

Tory Walko	Chair	Absent
Daniella D’Andrea	Vice-Chair	Present
Marion Staples	Past Chair	Present
Cecily Chiles	Secretary	Present
Paul Cooper	Treasurer Finance Committee Representative Outreach Committee Representative	Present
Kenji Marui	Ministry	Absent
Pat Morrison	Ministry	Present
<b><u>Committee Representatives:</u></b>		
Marilyn Barros	Region Rep	Present
Christopher Cooke	Communications	Present
John Cooke	Property	Present
Laura Black	Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	Present
Joanna Catterson	Trustees	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 14 participants and began at 7:05 pm. There was a quorum.

**1. Devotion:** Communications

A devotion on the theme: The Bible and money, Abundance, Earthly numbers and Stewarding.

Reflection on John 4 v 28-30

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

In what way has the ministry our committees are reporting, transformed our understanding or approach to the work we do? What is revealed to ourselves and others while we do this work?

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION: to approve the agenda. [ John Cooke / Bryce McGarvey ] – Carried**

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes January 7, 2025 [ Joanna Catterson / Marilyn Barros] – Carried.**

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

A. Finance presented details used to calculate the 2026 Target Assessment of Antler River Watershed Regional Council. The target assessment is \$21,915 for the year 2026. The denominational assessment on net revenue increased to 5% for 2026, from 4.5% the previous year.

**5. Correspondence**

None

**7. New Business**

None

8. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

A. Pat Morrison

- The next *Price of Admission* for men takes place Saturday February 7. 6 men attending, new people who have not attended before.
- Spent the past weekend at Worshiplude, Winter Youth Retreat in Ottawa. New moderator, Dr. Kimberly Heath, preached at the Saturday evening event.

9. Governance and Support Committee Reports

A) Finance

- Completing year-end financial statements. Givings were very generous in December enabling the operating budget to have a surplus of \$15K in 2025.
- Also preparing statements for the annual report. UCC Statistics report is due by early March.
- Provided support for the annual assessment review coordinated by Gord Walkling and Laura Black.
- An Operating Budget proposal for 2026 was presented, see Table 1 below.

**Motion: That council accept the 2026 Budget Proposal and present to the Congregation for approval at the March 8 Annual Congregational Meeting [Paul Cooper / Marion Staples] - Carried**

Discussion:

Costs have inflated, however givings have remained static.

Finance is investigating whether to utilize idle funds. March 4 Council meeting New Business: Present list of identified idle funds, the committees responsible for oversight of those funds, and the funds' balance.

Paul Cooper

**Table 1**

<b>2026 OPERATING BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FEBRUARY 2026 COUNCIL REVIEW (REV 3)</b>				
	<u>2025 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Actual</u>	<u>2026 Budget</u>	<u>Assumptions for 2026 Budget</u>
Givings for Operating Budget	354000	364380	<b>370300</b>	
Designated M & S Givings	3500	5070	<b>5300</b>	
<b>Total Givings</b>	<b>357500</b>	<b>369450</b>	<b>375600</b>	2025 YE + 2%
Rental	58000	69,300	<b>69,000</b>	Rental increase of \$5/hour starting in Sept 2025
Donations	3500	300	<b>2500</b>	
Interest	20000	19600	<b>12000</b>	Interest - GICs + RBC MM. Lower rates in 2026
Special Events	7000	11400	<b>8000</b>	Fall fair in 2026 plus other fund raisers
Other Income	2000	1800	<b>2000</b>	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>448000</b>	<b>471850</b>	<b>469100</b>	
<b>Committee Expenditures</b>				
Congregational Care and Growth	1160	440	<b>1260</b>	All committee requests accepted
Outreach				
Christian Development	2200	1600	<b>2200</b>	
Worship	2500	2170	<b>2550</b>	
Communications	8000	8400	<b>8000</b>	
Ministry and Personnel	365,000	362,920	<b>381,800</b>	2.6 adjustment, 4.7% overall
Trustees	12,950	12,560	<b>14,460</b>	UCC insurer quote not competitive
Property	39,680	39,350	<b>40,000</b>	
Finance	3500	3930	<b>4000</b>	
Region 7 assessment	17,604	17,604	<b>22,915</b>	ARWS annual mtg costs included
Council				
Debt Servicing				
M & S	7000	7000	<b>7000</b>	Maintain 2025 M&S Commitment
Special Events		340		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>459594</b>	<b>456314</b>	<b>484185</b>	
<b>Net Income vs. Expenditure</b>	<b>-11594</b>	<b>15536</b>	<b>-15085</b>	
Transfer to Reserve Fund	0	15536	<b>0</b>	
Transfer from Reserve Fund	2000	0	<b>15085</b>	
Transfer to Legacy Fund	0	0	<b>0</b>	
Transfer from Legacy Fund	9594	0	<b>0</b>	
Reserve Fund Balance	40000	57672	<b>42587</b>	Reserve fund minimum = 40K (15+25)
Legacy Fund Balance	306315	315909	<b>315909</b>	No change

