

<u>I</u>		<u>Attendance</u>
Executive:		
Chair	Al Shaw	Present
Vice-Chair	Leslie Veldman	Present
Past Chair	Regan Pfaff-MacDonald	Present
Secretary	Cecily Chiles	Present
Treasurer	Wayne Pease	Absent
Ministry	Kenji Marui	Present
	Pat Morrison	Present

<u>Committee Representatives:</u>		<u>Attendance</u>
AOTS	Al Grimwood	Absent
Christian Development	Shirley Willis	Absent
Communications	Christopher Cooke	Absent
Congregational Care & Growth (CC&G)	Bev Walkling	Present
Finance	Paul Cooper	Present
Region Rep	Kenji Marui	attendance noted Ministry
Outreach	Paul Cooper	attendance noted Finance
Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	John Cooke	Present
Planning	Jim Wicks	Present
Property	John Cooke	attendance noted M&P
Proclamation and Special Events	Bev Walkling	attendance noted CC&G
Trustees	Pete Melanson	Absent
Worship	John Baxter	Present

The Meeting was held in person and via Zoom with 12 participants, as per adjournment and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. Devotion

John Cooke on behalf of M&P

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: to approve the agenda.

[Leslie Veldman / Regan Pfaff-MacDonald]- Carried

Added Resonance fund policy to agenda – under Finance

3. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes from November 2, 2022.

[Jim Wicks/ Paul Cooper] – Carried (9 in favour, 1 abstention)

4. Business Arising from the Minutes –investment policy moved to ad hoc committee report 8 (below).

- Review current Safety Plan Rev. 17

MOTION: CC&G moves that a recommendation be made to council that the safety plan should be amended to include the following: **Local Public Health and Ontario Ministry of Health regulations will be reviewed regularly (monthly at least or in response to a significant public announcement). To make sure this plan is working they will also be reviewed weekly at staff meetings and monthly at Council meeting (and other committees) both with the guiding principle that we should at all times be attentive to the messaging, advice and recommendations from our public safety and public health officers. [Bev Walkling / Chris Cooke] – motion withdrawn.**

Discussion: Submission received from Congregational Care and Growth. Grace's Safety Plan does not stipulate a frequency for review of regulations and guidance from public health. There is no longer a re-opening committee which attends to new guidance from public health, CC&G recommends that the Safety Plan be amended to include a stipulation for public health regulations and new guidance be reviewed monthly (at least) or weekly, at Council meetings, at Staff meetings. Currently hospitals are under great strain and are asking for our support.

Who would be tasked with checking for updated regulations and guidance? There was agreement that actively checking for changes to regulations monthly and checking weekly for any significant public announcement, was reasonable.

Lori will be asked whether she be willing to bring any new guidelines to council in advance of meetings.

An alternative to adopting this motion to amend the safety plan was proposed, was to ask Lori to attend to any change to regulations or updated guidance issued by Public Health Ontario.

Council wants to ask Lori to undertake the following: review public health announcements at least monthly or in response to any new announcement. Public health issues weekly updates on COVID on Wednesdays; Bev can provide links to weekly announcements. If something in the weekly news requires Council's attention and/or changes to the Safety Plan, staff (Lori) would be asked to bring it to Council's attention. Council has the Safety Plan as a standing agenda item, Lori would be asked to provide any changes in public health guidance prior to each meeting of Council.

Mover and seconder agreed to withdraw the motion and proceed with a plan to ask staff conduct monthly review of Safety Plan and issue recommendations to Council.

Question: is there a need to maintain a committee of council to manage any new event such as the pandemic?
Answers from members of re-opening committee: not necessary to maintain a committee. If a similar event arises, Council should form a committee to manage it in response to the mandate at that time.

5. Correspondence

- Bill Palmer tendering his resignation effective at the annual congregational meeting. Al Shaw responded, thanking him for his many years of service to the Grace community. Moving forward to finding a replacement. There are at least 2 vacancies. Working with nominating committee to recruit new members.
- Alzheimer Society Sarnia-Lambton, volunteer opportunities and training for Dementia Friendly Communities Ontario. Local branch working on a program offering knowledge and support to families affected by dementia. Forward letter to CC&G for follow-up.

6. New Business

- Date for Annual Congregational Meeting. Looking for input from Finance, Lori Armstrong and Financial reviewers. Proposed date Feb. 12. Delay next council meeting to Jan. 11, this date would give Finance time to collect year-end financial information. Finance would seek approval for proposed budget at January Council meeting. Feb. 1 is a scheduled Council meeting.
- **Motion: That the Annual Congregational Meeting be scheduled for Feb. 12, 2023 [John Cooke / Leslie Veldman] – Carried**
- Discussion: recommended that committees to start drafting reports now, Lori will be asking for them starting in early January.

7. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching**Kenji's ministerial report**

- After 2 years of pandemic ministry, life at Grace is beginning to return to a previous rhythm of normal as historic Advent and Christmas traditions are organized. I'm encountering the dynamic of such things being new for me still, despite being here for so long already.
- I completed a Compelling Preaching test project for one of my professors using the weekly Bible Study group. This may lead to a grant-funded program implemented more widely by Luther Seminary.
- In my role as pastoral charge supervisor for Walpole Island United Church, I may be needed to lead Sunday morning worship there on rare occasions. Pat Morrison will be given right of first refusal to cover at Grace. Funding may be available through the Region to provide pulpit supply at Grace.
- Diversity Ed's weekly drop-in sessions have been discontinued and my role as a volunteer there will shift accordingly.
- I am currently planning continuing education and holiday plans for 2023.
- Grateful for the support given to the Amazing Grace Walk a Mile team, final total raised is \$1666.13

Pat's ministerial report

- Beer and Carols will be held December 14 at Two Amigos with food donations being forwarded to Inn of the Good Shepherd.
- With Regional youth ministry initiatives being cancelled for low registration (e.g. Youth Forum, Confirmation Retreat), my colleagues and I have decided to offer smaller regional activities. As such the Christmas Swell will not be offered at this time.

8. Ad hoc committee reports**Investment Policy ad hoc committee**

- Motion tabled Nov. 2 to approve the Investment Policy Report Rev. 1. Review comments were received and incorporated into a revised policy handed out at this meeting. (Appendix A the Investment Policy Report Rev. 2)
Motion to lift the motion from the table. [John Cooke / John Baxter] – carried

Discussion: Changes to Rev. 1 of the policy include: Protection from Liability was removed, covered in UCC Manual. Assignment of Responsibilities was changed.

Change “closely aligned” to “aligned”.

A plan would have to be presented to council for approval. Request for clarity around Legacy fund and how income generated from it is it used.

Section D, asset allocations, includes Equities as an option for investments. Finance committee prefers more conservative investment strategies that do not require as much management work. Ad hoc committee wishes to keep open the option of having a fund manager as a solution to manage investments. Ethical investing was discussed and is included in the policy.

Any investment plan would be presented to Council for approval.

Council agreed that a revised policy statement should be circulated and returned to Council in 2023.

Chair thanked Paul and the group for their work on this.

Short-term deficit reduction ad hoc committee

- Cost savings and revenue improvement items proposed for 2023 budget. Reported under Finance committee report below.

9. Key Ministry Committee Reports**Worship**

- **Budget:** The Committee discussed the 2023 budget for the supporting worship initiatives. Although the majority of line items were held constant in spite of expected inflationary pressures for some goods and services, the main focus of discussion was on adding a line item for New Music Initiatives. The objective of this item is to provide Marque with some latitude and flexibility to purchase minor musical instruments and bring in guest musicians to support the music ministry. It should be noted that this initiative was not raised by Marque, but rather by other committee members.
- **Advent and Christmas Services:** The current plan is that there will be in-person services with Zoom options for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. Local United Church ministers will be preparing video segments that can be shared and used as needed by others to ease the workload through the busy season.
- **Communion:** The committee discussed the mode of communion to employ while we still face respiratory disease transmission challenges. It was agreed that the method of bring elements from home or picking them up in the Narthex prior to the service is the best option for the time being. Kenji will serve to members of the choir.

John Baxter

Christian Development

- No report
-

Congregational Care & Growth

- Defibrillator training still pending
- 2023 Budget. Pre-pandemic items added back into budget. Total of \$1K
- Upper Room publication is no longer available.
- Discussions with Mark Davenport, prison Chaplaincy. Grace may partner with them to offer meeting space for staff meetings and training.
- CC&G recommends that email blasts should be updated at the present to reflect that "In light of recent communications from Canada's and Ontario's chief medical officers "strongly recommending" the use of masks indoors in public places, we want to remind everyone that while masking has not been required at Grace, except when singing, it is encouraged."

