

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 AOTS	Present
Kenji Marui	Ministry	Absent
Pat Morrison	Ministry	Present
<u>Committee Representatives:</u>		
Marilyn Barros	Region Rep	Present
Christopher Cooke	Communications	Present
John Cooke	Property AOTS	Present
Laura Black	Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	Present
Dave Ashdown	Trustees	Present
Marion Staples	Finance Committee Representative	Absent
Bryce McGarvey	Worship	Present
Jim Wicks	Planning	Present
Bev Walkling	Congregational Care & Growth (CC&G) Proclamation and Special Events	Present
Shirley Willis	Christian Development	Absent

The Meeting was held in person and via Zoom with 13 participants and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. Devotion:

Jim Wicks shared a story about the heaviness of stress and worry and its impact on our lives, on behalf of Planning.

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

Reflection on theme Gospels in Action.

The Backpack drive during the summer- Daniella thanked everyone in the congregation for the kindness and care shown for children in our community. This action made a difference in the lives of several children.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: to approve the agenda. [John Cooke / Marilyn Barros] – Carried

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes [Bev Walkling / John Cooke] – Carried.

- a. June 3, 2026
- b. Council Executive meeting July 8, 2026
- c. Council Executive meeting Sept. 9, 2026

Discussion: Question on the Sanctuary solar window film replacement project (July 8 minutes), Was there permission granted from Worship committee for use of Memorial Fund? Yes, permission was obtained by Worship and the project cost will be covered through the Memorial Fund.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. Council Discussion: None

6. Correspondence

Nothing for Council's attention.

7. New Business

A. Ad hoc committee update on the Kitchen Renewal Project. Seeking a project leader.

B. Constitutional changes presented by Chris Cooke.

Chris and Gord Walkling worked on revisions to the Grace Constitution.

Committee reps are encouraged to review the changes with their committees.

With the exception of the Finance Committee, only a "light" review of the committee sections was conducted.

Committees may wish to take this opportunity to review and provide updates for their section, but this is completely optional.

The proposed text for the revised Constitution is attached with changes highlighted and notes in the margins. Compare to *The Manual* of the United Church of Canada at the following link: <https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2026-01/the-manual-2026.pdf>

Reach out to Chris with any questions or concerns. We can have further conversation at a future Council meeting. The first opportunity to present the proposed revisions to the congregation is in February 2027 at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

The following is a list of the substantive changes. The first two in bold were the motivation for launching this project:

1. **Council Executive - purpose/duties (pg 13):** Restricted Council Executive from meeting unless necessary. If a Council meeting can be called with quorum, Council Executive should NOT meet. The bar is lower during a formal recess period.
2. **Treasurer (pg 12):** Fleshed out the Treasurer responsibilities per *The Manual* (G.4.3). I've defined all of these responsibilities as "oversee" to clarify that the Treasurer is accountable for all of these items, but can assign the Finance Committee, Office Admin, or others to perform them. Additionally, I am making Nominations responsible for this position. They will most certainly seek input from the Finance Committee regardless.
3. Church Council - item 16 (pg 5): Clearly assigned Council the responsibility to approve membership changes. This has been our historic practice, but wasn't clear in the current Constitution. CC&G simply oversees the process and makes recommendations to Council.
4. Church Council - item 21 (pg 5): Introduces the "major change" concept for congregational budgets. Per *The Manual*, Council has authority to update a congregational budget if the change is "not major". This could allow for small budget increases, while requiring congregational approval to make large changes that do NOT increase the budget (ex. reduce M&S top-up by 5K to fund another initiative).
5. Church Council - membership (pg 7): Committees can no longer assign/elect their own Council representative, only nominate. *The Manual* (B.7.3.1) requires members of the governing body to be full members and be approved by the congregation. Additionally, I'm removing AOTS from our Constitution.
6. Council Chair - item 7 (pg 8): Removing the requirement that the Council Chair/Secretary will chair/secretary the congregational meeting. *The Manual* expects the congregation to elect their own chair/secretary for any congregational meeting. In response to this Manual requirement, I would propose our congregational meeting template be updated to include a "motion to elect Council Chair/Secretary as chair/secretary for the congregational meeting."
7. Council Chair - appointment (pg 8): Per *The Manual*, while we can nominate using the 3 year cycle for Vice Chair, Chair, Past Chair, the congregation can choose to elect others to these positions. I've moved our nominating practice into the Profile section for clarity.
8. Board of Trustees (pg 19-20): Fleshed out membership, duration of office, appointment, decision making, and meetings per *The Manual* (G.2.2.1).
9. Committees (21+): Require each committee to periodically review and update its Funds. I've specifically named the Funds for clarity. If any are added/remove in future, I'd suggest we can call it an "administrative change" and make the update without congregational approval.
10. Finance Committee - purpose / duty #1 (pg 24): The Treasurer does NOT work for the Finance Committee, rather the Treasurer provides oversight to the Finance Committee with respect to cash management / bookkeeping requirements. Put another way, Council and Committees (including Finance) make decisions about whether/how to spend money, but the Treasurer oversees the recording of those transactions.

