

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, JANUARY 26th, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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Today we are challenged us to reflect on how we, as followers of Christ, are called to carry forward His mission. Who are the poor, the captive, and the broken hearted in our community? How can we embody the hope, freedom, and love that Jesus proclaimed? May today message stir our hearts to be vessels of God's grace, boldly living out the good news and sharing it with a world in need. Just as Jesus declared in that synagogue, we too are anointed by the Spirit to be instruments of change and compassion.

OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God, you have blessed us beyond measure and called us to be part of Your mission of love, healing, and hope. As we offer these gifts today, we remember the good news that Jesus proclaimed: freedom for the captive, sight for the blind, and hope for the broken hearted. Use these offerings to bring that same good news to the world. May they empower ministries that uplift the poor, set free those in bondage, and shine Your light in places of darkness. And as we give, remind us that You work through us, ordinary people, to accomplish extraordinary things. In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord is upon us!

People: He has anointed us to bring good news to the poor.

2

Leader: He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.

People: To set free those who are oppressed and declare the year of the Lord's favor!

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who calls us beyond what we see to the hope of what is to come.

People: We open our hearts to His Spirit and His mission of love!

OPENING HYMN: #412 This is the Day

- 1,4 This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made.
- 2 Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God, your gates, O God;
we will go in, we will go in,
to your holy place, to your holy place.
Open to us your gates, O God,
we will go in to your holy place.
Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God.
- 3 You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name, we will praise your name;
we will give thanks, we will give thanks,
for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.
You are our God, we will praise your name,
we will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, we come before You today with hearts open to Your Spirit, ready to hear Your Word and receive Your call. Though we sometimes struggle to see Your work in the ordinary, help us recognize Your presence in our lives and the world around us. Equip us to be vessels of Your good news, bringing hope and healing to all we encounter. Strengthen us when we face rejection or doubt, and remind us that Your mission will never fail. May this time of worship renew our faith and our commitment to Your Kingdom work. In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

ANTHEM**CHILDREN'S TIME****CHILDREN'S VIDEO****LITANY**

Leader: Lord, sometimes we think we know it all.

People: And then You surprise us with Your plans!

Leader: Sometimes we think, "Isn't this just the carpenter's son?"

People: And You remind us that You work through the ordinary.

Leader: When we hold onto our expectations too tightly...

People: Teach us to trust in Your greater vision.

Leader: When we doubt that anything good can come from us...

People: Remind us that Your Spirit empowers us for Your work.

Leader: When rejection discourages us...

People: Give us courage to keep walking the path You've set before us.

Leader: When we struggle to see others through Your eyes...

People: Open our hearts to welcome the stranger, the outcast, and the overlooked.

Leader: When we grow weary of doing good...

People: Refresh us with the joy of serving You.

Leader: You have called us to bring good news to the poor!

People: Help us to be bold in sharing Your love.

Leader: You have sent us to proclaim release to the captives!

People: Use us to bring freedom and hope to all who are bound.

Leader: You call us to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

People: And to trust that You are at work in us and through us.

Leader: Lord, here we are—ready to serve, love, and shine Your light!

People: Here we are—send us!

CHORUS: #215 "OPEN OUR EYES"

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,

To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.

Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus. (2 X)

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 4:14-24 & 28,29, 30 NIV**Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."^[a]

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. ²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"²⁴ "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown.

²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

MESSAGE: "The Stranger at the Gate"

There was once a village known for its tight-knit community. Everyone knew everyone, and change was rarely welcomed. One day, a stranger arrived at the village gate. He carried little more than a bag of tools and a kind smile.

The stranger began to speak in the town square, sharing a vision of a brighter future. "There is more to life than what we see here," he said. "What if we opened our gates to others? What if we worked together to care for the poor, heal the sick, and welcome those in need?"

At first, the villagers were curious. His words stirred something deep within them. But soon, murmurs of doubt began to spread. "Who is this man to tell us what to do?" one elder grumbled. "He doesn't even belong here!" another shouted.

The stranger looked at them with compassion. "I came here to bring hope," he said gently, "but I see that you are not ready to receive it." With that, he left the village. Some watched him go with relief, others with regret. But as time passed, they began to notice something strange. The neighboring villages where the stranger traveled began to thrive. They opened their gates, healed their divisions, and found joy in working together.

The villagers started to realize that they had rejected not just the man but the hope he carried. Slowly, they opened their hearts, and though it took time, they began to change. They learned that the gifts of love and transformation often come from unexpected places—and that rejecting the messenger doesn't stop the message.

