

Council Minutes April 1, 2026 Grace United Church

Daniella D'Andrea	Chair	Present
Joe Chan	Vice-Chair	Present
Tory Walko	Past Chair	Absent
Cecily Chiles	Secretary	Present
Paul Cooper	Treasurer Outreach Committee Representative	Present
Kenji Marui	Ministry	Present
Pat Morrison	Ministry	Present
<u>Committee Representatives:</u>		
Marilyn Barros	Region Rep	Present
Christopher Cooke	Communications	Present
John Cooke	Property	Present
Laura Black	Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	Present
Bruce Davies	Trustees	Present
Marion Staples	Finance Committee Representative	Present
Bryce McGarvey	Worship	Present
Jim Wicks	Planning	Present
Bev Walkling	Congregational Care & Growth (CC&G) Proclamation and Special Events	Present
Shirley Willis	Christian Development	Present

The Meeting was held in person and via Zoom with 16 participants and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. Devotion:

Laura Black on behalf of M&P offered a devotion on the theme: Meditation by Rev. Tremble quote from Thomas Aquinas.

2. Reading of Scripture, reflection on the theme *Growing in Christ; The Gospels in Action*

Reflection on *Love thy neighbour*. Where have you noticed the gospels in action?

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: to approve the agenda, as amended. [John Cooke / Bruce Davies] – Carried

Discussion: add follow-up from the Annual meeting under new Business.

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes March 4, 2026 [Bryce McGarvey / Paul Cooper] – Carried. (1 abstention)

Discussion:

Nominating report, slate of candidates: Marion Staples is the Council Rep. Paul Cooper is chair.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. None identified

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6. Correspondence

- A. Kenji shared a message of thanks he received from Dunlop Central United Church Council.
- B. Request from Scott Woods, would like to use Grace again for a concert on Dec. 19. Proceeds go to St. Joseph's Hospice.
- C. Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society is seeking a site for a food bank for their clients, wondered if Grace would host.

7. New Business

A. Kitchen Refresh Project.

Planning reported that a Project Proposal form was received for a project to renovate the large kitchen beside the gym. The committee reviewed and scored two projects, the oven repair and the Kitchen Refresh Project. The stove repair: the right-side oven has been out of service for the past 11 months. Estimate in June 2025 to repair was \$2400 plus tax. Waiting for an update on the estimate from the contractor. Alternatives to the repair are to replace the old stove with a more modern gas stove with electronic pilots or a commercial electric range.

Motion: The Council approve the cost of the gas stove repair by MN Mechanical, create or confirm training materials for safe use of the stove and establish responsibility for ensuring people are properly trained. [Jim Wicks / Paul Cooper] - Carried

Discussion: what is the threshold for when to replace a piece of equipment that is 6 decades old. Run to failure is the plan.

Outreach looking at refreshing the calling it : *Wonderful Kitchen Repair Project WKRP*. There are a number of deficiencies and things that would make the kitchen look better including a deep cleaning. A crew of volunteers did a deep clean in March. Fundraising will be

Motion: that Council approve in principle a project to refresh the large kitchen. [Paul Cooper / Bryce McGarvey] - Carried

Discussion: Look to work with property to undertake a regular cleaning of the kitchen.

Is the only proposed structural change to the countertops? Yes.

One item in the proposal, laminate countertops, is there consideration for stainless steel countertops? Stainless is better for food safety.

Council is supportive of the efforts of the members in Outreach to refresh the kitchen and expressed a desire to move the project forward.

Council requests Outreach come back to Council with a definitive scope of the project and any associated fundraising.

B. Follow-up from the annual meeting.

Kenji reported that at the Annual meeting, the specific agenda item to elect the council officers or the committee reps. It was recommended that a special congregational meeting be called after the new members welcoming service on April 26, immediately following a worship service. Ministerial staff as representatives of the Region will call the congregational meeting.

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C. Nominating Report. The slate of candidates is listed below. Joe Chan will be elected as Vice-chair after he becomes a member of Grace.

Past Chair	Tory Walko
Chair	Daniella D’Andrea
Vice Chair	Joseph Chan
Secretary	Cecily Chiles
Treasurer	Paul Cooper
Assistant Treasurer	Marion Staples
Christian Development	Shirley Willis (C&R)
Communications	Chris Cooke (C&R)
Congregational Care & Growth	Bev Walkling (C&R)
Finance	Paul Cooper (C)
Finance	Marion Staples (R)
Ministry & Personnel	Laura Black (C&R)
Outreach	Paul Cooper (C&R)
Planning	Jim Wicks (C&R)
Property	John Cooke (C&R)
Regional Representative	Marilyn Barros
Special Events	Bev Walkling (C&R)
Trustees	Joanna Catterson (C)
	Bruce Davies (R)
	Dave Ashdown (R)
	Neil Holloway (R)
Worship	Bryce McGarvey (C&R)
Nominating	Tory Walko (C)
A.O.T.S.	Paul Cooper
	John Cooke
Ministers	Rev. Dr. Kenji Marui
	Rev. Pat Morrison

C = Chair of committee
R = Representative on Council

8. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

A. Kenji Marui

- Collaboration with congregations at St. Luke’s and Dunlop Central shared worship services for Holy Week.
- Carmen Lansdowne joined the PIE Day gathering. There was a good turnout for this event.
- Jazz Worship services, next service is on April 19.
- Working as a teaching assistant for an on-line preaching course.
- Working on a detailed sabbatical plan with M&P. Sabbatical dates July 13 to Nov. 29. Deborah McGill will be covering several worship services and emergency pastoral care coverage.