11. Finance Committee - duty # 8 (pg 24): Removing Stewardship responsibilities from the Finance Committee, but left it as a sub-committee of Planning.

8. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

A. Pat Morrison

- I just returned from a week in Minnesota where I met with colleagues from the Resonance Project. Together we shared ongoing efforts beyond the project, shared what we were each reading and wrestling with, and offered support and direction to each other.
- I have been selected to participate in a one-year Project through Luther Seminary and funded by Lily Endowment to study the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and its application to the practice of ministry with children. My daughter, Lauren, has also been chosen for this study for her work leading children in worship, Christian education, and outdoor education at Lambton Centre.
- Ben Parkinson will be receiving the Ballie Award in worship on December 6, 2026. He was one of 12 chosen for the award from United Church teens from across the country.
- Nevaeh Walko has begun her coop placement here at Grace. She will be focusing her time on Christian education programming, worship and governance.

9. Key Ministry Committee Reports

A. Worship

- Pulpit Supply: Members of the Worship Committee have been providing weekly support for our pulpit supply ministers through Kenji's leave. The level of support is determined by ministers and how they feel comfortable with Grace announcements and the operation of the Powerpoint. Debra McGill and Marilyn Townsend-Smith both attended our September committee meeting to talk through a few questions that each of them had. The schedule for committee member support during the services is now filled out for the remainder of Kenji's leave.
- Committee Membership and Support: A member of the congregation has joined the Worship Committee and two new tech booth operators have begun providing support for weekly services.
- Video Update: From the perspective of the Worship Committee, the video of congregation members is complete and will be, or has been sent to Chris Cooke to be posted on the website. We have extended our thanks to Matt Godfrey for his professionalism in recording and editing the video, and provided a letter of reference and a small token of appreciation.
- Planning Big Sing Thing Date: During the summer, the Proclamations and Special Events Committee asked for approval of January 30, 2027 date for a Big Sing Thing Event. The date was approved following an summer email exchange, but there was additional discussion regarding the upcoming event in the context of the Beatles version earlier this year. Some concerns were raised regarding 2 songs that some committee members thought were of questionable appropriateness for a church sanctuary (specifically Get Back and Maxwell's Silver Hammer). It will be requested that the organizers be mindful of the lyrics that are sung in the sanctuary.

Bryce McGarvey

B. Christian Development

- Nevaeh Walko has begun a co-op placement with Pat for her first semester at school. Pat is her advisor. She will be focusing on planning during the morning and then leading programs in the evenings and weekends.
- Pat, Margaret and Gord are going to be rotating high school leaders on Sunday mornings so that we will have a high school class every week. Adelle and Molly will lead SPLAT on the weeks Pat is leading high school. These leaders have worked out a new format for the high school group to help keep them engaged and support their Christian journey.
- Marilyn Barros is organizing CD participation in a webinar that ties into visioning CD has been doing around our youth and young people. The goal is help them to deepen their relationship with God and in doing that, supporting their mental health.
- CD continues to discuss the Planning Committee reflection questions.

