



Thornbury, Ontario  
**Grace United Church**  
**Bold. Nurturing. Liberal. Christian.**

**Annual Congregational Meeting  
Sunday March 2, 2025  
10:30 am**

*Attend meeting in-person during Sunday's service or by livestream with the link found at  
[www.graceunitedthornbury.ca](http://www.graceunitedthornbury.ca) / Worship / Click for Livestream*

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**



From the Atkins Window in the Sanctuary of Grace United Church, in memory of Melville & Gladys Atkins

*"The panorama of our Beaver Valley speaks volumes to us of our place and role within creation, of our enjoyment of nature, of our responsibility to our environment, and our dependence on God's providential care"*

*From the GUCT book The Stained-Glass Windows*

# GRACE UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY MARCH 2, 2025

10:30 AM in-person and livestreamed

---

## 1. GREETING

## 2. CALL TO ORDER

## 3. OPENING PRAYER

## 4. OPENING MOTIONS

- a) Establishment of quorum
- b) Nomination and Election of Meeting Chairperson
- c) Nomination and Election of Meeting Secretary
- d) Motion regarding temporal matters: Mover/Seconder: that adherents, people who are active in the life and work of Grace United Church but are not members, be given the ability to speak to the meeting and vote on temporal matters.
- e) Motion regarding agenda: Mover/Seconder: that the agenda for this meeting be approved.
- f) Motion regarding minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting March 3, 2024
  - i. Attendees at the 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting.....4
  - ii. Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting March 3, 2024.....4
- g) Mover/Seconder: that the minutes of the congregational meeting of March 3, 2024 be approved as circulated.

## 5. REFLECTING ON 2024

Referring to the Annual Report: Questions and comments from the congregation received in advance will be shared. There will be an opportunity for questions and comments that arise during the meeting.

- a) Marriage Services .....11
- b) Funeral and Memorial Services.....11
- c) Changes in the Membership Roll.....11
- d) Memorial Donations.....11
- e) Message from the Minister.....11
- f) Message From the Church Board Chairperson.....12
- g) Board of Trustees Report .....13
- h) Faith Formation and Justice Initiatives:
  - i. Affirming Ministry Leadership Group.....14
  - ii. The Green Team & The TBM Repair Café .....15
  - iii. The Green Team Report.....15
  - iv. Grace United Church Sunday School.....16
- i) Ministry and Personnel Committee.....17
- j) Candy Cane Fair Report.....17
- k) Worship Committee Report.....18
- l) Regional Council Lay Representative Report.....19
- m) Ministry of Music Report.....20
- n) Membership, Visitation and Communication (MVC) Committee Reports
  - i. Part 1: MVC Committee Reports.....21
  - ii. Part 2: MVC Program Reports.....21
- o) Property Management Report.....23

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

a) Nominations Report.....	24
b) Adoption of Slate of Nominees	
c) Motion about the date of the next Annual Congregational Meeting, to be held on _____, or at the call of the Chair of the Congregation, or the Minister. Proposed Board / Committee Members for 2025.	
f) Grace United Church Staff.....	25
g) Grace Goals for 2025.....	25
i)    Develop a sustainability plan that considers collaboration with other churches and using the church's physical assets for sustainable housing and increased rental revenue	
ii)    Recruit a minister and secure supply ministry services as needed	
iii)    Support social justice issues in our Church and community with a focus on green initiatives, Georgian Bay Home Share, and becoming an Affirming Ministry	
iv)    Strengthen spiritual growth and care within the congregation	

h) Grace United Church Contact Info.....	25
--	----

I) Budget 2025	
----------------	--

**7. COVENANTING WITH THE ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS AND GOALS OF THE CONGREGATION****8. CHURCH BOARD MOTION**

Mover/Seconder: that the Church Board be granted interim powers to conduct emergent business from the close of this meeting until the next Annual meeting of the Congregation on \_\_\_\_\_.

**9. DECLARATION OF CLOSING OF MEETING**

The business of this meeting having been completed, the chair may declare the meeting closed following Communion and Sending.

## ATTENDEES AT THE 2024 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

In person and On-Line

March 3, 2024

---

Adam, Kelly	Findlay, Linda	Oliver, Jim
Adams, Rosemary	Fleming, Phyllis	Parkin, Marilyn & Paul
Anderson, Orleen	Gignac, Mary Lou	Poulin, Mary
Araujo Abbotts, Caroline*	Hagerman, Isabelle	Reck, Heike
Baron, Garth & Norine	Hammond, Bonnie	Roberts, Donna & Peter
Bell, Sylvia	Hunter, John	Robinson, Dave & Eileen
Burton, Dr. Christopher	Kearns, Donna & Rob	Ryan, Charlene*
Clarke, Carol & Doug	Kelly, Ken & Jean	Sampson, Carl & Sylvia*
Cornfield, George*	Lockie, Ian & Lois	Smith, Rev. John Gregory
Dickson, George & Heather	Maloney, Wendy	Weale, Debby*
Dillon, Bev*	McKinlay, James & Joan	Woolner, Shirley
Dolmer, Diana & Jim	McMurphy, Sylvia	Yeandle, Candy
Donald, Chris & Jocelyn	Mount, Marilyn	
Douglas, Drew & Marilyn	Murray, Ian & Teddy	TOTAL = 56
		ON-LINE (*) = 7
		IN PERSON = 49

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

March 3, 2024

---

In Person & On-line Participants

### Opening Comments and Motions:

James McKinlay spoke about seeing snow drops blooming on his way into town this morning. He thought that they were a fitting image of the new life and new energy that comes with the Spring and a new church year. He stated that he was privileged to serve as the Congregational Chair because it is a very unique position to work with such a talented, dedicated and forward-thinking congregation, Board and staff here at Grace United Church. He then called the meeting to order.

James McKinlay welcomed everyone in the church and on-line. He said that this was our annual meeting, a time to reflect on our achievements in the past year and a time when we can plan and position ourselves to meet the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead with renewed energy and new ideas. He asked us to embrace the frisson of energy that Rev. John had described in his sermon. How can we best meet God's call for us at Grace United Church?

James stated that he carried a proxy vote for the motion on marriages.

