HAGERSVLLE UNITED CHURCH & SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29th, 2026

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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Advent 1 - HOPE

"Hope doesn't mean everything is perfect. Hope means knowing that God is still at work."

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, we offer these gifts with grateful hearts. May they bring hope where there is uncertainty, comfort where there is sadness, and love where it is needed most. Bless these gifts and the hands that give them, that together we may share the light of Christ with our world. Amen.

PRELUDE & WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Today we begin the journey of Advent.
People: A journey of waiting, watching, and hoping.
Leader: When the world feels uncertain,
People: God's love gives us hope.
Leader: When the road ahead seems difficult,
People: God's promises remind us we are not alone.
Leader: Today we light the first candle of Advent.
People: A small light reminding us of God's great love.
Leader: Come, let us worship the God of hope!
All: With joyful hearts, we welcome the light of Christ! Amen.

OPENING HYMN: #1 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Vs. 1, 2, 4 & 5

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go. **R**

4 O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave. **R**

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. **R**

OPENING PRAYER

Loving and gracious God, As we begin this beautiful season of Advent, we come with hearts filled with many things. Some of us are excited about Christmas. Some are carrying worries, and others are simply wondering how another year has passed so quickly.
But today, you invite us to pause. To remember that Advent is not about having everything ready, everything decorated, or everything perfect. It is about preparing our hearts for the wonderful gift of your Son.
As we light the candle of Hope, remind us that your love is stronger than our fears, your promises are greater than our worries, and your light continues to shine even in the darkest moments. May this season renew our faith, strengthen our hope, and fill our hearts with peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE: HOPE

Leader: Today we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of Hope.
People: Sometimes hope is easy to find. We see it in a child's smile, a kind word, or a helping hand.
Leader: But sometimes hope seems far away, especially when life is difficult or the world feels uncertain.
People: Advent reminds us that even in the darkest times, God's light is still shining.

Leader: Long ago, God's people waited with hope for the coming of a Saviour.
People: And today, we continue to trust that God's love is with us and that better days are possible.
The Leader Lights the first purple Advent candle.
Leader: We light this candle as a reminder that hope is alive, God's promises are faithful, and Christ's light is coming into the world.

CANDLE-LIGHTING PRAYER - Peggy
God of Hope, As this small flame begins to shine, may hope grow within our hearts. Help us to trust your promises, share your love, and carry your light into the world. Amen.

ADVENT LIGHTING HYMN: #6 A Candle is Buring verse #1

1 A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

SCRIPTURE READINGS
Isaiah 9:2—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.
Isaiah 9:6-7—[6] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
[7] Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and
upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and
forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.
Romans 15:13—May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ANTHEM

TWO-PERSON CONVERSATION "HOPE IS ON THE WAY!"
Person 1: Well, here we are again! The First Sunday of Advent. Christmas is coming!

Person 2: It certainly is! Have you started your Christmas shopping?
Person 1: Shopping? I haven't even figured out what happened to October!
Person 2: Well, you had better get moving. Christmas will be here before you know it.
Person 1: Oh, I know! And I've got decorations to put up, cards to write, presents to buy, baking to do, and somewhere in all of that, I'm supposed to find a little Christmas spirit!
Person 2: Sounds like you need a little hope!
Person 1: Hope? I was hoping someone would come and do my Christmas shopping for me!
Person 2: (Laughing) Well, I can't promise you that. But today is the First Sunday of Advent, and we're celebrating hope.
Person 1: I know, but sometimes I wonder what hope really means. We use that word all the time. I hope the car starts in the morning. I hope the price of groceries comes down and I hope the Toronto Maple Leafs win the Stanely Cup this year….. We a least can Hope….
Person 2: And those are all perfectly reasonable things to hope for. But the hope we celebrate during Advent is a little different.
Person 1: How so?
Person 2: Well, Advent hope isn't simply wishing that everything will turn out the way we want. It's trusting that God is with us, even when things don't go as planned.
Person 1: That's not always easy, is it?
Person 2: No, it isn't. Especially when we look at the world around us. There is so much uncertainty, so much sadness, and so many people struggling.
Person 1: Sometimes I wonder where we're supposed to find hope in a world like this.
Person 2: I think that's exactly why Advent is so important.
Person 1: What do you mean?
Person 2: Think about the people in Isaiah's time. They were living through difficult days, facing fear and uncertainty. And yet Isaiah spoke these wonderful words: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."
Person 1: So even when things looked hopeless, God was promising something better?