Pat Morrison

C. Outreach

- Donations totaled \$4965 for July 2026 Venezuelan Earthquake appeal. Money was submitted in time to receive 2:1 match.
- Thank you to all those who volunteered to help with the Inn meals over the summer. Elevated number of clients continues.
- Attended "Coffee in the Field", a get together for the BLUEWATER GROWING PROJECT on September 19th. Canada Foodgrains Bank continues to do excellent work.
- September 27 soup luncheon raised about \$1400 for CONNECT-SARNIA. Happy that Jim Curran and Murray Stephenson were able to join us and answer questions from the congregation.
- Next soup luncheon is scheduled for November 22, 2026. Beneficiary TBD but possibly Habitat for Humanity. Tiny homes project on Christina St. S.
- Scott Woods concert booked for December 19. Part of proceeds to support St. Joseph's Hospice.
- **Motion that the L4L fund be closed and that \$12,379.41 be donated to support the VON's Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP) [Paul Cooper / John Cooke] - Carried**

Discussion: The OSNP is a good fit with the L4L program - food related, kids benefit, volunteers are required, partial funding from governments. VON came to a meeting with Outreach. Funds stay locally. Outreach will disperse some of the equipment stored at Grace that is no longer needed.

Paul Cooper

D. Congregational Care and Growth

- The committee needs some new members to make connections with people who are no longer able to come to church.
- Student letters, planning and preparing to send these out again this year.
- Pastoral Care and benevolent relief, there were gaps during the summer for people seeking support. The committee is encouraging advance planning to cover staff vacation times to meet these needs. A volunteer in the office has covered vacations in the past.
- Dec. 6, planning volunteer and minister appreciation reception after the worship service.

Bev Walkling

E. Proclamation and Special Events

- Trunk sale was a success. People were pleased with the organization. A folding gazebo was purchased for the Trunk Sale, covered by a donation. It is stored in the room beside the stage. It is available to be used for Pride events and any other church group who wishes to use it. Worth doing again in the spring. \$547 was raised.
- Municipal election candidate meet-and-greet was successful. Several questions about the church and congregation were received during the mayoral candidate event. Many people thanked the organizers for hosting the event.
- Planning ahead for **Fall Fair Saturday October 17.**
- Chilli making has started, beef donated by **Cattleman's association.** Thanks to this group for their generous donation.

Bev Walkling

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

- Rental Policy concerns raised by Worship Committee were resolved over the summer.
- The project to replace the Sanctuary Solar Window Film was approved by the Executive but was delayed due lift access problems. A pew was removed this week to facilitate completion of the work.
- The Cathcart Canopy Roof Repair project was approved, and Gallaway Roofing completed the work in September.
- The Sanctuary Soffit Repairs 2026 project was approved and will be completed by Imperial Roofing this fall.
- Raccoon saga - We engaged JSG Animal Trapping who are skilled at removing the animals and identifying/mitigating entry points. They found a new entry point and captured several critters. They also installed covers on 15 vents on the lower section of the Sanctuary Roof. Gallaway Roofing installed low-profile, weatherproof vents over the Gym Washroom exhaust vents. Further work still needs to be determined. We expect this work will cost ~\$3500.
- STEM Camp confirmed they plan to return next year, June 29 to September 3, 2027.
- Klean & Brite steam-cleaned the upholstered furniture in the Narthex & the Friendship Room.
- Ainsworth completed the HVAC fall contract maintenance.
- Danny Knight agreed to do weekend sidewalk snow shoveling for the 2026-27 season.
- Bore Fencing submitted a quote for seasonal snow removal. The cost increased 8% although this is the first increase since ~2023. We recommend approval.

