

Southminster United Church, Ottawa, Ontario

February 8, 2026

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Toller

Director of Music: Sarah Westbrook

Readers: Sandra Black

Prelude: *Adagio Cantabile* - R. Nathaniel Dett (October 11, 1882 – October 2, 1943)
Canadian-American composer, organist, pianist, choral director, and music professor.

Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the importance of the land, which we call home.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have occupied and cared for this land.

We seek to live with respect and gratitude on this land.

We acknowledge the Anishinaabe Algonquin people on whose traditional and unceded land Southminster United Church is built.

We seek to live with respect and gratitude on this land.

We acknowledge the harm and mistakes of the past in our relations with Indigenous people.

We seek to live with respect and gratitude on this land.

We reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships and our understanding of all Indigenous people and their cultures.

We seek to live with respect and gratitude on this land.

Lighting of the Candles

We light the Christ candle to remind us of Christ's presence among us. May this flame remind us we are loved and are not alone.

We light the Affirming candle to remind us that everyone is welcome here. We are all God's children and our community includes people of all cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities. God loves all of us.

Call to Worship

What does it mean to be salt and light to the world?

Salt preserves.

Light keeps things from being hidden.

What does it mean to be salt and light to the world?

To hold on to what is good.

To hold on to what is right.
To hold on to what is just.
To shine in the back rooms of oppression.
To shine in the prisons of fear.
To shine in places that have no hope.

This is salt and light to the world.

This is Christ's people—

salt and light—

hope and wonder—

in and with the world!

As salt and light,
as hope and wonder,
let us worship God!

Alleluia!

Richard Bott, Grace U.C., Burlington, Ont.

Opening Prayer

God of abundance and generosity, you call us to celebrate your love each and every day,
so love will overcome divisions and build a bridge to unity.

You call us to lift our hearts in prayer and praise and to raise our spirits in holy song.
Lift our worship to greater heights this day.

Make our prayers deep enough to plumb the depths of our souls
and bring us to your throne of overflowing grace. Amen.

Beth W Johnston, Bridging Waters P.C., Nipawin, Sask.

Opening Hymn: Over My Head (MV 88)

Refrain:

Over my head, I hear music in the air. (3X)
There must be a God somewhere.

When the storms of life are ragin'
Ooh, I hear music in the air.

When the storms of life are ragin'
Ooh, I hear music in the air. Ooh

When the storms of life are ragin'
I hear music in the air.
There must be a God somewhere.

Words and music: African-American spiritual; French trans. Denise Soulodre, 2006. Arrangement: Stephen Lee, 2006. French translation copyright © 2006 Denise Soulodre. Used by permission. Arrangement copyright © 2006 Professional Music Services. Used by permission.

Passing of the Peace/ Greeting Time

Prayer of Confession

Dear God, we come to you today, though many of us are tired and discouraged.

Give us relief from our distress.

Lord, we ask for your guidance and intervention,

so that we may be reconciled and made new.

We put our trust in you. You know our innermost thoughts and aspirations.

We ask you to shine your face upon us and fill our hearts with joy.

Let us put our troubles aside.

We lay our burdens to rest, safely held in your care. Amen.

Aaron Palmer, St Paul's U.C., New Liskeard, Ont.

Words of Assurance

Family of faith,

God is always here for us. God will never turn us away. Let us release any tensions or stress we may be carrying, and make room for our Maker.

Prayer of Illumination

Creator, please open our hearts and minds to receiving your wisdom today.

Lectionary Readings

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have

received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Psalm 112 (VU p. 834)

Refrain:



The just shall trust in God a - lone.

Blessed are those who fear God,
who greatly delight in God's commandments.

Their descendants will be mighty in the land,
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

**Riches and plenty shall be in their house,
their righteousness enduring forever.**

They are a light in the darkness for the upright,
being gracious, compassionate and just.

**It goes well with those who lend generously,
who conduct their affairs with justice. Refrain**

For the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be kept in remembrance for ever.

**They will not live in fear of bad news;
with resolute heart they trust in God.**

Their heart is steady, they do not fear;
in the end they will see their enemies' downfall.

