



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA March 24, 2024

1. Start of hybrid meeting 11:30 AM
Note – This meeting will be recorded for Minutes.
2. Acknowledgement of Territory

For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Attawandaron First Nations - part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nation. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages. May we strive to be the stewards whom God calls us to be and whom Mother Earth needs us to be.

3. Grace – FULL Conversations

At Grace United, we live out our core values by abiding by our **Guiding Principle: Belonging, Learning, Connecting in Grace**. Therefore, when we gather to do the work of the church, we are all invited to join in the conversations and dialogues. Each person's idea or opinion is to be equally considered and valued.

We remember the importance of "listening so we may understand, and not simply respond" and the wisdom of the Dalai Lama who says (paraphrased) that when we talk we are only repeating what we already know, but when we listen there is the possibility of learning something new.

We strive to engage in Grace-FULL conversations. **GRACE-FULL** is defined here as:

- We covenant to keep **G = GOD** at the centre of our listening, silence and speaking
- We covenant to take **R = RESPONSIBILITY** for what we say and feel without blaming others.
- We covenant to **A = APPROACH** new ideas with curiosity and wonder
- We covenant to **C = CONSIDER** our own assumptions and perceptions, what we hear and feel before we speak
- We covenant to **E = ENCOURAGE** sensitivity, kindness, compassion, patience, courage, and open-mindedness
- Being **FULL = Of God's Spirit**, we covenant to lean into God's transformative love, as we seek a safe community where each person's dignity and worth are affirmed and celebrated.

4. Opening Prayer
 - a. Memorial for members who have passed
5. Process for voting and asking questions.
 - a. This meeting will be recorded.
 - b. Participants online:
 - i. will be muted except during discussion times to avoid interference from background noise.
 - ii. will be asked to vote on Motions only if you disagree and do so by physically raising your hand and keeping it up until we have counted.
 - iii. If you have a question, click on the chat icon at the bottom of your screen and type your question. The Chair will read out the question before it is answered.
6. **Motion:** To allow members and adherents to vote at the meeting.
7. **Motion:** To elect Stacy Goodale as Chair and Jennifer Brezina as recording Secretary for the meeting.
8. **Motion:** To approve the Agenda as presented.
9. **Motion:** To approve the March 2023 AGM minutes as presented
10. **Motion:** To approve the June 2023 Congregational minutes as presented
11. **Motion:** To approve the October 2023 Congregational minutes as presented
12. Presentation of Board and Committee Chairs for 2024-2025
 - a. **Motion:** To accept the Board & Committee Chairs as presented by Nominations Committee.
 - b. **Motion:** To allow the Board to fill open positions throughout the year.
13. Finance Report & 2024 Budget
 - a. **Motion:** To accept the 2024 Budget as presented
14. Endowment Funds Reports
 - a. Nelson Endowment Fund

Motion: To approve spending \$ 50,000 of the \$ 120,000 available in the Grace-Nelson Capital Fund per the following recommendation of the Property Committee

- \$10,000 for Audio/Visual equipment upgrades to sound booth
- \$5,000 for Security camera upgrade
- \$15,000 for Internet upgrade to increase bandwidth
- \$500 to replace the roof on the lawn shed
- \$1500 Repair of retaining wall near basement exit
- \$18,000 as a contingency fund for small projects and repairs to building in 2024

b. Grace-St. Stephen Endowment Fund

Motion: To approve the new Grace-St. Stephen Endowment Fund policy

15. Committee Updates

a. **Motion:** To approve the Committee Reports as presented.

16. Other Business

17. Motion to Adjourn

18. Benediction



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

March 26, 2023

Attendees: Nancy Adams, Walter Adams, John Allchin, Louise Allchin, Claire Andoff, Paul Bartu, Rev. Richard Bott, Shirley Bottaro, Steve Bottaro, Jennifer Brezina, Shirley Bruce, Cheryl Caldwell, Ron Caldwell, Mary-Ruth Crabb, Paul Crittenden, Wendy de Jaray, Holly Dobson, Aislin Doran, Maureen Doran, Linda Draddy, Joan Eagle, Colleen Edwards, Janice Edworthy, Bob England, Sharon Georgas, Gary Goodale, Mark Goodale, Ruth Goodale, Stacy Goodale, May Griffiths-Turner, Janice Hatt, Larry Hatt, Jennifer Henry, Joyce Hughs, Don Hunt, Joan Hunt, Joyce Imrie, Mike Lawton, Cliff Lelievre, Donna LeLievre, Janice Martin, Marilyn Martin, Garry MacDonald, Heather McGavin, Dale McKeown, Sandy McKeown, Sherill McNally, Bruce Merwart, Lynn Merwart, Kathryn Munn, Sandra Newcombe, Nancy O'Brien, Liza Ontong, Sue Paquette, Jo Parkinson, Doug Pettit, Chisanga Puta-Chekwe, Jane Roach, Larry Roach, Margaret Rogers, Helen Rutherford, Keith Rutherford, Judith Sargent, Janet Saunders, Janice Scott, Jack Seedhouse, Kathy Seedhouse, Dave Shilton, Michelle Shilton, Doug Smith, Janet Smith, Ross Stephen, Sue Stephen, Susan Ward-England, Kim Wilson, Sandy Wright, Lorraine Yamamoto, Sheila Young

1. Start of hybrid meeting –11:30 AM. Everyone was welcomed to the Annual Meeting.

Attendees were advised the meeting was being recorded for minutes.

