

# Council Minutes October 4, 2023 Grace United Church

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<b>Executive:</b>		<b>Attendance</b>
Chair	Leslie Veldman	Present
Vice-Chair	Marion Staples	Present
Past Chair	Al Shaw	Present
Secretary	Cecily Chiles	Present
Treasurer	Wayne Pease	Absent
Ministry	Kenji Marui	Present
	Pat Morrison	Present

<b>Committee Representatives:</b>		<b>Attendance</b>
AOTS	vacant	
Christian Development	Shirley Willis	Absent
Communications	Christopher Cooke	Present
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)	Laura Black	Present
Planning	Jim Wicks	Absent
Property	John Cooke	attendance noted M&P
Proclamation and Special Events	Bev Walkling	attendance noted CC&G
Trustees	Pete Melanson	Present
Worship	Gord Walkling	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** – Paul Cooper on behalf of AOTS, The Hand of Thanksgiving.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION: to approve the agenda.**

[John Cooke/ Al Shaw]- Carried

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes from June 7, 2023 as amended.**

Discussion: Amend Property report the motion to upgrade HVAC filters to MERV-13.

[ Gord Walkling / Paul Cooper] – Carried

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

- a. Remit Education: In 2022, at General Council 44, the National Indigenous Council proposed that the church identify and remove any structural barriers that would prevent the development and sustaining of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada. When any requested change in church structure will alter the Basis of Union of The Manual, as this will, a Category 3 Remit is required. By March 31, 2024 each church council must vote on the Remit; if no vote is received, it is counted as a no vote.

Antler River Watershed Regional Council will be holding a workshop regarding the Remit. The workshop will be held live at Siloam United Church in London, and via Zoom on Friday, October 20th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. October 13 email blast should include an invitation for the congregation to attend the workshop at Siloam on Oct. 20.

Council would like to host a congregation learning session in Friendship room, after worship service to present background material and allow questions, on a date after the Oct. 20 workshop.

January meeting suggested for Grace Council to vote on the remit.

Thanks to Kenji for presenting information for the remit.

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- b. Review current COVID-19 Safety Plan (rev. 19). Language from LPH has changed around Respiratory Illnesses. No change to the Safety Plan was proposed. At the November meeting, Council will review the possibility of creating a permanent policy that encompasses all respiratory illnesses to replace the COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- c. Worship Committee to update council on a plan to address the AV system used for virtual services. Immediate concern was resolved with moving the microphones away from ventilation. Concern was expressed that we need support from one person when things go wrong. Worship committee is taking on responsibility to staff and train people to manage sound during the worship service.

## 5. Correspondence

- a. Letter of congratulations to Dunlop Central sent from Barb Baxter, who also presented the congregation with their certificate June 24. In celebration of their becoming an Affirming congregation.
- b. Letter from John Howard Society, support for Sarnia Lambton Alliance against Hate. Forward the request to Outreach committee for them to review and decide which organizations will be supported.
- c. MacKenzie Vozza from Great Lakes Law, offering informative presentations on wills and estate planning. No action to be taken. Council does not wish to endorse one company over another.
- d. Sarnia Community Foundation Community Impact Grants, presentation Wednesday Oct. 18. Directed this to Finance, who have already received the notice.

## 6. New Business

- a. We received notice of retirement from Lori Armstrong. Lori's last day of work is April 26. M&P will create a job description for the administrative position. M&P will bring recommendations to Council. As of tonight, we can notify the congregation of Lori's retirement, as a letter from the Chair. Lori has taken care of the office, and our members and groups for 25 years. Thank you and we wish you well in your retirement!

## 7. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

- a. **Pat's ministerial report**
  - Throughout September the usual CD programs were rebooted. Beyond these standard programs, I have also initiated the following new programs:
    - Meeting with adults to explore six ways to continue supporting youth ministry (Sept 17)
    - Grandparents group exploring relationships with grandchildren (Sept 12,19,26)
    - Hosted a gathering of Lambton Presbytery (Sept 21)
    - Congregational Retreat (Sept 29-30)
    - Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (Oct 14)
    - Piano! Piano! Piano! (Nov 25)
  - Over the summer I met with a congregation in Kitchener to share with them our 3-year reusable Children's Worship Curriculum. I am also in the process of working with my brother and Strathroy United Church to revise and combine our Children's Worship Curriculum, to update, expand and align it with the narrative lectionary.
  - As part of my Resonance Project, I had the chance to speak to the grade nine class of Holy Rosary Catholic Secondary School in Strathroy, testing my thesis against staff and students and encouraging students toward moments of resonance in the school setting.
- b. **Kenji's ministerial report**
  - Resonance project continues. Retreat at Lambton Centre was enjoyed by many; the main goal of building a sense of connection was met.
  - Kenji supported the Nominations committee for Rayjon's board of directors.
  - Participated in Lambton Presbytery reboot.
  - Continue to work with Pflag chapter that meets at Grace.
  - Continue to work with Ecumenical committee for the unhoused.
  - Started meeting with General Council 45, part of the planning committee and chair of business, happening in 2025.

