

HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, AUGUST 30th, 2020

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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Paris: St. Pauls

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you". Psalm 32:8

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: There are so many directions in which we are being pulled.

P: We struggle and hope that we have chosen the right way.

L: Some of these paths are falsely enticing and others dangerous.

P: How can we know what to do?

L: Look to Jesus! He will be your guide and Holy Spirit will guard your life.

P: I am going to follow Jesus. He is the example of compassion, healing and hope.

OPENING CHORUS: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

1. I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back.

2. Tho' none go with me, I still will follow,
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,
Tho' none go with me, I still will follow;
No turning back, no turning back.

3. My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus;
No turning back, No turning back.

4. The world behind me, the cross before me,
The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of summer sunshine and autumn harvest, be with us this day as we gather to encounter your word and your way for us. Remind us that we can place our trust in your eternal love. Enable us to be more effective in our witness to that love by word and deed. Guide our steps and pick us up when we falter. Dust us off and place us on the pathways of grace and service. These things we pray in Jesus' name. AMEN.

CHILDREN'S TIME – GOD'S ROAD MAP

I want you to think about a time when you got lost on the road. Maybe before GPS. Or even when your parents got lost on road. Put aside the frustration or the driver or the navigator or the passengers and think about this....

What did you discover? Were the roads straight or did you go on winding roads? Did you discover things that you had never seen before. Did you find a quaint little restaurant or a place to buy ice cream or a farmers Market? Was it a good experience?

OR

Did you have to stop and get the road map out? Did you have to double back and it seemed as though you were never going to get to the destination? Was everyone in the vehicle getting frustrated. Did you hear the words... "are we there yet?"

Life is like that. We are all on different roads or paths. Some of them are straight and others curvy. Some go forward and some twist and turn and seem to go backward. There are times when we are confused and frustrated and just want to get off the path and go our own way. But Jesus calls us to be faithful to the pathway and when we are faithful, we can learn many things and help many people. When we place our focus on the journey and the things, we can do to help others, we are following the way of Jesus. Jesus wants you to follow him. He loves you and will always be with you. So, path-walkers, journeyers, God is blessing you and preparing you for special roads of hope. That's great news! May God bless you always and keep you safe.

CHILDREN'S SONG

MORNING PRAYER

Surprising God, you have an uncomfortable habit of showing up where we least expect you: in a burning bush, in the face of an enemy, in a livestock feed trough, on a rough wooden cross. Turn our lives upside down with your radical love. Help us fully embrace your surprises, even as we revel in the joy of being fully embraced by your all-encompassing grace and mercy. We pray in the name of your most amazing surprise of all: your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Romans 12:9-21 NIV

Love in Action

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.^[a] Do not be conceited. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"^[b] says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."^[c] ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Matthew 16:21-28 NIV

Jesus Predicts His Death

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the

chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

MESSAGE: Your Path, My Path, Your Journey, My Journey.

One of the poems that has struck with me since high school is, Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," I begin with the beginning of the poem...

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the under growth. Then took the other as just as fair, but having perhaps the better claim because it was grassy and wanted wear, though as for that the passing there had worn them really about the same."

Most of us can identify with the traveler's dilemma. There are choices and differing directions placed before us many times in our lives. We stand at the junction where the roads split off and go in their own direction. In the beginning some of these roads seem too similar and we don't know what to do. We stand there trying to decide what we should do and then take our first step on the road which appealed to us, our choice.

Mr. Frost noted that we “looked down one of the roads as far as we could”, then perhaps seeing nothing that particularly called out to us, we ventured forth on the second road, not really knowing where it would lead. And the journey holds surprises for us... some broken pavement, some dirt, some mud, some filled with obstacles, some sandy, some grassy – on and on it goes, presenting differing outlooks, differing opportunities, differing lessons for us. A road of chance, a road of promise, a road of life.

For Jesus’ disciples, this must have been the way things were. They decided to follow Jesus. They had been living their lives as best they could, but something was missing – something was broken. Jesus called them to come and become those who would bring the words that would capture the hearts of broken and alienated people, of arrogant and uninterested societies. This would bring those words to us today! And the disciples followed, but not without encountering many hazards as well as opportunities to learn and serve.

