

Council Minutes May 1, 2024 Grace United Church

Executive:		Attendance
Chair	Marion Staples	Present
Vice-Chair	Tory Walko	Present
Past Chair	Leslie Veldman	Present
Secretary	Cecily Chiles	Present
Treasurer	Wayne Pease	Absent
Ministry	Kenji Marui	Present
	Pat Morrison	Absent

Committee Representatives:		Attendance
AOTS	vacant	
Christian Development	Shirley Willis	Present
Communications	Christopher Cooke	Present
Congregational Care & Growth (CC&G)	Bev Walkling	Present
Finance	Paul Cooper	Present
Region Rep	Marilyn Barros	Present
Outreach	Paul Cooper	
Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	John Cooke	Absent
Planning	Jim Wicks	Present
Property	John Cooke	Absent
Proclamation and Special Events	Bev Walkling	
Trustees	Pete Melanson	Present
Worship	John Baxter	Present
Guests	Gord Walkling	Present

The Meeting was held in person and via Zoom with 15 participants, as per adjournment and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. **Devotion** – Pete Melanson shared a story about inviting God’s presence.
2. **Approval of Agenda**
MOTION: to approve the agenda. [Pete Melanson/ Leslie Veldman] – Carried
3. **Approval of Minutes**
MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes from April 3, 2024. [Cecily Chiles/Paul Cooper] – Carried.
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
 - a. Proposed Public Health Policy.
Motion: that council modify the COVID-19 Safety Plan [Gord Walkling / Leslie Veldman]-Tabled
Chris Cooke moved to table the motion to next meeting (second Leslie Veldman) - Carried.
 Discussion: There was a lengthy discussion around a proposal to revise the Safety Plan and replace it with a procedure to mitigate transmission of Respiratory Illnesses at Grace.
 - Gord Walkling received feedback from several committees of Council on the proposed Public Health Policy and Safety Plan and presented a new alternative “Respiratory Illness Safety Procedure”.
 - Council was supportive of the proposed new procedures to help maintain clean and safe environment, and adhere to Public Health guidelines.
 - Review of any Procedure or Policy should be administered by a committee of Council. Suggested monthly and annual reviews of the Procedure are proposed to be undertaken by the Office Administrator and the process overseen by Communications Committee.
 - The custodian of the proposed Procedure will continue to be the Committees identified by the appendices within the Procedure, Worship, Property, Communications, Christian Development, Staff and Council.

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Under the proposed Procedure it would be the responsibility of each named standing committee to implement the Procedures described in the appendices.

- Gord Walkling received several suggestions for revisions to the first version of the Procedure document and will prepare a revised document to present to Council at it's June meeting.
 - Members of Council expressed appreciation to Gord for his work on preparing the new Procedure document and his willingness to present a revised version.
- b. List of duties of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Paul Cooper reported that Finance Committee prepared a description of the tasks of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer members of the committee. The document may be used to help recruit someone to fill these roles. See Finance Treasurer Job Description 2024 appendix to these minutes.
- c. Status of filling Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer 2024/25 positions. Nominating Committee will collaborate with Finance Committee to recruit members to fill Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer positions.
- d. Selling of items before and following Worship services in the Narthex. John Baxter reported on the discussion at Worship Committee. The sale of items in the Narthex is not permitted as was discussed at Council. This does not include tickets for events that directly contribute to Grace.
- e. Are we a vulnerable community of faith? A webinar was presented April 18 by the Region. <https://arwrcucc.ca/event/wow-are-you-a-vulnerable-community-of-faith/>
Risk factors that were identified include: a budget deficit for 3 or more years consecutively, staffing is greater than 60% of the annual budget, difficulty recruiting volunteers.
Discussion around these risk factors was focused on launching a Stewardship campaign at Grace. Marion Staples and Marilyn Barros offered to work together to gather the available resources from Region in preparation for a Stewardship Campaign in the fall.
- f. Council requested an update on Grace funds at Sarnia Community Foundation (SCF) and how the process works. Paul Cooper reported that the Foundation met the last week of April. Finance committee is expecting a communication from SCF.
- g. Chris Cooke and Kenji Marui spoke to some realtors about long term commercial rentals. This effort is ongoing.