There is a connection between these two stories.... This story "The Stranger at the Gate" reminds us of Jesus' rejection in Nazareth. Like the villagers, the people of His hometown struggled to see beyond the familiar. They couldn't imagine that the one they grew up with carried the hope of the world. Yet, God's mission didn't stop because of their rejection. It spread beyond Nazareth, bringing life to those willing to receive it.

When Jesus reads from Isaiah and proclaims, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*," He makes an astonishing claim: He is the Messiah bringing God's promises to life. At first, the people are amazed, but their amazement quickly turns to rejection. Why? Because they could not reconcile the extraordinary nature of Jesus' mission with their familiarity with Him. To them, He was just Joseph's son—an ordinary man.

This rejection reveals a profound truth: sometimes, the hardest place to proclaim God's truth is among those closest to us. It shows how the human heart can struggle to accept God's work when it doesn't align with preconceived notions or comfort zones. Jesus' mission wasn't limited to Israel or to fulfilling the crowd's desires; it was a mission for all people, especially those often overlooked.

Like Jesus, we may face resistance—even from those closest to us—when we live out God's calling. This passage reminds us to stay steadfast, even when misunderstood or rejected.

Jesus' rejection by His hometown shows that the good news isn't about favoritism or entitlement. It is for everyone, especially the marginalized. His mission challenges us to look beyond our familiar circles and embrace the expansive reach of God's love.

The people of Nazareth missed their moment of transformation because they couldn't see beyond the ordinary to recognize the extraordinary in Jesus. It's a call for us to approach God's work with open hearts, ready to be surprised by His plans.

This rejection ultimately set the stage for Jesus' broader ministry, reminding us that rejection is often part of the journey when we faithfully proclaim and live out the Gospel.

Both the stories I shared, the one in the beginning of the message and the Scripture Reading asks us.....Are we ready to receive the hope and transformation God offers, even when it comes from unexpected places? Will we welcome the stranger at the gate?

HYMN: #605 Jesus, Teacher, Brave and Bold

1 Jesus, teacher, brave and bold,
let us serve you, young and old.
Let us faith-filled workers be,
all around, your wisdom see.
Let us play and dance and sing,
your goodness find in everything.

- 2 Jesus, friend, so strong and true,
show us good, brave work to do.
Show us those who need a friend,
all things broken help us mend.
Free our minds and stretch our care,
teach us to serve you everywhere.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we come into prayer this morning, Let us bring our prayers before
the our Creator who listens, loves, and heals. For those who feel rejected
and unseen, Lord, in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

For the poor, the captive, and the oppressed, Lord, in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

For courage to proclaim Your good news, even in the face of doubt,
Lord, in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

For eyes to see the extraordinary in the ordinary and hearts to welcome
the stranger, Lord, in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

For healing in our relationships, our communities, and our world, Lord,
in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

For the unspoken prayers of our hearts, Lord, in Your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Faithful God, thank You for hearing our prayers. Help us be answers to
the prayers of others as we live out Your mission in the world. In Jesus'
name, we pray the prayer he taught us

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #606 In Christ There Is No East or West

- 1 In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great family of love
throughout the whole wide earth.

- 2 In him shall true hearts everywhere
their high communion find;
his service is the golden cord
close binding humankind.
- 3 Join hands, then, people of the faith,
whate'er your race may be;
all children of the living God
are surely kin to me.
- 4 In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north;
all Christ-like souls are one in him
throughout the whole wide earth.

SENDING FORTH

Leader: Go now, knowing that the Spirit of the Lord is upon you.

People: We are called to bring good news to the world!

Leader: Even when the road is hard, know that God's love goes with
you.

People: We will walk in faith, trusting His power and grace.

Leader: May the peace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit guide you now and always.

All: Amen!

GO NOW IN PEACE

Don Besig, Nancy Price

Go now in peace, never be afraid
God will go with you each hour of every day
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true
Know He will guide you in all you do
Go now in love and show you believe
Reach out to others so all the world can see
God will be there watching from above
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love
Amen. Amen. Amen.

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, February 4th: Coffee Tuesday & breakfast! Everyone is invited to join us for coffee, breakfast & great conversation beginning at 9am.

Sunday, February 16th: Springvale Annual Meeting immediately following worship. Lunch details to follow.

Sunday, February 16th: Peggy will be at Springvale's annual meeting. Peter & Jo-Ann will be leading the service that Peggy has prepared.

Sunday, February 23rd: Hagersville's Annual Meeting immediately following worship. Potluck lunch to follow, please bring main course or dessert.

Please bring paper products for the Hagersville Food Bank! 😊

