

Local, National and Global Outreach Committee Newsletter

**Southminster United Church
November 2025**



Introduction

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.”
(Matthew 5:9)

As the chill of November settles in and poppies bloom on our coats, we pause to remember those who gave their lives in the pursuit of peace. Remembrance Day invites us to not only honour the past, but to renew our commitment to the peace Christ calls us to embody — a peace that reaches from our homes to all nations. In a world divided by politics, inequality, and fear, the Church has a sacred mission: to be a community of reconciliation. Peace is not the absence of conflict — it is the active presence of Christ’s love in a broken world. Let us remember, this November and always, that we are not just recipients of peace, but ambassadors of it.

Local

Peace often begins with the smallest acts. In our own community, opportunities abound to build bridges — across generations, backgrounds, and even small misunderstandings. So, this month, consider:

- Participating in local Remembrance Day ceremonies to pray for families affected by war and loss; and/or,
- Hosting a community prayer service, or conversation circle, focused on healing divisions and listening well to one another.

From late October through to November 11th, there is a light projection (**“Virtual Poppy Drop”**) on the Peace Tower and Centre Block, with thousands of poppies representing the fallen.

In Ottawa, there are three main Remembrance Day services:

1. National War Memorial. This event starts at approximately 10:30 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. at the Memorial. It includes the arrival of dignitaries, laying of wreaths, two minutes of silence right at 11:00 a.m., and often a fly-past by military aircraft.
2. The National Military Cemetery, located on the Beechwood Cemetery grounds, hosts a ceremony, typically starting around 10:45 a.m.
3. The Canadian War Museum features special programming on November 11th, including, in many cases, free admission on Remembrance Day.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since, as members of one body, you were called to peace.”
(Colossians 3:15)

National

The roots of Canada's role in peacekeeping go back to 1956, during the Suez Canal Crisis. At that time, global tensions were dangerously high: Britain, France, and Israel had invaded Egypt; the world was on the brink of another large-scale war.

Lester B. Pearson, then Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, proposed a bold idea: to create an international force for peacekeeping which would separate the warring sides and allow diplomacy to work. Such was the origin of the United Nations.

The plan succeeded and a new kind of armed, yet neutral, peacekeeping mission was born. Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his brilliant plan.

In the decades that followed, Canada became a leading contributor to U.N. peacekeeping missions, sending troops, observers, medical teams, and logistics experts to serve in Cyprus, Congo, the Balkans, Rwanda, Haiti, Ghana, and many other regions where civilians were caught in conflict. Thus, the blue beret of the U.N. peacekeeper became a symbol of Canada's compassion, diplomacy, and moral leadership.

I am proud to say that my own Father was involved in this effort. As an Officer at National Defence Headquarters, in a Sector called "Planning Careers and Postings", it was his responsibility to interview and then choose the appropriate Army member for each of these locations. As a way of thanking him personally, the Government of Ghana invited him to the opening of their very first Parliament.

Although Canada's military focus shifted somewhat in the 2000s (Afghanistan), we still support peace operations, training, and humanitarian efforts through the U.N. and other coalitions. Recent Canadian missions include support for peacekeeping in Mali, Congo and Haiti, as well as training programs to help other countries develop their own peacekeeping capacity. Today, Canada's role continues, not only through soldiers, but also through diplomats, aid workers, and reconciliation initiatives at home and abroad.

Global

Even as we pray for peace at home, we are part of a global family of believers who long for healing and safety. Around the world, wars, displacement, and persecution weigh heavily on millions.

Today, we should also take the time to pray for peace in all the areas of conflict in this world – and there are many, too many. The United Church of Canada has offered up a prayer for Israel and Palestine. Much of this prayer can be repurposed to pray for other areas of conflict, such as Ukraine, Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Yemen, India/Pakistan, Cambodia and Afghanistan.

“God, you are our hope, we shall not let go.

You help us seek peace, justice, hope, and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis.

You lead us towards courageous actions with United Church partners Middle East Council of Churches, Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees, Defense for Children International – Palestine, Sabeel, and Kairos Palestine.

We faithfully journey to places of unrest, instability, and fear, to advocate for the basic human rights of all people,

Support the peace-builders who are actively resisting the dehumanizing forces of violence, and,

Better proclaim the gospel of peace for your sake.

Even though there is uncertainty, indifference, and opposition,

Grant us the strength to continually seek an end to the occupation,

So that Israelis and Palestinians can create a better future for themselves.

Even as we dream of a time when Israel/Palestine will be a symbol of hope, peace, and reconciliation,

Help us to be mindfully aware of the volatile present.

Draw close to the multitude of injured and grieving people in the Holy Land;

Gather up the hopeless, and abide with the physically and emotionally oppressed;

May your presence and your kingdom comfort our siblings in their suffering.

God, prepare tables of dialogue and opportunities for truth-telling around us.

Open the hearts of hurting people so that they may witness small signs of hope.

Surely, with your help, we will continue to seek justice and resist evil,

All the days of our lives,

Until all are able to live abundantly.

Amen”

Mission and Service

In 2024, 16% of Mission & Service funds supported projects overseas. Here are a few facts about these projects:

“The United Church of Canada has Mission & Service global partners in three global regions: **Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.** The church is also in formal relationship with seven global ecumenical partner organizations with global mandates and membership. Global partners fall into three categories:

- Denominational and Ecclesial;
- Development Organizations and Social Movements; and,
- Ecumenical Partnerships (Councils of Churches, Regional Ecumenical Organizations).

Africa and Middle Eastern Mission & Service Global Partners (25 partners in 8 countries)

In Africa and the Middle East, the United Church works with Mission & Service partners on urgent issues affecting people's daily lives. Priorities are: sustainable livelihoods, community access to food and markets, and the right of communities to determine what food to grow locally and how, as well as access to land and safe water in the context of land grabbing, issues of resource extraction, such as mining, and working for justice and peace.

Asia Mission & Service Global Partners (24 partners in 8 countries)

In Asia, the United Church works with Mission & Service partners who are identifying and addressing human rights abuses wherever they occur, as part of building a world of justice for all. Critical issues for the region include peace building and upholding the rights of communities to healthy environments in the context of resource extraction projects, such as mining. The work of Mission & Service partners includes sustainable community development and addressing food security. The United Church also supports Mission & Service partners responding to humanitarian crises.

Latin American and Caribbean Mission & Service Partners (19 partners in 7 countries)

In the Caribbean and Latin America, the United Church works with Mission & Service partners to secure community access to food and sustainable practices, to provide education for young children and adults, and to build and sustain safe water supplies. Partners also work to promote respect for human rights, including women's and Indigenous peoples' rights, as well as the right to a healthy environment in the context of resource extraction projects, such as mining. The United Church also supports Mission & Service partner work responding to humanitarian crises and, with others, advocates for strong development and aid policies that support people and communities in crisis.” *

More on individual projects next time.

If you have suggestions for items that might be included in this ongoing monthly newsletter, please send your ideas to: ***LNGO@southminsterunitedchurch.com***

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