5. Correspondence

None

6. New Business

- a. Letter to the congregation from the Chair, Marion Staples, will be emailed to the congregation next week. The letter will communicate some of the discussions that are happening at Council, specifically relating to Stewardship.

7. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

- a. Kenji Marui's report
- Letter was received from Sandra Leckie of St. Luke's, inviting Grace to participate in the June 2025 concert.
 - Kenji and Shelley are new residents of Lambton County.
 - Kenji is taking a week of study leave to attend the Festival of the Homiletics in Pittsburgh. Tom Rodger is covering Worship service while Kenji is away.
 - Regional meeting upcoming in Port Elgin, May 24-26. Pat Morrison will become an Ordained Minister that weekend. Dan Leaver will be commissioned a Diaconal Minister. Vanessa Benoit is in the process to become a Diaconal Minister and Kenji will be part of her supporting network.

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- Murray Stevenson will be taking the Worship service on May 26. His agency in downtown Sarnia provides a safe space to the unhoused and vulnerable.

8. Ad hoc committee reports

- a. Investment Policy – a policy has been in place for 2 cycles following its acceptance. The policy is an appendix in the constitutional documents and available on the Grace United Church website, under Our Governance.

Motion: to disband the Ad hoc Investment Policy committee. [Paul Cooper / John Baxter] – Carried

Council wishes to recognize the members of the ad hoc committee and thank them for their efforts. Members are Wayne Pease, Bill Palmer, and Vern Chiles.

On an annual basis, investment options are reviewed by finance and recommendation is approved by trustees and communicated to council.

Legacy Fund invested in ScotiaBank GIC's in 2023 and 2024.

RBC money market interest for remainder of church funds is maximized by transferring funds to and from chequing account as required.

Future options: Investment policy would allow funds to be invested via a third party fund manager, if appropriate.

Paul Cooper

- b. Short Term Deficit Reduction – no report

Paul Cooper

9. Key Ministry Committee Reports

a. Worship

- Music: Paul Cooper represents Grace on a committee of different United Churches. He made a request: this group would like to use the sanctuary on June 7, 2025 for a concert to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada. The request was approved in principle with more details to follow closer to the date.
- Good Friday Service Summary: There was general discussion about the Good Friday service, and comments included that there was a good balance between the readings at Grace and St Bartholomew's, and that the (Besig and Price) video that was used was very good. Other comments included the good poem selection. A possibility for next year is a shared service with St. Giles Presbyterian church.

John Baxter

b. Christian Development

Thanks to Chris Cooke, Margaret Billings and Tory Walko for what they are doing to bring families together after worship services.

Shirley Willis

c. Congregational Care and Growth (CC&G) –

Motion to approve the marriage of Marque Smith and Andrew Koornstra [Bev Walkling/ Pete Melanson] - Carried

Bev Walkling

d. Proclamation and Special Events – Thanks to everyone who supported the Dante Club Pastafest fundraiser. Art card fundraiser, selling 5 cards for \$5 with proceeds going to Capital Replacement fund for Landscaping projects.

Contacted by Warm hearts and Full Bellies a local charity feeding homeless and food insecure people. They have asked us to support them in some way. The committee would like to ask the congregation to bring in specific food items to be donated to this organization.

Bev Walkling

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e. Outreach

Successful soup luncheon for the Brain Injury Association - Sarnia Lambton on April 14, 2024. Great support from volunteers, the Outreach Committee and the congregation. \$1790 was raised. The BIA-SL folks were very appreciative of our efforts.

Inn of the Good Shepherd update - we donated 145 pounds of food on Food Bank Sunday and served a very large group - 117 clients - for the mid-day meal on April 24, 2024.

Circles dinner - May 28, 2024 is the proposed date for Grace to supply the evening meal at a Circles meeting. Further information will be shared with the congregation prior to this date.