2. Acknowledgement of Territory

For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-naah-bay) First Nations - part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit - and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages. May WE strive to be the stewards whom God calls us to be and whom Mother Earth needs us to be.

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Being FULL = Of God's Spirit, we covenant to lean into God's transformative love, as we seek a safe community where each person's dignity and worth are affirmed and celebrated.

4. Opening Prayer was given by Heather McGavin, including In Memoriam for members who have passed (page 5 of the Annual Report):

Ruth Green
William Morgan
Paul DeRoo
Joan Fradley
Penny Edwards
Pat Murray

5. Process for voting and asking questions was provided:

- a. The meeting is being recorded to ensure discussion is captured for the Minutes.
- b. Participants online:
 - will be muted except during discussion time to avoid any interference by background noise
 - For both in person participants as well as online, you will be asked to vote only if you disagree, and do so by physically raising your hand and keeping it up until we have counted.
 - If you have a question, raise your virtual hand (found under the reaction button at the bottom of the screen) and you will be recognized.

6. Motion to allow adherents to vote:

MOTION: That all full members and adherents present to vote on the Motions

Moved by: Janice Martin

Seconded by: Sue Stephen

CARRIED

7. Election of Chair and Recording Secretary for the meeting:

MOTION: That Heather McGavin be appointed as Chair and May Griffiths-Turner be appointed Recording Secretary for the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Moved by: Dale McKeown

Seconded by: Chisanga Puta-Chekwe

CARRIED

8. Approval of Agenda (Pages 10-12 of the Annual Report)

MOTION: That the Agenda be accepted as printed

Moved by: Don Hunt

Seconded by: Sandra Newcombe

CARRIED

9. Approval of previous Minutes Annual Congregational Meeting March 13, 2022
Pages 13-28 of the Annual Report

MOTION: That the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting March 13, 2022 be accepted as printed

Moved by: Sue Stephen

Seconded by: Janice Hatt

CARRIED

12. Presentation of Board and Committee Chairs for 2023 – Nominations Committee.
Reported by Heather McGavin on Carol Boyle's behalf.

The Full Board listing, is located on pages 50-52 of the 2022 Annual Report for the Term of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Please note that the vote is for the Official Board members only.

a) Motion to accept the Board & Committee Chairs as presented by Nominations Committee

It was noted that there are a couple of errors, Larry Hatt is the Coordinator of Men's Breakfast, the Consolidation and Renewal Team has disbanded

MOTION: To accept the nominations for the Official Board slate of officers for July 1, 2023 to June 30 2024 as amended.

Moved by: Shirley Bottaro

Seconded by: Gary Goodale

CARRIED

b) Motion to allow the Board to fill open positions throughout the year

MOTION: To allow the Board to fill any open positions as necessary throughout the year.

Moved by: Sandy McKeown

Seconded by: Chisanga Puta-Chekwe

CARRIED

13. Finance Report (pages 80-82) & 2023 Budget (page 83)- Reported by Dave Shilton

2022 Year End Highlights:

On behalf of the Finance Committee, **Thank-you** was extended. With GUC generous support, during the past three years of Covid-19, Grace has come out of the pandemic in a good financial position. This is something to celebrate as many churches in Canada struggled during this period.

- 2022 results show a net profit of \$24,606
- These results are favourable to budget by \$32,431

Revenue

- Envelope givings were less than budgeted by \$13,193
- Offset by better than budgeted Rental and Fundraising income of \$16,654.
- The budgeted \$20,000 from the Loan Forgiveness program has been moved to 2023

Expenses:

- Payroll costs were significantly less than planned due to Administrator and Minister positions not being filled fully in 2022
- Finance planned prudently due to the uncertain timing when full time Administrator and Minister roles would be filled

2023 Budget Highlights:

- A shortfall of \$13,841 is projected
- An increase in Envelope givings of 2.7% to \$185,000 is projected
- The loan forgiveness amount of \$20,000 will be moved into 2023 income.
NOTE: Without this amount the budgeted shortfall in 2023 would be \$33,841
- 2023 payroll costs have been budgeted to show the Minister and Administrator positions to be filled for the whole year
- Expenses are going up reflecting the increased costs of goods and services
- Consumer price index increase as of December 31 2020 was 6.8%
- Endowment funds cannot be used to cover this shortfall
- Committee Expenses will increase reflecting increased activity

a. Motion to Accept 2023 Budget on page 83 of 2022 Annual Report

MOTION: to accept the Budget for 2023 as submitted.

Moved by: Dave Shilton

Seconded by: Don Hunt

CARRIED

Thanks was extended to the Finance Team for their excellent stewardship of church funds. Thanks was also extended to the congregation both in person and online for their contributions and support of the life of the church

14. Endowment Fund Reports

GUC is blessed to have these Endowment funds to support Outreach and capital Property projects.

a. Nelson Fund Update. – Reported by Mike Lawton

As a reminder, the Nelson Endowment Fund is the legacy of Nelson United Church. The little stone church that is located on the north side of Highway 5 between Guelph Line and Brant Street. The money in the fund came from the sale of the building and property in 2017 and from money bequeathed to Nelson United by the Kerns and Lamb families.

