

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

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Daniella D’Andrea	Chair	Present
Joe Chan	Vice-Chair	Present
Tory Walko	Past Chair	Present
Cecily Chiles	Secretary	Present
Paul Cooper	Treasurer Outreach Committee Representative AOTS	Present
Kenji Marui	Ministry	Present
Pat Morrison	Ministry	Absent
<b><u>Committee Representatives:</u></b>		
Marilyn Barros	Region Rep	Present
Christopher Cooke	Communications	Absent
John Cooke	Property AOTS	Present
Laura Black	Ministry & Personnel (M&P)	Present
Dave Ashdown	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	Absent

The Meeting was held in person and via Zoom with 14 participants and began at 7:00 pm. There was a quorum.

1. **Devotion:**  
Dave Ashdown on behalf of Trustees offered a devotion on the theme: *Do not fear, only believe.*
2. **Reading of Scripture, reflection on the theme *Growing in Christ; The Gospels in Action***  
Reflection on acts of kindness in our community. The Inn of the Good Shepherd is experiencing a shortage and there are many examples of people stepping forward to collect donations.
3. **Approval of Agenda**  
**MOTION: to approve the agenda. [ John Cooke / Bryce McGarvey] – Carried**
4. **Approval of Minutes**  
**MOTION: to approve the Council meeting minutes May 6, 2026 [ Marilyn Barros/ Paul Cooper] – Carried.**
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
  - A. Council received a copy of the minutes from the congregational meeting held May 31, 2026.  
**Motion: that Council receive the minutes of the May 31, 2026 congregational meeting [ Cecily Chiles / John Cooke] - Carried.**  
Discussion: None
6. **Correspondence**  
Nothing for Council’s attention.
7. **New Business**
  - A. *Ad hoc* committee update on the Kitchen Renewal Project. The group is still recruiting members for the committee. Hoping to meet before the summer.

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

---

- B. Council executive to act on Council's behalf until Council meets again in October 2026. Council executive consists of the officers (Chair, Past Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) and Ministry personnel.  
**Motion to allow council executive to act on Council's behalf until council meets again in October 2026. [Bev Walkling / Marion Staples] - Carried**
- C. Meeting dates of Council executive in July, August, September to address pressing Council business. – Daniella will connect with members of executive and select 3 meeting dates.
- D. Update on Camlachie United Church pastoral leadership.

## 8. Pastoral Team Reports and Teaching

- A. Kenji Marui
  - 2S-LGBTQ+ Pride focus for this month, attending community events and planning a couple for Grace
  - Tending to some emergent pastoral care concerns
  - Will follow-up on sending pastoral letters to Jon Forbes and Camlachie United Church
  - Approached about sitting as a director of the board for Children's Aid Society
  - Preparing for regional council meeting at the end of the month
  - Mapping out sabbatical plans and longer-range preparation for my return

## 9. Key Ministry Committee Reports

- A. Worship
  - Pulpit Supply: An Excel file with the coverage for Kenji's leave, which is now fully filled. The file will be used by the committee members to schedule computer support and reading of introductions, announcements etc. The file will also be shared with Kathy and Pat.
  - Communion: Communion will be held on June 14. Kenji will be using a traditional method for sharing the bread. Rice crackers will be available for those who prefer them. Juice will be served in cups. There will not be an intinction option.
  - Video Update: Gord Walkling and Tessa Hall gave an overview of the recording of the video for the website, which was done and edited by Matt Godfrey. The video is approximately 5 minutes long and clips that included 10 people were recorded in various parts of the church. There will likely be some additional editing and possibly an inclusion of some background music before the final video is given to Chris Cooke.
  - Planning Document: The original and updated planning documents have been received from Jim Wicks, and the committee supports the review/update activity. However, given the importance of having Kenji's input, the committee will hold off on formal feedback until after his leave.
  - Fall Meetings: The lay members of the committee will continue to meet in the fall. Debra McGill and Marilyn Townsend-Smith will be invited to attend as they choose, but their attendance is not mandatory. The committee will reiterate to each of them that we are available to support them throughout Kenji's leave.