It was established that there was a quorum for the meeting. **Jim Oliver moved that James McKinlay be nominated and elected as Chair of the Congregational Meeting. Heather Dickson seconded the motion.**

**Carried.**

**Carol Clarke moved that Joan McKinlay be nominated and elected as the Secretary of the Congregational Meeting. The motion was seconded by Shirley Woolner.**

**Carried.**

**Shirley Woolner moved that adherents, people who are active in the life and work of Grace United Church but are not members, be given the ability to speak to the meeting and vote on temporal matters. This was seconded by Bonnie Hammond.** Carried.

**Mary Lou Gignac moved that the agenda for this meeting be approved as amended. Seconded by Shirley Woolner.** Carried.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Marilyn Mount moved that the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of March 5, 2023 be approved. Seconded by George Dickson. Carried.

**Review of the Annual Report for 2023:**

James guided the congregation through the printed reports and asked for comments and questions. Bonnie Hammond noted that George and Lynn Cornfield's names should be added to the Memorial Donations. Phyllis Fleming noted that the term Non-Membership Roll should not be used under the Changes in the Membership Roll.

Orleen Anderson said that Carl Sampson's name should be included in the Tech Team as well as Matthew Roque. Ella and Emmerson Roque have also been a part of the team. Wendy Maloney's name should be a part of the Affirming Ministry committee.

**Shirley Woolner moved that the reports be accepted and Jim Oliver seconded this motion.**

Carried.

**In Memoriam:**

Rev. John Smith read the names of Jim Armstrong, Peter Armstrong, Muriel Anderson, Catharine Dalrymple, Eric Marriott, Roland Gosselin, John Kadwell, Don Young, Mary Louise Dickson and Joshua Arsenio, and invited us to pause and think of them. Dr. Christopher Burton played as we sang the hymn "Those Hearts That We Have Treasured" VU #494

**Presentation Stewardship and Finance Committee:**

Orleen - Good Morning: Let me introduce Grace's Stewardship and Finance committee: Heike Reck, Kelly Adam and me, Orleen Anderson.

Orleen - First off, please don't shoot the messengers. The S&F committee is responsible for reporting the financial results. As the family of Grace we are ALL accountable for discussion and decision making.

At the annual meeting in March of 2020, the S&F committee presented a rally call to IMAGINE, imagine this building filled for movies, for concerts, for speakers, for dinners. The one thing we didn't imagine was a world-wide pandemic that would close this building and change so many things. At that time we couldn't have imagined this building quiet ---yes-- we keep mentioning this...it was real, it is real. The after effects, both good and not so good are still with us.

2023 was a year of continuing to open up and feel comfortable gathering, recommitting to community dinners and the Candy Cane Fair, reopening for concerts, for lunches and guest speakers, supporting the busy Repair Cafe, promoting this building for community groups to use. The energy, the spirit and faith inside Grace is still here.

Let's look at the Financial Report:

How did you feel when you saw the 2023 financial results with a deficit of more than \$37,000? How did you feel when you looked at the predicted budget for 2024, which shows a projected deficit of more than \$47,000? I know how I felt....shocked, dismayed, scared, I felt like a pin had popped my balloon.

We are starting with an explanation of EXPENSES, which you can find on p.5 of the Financial Report. We will pause for questions so feel free to wave at any time.

Orleen - Church Building Expenditures - Thank you to Doug Clarke and to each of his helpers that rally when assistance is requested. They keep the building and grounds in good shape. Considering the increase in the costs of services, the building expenses for 2023 have been kept very close to the predicted budget and well below 2022 levels. The proposed budget for 2024 is in line with inflation.

Heike - Worship Expenditures - These expenditures include organ and piano maintenance, pulpit supply, bench supply (when Christopher is on holidays), guest musicians, and candles, flowers etc. used in worship. The 2023 expenditures of \$10,400 were well above the 2023 budget of \$7,400 due to our heavy reliance on pulpit supply after Christine's departure in May. For 2024 we are expecting a significant decrease in pulpit supply, but this reduction will be partially offset by some required maintenance for the organ and the piano.

Orleen - Office Expenditures – This year, along with the standard expenses of running an office, paper, copier ink, Tithely fees, banking fees, licensing fees, Grace's bookkeeper, the Board and S&F have included \$3,000 for upgrading of staff computers. These computers are so old we can't remember when they were purchased and if by chance Vanessa's computer is shut off, when she turns it on she has time to make hot tea before it fully boots up.

Also included in the budget is \$1,000 for promotion of Grace. This is separate from any event promotion which would be expensed against the event income. The first promotion expense was the 2023 By The Numbers card that was included with all Income tax receipts. Suggestions are welcome as to where else these little cards could be displayed. We, that's everyone attending today, on-line or in person or watching at another time, have to consider how we can promote the use of this building within the community: you can promote on social media the events being held; write stories about events to be submitted to the Review; tell a friend.

Heike - United Church of Canada Assessment - This assessment assists in the running of the broader church and is assigned to each congregation according to a pre-set formula based on statistics from two years prior. The formula is based on a percentage of net revenue and investments. We were fortunate to receive a couple of significant one-time donations in 2022, which has resulted in an unfortunate increase in our assessment for 2024. Likely a one- time thing, but we won't know until later on this year.

Kelly - Committee Expenditures -There are two “take-aways” I want you to leave with. The first one.... you will see many more columns in the committee expenses than in the past. This is to let you know that the S&F committee is focusing on a detailed breakdown of our fund-raising efforts, showing the income and expenses for each fund-raising activity: dinners, concerts etc. This will assist us with better data and help us, as we go forward and look to increase our revenue, with this revenue deficient budget to assess what is working best for us.

Grants and the timing on our financial statement of those grants. Typically grants are monies that an organization donates to us for certain works that they want to support. Typically what happens is the grant comes in one year and then you spend the money but it isn't all spent in the current year, it often takes several years to be spent, so what my take away here is, that if you look at our total expenses for 2022 is at \$11,000 then we run to 2023 and we jump to \$15,000 and in our budget we are up to \$16,700, that's a significant increase. If you take away our grants from our committee expenses you will note that the committee net expenses are about \$9,000 across all three years. With inflation as it is, I'm very pleased that it has been that well managed. In fact, the S&F committee and the Board understands that the congregation does more than give financial donations to the church. As important are the volunteer hours and the expertise that is provided by your volunteering and that has helped us control our expenses at the committee level. Thank you ALL.

