

Southminster United Church, Ottawa, Ontario

April 12, 2026

Holy Humour Sunday

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Toller

Director of Music: Sarah Westbrook

Reader : Sandra Black

Prelude: Von fremden Ländern und Menschen by R. Schumann

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.

During this time of new beginnings, when we celebrate Easter and the arrival of spring, let us remember to renew our relationship with Indigenous people. There is much to be learned from the original caretakers of this place we call home, if they choose to share their knowledge. Let's be grateful for the Algonquin Anishinaabe and the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who continue to offer their gifts to this area.

Lighting of the Candles

We light this candle to celebrate the light of Christ, the one who offers unconditional love and acceptance.

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

Come into this space for Holy Humour Sunday.

Are you declaring that we are allowed to laugh? We are free to giggle at life's contradictions?

Absolutely! We need a sense of humour as part of life's balance.

Well, that must be true, or we wouldn't have put up with you as our minister this long!

Touché! Very funny.

Indeed, since we are created in God's image, humour is woven into the very fabric of our being.

Then let's get on with it.

Let's embrace irony and grin wryly at life's foibles because of our faith.

Let us pray:

Loving God, we often despair at the world's complexity. We long for simpler times, and yet we rely on complex technology. Open our hearts for your joy—a joy that bubbles into life by the Spirit's movement. Amen.

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine, Ont.

Opening Prayer

With joy and in celebration, let us open our hearts to God in prayer:

Surprising Spirit, we just want to let loose with abandon. We want to unburden ourselves of all our worries, grief, and anxieties.

Dance with us, teaching us the transformative pattern of the faith journey. Zip along with us as our hair streams behind us in the freedom of becoming. Breathe into us the sweet, refreshing atmosphere of new life. Sing with us as we lift our spirits in praise and in awe. Amen.

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.

Opening Hymn: Seek ye first the kingdom (VU 356 adapted lyrics)

Passing of the Peace/ Greeting Time

Prayer of Confession

Let us come humbly before God in confession:

Wait a minute! Haven't we just been singing about laughter as healing? How does laughter and joy and giggling and delight match with confession?

We come humbly because God already knows what's heavy on our hearts. We come to confess because it opens us to God's delight.

You mean like a parent who tries desperately not to laugh when a child tries to get away with something behind the parent's back—even though the parent knows from experience what's happening?

Exactly! As we enter our time of silent prayer, imagine God's twinkling eyes as you share how you've tried to hide.

(silent prayer)

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.

Words of Assurance

Family of faith,

It's ok to laugh once in a while, even through difficult times.

Our Maker wants us to be happy and to enjoy life.

This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Gift of Music: A Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester by L.J. White

Prayer of Illumination

Holy One,

Help us see the wisdom of our ancestors as we read the scriptures today. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Acts 20:7-12

On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and bending over him took him in his arms and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then

he left. Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.

Anthem: His Strength is Perfect by Steven Curtis Chapman
Soloist: Keri Hugh

Reflection

Hymn: In My Wrestling, and in my Doubts (TLUS 100)

Invitation of Offering

Loving God, you invite us to be joyful givers.
Bless our offerings of time, of talent, and of treasure:
that those who are oppressed
may one day dance a jig of liberation,
that those who are marginalized
may soon rediscover delight in community,
that those who are feeling lost
may laugh as they encounter possibility,
that those who are enemies
may find understanding through dialogue.

Then, Laughing Spirit, may we chuckle at your wise whispers,
knowing how we have been changed and made whole all
because we joyfully gave in Christ's name. Amen.

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.

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

Offering Prayer

Take and bless these offerings, O God, that, through them, we may find connection with our aching world. In our joyful giving, may we find hope and healing for ourselves. In our offering, may we foster delight in others, which brings healing laughter. Amen.

Gord Dunbar, Kincardine, Ont.

Prayers of the People

O God, our Source of Love,

We come to you today, grateful for all the gifts you give us. The treasure of humour is just one of the ways you help us relieve stress, laugh and find joy in life. Humour helps ensure we don't take life too seriously, or that we at least pause to refresh our perspectives, and come back to face reality with a dose of clarity.

While feeling lighthearted, we may be more able to express the things that make us happy. Let's take a moment to thank God for those people, places or events that have brought us joy.....

Holy One, the world has felt very heavy lately. While we seek diversions to escape the pain and suffering, being inflicted on many individuals and countries, we should not forget, we are all your children. We need to care and show compassion for those in war zones, like Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Iran, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Sudan. Please bring them your peace, ensure they have food and shelter, and provide comfort for the loss of loved ones.

We ask that you open the hearts of political leaders, and help them feel love, so they can lead us in showing kindness and

generosity to the vulnerable people in their own countries (specifically those in United States). Encourage them to nurture respect and humility for neighbouring countries, who feel the impacts of the actions of self-important and greedy nations.

Are there other places, people or situations that need God's love?

As we lift these prayers to the Divine, let us join together in singing the words Jesus taught us (we will substitute "Creator" for "Our Father"):

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.**

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Announcements

Closing Hymn: Jesus, You have Come to the Lakeshore (VU 563)

Benediction and Sending Forth

May God bless us, as we seek to be witnesses to Christ,
Seeking truth and justice,
With a healthy dose of humour!
Amen

Postlude: Sonata in Eb Major, Hob XVI 49: Finale: Tempo di minuet by Haydn

Coffee Time

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

Coffee Host: Paul Mullin
Ushers/Counters: Margaret Isaac/ 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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