Bryce McGarvey

### B. Christian Development

- No report

Shirley Willis

### C. Outreach

- 93 clients served at the Inn on May 27. 143 pounds of food taken to the Inn on May 3 Food donation Sunday. Grace was able to donate about \$1500 from the Inn Fund to help with current shortages at the food bank.
- Looking at options for L4L fund disbursement.
- Hoping to have a meeting in June for kitchen renewal project.
- Next soup luncheon is September 27, 2026. Reviewing potential beneficiaries.

Paul Cooper

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

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## D. Congregational Care and Growth

- Huge thanks to Diane for her long service to this committee and discussion on recruitment. After her many years of dedication and service to our committee, Diane has handed over the folder of information on the Easter flower delivery, one of the many services she provided. She will be glad to give advice to her replacement.
- Recruitment of new members for the committee, proposing to change the time of meetings.
- Letter from Jim Wicks about visioning – Tabled to a future meeting between Bev and Sylvia to see how this applies to our committee
- Making contact with congregation:
  - Bev has a contact number for someone to come and speak about scam avoidance to our members, and also extend the invitation beyond.
  - In the Fall to have a person come and give instructions about the use of the defibrillator.
  - A consideration to making calls to members similar to what we did during COVID
  - Recruitment of new volunteers. A suggestion to use the purple folder along with other committees
- PIE day – approximately a \$248 shortfall for the expenses.
- Sarnia Pride Fest is the July 2nd weekend. Local groups, Queer and Questioning, YOUphoria, and PFLAG are working on connecting for that event. Grace has a table booked for the event. Volunteers are needed for the event.
- Drop-in – Coffee & conversation: Considering shortening to one hour. A suggestion to have guest speakers sometimes.
- Communications request for information about the committee for website.

Bev Walkling

## E. Proclamation and Special Events

- Communications request for information about the committee for website.
- Planning for a trunk sale, rent a parking lot space for a community garage sale.

Bev Walkling

## 10. Governance and Support Committee Reports

### A. Planning

- The Planned Giving Workbook was reviewed by Trustees to check for legal concerns. Trustees also generously provided some wording improvements updates.
- Revision to be completed in the fall and then made available
- The 2008 Visioning Report was distributed to Bev Walkling, Shirley Willis and Bryce McGarvey for update to the six questions responded to in 2008
  - Received feedback that the doc was a tad onerous so a refined version in Word format was generated and was sent out in an effort to attempt to improve the effort
  - Lorna Cooper, of Planning, is available to any of the responding committees to assist
    - What's coming down the road?
    - What's truly important?
    - What are our past and present strengths?
    - What ministry opportunities await us?
    - What do we build to get there?
    - What will leaders need to transform the church?

Jim Wicks

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

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## B. Finance

- Marion is able to resume assistant treasurer duties - welcome back.
- Thanks to Bob Newman for coverage during May.
- Meeting with Sarnia Community Foundation to determine 2026 withdrawal plans.
- Operating budget results communicated to the congregation via the weekly e-mail. No major issues.
- Givings will be a challenge through the summer period.
- CRA report due at the end of June, to maintain our charitable status.

