

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, AUGUST 23rd, 2026**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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“The Sweet Life: A Sundae with God”

*Life may not always be sweet, but God gives us the ingredients we need,
love, grace, hope, forgiveness, joy, and one another.*

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God, everything we have is first a gift from you.
Receive these gifts and receive our lives. Use what we offer to feed the
hungry, encourage the discouraged, welcome the stranger, care for our
neighbours and share your love. May our generosity become another
small taste of your goodness in the world. Amen

PRELUDE & WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Some of us like chocolate sauce.

People: Some of us prefer caramel.

Leader: Some want a few sprinkles.

People: And some believe there can never be too many!

Leader: Some like whipped cream.

People: And somebody is already wondering where the cherries are!

Leader: We may not agree about the perfect sundae.

People: But we gather around the goodness of one God.

Leader: We come with different gifts.

People: Different stories.

Leader: Different joys.

People: Different worries.

Leader: Different hopes and different needs.

People: And God welcomes every one of us.

Leader: So come, people of God. And discover grace. And experience
love. And receive hope. Come, taste and see—

All: That the Lord is good!

OPENING HYMN: #357 Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

1 Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here;
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

2 First let me hear how the children stood round his knee;
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
all in the love-light of Jesus' face.

3 Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea,
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee;
and how the Master, ready and kind,
chided the billows, and hushed the wind.

4 Into the city I'd follow the children's band,
waving a branch of the palm-tree high in my hand;
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing
loudest hosannas! Jesus is King!

5 Show me that scene in the garden of bitter pain;
and of the cross where my Saviour for me was slain.
Sad ones or bright ones, so that they be
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray. Gracious and loving God, you fill our lives with gifts that
we sometimes notice and many that we simply take for granted.
There is goodness in the warmth of the sun, the laughter of a friend,
the hand that reaches out to help, the meal shared around a table,
the beauty of creation, and the simple joy of being together.
There is goodness in forgiveness, goodness in second chances,
goodness in hope, and goodness in knowing that we are loved.
Today you invite us to taste and see that you are good. So open our eyes
to recognize your goodness. Open our ears to hear your voice.

Open our hearts to receive your grace. And open our lives so that your goodness might flow through us into the lives of others. When we are discouraged, give us hope. When we are impatient, teach us kindness. When we have hurt someone, give us courage to make things right. When someone around us is struggling, help us notice. And when life gives us reason to celebrate, teach us to celebrate with gratitude. Gather us now into your love. Fill this place with your Spirit. And may our worship bring joy to you and renew our hearts for the week ahead.
Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 34:8

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Colossians 1:9-12

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^[a] ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[b] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

HYMN: Jesus loves Even Me (from Hymns for the family of God)

1. I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

Refrain:

**I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves even me.**

2. Though I forget Him and wander away,
Still Jesus loves me wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me. **R**

3. Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be:
"Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!" **R**

MESSAGE: "Be Somebody's Sprinkle"

There's a question I need to ask this morning.

And I realize it may be one of the most controversial questions ever raised from this pulpit: What belongs on the perfect ice cream sundae? Chocolate sauce? Caramel? Strawberries? Nuts? Whipped cream? Sprinkles? A cherry on top?

I suspect if we passed a microphone around this morning, we would quickly discover that we don't all agree.

Some people like a simple sundae, a little ice cream, a little sauce, and they're happy.

Others approach a sundae with the philosophy that if you can still see the ice cream underneath the toppings, you haven't finished yet! But let me change the question. If you could build a good life the way you build an ice cream sundae, what ingredients would you put into it? Love? Joy? Peace? We could all use more of that.

Kindness? Patience? Well...perhaps we don't reach for that one quite as quickly!

And yet Paul tells us in Galatians that the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Notice something important.

Paul doesn't call these the toppings of the Spirit. He calls them the fruit of the Spirit. Toppings are something we put on the outside.

Fruit is something that grows from within. And that takes our little sundae illustration somewhere much deeper.

Our Christian faith isn't simply about decorating our lives with a few good things, going to church, saying our prayers, adding a little kindness here and a little generosity there.

Paul is talking about what kind of people we are becoming.

When the Spirit of God is alive within us, something begins to grow.

Love grows. Joy grows. Peace grows. Patience and kindness grow.

Not all at once. Not perfectly. And certainly not without some struggle.

But gradually, our lives begin to bear fruit. And then we come to Paul's prayer in Colossians. Paul doesn't pray that everything will be easy for these people. Instead, he prays that they will know God's will and have spiritual wisdom and understanding so that they might live lives worthy of the Lord. And then he says something that connects beautifully with Galatians: He prays that they will be "bearing fruit in every good work."

There it is again. Fruit. Galatians tells us about the fruit that grows within us.