Paul Cooper

10. Governance and Support Committee Reports

a. Finance

- Submitted CRA reports at the end of April including information on the Church manse (part of new requirements this year). Thanks to Bob Newman and Lori Armstrong for their efforts. Also thanks to trustees for providing the information required to complete the report.
- Still looking for candidates for treasurer and assistant treasurer positions.
- Reviewed end of the first quarter operating budget data. Q1 report was presented.

Paul Cooper

First Quarter Financial Results

Operating Budget Summary- Results are for Q1 2024, and comparison to Q1 2023, in \$K.

	<u>Q1 2024</u>	<u>Q1 2023</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Budget (2024 full year)</u>
Revenue	145.9	132.7	+13.2	434.5
Givings	125.8	116.2	+9.6	357.5
Rentals	15.3	10.4	+4.9	43.0
Interest	4.0	5.5	-1.5	20.0
Costs	120.3	111.5	+8.8	447.2
Staffing	88.2	81.7	+6.5	354.2
Property	18.9	18.7	+0.2	37.5
ARWS assessment	4.7	4.5	+0.2	19.1
Net income	25.7	21.2	+4.5	-12.1

- Revenue is higher than in 2023. Mainly due to generous one-time donation events in Q1.
- Rental income continues strong performance with many user groups using Grace facilities.
- Costs are higher than 2023 mainly due to expected staffing cost increases.
- **Support by the congregation for the operating budget is greatly appreciated.**

b. M&P

No report.

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c. Property

- YTD March expenses were 50% of the annual budget. However, most of the spending relates to annual contract or inspections costs for the sprinkler system, Damar Security, Bore snow removal, Keytech boiler water monitoring, and the HSE fire system. We also incurred peak utilities costs in Jan/Feb.
- Reviewing plans for relining the parking lot – proposal deferred to June.
- Repairs and painting in Rm 6 & Rm 8 are ongoing.
- Cathcart garden revamp is essentially complete. New plants will be added over the next few weeks.
- Tree Maintenance Proposal submitted with the agenda for Council approval.
- Joyce Rawson volunteered to launder kitchen linens. Thank you to Lauren Clark for her good work over the last year.
- Thank you to Diego Butterworth for his volunteer assistance over the last 2 months.

Motion: Council approves the proposed tree removal and trimming at a cost of \$3200 + HST to be financed from the Capital Replacement Fund. [Cecily Chiles/ Chris Cooke] - Carried.

Discussion: This should be communicated to the congregation, this was an unbudgeted expense.

John Cooke

d. Communications

- The Committee wishes to express our heartfelt thanks to Lori Armstrong for her 26 years of service. We wish her well in her retirement. We further look forward to supporting Kathy Dodkin as she begins her work with our congregation. It is an exciting time!
- The most recent committee meeting was April 23rd at 7pm.
- The proposed Health and Safety Policy and accompanying Safety Plan Phase 1 was reviewed. All of the base requirements recommended by the Safety Plan seemed reasonable to implement. However, instead of implementing the Policy, suggest the following simplified approach:
- Phase 1: Include measures recommended by the Safety Plan within existing processes/procedures instead of developing an independent Safety Plan.
- Phase 3 / 4: Assume Council / Staff would respond as appropriate based on clear direction from the Ministry of Health or Lambton Public Health (similar to our reaction at the start of the Covid pandemic).
- Phase 2: This is difficult to implement from a policy perspective unless Council is able to point to an official source providing clear direction (ex. Lambton Public Health). Some other Public Health areas (ex. Ottawa Public Health) are promoting stricter measures with respect to masking. Can/should Council utilize these types of sources?
- Further, it was highlighted that a congregation in Ottawa spent the money to install filters in their Sanctuary that is sufficient to filter Covid. Why is the proposal from our HVAC provider so expensive? Are there cheaper options (ex. could a volunteer replace the filters)?
- The Committee has undertaken the creation of a new photo directory to be produced by IPC Studios. Editorial decisions were discussed at the meeting.
- Sign-ups have exceeded expectations with 98 families registered for photo sittings. Nearly all families in the Household Directory have been called. Thank you to Lori Armstrong, Margaret Billings, Betty Carson, Marg Cameron, Tory Walko and Diane Werezak for volunteering to make the calls.
- Thank you to the folks that have volunteered as greeters on photo sitting days: Christopher Cooke, Anne Eastman (contingent), Kenji Marui, Marianne Nichols, Marion Staples, Yvonne Vanderbeld and Bev Walking.
- Actions taken outside the meeting:
- The Chapel projector screen was moved to the gym to support Lori Armstrong's retirement celebration. It has been left as a permanent install in the gym. A used projector screen was donated and installed in the Chapel. Thank you to Benjamin Parkinson for his support with the installation.
- The new television cupboard and security cable was installed in Room 9. Thank you to Ben Parkinson and Jim Wicks for building the beautiful cupboard. The Committee is pleased with the end result. Also, thank you to Margaret Billings, Ben Parkinson, Jim Rutledge and Jim Wicks for support with the final installation.

