

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th, 2026**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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GOD MUST HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR!

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God, thank you for all the ways You bless our lives. Take these gifts and use them to bring hope, comfort, welcome, food, friendship and joy.

And take us too. Use our hands, our voices, our compassion and even our laughter to make someone's day a little brighter. Amen.

PRELUDE & WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: This is the day that God has made!

People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Leader: God gave us voices to sing.

People: And mouths to laugh!

Leader: God gave us hands to serve.

People: And arms to hug!

Leader: God gave us minds to think.

People: Although some days they work better than others!

Leader: God gave us companions for the journey.

People: So we don't have to travel alone.

Leader: God gave us faith for difficult days.

People: And joy to brighten the journey.

Leader: So come, people of God.

People: We come to worship with grateful hearts and joyful spirits!

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OPENING HYMN: #395 Come In, Come In and Sit Down

REFRAIN: Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

- 1 You know the reason why you came,
yet no reason can explain;
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,
for we are a part of the family. **R**
- 2 God is with us in this place,
like a mother's warm embrace.
We're all forgiven by God's grace,
for we are a part of the family. **R**
- 3 There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,
but we are a part of the family. **R**
- 4 There's rest for the weary and health for us all;
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.
So come in and worship and answer the call,
for we are a part of the family. **R**

OPENING PRAYER

God of joy, thank You for bringing us together today. Thank You for music, for friendship, for stories, for smiles, and for the wonderful gift of laughter. We know that life isn't always funny. There are times when our hearts are heavy, when we worry, when we grieve, and when laughter seems far away. But even then, You continue to plant little seeds of joy. A friend's phone call. A child's giggle. A funny memory. A beautiful day. A story that makes us laugh until our sides hurt. Help us recognize these moments as gifts. Today, loosen us up a little, God. Help us put aside our worries for a while. Let us worship You with grateful hearts, open minds, and perhaps even a few good laughs. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME: "What Makes You Smile?"

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

LITANY: "Thank God We Can Laugh!"

Leader: For the times we walk into a room and forget why we're there...

People: Thank God we can laugh!

Leader: For the glasses we've searched for while they were on our head...

People: Thank God we can laugh!

Leader: For the names we forget and the stories we accidentally tell twice...

People: Thank God we can laugh!

Leader: For the times we confidently sing the wrong verse...

People: Thank God we can laugh!

Leader: For recipes that don't look anything like the picture...

People: Thank God we can laugh!

Leader: For plans that don't quite go according to plan...

People: Thank God we can laugh—and try again!

Leader: For children who say exactly what they're thinking...

People: Thank God for the joy they bring!

Leader: For friends who make difficult days a little lighter...

People: Thank God for friendship!

Leader: For memories that still make us smile years later...

People: Thank God for good memories!

Leader: For laughter shared around a table...

People: Thank God for community!

Leader: For joy that finds us when we least expect it...

People: Thank God for hope!

Leader: And for a God who loves us through every season of life...

People: Thank God for amazing grace!

CHORUS: #18 He Has Made Me Glad

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart,

I will enter His courts with praise.

I will say, "This is the day that the Lord has made,

I will rejoice for He has made me glad."

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 126: 1-3

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.

2 Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,
"The Lord has done great things for them."

3 The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

Ecclesiastes 3:1&4

1. There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

4. a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

Genesis 18:9-15

⁹ "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

¹⁰ Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing.

¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

Genesis 21:1-7

The Birth of Isaac

21 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac^[a] to the son Sarah bore

him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” ⁷ And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

MESSAGE: “God Must Have a Sense of Humour!”

I wonder if God ever looks at us and smiles. Not in a mean way.

More like a loving parent watching a child insist: “I can do it myself!” And then watching the child discover... maybe they could use a little help. Because let's face it, Human beings can be pretty funny.

We make plans. We organize everything. We make lists. We make backup lists. We put things on calendars. We set reminders on our phones. And then life comes along and basically says, “That's a lovely plan you have there! But we have to change it.”

The Bible is filled with people whose lives did not go according to plan. Take Sarah. God promises Abraham and Sarah that they will have a child. By this point, Sarah is well beyond the age when she expects to be having babies. So, when Sarah overhears the news... she laughs. And can we really blame her? If Sarah had been holding a cup of coffee, she might have spilled it.

“You've got to be kidding!” But God wasn't kidding. And eventually Sarah's laughter changes. At first, she laughs because the promise seems impossible. Later, when Isaac is born, she laughs because the impossible has happened. She says, “God has brought laughter for me”. That make me smile. Because sometimes that's exactly what happens in life. We laugh because something seems ridiculous. We laugh because things didn't go according to plan. And sometimes we laugh because somehow, despite everything, we made it through. There are other moments in Scripture that make you wonder whether God has a sense of humour. There's Balaam, who is supposed to be the wise one. But who sees what Balaam cannot? His donkey! (remember Peggy asked us about what animal talked in the Old Testament and it was a donkey). Imagine having an argument with your donkey... and discovering that the donkey has the better point. Then there's Jonah. God says: “Go this way.” Jonah says: “I think I'll go exactly the opposite way.” We know how well that

works out.