Motion: That Council approve the Bore Fencing snow removal contract of \$4450 + tax including salt box rental.

The Capital Replacement Fund balance was \$7863 at the end of Sep. [John Cooke / Bryce McGarvey] - Carried

Discussion: We are committed to an additional ~\$24k (JSG, MN, Gallaway, Imperial) so Finance will need to transfer funds to cover that. We also have ~\$4.5k in 2 new projects for approval (IRS, Ainsworth).

- The automatic opener on the Narthex N outside door failed like the inside door failure in March. Replacement is mandatory to maintain accessibility.

Motion: That Council approve installation of a new operator at a cost of \$3000 + tax. Costs to be directed to the Capital Replacement Fund. [John Cooke / Bev Walkling] - Carried

Discussion: Any grants available to help fund accessibility doors? None known. Is it a requirement for the church to have 3 automatic doors? Property costs are ongoing and increasing, points that could be communicated to members of the congregation. Create a list of projects needing funding to send out in the email blast. Congregation members can send donations in support of these projects to the Capital Replacement Fund.

- Ainsworth found the N RTU motor bearing failed. We recommend continuing repair of this equipment.

Motion: That Council approve repair of the Sanctuary N RTU HVAC unit a cost of \$1496 + tax. Costs to be directed to the Capital Replacement Fund. [John Cooke / Jim Wicks] - Carried

Discussion: property costs, utility costs, etc. are directed to the operating budget in the property account. Capital Replacement Fund has a few donations on an ongoing basis.

John Cooke

B. Planning

- Cecily Chiles has decided to resign from the Planning Committee. Many thanks for her contribution these past years.
- The Planned Giving Workbook was reviewed by Trustees to check for legal concerns and their updates and revisions included and final review completed by Planning.
 - The final version will be updated in final format by Kathy and hardcopies will be made available in the office
 - An info blurb will be posted in the email Blast
- Jim Wicks has decided to step down as Chair of the Planning Committee effective end Feb 2027
 - Planning will spend the remaining meetings until this time to take a critical look at the role and duties of this Committee and make recommendations to Council
 - A Planning Committee at a United Church is rare and we would like to explore if having a separate committee is an effective approach to the assigned responsibilities

Jim Wicks

C. Finance

- Submitted request for CRA GST/PST rebates.
- Issued end of August operating budget update for weekly e-mail. No major issues. Timing of one-time donations is a factor.
- Problems experienced trying to run Marion's accounting software. Bob was able to run reports from his system. Will continue to trouble-shoot while also looking at new system options.
- Working with property on small capital items financing.
- Still looking for new finance committee members.

Paul Cooper

D. M & P

- Paid an additional 300/week for pastoral care to the ministers.
- Hired Ryan Primmer to cover for Curtis while he is recovering.

Laura Black

E. Communications

- Communications upgraded the networking equipment in the office by adding a small server rack. It makes the equipment easier to maintain.
- Cogeco replaced the modem that was damaged by lightning.

