

**Covenanting Service for
Rev. Susan Toller
Southminster United Church
and
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
March 22, 2026**

Prelude: Aria from the Goldberg Variations BWV 988 by J.S. Bach

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

Sisters and brothers, as we gather in the welcome of God's love,
as we gather in the joy of our unity in Christ,
as we gather in the power of the Spirit,
let us listen for the voice of God.

**Let us worship God,
who has spoken and still speaks to those who attend to the
roar or the whisper of the Holy One.**

Prayer of Approach (Unison)

Loving God, we cry aloud this day for your guidance. You have called us into ministry as we follow the pathways that you set down for us. Grant us, we pray, strength to believe in your gospel and courage to trust in your Word. We pray that the ministry of this pastoral charge will be strengthened and nurtured by your Holy Spirit. All glory and honour are yours, God most high. Amen.

Hymn: Called by Earth and Sky MV 135

Passing of the Peace/ Greeting Time

Prayer of Confession *(Unison)*

**Gracious God, as people called to by your presence in the world,
we search our hearts, and ask your forgiveness:**

**For opportunities not taken
for care not given,
for sorrow not shared,
for joy not celebrated
for love not extended
for those failings we cannot speak aloud,**

(pause for a time of Silent Prayer)

**Gracious God, we seek your healing grace and ask forgiveness
in the name of Jesus. Amen**

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

As disciples, we no longer need to be burdened by guilt,
no longer need to be bound by fear.

Be renewed through God's forgiving love;
be open to Christ's presence in our life.

Thanks be to God.

God's Word Proclaimed

Prayer of Illumination

Loving God,

You speak to us in so many ways:

in the song of a bird,
in the babbling of a brook,
in the voices of our friends,
in the hug from Mom or Dad,
in the songs we sing,
and in the stories of the Bible.

Speak to us now through the reading of scripture.

Help us to hear your voice and follow the way of Jesus. Amen.

Hebrew Scriptures: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath[a] to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my

people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”

Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you.

O God, hear my cry!

Let your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy.

If you should keep account of what is done amiss,

O God, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,

therefore we will honour you.

I wait for you, God;

my soul waits, and in your word is my hope.

My soul waits for God

more than the watchers long for morning,

more than the watchers long for morning.

O Israel, wait in hope,

for with God there is love unfailing.

With God is great power to redeem,

to redeem you, Israel, from all your sins.

Ministry of Music: Way Maker (TLUS 8)

Meditation

Hymn: Psalm 42 - As the Deer Pants for the Water

The Act of Covenant

(At the invitation of the Presider, the new minister, a member of the Search Team, and the Regional Council PR Liaison come forward.)

Minister (Susan):

Affirmation of Faith - A New Creed

We are not alone

we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating

who has come in Jesus the word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence,

to live with respect in Creation,

to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope..

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Presentation of the Minister

Regional Council Liaison:

We are here to join into a covenantal relationship with God and between *Susan Toller, Southminster United Church*, and the wider United Church as represented by *Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council*. Although God's covenant with us never changes, our covenants with one another evolve as we seek ways to faithfully deepen our commitment to Jesus and live into our call to embody God's love in the world.

Member of Search Team:

After prayerful discernment, and the approval of *Southminster United Church*,, we present *Susan Toller*, who has been called to begin a new ministry in *Southminster United Church*. *We believe* that their skills and talents complement our faithful witness, ministry needs, and our community.

Disbanding of the Search Team

Regional Council Liaison:

Would the members of the Search Team please stand. Margaret Isaac, David Pringle, Janet Sutherland and John Temple. The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council and the members of this community of faith would like to express our gratitude to the Search Team for your faithful service over the past months. Your commitment of time, faith and discernment has brought us all to this significant time and place. Thank-you for the completion of this work.

Regional Council Liaison:

Susan Toller, you are here in response to the need of *Southminster United Church*, and by action of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council. We come together to mark this new relationship among you, the region and the pastoral charge. May the God who has given us the will to do these things give us the power and the grace to perform them.

Covenanting Action

Regional Council Liaison:

Susan, you are about to undertake a new ministry in this place. You, the members of this pastoral charge, are called to join her in worship, study, prayer and action. We, the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, will be responsible for the support and accountability of this ministry. Let us ask for God's grace as we covenant together this day. Let us pray:

Gracious God, by our baptism you have called us to Christ's ministry; pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we commit ourselves to work together for Christ's name. Amen

Promises of the New Minister

Regional Council Liaison (to new minister):

Do you, in the presence of this congregation, commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?

I do.

Will you accept the discipline of United Church of Canada?

I will, by the grace of God.

Together with the Regional Council and its members, will you be responsible for the support and accountability of the church's life?