Motion: to change in language in the Safety Plan and email blasts, change wording "masking is optional" to "masking is strongly encouraged" [Bev Walkling/ Chris Cooke] – Carried (motion carried with 9 in favour, none opposed, 1 abstention. Ministry staff did not vote)

Discussion: The change from masking "optional" to masking "strongly recommended by public health" is worthy enough to require a change in the Safety Plan document. Communications will update the wording in email blasts. This motion is consistent with the wording that is coming from the pulpit.

Bev Walkling

Proclamation and Special Events

- No report
- Bev Walkling

Outreach

- Continued with support for the Inn of the Good Shepherd. 82 served in November
- Met in person for the first time since March 2020.
- Looking for approval to re-start soup lunches. Proposing Jan. 15, beneficiary Canada Foodgrains Bank, and partnership with Brigden United Church.

Paul Cooper

10. Governance and Support Committee Reports:**Ministry & Personnel**

- Lori currently works 36 hours per week. She recently proposed to work 25 hours per week for the months of June, July and August on a trial basis. We reviewed the proposal with the Ministers and Communications Committee and determined this change will not impact on office support or other duties. This change reduces Grace costs by ~\$4,000 per year including salary and benefits contributions. We propose changing her 2023 work hours as an experiment to be reassessed in October 2023.

MOTION that Council approve a change in Lori Armstrong's 2023 work hours from 36 to 25 hours per week for the months of June, July and August, with the provision that a recommendation for 2024 be presented to Council no later than December 2023. [John Cooke / Chris Cooke] - Carried

- Minister and staff salaries will increase by 3.4% in 2023 based on the United Church of Canada guidelines. As in previous years, we would like to implement the changes effective Jan 1, rather than wait until the annual meeting and implement the changes retroactively.

MOTION that Council approve the 2023 salary increases effective January 1, 2023, with the provision that they can be amended in the future, as necessary. [John Cooke / Regan Pfaff-MacDonald] - Carried

- Since 2015, the Ministers salaries have been based on “*the principal of regionally-based minimum comprehensive salaries reflecting local cost of living*”. Communities of Faith were assigned to cost of living (COL) groups based on local housing costs. A 2021 review of COL groups was postponed while a better metric was determined. The new COL groups will be published in early 2023 and adjustments, if required, will start in July 2023. There is ~50% chance that our COL group will change (higher) so we included a contingency in the 2023 budget in anticipation. Council will be asked to approve salary changes that may be required in 2023. 2023 Budget drafted – 1.5% increase over 2022 budget, including the considerations noted above.
- M&P Committee review of Constitution Appendices 3.1 and 3.2. 3.1, Model of Multiple-Staff Ministry, was based on a 2006 handbook that has been superseded by several rewrites of the United Church Manual. We will recommend a new document that captures the key issues in 2023.
- 3.2, Annual Review Timeline – We recommend Council approve the revised document, Annual Review Process, which summarizes all elements of the review process. (see attachment)

MOTION that Council approve the document, Annual Review Process, for inclusion as Appendix 3.2 of the Grace Constitution. [John Cooke / Leslie Veldman] - Carried

Discussion: Are contract staff included in annual review process? Answer: no. No formal mechanism for review process of contract staff.

John Cooke

Finance

- Resonance Project fund criteria. (Appendix B Resonance Fund document)
Motion: to adopt the policy for Resonance Project Fund. [Paul Cooper / John Baxter] - Carried.
 Discussion: What is the accountability of ministers? UCC Financial handbook outlines procedures and best practices for funds.
 Question: Have other individuals contributed to the fund? Answer: no but some people have asked. Question: How do we account for expenditure? Answer: Include any disbursements in regular ministerial reports to Council. Include reports to council in the policy under Authority, Approvals and Accountability.

- Operating budget Results. End of November 2022 versus 2021 in \$K

	2022	2021	Delta
Revenue	351.6	320.3	+21.3
Expenses	365.6	340.9	+14.7
Delta	-14.0	-20.6	

- Revenue is higher in 2022. Rental income is up \$20.4k. Givings are up by \$8k. Costs are higher in 2022. M&P is up \$13k. Property is up \$11.4k
- With a M&S payment of \$21k to meet our commitment in December, the year-end outlook is a deficit of about \$30k.
- The ongoing support of the operating budget by the congregation is appreciated.
- Reviewed the 2023 budget. It will be presented to Council in December.
- Looking for new Finance Committee members. Training will be provided.