The interest earned during the calendar year is available to support the work of Grace United Church. The wishes of the Nelson congregation prior to amalgamation with Tansley was that the money could be used to support either Outreach or Capital projects. The intent was that the money is not used to pay for operating expenses which includes salaries, heat & hydro, office supplies, ...

Prior to amalgamation with St Stephen United the available funds from the Nelson Fund was split between the Outreach, Property and Communication Committees. Since amalgamation we are now blessed to also have the St Stephen Endowment Fund. This fund is more narrowly focused on Outreach, so we now deploy the Nelson Fund entirely to support Capital projects.

Some of the projects funded by the Nelson Fund are obvious, including upgrades to the sound booth, sound system and more window blinds in the sanctuary. Some of the projects are less obvious but necessary, nonetheless. This includes replacement of the waterproofing over the flat roof in the office area and upgrade to parking lot lighting.

The fund has been well managed by RBC-Dominion Securities since 2003. The fund is a managed account with a mix of fixed assets and equity. The equity is mostly shares of large established companies in Canada and the USA that award annual dividends.

In 2022 the Nelson Fund did not earn any interest which was not unexpected because of the poor performance in North American stock markets. So, there is no new money to distribute or anything to approve in this meeting. However, there is \$ 70,000 that is still available to spend from previous years. Already \$ 30,000 has been spent in 2023, \$ 20,000 toward the new piano and \$ 10,000 to various capital projects already approved.

Nelson Endowment Fund	
Balance as of December 31, 2022	
Investment Account	\$1,000,000
Income earned but not spent	<u>\$70,000</u>
Balance:	\$1,070,000

b. St. Stephen Endowment Fund Update - Reported by Dave Shilton
Report on page 55-57 of the Annual Report

- The funds came to Grace United as a result of the sale of the property of St. Stephen United Church
- In 2022 the fund supported 17 separate charities for \$72,700
- Since inception the fund has supported 23 charities for \$175,200
- An additional \$18,000 in funds has been pledged
- The value of the fund has grown from \$2,650,000 to almost \$3,000,00.
- Almost all of the 17 sponsorships in 2023 were initiated by members of Grace United Church
- Would like to spend all income generated annually to support initiatives

Some information about few of the worthwhile charities we support:

Masomo Education Foundation: \$5,000

The Foundation's aim is to finance the education of talented young women and men in Zambia. The Foundation has a Canadian Board of Directors. Each year the Board of Directors select a Committee of eminent academics and professionals whose task it is to identify suitable candidates. The scholarships are advertised in the national press and suitable candidates are identified on merit.

The President of the Foundation is our own Chisanga Puta-Chekwe

Halton Women's Shelter: \$1,000:

Halton Women's Place is the ONLY women's shelter in the Halton region providing emergency safe shelter and community outreach services to women and children experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Burlington Scouting World Jamboree \$5,000:

This request is in support of a number of our scouts/scouter who have registered to attend the 25th World Scout Jamboree to be held in South Korea, Aug. 1 – 12, 2023. This is a once in a life-time opportunity for these young people. Each member is responsible for the cost of their trip \$6,000, which includes registration fees, meals and airfare, plus any out-of-pocket expenses during the trip. Members will have the opportunity to spend 4 days touring South Korea followed by 8 days on-site at the Jamboree.

13th Burlington Scouts were held their weekly meetings at St. Stephen United Church for many years

Grace United Church Support In 2022 33% of our funding supported Grace

Grace United Church Outreach: \$21,000: *T*

his is by far our largest commitment. The funds are to support the many worthwhile projects of our Outreach team

Grace United Church Affirming Committee \$ 3,000: *To cover our financial commitment of \$3,000 towards the Concerning Matthew Shepard performed by the Elora Singers held at Port Nelson United Church in June 2022*

For 2023 we will again support Outreach, in addition to contributing to the cost of the new Piano and Choir gowns.

A Video "thank-you" was received from Nina's Place.

Questions / comments arising from the St. Stephen Endowment Fund Update:

- Does the Christian High School that received funding support 2S LGBTQIA+? Response was that the funds were requested by a former GUC member to support 15 students to travel to the Dominican Republic to build housing. The Endowment Fund doesn't apply a filter for requests. Current Fund Guidelines are used.
- Is there a way to ensure that future fund recipients are welcoming and affirming to all people? Response was that Fund Guidelines can be reviewed.
- How can new projects get funded, for example So On Fire? There is a link on the GUC website to apply for funding.
- Suggestion was made to increase donation amounts to supported organizations in order to spend more of the income generated