I will, by the grace of God.

Will you accept the support and encouragement of this pastoral charge and this Region?

I will, by the grace of God.

Promises of the Pastoral Charge

(Members of the Pastoral Charge please stand in body or spirit)

Will you join with **Susan** in a ministry of worship, study, prayer and action within this pastoral charge and the world?

Yes, we will by the grace of God.

Will you support her as she serves among you in this ministry?

Yes, we will, by the grace of God.

Promises of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

(Members representing the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council please stand in body or spirit)

Will you, as representing all of the members of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, join with **Susan** and Southminster United Church in the ministry that is both theirs and ours?

Yes, we will by the grace of God.

Will you exercise support for this community of faith as it fulfills its work and witness through its living faith story?

Yes, we will by the grace of God

Support of Family and Friends

(Family and friends of the new minister are invited to stand in body or spirit)

As the family and friends of Susan Toller, do you offer your love and support to Susan as she begins this new ministry in this place?

We will.

Presentation of Symbols

(Congregation members who will present covenant symbols to the minister please come forward.)

Presider:

I invite congregation members to present Susan with symbols of her covenant relationship with Southminster.

Bible

Presenter:

Take this Bible. Be among us as one who teaches and proclaims the Word.

Amen.

Water

Presenter:

Be among us as one who baptizes with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Towel and Basin

Presenter:

Be among us as one who serves, as Christ served.

Amen.

Bread and Wine:

Presenter:

Be among us as one who breaks the bread and blesses the cup.

Amen.

Balloons

Presenter:

Be among us as one who celebrates the ministry to all ages; through laughter, joy and celebration of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Keys to the Church

Presenter:

We give you these keys as a symbol of your daily duties and the work of administration; and of this building, a witness to Christ's presence in this community.

Amen.

Presider:

Susan and Southminster United Church, let all these be signs of the ministry that is ours and yours in this place.

Amen.

Declaration of Covenant

Presider:

In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, I declare this covenant to be established.

Thanks be to God!

Let us all rejoice in the covenant we have made.

Amen.

Halle, Halle, Halle (VU 958)

Halle, halle, halle - lujah!

Halle, halle, halle - lujah!

Halle, halle, halle - lujah!

Hallelujah, Hallelujah (*repeat*)

Minister (Susan):

Offering

Offering collected today, will go to the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada for our mission to the whole people of God.

Presentation of the Offering: What Can I Do? (MV 191)

Prayer of Dedication (*Unison*)

Holy and Beloved God, We dedicate our lives and all that we have to the work of life, of love, of peace. Receive our gifts and lead us in wisdom and courage. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

For the world you have created, in all its complexity and wonder

We thank you, Lord

For life itself, for the challenge and the hope

We thank you, Lord

For your Spirit in our lives, spurring us, rebuking us, encouraging us.

We praise and thank you, Lord

For Jesus Christ, for the life he lived and the life he gives.

We praise you, Lord

For the people of God who have kept the faith, for the church in our time which stands in truth, for the church of our children, which is nurtured by grace.

We praise you God. We praise and thank you.

Let us pray for the church and its varied ministries throughout the world.

(Silence)

Let us pray for this ministry that we have together in this pastoral charge.

(Silence)

Let us pray for all the activities on this pastoral charge.

(Silence)

Let us pray for all those who are impoverished, sick, sad, lonely and disturbed in body, mind or spirit that the love of God may fill all our hearts.

(Silence)

Let us name before God any of whom we have a particular concern at this time.

(Silence)

Hear us, O God, in these prayers which we offer in Jesus saying the prayer that he taught his disciples together.

**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.
For ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn: My Love Colours Outside the Lines MV 138

Blessing and Sending Out

May the God who dances in creation,
Who embraces us with human love,
Who shakes our lives like thunder,
Bless us and our relationship
So we can fill the world with her justice.
Go out into the world in peace.
Love the Lord your God
With all your heart,
With all your soul,
With all your mind,
With all your strength,
And love your neighbour as yourself.

**Postlude: Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me - Farren, Robinson,
Thompson, Arr. by Mark Hayes**

***Everyone is welcome to join us for a reception downstairs
after the service***

President: Janet Nield

Director of Music: Sandra Westbrook

Guest Musician: Jeff Holdsworth (guitar)

Reader: Sandra Black

Regional Council Liaison: Jim Allen

Search Committee representative: David Pringle (Chair of Council)

Symbol Presenters: Margaret Isaac, John Temple, Edie Fraser, Brian Ure, Matthew Keough, David Pringle

Coffee Host: Bernie Ducker

Ushers/Counters: Heather Macfaden/ Paul Mullin

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.



Make a DONATION

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