, we bring before You our prayers for the world, the church, and those in need.

Congregation: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the strength to forgive as Joseph forgave his brothers, and as Jesus forgave those who persecuted Him. Teach us to love our enemies and do good to those who have wronged us.

Congregation: Lord, help us to love as You love.

Leader: For those struggling with bitterness and resentment, may they find healing and peace in Your presence. Soften our hearts and remind us that forgiveness brings freedom.

Congregation: Lord, transform our hearts.

Leader: We lift up those who feel burdened by past hurts and broken relationships. May Your grace restore what is lost and bring reconciliation where there is division.

Congregation: Lord, make us instruments of Your peace.

Leader: Help us to be generous in love, as Jesus taught us—to give, expecting nothing in return, and to show mercy as You have shown mercy to us.

Congregation: Lord, guide us in Your ways.

Leader: We pray for our communities, our nation, and the world, that justice and compassion may reign in the hearts of all people.

Congregation: Lord, may Your kingdom come.

Leader: Strengthen us to be faithful witnesses of Your love, forgiving as we have been forgiven and living as lights in a world that desperately needs Your grace.

Congregation: Lord, use us for Your glory.

Leader: In the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to love beyond measure, we pray.

All: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #506 Take My Life and Let It Be

- 1 Take my life, and let it be
 consecrated, all for thee;
 take my moments and my days;
 let them flow in ceaseless praise.

- 2 Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet, and let them be
swift and purposeful for thee.
- 3 Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.
- 4 Take my will, and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.
- 5 Take my love: and I will pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

SENDING FORTH

L: Go with God's blessings.

P: As followers of Jesus, we will love our enemies and do good to those who hate us.

L: Go with God's blessings.

P: As followers of Jesus, we will bless those who curse us and pray for those who persecute us.

L: Go with God's blessings.

P: As followers of Jesus, we will do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

L: Go with God's blessings. In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, March 4th: Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at 9:30am. All are welcome!

Tuesday, March 4th: Pancake Supper at Hagersville from 4-7pm. There will be pancakes, ham, sausage, baked beans & a fruit cup. Tickets are \$12.50 for adults, \$5.00 for ages 6-12, under 5 are free. Or take advantage of the family deal (2 adults, 2 children) for \$30. Tickets will be sold at the door.

Wednesday, March 5th: Official Board meeting at Springvale at 1:30pm.

Thursday, March 6th: UCW will meet at 12:30pm in the Sunday School room. Roll call is items for gift bags for women's shelter.

Springvale's Annual Meeting has been rescheduled to
Wednesday, February 26th at 1pm

Please bring paper products for the Hagersville Food Bank! ☺

SNOW JOKES

1. What do snowmen call their kids?

Chill-dren.

2. What did the icy road say to the car?

“Want to go for a spin?”

3. What falls in the winter but never gets hurt?

Snow.

4. What does a gingerbread man put on his bed?

A cookie sheet!

5. Why did the girl keep her trumpet out in the snow?

She liked playing cool jazz.

6. Knock, knock.

Who’s there? Icy. Icy who? Icy you!

7. How do mountains stay warm?

They put on their snowcaps.

8. What do you call it when a snowman throws a temper tantrum?

A meltdown.

9. What is a snowman’s favorite snack?

Ice krispies treats.

10. What does December have that no other month does?

The letter D.