Person 2: Exactly! And that promise was fulfilled in a way nobody expected.
Person 1: You mean Jesus?
Person 2: Yes! Think about it. God didn't send hope into the world with a great army or a mighty display of power. Hope arrived as a tiny baby, born in a stable.
Person 1: That's quite something, isn't it? The greatest gift the world has ever received came wrapped in swaddling clothes!
Person 2: And without a gift receipt!
Person 1: (Laughing) Well, that's one gift nobody would ever want to return!
Person 2: But here's the beautiful part. That little baby brought a message that would change the world. A message of love, forgiveness, compassion, and hope.
Person 1: You know, sometimes I think we forget that hope doesn't always arrive in big, dramatic ways.
Person 2: You're right. Sometimes hope arrives in the smallest moments.
Person 1: Like when someone calls just to see how you're doing?
Person 2: Exactly.
Person 1: Or when a neighbour shows up to help without being asked?
Person 2: Yes!
Person 1: Or when someone at church says, "Don't worry, we'll get through this together."
Person 2: Now you're getting it!
Person 1: I suppose that's what we've seen in our own church family, too. When things have been difficult, people have stepped forward, offered encouragement, and reminded us that we're not alone.
Person 2: And isn't that a wonderful example of hope? Not pretending that everything is perfect, but believing that with God's help, we can keep moving forward together.
Person 1: You know, that makes me think of something. Sometimes we spend so much time looking for hope that we forget we can actually be hope for someone else.
Person 2: That's a beautiful way of putting it.
Person 1: We don't have to solve all the world's problems. Sometimes we just need to be kind, lend a helping hand, or remind someone that they matter.

Person 2: And that's how God's light continues to shine in the world.
Person 1: So let me see if I've got this right. Advent hope isn't about everything going perfectly.
Person 2: No.
Person 1: It isn't about getting everything on our Christmas list.
Person 2: Definitely not!
Person 1: And it certainly isn't about having all the decorations up before December first!
Person 2: Although that would be nice!
Person 1: Advent hope is about remembering that God hasn't given up on the world, and God hasn't given up on us.
Person 2: Exactly. And as Paul reminds us in Romans, our God is the God of hope, who fills us with joy and peace as we trust in him.
Person 1: I like that. Because sometimes we need to be reminded that even when life feels uncertain, there is still goodness, still love, and still a reason to believe in tomorrow.
Person 2: And that is the gift of Advent. We don't have to wait until Christmas morning to experience God's love. It is already here, working in our lives.
Person 1: You know, I think I'm beginning to feel a little more hopeful already.
Person 2: Wonderful! Does that mean you're ready for Christmas?
Person 1: Well, spiritually, perhaps. But if you're offering to help with the shopping, I'm still accepting volunteers! (looking at the congregation)
Pause for laughter.
Person 2: Before we finish, there's something I think we should all remember.
Person 1: What's that?
Person 2: The first Advent candle may be small, but its light reminds us that darkness never has the final word.
Person 1: And perhaps that's what hope really is. A little light that keeps us going, even when we can't see the whole road ahead.
Person 2: Yes. Because the God who brought hope into the world through a child in Bethlehem is still bringing hope into our world today.
Person 1: Through kindness.
Person 2: Through compassion.
Person 1: Through forgiveness.

Person 2: And through ordinary people like you and me.
Person 1: So, as we begin Advent, perhaps we should spend a little less time worrying about everything we have to do...
Person 2: And a little more time noticing what God is already doing.
Person 1: Because no matter what challenges we face...
Person 2: No matter how uncertain tomorrow may seem...
Together: Hope is on the way, because God is already with us!
Person 1: And that, my friends, is what Advent is all about.
Person 2: Amen. (Loudly)

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 Hope, As we begin this Advent season, we thank you for the promise that your light continues to shine in our world. We pray for those who are struggling to find hope today. For those facing illness, loneliness, grief, or uncertainty, may they feel your comforting presence. We pray for families who are worried about making ends meet, for those who are searching for work, and for those who find this season especially difficult. Help us to remember that Christmas is not about how much we spend, but how much love we share. We pray for our communities and our churches. May we continue to be places of

welcome, encouragement, and compassion. Give us the courage to work together, the patience to listen to one another, and the wisdom to see your goodness in the people around us. And as we journey through Advent, help us to become messengers of hope. May our words bring encouragement, our actions bring kindness, and our lives reflect the love of Jesus Christ. We ask these things in the name of the One whose coming we celebrate. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING 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.

SENDING FORTH

As we leave this place on the First Sunday of Advent, may we carry hope in our hearts and share it wherever we go. May we remember that even the smallest act of kindness can bring light into someone's darkness. And may the God of Hope fill us with peace, strengthen us with faith, and remind us that we never walk alone. Go in peace, walk in hope, and let your light shine!

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

Announcements

Saturday, December 5th: *Please note change of date* UCW will meet in the Sunday School room at 6:15pm for a Christmas potluck dinner. Everyone is welcome, men too! Roll call is show & tell and secret pal gifts.

Sunday, December 6th: Second Sunday of Advent—White Gift Sunday

Sunday, December 6th: There will be no coffee Sunday today.

Sunday, December 6th: Lynn Valley Voices Wintersong at Jarvis Ebenezer Church, 139b Talbot St., Jarvis beginning at 2pm. Admission by donation.

Sunday, December 13th: Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 20th: Candlelight Service at 7pm at Springvale.

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

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