Colossians reminds us that eventually that fruit needs to become visible through us. Because love that stays inside me doesn't help my neighbour very much. Kindness that I simply believe in doesn't comfort somebody who's hurting. Generosity that remains a good intention doesn't meet anybody's need. Patience that disappears the moment somebody annoys me hasn't matured very far! The fruit has to become visible. And here's something interesting about fruit: A tree doesn't produce fruit for itself. The fruit it produces becomes nourishment for someone else. Maybe the fruit of the Spirit works that way too.

The love God grows in me becomes love I can give to you. The patience God develops in me becomes patience I can offer someone who is struggling. The kindness God grows in me becomes kindness someone else needs.

The peace God gives me can help create peace in my family, my relationships and my community. The fruit God grows in us becomes God's gift through us. But Colossians takes us one step further.

Paul prays that these people will be strengthened by God so that they may have endurance and patience. Remember that in this life, we need endurance and patience when life is difficult. And that's important because, despite our theme this morning, life isn't always sweet.

There are disappointments. There is grief. There are worries. There are relationships that become difficult. There are prayers whose answers we cannot yet see. And Paul doesn't say that if we have enough faith, none of those things will happen. Instead, he prays: May God strengthen you. May God give you endurance. May God give you patience. May God help you keep going. Sometimes God's goodness is the joy of a wonderful day. And sometimes God's goodness is the strength to get through a difficult one. Sometimes God's goodness is laughter around a table. And sometimes it is the person who quietly sits beside us when there isn't anything to laugh about. Sometimes God changes our circumstances. And sometimes God changes us in the middle of our circumstances. And perhaps that's where our sprinkles come back into the story. One sprinkle is tiny. It doesn't seem as though it could make much difference. And yet so much of Christian discipleship happens in little moments.

Remember, the little acts of love are never little to the person who needs them. That's why I like the phrase: Be somebody's sprinkle.

Not because our faith is supposed to be gushy or superficial.

But because a small act of genuine love can remind somebody that God has not forgotten them. And perhaps today we can take it one step further. Don't just be somebody's sprinkle. Bear fruit. Let others experience your love, catch your joy, and feel your peace. Let patience guide your response, kindness shape your actions, and gentleness fill your words. And when life is difficult, ask God for the endurance, that Paul prayed for. We may never know how deeply our lives touch another person. Someone may know God cares because you cared.

Someone may discover grace because you forgave, find courage because you encouraged, or know they belong because you made room for them. Someone may taste the goodness of God through the fruit God is growing in you.

So, when we gather around those bowls of ice cream today, enjoy the chocolate, the caramel, the whipped cream, and yes, be generous with the sprinkles! And remember these words from Psalms....“Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN: The Solid Rock (from Hymns for the Family of God)

1. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

**On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.**

2. When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

3. His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

4. When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray. God of goodness and grace, today we have spoken of joy, sweetness and celebration. And we thank you for those gifts. For laughter around tables, for children who make us smile, for friends who know us well, for food shared together, for unexpected kindness, for communities where we belong, and for moments when life simply feels good, we thank you. But we know that life is not always sweet. And so today we remember those whose lives are difficult. We pray for those who are grieving. For those who are lonely. For those waiting for news. For those worried about someone they love. For those facing changes

they did not choose.

For those who feel overwhelmed. For those who wonder whether anyone notices. May they experience your presence. And, loving God, if there is some way that we can become part of the answer to those prayers, help us notice. Make us generous with kindness. Generous with encouragement. Generous with forgiveness. Generous with our time. Generous with love. We pray for our community. We pray for our country. We pray for places throughout the world where people live with violence, hunger, injustice, fear and uncertainty. Raise up peacemakers. Strengthen those who serve. Comfort those who mourn. Protect those who are vulnerable. And teach us never to become indifferent to the suffering of another. Finally, God, we pray for ourselves. Plant within us the fruit of your Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And wherever we go this week, may somebody taste a little of your goodness because they encountered your love through us. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together, saying: Our Father...

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #420 Go to the World

- 1 Go to the world! Go into all the earth.
Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
baptizing as the sign of our rebirth.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- 2 Go to the world! Go into every place.
Go live the Word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- 3 Go to the world! Go struggle, bless and pray;
the nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- 4 Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,
when all the hosts of glory cry 'Amen!'
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

SENDING FORTH

Friends, you have heard the invitation: “Taste and see that the Lord is good”. Now go and help someone else taste that goodness. Where there is sadness, bring a little joy. Where there is loneliness, offer friendship. Where there is discouragement, speak hope. Where there is hurt, offer grace. Where someone is struggling, help carry the load. And wherever you go this week, be somebody's sprinkle. May the love of God surround you, the grace of Christ sustain you, and the Holy Spirit fill you with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and hope, today and always.

CHORAL AMEN**POSTLUDE**

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Announcements

Wednesday, September 9th: Official Board at Hagersville at 1:30pm.
Church Council will meet at 6:30pm.

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