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- Instructing for preaching lab sessions with Luther seminary this fall.
- In October Kenji is planning travel to Israel and Palestine, partnering with UCC partners in Palestine.

## 8. Ad hoc Committee Reports

- a. Investment Policy ad hoc committee
  - Options for Legacy Fund investments discussed at September Finance Committee meeting. Currently, GIC rates are attractive - up to 5.75%.
  - Finance will review with Trustees and make recommendation at November Council meeting.Paul Cooper
- b. Short-term deficit reduction ad hoc committee:
  - Application submitted for UCC Protect quote for Church building insurance.
  - Request to council to revisit previous decision on manse rental rate.
  - Possible fund-raising opportunity with other United Churches to schedule another concert similar to the one held in March 2000. Council agreed to support. Paul Cooper will follow-up.

## 9. Key Ministry Committee Reports Ad hoc committee reports\_

### Worship

- A new hymnal and music resource, Then Let Us Sing!, is being developed by the United Church and a sampler has been made available to Grace. Kenji and Marque will introduce this initiative and with the choir's help they will introduce the congregation to some of this music. The worship committee will be interested in hearing your feedback regarding the new music and lyrics: what was it like to learn new hymns, which songs were challenging and in what ways; to what extent do these new songs help you to feel and express your faith, and was there any particular one that resonated with you the most?
- The following guests recently participated, or will soon be participating, in our worship services. On September 24th, Renaud Thomas, project director for Rayjon in Haiti, provided the message. On October 1st, there was the Celebration Dance Collective. And during Kenji's absence later this month on October 15th, Bob Gibson will preach.  
Gord Walking

### Christian Development

- No report  
Shirley Willis

### Congregational Care & Growth

- Recognize Pastor appreciation month! Thanks to Pat and Kenji for all they do. Thanks to all those people providing pastoral ministry to members.
- Would like to encourage gathering evenings or afternoons to promote community for board games or music.
- Trying to schedule Defibrillator training.
- Participating in an event at Radiant Community Centre, event focussing on infant loss.
- Marriage of Tessa Hall and Daniella D'Andrea, planned for June 30, 2024, at an offsite wedding ceremony. **Motion: to approve that Kenji preside at the wedding of Tessa Hall and Daniella D'Andrea. June 30, 2024 [Bev Walking / Chris Cooke] – Carried.**

### Proclamation and Special Events

- No report  
Bev Walking

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## Outreach

- Maintained support for the Inn of the Good Shepherd through the summer period serving between 80 and 115 clients each time. Great support from volunteers.
- Thanksgiving M&S special offering will support United Church Anti-Racism Initiative.
- Tentative fall soup luncheon dates are October 22nd and November 19th. Proposed beneficiary is ReFound.
- RayJon communication and visit was featured in September.
- Syrian family sponsorship commitments completed in June. Communication shared with all stakeholder groups. Thank-you to all who supported the families from 2015 through 2023.

Paul Cooper

## 10. Governance and Support Committee Reports

### Ministry & Personnel

- seeking approval of the revised Appendix 3.1, The Model of Multiple Staff Ministry. **MOTION: that council approve the revised appendix [ Laura Black / Gord Walkling ] – Carried.** Discussion: the new version is simplified and clarified. Guiding principles and Shared Leadership parts were unchanged. An important companion document to this appendix would be the job descriptions for staff.
- 2024 UC salary schedule calls for 6.3 % salary increase. M&P will include this into the budget forecast in November.

Laura Black

### Finance

- Monthly communication to congregation on operating budget. Deficit of \$8K at the end of August.
- CRA report filed on time (deadline was end of June).
- Finance Committee covered givings counters role through the summer.
- No withdrawals from Sarnia Community Foundation investments in 2023 (funds were re-invested).
- Legacy Fund GIC's mature this fall. Outlook is positive for GIC rates through 2024.
- Finance will complete recommendation with Trustees for November Council endorsement.
- Search for new assistant treasurer continues.
- Hope to get a reduced rate for 2024 insurance through United Church of Canada self-insurance program.
- Assessing renter insurance needs versus our current system.

Paul Cooper

### Planning

#### Resonance Project

- Past discussions on Resonance tied the use of the Legacy Fund to the resonance outcome.
- With input from Kenji, we no longer see the requirement to link future use of the Legacy Fund to the Resonance Project outcome.

#### Legacy Fund

- We continue to feel that this fund is primarily for new growth and expanding initiative and not for the general operating funds style of expenditures.
- Suggest that funds can be used to pay for the difference in cost between a conventional replacement of church building assets with greener, future-thinking replacement such as standard HVAC with heat pumps.

