

Tory Walko	Chair	Present
Daniella D’Andrea	Vice-Chair	
Marion Staples	Past Chair	Present
Cecily Chiles	Secretary	Present
Paul Cooper	Treasurer Finance Committee Representative Outreach Committee Representative	Present
Kenji Marui	Ministry	Present
Pat Morrison	Ministry	Present
Committee Representatives:		
Marilyn Barros	Region Rep	Present
Christopher Cooke	Communications	Present
John Cooke	Ministry & Personnel (M&P) Property	Present
Neil Holloway	Trustees	Present
Bryce McGarvey	Worship	
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 13 participants and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. **Devotion:** Bev Walkling on behalf of Proclamation and Special Events “Holy knots and dropped stitches” by Rev. Cameron Trimble. Printed on page 8 of these minutes.
2. **Reading of Scripture, reflection on the theme *Seeds of Curiosity***
Tory shared some of the discussion heard at the Bell Ritual after Sunday Worship services, people feel a sense of belonging at Grace. Council heard the reading of John 4: 34-42
3. **Approval of Agenda**
MOTION: to approve the agenda. [Bev Walkling / Chris Cooke] – Carried
Discussion: The Sunday Lock-up schedule was revised and harmonized with the list posted in the Narthex. Please take note of the new schedule for Committees to be responsible for locking the church after Sunday Worship Services. Schedule for Devotion at Council meetings was also revised.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes October 8, 2025 [Marion Staples / Marilyn Barros] – Carried.
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
 - A. Communications, Privacy Policy 2025 Proposal
MOTION: that the Personal Information Privacy Policy be approved and replace Constitution Appendix 1.5 Privacy. [Chris Cooke \ John Cooke] – Carried.
Discussion: ARW Regional Council developed a policy template which formed the basis of the new Grace policy. One addition to the policy was to include a personal information request form for persons wanting to find their personal information held by the church (i.e. Baptismal certificate).
Definition of employee is printed in italics is intended to define “employee” for the purposes of the Privacy Policy and not to any other policy for the church.
Guidelines for handling person information were developed by Communications approved it. The guidelines offer practical information on how personal information is handled at Grace. Office Administrator and Communications will keep the guidelines up to date. Privacy officer is the Office Administrator (Kathy Dodkin).

If a committee is asked for personal information, the request should be directed to the Privacy Officer/Office Administrator. If a person or committee is intending to gather and store personal information, then the Privacy Officer should be consulted.

B. Property 2025 Rental Policy

MOTION: that the motion to approve the Rental Policy be lifted from the table. [John Cooke \ Marion Staples] - Carried

Discussion with Committees resulted in one change regarding Worship approval for use of the Chapel. The Chapel is used more as meeting/activity space and, as such, Worship approval for use of the Chapel is no longer required.

MOTION: that the Rental Policy be amended to remove the requirement for Worship approval for use of the Chapel. [John Cooke \ Chris Cooke] - Carried

MOTION: that the Rental Policy be approved as amended. [John Cooke \Chris Cooke] – Carried

6. Correspondence

None

7. New Business

None

8. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

A. Pat Morrison's report

- I continue my work with the planning team for Collective 2026, the bi-annual youth and young adult conference hosted by the UCC and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The planning cycle will have me attending on-site planning meetings at Brock University where the event is to be held in August.
- The next Men's Price of Admission is planned for January 10 and Peg Dawkins has kindly agreed to offer her home to host. A four course meal is catered and paid for by donors, so the price of admission for attendees is to bring a personal story of a difficult chapter of life.
- Two years ago I gathered four Grace teenagers to begin a four-month focus group where I shared my research to date on adolescent mental health. Part of their work was to come up with a communal ritual that set a rhythm to our communal life and that delivers developmental nutrients into the lives of teens. The bell ritual was birthed, and over the past year and a half it has become a fixture, continuing to animate concepts and practices that Kenji and I have been pointing to: resonance, revelation, otherness, discernment, waiting and listening. Our youth continue to lead.
- The Grace congregational retreat is book for April 17 and 18 at Lambton Centre. Our theme speaker will be Blair Bertrand, author of When Church Stops Working. His focus will be to continue the conversation on what it means to be church in what Taylor calls 'a secular age', and help move us forward in our discerning.

