

Southminster United Church, Ottawa, Ontario

April 26, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Toller

Director of Music: Sarah Westbrook

Reader : Nancy Watters

Prelude: To A Wild Rose by Edward MacDowell

Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

We worship on the unceded and unsundered land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. They have cared for this land where we live for millenia.

Indigenous people help remind us that nature is not a resource to exploit but a system upon which everything else depends. Canada has committed to conserving 30% of our land by 2030 as part of an international conservation effort. Indigenous people are involved in stewardship and comanagement of some of the newest protected areas in Canada. In the Outaouais region, across the Ottawa River, leaders from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation's natural resources and wildlife office are working with government and other organizations to find areas that need protection as part of the 30 x 30 initiative. Protecting land requires Indigenous leadership.

We are grateful for the Algonquin Anishinaabe and the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who continue to care for the land in the Ottawa area.

Lighting of the Candles

We light this candle to celebrate the light of Christ, the one who showed us how to live and care for everyone and everything in Creation.

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

Call to Worship

The simple act of gathering here is a form of pastoral care...

God is my shepherd, I shall not want.

When we greet each other with an honest "How are you doing?" that is also pastoral care...

God restores our souls.

When we hear the assurance of forgiveness...

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

The truth is that pastoral care is God's care...

We are the presence of God for each other.

We are the hearts that offer this care in God's name.

May we be cared for in this time of worship and may we learn more of what it means to be the Body of Christ to each other and to everyone we meet.

Let us worship God.

Peter Chynoweth, Cochrane, Alta.

Opening Prayer

Holy God, who delights in Creation and invites us into delight as well, you call us to gather on this day.

We ready our hearts and minds to lift our spirits in songs of praise and prayers of adoration.

Embraced by your spirit of wonder and delight, we come to worship you, our God. Amen.

Dora White, Minnedosa U.C., Minnedosa, Man.

Opening Hymn: Deep in our Hearts (MV 154)

**Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
deep in our hearts there is a common song;
deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.**

**Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
justice and peace in harmony.**

**Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
deep in our hearts there is a common current,
flowing to freedom like a stream.**

**Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
deep in our hearts there is a common song;
deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.**

Words: John Oldham, 1995. Music: Ron Klusmeier, 1996. Words copyright © 1995 by John Wesley Oldham. Used by permission. Music copyright © 1996 by Ron Klusmeier, www.musiklus.com. Used by permission.

Passing of the Peace/ Greeting Time

Prayer of Confession

In the late morning of a brightening season, we have come to sing and share and pray our gratitude and our joy, our hope and our excitement, our mindfulness and our peace.

We have also come with baggage: things we couldn't leave behind, but wish we could; things we wish we could have brought, but couldn't; feelings that are separating us from our own spirits and the spirit we find in this place; thoughts of what we could be doing instead; wonderings if this time will be up to the promise that is made.

Free us from this baggage, O God. Let it fall away that we can come into your presence without the weight of care, guilt, reluctance, and regret. Let us be open to the power of your challenge and the grace of your care as we rest and reflect in this silence...

(a time of silent prayer)

Amen.

Peter Chynoweth, Cochrane, Alta.

Affirmation of Faith

Friends,

Rest easy. You can put down your baggage, and breathe easily, here in this place where we find the Divine.

Take this time to renew and refill your spirit. You are loved.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy Love, open our hearts, our minds, and our lives to the living Spirit, that we may appreciate the wonders of your Creation. Amen.

Susan Girard, Riverview U.C., Atikokan, Ont.

Scripture Reading

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds[a] to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Psalm 23: The Lord's My Shepherd (VU p747 v.1,2,3,5)

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

Words: Scottish Psalter 1650. Music: Jessie Seymour Irvine 1872

Anthem: Cantate Domino by Pitoni

Reflection

Hymn: In Loving Partnership we Come (VU 603)

In loving partnership we come,
seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive;
we freely offer them to you.

We are the hands and feet of Christ,
serving by grace each other's need.
We dare to risk and sacrifice
with truthful word and faithful deed.

Loving community we seek;
your hope and strength within us move.
The poor and rich, the strong and weak
are brought together in your love.