#### Building Back Community at Grace

- “Real Connections with Real People”
- Looking forward to the retreat and feedback form the retreat for future initiatives.
- Happy to see the “Guess Who is Coming to Dinner” initiative returning.
- Agreed that the repairs and painting of parking lot provide a more welcoming environment for Grace members and outside groups using the church.

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- Consider enhancing the role of greeters at Worship to provide the welcome – possibly create a business card to hand out to recent/new worship attendees with contact information and/or a QR code to link to Grace information on one’s smart phone.

## Future Planning Initiatives

- Continue deliberations on the use of the Legacy Fund and encourage input from others.
- Continue to encourage other committees to have a minute session at worship.
- Continue to advertise that Planning is available to help individuals launch initiatives.
- Agreed that Planning Committee does not need to meet monthly so will meet regularly in September, November, January, March and May but will convene at other times if the need arises.

Jim Wicks

## Communications

- We received the invoice for the gym painting. It was \$3551.07, less than quoted, due to only 1 coat of primer and 1 coat of paint. (A tinted primer was used.) Thank you to Karen Rutledge and Lo-Ann Chan for their help with making our two-tone walls a reality.
- Sure Signs has quoted about \$1100 to apply the logo to the east wall of the gym. We are awaiting installation.

Chris Cooke

## Property

seeking approval for repairs to the main parking lot.

The Committee has been concerned about the parking lot condition for several years. The issues requiring attention are:

1. The north and south catch basin and manhole assemblies are deteriorating.
2. The north catch basin is partially plugged, and heavy rain creates a “lake” that takes many hours to drain.
3. Six sections of asphalt are in poor condition - a combination of deteriorated asphalt, potholes, trip hazards, and water pooling.
4. Cracks in the remaining asphalted area need to be sealed.
5. The lines and logos need to be repainted.

We propose the following repairs in 2023:

1. Catch basin repairs including repaving a 6 ft x 6 ft section around each one - \$6380 + tax.
2. Vacuum out the catch basins and/or scope the lines if necessary - \$300 + tax.
3. Seamless asphalt repair in 6 sections - \$4060 + tax.
4. Total cost – 10740 + tax

We propose deferring the crack sealing and line painting to 2024 - \$2062 + tax, subject to escalation.

The benefits of the 2023 repairs are:

1. Ensures proper operation and extended life of the catch basins.
2. Economically rehabilitates the parking lot to safe operation.
3. Positions us to complete the remaining work in 2024 without asphalt disruption.

Contact John Cooke for more detail or explanation.

**MOTION: That Council approves main parking lot repairs at a cost of \$10,740 + tax. The work scope includes catch basin repairs and cleaning, and repaving of six sections of asphalt surface. [John Cooke / Pete Melanson] - Carried.**

Discussion: this was not part of the Property budget for this year. Future meetings, need to discuss funding options.

Repair the catch basins is a long-term repair. Contractor is Add-a-line from London.

- HVAC filter elements are changed semi-annually as part of the preventative maintenance contract which costs \$1,800 annually. In June, the Council approved upgrading filter elements on 2 RoofTopUnit’s, 2 furnaces, and the

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dais fan from Merv 10 to 13. Ainsworth advised the annual contract cost would be \$4100. Decided not to pursue this upgrade for now due to the significantly higher cost.

- Raccoons continue to damage Sanctuary soffit. Cecily & Curtis are working to trap the perpetrators.
- A Lambton Public Health inspector made an unannounced inspection of Room 10 based on a complaint. He was content with the cleanliness of the room and suggested some minor changes to cleaning procedures. Lori and I sent a letter to one user group regarding the protocol for complaints.
- We approved the Bore Fencing contract for seasonal Snow Removal. We need to recruit someone to clear sidewalks on weekends.
- The Cathcart/Indian roundabout is virtually complete. Some parking spaces on Cathcart Blvd are no longer available.

John Cooke

## Trustees

- Working with Finance on securing insurance for next year.

## AOTS

- No report.

## Region updates

- Fall meeting Oct. 27 and 28, online meeting.
- Resignation
- President has stepped down, Cheryl Bolton was installed as President.
- Marilyn Barros is interested in becoming a Regional Rep. Congregation can formally vote. Al Shaw also interested in Rep for the Region after the congregational meeting in February.

Kenji Marui

## **11. Adjournment and closing prayer, Meeting closed at 9:20 pm**

**Motion to adjourn: [John Cooke / Chris Cooke] – Carried.**

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Leslie Veldman, Council Chair

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Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

<b>2023 Devotion Responsibility:</b>	<b>2023 Sunday Lock-up Responsibility:</b>
JANUARY –Property	JANUARY – CD
FEBRUARY –Planning	FEBRUARY – CC&G
MARCH – Worship	MARCH – AOTS
APRIL – Trustees	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