

HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14th, 2025

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – JOY

“Joy arrives when we trust God’s presence, even when the path is uncertain.”

OFFERING PRAYER

Giver of Joy, receive our gifts, the gifts of our hands, our resources,
our time, and our compassion. Bless them and multiply them
so that Your joy may spread into homes, hearts, and lives. Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Rejoice! For God is near.

People: Joy bursts into the world like dawn breaking through the night.

Leader: Rejoice! For God is doing something new.

People: In the ordinary and the unexpected, God’s joy takes root.

Leader: Rejoice! For Christ is coming.

People: Let our hearts be open, our spirits be ready, and our lives be
filled with joy.

OPENING HYMN: #38 Angels We Have Heard on High

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

[Refrain:]

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
[Refrain]

3 Come to Bethlehem and see, Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
[Refrain]

4 See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.
[Refrain]

OPENING PRAYER

God of Joy, as we gather on this Third Sunday of Advent, open our
hearts to the gladness You bring. Lift the worries that weigh us down,
soften the fears that whisper in the night, and fill us with the deep joy
that comes from trusting Your presence. As Mary once said “yes” to
Your call, help us to say yes to Your hope,
yes to Your peace, yes to Your joy.
Amen.

ANTHEM

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES – HOPE, PEACE, and JOY

Reader 1: Today we light the third candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy.
Not the joy that fades with the season, but the everlasting joy God plants
within us.

Reader 2: Mary’s heart knew this joy when she said “yes” to God’s
surprising call. Joy grows when we trust that God is with us, even when
the path ahead feels uncertain.

Both Readers: We light this candle as a sign of joy. May its flame
remind us that God’s joy is stronger than fear, brighter than darkness,
and alive in us today.

(Light the first, second, and third candles.)

SING “*A Candle Is Burning*” (verse 3 – Joy)

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
 A candle to welcome brave Mary’s new boy,
 Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow,
 As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

CHILDREN’S TIME**CHILDREN’S VIDEO****DRAMA PRESENTATION:** “Mary’s Yes: A Story of Joy”**SCRIPTURE READING:** Luke 1:26-38**The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

REFLECTION: “When Joy Asks for a Yes”

There’s a beautiful truth woven into the story of Mary and Gabriel: Joy doesn’t always arrive as something easy. Sometimes joy arrives as a

surprise... and sometimes it arrives disguised as a challenge. Mary’s day began like any other. She wasn’t searching for angels, or waiting for a life-changing announcement. Yet joy came knocking on her door anyway ... not as a finished gift ... but as an invitation to trust. Gabriel’s message wasn’t simple. It raised questions. It stirred fear. It stretched her understanding of herself and of God. And still... Mary said yes. Not because she understood everything. Not because she felt ready. Not because she had all the answers. She said yes because she believed that God would be with her. And joy, true joy, is found exactly there: in believing that God is near, in trusting that God works through ordinary people, in offering ourselves even when we feel unsure. Mary’s yes opened the way for Jesus to enter the world. Our yes, however small, opens the door for joy to grow in our lives too. Joy isn’t the absence of difficulty. Joy is the presence of God in the middle of it. So, as we reflect on the Candle of Joy today, may we say yes to God’s nudge, yes to God’s call, and yes to the joy that finds us even when we don’t feel prepared.

Amen.

CAROL: #46 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

1 Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
 there he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.
 Such a Babe in such a place, can he be the Saviour?
 Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favour.

2 Angels sang about his birth, wise Men sought and found him;
 heaven’s star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.
 Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
 all the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

3 Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
he is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth, beautiful the story;
praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glory!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of Joy, we come to You with hearts open and expectant.
Like Mary, we do not always understand Your ways,
but we trust that You are with us. Bring joy to all who wait—
those who wait for healing, those who wait for reconciliation,
those who wait for news, those who wait for peace.
Bring joy to our community, that laughter may return to weary homes
and hope may bloom in unexpected places. Be near to those who grieve
this season, and let joy rise gently within them again. We offer our
prayers, spoken and unspoken, in the name of Jesus—the Joy of the
World.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING CAROL: #47 Still, Still, Still

- 1 Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.
The Christchild in his crib lies sleeping,
angels round him watch are keeping.
Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.
- 2 Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus, softly sleep,
while Mary sings and gently holds you,
safely in her arms enfolds you.
Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Jesus softly sleep.
- 3 Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!
For through God's holy incarnation
Christ is born for our salvation.
Joy, joy, joy; glad tidings of great joy!

SENDING FORTH

Go forth as people of joy. May Mary's courage inspire you,
Gabriel's message strengthen you, and the joy of Christ fill you
with hope, wonder, and a deep peace that carries you through this
Advent season.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, December 16th: Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice presents A Candlelight Evening to Remember from 7-8pm at The Devine Mercy Catholic Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis. For more information contact 519-410-0881.

Sunday, December 21st: Fourth Sunday of Advent. Candlelight Service at Springvale at 7pm. Regular morning service at Hagersville.

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***

