

**Executive:**

Chair	Kirk Wilson ✓
Vice-Chair	Regan Pfaff-MacDonald ✓
Past Chair	Barb Baxter ✓
Secretary	Diana Fisher ✓
Treasurer	Wayne Pease
Ministry	Pat Morrison ✓

**Committee Representatives:**

AOTS	Bill Palmer
Christian Development	X
Communications	Christopher Cooke ✓
Congregational Care & Growth	Iris Murtha ✓
Finance	Paul Cooper ✓
Region Rep	x
Outreach	Paul Cooper ✓
Ministry & Personnel	John Cooke ✓
Planning	x
Property	Marion Staples ✓
Proclamation and Special Events	x
Trustees	Pete Melanson
Worship	Val Adamson ✓
	Bryce McGarvey ✓

✓ = present

The Meeting was held via electronic cloud program Zoom, as per adjournment and began at 7:05pm. There was a quorum.

**1. Devotion**

Trustees – not present.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION to approve the agenda**

Regan Pfaff-MacDonald/Al Grimwood. Carried

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION to approve the March 4, 2020 council meeting minutes.**

Marion Staples/Bryce McGarvey. Carried

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

CENTRAL UC UPDATE

Central is going to follow-up with Grace UC, Dunlop UC, St. Lukes UC regarding amalgamation; method to be determined due to Covid-19 outbreak.

**5. Correspondence**

LETTER TO CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH

Grace will only consider amalgamation with Central UC and it is understood that Grace UC is an affirming ministry and will retain this status. Central UC will schedule a future meeting with Grace UC, Dunlop UC, St. Lukes UC.

**6. New Business**

UPDATE ON PROFILE AND POSITION DESCRIPTION

We have updated Regional Council on current status – Rev Linda Marcotte has left Grace UC early due to Covid-19 outbreak. She feels uncomfortable with technology replacing a major portion of ministry work along with the physical distancing guidelines. Also, she should be close to her partner and family in New Brunswick. We have updated our ChurchHub profiles and position description. Profiles and position

description documents have been distributed for review by Council. They are Living Faith Story, Demographics, Financial Viability, Real Property, Manse; along with Position Description. A congregational meeting to approve these documents is required and then Regional Council can consider expediting our Search Process.

**MOTION that Council recommend the Profile documents to be presented and approved at a congregation meeting.**

John Cooke/Barb Baxter. Carried

Position description document was reviewed and discussed.

**MOTION that Council recommend the Position Description to be presented and approved at a congregation meeting.**

John Cooke/Bryce McGarvey. Carried

### **REGIONAL COUNCIL (RC)**

#### **Notes from Regional Council – Mar 27/20**

##### **Financial issues**

Federal wage subsidy (75%) announced on March 27 will likely apply to churches. Details to start emerging on Mar 30. Congregations are urged to stay up to date on these developments.

Rules for restricted funds held by the Congregation:

- Funds restricted by Presbytery or Regional Council are available to meet ADP payroll obligations only. This action requires a Council direction to the Trustees, then Trustee action to release the funds. Congregations must track and report their actions to RC. Note: I don't believe this is applicable to Grace.
- Funds restricted by other terms (e.g. designated for specific use or directed by the giver) are not available for payroll or other obligations.

A Congregation can delay submitting their regional assessment until their cash crunch is resolved.

The Congregation is free to take a line of credit or other loan guaranteed by restricted funds. Additional security can be provided by the UCC upon request. Eric Mattheson from UCC National will sign as guarantor.

The UCC of Canada is considering an emergency loan process by which the UCC would loan congregations emergency cash. There is no extra pot of cash in the UCC reserves. Emergency loans, if made, will be financed through debt. If this goes ahead, all other financial means must be addressed by the congregation before they would be eligible including:

- Use of Congregational savings
- Use of restricted funds
- Federal wage subsidy
- Possibly other requirements

Congregations insured through ChurchHub insurance will have a waiver for regular building inspections. All others should seek inspection waivers from their insurer.

TechSoup Canada is offering discounts on technology tools that may be needed to support online worship and pastoral care.

The existing technology grant program offered by the UCC continues to make grants available for hardware.