Chris Cooke

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e. Planning

Paul Cooper and Jim Wicks met to discuss M&P communications, identified gaps and proposed strategies.

- Gap - poor understanding by congregation of what the UCC Mission and Service fund does
Propose to hi-lite as least once per month a 'M & S Story' (formerly "Minutes for Mission") via council minutes and weekly email.
The M&S umbrella is broad so these stories will help with examples that everyone can relate to.
- Gap - with M&S part of the unified budget, how do I know if my contribution is part of the annual budget or 'over and above'
- Propose to collect additional data on the history of Grace and the M&S fund and to understand how M&S funding has been managed in the past.
- Remind the congregation that the 3 annual appeals for 'thank-offerings' at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas are 'over and above' contributions to M&S.
- Also, there may be a way of simplifying the way M&S contributions are managed in the future.

f. Trustees

No report
Pete Melanson

g. Regional Council

Marilyn Barros will be attending the meeting May 24-26, tri-regional meeting in Port Elgin, along with Kenji Marui and Pat Morrison.

Marilyn Barros

h. AOTS

No report

11. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Meeting closed at 9:22 pm

Next Regular Meeting: June 5, 2024.

Marion Staples, Council Chair

Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

<u>2024 Devotion Responsibility:</u>	<u>2024 Sunday Lock-up Responsibility:</u>
JANUARY – M&P	JANUARY – CC&G
FEBRUARY – Outreach	FEBRUARY – AOTS
MARCH – Property	MARCH – Communications
APRIL – Planning	APRIL – Finance
MAY – Trustees	MAY – M&P
JUNE – Worship	JUNE – Outreach
JULY - na	JULY – Property
AUGUST - na	AUGUST – Planning
SEPTEMBER – na	SEPTEMBER – Trustees
OCTOBER – CD	OCTOBER – Worship
NOVEMBER – CC&G	NOVEMBER – CD
DECEMBER – Communications	DECEMBER – CC&G

Appendix 1 **Grace United Church Finance Committee Job Descriptions March 2024** **PRELIMINARY To be reviewed by Finance Committee**

Note: This document describes the various duties of the Finance Committee and reflects the sharing of tasks as well as the core tasks of the committee members.

Note: not all tasks are the responsibility of the treasurer. The Finance Committee Chair, Office Administrator, Assistant Treasurer and ADP contact are responsible for the execution of specific tasks within the financial system at Grace.

1. The M&P ADP contact is responsible for maintaining the salary data and issuing an annual report of all M&P costs.
2. See Office Administrator job description for specific tasks.

Treasurer:

Member of Council Executive.

Recommends legacy fund investment plan (approved by Trustees)

Tracks interest income from legacy fund.

Assistant Treasurer

Maintains monthly spreadsheet of financial transactions – receipts and expenditures

Makes payments including automatic withdrawals, e-transfers and cheques.

Transfers information to the book keeper

Generates monthly reports from Simply Accounting

Monitors the donations data base (data inputted by Office Administrator)

Claims the HST rebate semi-annually

Completes the CRA report by June 30.

Transfer funds to the operating account as required to meet projected expenses.

Prepare reports, outreach statistics and budgets for presentation at the Annual Meeting.