In loving partnership, O God,
help us your future to proclaim.
Justice and peace be our desire,

we humbly pray in Jesus' name.

Words: Jim Strathdee 1982. Music: Jim Strathdee 1982. Words and music copyright © 1983 Desert Flower Music.

Invitation of Offering

Remembering that God's family is our family, let us reach out in love and gratitude as we present our offering for our community and for the world.

George Allan, Chatham, Ont.

Presentation of the Offering: Sing, Thanks to our God (TLUS 58)

Sing, Thanks to our God

Sing, Thanks to our God

Sing, Thanks to our God

Sing, Thanks to our God (Repeat)

Words and music: Amy Yea Kyong Lee, 2019. Words and music copyright © 2019 Amy Yea Kyong Lee. All rights reserved.

Offering Prayer

We reach out to our neighbours, nearby and around the world, as we present this offering, this return of the gifts you have given us.

Use this money, and use us in your service, that all may know your love, your compassion, your comfort, and your strength, in Jesus' name. Amen.

George Allan, Chatham, Ont.

Prayers of the People

Loving and Gracious God, we gather our prayers to you in the knowledge that, before we name them, you have already received our petitions. When we share them, you listen. But you also know that many of our prayers are too fragile to name, especially in the presence of others. We fear that in naming them, we are left too vulnerable, and so they remain unshared. And yet we know that even those prayers are received by you. It is like you are reading our hearts and we know, just know, that you understand even our unnamed yearnings. So now, in a time of silent prayer, we release them to you.

(a time of silent prayer)

On this spring day, we pray to you, Great Creator, for all of your creation. We pray for the birds, and we give thanks for their songs, for their lovely colours, and for their amusing ways that make a simple puddle into entertainment for them and us. Do they know they are good at what they do? Do they know they are your avian disciples?

We pray for the bees, who buzz from flower to flower, from plant to plant. Do they know how good they are at their job of pollination? Do they know they are your garden disciples?

We pray for the waters: the snow and the rains, the rivers and oceans, the lakes and ponds. Do these bodies of water know of the life they support and the life they give? Do they know that with a single drink, they sustain life? Do they know they are your life-giving disciples?

We pray for ourselves, in all of the variety we represent. Did you know that you were so creative, Loving One, when you crafted humanity in such variety and diversity? Did you recognize the imagination and ingenuity that you placed in us? Did you know that we would inherit your creative gifts and become artists like you? Did you know that you were creating us to be your disciples?

We pray to know you more fully, dear God. We pray that we might recognize all of the ways you have crafted disciples: in the sky, in the wind, in the water, and in all that we are. We pray that we might honour your creativity by sharing it and by being the disciples you have called and crafted us to be.

In all that we do, in all that we ask, in all that we dream, we do it in the name of Jesus, who gave us the words to say in the language of our hearts. Let us sing...

Heather McClure, Wesley U.C., Montreal, Que.

The Prayer of Jesus - VU 959

**Our Creator in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.**

Music copyright © 1986 G.I.A. Publications, Inc

Announcements

Closing Hymn: Draw the Circle Wide (MV 145)

Refrain:

**Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.**

**God the still-point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms. *Refrain***

**Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call. *Refrain***

**Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door. *Refrain***

Words and music: Gordon Light, 1994; arrangement: Michael Bloss, 1998; French translation: Denise Soulodre, 2006. Words and music copyright © 1994 Common Cup Company, www.commoncup.com. Used by permission. Arrangement copyright © 1998 Wood Lake Books

Benediction and Sending Forth

Go as a disciple who can't describe precisely what the resurrected Jesus is like,
but is willing to explore and discover his Way, day by day.

Bill Perry, Belleville, Ont.

Postlude: "Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum" from *Children's Corner* by Debussy

Coffee Time

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

<p>Coffee Host: Brian and Peggy Kinsley Ushers/Counters: Heather Macfaden/ Bernie Ducker</p>

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.



Southminster United Church / 15 Aylmer Ave. Ottawa ON K1S 3X1
613-730-6874 / admin@southminsterunitedchurch.com / southminsterunitedchurch.com

Make a DONATION

Please consider making a donation to assist the operation and mission of the church. This QR code will take you to the donation page on our website or visit southminsterunitedchurch.com/donate