Kelly - Salaries and Benefits – The juggernaut is the salaries and benefits in 2022 represented about 67.7% of our expenses. It is a very significant line item and if you look at our 2022 results you'll see a reduction from 2022 to 2023 and that was a direct result of Rev Christine's resignation in May of 2023. Rev. John joined us in October, so we have a large gap there, in terms of salaries. Heike in her explanation of pulpit supply mentioned its increase and that's why, we were utilizing pulpit supply during that interval between May and October, so our expense base went down in 2023. It is up in 2024 budget but I just want to give accolades to the Board and the pastoral committee in showing financial restraint. It was necessary.

With Rev. John guiding us with his 27 hours per week, we are able to constrain the budgeted salaries and expenses to well below that of 2022 which represented a full year. In fact, the salary and benefits total is about 10% lower than 2022 - that is significant and as a percentage of total expenses it has dropped from 67.7% to just over 62%. That is a significant, significant change and when you find yourself in a revenue deficient situation as we are, these tough decisions must be made. I applaud the Board for doing so.

Orleen – As you can see, Grace's Expenses are relatively fixed and managed well. Now let's look at the INCOME LINES on p.4 of the Financial Report.

Mission and Service Fund (M&S) - Your gifts for Mission & Service help transform and save lives. Locally, your gifts help people in need, young people on campuses and at camps. Globally, your gifts help people access clean water, food, medical care, and so many other things. Your gifts for Mission & Service inspire meaning and purpose: train ministers; support theological schools, education centres, and retreat centres. Globally, you sustain churches, student groups, and others doing important outreach work. All dollars donated go directly to the UCC Mission and Service Fund and have no impact on the finances of Grace.

Envelopes, PAR, Tithely – Donations bring in 80% (i.e. 132,000/167,000) of the 2024 budgeted income, that is only 62% (i.e. 132,000/214,000) of the necessary funds to maintain this church building and staff. Adding in the interest from the funds the Trustees manage and this number reaches 67% (i.e. 144,000/214,000). Building rental and fundraising events will be challenged to make up the rest. In the past 10 years there have been several generous one time donations that have kept Grace in the black, but we can't rely on these. We must figure other income streams.

Heike - The Board and S&F Committee have decided to challenge the congregation to a 15% increase in donations over the 2023 level. Grace needs to meet expenses - are we willing to take up the challenge? There will be multiply appeals this year, but the first one is today. We know this will be a difficult conversation, but one that we need to have with ourselves and our partners, and it needs to be adjusted to our income. Each of us has to consider what we can afford.

Other than the proposed 15% increase in givings, this budget is "status quo", which means that it does not assume any growth in congregational membership, new fundraising, revenues from additional use of facilities or any other new initiatives. It is meant as a 'guardrail budget' to illustrate what our financial position will look like without making some significant changes.

Orleen - The finances as they are tracking are not sustainable!!! That is obvious. We have to make changes. It is time for Grace to challenge a few more dreams into action plans. I have heard that the Music Committee is putting dreams into action and have some events in the planning stages for 2024. The Affirm team is planning "lunch and learn" events. The Supper Committee is looking to bring back the ham dinner. We know each of you have dreams, ideas of using this beautiful building more often. Please share them with the Board. If you are nervous about sharing an idea because you think you might have to organize, there is an anonymous suggestion box at the back of the church. So please fill it for us so we know what you are thinking and dreaming.

#### **Questions:**

Jim Oliver, two questions: We are starting the year looking at a \$47,000 deficit. Are we paying interest on financing from the bank? Orleen: Right now we still have cash in the bank in a chequing account and we also have a savings account. We are not paying interest on any loans.

Home Share program is showing a 100% increase in expenditure in 2024 over 2023 but that still only ends up roughly totaling the balance of the grant that we received. Is that what that is showing? So it is funded by the grant? Orleen: Yes. It is still grant and donation money. For Home Share, it will always be grant and donation dollars. Grace is just the medium by which the funds are tracked.

Kelly: The S&F committee want to recognize our obligation that when we receive grants it is our obligation to track them and to spend the money for the reason we received the grant dollars. We want you to be aware that we recognize that \$7,000 can be used and we recognize that it could be this year it is used. And we always like to end on a positive note. I would like to share an observation with you from my past church experience and that is when a congregation invites a new minister to join them and that minister is as experienced and gifted as Rev. John clearly is - he has his hand clearly and firmly on the rudder and is taking us to a shore - the result is often rejuvenating to the life and works of the church that can also have a positive effect on offerings. So as Rev. John would say, "Make it so"!

Linda Finley: There is a line item in 2023 budget for HST rebate but nothing in the actual and nothing noted for 2024. Orleen: When an expense comes in, our bookkeeper immediately removes the part of the HST that will be rebated away. It doesn't ever show up as an expense. It shows up accrued on the balance sheet. In reality there was about \$3,700 of HST credit for 2023.

Kelly: The expenses are shown net of HST in 2023, before the record keeping was showing expenses gross and showing a rebate. So, going forward, it is better accounting to track our expenses net of HST.

John 1: 39 – Jesus said “come and you will see”. Curiosity sparked within them and they accepted His invitation. This is the year Grace will continue to spread this idea. Come and see the community events. Come and see the many ways that the Grace building can be used. Come and see.

We are an amazing congregation. We are still here and still serving, each other, community, and world.

**Shirley Woolner moved the adoption of the financial report for the year ended Dec 31, 2022, seconded by George Dickson.** **Carried.**

**Mission and Services Objective:**

**Norine Baron moved that we establish an objective of \$14,000.00 for contributions to the M&S Fund in 2024, seconded by Rob Kearns.** **Carried.**

**Budget 2024 Approval:**

**Jim Dolmer moved that we accept the 2023 Budget as presented, Marilyn Mount seconded.** **Carried.**

**Report from the Chair of the Board:**

The Church Board Chair, Mary Lou Gignac, addressed the congregation about the importance of intentionally growing the congregation size as a strategy in sustaining our Grace community. She urged congregation members to find our individual voices to promote the riches and joys of Grace United Church Thornbury to our family, friends and neighbours. This type of sharing could be done one-to-one and through our personal social media and would be enhanced with communications at the community level.

