

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &  
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH  
SUNDAY, MAY 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God  
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**Earth Sunday "For the Love of Creation"**

*Today, Earth Sunday is about more than planting trees or cleaning up parks (though those are holy acts, too). It's about tuning our ears to hear God's heartbeat in the rustle of leaves, in the song of birds, in the hush of forests and the crash of ocean waves.*

*Creation is not only scenery ... it is God's first sanctuary. It is the holy place where humanity first walked with the Divine. And it remains our shared home, entrusted to our care, a sacred trust we are called to honour with both gratitude and action.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Giver of all good gifts, we bring our offerings with grateful hearts. May they be used to renew lives, to restore communities, and to protect the earth. Teach us to live wisely and walk gently on your good earth.  
Amen.

**PRELUDE AND WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Leader:* The heavens are telling the glory of God!

*People:* The skies proclaim God's handiwork!

*Leader:* Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

*People:* Let us join all creation in praising the Creator!

*All:* We gather today, for the love of creation, to worship the One who made it all.

**OPENING HYMN: #307 Touch the Earth Lightly**

1 Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,  
nourish the life of the world in our care:  
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,  
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

2 We who endanger, who create hunger,  
agents of death for all creatures that live,  
we who would foster clouds of disaster,  
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

3 Let there be greening, birth from the burning,  
water that blesses and air that is sweet,  
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,  
regeneration that peace will complete.

4 God of all living, God of all loving,  
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,  
teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,  
using us gently, and making us one.

**OPENING PRAYER**

God of all creation, you formed the earth with wisdom and painted the skies with glory. We praise you for mountains and rivers, for forests and flowers, for animals and oceans, and for the breath of life you've given us. Open our hearts this day to your Word. Inspire us to care for the world you so lovingly made. Let this worship renew our spirits and guide us into action. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**ANTHEM**

**CHILDREN'S TIME & CHILDREN'S VIDEO**

**LITANY FOR THE CARE OF CREATION**

**Leader:** Creator God, you formed the heavens and the earth, the seas and the skies, the creatures of the land and the wonders of the deep.  
We thank you for the beauty and diversity of all that you have made.

**People:** We praise you, O God, for the gift of creation.

**Leader:** For the animals who share our homes, for pets who offer companionship, joy, and unconditional love, For dogs who greet us with wagging tails, for cats who curl up beside us, for birds whose songs brighten our mornings—

**People:** We give thanks, O God, for the animals who journey with us.

**Leader:** For the animals who are rescued from harm, who find new life and healing through human kindness and care; For every creature given a second chance, for every shelter that becomes a sanctuary—

**People:** We give thanks, O God, for acts of mercy and compassion.

**Leader:** For the endangered species of our world— For the elephants and the whales, the sea turtles and the red wolves, the monarch butterflies and the rainforest frogs— Those who stand on the edge of survival, calling out for our care—

**People:** We pray, O God, for their protection and for the healing of their homes.

**Leader:** For the wild places: the forests, the deserts, the oceans, the grasslands—Places of wonder and mystery, where life thrives in delicate balance—

**People:** We pray, O God, that we may be wise and faithful stewards.

**Leader:** For farmers who honour the land, for scientists who protect ecosystems, for rescue workers who heal injured wildlife, for advocates who speak for the voiceless—

**People:** Bless them, O God, with strength and perseverance.

**Leader:** For the times we have neglected the earth, polluted the waters, destroyed habitats, and ignored the cries of suffering creatures—

**People:** Forgive us, O God. Turn our hearts toward renewal.

**Leader:** Teach us to live gently upon this earth, to cherish all creatures as beloved by you, To walk in harmony with creation, and to honour the sacred trust you have placed in our hands.

**People:** Make us instruments of your peace and care for all living things.

**Leader:** With all creatures great and small, with all the earth and the heavens, we lift our voices in praise:

**People:** Blessed be God, Creator of all! Amen.

**RESPONSIVE HYMN:** God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall

1 God sees the little sparrow fall,  
it meets his tender view;  
if God so loves the little birds,  
I know he loves me too.

**Refrain:**

*He loves me too, he loves me too,  
I know he loves me too;  
because he loves the little things,  
I know he loves me too.*

2 He paints the lily of the field,  
perfumes each lily bell;  
if he so loves the little flow'rs,  
I know he loves me well. **[Refrain]**

3 God made the little birds and flow'rs,  
and all things large and small;  
he'll not forget his little ones,  
I know he loves them all. **[Refrain]**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

**Book of Genesis: Chapter 1 – A paraphrase**

In the beginning...

In the beginning there was no earth or sky or sea or animals. And then God spoke in the darkness: "Let there be light!" And right away there was light, scattering the darkness and showing the infinite space.

