

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd, 2026**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Rev. Peggy Bartlett
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First Sunday of Lent

Today we begin a Lenten journey called
“What Are We Carrying?”

Each week, we will name something we carry ... quietly, privately ...
and we will remember that Christ carries it with us. Today, we begin in
the wilderness. With temptation. And with a backpack that will slowly
grow heavier.

OFFERING PRAYER

Faithful God, as we begin this Lenten journey,
we bring our offerings before you,
not only these gifts of money,
but the quieter offerings of our lives.
Receive what we give and bless it for your purposes.
We offer these gifts that they
may serve your kingdom of justice, mercy, and love.
In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the wilderness of life,

People: God meets us.

Leader: In seasons of testing,

People: Christ walks beside us.

Leader: When we feel pressured, weary, or pulled in many directions,

People: The Spirit strengthens us.

Leader: We come carrying many things.

People: We come seeking grace.

All: Let us worship God.

OPENING HYMN: #120 O Jesus I have Promised

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend:
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.
- 2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God, You meet us not only in bright mountaintop moments
but in wilderness places. When we feel stretched, tested, or tempted,
remind us that Your Son walked that road first. Strengthen us for the
journey ahead. Lighten what we carry. Ground us in Your love.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN' VIDEO

LITANY: “Entering the Wilderness”

Leader: The season of Lent begins.

People: We step into the wilderness with Jesus.

Leader: In the wilderness, distractions fall away.

People: We come seeking what is true.

Leader: In the wilderness, we face temptation and uncertainty.

People: We trust that God walks beside us.

Leader: When we are tempted to rely only on ourselves...

People: Remind us that we live by every word that comes from God.

Leader: When we are tempted to seek power or recognition...

People: Teach us the quiet strength of humility.

Leader: When we are tempted to doubt God's presence...

People: Anchor us in your faithful love.

Leader: This season is not about despair...

People: It is about drawing closer to Christ.

Leader: The wilderness is not empty.

People: God is there.

Leader: The journey is not easy.

People: But it is holy.

All: Lead us, O God, through these forty days, that we may emerge renewed, strengthened in faith, and ready to follow Jesus more closely. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 4:1–13

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’^[b]”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’^[c]”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’^[d]”

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[e]”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

MESSAGE: “The Pressure to Prove Ourselves”

The wilderness is not just sand and stones. It is the place where we feel exposed. It is the place where we feel pressure. It is the place where our strength feels thin. Luke tells us that Jesus was “full of the Spirit” and then He was led into the wilderness. Notice that. He wasn’t led there because He failed. He wasn’t led there because He sinned. He was led there because He was human. Because wilderness comes to all of us. Temptation is often misunderstood. We think temptation means dramatic wrongdoing. But often temptation is quieter.

It sounds like this:

“Prove yourself.”

“Take control.”

“Make it easier.”

“Cut the corner.”

“Don’t let them see you struggle.”

“Handle it yourself.”

In our communities, temptation can sound like:

- Don’t admit you’re tired.
- Don’t talk about the diagnosis.
- Don’t say the farm/ business isn’t doing well.
- Don’t let anyone see doubt.

The first temptation Jesus faces is about bread. He’s hungry. He’s human. He’s empty.

“If you are the Son of God, turn this stone into bread.” In other words: Prove it. Use your power. Take control. But Jesus refuses to define Himself by performance. He doesn’t prove Himself. He trusts God. The second temptation? Power. Recognition. Control. The third? Protection from pain. Each one whispers: Take the shortcut. Avoid the hard road. Prove who you are. But Jesus does something remarkable.

He stands firm, not because He is superhuman, but because He is rooted.
Temptation often strikes when we are:

- Tired
- Hungry (for affirmation)
- Lonely
- Uncertain

Sound familiar? Lent invites us to notice: What tempts us?

What pressures us? What are we trying to prove?

Maybe we're tempted to:

- Overwork
- Appear stronger than we are
- Avoid difficult conversations
- Distract ourselves from grief
- Carry burdens silently

Temptation is not weakness. It is human. Even Jesus faced it. And notice something else ... He did not face it alone. "The Spirit led Him." And angels later attended Him. He was held. And so are we. The wilderness is not punishment. It is preparation. The pressure to prove ourselves is heavy. The need to appear fine is heavy. The belief that we must carry everything ourselves is heavy. And that is why we have this backpack. Today we placed one stone inside: Temptation.

We name it. We don't hide it. And we remember: Christ has walked the wilderness before us. You do not have to prove your worth.

You do not have to carry every burden alone. You do not have to win every battle quietly. The One who resisted the wilderness walks beside you still. Amen.

HYMN: #651 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Gracious God, We confess that we often feel pressure, to be strong, to be capable, to hold it together. We carry expectations — our own and others'. We are tempted to control what we cannot control, to hide what hurts, to measure our worth by what we produce.

In silence now, we name the pressures we carry...(Silence)

God of the wilderness, strengthen those who feel worn thin.

Be near to farmers facing uncertainty. Be near to families carrying illness. Be near to those wrestling with doubt. Be near to those who feel alone in their struggle. Teach us that asking for help is not weakness.

Teach us that trust is stronger than control. Teach us that Your grace is enough. We pray in the name of Christ, who faced the wilderness and overcame. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #671 I Need Thee Every Hour

1 I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

[Refrain:]

I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee;
O bless me now, my Saviour; I come to thee.

2 I need thee every hour; stay thou near by;
temptations lose their power when thou art nigh. **[Refrain]**

3 I need thee every hour, in joy or pain;
come quickly and abide, or life is vain. **[Refrain]**

4 I need thee every hour; teach me thy will;
and thy rich promises in me fulfil. **[Refrain]**

BENEDICTION

Go now into your week ... not proving,
not performing, not pretending. Go grounded in grace.
When the wilderness comes, remember ... You are not alone.
The Spirit walks with you. Christ strengthens you.
God holds you.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Sunday, March 1st: Springvale Annual Meeting immediately following worship service. Someone will fill for the Hagersville service while Peggy attends the meeting at Springvale.

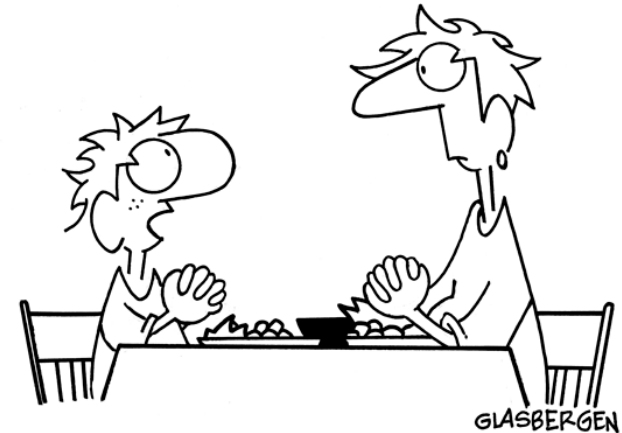
Tuesday, March 3rd: Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at 9:30am. All are welcome!

Wednesday, March 11th: Official Board meeting at Springvale at 1:30pm.

Friday, March 20th: Soup lunch at Hagersville. More details to follow.

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

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**"If God wants me to be thankful for vegetables,
why did He make them taste like vegetables?"**