

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &  
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH  
SUNDAY, MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**

**OPENING HYMN: #672 Take Time to Be Holy**

- 1 Take time to be holy, speak of with your Lord;  
abide in him always, and feed on his word.  
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,  
forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.
- 2 Take time to be holy, let him be your guide,  
and run not before him, whatever betide.  
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,  
and, looking to Jesus, still trust in his word.
- 3 Take time to be holy, be calm in your soul,  
each thought and each motive beneath his control.  
Thus led by his spirit to fountains of love,  
you soon shall be fitted for service above.

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**Lent – Week Five**

**“What Are We Carrying this Week? ... Grief”**

We carry grief from many places in life, the loss of loved ones, broken relationships, dreams that did not unfold as we hoped. Even Jesus wept. In our grief, God meets us with compassion and hope.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Generous God, In every season of life, joy and sorrow alike,  
you continue to provide for us.

Receive these gifts we offer today. May they bring comfort to the grieving, strength to the weary, and hope to those walking through difficult days. Use them so that your love may be felt in this community and beyond. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**PRELUDE AND WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: We come carrying many things today.  
People: Some carry joy. Some carry questions.  
Leader: Some carry gratitude.  
People: Some carry grief.  
Leader: God gathers us exactly as we are.  
People: God meets us in our sorrow and in our hope.  
Leader: For the One who knows tears,  
People: The One who walks with us through loss,  
Leader: The One who promises resurrection—  
All: Let us worship God.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Loving God, You know the hidden places of our hearts. You see the grief we carry, the losses we speak of and the ones we hold quietly within. You know the empty chairs at our tables, the memories that come rushing back, the hopes that did not unfold the way we imagined. Yet you are the God who does not turn away from sorrow. You are the God who stood at a tomb and wept. The God who understands love and loss. As we gather in this sacred space today, wrap us in your presence. Bring comfort where hearts are tender, peace where souls feel restless, and hope where darkness feels heavy. Remind us that even in grief, you walk beside us. We pray this in the name of Jesus, who knows our tears. Amen.

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

**CHILDREN'S VIDEO**

**LITANY: Carrying Grief Together**

Leader: Life brings us many things to carry.  
**People:** Some are light... and some feel like a full backpack of bricks.  
Leader: Sometimes grief arrives suddenly.  
**People:** Like stepping on a Lego in the dark.  
Leader: Sometimes grief sneaks up quietly.

**People:** Like when a song comes on the radio and suddenly we're crying in the grocery store.

Leader: Sometimes we laugh at memories.

**People:** Sometimes we cry at the same memories.

Leader: Sometimes we remember the good stories.

**People:** And sometimes the slightly embarrassing ones too.

Leader: God does not ask us to hide our grief.

**People:** God welcomes our tears and our memories.

Leader: God also gives us each other.

**People:** Friends who listen...family who care...and a church that walks together.

Leader: And when the weight feels too heavy...

**People:** God helps carry it with us.

All: For even Jesus knew sorrow and tears. And even in grief, God's love holds us. Thanks be to God.

### SCRIPTURE READING: John 11:20-36

<sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." <sup>28</sup> After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." <sup>29</sup> When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. <sup>32</sup> When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and

troubled. <sup>34</sup> "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

### MESSAGE

Grief is a strange thing.

It can sneak up on us in the most unexpected moments.

A friend once told me that after her husband passed away, she was doing fine for weeks. She was handling paperwork, organizing things around the house, staying strong.

Then one morning she opened the fridge... and saw the jar of pickles. And suddenly she burst into tears.

Now it wasn't really about the pickles. It was because her husband absolutely loved pickles and insisted that every sandwich in the world needed at least three of them.

Grief is like that.

Sometimes it's not the big things that catch us off guard.

It's the little things — a song, a smell, a chair at the table, or even a jar of pickles in the fridge.

Grief has a way of reminding us just how deeply we loved.

And the beautiful thing is this: the Bible tells us that Jesus understands that kind of grief. Because when his friend Lazarus died, the shortest verse in all of scripture tells us something powerful:

**'Jesus wept.'**

Even the Son of God knew what it meant to carry grief."

Grief is one of the heaviest things we carry in life.

Unlike many other things we carry, grief does not ask permission before arriving. It simply shows up, often suddenly, and settles into our hearts. Sometimes grief comes when someone we love dies.