Marion Staples and Paul Cooper

## C. Property

- Cecily led a yard clean-up day on May 30. Thank you to Cecily and all who assisted with trimming, mulching and cleaning up. It was noted that Cecily's clipboard added a genuine sense of efficiency to the activities.
- Main Kitchen Stove status:
  - The right-side oven thermostat valve was replaced.
  - The on/off valve will be replaced with an improved design that requires a small modification to the piping.
  - Jim Wicks is working with MN Mechanical to replace the on/off valves on both ovens.
  - Special signs were installed by Jim Wicks to ensure the fan is turned on before the stove/oven is used.
  - Jim is also working on training materials to enhance safety and clarity for operation
- On May 12, the evening volleyball group noticed a smell of gas in the gym. They shut off the stove gas valve, turned on the fan and opened doors/windows, and the odour quickly dissipated. Other building occupants were advised. We suspect a stove pilot was left unlit but can't be sure.
- The Sarnia Horticultural Society offered to plant a native redbud tree on the property. Cecily will follow up.
- Awaiting installation of the automatic opener on the Narthex N inside door.
- Awaiting installation of the new Administration Office window.
- Initial estimate to repair the Sanctuary soffit/eaves is \$20k. Looking at alternatives and other contractors.
- The window film on the south Sanctuary windows is at end of life (typically 25-30 years). We propose replacing the film to restore the film properties and reduce glare, UV penetration and other benefits. One contractor quoted \$5654 + tax and we are seeking 2 other quotes. We suggest the costs be directed to the Memorial Fund as this work will enhance the sanctuary and the worship experience. A motion will be presented when we have the details finalized.
- A project proposal was submitted to Planning to upgrade the parking lot lighting. There are 5 lights: 1 located NE of the Cathcart entrance, 2 on the east side of the Indian Road sidewalk and 2 on the island outside the Narthex. The island lights are controlled by a mechanical timer. The others are controlled by dusk/dawn sensors. The existing lights use high-pressure sodium or metal halide lamps which we propose to change to LED lamps with dusk/dawn sensors at a cost of \$2478.74 + tax. The benefits will be:
  - Power savings estimated by BW Power of \$494 per year which equates to 5-year simple payback (excluding tax)
  - The dusk/dawn sensors will ensure optimum operation.
  - One lamp on the main parking lot will be restored to service.
  - Some adjustments will be made to the light direction to resolve current issues.

**Moved that Council approve upgrading the parking lot lighting at a cost of \$2478.74 + tax. Costs to be directed to the Capital Replacement Fund. Property will advertise this project to the Congregation and ask for donations to the fund. [ John Cooke / Cecily Chiles ] – Carried**

Discussion: None

John Cooke

## D. M & P

- No report.

Laura Black

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

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## E. Communications

The phone system was replaced in early April. The old system was obsolete, and it was important to replace it on a planned basis to ensure a smooth transition. The new system seems to be working well for staff.

Considerations for a public phone are:

- Our new provider YoVu strongly discouraged making a public phone available, saying: "Maintaining public-facing hardware introduces significant security risks. Having an active phone accessible to the public can provide bad actors with a potential entry point to your internal network or our broader systems."
- Although exceptions exist, the majority of public buildings no longer provide public phones, including retail stores and community centers.
- If we were to proceed regardless, YoVu quoted ~\$150 to purchase a phone, \$25 set-up fee, and an on-going monthly service fee of \$27.50/month (\$330/year). Bell similarly quoted us \$29.40/month. Cheaper VOIP services are likely available, but we can't run the two phone systems in parallel (YoVu and the public phone) without them interfering with each other.

The committee will not proceed with a public phone, as it does not appear cost justified and carries the additional security risk.

Chris Cooke

## F. Regional Council

- The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath (45th Moderator of the United Church of Canada) is preaching at Byron United Church in London for our Good News for Life event. It's a two-day evangelism and worship event June 13 & 14.
- Affirm United has a new website: <https://www.affirmunited.com>
- Join in on the 2S and LGBTQIA+ apology animation to reflect on the apology and to explore practical ways congregations can live into the apology in worship, community life, and public witness. From Words to Practice: Living Into the 2S and LGBTQIA+ Apology on June 9, 2026 2:00 – 3:30 pm ET. Register through ChurchX. This is a United In Learning online session.
- Looking for someone interested in attending part of all of the Regional meeting on Friday, June 26, Saturday, June 27 and Sunday June 28, 2026. The meetings are available in hybrid, so travel would not be required. It does require registration and it is a great opportunity to get to know more about our region and the United Church of Canada from a wider lens.
- Antler River Watershed e-newsletter can be found at [https://us.list-manage.com/10\\_SFArLGqL?e=8325eff85f&c2id=00fc897b12ea60359bd50dc556ca8085](https://us.list-manage.com/10_SFArLGqL?e=8325eff85f&c2id=00fc897b12ea60359bd50dc556ca8085)

Marilyn Barros

## G. Trustees

- No report

Dave Ashdown

## H. AOTS

- Working on reviewing applications for the Plumley Scholarship.

John Cooke

## 11. **Reflection and Closing Prayer**

Meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

Kenji led a closing prayer

**Next Regular Council Meeting: Wednesday October 7, 2026.**

# Council Minutes June 3, 2026 Grace United Church

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Daniella D'Andrea, 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