

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21st, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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Advent 4 Love

“Because love is the reason Christ came.
Love is the gift God gives again and again.
And love is what makes Christmas, Christmas.”

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God, we offer these gifts as signs of our gratitude and love.
Bless what we give and bless what we keep,
that all may be used to share your love in the world. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We gather on this Fourth Sunday of Advent,
when love draws near.

People: We come longing for hope, peace, joy, and love.

Leader: We come with busy lives and full hearts.

People: We come seeking the love that began in a manger.

Leader: Let us open our hearts to the gift of God's love.

People: We worship the God who loved us first.

OPENING CAROL: #74 What Child is This

- 1 What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

2

**This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!**

- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. **R**

- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him. **R**

OPENING PRAYER

God of love, As we draw closer to Christmas, quiet our spirits and
soften our hearts. Help us set aside the noise, the rush, and the worries
that crowd this season. Remind us that Christmas begins not with
perfection, but with love. Love born in a stable, love wrapped in grace,
love given freely. Be present with us today, and teach us again how to
love as you love. Amen.

ANTHEM

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: The Candle of Love

Leader: We have lit candles of hope, peace, and joy.

(First 3 candles are lit again)

People: Today we light the candle of love.

Leader: We light this candle as a reminder that God's love came close
in Jesus.

People: A love that welcomes, forgives, and heals.

Leader: May this light remind us to love not only in words, but in
actions.

People: Come, Lord Jesus. Let love be born in us again.

(The Candle of Love is lit.)

Leader: Let us Pray-Loving God, as this candle of love shines among
us, fill our hearts with the love you first showed the world in the gift of

Jesus. Help us to receive that love,
to share it freely, and to carry it with us into the days ahead.
Prepare our hearts for Christmas, that love may be born anew in us.
Amen.

SING: “A Candle Is Burning” (verse 4 – Love)

4 A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

LITANY: “Love Is Almost Here!”

L: Here we are ... the Fourth Sunday of Advent! The candle of Love is ready to shine...

P: And Christmas is only four days away!

L: Four days until carols fill every corner...

P: And four days until we finally find the wrapping paper we bought last year!

L: Four days until the story of Love takes centre stage again...

P: A Love so deep it arrived in a manger.

L: Today we breathe in God's Love ... steady, warm, and welcoming.

P: Today we breathe out God's Love ... to neighbours, family, strangers, and ourselves.

L: When the world feels hurried, God's Love slows us down.

P: When the world feels weary, God's Love lifts us up.

L: When we wonder if we are enough, Christmas whispers:

P: “You are loved more than you can imagine.”

L: So let us rejoice: the candle of Love is lit!

P: And the Love of Christ is almost here, four days and counting!

All: Let Love fill our hearts, our homes, and our world. Amen.

CAROL: Silver Bells Vs. 1

City sidewalks, busy sidewalks

Dressed in holiday style

In the air there's a feeling of Christmas

Children laughing, people passing,

smiling smile after smile

And on every street corner you hear

**Silver bells, silver bells
It's Christmas time in the city
Ring-a-ling hear them ring
Soon it will be Christmas Day**

SPECIAL PRESENTATION SKIT: “When Love Feels Lost”

Characters

- Santa (silent throughout except a Ho Ho Ho) Frank
- Narrator - Peggy
- Elf 1 & Elf 2 (younger elves) Jordyn and Jake
- Elf 3 - Deborah
- Elf 4 - Brenda

(Santa comes in and sits on the steps at the front of the church, slumped slightly, hands folded, looking tired and sad.)

Narrator

(soft, reflective tone)

Santa sits here today, not jolly... not cheerful... not himself at all. This is not the Santa we expect to see.

This Santa carries a heaviness in his heart. A sadness that no sack of toys can lift. A weariness that even the busiest season cannot distract him from.

Something feels missing.

(Elf 1 and Elf 2 come happily down the aisle carrying a mug of hot chocolate, cookies, and a small glass of milk. They stop when they get to Santa, look at each other, then smile and gently offer them to Santa.)

Elf 1 Here Santa, we brought you your favorites

(the elven give Santa the treats)

Elf 2 Santa doesn't seem Himself

Narrator

The elves notice it too. They try the things that usually help... Warm treats. Sweet comforts. Familiar traditions.

(Santa gently shakes his head no and puts the treats down. The elves look confused but caring. They move the items by Santa and sit down beside him)

Narrator

But today, even the sweetest things don't seem to help.

(Elf 3 and Elf 4 enter)

Elf 3 (softly, kindly) Santa... something isn't right. You haven't smiled. You haven't laughed. You haven't even hummed a carol lately. What's weighing on your heart?

(Santa looks down, then slowly looks out toward the congregation.)

Narrator

Santa doesn't speak ... not because he has nothing to say... But because some feelings are too heavy for words.

He feels it everywhere he goes. Christmas has become loud... Busy... Rushed... The lists are longer. The expectations are higher. The love... feels harder to find.