B. Kenji Marui's report

- Currently journeying with a couple families on their end-of-life
- Walk a Mile \$3530 raised by Amazing Grace team
- Ecumenical effort to write an open letter in support of Indwell and circulating to other churches, inviting them to join on as signatories
- Transgender Day of Remembrance is November 20, for which I have to send my regrets
- 2026 planning - holidays July, August-October sabbatical, November study leave return for Advent. Work with M&P and Worship to secure long-term pulpit supply

9. Key Ministry Committee Reports**A. Worship**

- **Grace Rental Policy Review:** John Cooke from the Property Committee described modifications to the Grace rental policy. A major point of discussion was the evolving requirements for rental groups to ensure that they have liability insurance coverage for the activities that they hold at the church. An additional item was the Worship Committee suggesting that the chapel be removed from the document that is used to obtain approval for usage. The rationale is that the chapel is now used primarily as a meeting space and that if a wedding or funeral event was requested, then the committee could be consulted for their input.
- **Richard Bott Ideas:** The committee continued the discussion about the Richard Bott ideas for worship services. The general consensus is that Grace is doing the majority of the items in his list well enough that there is not a need for any major changes. The committee agreed that Bott's point about nametags was potentially problematic for people who do not like to wear them (reasons could be not wanting to be centred out as "new" or preferring to remain more anonymous). On the item regarding offering options, the committee was supportive of exploring the use of a QR code for donations. The QR code was set up and tested and is now available for use.
- **Guest Minister No-Show Contingency:** A question was raised regarding a scenario of a guest minister being unable to attend at the last minute due to some type of emergency. It was suggested that the guest minister have the telephone numbers of the M&P contact as well as the Worship Committee contact who would be assisting with the service. Further discussions will take place regarding how the service would be led by members of the Worship Committee.

Bryce McGarvey

B. Christian Development

- Volunteers involved in CD activities requested to do updated police checks. Vulnerable sector checks.

Shirley Willis

C. Congregational Care and Growth (CC&G)

- **Motion to approve marriage of Holly Shelton and Stephen Duffy [Bev Walkling \ Marilyn Barros] - Carried**
- The committee discussed the new Privacy Policy.
- Volunteer appreciation Sunday was successful. Thanks to Tory for his support at the event.
- Ontario volunteer awards, only one submission was received. Looking for submissions this week to submit a block of entries.
- Senior Singles event had 8 attendees in October. Happening the second Tuesday of the month.
- Euchre was well received, 3 tables of players.
- Assistance with grocery shopping was secured. People responded quickly to a call for volunteers.
- Floral deliveries, Carol Homes will continue to do these deliveries.
- Meeting this week to review budget and volunteer applications.

Bev Walkling

D. Proclamation and Special Events

- Fall Fair on Saturday Oct. 18. Was a successful day and important to continue this legacy. Looking to recruit people to take over the organization of the event.
- Prail's is offering poinsettia sales as a fundraiser again this year. Short-term limited fundraiser, as soon as the 1000 units are sold out the sale is closed. Pick up Nov. 21. Place orders asap.
- New members for the committee would be very welcome.

Bev Walkling

E. Outreach

- Soup Luncheon on September 28th raised about \$2800 for Indwell supportive housing proposal.
- Soup Luncheon on November 2nd raised about \$1800 for River City Vineyard shelter safety upgrades.
- Inn of the Good Shepherd support continues with 85 pounds of food donations and 137 clients served on October 22nd
- Proposed date and beneficiary for next soup luncheon is January 18, 2026 and RayJon. Date does not conflict with any other planned activity.
- Following the January Soup lunch the next date is assumed to follow the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) in early March 2026. Council will discuss setting a date for the ACM at the December Council meeting.
- Revisit the question of date for ACM at December meeting. Finance will advise on when all the information needed for the Annual Report and ACM will be available.

Paul Cooper

10. **Governance and Support Committee Reports**A. Finance

- Finalizing plan for Legacy Fund capital. Current GIC terms expire on November 22, 2025
- Initiating 2026 Budget Cycle. Committees are requested to submit 2026 budget numbers by November 30, 2025.
- Scotia Bank Legacy Fund GIC's mature in late November. Scoping next investment options to review with Trustees.

Paul Cooper

B. M&P

- Curtis returned to full duties on Oct 19. Thank you to Danny Knight for his diligent coverage over the summer and fall.
- The M&P budget is in development. Some key assumptions need to be clarified before we can share the result.
- M&P is responsible for the Non-Taxable Allowances Policy which describes the allowances provided to Ministers and Lay Staff. The policy was approved by Council in November 2024. The appendix in the policy lists the specific allowance amounts. We are seeking approval for 2 changes to be consistent with the UCC guidelines.

