

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30th, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
Ministry of Pastoral Care & Worship: Rev. Peggy Bartlett
Cell: 905-317-5275 Email: info@hsupc.ca
Website: www.hsupc.ca
Church: Hagersville- 905-768-5863 Springvale- 905-768-1501

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – HOPE

“Getting Ready... With Hope!”

OFFERING INVITATION

This season invites us to give not out of obligation,
but out of joy and gratitude. As God prepares our hearts,
may we share generously so that hope shines brightly
in our community and beyond.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of hope, receive our gifts—
the ones in our hands and the ones in our hearts.
Bless them, multiply them, and use them to lift spirits,
brighten lives, and prepare the way of Christ.
Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP: “The Season Begins!”

One: Advent is here!

All: Let the waiting begin!

One: Not the stressful waiting, not the “where-did-I-hide-the-tape?”
waiting, that is hopeful, joy-filled kind that reminds us something
wonderful is coming.

All: We gather to breathe deeply, open our hearts, and prepare room for
Christ.

One: As lights twinkle, lists grow, and calendars fill... God whispers,
“*Slow down. I’m already here.*”

All: We come to worship with expectation, with laughter, with hope,
and with open hands.

One: Come, people of God, the journey to Bethlehem begins!

All: Thanks be to God!

ADVENT HYMN: #29 Hark the Glad Sound

- 1 Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.
- 2 He comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.
- 3 He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.
- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, as the season of Advent begins, remind us that preparation is
not about perfection but about making space for Your love.
When we feel rushed ... slow us. When expectations grow heavy ... lift
us. When joy gets buried under busyness ... uncover it and return it to
our hearts. May this season bring anticipation, holy laughter, and
renewed hope. We are ready, Lord ...well, not perfectly ready, but
joyfully ready. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: HOPE

Reader 1: Today we light the first candle of Advent: the Candle of Hope. In a world that often asks too much and moves too fast, this candle reminds us that hope doesn't rush. Hope grows gently, one flicker at a time. As we begin our Advent journey, may this small flame warm our hearts and remind us that Christ is coming, and that is very good news.

Reader 2: This is a promise that God meets us in the ordinary days, in the quiet moments, and even in the messy ones.

Reader 1: Today we light the Candle of Hope. Not the hope that comes from perfect plans or perfect holidays, but the hope that comes from God's steady, unfailing presence.

Reader 2: As this candle burns, may it slow our hearts, lift our spirits, and remind us that God is already at work in our waiting. We light this candle with hope, gentle hope, steady hope, the hope that leads us toward the joy of Christmas.

(The first advent Candle is lit the candle.)

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

ADVENT LIGHTING HYMN: #7 Hope Is A Star Vs. 1

1 Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.

[Refrain:]

When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

CHILDREN'S TIME: "The Advent Backpack"**CHILDREN' VIDEO****ADVENT LITANY: "Preparing Our Hearts, Not Our To-Do Lists"**

Voice 1: Today we begin Advent, the season of waiting, watching, and getting ready.

Voice 2: But let's be honest... most of us arrived this morning thinking, "I'm *already* behind on Christmas!"

Voice 1: Gifts, lists, baking, cleaning, decorating...

Voice 2: And that's just the first page!

Voice 1: But Advent invites us into a different kind of preparation, you know, not a frantic one, but a faithful one.

Leader: **We prepare our hearts, not just our homes.**

Voice 2: I know, Advent says, "Slow down. Take a breath. I am with you."

All: We breathe in God's peace. We breathe out the holiday stress.

Voice 1: So let's, not be in a rush... not become overwhelmed with stress...

But with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Voice 2: And guess what ... *none* of those require online shopping or going to the Mall.

Leader: **We wait with hope. We welcome Christ with joy.**

Voice 1: You know what, This season isn't about being perfect.

Voice 2: Yes! It's about being present.

Voice 1: Present to God's promise.

Voice 2: And, present to each other.