The UCC General Council Executive is meeting this week to consider the budget priorities for 2020/21 budget cycle. Prior to the pandemic they were anticipating a difficult financial crunch that will obviously be exacerbated by the pandemic crisis.

Financial questions and concerns can be directed to Lynne Allin at RC

### **Stewardship**

Find ways for people to give and publicize them broadly.

Congregations have the option to use [Canada Helps](#) as part of their stewardship efforts. All Congregations are in the system. Initial set-up is required by the Congregation. The base fee is 4%. If the Congregation upgrades their account to provide additional functionality, the fee drops to 3.5%.

Since congregational members may be financially stressed it was recommended that pastoral care contacts and stewardship contacts be handled through separate discussions.

New PAR applications must be mailed to the PAR coordinator.

Rose Cambourne  
The United Church of Canada  
8 Switzer Street  
New Lowell, ON  
L0M 1N0

E transfers are allowable. Discuss set up with your local bank.

2 webinars are available regarding stewardship, givings options and related topics.

Be deliberate about thanking our members for all their gifts, financial and otherwise. Tell the stories about generosity in time, talent and treasure.

### **Building Access**

#### **Meetings**

Governing bodies are permitted to meet through electronic media in a real time form that permits discussion.

Congregational meetings:

- Can be announced in online worship and websites, supplemented by calls, letters and emails
- Meetings can be conducted through electronic media in a real time form that permits discussion/questions.
- Voting procedures must be established in advance.
- Meeting minutes must record how notice was given including the number and percentage of people contacted.

#### **Building Access**

Churches are deemed not essential services except where they provide services to the most vulnerable, and where established programs to support the most vulnerable are provided, there is strict adherence to health guidelines.

Contrary to previous direction, a small group of people can enter the sanctuary to conduct online worship provided there is strict adherence to health guidelines. However, we should seriously consider:

- Should we do this?
- Are we undercutting the health message to isolate/distance?
- Are we providing appropriate leadership when our community needs to be taking health guidelines seriously?

Encouraged to contact our insurance provider for prescribed building-check protocol during this time. Churches can request moving to monthly payments rather than quarterly/annual.

### **Others**

Focus first on the current realities and the anxiety these realities create. Don't be side-tracked by worries about future events that we can't control or influence.

May RC meeting is cancelled.

Oct 3 ARWRC (Antler River Watershed Regional Council) meeting is still scheduled; but will be confirmed later.

The Facebook group was highly recommended, as it is the fastest mechanism for distributing current information.

### **CURTIS DIXON**

We continue to support Curtis/Tracey Dixon family during this time of ill health and continued treatments. Effective March 16, Curtis is now on unpaid compassionate leave for 28 weeks. We have made and delivered a meal to the family weekly for 3 weeks and looking for more volunteers/drivers.

### **INN OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Are we still preparing a meal at the Inn for April? Due to Covid-19 outbreak, physical distance and concern of vulnerable persons present some challenges.

The Inn is complying with all health and safety guidelines and restricting access to the Inn by handing out meals one-by-one in take-out containers.

Kirk will investigate the options of cooking off-site and delivering to the Inn, restaurant/catering delivery option, or cooking at the Inn.

### **REV LINDA MARCOTTE**

Following Linda's early departure, what are our options now? What do we need?

Our Grace volunteer Caregivers team has been calling members who are confined at home/nursing care and feels that pastoral care is being addressed. Marilyn Townsend-Smith has agreed to provide any assistance as needed.

Iris and Pat will discuss further pastoral care gaps for the congregation and draw upon Marilyn Townsend-Smith expertise or others.

### **MOTION to empower M&P to setup a contract for pastoral care with Marilyn Townsend-Smith.**

Chris Cooke/Marion Staples. Carried

## **7. Pastoral Report and Teaching**

PAT MORRISON

No report.

LINDA MARCOTTE

Supply/GAP Minister's report - March 2020

March started out as a lamb, but certainly has gone out as a lion. What an unexpected turn of events! I started the month looking forward to continuing through the Lenten Season as we prepared for Holy Week and Easter Sunday Joy. I was in the midst of preparing worship services and sermons when the pandemic was declared in Canada.

