

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, JULY 5th, 2020**

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

Jerseyville

'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.'
Paraphrase of Matthew 11: 28-30

CALL TO WORSHIP

Has it been a rough week for you? Do you feel burdened and exhausted? Or worried or scared?

This is supposed to be a season of relaxation, but our spirits feel dragged down with cares and concerns.

Bring your cares to the Lord. Pause in the moment of this worship and open your hearts to God who listens to us and heals our spirits.

OPENING HYMN: #296 This Is God's Wondrous World

1 This is God's wondrous world,
and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world;
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.

2

2 This is God's wondrous world:
the birds their carols raise;
the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.

3 This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad!

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of love and mercy, we come to you this day, at the beginning of the summer season. This should be a time of relaxation and restoration, but our spirits still carry the burdens and concerns of this very different year. Strengthen us, journey with us each day, whatever we face, as we come into worship with you this morning. We offer all of this and our prayers to you in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

CHILDREN STORY

CHILDREN'S SONG

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Matthew 11:16-19

New International Version

¹⁶“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

¹⁷“‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

Matthew 11:25-30

The Father Revealed in the Son

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MESSAGE- Lighten Up

Are you stretched too thin? Do you have too many irons in the fire? Is your candle burning at both ends? Canadians are a stressed out, frazzled, frizzled, and in many cases we are a burned out society. We are a society of workaholics. We work from sun up until way past sundown. Some of us don’t feel productive until we are juggling 20 things at once. Our hard working ways have served us well in the past century. It helped our nation while fighting in the World Wars and out of a Great Depression a, but with the 1950s new technology was supposed to give us a life of ease and comfort.

If you watch cartoons from those days you will find an imaginative world filled with time and work saving gadgets and gizmos. Dinner would be prepared with a push of a button. Cars would drive themselves and computers would be the wave of the future. In the 60’s the government predicted that advances in technology would radically change how many hours a week people worked. They forecasted that the average Canadian would be working 22 hours a week within 20 years. “The great challenge,” the experts said, “would be figuring out what to

do with all the excess time.” Over 50 years later, after major advances in technology, life hasn’t slowed down. Technology was supposed to make our lives easier and simpler, but they have only made them more complex and busier. Because of cell phones, tablets, laptops, and digital watches people can’t escape from work even when they are at home and the sad thing is that a lot of us like it. We want to be connected 24/7/365. We have the mentality that busyness is a good thing, it means that we are pulling our weight and we are a productive member of society. Rest and relaxation is considered weakness and laziness. If you sit around and do nothing then sometimes you are judged. We are a country without Sabbath, without rest. We work, work, work until the day we die. Even those of you who are retired have told me that you work more now than you did when you were in the workforce. Although this workaholic attitude has its benefits, it leads to a lot of serious problems. These include heart disease, stroke, poor eating habits, headaches, body aches and other personal health problems. It also causes broken relationships with spouses and children. Do you remember the song Cats in the Cradle? The song is about a father working and working with no time for his son and at the end when the father finally had time he realized that his son had become just like him with no time for anything but work. This song is a reality for a lot of people. People work so hard to take care of their families they miss out on the simple things in life.

We weigh ourselves down with a heavy burden and sometimes it is heavy enough to break us. If you find yourself in that kind of position this morning, Jesus has an invitation for you. “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The yoke of today is different than the one in first century Judea. In those days the yoke was an unfair interpretation of the law. The religious leaders place the law in every aspect of the people’s lives and it was so complex and difficult to adhere to that almost no one could possibly follow it. The leaders themselves did not follow it; they did not practice what they preached. The people became so burdened by the laws of their religion that worshipping God became a requirement instead of a joy.

Jesus invited the people to take of the unfair teachings of the religious leaders and to take on his yoke which is much lighter and easier. It is a yoke of love and peace. It is a teaching that leads to new life and improvement not just of self, but also of community. Jesus' focus was on the love and grace of God not to a strict adherence to the law. Jesus believed in the spirit of the law which was to love God and neighbour. Just as he invited the people then to a better life so he invites us as well. Come and leave your burdens here and take on my yoke which is easier. We must understand that this is not a removal of burdens. We do not drop our burdens and go home empty handed because Jesus knows that in time we will pick up a whole new set of burdens and end up right where we started. Instead Jesus calls for a burdens exchange, drop what you have and take on my yoke which is easier and lighter. Drop your load of worry, overwork, selfishness, greed, anger, and despair and take on the light load of peace, hope, and love. Following Jesus is not a piece of cake there are requirements and there must be changes made. However, the load that Jesus asks us to carry leads to much better things, a life of love, family, community, selflessness, and rest. Jesus is inviting us to come and exchange our heavy load for one that is far easier and yet leads to greater rewards in this life and in the next, because... "Life goes by pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Jesus invites us to take some time away from ourselves and focused on God and God's amazing creation. Jesus invites us to rest from our hectic schedules and to take a Sabbath.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." That is the invitation that we have from Jesus this morning. Exchange your burdens and your yoke for one that is lighter and easier and for one that reaps a truly bountiful reward. The invitation is made will you answer it?

HYMN #560 O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee

1 O Master, let me walk with thee
in lowly paths of service free;
teach me thy secret, help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

2 Help me the slow of heart to move
with some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.

3 Teach me thy patience; still with thee,
in closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sure and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

4 in hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broadening way,
in peace that only thou canst give,
with thee, O Master, let me live.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Lord of the seasons and of all life, we come to you this day with so many cares and concerns on our lives. We have planned for the summer months as times of relaxation and refreshment. It is so different this year. We need to take some time to stop, to focus on your healing love, to let go of all those things that weigh us down. Heal and restore us, O Lord. Help us be the church in times of pandemic as well as in times of work and stress. As we have brought our cares to you in our prayers, let us bring our lives to your healing mercies. Strengthen and heal us, Lord. Get us gently ready for all the joyful opportunities that stretch before us. We ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #424 May the God of Hope Go with Us

1 May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace,
singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

- 2 May the God of healing free the earth from fear, freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued. May the God of love keep our commitment clear to a world restored, to human life renewed. R

BENEDICTION

God, who has given you rest and peace, will go with you as you leave this place. Feel the healing love of God in your life. Bring the good news of God's love to all whom you meet. Go in peace. AMEN.

POSTLUDE

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