Sometimes it comes through the loss of a relationship.

Sometimes it arrives when life changes in ways we never expected.

Grief is not something we fix.

It is something we learn to carry.

And that is why the story of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus is so powerful. Jesus arrives in Bethany after Lazarus has died. Martha and Mary are heartbroken. Their friends and neighbors are gathered around them in mourning.

And when Jesus sees their pain... something remarkable happens.  
The shortest verse in the Bible appears.

**“Jesus wept.”**

The Son of God stands at a tomb and cries. He does not rush to explain suffering. He does not give a theological lecture. He simply enters into grief. This tells us something important about God. God does not stand far away from our sorrow. God steps into it. When we stand beside hospital beds. When we sit in funeral homes. When we look at old photographs. When the memories return unexpectedly. God is there. Grief, in many ways, is the price of love. We grieve because we loved deeply. And even though grief never fully disappears, something else slowly begins to grow alongside it. Hope. Jesus eventually calls Lazarus out of the tomb. Not because grief doesn't matter, but because grief never gets the final word. Easter reminds us that death does not win. Loss does not win. Darkness does not win. God's love is stronger. So yes, we carry grief. But we do not carry it alone. Christ walks beside us. The church walks beside us. And God promises that one day all tears will be wiped away. Until that day comes, we carry grief together — with compassion, patience, and hope. Amen.

**HYMN: #703 in the Bulb There is a Flower**

1 In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

2 There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;  
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

3 In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;  
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Loving God, Today we bring before you the grief that lives in our hearts. We remember those we have loved and lost. We remember voices we long to hear again, smiles we miss, and the quiet spaces their absence has left behind. We pray for those who are grieving today, for families who have recently said goodbye, for those walking through anniversaries of loss, for those whose grief is fresh and for those whose grief has lived quietly for many years. God of compassion, wrap them in your peace. We pray for those carrying other kinds of grief, grief for broken relationships, grief for dreams that never came to be, grief for changes that have altered life's path. Remind us that you hold every tear. Strengthen us to be a community that listens well, cares deeply, and walks beside one another through sorrow. And in the midst of our grief, remind us of the promise of resurrection. For the tomb is not the end of the story. Hope still rises. Life still emerges. And your love still surrounds us. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, who wept with us and walks beside us. Amen.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**CLOSING HYMN: #664 What a Friend We Have in Jesus**

1 What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

2 Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

3 Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Christ the Saviour is our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do our friends despise, forsake us? Are we tempted to despair?  
Jesus' strength will shield our weakness, and we'll find new courage  
there.

**SENDING FORTH**

As you go from this place,  
 Carry your grief honestly.  
 Carry your memories gently.  
 Carry your hope faithfully.  
 And remember this:  
 The God who wept with Mary and Martha  
 walks beside you still.  
 May God's comfort hold you,  
 Christ's peace surround you,  
 and the Spirit's hope lift your hearts today and always.

**CHORAL AMEN****POSTLUDE****Announcements**

**Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>:** Coffee Tuesday at Springvale beginning at 9:30am. All are welcome!

**Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Good Friday service at Hagersville beginning at 10:30am. Fellowship & hot cross buns to follow in the C.E. Wing

**Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>:** The Chapelaire's in concert for Christian Service Centers 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet at Port Dover Community Centre. Doors open at 6pm, dinner at 6:30pm. For tickets please contact Dorothy Gordon at 519-443-6578

**Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>:** Unified Board meeting at Springvale at 1pm.

**Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>:** Jarvis Community Church presents Elvis in Concert! Garry Wesley as Elvis tribute & Donna Brooks performing the hits of Tammy Wynette & Patsy Cline in this gospel extravaganza. Tickets are \$25 or \$30 at the door. For tickets please call 519-420-0392. All proceeds will go to the Jarvis Caring Cupboard.

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

**Sunday Humour**

Firstly, THANK YOU everyone for your concern.  
 I'm ok! .... just a bit shaken up, but I'll be fine.  
 For those who don't know what happened, I was robbed this morning in broad daylight at the Esso station.

After it happened my hands were shaking, I felt dizzy and I was probably in shock. My money was gone, so I called the police. They were fantastic and even called an ambulance because my blood pressure was through the roof!

The officer asked if I knew who did it...  
 I said:

“Yes... it was pump number 4.”

