

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11th, 2026**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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FAITHFUL FOOTPRINTS
“Thankful for Those Who Walked Before Us”

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God, everything we have and everything we are comes ultimately from you. Receive these gifts and use them to continue the work begun by generations before us. May what we give today become a blessing for someone tomorrow. Amen.

PRELUDE & WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come with thankful hearts.

All: Thankful for God's goodness and love.

One: We give thanks for those who walked before us.

All: For those who taught us, loved us, prayed for us, and encouraged us.

One: We give thanks for the faith they shared.

All: A faith passed from generation to generation.

One: And today we remember that we, too, are leaving footprints.

All: May they be footprints of kindness, hope, love, and faith.

One: Come, let us worship the God who has been faithful through every generation.

All: Thanks be to God!

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OPENING HYMN: #516 Come, You Thankful People, Come

- 1 Come, you thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in,
safe before the storms begin;
God, our maker, does provide
for our needs to be supplied:
come to God's own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
- 2 All the world is God's own field,
harvests for God's praise to yield;
wheat and weeds together sown,
here for joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade, and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear:
Harvest-giver, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.
- 3 For our God, one day, shall come,
and shall take this harvest home;
from the field shall in that day
all offences purge away;
giving angels charge at last
in the fire the weeds to cast;
but the fruitful ears to store
in the garner evermore.
- 4 Even so, God, quickly come
to your final harvest home!
Gather all your people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin;
there for ever purified,
in your presence to abide:
come, with all your angels, come,
raise the glorious harvest home.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, On this Thanksgiving Sunday, we come with grateful hearts. Thank you for the beauty of creation, for food and shelter, for family and friendship, for laughter and love. But today we especially thank you for the people who have walked before us. For those who taught us to pray. For those who brought us to church. For those who opened the Bible and told us the stories of Jesus. For those who showed us kindness, forgave us when we made mistakes, encouraged us when we struggled, and reminded us that we were never alone. Some of their names we remember easily. Others may have faded from memory. But their footprints remain upon our hearts. Thank you, God, for every person who helped lead us along the journey of faith. And help us to remember that someone may now be following our footprints. May the path we leave behind lead others toward kindness, compassion, hope, and most of all, toward you. Amen.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHILDREN'S VIDEO

A THANKSGIVING LITANY

Leader: Today we give thanks for those who walked before us.

People: And for the footprints they left behind.

Leader: For grandparents who taught us to pray...

People: Even when we were peeking to see if everyone else had their eyes closed!

Leader: For parents who got us up and ready for church on Sunday morning...

People: Even when we insisted we were much too tired to go!

Leader: For Sunday School teachers who patiently taught us Bible stories...

People: And somehow survived the glue, glitter, crayons, questions, and chaos!

Leader: For church musicians who taught us the old familiar hymns...

People: And kept playing even when we weren't singing anywhere close to the right note!

Leader: For the faithful church cooks who fed generations of hungry people...

People: And taught us that almost every church problem looks a little better after dessert!

Leader: For the people who quietly repaired things, washed dishes, set up chairs, made coffee, folded bulletins, and did a hundred other jobs no one noticed...

People: God noticed, and today, we remember.

Leader: For those who welcomed us when we were new...

People: And made room for us in the pew, and in their hearts.

Leader: For those who prayed for us when life was difficult...

People: And celebrated with us when life was good.

Leader: Their footsteps helped create the path we walk today.

People: And now it's our turn.

Leader: May we leave footprints of kindness.

People: Footprints of generosity.

Leader: Footprints of laughter.

People: Footprints of welcome.

Leader: Footprints of forgiveness.

People: And footprints of faith.

Leader: So that someday, when another generation gathers in this place, they might remember us with a smile and say...

All: "Thank God they walked before us!"

Leader: And may they also say...

All: "And thank God they left us some good recipes!"

Leader: For those who came before us, those who walk beside us, and those who will come after us ...

All: We give thanks to God. Amen!

CHORUS: #7 "Give Thanks"

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong!" let the poor say,
"I am rich because of what the Lord has done for us."

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.

Give thanks. Give thanks.

SCRIPTURE READING

Hebrews 12:1-2

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Timothy 1:3–7

Thanksgiving

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.
4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.
5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

REFLECTION: “Faithful Footprints”

Thanksgiving usually invites us to count our blessings. We look around the table and give thanks for food. We look around our homes and give thanks for shelter. We look at the colours of autumn and give thanks for creation. And those are wonderful things for which to be grateful.

But this Thanksgiving, I wonder if we might count our blessings a little differently. Instead of asking, “What am I thankful for?” perhaps we could also ask, “Who am I thankful for?” Because none of us arrived here entirely on our own.

Someone walked before us. Someone taught us. Someone encouraged us. Someone prayed for us. Someone planted a seed. Paul understood this when he wrote to Timothy.

He said: *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.”*

I love that. Paul looked at Timothy and could see the footprints of the generations before him. Timothy's faith had a history.