B. Pat Morrison

- I am currently engaged in preparations for the congregational retreat on April 17-18.
- I will be away next Council meeting taking holidays and study leave before Kenji begins his sabbatical.

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9. Key Ministry Committee Reports

A. Worship

- Extended Invitations for Additional Pulpit Supply: Marilyn Townsend-Smith has agreed to cover a number of the remaining dates during Kenji's leave. Dates and number of Sundays being worked on.
- Update on Website and Video: Gord Walkling reported that he and Tessa Hall had met with Matt Godfrey after a worship service. They surveyed various locations in the church that could potentially be used for recording clips from members of the congregation about what they enjoy about Grace. Several dates/times have been set for late April for recording.
- Musical Notes: Marque reported that there is a plan to purchase copies of new hymn books for the choir, music leaders and potentially copies for the congregation. The purchases will be paid for from the Memorial Fund. Additionally, the Starlight Singers will sing on May 10 and again in June, and Marque continues to engage members of the congregation to participate in the music ministry.

Bryce McGarvey

B. Christian Development

- No report.

Shirley Willis

C. Outreach

- Successful soup luncheon on March 08 for the Bluewater Growing Project of the Canadian Food Grains Bank. Great support from many hands. Thanks to John Young and Norm Holbrook for being the minute people. A total of \$12,300 was raised. Next soup luncheon is scheduled for April 19th.
- Special Easter offering is available to support the Mission and Service fund of the UCC.
- Outreach Committee and Friends completed a deep clean of the big kitchen on March 24th; it was a lot of work but made a significant difference. Outreach is continuing to work additional scope items for the "Big Kitchen Refresh Project"
- 93 clients served at the March 25th Inn meal.
- 73 pounds of food taken to the Inn after the March 01 food bank Sunday
- Request from Scott Woods group to again use the Sanctuary and Grace facilities on December 19 for a performance. They donate part of the proceeds to St. Joseph's hospice (\$1630 raised in 2025).
- Hopefully, no heating related issues this year.

Paul Cooper

- Congregational Care and Growth
- PIE Day had good representation from Grace.
- Guess who's cooking dinner was a huge success. Given that it was so successful, the committee would like to organize another date in the fall.
- Flowers: Thanks to Diane Werezak organizing Easter flowers that were delivered on March 31, 2026. McKellar's flowers made beautiful presentation of the flowers.
- April 26 service to welcome new members. The following people were recommended for membership at Grace United Church:
Anne Kurtz-Alton,
Debbie and Mike Burns,
Joe and Lo-Anne Chan,
John and Kathy Dodkin,
Stacey and Brian Huxtable,
Linda Lucas,
Marlene McBride (transfer of membership)
Andrew Koornstra and Marque Smith

Motion: that Council approve these people for membership at Grace United Church. [Bev Walkling / Chris Cooke] - Carried

Bev Walkling

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D. Proclamation and Special Events

- The Special Events Committee was thrilled to host the Big Sing Thing at Grace United Church on Friday, March 20, 2026. It was one of the biggest new events that our committee has taken on! We were honoured to have the opportunity to host musicians Mark Payne and Pat Morrison here at Grace, in our Sanctuary. The theme of Beatles music was a proven winner, with the audience as participants, singing the words embedded in their memories, without rehearsals. We rocked the house!
- Over the course of just over a month, 258 tickets were sold, 246 were presale tickets, and 12 were at-the-door on the night of the concert. As well, we received \$25 in donations from two participants and raised a few funds with refreshments during the intermission. In all, our gross revenue was nearly \$8000! After expenses for the band, advertising, tickets and refreshments of approximately \$3294, we were able to raise the amazing amount of just over \$4600!
- Our special thanks go to Pat Morrison for offering us the opportunity to raise funds for the Grace budget by hosting a fun night of entertainment, and to all of you who supported our committee by buying tickets and coming out to make this evening of Beatles music a big success!

Yvonne, Bev, Daniella – Your Special Events Team at Grace

10. Governance and Support Committee Reports

A. Planning

- No report.

