

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18th, 2020**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of Pastoral
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Southminster

“Model Christians?”

Offering Prayer

God, source of all that is,
lover of justice and source of equity,
help us live boldly and truthfully
as we seek to follow your ways.
Encourage us to share with others the gift of grace
that you have so abundantly given us.
Receive and bless these our gifts
that we return to you now.
In the name of the One who gives us life, we pray. Amen.

PRELUDE & WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Celebrate God’s love, which has been poured into your life!
**Forgiveness, encouragement, support, and healing are gifts of God
to us.**
Reach out and care for those around you.
We will be people of peace and justice.
Shout for joy!
Sing God’s praises always!

OPENING HYMN: #374 Come and Find A Quiet Center

- 1 Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.
- 2 Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.
- 3 In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!

OPENING PRAYER

God, you are our refuge. When the world gets to be too much with us,
we turn to you for consolation and healing. Help us today to hear your
words of compassion. Enable us to be those who would willingly serve
all people in need. For we ask these things in the name of Jesus our
Lord. AMEN.

CHILDREN’S TIME

CHILDREN’S SONG

PRAYER OF AFFIRMATION AND CONFESSION

In our ongoing struggle to live out our faith in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, God, we come to you in prayer affirming and confessing what we believe: We believe that you created this beautiful world in which death and destruction, sickness, pain and suffering cannot, and must not, have the last word.

We believe that you created humanity to care for this earth, to uplift each other's life, to service one another in love as God has shown us in Christ. May we hear your call now to heal the world and its people, to ease every pain and anguish, by reaching out in loving service to those broken by calamities and strife, and thus restore them to wholeness. God, send the Holy Spirit upon us, to strengthen us in our work, that gentleness and tender care may flow from us and be transformed into life-giving power, the hope of wholeness for those in need. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 22:15-22

15. Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17 Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, 20 and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" 21 "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

1 Paul, Silas^[a] and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

²We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³We remember before our God and Father your work

produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴For we know, brothers and sisters^[b] loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

MESSAGE

What is a model... A model is someone who strikes poses to capture images and moments, and helps manufacturers to showcase their items, such as clothing, accessories, and merchandise to the public. Or another definition... A model is a system or thing used as an example to follow or behave like for example ...a Christian. The idea of the fashion model is fairly easy to grasp. You wear some fancy clothes, so that others will say - yes, I like that shirt, or that dress or whatever. I want to have that, be like that.

But today we are going to talk about Christian models, who do you think of? Who are the Christians you look up to? Could you be a model for other Christians? Now, maybe when you hear the phrase 'model Christians' you are already shrinking in your seat, thinking that could never be me. So what do you think a model Christian would look like? What would make someone a model Christian?

A young lady was soaking up the sun's rays on a Florida beach when a little boy in his swimming trunks, carrying a towel, came up to her and asked her, "Do you believe in God?" She was surprised by the question but she replied, "Why, yes, I do." Then he asked her: "Do you go to church every Sunday?" Again, her answer was "Yes!" He then asked: "Do you read your Bible and pray every day?" Again she said, "Yes!"

By now her curiosity was very much aroused. The little lad sighed with relief and said, "Will you hold my quarter while I go in swimming?" Is that a Model Christian? We see in our reading this morning from 1 Thessalonians. The Christians in Thessalonica were described in verse 7 in this way. 'And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.' So how did they come to be thought of so highly by Paul? What was it that made them model Christians? Could we also be model Christians throughout Springvale and Hagersville and beyond? This morning we're starting into Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, but remember, Paul had been a missionary in Thessalonica for just about three weeks before he was chased out of town. He flees to Berea, then Athens, then Corinth. When he gets there, he writes this letter back to the church in Thessalonica. He didn't get to tell them everything he wanted to; but even in that short time, they have become model Christians. They have just recently converted to Christianity, but they are an example to others. It all starts in verse 6, where we're told 'You became imitators of us and of the Lord...' You see, to be a Christian is to be like Jesus - to be modelled on his teachings and to become like him. This group of people are copying Christ (and the apostles), so they are a model to others. And we see this especially in how they received and believed the word of God. In a sense, that's it. Nothing special or secretive - no ten top tips to becoming a model Christian. They received the word and believed the word of God. Everyone in the whole region knew about the Thessalonian's reception of Paul and the others - it was a warm welcome. A joyful welcome. And that warmth was because of what the missionaries were bringing to them. You see, they received not just the missionaries, but they received the word of God. In verses 6-7 it states that they imitated Paul and the others, and the Lord, because 'in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so, you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.' They received the word with the joy that comes by the Holy Spirit. Paul preached the gospel, the word of God, and they welcomed it. The church was mixed, there were Jews and Gentiles, but all received the word. Now from hearing this you might think, well it was easy for them then...the world was easier and less complicated than in our non-stop busy world now...it wasn't though ...they were stepping outside the box, the people could be stoned or put in Jail...but

believing God's word was revolutionary for them. They believed that God existed... But they also believed his word, about his Son. For such a short visit from Paul, they have certainly grasped and believed the key doctrines of the faith. They knew that Jesus was God's Son. They knew that Jesus died on the cross for them. They knew that God raised him from the dead. And they knew that Jesus will return from heaven someday. They received and believed the word of God, this was the talk of the town.

What does this mean for you and me...

Model Christians receive and believe the word of God. So... take his promises seriously, and depend totally on them, no matter what comes. Be example to others, and then, go and live your life this week, knowing that you and every single person you meet carry with them that very same label: Made in the Image of God. And may that guide all the parts of your life. Amen.

HYMN: #672 Take Time to Be Holy

- 1 Take time to be holy, speak oft 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord, we enter these "gates" with thanksgiving and praise. Many of us have come with burdens, seeking your healing; others have come with joys, celebrating the goodness and blessings that abound. Each one is welcome here. We know that there is much work to be done in this world. Injustice, greed, isolation, alienation all exist when we have

forgotten to be your people of peace. As we have spoken the names of people who are dear to us, seeking prayers for their needs, let us also remember to be faithfully working for you in all that we do. Help us give to you our complete faithfulness. Teach us to be good citizens of your kingdom here on earth. Be with us as we go from this place. For we ask this in Jesus' Name who taught us to pray saying...

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,
 baptising 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

Go from this place with the confidence that you are God's beloved children.
We go, to labor in love with all we meet.
Go out into the world with steadfast hope and joyous trust.

We go, remembering our faithful God who goes before us.

In God's love, the Spirit's power, and the peace of Christ, go now in peace.

CHORAL AMEN

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