Leader: **Come, Lord Jesus. We are making room for You.**

Voice 1: So let's begin this Advent journey gently.

Voice 2: With open hands...

Voice 1: Open hearts...

Voice 2: And a readiness to notice God in small, ordinary moments.

Leader: **We light the candles. We lift our spirits.**

We welcome the Holy One, born in wonder.

Come, Lord Jesus, our hearts are ready.

RESPONSE: #22 Wait for the Lord 2x

Wait for the Lord, God's day is near;

Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart!

SCRIPTURE READINGS**Isaiah 40:1-5 Comfort for God's People**

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her

that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:

"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD^[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.^[b]

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

This passage emphasizes comfort and hope for the people of Israel, signaling the end of their suffering and the coming of God's glory.

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^[a] 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.

MESSAGE: "Preparing for Christmas Without Losing Our Minds"

It's Advent again—the season when Christmas preparation begins. And for many of us... so does the mild panic. We start making lists. Then we make lists *for our lists*. We find the Christmas lights, plug them in—and half of them don't work, even though they worked perfectly when we put them away. This is the season where every commercial tells us we must do more, buy more, cook more, clean more, and somehow also "relax and enjoy it all." No wonder people come to church looking tired! But Advent... Advent is God's gentle reminder that preparing for Christmas was never meant to be stressful. Look at Mary. Was she "ready"? Of course not. But she was *open*. Look at the shepherds—they were working the night shift. Not exactly rested and organized! But they were *willing to look up*. Look at the Wise Men—their journey took years, and they didn't rush. They followed the light, step by step. Not one person in the Christmas story had everything under control. Not one person had a colour-coded schedule, matching stockings, or perfectly wrapped gifts. But each one carried **hope**. And that was enough. So maybe this year, as we begin the journey to Bethlehem, our preparation can look a little different. Maybe we can slow down just enough to notice small joys—the glow of a candle, a kind word from a neighbour, the laughter of a child, the music that fills the sanctuary. Maybe we can set aside perfection and choose presence. Maybe we can remember that we don't have to get Christmas "right." We only have to make room for Christ. So here's your Advent practice for the week—simple and doable:

Every day, pause for 20 seconds and whisper:

"There is room for hope here."

In your kitchen. In your car. In your worries. In your waiting. There is room for hope. Because Christ is coming, and nothing, absolutely nothing, can take away the joy of that promise. Amen.

HYMN: #2 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

- 1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free:
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
- 2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.
- 3 Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
- 4 By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of this beautiful season, we thank You for the flicker of hope that lights our way through Advent. When we rush, slow us. When we stress, steady us. When we forget joy, remind us. For those who feel lonely, bring comfort. For those who feel overwhelmed, bring peace. For those who are excited, let their joy be contagious. Bless our preparing, the baking, the decorating, the card-writing, the gathering, the quiet moments and the noisy ones. Most of all, prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus again, with wonder, with warmth, and with hope. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER**CLOSING CAROL: #48 Hark! The 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

SENDING FORTH

As you go into this first week of Advent, may you walk a little slower, smile a little easier, and breathe a little deeper. May hope surprise you in unexpected places. And may the blessing of God, Creator, Christ, and Spirit, go with you as you journey toward Christmas with joy.

CHORAL AMEN**POSTLUDE**

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

Announcements

Thursday, December 4th: Lantern of Light Free Workshop at the Jarvis Public Library from 6-8pm. Participants are invited to create personalized lanterns to honour and remember the life of a loved one. Pre-register by contacting Carlee at 519-410-0881 or Maureen at support@norfolkaldimandhospice.ca.

Sunday, December 7th: Second Sunday of Advent—White Gift Sunday. Suggested items are New/used chapter books, story books, sports/car/Teen magazines, etc. Coloring books, activity books, crayons, markers, pencil crayons. Various size socks, new or gently used pajamas, mitts, scarves, hats or head band for boys and girls. Hair items brushes, elastics, clips, etc.

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

Sunday, December 14th: Third Sunday of Advent

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.

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