Paul Cooper

Planning

- Planning Committee through eMail Blasts and Minute Person times on Sunday explain a proposed enhanced role of this committee
 - First make it known who is on the committee
 - Broadcast that we will play a new NON-JUDGEMENTAL role of facilitator for anyone who has a new idea on how to enrich Grace but does not know how to proceed
 - Can answer questions on who to talk to, how to fund it, is it being done now ... simply somewhere to bounce off an idea
 - Can make it more comfortable to come forward without a fear of having to do all on your own
- Encourage each of the Committees and Council members to have similar information in the eMail Blast and as Minute Person to acquaint the congregation with the Committees
- Since healthy Committees with known-to-the-congregation membership is a necessity, it is proposed for Planning to support a “Committee Fair” in early 2023 prior to the Annual Meeting and Family Day weekend
 - Plan to be after church with bribes of food and drink (?)
 - Goal is to make the Committees more visible to the congregation and possibly attract new members to the committees
- Concept proposed is to have a “Committee Table” with Committee members for each to provide a visible picture of the current membership, or lack thereof and be able to answer questions
- 3 things Planning is looking for from Council:
 1. Support for Planning to take on the role of supporting and guiding new ideas for those needing this assistance
 2. Support for the planned approach to moving forward with Grace’s Vision
 3. Support in terms of accepting the proposed concept of a “Committee Fair” and hopefully some willingness to support the Planning Committee in tasking this “fair”

Discussion: Communications was considering a Kiosk, information booth, for people coming in and out of worship on Sunday. Special events members are good about making posters, given enough notice. Consensus that Council and its committees are interested in supporting the next steps proposed by Planning. Committee posters may be displayed at Jan. 15 and Feb. 12 Soup Lunches. Planning will do a “minute presentation” during worship.

Jim Wicks

Communications

- Laptop request. Communications is looking for a laptop that can be used for slides on Sundays with guest ministers. If you have Windows 10 or 11 laptop that was purchased new in the last 4 years and are willing to donate it to the church, please contact Chris Cooke or the office.

Chris Cooke

Property

- Property budget finalized at \$35.5 K. This compares to 2022 Budget of \$30.8 K and 2022 Forecast expenses of \$37.6 K. The major difference is increased energy costs.
- Replaced a pump bearing on the boiler system.
- Lori is working with Damar re: security system deficiencies. Doors left ajar are bypassed by the system (resolved). We are adding a “virtual assistant” so the system arm times can be changed for special events.
- A user group left the main kitchen stove gas burners on without the exhaust fan running for several hours on Nov 2. Lori followed up with the group coordinator.
- Volleyball group knocked out a fire detector on the gym ceiling resulting in alarm and reset issues. Waiting for contractor to arrange for a repair, lift and install cage guards for the detectors.

John Cooke

Trustees

- The insurance for the period of Dec. 1, 2022 to Dec. 1, 2023 is once again with Ecclesiastical Insurance underwritten by Marsh Canada. After increasing the deductible to \$10,000 the cost of the annual insurance is \$10,282 plus 8% tax.

Peter Melanson

AOTS

- No report

Region updates

- Executive meeting of 3 regional councils. Anti-racism training. Indigenous partners, mission was experienced by indigenous. What should it be changed to?
- Agreement to staff to 5 Oaks Centre.
- ARW – meetings
- Orphan cemeteries, trustees will be appointed

Kenji Marui

11. Closing

- Closing, Lord’s prayer as presented in First Nations version of the New Testament, Kenji.
- Next regular meeting: January 11, 2023. 7 pm.

12. Adjournment, Meeting closed at 9:40 pm

Motion to adjourn: [Leslie Veldman/ Chris Cooke] – Carried.

Appendix A Investment Policy – Rev.2

Appendix B Resonance Fund

<u>2023 Devotion Responsibility:</u>	<u>2023 Sunday Lock-up Responsibility:</u>
JANUARY –Property	JANUARY – CD
FEBRUARY –Planning	FEBRUARY – CC&G
MARCH – Trustees	MARCH – AOTS
APRIL – Worship	APRIL – Communications
MAY – CD	MAY – Finance
JUNE – CC&G	JUNE – M&P
JULY - na	JULY – Outreach
AUGUST - na	AUGUST – Property
SEPTEMBER – na	SEPTEMBER – Planning
OCTOBER – AOTS	OCTOBER – Trustees
NOVEMBER – Communications	NOVEMBER – Worship
DECEMBER – Finance	DECEMBER – CD

Al Shaw, Council Chair

Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

Appendix A

Investment Policy of Grace United Church

I. Introduction

This policy will be consistent with the appropriate United Church of Canada documents (e.g., UCC Trustees Handbook 2004 page 26)

II. Assignment of Responsibilities

Refer to the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook. At Grace, responsibilities will be a joint effort of the Finance Committee and Trustees.