B) Property

- The following summary of 2025 Property expenses will also be included in the Annual Report. In 2025 the Committee expenses were ~\$40,500 for utilities, routine maintenance and supplies. Non-routine costs totalling ~\$20,000 were paid from the Capital Replacement Fund. The Fund received ~\$6,000 in generous donations to partially offset the non-routine costs.
- There were no major issues to report in January. The weather has been a challenge requiring extra salting and weekend shovelling. We expect a few high gas bills.
- The HVAC equipment including 2 boilers, 1 air handling unit, 2 Sanctuary Roof Top Units and 2 furnaces are serviced biannually for preventive maintenance and to change filters. This work is performed on a 3-year contract awarded to Ainsworth at a cost of ~\$2000 per year. Ainsworth also provides repair service as needed on this equipment, which typically costs \$6-10 per year depending on the extent of repairs required. The service contract is due for renewal this month at an average annual cost of \$2087 + tax over the 3-year term. We are satisfied with the service support we receive from Ainsworth and are proposing to renew the contract.

**Moved that: Council approve the 3-year HVAC preventative maintenance contract awarded to Ainsworth Technical starting Feb 1, 2026. [John Cooke / Joanna Catterson ] - Carried**

- In December, Council approved the Trustees' recommendation that all Rental Groups must have 3rd party insurance. The revised Rental Policy document, as circulated with the agenda, incorporates the new insurance requirements.

**Moved that: Council approve Appendix 4.4 Rental Policy dated Feb 4, 2026. [John Cooke / Chris Cooke ] - Carried**

Discussion:

Can the wording be altered after approval of the policy? Council can bring revision suggestions to John Cooke and the policy can be revised by a motion at Council.

John Cooke

C) M & P

- No report

Laura Black

D) Planning

- As previously shared at the previous Council, Planning met to re-group and reset our focus back to the constitutional mandate for Planning
- Key directions that emerged were as follows:
  - Focus on gaining insight into the future needs for our faith community and how we can support initiatives of Council and individuals
  - Discover ways that the opportunities for individuals exist in the Grace community
  - Clarify our need for a more formal vision of our future by initially understand previous visioning efforts and glean ideas from these past efforts
  - Explore vision-related ideas and concepts that worked or did not work and maybe resurrect elements from the past (talent shows? Grace Works?)
  - Learn from other churches and what they find successful
  - Wrestle with the needs and approach to social media to engage our current and growing community in concert with Communication Committee
  - Encourage other committees to share with Planning and Council future vision concepts and how those committees can contribute to the vision of Grace
  - Continue to encourage individuals who have an idea for the Grace community but needs help in implementing it, to come to Planning for advice and guidance

- Marilyn Barros has chosen to not continue in Planning Committee. Many thanks to Marilyn for all her contributions.
- We will also miss Daniella on the committee as she becomes the Chair of Council and we thank her for her candour and enthusiasm this past year.

Jim Wicks

E) Communications

- New Grace brochures are printed. Printed by Haines in Sarnia. Distributed in the pews and at church entrances.
- Thanks to Chris for the work on the new website and brochures.