Finance Committee Chair

Attends Council Meetings and provides update on key activities and financials

Schedules and chairs monthly committee meeting and provides minutes

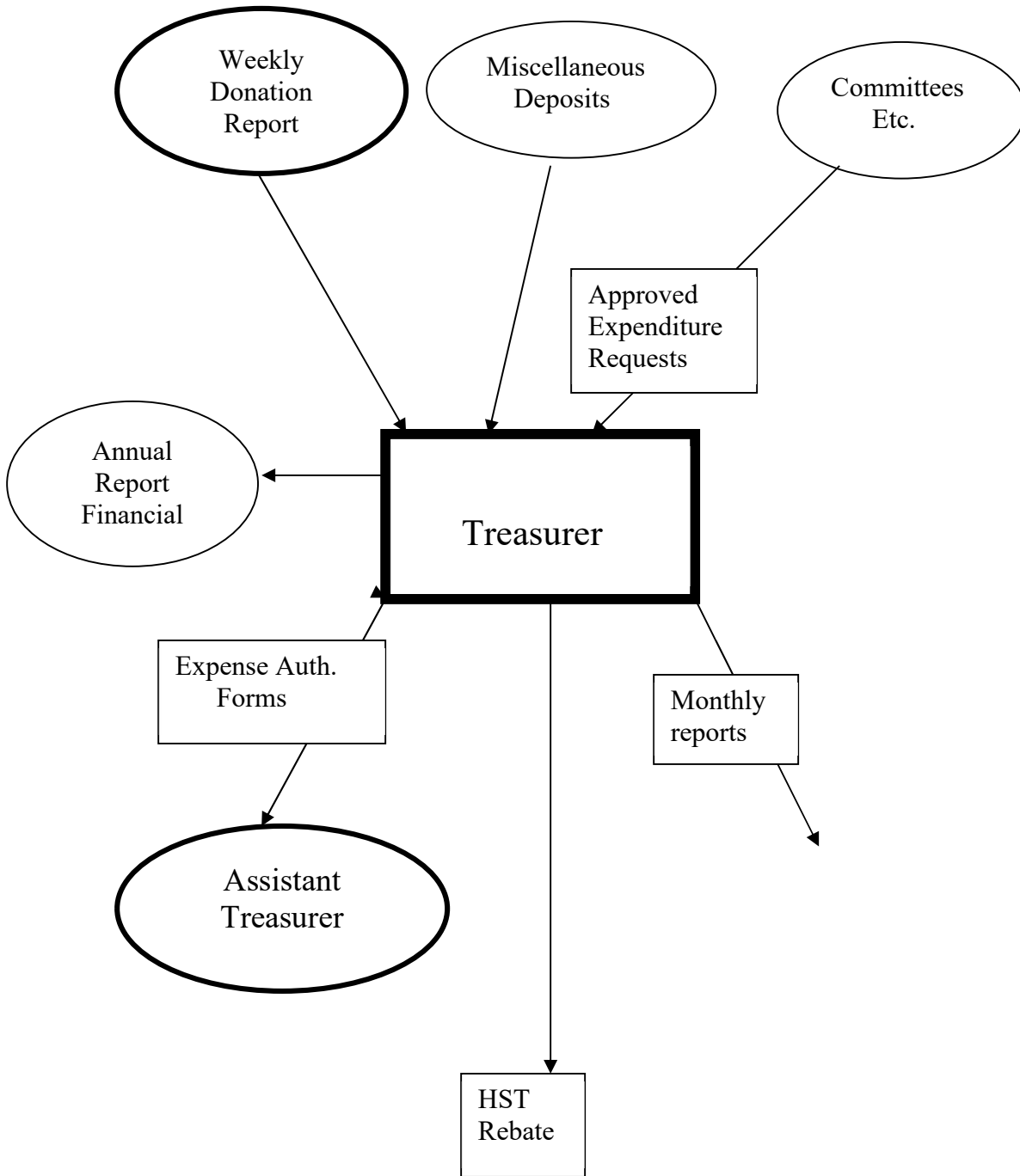
Schedules committee members to complete weekly givings report

Completes annual budget process and communicates to congregation at annual meeting for approval.