**They distribute freely to the poor,
their righteousness enduring forever;
they will hold up their heads in honour. Refrain**

Samuel Webbe (the elder) 1782

Matthew 5:13-20

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

Anthem: Ave verum corpus - Mozart

Reflection: Moving towards Wisdom

Hymn: I am the Light of the World (VU 87)

Refrain:

**"I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!"
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found
their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun: *Refrain***

**To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth
and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! *Refrain***

**To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere! *Refrain***

**To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! *Refrain***

Words: Jim Strathdee 1967. Music: Jim Strathdee 1967. Words and music copyright © 1969 Desert Flower Music.

Mission and Service Story: Paul Mullin

Invitation of Offering

We make our offering as a way of showing our commitment to the light that is needed in our communities and in the world around us. Please give as you are able. We recognize that many people give their skills and talents, and that some people contribute online. Let us now pass the offering plate around.

Presentation of the Offering: Ev'ry Day is a Day of Thanksgiving (MV 185)

**Ev'ry day is a day of thanksgiving, God,
you've been so good to me.
Ev'ry day you're blessing me.
Ev'ry day is a day of thanksgiving.
I will glorify you, O my Lord, today! *Repeat***

**You keep blessing me, blessing me, blessing me.
You opened the door that I might see,
you're blessing me.
And you keep blessing me, blessing me, blessing me.
I will glorify you, O my Lord, today!**

*A lively gospel song from the African-American tradition. Words and music: Leonard Burks.
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Offering Prayer

As followers of Jesus, we give you this offering, O God. We trust the talents and gifts we contribute this week will be the salt that helps more light emerge from darkness.

Prayers of the People

O God of Justice, God of Mercy,
we come to you with hearts weighed down by stories we wish were not true.
We lift up every soul who has faced the sting of prejudice,
every child who wonders why they are left out,
every parent who carries the burden of explaining a world not yet ready for love.
We pray for every person whose skin, language, or identity

has made them a target of fear, of exclusion, of hate.
We pray for the streets, the schools, the homes, the nations
where racism hides in shadowed corners and in whispered words,
where injustice is normalized and love is challenged.

O God, break the chains of hatred that bind us,
tear down walls of fear and indifference.

Let rivers of your justice flow through our cities,
washing away centuries of lies, lifting every soul to dignity.

We pray for the nations of the world,
for every land that has ignored injustice,
for every government, every institution, every home, every heart
that has tolerated prejudice instead of challenging it.

O God, let your Spirit ignite in us a fire that cannot sleep,
a fire that will call out racism wherever it hides,
and remind us that we are all your children,
all beloved, all worthy of love, dignity, and freedom.

Do not let us leave this place unchanged, O Lord.

Let us rise as your body in a hurting world.

Let us be bold, let us be brave, let us be love in action,
until every child can live freely, every voice is heard, every heart is free,
and your kingdom of justice and peace is made clear in our midst.

Amen.

Daniel Addai Fobi, originally published for 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism in 2025

Prayers for Joys and Concerns - What prayers of gratitude or concern would you like to request?

We pray the prayer you taught us to pray, saying. . .

The Lord's Prayer

Our Mother and Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Announcements

Closing Hymn: "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me" (VU 575)

I'm gonna live so God can use
me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use
me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna pray so God can use
me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Words: African-American spiritual. Music: African-American spiritual; arr. Wendell Whalum. Arrangement copyright © 1987 Estate of Wendell Whalum.

Sing Amen (Asithi: Amen) VU 431

Sing amen: Amen, we praise your name, O God.
Sing amen: Amen, we praise your name, O God.
Sing amen: Amen, amen, amen, amen,
amen, we praise your name, O God.

Words: S. C. Molefe 1977. Music: S. C. Molefe 1977; arr. Dave Dargie 1977. Words and music copyright © 1991 Lumko Institute.

Benediction and Sending Forth

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

May this light guide our lives, always.

Jesus calls us to be the salt of the earth.

May we bring flavour to the lives of all those we encounter.

Postlude: Rondo from *Sonata and Rondo in C Major* - Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George

Coffee Time

Scripture readings are from the New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition) of the Bible.

Coffee Host: Paul Mullin
Ushers/Counters: Heather Macfaden/ Sandra Black

As the people of Southminster United Church, we affirm and actively support the life experience of all. All persons are invited to take part in every aspect of church life including membership, leadership, celebration of life passages and marriage. We are committed to following Jesus' example as we embrace people of all ages, racialized groups, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, ethnic origins, economic circumstances and differing abilities and challenges in the ministry and life of Southminster United Church.



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Make a DONATION

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