Chris Cooke

F) Regional Council

- Question - as a council do we report the following, and if so who is responsible for completing and submitting it: Community of Faith's Annual Report and to complete the Community of Faith Self-Assessment Checklist as well as your updated Community of Faith Profile.
- *I'm here - Life is just different* - Guest Presenter: Janet Kennedy via Zoom. Navigating dementia and Alzheimers can be a challenge. With care and 'a listening ear' we can offer a ministry of strength, support, and understanding to our members and their families. I bring experience in ministry in communities of faith, my internship for ministry was in a schizophrenia lock-down unit, and at the present time, as part of my Ministry in the United Church, I work full time as a chaplain in a retirement village, which includes long-term care. ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED: Feb 12th, 2026 Time: 10am-11:30am Registration required.
- In case you missed it: "*Yes! Your Annual Meeting Can Be Inspiring!*" webinar recording is here. Please email Brenna Baker at bbaker@united-church.ca if you would like to see the slides and other supplemental materials.
- *Here from the Beginning* is an exhibition about the history of The United Church of Canada from the perspective of Black peoples in the church. <https://arwrcucc.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=cad7846744&e=8325eff85f>  
View the exhibition at: London - First St. Andrew's UC- Feb 25-March 4,  
Fingal - Pearce Williams (at Hume's Hall, 8009 Iona Road, Fingal, ON) March 5-10.
- Join Rev. Dr. Christine Jerrett for a six-week Lenten study using the United Church's new devotional Bless, Break, Share. Explore themes of food, hunger, and justice through reflective discussions every Tuesday from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET, February 24 - March 31, 2026. Register through ChurchX - \$39.00 plus optional purchase of a book
- To view entire regional newsletter: <https://arwrcucc.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=b977844195&e=8325eff85f>

Marilyn Barros

G) Trustees

- No report

Joanna Catterson

H) AOTS

No Report

**10. Key Ministry Committee Reports****A. Christian Development**

- Pancake Dinner is happening Tuesday Feb. 17. Funds raised go to youth activities and events.
- What happens if a rental group violates nut allergy policy? There is a letter that groups sign with the rental agreement acknowledging the no nuts policy. Staff and volunteers can request that food be removed from the building if it violates the no nuts policy.

Shirley Willis

**B. Worship**

- Extended Invitations for Additional Pulpit Supply: With Kenji's upcoming extended leave of sabbatical, vacation and study leave, the committee discussed the merits of expanding the current list of pulpit supply ministers. The names of 3 people were discussed and include two people who currently attend Grace, and a third who has a longer-term relationship with Grace. The committee agreed that this is worthwhile pursuing.
- Lauren Morrison has agreed to preach on one of the Sundays that Kenji is away.
- Tom Rodger is pulpit supply for February 8, with support from the Worship Committee.

Bryce McGarvey

**C. Outreach**

- Donations received for January 18, 2026 soup luncheon for RAYJON were \$2193. Great support from the congregation and RAYJON folks.
- Next soup luncheon will coincide with the annual meeting on March 8. Beneficiary will be the Canadian Food Grains Bank via the Bluewater Grow Project. Correspondence received from Canada Foodgrains Bank.
- 103 clients served at the Inn meal on January 28, 2026. 90 pounds of food donations were taken to the Inn in January.
- Reviewing beneficiary options for possible April 2026 soup luncheon.
- Working with the Sarnia Community Foundation (SCF) to finalize disbursement options for the High Park UC bequest.

Paul Cooper

**D. Congregational Care and Growth**

- Considering the request from Planning for small group gathering "Real Connections with Real People".
- Buying gift cards this week for letters to post-secondary students.
- PIE Day (Saturday March 14, 2026) activities will be coordinated with local congregations St. Luke's and Dunlop-Central.

Bev Walkling

- Proclamation and Special Events
- Pizza orders picked up this Sunday, Feb. 8.
- Guess Who's Making Dinner, Margaret Billings offered to co-ordinate an event this year. This is a great way to get to know people in the church. 22 people have signed up, enough for 3 or 4 groups. Email the office to sign up for this event.
- Planning a Mother's day fundraiser.
- Big Sing with The Beatles at Grace. March 20 suggested date.

Bev Walkling

**11. Reflection and Closing Prayer**

Reflection on Devotion. Council members were invited to share their reflections on what transformations are unfolding as we come together as a group? What do we notice after hearing everyone this week? What is revealed to us through this connection?

Meeting closed at 8:40 pm.  
Pat led a closing prayer

**Next Regular Council Meeting: Wednesday March 4, 2026.**

Daniella D’Andrea, Vice Chair

Cecily Chiles, Council Secretary

<b>Sunday Lock-up Responsibility</b>		
<b>2026</b>	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
<b>Devotional at Council Meetings</b>		
<b>2026</b>	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