Moved that: The mileage allowance be increased from \$0.55 to \$0.60 per kilometer and Pat's CELR allowance be increased from \$1690 to \$1733 per year. [John Cooke \ Chris Cooke] – Carried.

CELR: Continuous Education and Learning Allowance

John Cooke

C. Property

- The critter war has been “won” at least for now. Thank you to Dave Veldman who found and repaired another location on the roof where raccoons were gaining entry to the eaves and various locations in the building.
- Repair of the Main Kitchen stove right-side oven is on hold indefinitely.
- A neutralizer cartridge was installed on the Chapel furnace/AC unit condensate line to resolve the issue found over the summer. Thank you to Dave Veldman for his work on this project.
- We are waiting for the contractor to complete repair of the Sanctuary soffit.
- We are seeking a person to be responsible for weekend sidewalk snow clearing.
- The flat roof over the Cathcart Entrance needs repair to prevent rain accumulating on the sidewalk and a slipping hazard in the winter. We identified a contractor to repair the roof at a cost of ~\$1500. We expect the roof will require replacement in 2-4 years (\$6-10k).
- Recycle collection will be transitioned from the City to the Circular Materials contractor in 2026 (a provincial program). Institutional/church/commercial clients currently served by the City program likely won't be served by the new program. It's not clear what service, if any, will be available to Grace in 2026. We are monitoring communications and investigating options. The likely scenarios are:
 - a. Grace recyclables disposed of as regular garbage, likely incurring bag tag charges. This could happen for the first few months before another solution is found.
 - b. The City of Sarnia negotiates with Circular Materials to continue recyclables collection. Cost unknown.
 - c. Private collection service. Costs and logistics unknown.
- The semi-annual HVAC equipment inspections and filter changes were completed in Oct. A problem was discovered with the #1 boiler controls. The boiler is operating normally, although it may not restart reliably. We recommend the front end/relay board be replaced.
- **Moved that: Council approve replacement of #1 boiler front end/relay board at a cost of \$2538 + tax. [John Cooke \ Chris Cooke] – Carried**
Discussion: Funds would be from Property budget or Capital Replacement.

John Cooke

D. Communications

- New Grace Website is up and running.
- The committee is developing new pamphlets for the pews.

Chris Cooke

E. Planning**Welcome New Member**

- Marilyn Barros has generously agreed to join the Planning Committee
Planning Committee “Real Connections with Real People” Next Event
- Proposing that Grace hold another event in January 2026
 - Goal is to provide an opportunity for us to get to know on a deeper level other individuals in our faith community
 - Open invitation to the congregation. Holding the event after church on Sunday. After Bell Ringing and Room 1 gathering
 - Lunch to be provided
 - Initially all-together and give a thought-provoking presentation
 - Break into discussion groups and talk over a meal
 - Each group will have a facilitator/gate-keeper to guide the discussion event (Will be looking for facilitator volunteers)
 - As before, there will be seed questions available for the facilitators
 - The discussion time will be limited to 1:00 to not impact on typical Sunday plans
 - Proposed date: **Sunday, January 25, 2026**

Communication will take place in advance through the standard channels

Jim Wicks

F. Trustees

- Item 1- Insurance
The Trustees are waiting for quotes to come back after applications were made at the end of September. A quote has been received from the UCC Connect Program but we are still waiting from information from our Broker at Brokerlink. An inquiry about progress was sent last week but we have not had a reply. We will continue to push for a timely response so we have ample time to consider our options.
- Item 2- Women's Interval Home
A request has been received to set up a meeting with representatives from the Women's Interval Home to explore possible partnerships re their plans for transitional housing. We are currently working on scheduling that meeting and will keep Council updated on the request and discussions.

