

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &  
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

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

Nanticoke

*God cares for us, and we are called to show God's love by caring for  
one another! As Jesus shows us, the requirements are very simple: Love  
God fully, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves.*

***Offering Prayer***

As you have poured your healing love into our lives, O God, we now  
offer these gifts to you. Let them be used in ministries of peace and  
justice through the work of this church in your world. AMEN.

**PRELUDE & WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATION**

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

God, we know you are with us.

**From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.**

You have showered your love upon all generations,  
since the beginning of time.

**The love of Jesus Christ shines in our lives.**

Guide us now through this time of worship,

**From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.**

May our worship strengthen and empower us  
to share the gospel and to proclaim the good news with boldness.

**The love of Jesus Christ is at work in the world!**

**OPENING HYMN: #409 Morning has Broken**

- 1 Morning has broken like the first morning,  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!
- 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.
- 3 Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

**OPENING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, you command us to remember that the first commandment is  
to love God with all that we are, our hearts, souls, minds and spirits. The  
second is equal to this in that this love is to be extended to our  
neighbors. We are to love as we wish to be loved. Help us to adopt these  
commandments so that when we encounter times of difficulty, we are  
again reminded of your everlasting love for us. AMEN.

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

**CHILDREN'S VIDEO**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Everlasting God, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.  
Since the creation of the world, you have nurtured us with your love.  
And yet we shamefully acknowledge that we do not always share your  
love with others. We are selective about who we choose as neighbors. . .  
only those who are clean, who look like us, who talk right, who seem  
safe. Loving God, teach us to love you more fully. For in loving you,  
our lives will show love to all others, even as your love encompasses all  
your creation, in all generations. We pray in the name of your greatest  
gift of love, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

New Revised Standard Version

### **Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica**

**2** You yourselves know, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> that our coming to you was not in vain, **2** but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. **3** For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. **5** As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; **6** nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, **7** though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle<sup>[b]</sup> among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. **8** So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Matthew 22:34-46

New Revised Standard Version

### **The Greatest Commandment**

**34** When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, **35** and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" **37** He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

### **The Question about David's Son**

**41** Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: **42** "What do you think of the Messiah?<sup>[a]</sup> Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." **43** He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit<sup>[b]</sup> calls him Lord, saying, **44** 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'?"

**45** If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" **46** No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

### **MESSAGE**

Matthew 22:34-46 The Greatest Commandment of All

"Give it to me in a nutshell" an old saying which means, Tell me what I need to know, but keep it short. Don't bother me with unnecessary detail. Don't bore me with a long, technical explanation. Just get to the bottom line.

Some of us...maybe most of us like things short and sweet I used to enjoy going to presbytery to see everyone but... I did not enjoy the long meeting where we would go over and over the same issue and never come to a conclusion and it would be tabled until the next meeting.

Give it to me in a nutshell!

That's what the lawyer said to Jesus. At least that is what he meant.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

This man was not a lawyer as we know lawyers today he was a religious scholar. The law was Jewish Torah law Old Testament commandments. There were 613 such laws. You are familiar with some of them. Thou shalt not steal. They shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Others are less familiar. One law, for example, forbade boiling a calf in its mother's milk. Observant Jews today still take care not to mix meat and milk. Many observant families have one set of dishes for meat and another set for dairy products.

So, when the lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" he was asking about Torah law, religious commandments.

Matthew tells us that this lawyer asked Jesus this question to test him...tempting him, trying to trip him up. If he can get Jesus to pronounce one law which he felt was most important, this lawyer is sure that he can twist things to embarrass Jesus, to discredit him. That was what he intends to do.

Jesus knows what was going on. He understands that this man is his enemy. He understands that he is treading on dangerous ground. But Jesus didn't let it faze him. He didn't hesitate for a moment. He answered:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” Both commandments are related and are of equal importance. They are the basics of Christianity.

The employees of nursing homes are a good example of the fact that loving others comes from the knowledge that each person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. They treat the residents with the dignity and respect that the residents deserve. They show their love by doing their jobs to the best of their ability, and by doing so; they show the love they have for the residents. They try to help their neighbours, and by doing so, they are doing what God wants them to do. This love involves denying themselves for the good of others. People don’t care how much we know, until they know how much we care.

But what if loving our neighbour means that we need to listen to the world and be engaged with it? There was a time when neighbours helped each other out by having building bees where neighbours came together to build barns or houses. Other times they came together to help each other with the harvest or to care for sick neighbours or elderly parents. Those are examples of loving people as God loved us. The way God knows that we love him is by how we treat people. Whenever we demonstrate kindness, patience or gentleness, we see the Lord’s love at work

through us, especially when the other person has been unkind and doesn’t deserve such pleasant treatment. Our relationships with others demand priority over things that won’t last or won’t matter in a few years. If we love God and love people, we will naturally obey the rest of the Commandments. That’s only natural. After all, the two Great Commandments are an example of the Golden Rule. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”

It is through our faith we are called to love God — and to love others as God has already loved us. That is a tall order. The church, this church, by virtue of claiming to be Christian is called to make love the core value and also demonstrate that love in our attitudes and actions to others. BUT, It is not easy! We will be ridiculed for this and insulted by some people. This is truly our challenge – to live the love of God. It is far too easy to shout angry words and treat others who are different from

us with condescension. In the response of Jesus to the questions of the authorities, are we, ourselves, trapped? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And you shall love your neighbor, seeking pathways of peace. Don’t be fooled. This requires great patience, love and compromise. It requires dedication even in the face of ridicule. It’s not the easy way out. It is the way of peace. It is the basis of our obedience to God. It shows that our love for God is number one in our lives. Love for God and love for all of those who are made in his image form the backbone of everything God says to us in his word. In the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 13:10, “Love is the fulfillment of the law”.

#### **HYMN: #642 Be Thou My Vision**

- 1 Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;  
naught be all else to me save that thou art,  
thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;  
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;  
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 5 Great God of heaven, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

In the midst of frightening times when words of war soar to the heavens and anger seems to be the way to treat others and to respond to difficulty, be with us, merciful God. We do not want to live in these hideous ways. We seek your peace and healing love. Our hearts are filled with concern for our families and friends as well as those in far off lands who face great times of difficulties, illness, mourning. We share the names of those for whom we seek prayers knowing that you hear our cries and respond in love. Let us pray silently for a minute then offer the names of these dear ones. [Silent Prayer].

Yet in the midst of darkness your light of joy abounds within us as we share those moments which have caused us to rejoice in delight and love. Let us pray silently for a minute and then offer instances of joy that we have encountered this week.

*[Silent prayer.]*

Lord of hope and peace, we have brought before you the names of dear ones on our hearts. Some of the names have been uttered out loud in the congregation; others are whispered in our hearts. Be with all of us, O Lord. Heal our wounds. Direct our lives in pathways of peace. These things we offer in Jesus' name. AMEN.

### LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

### SENDING FORTH

God's love is sending us forth into the world in ministries of peace and justice. We have received forgiveness and been showered with God's gracious love. Go in peace, bringing hope to this hurting and angry world. AMEN.

### CHORAL AMEN

### POSTLUDE

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