III. General Investment Requirements

A. Investments made under this policy must be those adopted by a prudent investor.

B. Investment decisions should also take into account and be made in support of the Congregation's Mission Statement, commitment to social justice and The United Church of Canada policy with respect to corporate social responsibility.

IV. Duties of Trustees, Finance Committee and Treasurer

1. To develop an investment plan approved by Council.
2. To review general economic and investment market conditions with a view to recommending, when appropriate, changes in investment guidelines.
3. To recommend an asset 'mix' designed to provide a fair rate of return and avoid undue risk.
4. To present to Council and the Annual General meeting after the close of each calendar year an "Annual Report on Performance" for the current year.

V. Investment Guidelines

A. General: The intent of these guidelines is to be closely aligned with the policy of the United Church of Canada Investment Policy and the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) regulations. The Finance Committee shall maintain an investment portfolio that is separate from its operating account. Monies in this investment portfolio may derive from a variety of sources and be amalgamated for investment purposes. The church bookkeeper and treasurer shall maintain separate accounts for these invested funds.

B. Diversification: Diversification will be considered an important aspect of management of investments.

- C. Eligible Investment Classes: The portfolio may be invested in any of the following asset categories,
1. Equities
 2. Fixed Income
 3. Cash
 4. Mutual Funds or ETFs whose underlying assets are based on any combination of 1, 2, or 3.

D. Asset Class Allocation: The asset class weighting will be targeted to be reasonably within the ranges and restrictions as follows. These allocations will be reviewed at least annually by the Trustees and the Finance Committee.

Equities: 0% to 30%.

- To include common or preferred shares of publicly traded corporations. No more than 20% of the equity portfolio will be invested in any one company.

Fixed Income: 50% to 100%.

- No more than the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC) coverage limit shall be invested in any one GIC provider. In 2017, for example, this was \$100,000.
- No more than 20% of the bond part of the portfolio at the time of purchase shall be invested in any one company. No bonds will be included in the portfolio with a credit rating by a major Canadian rating agency below BBB at purchase.

Cash: 0% to 30%.

- All Cash Deposits shall be made in accordance with the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC) coverage limits

E. Policy Review

The investment strategy shall be reviewed at least annually by the Trustees and the Finance Committee.

F. Specific Guidelines for Grace United Church Funds

There are 3 funding categories currently used by Grace

1. Investments at Sarnia Community Foundation (SCF) support specific ministries. Potential payout is increasing to 5% effective in 2023. On an annual basis, SCF will request that Grace indicate if funds need to be withdrawn. If no withdrawals are required, money remains within the fund.
2. Operational funds support both the ongoing costs of the Church (operating budget) as well as Church administered special funds. The assistant treasurer ensures transfers are made between the checking account and the money market fund to generate a modest return on these funds.
3. The Legacy Fund is designed to generate income for the Church. This investment policy will guide how this fund is managed. On an annual basis, typically at budget preparation time, Finance and Trustees will review the performance of the fund and determine any changes that may be appropriate to make. Recommendations will be reviewed at Council and approved at the Annual Meeting. Management of the Legacy Fund may be given to a third-party firm as approved at the June 2022 Council meeting.

Appendix B**Resonance Project Fund****Origin and Purpose**

The Resonance Project Fund (the "Fund") was birthed upon receipt of the \$10,000US grant from Luther Seminary in October 2022 for Grace's participation in the *Relevance to Resonance Project*. The Fund holds grants and donations that are specifically intended for Grace's Resonance Project and is used to support initiatives that relate specifically to Grace's Resonance Project initiatives.

Parameters of the Fund

The Fund belongs to Grace United Church and is governed by section 5.6 of the *Financial Handbook for Congregations 2017 – The United Church of Canada (the "Handbook")*.

Individuals may contribute to the Fund at any time.

Authority, Approvals, and Accountability

Disbursements from the Fund are at the discretion of the ministers participating in Luther Seminary's *Relevance to Resonance Project*. Funds are to be used uniquely to support the *Relevance to Resonance Project*. The ministers are to report to Grace Council on expenditures.

Wind-Up

The Fund will be open for the duration of the official Luther Seminary *Relevance to Resonance Project* (Dec 2024) and beyond until all funds are depleted or the participating ministers agree the fund should be folded.

Council will direct the future use of residual funds in the unforeseen event that Grace has no minister participating in the Resonance Project.