

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, MARCH 10th, 2024**

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Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Pastor Peggy Bartlett
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Hornby

Lord, help us to keep our feet moving, our hands outstretched, and our hearts open to you. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, keep us from temptation and help us to do Your work in our world.

Amen

OFFERING PRAYER

God of the wilderness,

We give these offerings in gratitude,
rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.

We give these offerings in faith,
trusting that you will provide for our needs.

We give these offerings in hope,
knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.
And with these offerings, we give ourselves;
May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: How awesome God's light is!

P: It pours rays of comfort and hope onto this dark world!

L: Come, dance and rejoice in the light!

P: Lord, let your light flood into our hearts and spirits!

L: Come, let us celebrate!

P: Let us bring our praise to God! AMEN.

HYMN: #345 Come, Children join and Sing
Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
Praise to our Servant-King: Hallelujah!
Let all with heart and voice, saved by God's gracious choice,
Now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
Christ calls his people friends, the helpless he defends,
A love that never ends: Hallelujah!

Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
The whole creation o'er let all God's love adore,
Singing forevermore: Hallelujah!

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, as we gather here, on this day of sharing, remind us that you have shared with us your most precious gift, our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to model our lives after his messages of compassion and service to you and to all your world. In Christ's Name, we offer this prayer. AMEN.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S SONG

READING FOR LENT 4

Sing #381 Spirit of Life

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion,

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free:

Spirit of life, come to me, come to me.

Reader 1: Darkness has encompassed the world. Fear and alienation seep into every corner of our lives.

Reader 2: From the very beginning of creation, God’s spirit hovered over the waters of discontent and fear.

Reader 1: The darkness of the waters did not dissuade God’s creative intention for this world. Even now, God’s love floods over the world.

Reader 2: In the fullness of time God sent God’s own Son, Jesus Christ, who offered for us a model of peace and justice, mercy and love.

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Reader 1: But there were those who would not hear the Good News.

Reader 2: There are those today who scoff at even the possibility of peace and mercy.

Reader 1: Just as fear reigned in the lives of those who turned away from Jesus; so fear reigns in the lives of some people today.

Reader 2: Peace does not even seem a distant possibility to them. But we have known the peace Christ offers.

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Reader 1: Joy! Celebration! A reason to laugh, dance, rejoice.

Reader 2: Jesus came to remind us that we have choices. We can choose to rejoice and celebrate the many ways in which we can serve and love others; or we can choose to moan and weep about our lot in life.

Reader 1: We can keep everything we have and hoard and hold onto all the trinkets of life.

Reader 2: Or we can share! That’s what it is all about - God shares God’s best with us and we are called to share our best with others. Jesus

came that we may have life abundantly....and to share that abundance with others. Praise be to God!

LET US PRAY

God of mercy and patience, be with us this day as we celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing. Help us to remember that the gifts we give, go to help many people in need. Remind us again that our lives are meant to be gifts to others, for healing, hope, comfort, peace and love. Forgive us when we get so caught up in the details of living and when we become so overwhelmed by our current economic woes that we neglect to help others. Enlighten us again with your spirit and your words of healing love. Caring and sharing are the hallmarks of discipleship with Jesus Christ. Heal and forgive us. Give us hearts for joyful caring and sharing; for it is in Jesus’ name, we offer this prayer. AMEN.

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SCRIPTURE READINGS: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

Made Alive in Christ

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[a] ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."^[b]

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

MESSAGE: The Light for Dark Corners

There are a whole series of answers to the question, "How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb?"

Roman Catholics: None. They use only candles.

Pentecostals: Ten. One to change the bulb, and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.

Baptists: At least 15. One to change the light bulb, and three committees to approve the change.

Lutherans: None. Lutherans don't believe in change.

United: Two. One to call the electrician, and one to talk about how much better the old one was.

Light is wonderful creation of God. It is a very important for our happiness and our survival. It is with light that we are able to see the world around us. It is everywhere; it determines everything we see. Light is the conveyor of shape and colour; it is the swiftest carrier of energy in the universe. Nothing can move faster than the speed of light. And since the invention of the laser beam in the 1960s and it's ever-

increasing application by doctors as they slice away cancers, dentists as they cut out decay, and the armed forces as they accurately target weapons, it may well be that nothing is more powerful than light.

And yet there are times when there is too much light. It exposes corners that had previously been hidden. You know, those spots in the light of day that you see just how much dirt has accumulated in the dark.

There are so many dark corners in our world also. There is the dark world of politics, the dark world of poverty, of environmental irresponsibility, the dark world of a lack of purpose and identity among so many of today's kids, and the dark world of war where people are harmed and killed. And it's so easy to pretend these dark corners don't exist, but they do and they push away the light of Christ in our world. In today's text we are told, "Light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." Jesus is the Light. He came into the world not to condemn but to bring life. It is only as those dark private corners of our lives are exposed, that we can be helped. It is in the light of God's Word that we are faced with the reality that we have dark corners of sin in our lives that need tidying. We are suddenly shaken to the realisation that we are sinners.

Everything is not as neat and tidy as we thought. There is a mess that needs to be cleaned up, and even though we have tried to hide the mess in the darkest and most private corner of our lives, the light of Jesus has shown us that there is dirt piled up it needs cleaning out. Those things like our temptations and secret sins, those faults that we would prefer not to admit to, the poor way we have treated the people we love, and selfish attitude when it comes to our fellow brothers and sisters.