**Nominations:**

Mary Lou Gignac then presented the nominations report noting a couple of opportunities for people to join. It was noted that the Lay Rep to the WOW Region was mislabeled in the nominations report. Rev. John Smith is the Pastoral Charge Supervisor, not a Lay Rep to Region. The position of Lay representative to WOW region, a position on the Board, was declared vacant.

**Mary Lou Gignac moved adoption of the nominations report as printed. Heather Dickson seconded.** **Carried.**

**New Business:**

**Shirley Woolner moved and Jim Oliver seconded that the next Annual Congregational Meeting be held on March 2, 2025 or at the call of the Chair of the Congregation or the Minister.** **Carried.**

**Mary Lou Gignac moved that the congregation of Grace United Church Thornbury approve the new Marriage Policy as drafted by the Affirming Ministry Leadership Group and approved by the Church Board for the congregation's consideration. Orleen Anderson seconded.** **Carried.**

Rev. John Smith spoke to the Remit 1 proposal. While this is a Board decision, they would like to hear the will of the congregation. Jim Oliver questioned if this fits with our belief of us all being in one family. Rev. John Smith replied that while we are all family we can take different paths. He referred to the wampum belt

which has two distinct parallel lines making the whole rather than being mixed together. He also explained that the “Autonomous National Indigenous Organization” indicates the intent but not the name of the group. Phyllis Fleming pointed out that this is a vote for the Board to make. It was restated that this vote is a guide for the Board as to the wishes of the congregation.

**Heike Reck moved that Grace United Church support and affirm the establishment of an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization, as proposed in Remit 1, and approve the appropriate changes needed in the Basis of Union. Carol Clarke seconded the motion.** **Carried.**

**Church Goals for 2024:**

Mary Lou Gignac introduced the Church goals for 2024 that the board had passed.

Goal 1: Support social justice issues in our Church and community with a focus on green initiatives, becoming an Affirming Ministry, and promoting Georgian Bay Home Share

Goal 2: Strengthen spiritual growth and care within the congregation

Goal 3: Increase the recognition and profile of Grace United Church within the community

Goal 4: Recruit a new minister

**Mary Lou Gignac moved the adoption of these goals, seconded by Jim Dolmer.**

**Carried.**

**Covenant With Board and Elected Members:**

Rev. John Smith led the elected Board members as they affirmed their ministry, the committee members and the congregation as they recognized and affirmed their support of the ministry of the Board for 2024.

**Shirley Woolner moved that the Church Board be granted interim powers to conduct emergent business from the close of this meeting until the next meeting of the Congregation on March 2, 2025. Seconded by George Dickson.** **Carried.**

James thanked the Board and staff for their work throughout the year. He declared the meeting adjourned after Dr. Christopher Burton led the singing of our closing hymn *We Go Out to Serve* and the blessing *Go Now In Peace*.

Rev. John Smith thanked James for leading the meeting and Joan for taking the minutes. He encouraged us to go forward into the year with a new frisson of spirit.

We enjoyed a shared meal of fellowship, chilli and cake. Peter Roberts celebrated his 100th birthday with us and shared his cake.

Submitted by,

James McKinlay  
Congregational Chair

Joan McKinlay  
Congregational Secretary

## MARRIAGE SERVICES

---

Emily Croft and Robert McKinlay

## FUNERAL and MEMORIAL SERVICES

---

Norma Darling

Ron Elliott

Douglas James (Jim) O'Brien

John Peter Stewart Roberts

## CHANGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP ROLL

### Members Removed From the Roll by Death 2024

---

Norma Darling

Ron Elliott

Douglas James (Jim) O'Brien

John Peter Stewart Roberts

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

---

Ruth McGugan

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

---

Interim Minister: Rev. Dr. John G. Smith

Friends,

As we turned the calendar to the year 2025, I looked back on the year 2024 and realized: I have grown fond of you! You are such a devoted and friendly group of people, and your dedication to your church is remarkable. It's been a privilege to be with you in worship, in many, many meetings and in pastoral care situations.

Part of my job is to sit with the Board at its meetings as well as the Trustees. Having a seat at both those tables has helped me to see that a time of transition is upon us, whereupon we will need to be courageous and strong as some much-needed changes are made. We can't continue to fund ministry the same way. And our pool of volunteers is getting smaller.

At the same time there is enthusiasm and hope. Our new little Sunday School program is such a breath of fresh new air. It's so good to see a congregation embracing kids again, and taking seriously their care and their learning. (By the way, we are careful about that: I never want to teach kids something that we will have to unteach them later!!). We will need to find new ways to harness the wonderful spiritual energy that exists in this congregation because we will need all the gifts of the Spirit to move forward.

I also represent the Region in my role as Pastoral charge supervisor. While it does often feel that the region is some kind of amorphous body at a distance, we will find their help and their presence with us as we move toward solutions that secure a future for Grace. The Region really does not want us to fail, but rather will want to help us succeed.

I want to thank all of you for supporting me in my role as your supply minister. As my two-year term comes to an end, I know that I will count this experience as a rich and rewarding one for me personally. I want to thank Vanessa MacDonald for all her enthusiastic support in the office and Chris Burton for his willingness to play and try almost anything I put in front of him. I also wish to thank Carol Clarke for the hours and hours of volunteer time she gives, especially to the preparation of the bulletins for Sunday service, and then Heike Reck for so faithfully putting them up on the screen for online worship.

Finally I want to thank our Board Chair Mary Lou Gignac for the fantastic support she has given not only me, but all of our committees. She has been a strong and steadfast supporter of all that Grace is and does.

May God bless each and every one of you this year as we move forward.

Submitted by,

Rev. John G. Smith

Interim Supply Minister

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHURCH BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

---

Board Members: Orleen Anderson (Treasurer), Carol Clarke, Heather Dickson (Secretary), Jim Dolmer, Sandy Eagles, Phyllis Fleming (Presbytery Representative), Mary Lou Gignac (Chairperson), Joanne Lougheed (to October), Rev. Dr. John Smith (Pastoral Charge)

It was clear at the beginning of 2024 that Grace United Church was challenged to grow revenues in keeping with rising costs in spite of our tight fiscal planning and management. The primary focus of the Church Board's work was therefore on developing a plan for sustainability. To this end, the Board availed itself of education sessions sponsored by the United Church of Canada and accessed further resources to assist us.