"That's good!" said God. "From now on, when it's dark it will be 'night' and when it's light, it will be 'day'."

The evening came and the night passed and then the light returned. That was the first day.

On the second day, God made the earth and over it He carefully hung a vast blue sky. He stood back and admired His creation. "That's good too!" said God and the second day was over.

The next morning God looked around and thought, "The earth needs to be a bit more organized." So, He put all the water in one place and all the dry land in another. When He had finished that, God made plants to cover the land. Dandelions and daffodils appeared. All sorts of trees

and grasses began to grow. "It's looking great," said God and that was the end of the third day.

On the fourth day, God looked around and thought, "The daylight still needs a bit more work and the night is just too dark." So, He made the sun to light the sky during the day and the moon and stars to add a bit of sparkle to the night. He hung them in the sky and stepped back to look at his work. "This is coming along very well," said God.

The next day, God turned his attention to the water he had collected in the oceans. "I want these waters teeming with life!" As soon as He said it, it was so. In no time, there were millions of small fish darting through the shallow water and huge fish swimming in the ocean. God made birds, too. He sent them soaring through the air. "Ahh, that IS good!" said God. The dusk fell over the water and the sky grew dark and that was the end of the fifth day.

On the sixth day, God added creatures to the land. He made lions and tigers and bears. He made rabbits and sheep and cows. He added everything from ants to zebras to the land. But He still felt something was missing. So God added Mankind to enjoy and take care of all that He had created. God looked around and was happy with all He had made.

After six days, the whole universe was completed. On the seventh day God rested and enjoyed looking at all He had made

### **Matthew 6:25-33**

#### **Do Not Worry**

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[a]?"

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or

'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

### **MESSAGE: "For the Love of Creation"**

Have you ever stood outside on a quiet morning, watching the sunrise or listening to birds sing—and felt peace wash over you? Nature has a way of drawing us closer to God. Today, on Earth Sunday, we pause to remember: this world is a sacred gift, and we are called to love it, protect it, and live gently upon it.

Genesis opens with poetry. "In the beginning, God created..." Not just functionally, but beautifully—with rhythm and imagination. Trees bearing fruit, skies full of stars, seas teeming with life. And God looked at it all and said, "It is very good."

Creation isn't just the backdrop of our lives, it's part of God's very expression. To love creation is to honour the Creator.

Remember this ... We Are Called to Be Caretakers, Not Owners  
We often hear the word "dominion" from Genesis, but dominion in the biblical sense means *stewardship*. Not domination, but care. Psalm 24 reminds us: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." We are entrusted with this earth, not as owners, but as renters, tenants in a holy place.

So, I ask you this question this morning. What if we treated the planet like it truly belonged to God? Because it does. Scripture reminds us that "The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1). The trees, the rivers, the air we breathe, every part of creation is a sacred gift, entrusted to our care. When we recognize that the world is not ours to exploit but God's to cherish, our daily choices become acts of worship. Every small action, like a reusable bottle instead of single-use plastic, planting a tree to restore a patch of Earth, speaking up for environmental justice when ecosystems are threatened, becomes a prayer in motion. These gestures are not insignificant; they are part of a larger offering to the Creator, a way of saying with our lives, "We honour what You have made. We choose healing over harm, stewardship over selfishness." Each step, however small, helps weave a future where humanity and creation can thrive together in reverence and hope.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.” He’s not only offering comfort for anxious hearts; he’s inviting us to notice, to pause, to pay attention. Look at creation, He says. See the beauty woven into every blade of grass, every petal, every sparrow’s flight. Trust that the same God who sustains the lilies sustains you. Live simply. Let go of the frantic striving for more, and find joy in enough.

When we slow our pace and truly see the world around us, we begin to live in tune with the rhythms of grace rather than the drumbeat of consumerism. We rediscover that creation itself teaches us to trust, to wonder, to rest.

And when we care for the Earth, we are not just caring for landscapes and oceans; we are caring for people too. Pollution poisons the air that children breathe. Contaminated water sickens communities. Rising temperatures and natural disasters displace those who have the fewest resources to rebuild. Climate change is not only an environmental issue, it is a human one. Stewarding creation is a matter of justice, of compassion, of faithful love.

To love our neighbour is to love the air they breathe, the water they drink, the soil that grows their food. It’s recognizing that environmental degradation isn’t just harming ecosystems, it’s wounding bodies, families, and futures.

Yes, it would be easy to hear the warnings about climate change, pollution, or species loss and feel helpless. But as Christians, we don’t live as people without hope. We believe that God is still at work—even when the world looks broken.