The Light, Jesus, has come into the world not to bring condemnation, but to bring salvation, not to rub our noses in the dirt of those dark corners, but to sweep them out, to bring healing and reconciliation. This gift is freely yours. "Come," says the Light of the Word, "you are my daughter, you are my son. You are forgiven, you are accepted. Come and enjoy light and life. Bask in the beauty and warmth of the sun, the Son of God." *"For God so loved the world"* ... that means you. God loved you so much that he sent his only Son so that you may believe and have eternal life.

God's love for us is free, and it certainly is freely given. But it cost God a great deal. It cost him the life of his Son. It meant raising up the Light

of the world on a cross, for the world to see. Jesus spoke about this in the gospel reading. *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

Freely the light of his forgiveness shines into our lives brightening up every corner, forgiving every sin, restoring our relationship with God, renewing our lives. Whoever follows Jesus will not walk in darkness. They will experience the joy and peace of sins forgiven, of new attitudes for work, to school, to leisure, our world, our bodies, and of new relationships with family and friends.

But you know what? Too often we prefer to keep some of the dirt in our lives in the dark. We pretend it's not there. We know it's there all right, but like the dirt under the fridge, we cover it up and pretend everything is all right. We think that what we can't see, won't hurt us. What is hidden in the dark won't matter.

It matters to God. God knows about the dark corners in our lives. And he wants us to stop hiding our sin in the dark. He wants us to expose every dark corner to the Light of life. He is giving to us the Light that not only shows up the dirt in our lives but cleans it away. Jesus died so that we could be made new and clean.

In this Lenten season, another thought to reflect on is this..... why our Lord had to go to such extremes to save us. And this is why? He wants to clean the dirt hidden away in every corner of our lives.

And just one last point. Jesus shines his light into our lives, he fills us with his love and forgiveness. He fills us with the joy and knowledge of freedom from guilt for the things that upset us, comfort for our times of sadness, joy we experience between each other. The light that shines in our lives ought to bring blessing to others. We are to let this light of Christ shine through us so we can be the light in the darkness of the people around us.

The light you give to that person can dispel the darkness from that person's life and bring to him/her a completely new outlook. Don't underestimate what the light of Christ can do through you. As Jesus said: *You are the light of the world your light must shine before people so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14,16)*

And Peter reflects the words of Jesus when he says, "*God has called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light" (1Peter 2:9). Amen*

HYMN: #626 I Heard the Voice of Jesus

- 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
 your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
 weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
 and he has made me glad.
- 2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
 stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
 of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 and now I live in him.
- 3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise,
 and all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
 in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
 till travelling days are done.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE

The days are getting longer, Lord. The sun's rays are higher in the sky bringing more light to our world. Warmth begins to flood over the colder portions of our nation. Let the warmth of your mercy and love pour over us. As we have gathered this day to celebrate the good news that you have given to the world, remind us that it is our purpose to offer that good news to others, not only in words but in deeds of love and mercy, peace and justice. As we have offered names of people and situations which have been heavy on our hearts for your healing mercies, remind us also that we stand in need of that self same healing

love. As we have prayed for ministries of peace and justice and for those engaged in those wondrous missions, remind us that we are also on a journey of peace and justice whenever we offer comfort and aid to others. Be with us during this Lenten season. Give us hearts of great joy and courage to serve you all our days. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: #599 Living Christ, Bring Us Love

- 1 Living Christ, bring us love,
love for every stranger;
Living Christ, bring us love,
love from cross and manger.
- 2 Living Christ, bring us joy,
joy of earth and heaven;
Living Christ, bring us joy,
joy of sin forgiven.
- 3 Living Christ, bring us peace,
peace with God and neighbour;
Living Christ, bring us peace,
peace in all our labour.
- 4 Living Christ, bring us love,
love shared at your table;
Living Christ, bring us love,
love from cross and stable.
- 5 Living Christ, lead us out,
out to tell the story;
Living Christ, lead us out,
out to show your glory.

SENDING FORTH

As God has shared the best with you, now you are challenged to go forth to share your blessings with others. May the peace and love of God go with you always.

CHORAL AMEN

Announcements

Friday, March 15th: Scrapbooking table setup in the late afternoon/evening at Hagersville. All help is appreciated.

Sunday, March 17th: St. Patrick's Day. Wear your green!

Tuesday, March 19th: Coffee Time at 9:30am at Springvale. All are welcome!

Friday, March 22nd: Chili Lunch at Hagersville from 11:30am-1pm. Tickets are \$10/person. Takeout Only. Call Susan at 905-768-3729 by March 21st to order ahead.

Sunday, March 24th: Palm Sunday

Friday, March 29th: Good Friday Service at Hagersville at 10:30am. Hot cross buns served afterwards.

Sunday, March 31st: Easter Sunday. Springvale will be having an Easter Basket draw as well as a hot breakfast starting at 8:30am. Tickets for the draw are 1/\$2 or 3/\$5. Baskets will be drawn during breakfast with service to follow. Special music by Chad & Emilia Smith and our choir.

Thursday, April 18th: Ham & Turkey Supper at Springvale. More information to follow.

Friday, April 19th: Soup Lunch at Hagersville. More information to follow.

Please bring in paper products for the
Hagersville Food Bank!

☘Helen's Treasures is looking for children & adult clothing donations. If you have been thinking about doing some spring cleaning, keep them in mind for your donations. ☘