Three areas of potential future development were identified with support from congregation members:

1. Collaboration with other United churches in the area and with churches of other denominations in Thornbury
2. Using our physical assets for sustainable housing
3. Increasing rental of the various spaces at Grace (offices, the Sanctuary, Lower Hall and the Parlour).

Ad Hoc Committees were set up to explore options in these three areas and the Board made a commitment to involve the congregation in major decisions that affect how we operate in the future. The Board held the first of several conversations with the congregation in October to explore what members of the congregation valued about their involvement with Grace United Church.

Additional Board activities included the following:

1. Approved Phyllis Fleming as our Presbytery Representative

2. Approved a Snow Day/Closure Protocol for Sunday worship services
3. Worked with the Finance and Stewardship Committee and our administrator to make it more inviting and easier to donate to Grace United Church
4. Coordinated the first Sundae Sunday social event
5. Streamlined governance processes to strengthen focus on strategic issues
6. Approved new computers for administrator, minister and volunteers
7. Improved communication with the congregation by using What's Up at Grace and having lunchtime conversations
8. Assisted a Syrian refugee family to explore options in bringing family members to Canada
9. Monitored committee work and special events at Grace United
10. Began consideration of permitting alcohol to be served at events in the Lower Hall

The Church Board thanks Rev. Dr. John Smith for his wise counsel and helping us to imagine a strong future in keeping with what the congregation values about church life. Thank you also to outgoing Board members, Joanne Lougheed and Heather Dickson, and all leaders at Grace United Church. The life at Grace United Church is richer for their contributions.

Submitted by,

Mary Lou Gignac  
Board Chairperson

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT**

---

Members:, Kelly Adam, Orleen Anderson, Jim Dolmer, Bonnie Hammond (Secretary), Dave Robinson, Rev. Dr. John Smith, Margaret Tirpkoff (Chair) , Shirley Woolner

The Trustees welcomed and valued Rev. Smith's opinions and guidance on the varied aspects of church life for which the Trustees are responsible. An investment policy was developed and accepted by the Trustees so that we have a basis for guidance to make decisions about future investment strategies. Kelly Adam has worked diligently with the Trustees and the available funds to allow for the best possible outcome from the monies that we invest.

Insurance costs for the church building and contents continue to escalate. Now that we are insured through the United Church group, we have the benefit of their guidance related to not only our church but also many throughout Canada. Many churches have lowered the replacement value from 100% because most feel that if a building had to be replaced it would be done differently. By reducing the replacement amount, premium costs are reduced by approximately 15%. Another option to reduce insurance premiums is by raising the deductible amount which would result in about a \$2000. savings. With these in mind, and after prayerful consideration, the Trustees voted unanimously to insure the building and assets for 50% replacement costs and raise the deductible from \$5000. to \$10,000. This will reduce the insurance costs significantly. Thank you to Jim Dolmer for his ongoing diligence related to insurance matters.

After the first six months, the General Fund of Grace United Church was in a deficit position so the Trustees attended an emergency meeting and voted to transfer \$30,000 to the General Fund so that our beloved Grace could continue to operate.

Also at that time, the Trustees had to acknowledge and communicate to the church membership that we were happy to be in a position to assist but our funds are limited so this cannot be a regular occurrence.

Bonnie Hammond who has been a faithful member of the Trustees for many years is retiring following the annual meeting. Bonnie has served as Secretary and has always done an amazing task of recording the meeting proceedings.

Sadly, Dave Robinson is also retiring. Dave's calm, methodical approach and pleasant manner will be missed by the group. His past experiences always were a good guide. Letters of appreciation have been sent to Bonnie and Dave thanking them for their devoted service. The Trustees depended on their experience and caring approach.

At the Annual Congregational meeting we will be recommending that Jim Oliver and Robert McKinlay become Trustee members. Thank you to Jim and Robert for their willingness to serve.

After many years as a Trustee, I will be retiring from the committee. I have enjoyed working with all members and have experienced many changes throughout the years. Prayerfully, I wish the new committee much success.

Submitted by,

Margaret Tirpkoff  
Board of Trustee Chair

## **FAITH FORMATION AND JUSTICE INITIATIVES**

---

### **i) Affirming Ministry Leadership Group**

Members: Carolyn Abbotts (Co-chair as of May 2024), Mary Lou Gignac, Wendy Maloney (Co-chair as of May 2024), , Marilyn Parkin (Chairperson until May 2024), Paul Parkin, Mary Poulin, Heike Reck (Secretary)

The Affirming Leadership Group continued the delivery of activities and events to further our learning about 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in our region. The group's work in 2024 helped to advance our knowledge and appreciation of the support owed to this too often misunderstood community of diverse individuals.

Education events included two lunch presentations and discussions. One was led by Dr. Ted Maloney who works with Toronto's Casey House, a hospice and resource for people with HIV/Aids. A second was led by Annette Pedlar who spoke about the importance of inviting the use of pronouns such as they/them.

In the Fall, we hosted a popcorn and Movie Night showing the movie 1946 *The Mistranslation*, an eye-opening accounting of the first introduction of the word "homosexual" in bibles. The group has contacted various community resources with the view of organising speakers for the New Year, specifically from the 2 Spirit of the M'wikwedong Community and a female-to-male transgender person who is active with the Meaford Library.

The Leadership Group advanced its work on moving towards being designated as an Affirming Ministry by Affirmed United, an affiliate organization of the United Church of Canada. A draft of a *Future Action Plan* was submitted to Affirm United, and it received a favourable review with some suggestions for enhancement. The Leadership Group continues to evaluate its activities and interest and is now developing tools to ascertain how these activities have reached and helped shape congregation members' knowledge and attitudes towards offering a safe and more welcoming worshiping space to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

We joined Our Social Justice Group carrying the Rainbow Flag in The Canada Day Parade and helped out in June's social event, Sundae Sunday. Grace United was joined by Stayner United Church and Collingwood Trinity United Members, as well as several members of the public who marched in Collingwood's Pride Parade and attended a Public Focus Group addressing the need for the use of pronouns in Retail Settings.

