

Southminster United Church, Ottawa, Ontario

May 3, 2026

Red Dress Day and Coming Home

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Toller

Director of Music: Sarah Westbrook

Reader: Nancy Watters

Prelude: The Homecoming by Hagood Hardy

Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we are worshipping and working on the unceded land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. We do so because we are committed to the path of reconciliation. And so today, Red Dress Day, we also pause to remember the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People. We pause to reflect on the history, the decisions, and the actions that have created the inequalities Indigenous people face today.

Red Dress day is a call to ReDress wrongs that was started by Indigenous artist Jaime Black. The empty dress was chosen to evoke the memory of the Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People who should be wearing them. The colour red symbolizes the lifeblood that connects us. Red evokes both vitality and violence. Red is also a calling back of the spirits of these women, girls and gender-diverse people so that their voices may be heard among us.

As we gather as Southminster United Church, we commit ourselves to the work of truth and reconciliation, pledging ourselves also to the work of equality and justice.

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

Loving, Gracious, and Surprising Spirit, gather us together. Unify our hearts, minds, and spirits. Send us reminders of your presence so that we never forget to notice. Come to us in a friendly voice that we will recognize. Sing us songs that we know well and others for which the melody is catchy and new. Open our spirits as we journey the well-trodden paths so that we may discover you again as if for the first time.

Your love gathers us together, helps relieve us in our grief, our guilt, and our loneliness. Help us to navigate the way forward and to listen for your call. Make this day and this gathering a new beginning for us. Amen.

Éric Hébert-Daly, Executive Minister, Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

Opening Prayer

Holy God, we come to you with hope and joy.

Yet we know all is not right in the world.

We particularly think of the harms and injustice afflicted upon Indigenous women, girls and two spirited ones.

Lift our hearts to all those who need to come home to you.

Help us lead the way,

Amen.

Opening Hymn: O Great Spirit (VU 239)

O Great Spirit, how I long to hear your name.

How I long to see your face.

A way hi ho a way hi ho a way hi hi ho.

O Great Spirit, how I long to touch your hands.

How I long to see your face.

A way hi ho a way hi ho a way hi hi ho.

Words: Doreen Clellamin 1993, adapt. 1994. Music: Doreen Clellamin 1993. Words and music adapted by Doreen Clellamin from a song by Nuxalk Young People. Copyright © 1991 Doreen Cellamin

Passing of the Peace/ Greeting Time

Prayer of Confession

God, you have provided us such a diversity of gifts in your Creation. We don't seem to understand there is a part of you in each person of each culture and every gender. Help us recognize the wisdom, life and love of Indigenous women and children, and all those on the gender spectrum. We need to see and respect how each of us is beloved and needed in our communities.

Affirmation of Faith

Family of Faith,

Every day is a new day. God calls us to reconcile with those in our families and church communities, as well as the vulnerable ones in our society. Creator loves us and will help us find our path home.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy Love, open our hearts, our minds, and our lives to the living Spirit, that we may receive the words of hope, joy and peace we need this morning. Amen.

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

Scripture Reading

John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know[d] my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Reflection: Red Dress Day - Coming Home

Hymn: When Painful Mem’ries (MV 74)

**When painful mem’ries haunt each day
and dreams disturb the night,
when life is washed with shades of grey
and phantoms fill our sight,
Christ, stay beside us
and embrace the child who dwells within;
come, Healer, touch our lives with grace;
restore our lives again.**

When dreams at last bring peace and rest,

**and fear has lost control,
when, tried by struggle, we are blessed
with rightful mind and soul,
stay close beside us as before,
to guide us all our days.
Christ, take the lives that you restore
and fit them for your praise.**

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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: Grant US, God, the Grace (VU 540)

**Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.**

Words: anonymous. Music: attrib. Cristian F. Witt, Psalmodia Sacra 1715; adapt. Henry John Gauntlett 1861

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

Please respond to the words God of compassion
with the words **receive our prayers.**

Let us pray:

Great and Holy Mystery, Comforter, Advocate,
receive our prayers at this sacred time for families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People.

God of compassion,
receive our prayers.

God, who gently holds the tears of those grieving,
you know what it is to grieve the loss of a child.

Today we pray for each Indigenous family who is remembering and grieving.
They have waited for a very long time to share their stories.
They have waited for a very long time to obtain a true sense of justice and reach a true place
of peace.

God of compassion,
receive our prayers.

God of the broken and the broken-hearted,
you know what it is to be vulnerable and broken.

Today we remember
the beautiful Indigenous girls whose lives were cruelly shortened,
the beautiful Indigenous women who were robbed of their potential,
and the beautiful gender-diverse people who were targeted because of bigotry.

God of compassion,
receive our prayers.

God, Creator of all, we pray:

For the beautiful Indigenous girls growing up across this country,
that they may always be able to enjoy times of learning, times of play, and time at home,
safely moving wherever they go.

For the beautiful Indigenous women working hard for their families and communities, that
they may always be able to enjoy times of relaxation and respite from their cares, securely
and free from fear.

For the beautiful gender-diverse people blessing all those with whom they come into
contact, that they may always be able to enjoy the cities, the towns, and the countryside of
this great land in comfort and in welcome wherever they go.

God of compassion,
receive our prayers.

On this Day of Recognition and Lament for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls
and Gender-diverse people,

God of compassion,
receive our prayers.

In the name of all our relations. Amen.

Susan Lukey, High River U.C., High River, Alta.

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: Let Us Build a House (MV 1 v .1,2,4,5)

**Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.**

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Benediction and Sending Forth

Go into the world and help people come home, wherever that may be. God has already found us. We all need to seek the Divine.

Postlude: Special Music Presentation: "Remember Me" by Fawn Wood.

Fawn Wood's music reflects her Cree and Salish tribal lineage. She is a singer, songwriter, and traditional artist based in Alberta, celebrated for her powerful voice and dedication to

revitalizing Indigenous language through music. In 2022 she won the JUNO Award for Traditional Indigenous Artist of the Year for her album *Kakike*.

“Remember Me” is a beautiful memorial song written to honour the enduring spirit of loved ones who have passed away. It has become a widely recognized call to remember Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S). It is often played on Red Dress Day (May 5th) to bring this critical issue out of the darkness and into the light. The song is the 15th track on her second solo album, *Kikāwiynaw*.

© 2015 Fawn Wood/Kikāwiynaw (Canyon Records) Permission to play “Remember Me” for Southminster United Church’s Red Dress Day Service, granted by Fawn Wood

Remember

Remember me (remember me)

When the sun comes up in the morning sky

There I will be (there I will be)

Soaring with the eagle so high, feeling free

Remember me

Down the road

Hand in hand

You and me

Remember me (remember me)

When the sun comes up in the morning sky

There I will be (there I will be)

Soaring with the eagle so high, feeling free

Remember me

Down the road

Hand in hand

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You and me

Coffee Time

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

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

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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