The Lenten Book Study was well attended, and the participants had engaging and stimulating reflections, comments, and interactive, respectful conversation. I maintained updates with Michael Springate, the author of the book *The Beautiful West, The Beloved of God*. Unfortunately, the writer's forum is cancelled, as it will not fit into the author's future schedule. In the meantime, I have asked the participants to finish reading the book and send me their comments & reflections which I will forward to the author.

The weekly Holy Conversation group was going well with thoughtful reflections on the sermons and Scriptures. I started to post daily reflections on the Psalms online called *The GAP* because I was your supply or GAP minister.

Pastoral visiting was on-going. I completed seven in-person pastoral visits in personal homes, nursing homes and senior residents, some with the help of Sylvia Rose before March 15th. As the COVID-19 virus scare intensified, I called senior congregants to help ease their anxiety. I continued this practice last week, before my departure from Grace. I called many from my apartment to offer help with their physical isolation and assure them Grace is here to help them with their needs and to ease their loneliness.

We started to get directives from our Governments, our Region, and the UCC General Council, which was being updated and changing daily, on the COVID-19 pandemic. I attended two ministry team and staff meetings to discuss what are our options and possibilities to nurture our members and adherents while distancing ourselves. I met with the Worship Committee, the Congregational Care & Growth Chairperson, and we proposed a plan for worship and pastoral care - I took the lead with pastoral care. In consultation with Sylvia and Iris, we have in place a plan for pastoral care by naming those most vulnerable and meeting the immediate needs of certain congregants.

I was to participate in the online Zoom worship, but my role changed when I was restricted from being physically in the building at Grace, unable to continue face-to-face pastoral care, lead Worship Services and provide the Sacraments. With the directive from the Region to only allow one person in the building and as Pat has his equipment in the Chapel to live stream or record the Worship, I was unable to participate with other ministry team members because of my limited technological distance skills. I regret this.

Not having my partner Ari here with me, as he had return home before all this happened for what we thought would only be a week or so, we made the very difficult decision that I needed to return to the east coast.

With the decision to leave Grace before the end of my appointment - May 31st, I transitioned the pastoral concerns to Sylvia and Iris. I updated John, Lori and Pat. I am available for any further follow-up as needed.

I want to thank the Grace United Council for your guidance and leadership while I have been here.

To be a part of your ministry has been a joy.

Respectfully submitted, in peace and grace,

Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte

## 8. Key Ministry Committee Reports

### Worship

The focus of the March Worship Committee meeting was to discuss ideas and options for worship services during the church closure and the subsequent transition to reopening. There was extensive discussion regarding many aspects of the impact of the COVID-19 response and actions on the spiritual needs of the Grace United community as well as idea generation regarding the actions and things that the Worship Committee can do and support. Linda outlined that the Moderator of the United Church is recording a weekly worship service during the period of church closures. The service is open access for anyone with Internet access, and it can either be viewed live on Tuesdays, or the recording can be viewed at any time. This was the default service that was recommended for the initial Sunday. Pat described how he is viewing the current situation not only as a challenge because traditional methods of providing resources and interacting with people are not available, but also as an opportunity to try new methods, and engage people to think about the opportunities that are available for new forms of engagement and ministry. Several items were considered including meditations and reflections from the ministry staff. At that meeting, all options were being considered, including text-based, audio-based or video-based, and could be a way to contextualize the scripture readings with the current and contemporary situation.

Glenn reviewed some ideas that he had for continuing with the music ministry. He continues to work with the choir by sharing music via email and with the end of this situation in mind. Glenn also said that he has been experimenting with recording options for both piano and vocal accompaniment as Beth Parsons has said that she would sing hymns for recording and posting during this time. The committee fully supported these activities. There was some discussion about whether the Band could provide any music options during this time.

Pat, Glenn and Beth put together a very well prepared and inspirational service for Sunday, March 29. The Worship Committee decided that feedback options for congregation could offer a way to interact with the minister and act as a substitute for the end of service narthex greetings that typically follow a service. Chris Cooke set up a new email for general feedback, and Lori is forwarding any emails that come directly to her into the feedback email. Gord Walkling is reviewing, collating and categorizing responses from both email correspondence and Facebook posts. The summary of the comments is being shared with Pat and Glenn, as the primary contacts currently responsible for worship service preparation.