We thank Rev John who has been supportive and helpful in the identification of resources to assist us along the way. Also, without the help of Sandy Eagles and her team of hospitality volunteers, we would have been lost in a kitchen of chaos!

In closing we'd like to once again say thank you to Marilyn and Paul Parkin for all they have done in the past and hope for a great new future for them both in Fergus.

Submitted by,

Mary Lou Gignac (Committee Member)

Wendy Maloney (Co-Chair)

## **ii) The Green Team & The TBM Repair Café**

### Members of The Green Team

Norine Baron

Diane Dolmer

Phyllis Fleming

Jim Oliver

Marilyn & Paul Parkin

Heike Reck

Thérèse Samuel

Barry Tatchell

### Volunteers of The TBM Repair Café

Norine Baron

Diana Dolmer

Chris Donald

Paul Parkin

Heike Reck

Barry Tatchell

15 Community Volunteers

## **(iii)**

## **GREEN TEAM REPORT**

The Grace United Church Green Team provides services to the Town of Blue Mountains' community as well as to our congregation. Where possible, green cleaning and paper products are used in the church building. The recycling and compost systems continue to be streamlined and we now have a composter on the property for coffee grounds.

The Green Team sorted waste and recycling at two St. George's Anglican Church events: the annual Fish Fry and Corn Roast. We continue to encourage St. George's to reduce waste by requesting the event participants bring their own dishes and cutlery.

The Green Team and The Repair Café were represented in the town of Blue Mountains Canada Day parade.

The Repair Café is a huge success and its volunteer participants have increased along with the number of items repaired and diverted from the landfill. The Repair Café was open for business nine Saturdays in 2024. 25 volunteers from the community and Grace Church repaired 250 items. Some members of the community come out just to enjoy the social aspect of Repair Café, having tea or coffee and a snack while chatting with volunteers and participants. Many thanks to Good Grief Coffee in Thornbury. They donate the coffee to keep the volunteers charged and the participants happy while they wait to have their items repaired.

Donations are accepted for repairs and the funds help offset the cost of additional tools, the volunteer lunch, and the purchase of more Repair Café T shirts.

In March Barry Tatchell was awarded the Sustainability Award from the Town of Blue Mountains for the work that he and the volunteers do repairing and giving new life to items that would otherwise be sent to the landfill. The dedicated volunteers were celebrated at a lunch after the Repair Café in June, and Barry and Heike Reck hosted a Repair Café potluck at their home in August.

A new addition to the Repair Café experience in 2024 was information booths of local charities. The Grey Grannies and Georgian Bay Home Share were two of the organizations able to chat with Repair Café participants about their programs.

Submitted by,

Barry Tatchell  
Committee Member

---

#### **iv) Grace United Church Sunday School**

Volunteers: Phyllis Fleming, Mary Lou Gignac, Lois Lockie, Debbie Potts, Rev. Therese Samuels, Rev. Dr. John Smith

It was decided to try to offer some Christian education for the little ones at church. So far, we have had five to 6 kids who participate in our classes' downstairs. If we were to advertise, think how busy we could become! I provide the thematic framework and resources to support the weekly lessons, and my thanks goes to the volunteer teachers who have come forward to teach. I am indebted to these teachers for their willingness and enthusiasm. It really shows!

For curriculum, we are primarily using a resource called *A Joyful Path*, which we have borrowed from another United Church. The curriculum focuses on values and teaches spiritual concepts like trust, compassion, love, and kindness, with examples from the *Bible* and from contemporary life. A 'family story' *Bible* is used to read from. We will be supplementing the curriculum with some grand narrative stories at some point, the kind of stories everyone should know, in age-appropriate ways of course.

One thing we need is a second person to be downstairs at the time of the class, as this is required for Duty of Care reasons. If any of you would like to do this, on occasion, please speak to me about it.

Submitted by,

Rev. John Smith

## MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

---

Members: Chris Donald (Chairperson), Jim Dolmer, Jim Oliver

The Ministry and Personnel has three members and each has the responsibility to liaise with one staff member.

We met on four occasions over the year and had informal discussions as needed. Reports to the church Board were sent on three occasions and Jim Dolmer, who is our representative to the Board, gave verbal reports as needed.

There have been no major concerns with our staff over the past year.

Rev. Dr. John Smith is much appreciated within his role as interim minister and I am sure works much more than his 27 hours a week. He is on a six-month contract and now into his second period, with a third to go from March till July 2025.

Dr. Christopher Burton continues as Music Director and as in past years, has taken on extra duties with music services as well as organizing special events, such as the Elmer Iseler concert, Carolfest, a fundraiser for the local Beaver Valley Outreach, and other special concerts.

Vanessa MacDonald has been our Administrator for three years and works 15 hours weekly, working with volunteers, our Minister, and Music Director.

Lori Fitzgerald has been our Custodian for three years and works closely with Doug Clarke, who works untiringly. Lori, after three years of excellent service, resigned at the end of 2024.

With Marilyn and Paul Parkin moving away to be with family, we have lost two stalwarts from our church. Marilyn was a major volunteer at Grace and we would like to acknowledge Marilyn and Paul for their many years of contribution.

As well, a big thank you to Shirley Woolner and Candy Yeandle for their volunteer work in the office.

Ministry and Personnel would like to find one other member to join our committee.

Submitted by,

Chris Donald  
Chairperson

## THE CANDY CANE FAIR REPORT

---

Committee members: Mary Armstrong, Carol Clarke, Diana Dolmer (Co-Chair), Sandy Eagles (Co-Chair), Jean Kelley, Louise Lamont, Joanne Lougheed (Co-Chair), Mary Poulin, Carolyne Wedgbury

This year's Candy Cane Fair (CCF) was held on Saturday November 16 with tremendous results. We had an amazing number of cookies. Along with the cookie bar, we had an overflowing bake table, delicious lunch and, the *Purse and Jewellery* tables.

Thank you so much to everyone involved and for all your hard work. The CCF brought in \$ 5,706.75 with \$171.30 in expenses. Total revenue was \$5,535.45.