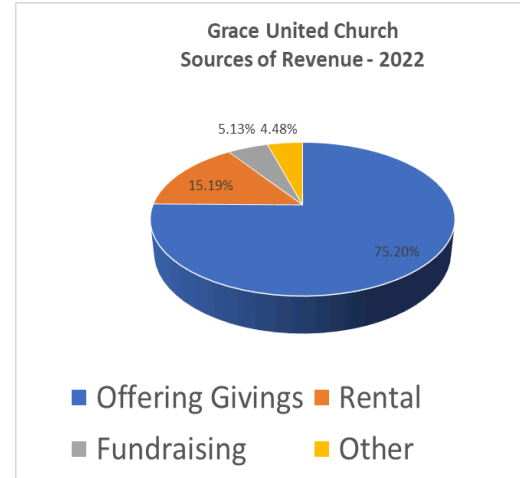
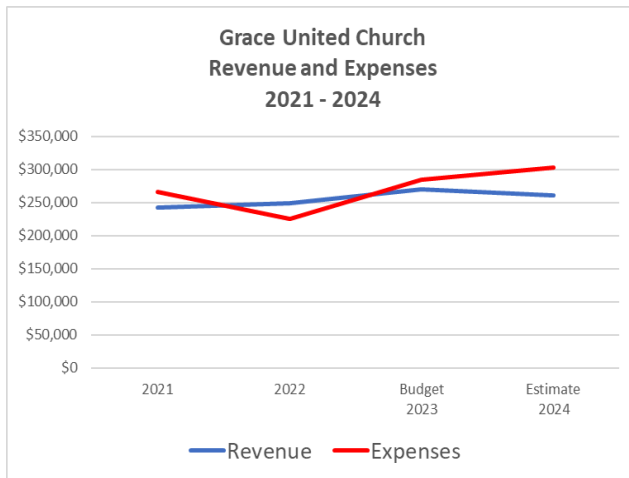
15. Committee Reports

Published in the Annual Report

Faith Formation Update– presented by Keith Rutherford

- Planning a welcome event targeted to young people, young families
- An email will be sent to the congregation after Easter inviting those who may not attend church on Sundays to a hybrid meeting on a different day to brainstorm ideas and new strategies to identify what they may be looking for in their faith or for spiritual growth
- Congregation will be encouraged to distribute the email to family, friends, and neighbours
- Will also reach out into the wider community

Finance Stewardship Update - presented by Dave Shilton



Finding a solution to financial challenges will be the major goal of the Finance Committee and the Trustees as together we work with Rev. Richard on a 2023 Stewardship strategy”

- Chart 1 shows if current trends continue, there will be a larger shortfall of ~\$40,000 in 2024
- Chart #2 shows where revenue comes from
- 75% is from givings
- An increase in givings needs to be looked at
- A Stewardship Strategy is required
- An active annual Stewardship strategy is part of the life of a healthy church. While many may find a Stewardship conversation somewhat awkward it is necessary. Rev. Richard will tell is that givings do not increase organically. Our history shows that.

The Stewardship Strategy for Grace United Church

- Goal not only to cover an expected shortfall. We are not naïve, 2024 is a shortfall
- But we also want to in the upcoming years to be in a position to support the many exciting initiatives that are coming
- There is so much energy in the church and many new ideas and initiatives coming forward that we want to be able to support them
- While we can't support it all we want to be able to say ... We can support a program to attract young people back to Grace
- An ongoing vibrant Stewardship strategy will help us.

2023 Stewardship Strategy

Three-Sunday Stewardship series

- April 16 - Thank you!
- April 23 - It's about God's Ministry
- April 30 - What's Your Part?

Look for additional information as we get closer to April 16th

Ministry and Personnel Update: presented by Mark Goodale



Susan Ward England accepted the task of taking the new position description for the Church Administrator and trying it out – bringing it to life. She started November 2021 until after “Christmas”, then was in the role until February 2023, working with 3 ministers Rev. Helen, Rev. Dale and Rev. Richard. The church benefitted not only financially – fewer hours to do the new role, no benefits etc., but because new systems were designed and implemented and then revised after Richard’s arrival.

Her husband Bob spent increased volunteer hours at the church – another benefit. Now Susan and Bob are ready to do more travelling.

As a token of thanks GUC presented a Gift certificate to the Travel Agency Expedia Cruises to be put towards a future trip that they can share and enjoy together.

MOTION: to accept the Committee Reports as submitted in the 2022 Annual Report

Moved by: Steve Bottaro
Seconded by: John Allchin
CARRIED

16. Recommendation from the Consolidation and Renewal Committee Update
Presented by Stacy Goodale
Report on pages 63-65 of the Annual Report

The Committee Report of the Consolidation and Renewal Team (CaR Team) outlined the history and progress of the Team since August 2022 when the team was first established.

2 additional items were addressed– the first relates to the crosses and the 2nd to the next steps with the Team.

It was previously communicated that in January the Board approved a motion essentially retaining all 3 crosses as a cross for Grace, just adjusting their location so each has a place of honour of its own:

- one on the exterior entrance wall, as a welcome to all,

- one in the loft where we share our faith with each other and with the community
- one at the front of the sanctuary

Although this decision does not require official congregational approval, the Board and the CaR Team felt strongly that congregational input and support was critical. The CaR Team provided regular updates on their progress and offered multiple opportunities to provide input including written feedback in the fish at the back of the sanctuary and to the CaR Team email. Many people took advantage of that opportunity - with more than 30 comments received in the fish as well as almost 40 emails – not to mention the numerous discussions that happened with members of the CaR Team directly. It was this feedback, that led the CaR Team to make the motion regarding the crosses to the Board and it was this feedback that led the Board to feel comfortable approving the motion on behalf of the congregation.

Since announcing the decision at the end of January, there has been almost unanimous support for the plan, but CaR committed to bringing the decision to the AGM, creating space for any final questions. The plan is to coordinate the move of the crosses with the Property Committee and a few key individuals to align the crosses to the new site most appropriate for their size and ensure the cross moving outside is properly protected. As the weather improves stay tuned for more info on the exact timing of the move and how we will celebrate all 3 of our crosses.