Jim Wicks

B. Finance

- Reviewed February Financial Statements. Revenue from Givings was up 6.33% due to the influx of stock option funding. Thank you to all those people who contributed in this manner. It will increase our cash flow from May through to October. We had a net income of \$26443.31 at the end of February. Capital Replacement Fund is decreasing to the point of being zero within the next few months.
- Made our first ¼ assessment payment to the United Church of Canada in the amount of \$5478.75. Our yearly remittance is \$21915.00
- The congregation approved a 2026 budget deficit of \$15k. Council will determine if there is any flexibility to utilize idle funds. This item should be included on the Agenda for May Council meeting.
- Working on the CRA Report due at the end of June.
- Discussed coverage for Marion as her surgery date has been back dated to May 4. Bob Newman will be covering her job.
- As follow-up to the 2025 Financial Review suggestions have been provided to document the agreement between Grace and SCF. Paul Cooper and Gord Walkling are working on this.
- We are still having issues with the new version of PAR. Bob Newman is working with Kathy and the United Church to resolve these issues.
- Paul is making inquires as to how the other United Churches are handling their bookkeeping.

Marion Staples

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C. Property

- Kurita Water contract for boiler water monitoring renewed.
- Purchased & installed a new timer switch for the lights outside the main kitchen. Thank you to George Vero for his assistance.
- Investigating options for the cracked window in Kathy's office.
- Looking at options to repair the Sanctuary soffit/eaves.
- Curtis plans to take 3 weeks of vacation in the summer. Coverage will be provided by Danny Knight.
- Two trees that came partially down that need to be removed. Contractor identified to complete this work.

Motion: that Council approve the removal of the trees from the property at a cost of \$1325 plus tax [John Cooke / Marilyn Barros] - Carried

John Cooke

D. M & P

- No report.

Laura Black

E. Communications

- Video, Tory and Chris created a primer video for the constitution can get a little intro to how our governance works. Review it with your committee members, any questions then bring it to Council. There's a link to it from the church website, go to the constitution page to find the video. Link: <https://www.graceucsarnia.com/constitution.html>
- Communications has renewed Cogeco UltraFibre 1G internet at \$70/month for 3 years. However, we will be transferring phone service from Cogeco to YoVu for \$100/month over the next few weeks. We will keep our phone numbers. All existing phones in the church will be removed. Staff will use a "softphone" on their laptops or cell phones to place or receive calls. YoVu comes with new features such as texting and voicemail transcription.
- Council recommended that the change to the phone system should be communicated to the congregation.

Chris Cooke

F. Regional Council

- Did anyone follow up with my invite to look at the UC of C website to find an interesting item?
- Executive Minister Mark Laird invites communities of Faith to a Zoom - Town Hall regarding Toward 2035: for a time of conversation, and answering questions of what does Towards 2035 mean in your local context, and what resources are needed for us to be this group of:
 - resilient, inspired, diverse contextual communities of disciples
 - seeking to continue the story of Jesus
 - by embodying Christ's presence in the world!
 - These sessions are open to clergy, lay reps, chairs of boards/council's congregation members.
 - Please register for a time at fits your schedule:
 - Wed April 29th 7-830pm
 - Wed May 6th 7-8:30 pm
 - Tues May 12th 1:30-3pm
- Trustee information session – Wednesday, April 15th from 7-8:30 pm, register for this zoom event
- Lay leader recorded webinars on a variety of topics – trustee information, the story behind statistics, church archives, leases, together we thrive, healthy disagreements and more <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/communities-of-faith/lets-connect-lay-leader-resources/>
- Webinar series – Confronting Christian Antisemitism- Supporting Justice for Palestinians – April 8, 15 and 22 from 10-11:30
- Earth Week April 19-26 – resources available
- UNJPPI (United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel) is offering a seminar on zoom on Monday, April 20 at 7 ET to learn about how communities of faith can join the Apartheid Free Community movement - Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner and leaders of United Church communities that have made this declaration to aspire to be apartheid free.

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- Full AnterRiverWatershed Region e-newsletter <https://arwrcucc.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=63d0bc5355&e=8325eff85f>

Marilyn Barros

G. Trustees

- Received confirmation from Community Living that their insurance has been renewed.

Bruce Daview

H. AOTS

- No report

11. Reflection and Closing Prayer

Reflection on Devotion. Council members were invited to share their reflections on love thy neighbour

Meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

Pat led a closing prayer

Next Regular Council Meeting: Wednesday May 6, 2026.

Daniella D’Andrea, Chair

Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

Sunday Lock-up Responsibility		
2026	January	Communications
	February	Outreach
	March	Property
	April	Planning
	May	Trustees
	June	Worship
	July	CD
	August	CC&G
	September	M&P
	October	Finance
	November	Communications
	December	Outreach
Devotional at Council Meetings		
2026	January	Regional Council
	February	Communications
	March	Finance
	April	M&P
	May	Outreach
	June	Trustees
	July	na
	August	na
	September	na
	October	Planning
	November	CC&G
	December	Property