What has it been like for you? Think about all the roads you have encountered and the decisions you have had to make. Most of you will feel pretty good about the decisions, believing them to be the right ones given all the information you had at hand at the time. And maybe there were decisions you wished you didn’t make, you wished you didn’t take that road. But, you have grown and learned from those decisions and have they made you a better person or have they?

I find that there were times in my life when I stood at the crossroad and wondered what I should do. Or have wondered what things would have been like if I had followed the other path. Made a different choice. Choices.....many choices seem to come to us.....little choices and monumental choices. What and whom should we follow? If left to our own devices, we wander helplessly around in circles. Jesus set his foot on the path – he kept his focus. One night he prayed to let things be different “Let this cup pass from me, O Lord”, and quickly followed it with a statement of commitment to the very end “Nevertheless, not my will but your will be done.” Peter, hearing Jesus’ statement about going to Jerusalem where he would suffer at the hands of the religious and secular authorities, tried to intervene, claiming that those things could not happen. Peter became an obstacle. He was frightened and he could

see only the danger. He was human. Jesus’s knew the path he had to walk... he said get behind me Satan to Peter, not to call Peter Satan but to say to him, do not let the world lead in a different path. God had set the path for Jesus... Jesus followed. God has set a path for each of his disciples then and Jesus calls us to follow him now. To be willing to place our trust in him – to take up the cross, face forward and focus on the glorious goal. Can you let go of the path you might be on? Can you put your trust in Jesus? Can you walk on the road less travelled? Can you take a step on the pathway of hope and salvation? It is your choice – it is always your choice. The last verse...

“I shall be telling this with a sigh, somewhere ages and ages hence. Two roads diverged in a wood and I.....I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”
God bless you all on your journeys. AMEN

HYMN: #595 We are Pilgrims
We are pilgrims on the journey
We are brothers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

Sister let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let me be your servant too

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
 We shall find such harmony
 Born to all we've known together
 Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother let me be your servant
 Let me be as Christ to you
 Pray that I might have the grace
 To let me be your servant too.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord of hope, we come to you this day. We have followed many paths and the one of hope leads to this doorway. Enter our hearts this day as we share our joys and concerns in prayer and in the actions and service that follows. We lift before you situations and people who are in need of your healing mercies and your peace. Help us to be those who would bring this peace to them.

As our lives have encountered difficulties and concerns, so, too, are we blessed with great joys. We celebrate these moments of happiness and wonder with each other, as we pray we lift up joys and celebrations of those around us and story of good news and hope we have heard this week.

Lord, bless all those whom we have named before you in our hearts and with our voices. Touch each life with the blessings and peace and mercy. Give us strength and empower us for the ministries of reconciliation, for it is in your name that we pray. AMEN.

LORDS' PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Verse 1

I am weak, but Thou art strong
 Jesus, keep me from all wrong
 I'll be satisfied as long as I walk
 Dear Lord, close to Thee

Chorus

**Just a closer walk with Thee
 Grant it, Jesus, is my plea
 Daily walkin' close to Thee
 Let it be, dear Lord, let it be**

Verse 2

Through this world of toils and snares
 If I falter, Lord, who cares?
 Who with me my burden shares?
 None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee. **Chorus**

Verse 3

When my feeble life is o'er
 And time for me will be no more
 Guide me gently, safely o'er
 To Thy kingdom, dear Lord, to Thy shore. **Chorus**

SENDING FORTH

Jesus has called you and placed his trust in you. Go into this world, bearing the words of hope and healing. Reach out to others in compassion. For it is Jesus' name, that you are sent out to serve. AMEN.

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Next Sunday we will finally be gathering together as a congregation! Worship times will be regular; 9:30am at Springvale and 11am at Hagersville. Please wear a face mask and enter through the front doors of the church. If you are unable to or choose not to attend, we will still be posting the services to our website.
 We look forward to seeing you!