Elf 4 Santa there is such a heaviest about you lately ...is it because things have changed so much, we see people rushing past one another. We see stress instead of kindness. We see more worry than wonder. I wonder if it is the people have lost the true meaning of the Season.... Santa... is that why you're sad?

(Santa nods slightly.)

Narrator

Santa remembers something important. Something sacred. Before the lights. Before the presents. Before the shopping and the schedules. Christmas began with love. Not flashy love. Not expensive love. But humble, holy love.

(Elf 3 steps closer.)

Elf 3 Christmas isn't about losing ourselves in busyness. It's about finding ourselves again... In the true meaning of Christmas

Elf 4 It's about a baby born in a stable. About God choosing love over power. Presence over perfection. Grace over grandeur.

Narrator

Santa grieves because he sees how easily the true meaning of Christmas has been forgotten. Christmas is not meant to be exhausting. It is meant to be loving.

Love that slows down. Love that notices. Love that shows up.

Elf 3 and 4 sit on the steps also as

Play Song ... Where are you Christmas?

Narrator

Maybe the magic Santa misses isn't really gone at all. Maybe it's waiting... to be remembered.

(and the elves, stand up and face Santa....

Elf 1 But Santa... Christmas still has singing!

Elf 2 And cookies! And hugs! And people helping each other!

Elf 3 And birthdays are supposed to be happy, especially Jesus' birthday!

(Santa looks up. His posture softens. He listens closely.)

Elf 4 Sometimes it takes the voices of children to remind us of what really matters.

Elf 1 Love is when we share.

Elf 2 Love is when we forgive.

Elf 3 Love is when we remember why we celebrate at all. The Birth of the Christ child born in Bethlehem for all of us. That God's love came down at Christmas.

Elf 4 Santa... maybe the magic isn't missing. Maybe it just needs a little love to shine again.

Elf 1 or 2 quietly places a heart, into Santa's hands. Santa looks at it and smiles

Narrator

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we lit the candle of Love.

A love that brings joy back. A love that makes room. A love that was born in a manger for all of mankind.

(Santa slowly stands up. He places a hand over his heart. A gentle smile spreads across his face.)

Narrator

And maybe... just maybe... The magic Santa misses isn't lost at all.
When we share that love, which is the true meaning of Christmas, hope
feels brighter, joy feels closer, and Christmas feels alive again.

(Santa gives a Ho, Ho, Ho)

Elf 1 Merry Christmas, Santa!

Elf 2 And happy birthday, Jesus!

Elf 3 Love is the best gift!

Elf 4 (pointing to the Manger Scene) That's what is all about.

Santa Come on Elves we have some work to do Christmas Eve is only 3
days away.

(joyful music begins. As they all exit together happily)

Narrator

This Christmas... May we remember what matters most.
Not what we buy. Not how busy we are. But how deeply we love one
another.

VIDEO: The Tenor's-Santa

POEM: "Room for Love"

There was no room at the inn,
no spare bed,
no quiet corner prepared in advance.
Yet love still found a place to rest.
It rested in a manger,
in borrowed space,
wrapped in humility and hope,
cradled by ordinary hands
and extraordinary grace.
Love came without knocking,
without demanding readiness or perfection.
It arrived in the middle of the night,
where hearts were open
and expectations were low.

This Advent, may love find room in us—
in the crowded places of our lives,
in the spaces we thought were too full,
too tired, or too uncertain.
Not because we are ready,
not because we have made everything right,
but because God is. And love always finds a way in.

CAROL: #48 Hark Herald Angels Sing

- 1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!'
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'
Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'
- 2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! **R**
- 3 Hail, the heavenborn Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. **R**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of love, We come before you with hearts both full and weary.
 As Christmas draws near, we pray for those who feel overwhelmed,
 those who are grieving, those who are lonely, and those who are
 struggling to find joy. We pray for families and friends, for children and
 elders, for those gathering in celebration and those facing an empty
 chair this season. We pray for our community, that love may be shown
 in kindness, generosity, and compassion. We pray for our world,
 for places where peace feels fragile, and for people longing for hope.
 Wrap us in your love, O God, and help us to be bearers of that love
 wherever we go. In Jesus' name we pray,

LORD' PRAYER

CLOSING CAROL: #44 It Came upon the Midnight Clear

1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
 from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold,
 'Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King!'
 The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled;
 and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
 above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
 and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
 beneath the angel strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
 and warring humankind hears not the love song which they bring.
 O hush the noise, and cease your strife, to hear the angels sing.

4 For, lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
 when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
 when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendours fling,
 and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

SENDING FORTH

May the love of God surround you,
 the grace of Christ guide you,
 and the light of the Spirit shine within you.
 Go into the world carrying love—
 for love is the heart of Christmas.

CHORAL AMEN**POSTLUDE**

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Announcements

Tuesday, December 23rd: Coffee time at Springvale beginning at
 9:30am. All are welcome!

Wednesday, December 24th: Christmas Eve Service at 7pm at
 Hagersville.

Sunday, December 28th: Joyful Christmas Sweater Sunday at both
 churches.

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