Neil Holloway

G. Regional Council

A few mentions from the Antler River Watershed newsletter:

- Pearce Williams camp at Fingal, ON – offering social club events for ages 55+ on Thursdays from 9:30 – 11:30 am. Topics include – games, nesting box building, labyrinth walking in nature and seniors in camping.
- November 13th Online Lunch and Learn – Here I Am Legacy Giving Campaign
- A recording of Children's Ministry event – Recruiting, Maintaining and Celebrating Volunteers
- For Young Adults – November 30th 3:30 – 5:30 at Wesley - Knox United Church in London: The Palestine Land Exercise workshop, to deepen understanding of Palestine and Israel history.
- *GC45 Decisions re: Israel and Palestine* [Summary of GC45 Actions re Israel Palestine.docx](#)
- Climate Justice/For the Love of Creation
- November 18th daytime or evening workshop - Succeed at Advocacy, casting a vision for a better world, Whether you're new to advocacy or a seasoned campaigner, you'll find tools, support, and inspiration to help you build strong relationships with your MP and speak out on the issues that matter most.
- Nov. 18th 6pm-7:30 – Cross Country Check-In Spend some time with members of the General Council Executive, the decision-making body for the United Church in an informal, thoughtful town hall. Everyone is welcome.
- November 28th at 7pm – Cultivating Digital Community
For entire newsletter:
<https://arwrcucc.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=2059897d24&e=8325eff85f>

Marilyn Barros

H. AOTS

- AOTS hosted a BBQ at the Fall Fair.

11. Reflection and Closing Prayer

Reflection on scripture. Council members were invited to share their reflections, what is God telling us about the work in the church.

Meeting closed at 9:20 pm.

Kenji led a closing prayer

Next Regular Council Meeting: Wednesday December 3, 2025.

Tory Walko, Council Chair

Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

2025-2026 Sunday Lock-up Responsibility		
2025	October	CC&G
	November	M&P
	December	Finance
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
2025-2026 Devotional at Council Meetings		
2025	October	Worship
	November	Proclamation and Special Events
	December	CD
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

Holy Knots and Dropped Stitches**Rev. Cameron Trimble**

“Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.” — Anonymous Stitcher of Sacred Wisdom

This weekend, in a burst of spiritual optimism (and questionable judgment), I decided to learn how to knit. I told myself it would be meditative. Grounding. A way to embody peace while Rome burns and our democracy does backflips into the abyss. My friend, who is both gifted and suspicious, watched me closely as I took up the needles. She patiently cast on a row, explained the mechanics, and then handed it over with the quiet confidence of someone who knew this would end in either enlightenment or expletives. I made it through two rows before I began praying in four-letter words. By row four, I had entered a kind of spiritual purgatory where every stitch was both a sacrament and a small betrayal. I briefly considered ordaining the fireplace as a holy place of yarn sacrifice. Listen, I get it now: knitters are spiritual warriors. You wield your needles like tiny sabers of calm in a world unraveling at the seams. I tried to join your sacred order, but the Divine clearly whispered, “Not your calling, child.” But in the middle of my meltdown, I started thinking about the state of the world—about the militarization of our cities, the cruelty aimed at the vulnerable, and the endless unraveling of systems meant to protect us. I realized: knitting and justice are not so different. Both require patience. Precision. Repetition. An ability to stick with it even when you want to cry or throw things. Both demand you show up day after day with compassion, even when you’re tired. Even when the thread gets tangled or the news makes you feel like screaming into a decorative throw pillow. It’s a spiritual practice to create something slow and steady in a world that thrives on speed and spectacle. Sometimes we knit. Sometimes we march. Sometimes we write. But all of it—when rooted in love—is an act of sacred defiance. And so I’m back to writing. The only knots I can handle are metaphorical. But bless you, you holy stitchers of the world. May your yarn never snarl and your hearts stay strong. We are in this together,

Reflection Questions

1. What practice, no matter how imperfect, grounds you in the midst of chaos?
2. Where do you feel the call to create something slow and sacred in a fast, unraveling world?
3. What’s one stitch (action, prayer, offering) you can make today toward healing

A Prayer For the Tangled Ones

God of the dropped stitch and the fraying edge,
 We are coming undone in so many ways.
 And still, you invite us to try again.
 To make beauty. To mend what we can.
 To hold one another with patient care,
 even when we don’t know what we’re doing.
 Bless the artists, the activists, the knitters of community,
 those who thread love through every row of injustice.
 And bless the rest of us—clumsy, tangled, and trying—
 as we find our own way back to sacred creativity.
 May we make something beautiful with the mess.
 Amen.

Spiritual Practice: Pick Up the Thread

Today, choose one simple, tangible action that helps you mend the world. You might:

- Cook something for someone who’s struggling.
- Send a card to someone who is grieving.
- Repair that thing you’ve been avoiding.
- Say a prayer for people you’ve given up on.
- Knit (if you dare).

Whatever it is, let it be your imperfect offering. Your dropped-stitch hallelujah. Your sacred loop of resistance.