

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28th, 2025**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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“Holding onto the Light”

It’s also Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday! Whether your sweater lights up, jingles, sparkles, or is just plain bold, thank you for joining the fun.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of generous love,
we thank you for the gift of your Son
and for the light you place in our lives.
Receive these gifts we offer today,
and use them to share your love and hope
in the world you cherish.
Amen.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The light of Christ has come into the world.

People: And the light still shines.

Leader: In quiet moments and ordinary days,

People: God is still with us.

Leader: Let us worship the One who comes to dwell among us.

People: We come with grateful hearts.

OPENING CAROL: #59 Joy to the World

- 1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2

- 2 Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and gracious God, We come to you in the quiet after Christmas, grateful for the joy we have known, and aware of the tiredness we carry. Thank you for the gift of your Son, for light born into our world, for love that did not leave when the celebration ended. Meet us here, O God, in this ordinary moment made holy by your presence. Refresh our hearts, steady our spirits, and remind us that the journey of faith continues. As we worship today, help us carry your light into the days ahead, trusting that wherever we go from here, you go with us. We offer this time to you with thankful hearts, in the name of Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN’S TIME

CHILDREN’ VIDEO

LITANY: “After Christmas... and Still Light”

Leader: Christmas Day has come and gone. The wrapping paper is gone... mostly.

People: The leftovers are still in the fridge.

Leader: The house is quieter. The calendar feels very empty, or very full.

People: And some of us are still tired.

Leader: We have sung the carols, lit the candles, and told the story once again.

People: And we are grateful... and maybe a little relieved.

Leader: But the light of Christ has not been packed away.

People: It stays on even when the decorations come down.

Leader: God meets us not only in holy nights, but in ordinary mornings.

People: And even in days when we don't know what comes next.

Leader: As we stand between Christmas and Epiphany,

People: We remember that the journey is not over.

Leader: The star still shines.

People: The light still leads.

Leader: So we bring our tired hearts, our grateful hearts, and our "what now?" hearts to God.

People: Trusting that wherever we go from here, God goes with us.

All: Thanks be to God, for light that lasts longer than Christmas. Amen.

CAROL: #70 There's Star In The East

1 There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,
rise up, shepherd, and follow;
it will lead to the place where the Christ was born;
rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Refrain:

**Follow, follow,
rise up, shepherd, and follow,
follow the Star of Bethlehem,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.**

2 If you take good heed to the angel's words,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.
you'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds,
rise up, shepherd, and follow. **R**

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:22-40

Jesus Presented in the Temple

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the

Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"^[a]), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."^[b]

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss^[c] your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^[d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

REFLECTION: "After the Wrapping Paper Is Gone"

Christmas has come and gone so quickly, hasn't it?

The decorations are still up, the tree still glows in the corner, maybe there's still a bit of wrapping paper tucked into a bag or a box of

chocolates half-finished on the counter. But something has shifted. The build-up is over. The excitement has quieted. The calendar page is about to turn.

And for many people, this week after Christmas can feel a little... strange. Some feel relief. Some feel tired. Some feel a deep sense of joy still lingering. And some feel a surprising emptiness, a kind of emotional let-down once the gatherings are over, the house is quieter, and the anticipation has passed.

We don't always talk about that part of Christmas. But it's real.

After weeks of preparing, planning, baking, decorating, shopping, worshipping, after all the energy we pour into "making Christmas happen" the question quietly rises:

Now what? Where do we go from here?

The beautiful truth of our faith is this: Christmas was never meant to end on December 25th. The birth of Jesus was not the finale ... it was the beginning. Luke's Gospel tells us that after the angels went home and the shepherds returned to their fields, life didn't suddenly become magical or easy. Mary and Joseph still had responsibilities. Simeon and Anna still waited and prayed. The world was still the world.

But something had changed.

God had come close, and Jesus stayed.

This Sunday after Christmas reminds us that faith is often lived not in the excitement of the holy night, but in the quiet days that follow. In the ordinary moments. In the spaces where the music fades and the lights dim just a little.

And maybe that's where Jesus does some of his most important work. Because Jesus was not born to be admired from a distance or packed away with the decorations. He was born to be lived with. Walked with. Carried forward into everyday life.

For those who are feeling tired today, the message is simple:

You don't have to rush. God is still here.

For those who are feeling lonely now that the gatherings are over:

You are not forgotten. Emmanuel ... God with us, he did not leave when Christmas ended.

For those who are feeling hopeful and ready for what comes next:

God is already walking ahead of you.

And that brings us to next Sunday, Epiphany.

Epiphany reminds us that the light of Christ does not stay in one place.

The star moves. The journey continues. The wise ones follow the light into unfamiliar territory, trusting that God will reveal what they need along the way.

So, if Christmas asked us to pause and marvel,

Epiphany will ask us to rise and follow.

We don't need all the answers today.

We don't need to know exactly what the new year will hold.

We are simply invited to carry the light we have been given, one step, one day, one act of love at a time.

Christmas has not ended.

It has taken root.

And as we stand in this quiet space between celebration and journey, may we remember:

The light still shines.

God is still with us.

And wherever we go from here, we do not go alone.

Amen.

CAROL: #43 Go Tell It on the Mountain

**Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.**

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. R
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth! R
- 3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. R

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Gracious and faithful God, In the quiet days after Christmas, we come to you just as we are — grateful, tired, hopeful, and sometimes unsure. We thank you for the gift of Jesus, for love made flesh, for light that continues to shine long after the carols fade.

We pray for those who find this season difficult, for those who feel lonely now that gatherings are over, for those who grieve loved ones who are missing, for those whose homes feel too quiet, and for those whose hearts feel heavy. Hold them close, O God. We pray for those who are weary, from busy schedules, long days, caregiving, work, and worry. Grant rest to tired bodies, and peace to anxious minds. As a new year approaches, we lift before you the hopes we carry and the concerns we cannot yet name. Guide our steps, even when the path is unclear, and remind us that we do not walk alone. We pray for your church, that we may carry Christ's light into ordinary days, that our words and actions may reflect your love, and that we may follow the star wherever it leads. We pray for our world, for places of conflict, fear, and division, for leaders in positions of power, and for all who long for peace and justice. May your light shine where it is most needed. All these prayers we offer to you, spoken and unspoken, trusting in your grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING CAROL: #62 Once in Royal David's City

1 Once in royal David's city, stood a lowly cattle-shed,
where a mother laid her baby, in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven, who, with God is over all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3 For he is our lifelong pattern; daily, when on earth he grew;
he was tempted, scorned, rejected, tears and smiles like us he knew.
Thus he feels for all our sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.

4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
for that child who seemed so helpless is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

SENDING FORTH

Go into the days ahead carrying Christ's light.
May hope guide you,
may peace steady you,
may love surround you,
and may the joy of Christmas live on in you.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, January 6th: Coffee time at Springvale beginning at 9:30am.
All are welcome!

Wednesday, January 14th: Hagersville Church Council meeting at 6:30pm

Friday, January 16th: Chili Lunch at Hagersville. More info to follow.

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