The CaR Team was formed in response to Rev Helen's challenge to GUC to achieve "complete unity where the past is fully celebrated, and the future embraced". The team's mandate was focused on recommending how to manage the duplicate/triplicate worship furniture as well as the entrance to the sanctuary. Through team discussions over the last few months, and congregational feedback, CaR concluded that unity has in fact been achieved. While there is great respect and honour for our parent churches, we no longer hold on to the past.

- The crosses have been addressed.
- Bible stands have also been moved and repurposed, the baptismal fonts have been removed for now and some communion ware has been consolidated
- With congregational support a new Grace Christmas tree was introduced with new ornaments and the sanctuary continues to be reorganized to meet changing Worship needs.

The logical conclusion of the CaR Team, as it was configured, has been reached. The recommendation made to the Board in March was to disband.

The work of creating a physical space to truly live into the ministry of a unified Grace is just beginning. The CaR Team believe that the next steps should be bolder; and that a new team with the right skills to take on a renewed mandate is necessary. We have the opportunity to move beyond communion ware, and

truly consider what God is calling us to be and therefore what we require from our physical plant.

As a CaR Team we talked to artisans and heard from an architect who helped us think bigger;

- the idea of a “sacred space” within our sanctuary – be that a water feature or a sculpture or something completely different.
- The idea of an entrance that tells people they are entering an inclusive place where you feel drawn to God.

The current team wasn’t pulled together with those objectives in mind and while a few will likely be willing to be a part of this new team, CaR is looking for others from the congregation and beyond, with specific expertise – engineering, design, general contracting, project management for example. We will no doubt need to pay experts to help us as we move forward but if you have any of these specific skills or you know someone who does, and would be willing to be a part of this new Grace team please let Heather McGavin or Stacy Goodale know.

CaR Team was asked to stand and be recognized.

Thanks was extended to Stacy Goodale and the CaR Team for all their work.

17. Affirming Ministry Update – presented by Janice Martin and Kim Wilson
Report on pages 58-62 of the Annual Report

The Affirming Journey of Grace

How it all began:

- Board approved Committee to investigate what would be required to become Affirming - Report submitted
- Board agreed to an official Affirming Committee being formed to move forward (Sept 2021)
- Kim Wilson and Janice Martin (Co-Chairs)
- Paul Bartu, Steve Bottaro, Holly Dobson, Sharyn Georgas, Jane Jenner, Kathryn Munn, Janet Saunders and Rev Richard Bott members

Focus:

- Explored understanding / issues facing various marginalized communities (2S & LGBTQIA+, Indigenous Peoples, Racialized Communities etc.)
- Focus on 2S & LGBTQIA+ community in 2023 as this group was the original focus of Affirm United
- Organized Lunch and Learns, next one on Tuesday March 28th on pronouns and 2S & LGBTQIA+ acronym

2021-2023:

- Prepared documents for the Grace website / GraceLine
- Read & discussed books / articles at our biweekly meetings regarding marginalized communities / individuals and problematic scriptures
- Conversations with Grace committees and groups
- PIE Day, PRIDE month, National Day of Truth & Reconciliation, Transgender Day of Remembrance, The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Community Partnerships:

- Sponsored (in conjunction with other churches) performance of Considering Matthew Shepard by the Elora Singers hosted by Port Nelson United Church
- Partnership with PFLAG established

Frequently asked question:

Do we need to become "affirming"? Aren't we very tolerant already? What difference would it make?:

- Words like welcoming / inclusion/ tolerate
- Suggest those on the inside have the power to choose to accept those on the outside
- Makes it sound like an act of charity to welcome those who are different or marginalized
- Church is not a private club & we are not gatekeepers

- As soon as one new person comes through the doors, the community becomes a new community

Affirming Ministries declare, in words AND ACTIONS, God loves and accepts people from the Queer community - and they call upon the rest of the church and society to do the same.

What's next?

Embark on an educational/discernment process that encourages us be Public – Intentional – Explicit

- Continue our journey to share info with the Grace community of faith - focus on 2S & LGBTQIA+ and many events as we have a vote coming up and we want to make sure everyone has a chance to ask questions and understand so they can have an informed vote
- Hearing personal stories from within our ministry / community to understand the need for this action
- Discussing modern theological understandings of scriptures used for years / still today to discriminate
- Talking with other Affirming ministries about impact of decision on their ministry. What it might mean for us
- Discussing the social justice aspects of why becoming Affirming is important

When we feel we are ready to make a public declaration of our work to be inclusive....

- 3 Documents need to be prepared / sent to the Affirming Ministry Program first to be approved
 - A Vision Statement
 - A Continuing Plan of Action for Grace (post Affirming) that will continue looking at issues facing other marginalized communities
 - An Equal Marriage Policy
- Next Grace Board approval
- Finally the Congregational vote

Decision Time:

- For the vote, Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble strongly advises a minimum of 75% approval
 - In a community of faith this would include both official members and adherents
- We are planning to have a vote on October 29 2023



Assuming a positive vote.....