There was Grandma Lois. There was his mother Eunice. Two women who probably had no idea that thousands of years later, people would still be saying their names. They simply lived their faith. And somebody noticed. Isn't that true for us too? Many of the people who shaped our faith probably never thought they were doing anything extraordinary.

Maybe it was the grandmother who folded her hands before every meal and said grace. The father who made sure the family got to church. The mother who taught her children to care for someone who was struggling. The Sunday School teacher who prepared a lesson every week, wondering if those children were listening to anything she said. The person who sang in the choir. The person who made the coffee. The person who quietly slipped a card into someone's mailbox. The person who sat beside someone who was grieving. The person who said: “I've been praying for you.” They probably didn't think they were changing anybody's life. They were simply living their faith. But they were leaving footprints. And here we are. In a church like ours, we are surrounded by the footprints of people who came before us. People built this church. People worshipped here. People baptized their children here. People were married here. People laughed here. People cried here. People prayed here. People gave their time and their money. People repaired things when they broke. People taught children. People sang hymns. People prepared meals. People welcomed strangers. And generation after generation, they kept the church going. Not because the building was the most important thing. But because faith was worth passing on. And now something rather remarkable has happened. It is our turn. We are no longer only following footprints. We are leaving them. The children and young people around us are watching. They notice how we treat people. They notice whether everyone is welcome. They notice whether our faith is something we only talk about on Sunday morning, or something we actually live.

And years from now, someone may remember you because you made church feel like a place where they belonged. You may never know the difference you made. Neither did Lois. Neither did Eunice. They simply passed their faith along. So, this Thanksgiving, let us not only say:

“Thank you, God, for those who walked before me.”

But also: **“God, help me leave faithful footprints for those who walk after me.”**

Footprints of compassion. Footprints of forgiveness. Footprints of laughter. Footprints of welcome. Footprints of faith. Let us give thanks for those who walked before us, the people whose faith helped shape our own. And then let us look toward those coming behind us. The journey isn't finished. The path continues. And now... it's our turn to leave some faithful footprints. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE: #644 I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

- 1 I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.
- 2 I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
in a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell.
- 3 When you heard the wonder of the word,
I was there to cheer you on;
you were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.
- 4 If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk till rising sun.
- 5 In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young.
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
- 6 When the evening gently closes in
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
with just one more surprise.
- 7 I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

A THANKSGIVING PRAYER FOR THE GENERATIONS

Loving God, Today we remember with gratitude the people whose footprints have marked our journey. We thank you for parents and grandparents, for family members and friends, for teachers and ministers, for Sunday School leaders and church families. We thank you for those who taught us about Jesus. For those who prayed with us and those who prayed for us. For those who encouraged us when our faith was uncertain. For those who showed us that faith is not simply something we say, but something we live. Today we remember those who are no longer with us. We give thanks for their laughter, their wisdom, their stories, their love, and the pieces of themselves that remain within us. We thank you for this church and for generations of faithful people who have cared for it and served through it. For every meal prepared, every hymn sung, every child taught, every prayer offered, every hand extended in friendship, and every act of generosity, we give you thanks. And now, loving God, help us to recognize our place in the story. Help us to leave faithful footprints for those who come after us. May our children and grandchildren see compassion in us. May newcomers find welcome among us. May those who are lonely find friendship. May those who are hurting find kindness. May those searching for hope find something of your love in us. We pray for our community, our country, and our world. Where there is hunger, teach us to share. Where there is loneliness, teach us to reach out. Where there is division, teach us to be peacemakers. Where there is sorrow, teach us to bring comfort. And where there is despair, help us leave footprints of hope. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus, who showed us the way and invited us to follow. And together we pray the prayer he taught us: **Our Father...**

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #236 Now Thank We all Our God

- 1 Now thank we all our God, with heart,
and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

- 2 O may this bounteous God
 through all our life be near us,
 with ever joyful hearts
 and blessed peace to cheer us,
 and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
 and free us from all ill in this world and the next.
- 3 All praise and thanks to God
 for all that has been given,
 the Son, and Spirit blest
 who dwell in highest heaven,
 the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

SENDING FORTH

As you leave this place today, remember the footprints behind you.
 Give thanks for those who walked before you. Remember the footprints
 beside you. Give thanks for those who share the journey with you.
 And remember the footprints you are leaving behind. Walk gently.
 Love generously. Forgive freely. Welcome warmly. Live faithfully.
 For someone may be following the path you make. Go in peace.
 Go in gratitude. And keep leaving faithful footprints.

CHORAL AMEN

POSTLUDE

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Announcements

Tuesday, October 13th: Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at
 9:30am. All are welcome!

Friday, October 16th: Scrapbooking table setup at Hagersville around
 4pm. All help is appreciated.

Sunday, October 25th: Hagersville Anniversary Service. Join us at
 11am for a joint service in celebration of Hagersville's 157th
 Anniversary. There will be no service at Springvale. Lunch to follow.

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