Chris Cooke

F. Regional Council

- **Bi-Regional Spring Meeting – June 26-28, 2026**, in London, ON – I did not attend but watched the recordings of the weekend.
Highlights:
Reverend Dr. Lillian Daniel, Uniting Church in Christ, Conference Minister in MI
Rev. Lillian refers to people entering ministry – they gave themselves to the most unprofitable venture of all time AND they knew what they were getting into. (participants had just heard from candidates for ministry within our regions) She suggests they are smart, practical people on a wild and mysterious call. Treasure keepers living in a cultural time (referring to learned clergy and learned lay people). Like kayaks paddling the same direction in our own ways, able to move nimbly about – have autonomy and independence and local congregations are the heart and soul of who we are. Rev. Lillian believes in the ‘perspicuity of scriptures’ and that the members are the ministers of that church and will preserve tradition.
Lillian quoted another minister in the US when referring to clergy beginning their ministry, “allow me to disabuse you of the notion that you are a welcoming church.” This was a minister who had been in this community of faith for 2 months. This person was able to speak the truth to the people.
Rev. Lillian attended a woman’s church group in MI along the shores of Lake Huron. Sixty women attended, twenty were new. When asked, why would you attend, the response of many was to be around these smart amazing 80-year-old women, filled with rituals. 19 others were looking for some rootedness in a tradition that is deeper and bigger than us.
Lillian suggests when she plans retreats for clergy, something powerful is going on, they want to go deep and, in her planning, needs to let this happen in ways that have meaning to the leaders attending.
- Moderator, Right Rev. Kimberly Heath spoke on Renewal and suggests God is up to something. Let us keep a sense of humor and be willing to be vulnerable in the sharing of honest stories. Rev. Kimberly was interviewed by Zoomer Radio, the first question asked was ‘tell me the story of Easter’. She believes the world is hungry for something that is deeper and God is going to prepare a way for that to happen.
- Rev. Pat Morrison attended the meeting and worked as the main tech person, assuring all the tech needs in the various meetings and worship was working as required.
- Rev. Pat and Rev. Gabrielle Heidinger provided meaning prayers/music as part of the worship service on Sunday morning.
- **General Council updates** - The United Church of Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Éric Hébert-Daly as its new General Secretary beginning January 1, 2027. The role of General Secretary, General Council is a permanent position, providing leadership in the direction, management, and coordination of the denomination working in close collaboration with the Moderator, who is elected every three years as the church’s spiritual leader.
Rev. Michael Blair is retiring from this position. Rev. Blair served as General Secretary for the United Church of Canada for the past 6 years.
- **Antler River Watershed happenings:**
Right Relations – Tuesday, October 20th Samantha Miller, an Indigenous Youth delegate to the 30th UN Climate Change Conference in Brazil is sharing her reflections online through Zoom, 7:00 pm. Register at:
https://mcusercontent.com/ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b/files/74c1466b-10bb-f068-a91b-36a4492812e6/Publicity_for_S_Miller_COP_30_Presentation_Oct_20_10_09_26.pdf
- Right Relations – October 9, 2026 - Oneida Arrival Day at Little Beach, Port Stanley from 11-6 - a day to gather, share, and recognize the history of the Oneida people and the connection to the Port Stanley area.
Throughout the day, there will be Oneida storytelling, cultural teachings, food, arts and crafts vendors, family activities, demonstrations, historical displays, community sharing, and more.
- Social Justice – Sept. 22, 2026 at 1:00pm online - 2S + LGBTQIA and communities and the Tri-regional Affirming Ministries Network gathered with the topic being “The Apology – Now What?” I was able to watch a recording of this meeting. This tri-regional group will meet next on Tuesday, November 24 at 1:00pm. If interested in joining this

is mentioned in the ARW newsletter providing contact info on how to join in. (Do we have current members of an Affirm Committee who may be interested?)

- Social Justice – Bridging Poverty and Privilege – a 6 module, online course, through ChurchX to deepen the understanding of poverty, privilege and belonging through storytelling, reflection and practical wisdom. The cost is \$49.00 per person or \$99.00 for a team of up to 8 people. Would anyone like to join me in this learning? We watch the material on our own but perhaps could come together to discuss?
It would provide ways of getting to know ourselves on a deeper level as well as our worldviews. Let me know if you are interested marilynbarros@gmail.com
- An interesting article from Rev. Carmen Lansdowne on welcoming/ communication:
https://carmenlansdowne.substack.com/p/the-ten-second-test?utm_campaign=post-expanded-share&utm_medium=web
- Please refer to the ARW newsletter for more information https://us.list-manage.com/15_6_F6O_XZ?e=8325eff85f&c2id=00fc897b12ea60359bd50dc556ca8085

Marilyn Barros

G. Trustees

- No report

Dave Ashdown

H. AOTS

- No report

John Cooke

11. Reflection and Closing Prayer

Meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Pat led a closing prayer

Next Regular Council Meeting: Wednesday November 4, 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