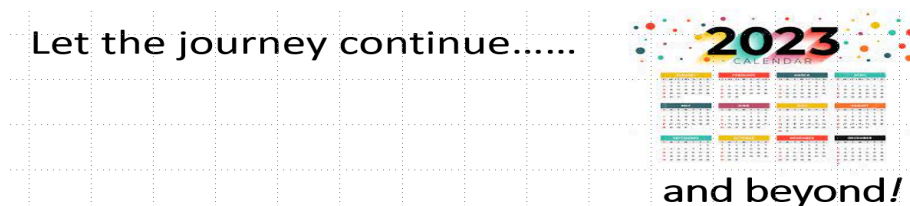


Making a commitment to the national Affirming movement:

- Required to become members of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble - This supports the Affirming Ministries program, advocacy work, the annual conference, governance etc.
- Report annually on the ongoing work of our Ministry.
- Send members to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble's Annual Conference and General Meeting each summer

Celebrating:

- After a positive vote, we will hold a public service of celebration for Grace, our community and the wider United Church and community
- At this service we will receive a certificate from Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble to mark this step
- Following this celebration, we will join the growing list of Affirming Ministries throughout Canada and will be listed on the national AUSE and United Church websites



Thanks was extended to the Affirming Ministry Team for all their work.

18. Strategic Goals for Grace United Church –presented by Stacy Goodale

At the end of February, the Board met on a Saturday for a Board retreat. The objectives were to feed our spirits and set some goals. We spent the morning reflecting on our own spiritual discipleship and practicing our praying. And we spent the rest of the day talking about the future of Grace. There was tons of energy but it was also a little overwhelming and raised lots of questions – what's most important, where do we start, and how will we know we're focused on the right things?

Since the retreat, a small group took those questions away and pulled together a summary of the Board's thinking – specifically some goals for Grace over the next 3-5 years, as well as the beginning of a road map to help GUC achieve those goals.



The first are Goals for the next 3-5 years ... Growth, Faith and Connection

Said simply.. Deepening our Faith in Christ, we Grow through our Connection, with one another, with the wider community, and with God

Each of these goals has a specific definition that will help inform some key metrics that the Board will use to monitor progress, the goals themselves are the pillars of our church home – they are grounded in the foundation of the United Church’s vision and call and remain sheltered and unified by Grace’s guiding principles and core values.

We are excited to see what we can accomplish as a Board and as a community of faith with these goals as our focus.



This is GUCs Board plan for this year – a roadmap of sorts but not the Trip tik kind you used to get from CAA. It's not meant to capture every turn or side road, or every Committee's activities. But it lays out some sign posts for GUCs Board work – activities that are not necessarily specific to 1 Committee but will require collaboration across Committees or overall support of the Board.

Right now it's showing this path as the fastest route, but just like Google, we expect the ideal route may change as we move along – we might experience road blocks, or maybe a new route or idea opens up that we want to try. So this will be an evolving plan.

Committees will have a chance to review this plan as it relates to Committee goals and activities. Feedback and questions are welcomed as we move through the year. We're excited about seeing what we can all achieve together!

19. Other Business

Paul Bartu expressed a sincere thanks on behalf of everyone to Heather McGavin who is resigning as Board Co-Chair after serving both Grace and parent church St. Stephen for 13 years. A rest is truly deserved!

20. Motion to Adjourn by Mark Goodale

21. Rev. Richard Bott closed the meeting with a Benediction.

Heather McGavin
Heather McGavin Board Co-Chair,

May Griffiths-Turner
Recording Secretary, May Griffiths-Turner



Congregational Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2023 11:30 AM

Attendees: 58 Congregants, including 4 people joining on-line

- 1) Meeting Opened by Stacy Goodale – Co-Chair of the Board
- 2) Opening Prayer by Stacy Goodale
- 3) Explanation of the voting process by Stacy Goodale and the meeting was then turned over to the Co-Chairs of the Affirming Committee – Janice Martin and Kim Wilson. They explained that, as part of the Affirming process, Grace United must have a Vision Statement that reflects Affirming values and is approved by the Congregation. This statement has already been approved by Affirm United.
- 4) **MOTION: Grace United Church is committed to living out all of our core values Affirming all of God’s children, embracing people of every age or stage of life, race or ethnicity, Indigeneity or settler ancestry, spiritual beliefs, culture, family configuration, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities or health, socioeconomic circumstances, and life experiences and who will be encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry, thereby enriching us all.**

Moved by: Janice Martin
Seconded by: Kathryn Munn

Discussion: There was a question about the number of different types of people covered in this Motion, as the understanding was that the Affirming Committee was only focused on 2S&LGBTQ+ individuals. Moving forward, if the Affirming vote passes in October, the Committee will be looking at affirming other marginalized groups at the appropriate times. This is a vision statement not a mission statement.