This week, the Worship message that will accompany the link to the service will also encourage people to submit prayer requests to the feedback email address so that they can be collected for reading during the next service. Any requests that are submitted after the weekly cut-off date will be held over and read the following week.

### Christian Development

Dan Leaver continues to find creative ways to continue programming with children and youth.

### Congregational Care & Growth

Pastoral Care

We delivered 31 bud vases with a carnation and a note saying, "From your friends at Grace". The recipients were those in retirement homes, nursing homes, shut-ins and those who had a bereavement

in the past year.

The Caregiving Committee, at least monthly, phone or visit 13 in retirement homes, 4 in nursing homes and 19 in their homes.

This month 9 others living alone were contacted by phone or visit.

These numbers are just the tip of the iceberg because we found on phoning that other members of the congregation had checked in on many of them.

We received no requests for grocery shopping. However, it was stated by some of the volunteers that this had become a problem because of the advice to stay at home and socially isolate as well as the stores' limit on some grocery items. Three meals were delivered to a family but because of the reasons stated above it was difficult to find a volunteer.

### **Outreach**

March soup luncheon (with donations directed to Lambton Center) was cancelled. Unlikely that the April 19 soup luncheon will happen.

Grace continues to support the IOGS our regularly scheduled 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday monthly meal. A modified format was used for the March 25<sup>th</sup> event – many thanks to the volunteers from Grace who participated. The Inn has requested that Grace help support the Easter Sunday meal. In addition, planning for the April 25<sup>th</sup> meal needs to consider the logistics of reduced access to the building.

### **Proclamation and Special Events**

No report

## 9. Governance and Support Committee Reports:

### **Planning**

No report.

### **Finance**

Following Church closure on March 13, appreciate the efforts and modifications made to normal protocols for maintaining the Church finances (i.e. no longer possible to use system of counters and bankers for givings processing). Many thanks to Bob Newman and Lori Armstrong to keeping the \$\$ counted and recorded.

End of March operating data not available for this meeting. Finance will communicate results as soon as available. Based on givings since March 15 and YTD end-of February data, there will be significant challenges (Reserve Fund may only provide 3-4 months of flexibility). Thanks to all members of the congregation who are either maintaining PAR donations, contributing via electronic transfers or mailing cheques. Finance recommends taking all reasonable cost reduction and/or deferral steps now (regional assessment fees, M&S 2020 commitment, minimizing utility usage, etc.) until more information is available.

### **Communications**

Lori has taken her desktop computer home. Future laptop considerations. Website has been updated. Created worship feedback email account to gather input and ideas about worship presentation.

**Property**

Yard work will be coming up end of April.

**Trustees**

No report.

**Ministry & Personnel**

No report.

**AOTS**

Effective April 1st, Al Grimwood will be taking over as the AOTS representative to Grace Council. Last breakfast meeting was cancelled. -- Bill Palmer

Many thanks to all who have continued to volunteer many hours to keep our ministry and outreach going. A special appreciation to John Cooke, who is always at the helm to handle any curve or situation that arises.

**10. Meeting closed at 8:48pm**

**11. Closing Prayer**

Pat lead us in a closing prayer.

Next regular meeting: MAY 6, 2020

**2020 Devotion Responsibility:**

JANUARY – Communications  
FEBRUARY – Property  
MARCH – Planning  
APRIL – Trustees  
MAY – Worship  
JUNE – June  
JULY - na  
AUGUST - na  
SEPTEMBER – na  
OCTOBER – Finance  
NOVEMBER – Outreach  
DECEMBER – M&P

**2020 Sunday Lock-up Responsibility:**

JANUARY – Planning  
FEBRUARY – Trustees  
MARCH – Worship  
APRIL – CD  
MAY – CC&G  
JUNE – AOTS  
JULY – Communications  
AUGUST – Finance  
SEPTEMBER – Outreach  
OCTOBER – M&P  
NOVEMBER – Property  
DECEMBER - Planning

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Kirk Wilson, Council Chair

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Diana Fisher, Council Secretary