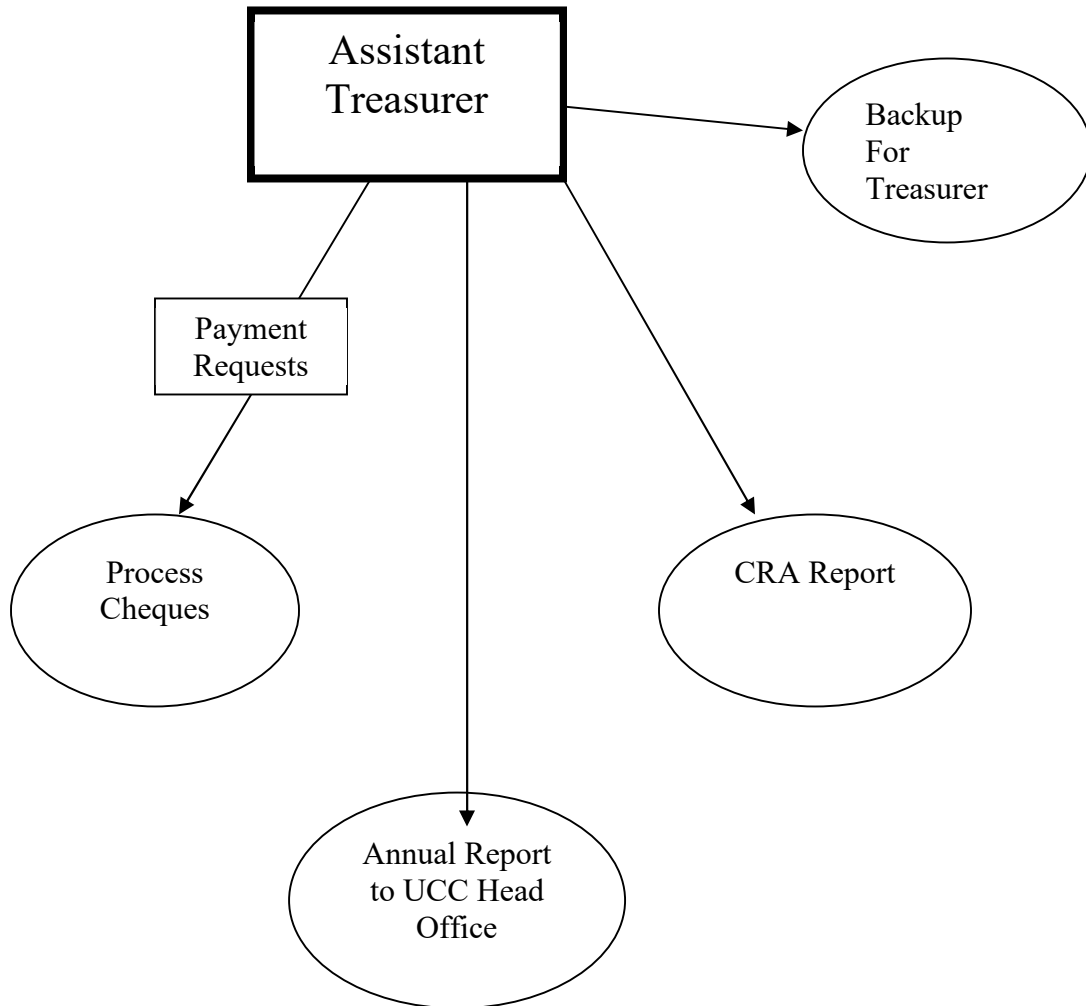
Completes finance committee report for annual report submission.

Finance committee contact for Sarnia Community Foundation investments.

Grace United Treasurer Responsibility Chart



**Grace United Assistant Treasurer
Responsibility Chart**



Assistant Treasurer Function Description

Write cheques, obtain signatures and mail out cheques as per list from treasurer.

Prepare annual Revenue Canada Charitable Agency Return by June 30 of each year.

Prepare annual report as required by the United Church head office by February 28