CARRIED – 57 to 1 in favour

- 5) Meeting Adjourned

Stacy Goodale

Jennifer Brezina

Co-Chair

Secretary



Affirming Congregational Meeting – Oct 29, 2023 Minutes

Attendees: Nancy Adams, Walter Adams, Beth Allan, John Allchin, Louise Allchin, Sharon Allchin, Claire Andoff, Paul Bartu, Peggy Birnie, Richard Bott, Shirley Bottaro, Steve Bottaro, Carol Boyle, Jennifer Brezina, Cheryl Caldwell, Ron Caldwell, Jeff Couley, Wendy de Jaray, Holly Dobson, Aislinn Doran, Maureen Doran, Shirley Dowd, Linda Draddy, Colleen Edwards, Janice Edworthy, Bob England, Sharyn Georgas, Gary Goodale, Mark Goodale, Ruth Goodale, Stacy Goodale, May Griffiths-Turner, Pouyan Haghdarsaheli, Janice Hatt, Larry Hatt, Susie Henderson, Jennifer Henry, Nancy Holman, Joyce Hughes, Jane Hunter, Jim Imrie, Joyce Imrie, Jane Jenner, Mike Lawton, Cliff Lelievre, Donna Lelievre, Anne Lowrey, Sheryl Lowrey, Dennis Marshall, Sue Marshall, Dale Martin, Janice Martin, Marilyn Martin, Myrna-Gail McDonald, Heather McGavin, Barb McKeown, Dale McKeown, Sherrill McNally, Bruce Merwert, Lynn Merwert, Rosalyn Morgan, Kathryn Munn, Bill Nicholson, Cathy Nicholson, Elizabeth Onton, Sue Paquette, Angela Prentice, Jane Roach, Larry Roach, Margaret Rogers, Judith Allan Sargent, Janet Saunders, Rod Saunders, Janice Scott, Jack Seedhouse, Kathy Seedhouse, Sylvie Sharpe, David Shilton, Michelle Shilton, Doug Smith, Janet Smith, Ross Stephen, Sue Stephen, Linda Trotter, Susan Ward-England, Kim Wilson, Sandy Wright, Lorraine Yamamoto, Sheila Young

1. The meeting opened with Prayer
Dear Lord, we have been working on what it means for Grace to be Affirming for a long time. We give thanks to the dedicated volunteers on our Affirming Committee who have educated us and kept us informed throughout the process. It is time now to make a decision about what God is calling us to do. Help us all to look deep into our hearts today and guide us in making the right decision for Grace United Church. Amen
2. Grace-Full Conversations
Prior to beginning everyone was reminded of the commitment to Grace-Full conversations.
3. Welcome
 - Everyone, both in person and online were welcomed.
 - People on Zoom, were asked to remain on mute unless there is an opportunity for questions and they are called upon.
4. Motion to elect Chairperson, Recording Secretary and Scrutineers

MOTION:

That Heather McGavin be elected Chairperson, that May Griffiths-Turner be the Recording Secretary, and that Janice Hatt and Sue Stephen be Scrutineers for this Congregational Meeting.

Moved by: Shirley Bottaro
Seconded by: Janet Saunders

CARRIED

5. Motion to allow adherents to vote

MOTION:

That all members and adherents present at this meeting, either in person or on Zoom, be granted the ability to vote on all matters raised in this meeting.

Moved by: Don Hunt

Seconded by: Sheila Young

CARRIED

6. Comments from the Chair

The following remarks were given:

- This meeting has only one item on its Agenda – to vote on whether Grace United Church will be an Affirming community of faith of The United Church of Canada. Because we recognize that this is an item of deep importance for the congregation, the Affirming Committee has recommended that the vote be by ballot rather than a show of hands. Ballots are prepared, as is a Poll on Zoom. If you are on Zoom, and there is more than one person in your household who wishes to vote, they must log into the meeting on a separate device to register their vote.
- You may notice a number of motions that seem extra, or a bit formal. Our Lead Minister, Richard, can be a bit of a stickler on process and procedure when there are important decisions before a congregation. At times like that, things that we might just have assumed as being what we do get spelled out, so that no one is concerned that our decision isn't being reached properly.
- Affirm United asks that a vote on this question be more than simple majority, requiring 75% of votes to support the Motion.
- Following The Manual of The United Church of Canada, we do *not* call for abstentions. In The United Church of Canada, if you wish to abstain from the vote, you simply do not vote. If you wish your abstention to be noted in the minutes, you are welcome to let the Recording Secretary know, following the vote.
- At a Congregational Meeting last June, Grace United Church approved the changes to our Core Values, and the Affirming statement that we would post on our website, if a later meeting of the congregation approved becoming an Affirming community of faith.

Affirming Statement:

Grace United Church is committed to living out all of our core values Affirming all of God's children, embracing people of every age or stage of life, race or ethnicity, Indigeneity or settler ancestry, spiritual beliefs, culture, family configuration, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities or health, socioeconomic circumstances, and life experiences and who will be encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry, thereby enriching us all.

- The congregation decided WHAT it would mean for us to be an Affirming community of faith at that meeting, and as there have over the past two years been multiple opportunities offered by the Affirming Committee at Worship Services, lunch and learns, various Committee Meetings, the Grace Library and information wall, one-on-one conversations with congregational members, as well as ongoing conversation with the Board.

- Given that there has been ample opportunity to discuss the pros and cons, we are going to do something that we have never done before and ask that the question be put to the congregation, without debate. If you are new and do not feel that you have enough information to make an informed decision, then we ask that you consider abstaining from voting. When the motion is presented, questions that could provide clarity to the motion or the process are welcomed. Janice or Kim or Richard would be happy to respond to those questions. We are asking that at this meeting, opinions one way or the other not be expressed. We believe it is important that there are no words spoken that would make any person here feel as though they are not a beloved child of God.