There's Zacchaeus. A grown man wants to see Jesus so badly that he climbs a tree. Imagine that happening today. You'd probably have twenty phones pointed at him before he reached the first branch! And then there are the disciples. Jesus tells them something. They misunderstand. Jesus explains. They misunderstand again. And yet Jesus keeps loving them. Keeps teaching them. Keeps trusting them.

Which should give all of us hope. Because we don't always get it right either. Faith doesn't mean becoming perfect. Faith doesn't mean we stop making mistakes. Faith doesn't mean everything suddenly goes according to plan. Faith means that through all of it... God stays with us. And sometimes one of the gifts that gets us through is laughter. There are days when laughter won't fix anything. But it helps us carry things. A funny story doesn't take away grief, but sometimes it gives our heart a little rest. A friend's joke doesn't solve our problem, but for a moment, the burden feels lighter. A memory can bring tears and laughter at exactly the same time. And isn't that interesting?

Sometimes the people we've loved most are remembered through the stories that still make us laugh.

“Remember when Dad did that?”

“Remember what Grandma always said?”

“Remember that vacation when everything went wrong?”

Those stories become treasures. Laughter reminds us that difficult things are not the only things. There is still joy. There is still friendship. There is still goodness. There is still hope. And maybe that's why Ecclesiastes doesn't simply say there's a time to weep. It also says, there is a time to laugh. Both belong in life. And both belong in church. We can pray together. We can cry together. We can carry one another through difficult days. And we can laugh together. Because church isn't supposed to be a gathering of perfect people pretending to have everything figured out. Thank goodness!

Church is a family of ordinary, imperfect people trying to follow Jesus. People who sometimes get it right. People who sometimes get it wrong. People who forget things. People who make mistakes. People who occasionally sing the wrong verse. People who need grace. And people who need one another. So, does God have a sense of humour? I think God must. After all... God created us! And perhaps every time we laugh together in kindness and love, God smiles too.

So don't feel guilty about enjoying life. Tell the funny story. Laugh at yourself. Enjoy the people around you. Treasure the silly moments. And when joy unexpectedly breaks through on an ordinary day, perhaps simply say, "Thank You, God. I needed that."

Because laughter doesn't mean we don't take God seriously. It means we recognize that joy is holy too. And maybe Sarah had it right all those years ago, God has brought laughter for us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN: "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart"

1 I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart, Down in my heart;
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart to stay.

2 I've got the peace that passeth understanding,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart, Down in my heart;
I've got the peace that passeth understanding,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart to stay.

3 I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart, Down in my heart;
I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart to stay.

4 For there is therefore now no condemnation,
down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart,
for there is therefore now no condemnation,
down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of laughter and tears, today we thank You for joy.
For the people who make us smile. For children who remind us not to take ourselves too seriously. For friends who know when we need a laugh. For stories told around kitchen tables. For memories that still make us smile. For all those ordinary moments that make life good. But we also remember today that not everyone feels like laughing. Some are grieving. Some are lonely. Some are worried. Some are waiting for answers. Some are facing illness. Some are carrying burdens that nobody else can see. Be especially close to them. And be with those we name openly now.....and those who we name in our hearts.

God we lift these prayers to you. And show us how we can be close to them too. Help us know when someone needs laughter... and when they simply need us to listen. Help us know when to speak... and when to sit quietly beside them. Give us compassionate hearts. And God, when we become too serious, too worried, too busy or too caught up in things that don't really matter, surprise us with joy. Send us a friend. A funny moment. A beautiful sunset. A child's laughter. A wonderful memory. Something that reminds us that life is still good. Love is still strong. Hope is still alive. And You are still with us. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #232 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

- 1 Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.
- 2 All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.
- 3 You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

- 4 Mortals join the mighty chorus
 which the morning stars began;
 God's own love is reigning o'er us,
 joining people hand in hand.
 Ever singing, march we onward,
 victors in the midst of strife;
 joyful music leads us sunward
 in the triumph song of life.

SENDING FORTH

As you leave today, take your faith with you. Take God's love with you. But don't forget to take your sense of humour too! Laugh often. Laugh kindly. Laugh with others, never at them. Don't take yourself too seriously. Make room for joy. And when life doesn't go according to plan, and it won't all the time ... remember Sarah.

Remember the disciples. Remember all those wonderfully imperfect people God used throughout Scripture. And remember, God isn't finished with us either. Go into this week with faith in your heart, kindness in your hands, hope in your spirit, and a smile on your face. And may the God who has brought laughter to generations before us bring laughter and joy to us as well.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Peggy will be away Sept. 14th-20th. During this time, Rev. Charmain Sebestyen from Jarvis Community Church will be available for any emergencies that may come up. Please call her at the church; 519-587-2915 if needed.

Announcements

Sunday, September 27th: Springvale's 153rd Musical Anniversary joint service beginning at 10:30am. Lunch to follow. There will be **no service** at Hagersville.

Tuesday, September 29th: Turkey Supper at Springvale from 4pm-6pm. Takeout only. Adults are \$25, ages 12 and under are \$10. For tickets call Barb at 905-768-3910 or Betty at 905-537-4188.

Saturday, October 10th: Rural Life Mission Fall Luncheon. Lunch beginning at 12pm with program beginning at 1:30pm. Meet the Thunder Bay Mission House hosts Lawrence & Melanie Anderson. Tickets available by phone: 905-768-3056 or email: rurallifemission@gmail.com. Cut off date for meal tickets is October 5th.

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