The following are the disbursements made: My Friends House \$250; Meaford Food Bank \$500; Georgian Bay Community School Backpack Program \$500; Grace United Church General Fund \$4,500.

The tentative date for the 2025 Candy Cane Fair is Saturday November 15.

Submitted by,

Sandy Eagles  
Co-Chair

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

---

Members: Ricardo Araujo Abbotts, Christopher Burton, Carol Clarke, Mary Lou Gignac, Bonnie Hammond, Rev. John Smith and Shirley Woolner (Chairperson)

As this year draws to a close, I'd like to thank Rev. Dr. John Smith for answering our worship call. His messages each week have opened our minds and expanded our comprehension of familiar bible stories. With his leadership the number of people attending in person has steadily grown while so have our numbers on-line. The lord works in mysterious ways! For that we are grateful and pray the growth continues, as our search for a permanent minister continues in 2025.

Chris Burton has led our worship with his excellent musical talent, delighting everyone each week. He organized Carolfest on Dec 10, which was well attended this year. All proceeds went to the Beaver Valley Outreach in Thornbury.

Our dedicated Senior Choir has added a richness to weekly services. Their commitment and time are greatly appreciated.

Much work goes on behind each worship service, from the compiling, editing and publishing the weekly bulletins, arranging supply ministry and volunteers, co-ordinating seasonal décor, flowers, after worship goodies and the e-blast's bi-weekly update. The people responsible for these tasks work tirelessly and are greatly appreciated for all they do.

Thanks also goes to those many volunteers reading scripture, ushering, greeting and assisting with lift operation. Our Tech Team (Orleen Anderson, Jim Dolmer, John Hunter, Jim Oliver, Heike Reck, Ella Rocque, Emmerson Rocque, and Carl Sampson) deserve a special mention. They work magic each week operating the microphones and cameras, recording and up loading the services! Thank you.

Grace United Church thrives through the commitment and strength of its people. Thank you to everyone who helps in any way to keep our spirit alive.

Last but not least a special thanks to Bonnie Hammond, who is retiring from the Worship Committee. She has kept the minutes, offered advise and has been a wonderful asset to us all. We will miss her guidance.

Submitted by,

Shirley Woolner  
Chairperson

## REGIONAL COUNCIL LAY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

---

Regional Council Lay Representative: Phyllis Fleming

Regional lay representatives, elected by their community of faith, are called to the ministry of participating in the decision-making council in which the community of faith resides, and are given a responsibility to consider and discern decisions about ministry, mission and priorities for service and stewardship in the Regional Council. Lay representatives serve as the liaison between the Regional Council and the community of faith (congregation). They are expected to share recent news, to update the congregation's governing body about the resources on the Regional Council website, and to report on Regional Council gatherings. The regional lay representative position was not filled during last year's annual congregational meeting.

After giving it some thought, I spoke to Mary Lou to offer my services as lay representative. This was approved by the Board on March 4; they have the ability to fill vacant positions in between congregational meetings. I have been Grace's lay rep to Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council since that time. At the end of May, I attended the spring meeting of the three United Church Regions in Southwestern Ontario, in person at the Unifor Centre in Port Elgin; and I attended the fall meeting of Western Ontario Waterways (aka WOW) Regional Council on November 16 which was on Zoom only.

A highlight of the Spring meeting was the presence of our Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne. She said that those in our pews are testament to the depth of our spirituality - they can choose to do whatever they want to do on Sunday, but they are there in church. Christian life can never be lived in abstract - Christian community is an expression of God's grace. "When people are deeply affected by the Word, they want to share it with other people," She said that the Good News is personal as well as community-transformational, but not 'Pollyanna'. Here are a few more quotes from Carmen: "Renewal is our work; resurrection is God's work." "God is a God of truth, not emotionalism." "We need to stay oriented to the saving presence of Christ in our life." She also challenged us: "Thinking we are not racist does not mean we aren't - there's a backlog of 70 people waiting to be admitted to the United Church from other denominations, most of them are black or brown."

The meeting highlighted that there are many 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ideas starting to form, to commemorate the creation of the United Church of Canada in June 1925. Our region has created a puzzle piece for each community of faith to decorate, to reflect themselves and their ministry; when all the pieces are reassembled in the spring of 2025, they will make a map of WOW. (I brought Grace's puzzle piece to a fall Board Meeting, but we didn't decide who would decorate it.) Other ideas for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Church include maybe having a big worship service and a big picnic in the spring, or maybe a worship rally.

The spring meeting may be best summed up by what someone said: "Holding on with a death grip is killing us. Humans do our best work when working towards goals, not when solving problems."

A highlight of the fall meeting was the passing of three proposals to set guidelines on how to disburse funds received when congregations disband and sell their property (a portion of the proceeds comes to the Regional Council). The three proposals all passed, and funds will be set up as follows: Bridging Loans and Matching Grants, for congregations who hold a capital fundraiser to help pay off debt; a Congregational

Legacy Fund, to expand a congregation's ministry or create something new within their ministry; and a Clergy Salary Fund, for when a congregation is looking to increase their ministry hours, or when they cannot maintain their current ministry hours going forward. These funds are expected to take some time to set up; I will be watching for further information to be provided in due course, since one or more may benefit Grace.

In addition to attending the two Regional Council meetings, I have provided region information and resources to the Board when requested, and have passed along information from the region that I thought could benefit Grace.

Submitted by,

Phyllis Fleming

Lay Representative to Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

## MINISTRY OF MUSIC REPORT

---

Director of Music: Dr. Christopher Burton

2024 was a challenging year for the church financially, and I am always impressed at how well we are able to forge ahead into uncertain times.

We also had to say good-bye to members of the church and choir. As Director of Music, I see the void left in the choir with the departure of Marilyn and Paul Parkin, who after many years with us, decided to move away from Thornbury. We wish them well.

The choir might be getting smaller, but never ceases to amaze me with their dedication, shown in rehearsals and performance during services. Bravi, tutti.

We were delighted and privileged to have the Elmer Iseler Singers visit us again in October, presenting a spectacular program of choral music. The singers in our community were invited to join the Iseler Singers in a workshop in the afternoon, followed by their participation in the Iseler's evening performance.