7. Motion about voting by ballot

MOTION:

That the motion regarding being an Affirming community of faith be conducted by secret ballot.

Moved by: Steve Bottaro

Seconded by: Sue Marshall

CARRIED

8. Motion about becoming and Affirming Community of Faith

- The wording of the motion was posted on the screen to be visible to all present.
- Janice & Kim came forward to answer any questions or provide any clarifications for the congregation prior to the vote.
- The question was asked: Does anyone have questions regarding clarity or about the process? There were none.

MOTION:

That Grace United Church, Burlington, be an Affirming community of faith of The United Church of Canada

Moved by: Janice Martin

Seconded by: Kim Wilson

Voting procedure carried out:

- The Chairperson stated that this vote would be carried if 75% or more of the votes cast were in favour of the motion.
- Spoiled ballots would be counted as abstentions
- The Zoom poll was opened as the ballots and pens were handed out by the Affirming Committee members
- Richard announced how long the poll would be open, and let those online know when 20 seconds remained to vote
- The ballots were collected by baskets being passed down the aisles
- As the ballots were being collected, the Zoom poll was closed, and Richard brought the Zoom numbers to the Scrutineers.
- The Scrutineers added the Zoom poll numbers to the paper ballot numbers
- The total number of votes (not including spoiled ballots), the number in favour and opposed were given to the Chairperson

Results:

In Favour: 85, 93.4%

Opposed: 6, 6.6%

The Chair declared that the motion was **CARRIED**.

9. Thanks

- The Affirming Committee was thanked for all their work over the past two years.
- Everyone was thanked for their participation in the process.
- The Chair announced that as a result of motion for Grace to become an be an Affirming community of faith of The United Church of Canada, there will be a celebration of being an Affirming community of faith that will take place at the end of January.

10. Motion for destruction of the ballots

MOTION:

That the ballots be destroyed

Moved by: Larry Hatt

Seconded by: Don Hunt

CARRIED

11. Closing Prayer by Rev. Richard Bott

12. Motion for Adjournment by Aislinn Doran

Heather McGavin

Chairperson, Heather McGavin

May Griffiths-Turner

Recording Secretary, May Griffiths-Turner

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund Policy

POLICY

Source of Funds:

This fund receives bequests and gifts designated as such, and any undesignated gifts designated for the GRACE – St. Stephen ENDOWMENT Fund of \$1,000 or more. The **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** is open to contributions from anyone in the congregation or wider community.

The fund will continue to accept donations directed to the St. Stephen Endowment Fund

Purpose:

*The Grace - St. **Stephen Endowment Fund** provides a means to support the work of the congregation, by way of bequests and planned gifts, in the areas of spiritual growth, pastoral care, music, and to support Outreach work in North Burlington and beyond whether through Grace United Church or in the greater community.*

Administration:

1. The Trustees of Grace United Church administer the investing of the funds.
2. The Trustees shall open and maintain a bank account and an Investment account for all gifts, bequests and legacies and such account shall be designated the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund**.
3. The Trustees Investment Policy will be reviewed annually with the investment advisor/professional manager, who will provide monthly accounting of all transactions during the month to the Endowment Fund Treasurer.
4. The intention of the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** is to preserve the capital portion of all donations received in perpetuity and

Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund Policy

Approved by Trustees: Month YYYY Approved by Congregation: Month YYYY Scheduled Review Date: Month YYYY Written/Issued By: Trustees
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only the income earned each year is to be made available for expenditure, except as noted in #5.

5. Up to 20% of the capital may be withdrawn for extraordinary expenses, upon recommendation of the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund Committee** with the Grace United Church Trustees and Congregational approval.
6. Annually a minimum balance \$1,000 is to be maintained in the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** bank account for "Emergency Purposes"; which if not used, is carried forward to the next year's disposable income.
7. The Endowment Fund Committee is comprised of: A Chairperson or Co-Chairs (elected by the congregation. The Minister, a representative from Trustees (named by the Trustees), a representative from Mission and Outreach Committee (named by the Committee) and three "At large members".
8. The **Grace - St Stephen Endowment Fund** Committee has the authority to approve requests up to \$5,000. All funding approvals are reported to the Board at the next monthly Board meeting. The congregation is provided a summary at the Annual General meeting.
9. The Treasurer shall keep proper books of account and enter therein all matters and transactions.
10. Donations to the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** are recorded in the Annual report of the congregation, as well as a full accounting of the investments and an audited financial statement.
11. All donations are acknowledged in the form of a letter or card within 30 days of receipt and an Official Tax Receipt will be issued by end of February of the following year.

PROCEDURE

1. At the year end, the Chair or Co-Chair(s) Chair of the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** advises the Chair of Trustees via email or written note the amount of income available for expenditure.

2. The **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund Committee** must provide a financial update to the congregation at the Annual General meeting.
3. Requests for funding from the **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** must be submitted using the application template.
4. The **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** committee will make decisions on how to respond to funding requests based on: the Purpose of the Fund, the Core Values (including the Affirming statement) of Grace United Church, and any Priorities currently named by the Board.
5. The **Grace – St. Stephen Endowment Fund** Committee is to meet on a minimum of a quarterly basis to discuss requests for funding, and more often should circumstances require.

Chair of Trustees

Secretary of Trustees