The hope isn’t just that God will fix everything someday. The hope is also that God invites us to participate in healing the earth today:

- Every tree planted, every piece of trash picked up, every act of advocacy or education, these are small acts of co-creating with God.
- Hope means believing our actions, even small ones, matter.

### **Think about it this way ... Christ Is Risen ... Creation Can Rise Too**

The ultimate symbol of hope is the resurrection of Jesus. If death isn’t the end for Christ, then despair isn’t the end for creation. We are Easter people, we believe that life and renewal can come out of brokenness. Therefore, Friends, let us take back our calling. Let us reclaim our role as caretakers of God’s garden. Not with guilt, but with grace-driven

responsibility. Let us do better, not just because the earth needs us, but because God has asked us to.

We can make a difference ... starting today, starting with small steps, starting with a renewed heart. Amen.

### **HYMN: #296 This is God’s Wondrous World**

- 1 This is God's wondrous world,  
and to my listening ears  
all nature sings, and round me rings  
the music of the spheres.  
This is God's wondrous world;  
I rest me in the thought  
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,  
God's hand the wonders wrought.
- 2 This is God's wondrous world:  
the birds their carols raise,  
the morning light, the lily white,  
declare their Maker's praise.  
This is God's wondrous world:  
God shines in all that's fair;  
in the rustling grass or mountain pass,  
God's voice speaks everywhere.
- 3 This is God's wondrous world:  
O let me ne'er forget  
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,  
God is the Ruler yet.  
This is God's wondrous world:  
why should my heart be sad?  
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:  
God reigns, let earth be glad!

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: Care of Creation**

God of earth and sky, of waters and wilderness, of creatures great and small — we come before you with gratitude and hope. All creation waits for your revealing, O God. Hear our prayers. We pray for the land—For soil rich and fertile, for forests ancient and wise, for rivers that sing and fields that yield their fruits.

Where the earth is wounded, bring healing.  
Where the land cries out, raise up caretakers.

We pray for the creatures—For those that run, swim, fly, and crawl, for our pets who share our homes, for animals who are endangered, for those rescued and restored to life. May we honour their lives as sacred and treat them with kindness.

We pray for those who work to heal creation—For conservationists, scientists, advocates, farmers, rescuers, and all who labor for justice for the earth and its creatures. Give them courage, strength, and joy in their work.

We pray for your Church—That we may become a people who live in right relationship with the earth, its creatures, and each other.  
Make us humble stewards, wise caretakers, and bold witnesses to your love for all you have made.

And now we lift up the silent prayers of our hearts—  
[Moment of Silence]

All creation waits with eager longing for your renewal, O God.  
Shape us into people of hope, and let your new creation begin in us.  
May we always be aware of this earth is our home and your creation,  
May always be caretakers of it. We this in one who taught us to pray saying....

## LORD'S PRAYER

**CLOSING HYMN:** #291 All Things Bright and Beautiful

**R:** All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

1 Each little flower that opens,  
each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors,  
God made their tiny wings. **R**

2 The purpleheaded mountains,  
the river running by,  
the sunset and the morning  
that brightens up the sky; **R**

3 The cold wind in the winter,  
the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden:  
God made them every one. **R**

4 The rocky mountain splendour,  
the lone wolf's haunting call,  
the great lakes and the prairies,  
the forest in the fall; **R**

5 God gave us the eyes to see them,  
and lips that we might tell  
how great is God our maker,  
who has made all things well. **R**

## SENDING FORTH

Go into the world with open eyes and grateful hearts.  
Care for the earth, for it is the Lord's.  
Go with courage, with joy, and with love for all creation.  
And may the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer bless and keep you.  
Amen.

## CHORAL AMEN

## POSTLUDE

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

## **Announcements**

**Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>:** Scrapbooking setup at Hagersville in the afternoon/evening. Please see Susan if you are interested in helping.

**Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at 9:30am. All are welcome!

**Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>:** Official Board meeting at 1:30pm at Springvale.

**Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>:** High Tea celebrating Hagersville's 150<sup>th</sup>.

## *Earth Sunday Jokes*

1. What kind of plant grows on your hand?

*Palm trees!*

2. Why did the leaf go to church?

*Because it wanted to turn over a new leaf!*

3. What did the tree say to the wind?

*"Leaf me alone!"*

4. Why are trees so forgiving?

*Because they always turn over a new leaf!*

5. What's a flower's favorite type of music?

*Heavy petal!*

6. Why don't mountains ever get tired?

*Because they just peak!*

7. What did the big flower say to the little flower?

*"Hey, bud!"*

8. Why was the mushroom invited to all the Earth Day parties?

*Because he was a fungi to be with!*

9. Why did the sun go to school?

*To get a little brighter!*

10. How do you know the ocean is friendly?

*It waves!*