I am pleased that musical groups are taking advantage of the availability of the Grace Sanctuary for their concerts and my Mason and Hamlin piano for performances. Congratulations go to Thornbury Jazz Works, pianist Ken Gee, violinist Sadie Fields, and cellist Paul Pulford. All are eager to come back to perform at Grace in the future. I am grateful, as well, to violinist, Jeremy Bell, who joined us for our service in early May. He is truly a wonderful, gifted artist, and I feel privileged to play with him.

My thanks go to Camryn Ruthven who we can count on to be available to fill in when I take my holidays. She seems happy to come in and lead the music in worship, and I hope she is able to keep this up.

My thanks also to Saundra Lake for filling in one Sunday morning in December when I was asked to participate in a special concert in Collingwood that afternoon. Saundra officially retired from doing Bench Supply a couple of years ago, but very graciously agreed to come in to help for that very special occasion for me. (BTW, Saundra also came to the Collingwood concert that afternoon.)

My thanks to everyone who kept Grace United running in 2024, from our Office Administrator, Custodian, Property Manager, the Tech Team, and all who contribute their time to keeping things operating smoothly.

I look forward to many more years of serving as Director of Music at Grace.

Submitted by,

Christopher Burton

Director of Music

## **MEMBERSHIP, VISITATION AND COMMUNICATION (MVC) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

---

Committee members: Diana Dolmer (Hospitality), Jocelyn Donald (Social Dinners), Sandy Eagles (Chairperson), Lois Lockie (Social Dinners-Retired), Marilyn Parkin (Pastoral Prayer Team & Prayerful Ministry – retired May), Rev. Dr. John Smith (Minister)

### **Part 1: MVC Committee Report**

The MVC Committee did not meet in 2024. Prior to each board meeting, the members send their report by email. The overall MVC group includes representatives from: Hospitality/catering, membership, pastoral care team, photography, prayerful ministry, social dinners, telephone tree and website, all of which fall within the MVC committee's terms of reference.

As in previous years, Grace United sadly said goodbye to faithful members and friends who have either moved or passed away. The Historic Roll gets updated whenever we have been advised that changes are required. Also, any new members get added to the roll. The roll was updated after the deaths of Eric Spence, Marjorie Stewart, Peter Roberts, Faye Myles, Jim O'Brien, and Fern Vershack. We had one new member William (Bill) Kelly.

MVC is involved in communication in may ways:

**Telephone Tree:** This is used to update church announcements and is mostly for people who do not have email, or would rather be called. It is activated to inform people of upcoming events, funeral notices, closure of the church due to weather etc., and it is maintained by Sandy Eagles, along with those who make the calls, Diana Dolmer, Susan Hoadley, Eileen Robinson, Lynn Corrigan Teddi Murray and Sandy Eagles

**Photo Board:** This is maintained by Sandy Eagles.

**Newsletter:** Hopefully we can resurrect this again. If anyone is interested in taking on this task, you can get in touch with Sandy or any one of the members. The weekly announcements page on Grace's website is updated every week. Any upcoming special events or special services are noted on the home page when appropriate. Grace's website offers our weekly services. It is live streamed every week. Thank you to the tech team: Orleen Anderson, Jim Dolmer, John Hunter, Jim Oliver, Heike Reck, Ella Rocque, Emmerson Rocque, and Carl Sampson.

**Name Tags:** Lynn Corrigan provides nametags for new members and regular visitors. Thank you for this work.

Submitted by,

Sandy Eagles  
(Chairperson)

## **Part 2: Program reports**

### **Hospitality:**

Members: Diana Dolmer (Co-chairperson), Sandy Eagles, Joanne Lougheed (Co-chairperson)

The committee catered six events and prepared for 205 meals. These included: Celebration of Life for Peter Roberts, involving only beverages served and cleaned up; a luncheon for the Climate Action Now Network; two Affirming Ministry Leadership Group lunches; a congregational 'Future of Grace' lunch; hosted a Good Friday lunch; provided dinner for the Elmer Iseler Singers who performed an evening concert at Grace.

Thank you to all the people who helped out with food preparation, providing desserts, serving meals and the clean up.

Submitted by,

Sandy Eagles  
Committee Member

### **Social Dinners:**

Members: Lynn Corrigan, Jocelyn Donald, Lois Lockie (Chairperson), Ruth McGee, Mary Poulin, Candy Yeandle

This past year has been uneventful without the usual dinners to raise money for Grace's General Fund. I have since resigned from the position of Chairperson after many years, and many meals. I am grateful for the tireless involvement of the many volunteers that help to organise and prepare multi-course meals that generated revenue for our church.

If anyone would like to take on this role, of Social Dinners Committee Chairperson, please get in touch with Sandy Eagles or any of the above members.

Submitted by,

Lois Lockie  
(Chairperson Retired)

### **Spiritual Care Annual Report 2024**

**Worship:** Marilyn and Paul Parkin continued to conduct the monthly worship at Errinrung Long Term Care and Retirement Community, until the Spring, with Christopher Burton at the piano, Rev. John Smith leading the worship, and volunteers who added the voices in song.

**Correspondence:** Teddi Murray sent cards as requested as well as Christmas and Easter cards.

**Cradle Roll:** Diana Dolmer sent birthday cards to children who were baptized or received a baby blessing at Grace United up to their sixth birthday. In 2024, we have three children under six.

**Hospital Visiting:** As noted in other years, there is often a delay in official notification that a person has been admitted to hospital. If you, or a member of your family, have a medical concern or are in hospital and would welcome a visit please contact Rev. John Smith or the church office directly.

Emergency Spiritual Care: Rev. John G. Smith

Phone: 519-270 5373

Email: [revjgs@gmail.com](mailto:revjgs@gmail.com)

Submitted by,

Marilyn Parkin

Committee Member (Retired)

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT REPORT

---

Doug Clarke (Chairperson), Volunteers: Chris Donald, Sandy Eagles, Joanne Lougheed, Barry Tatchell

The Property Committee's mandate is to ensure that the Church building, furnishings and grounds are well maintained. For insurance purposes, a walk through is conducted by the Property Manager every Wednesday to check that all is in proper working order. Once per month, Barry Tatchell inspects the fire extinguishers and emergency lights.

### Highlights of 2024

- In early May the parking lot was cleaned of all the winter debris.
- A new contract was arranged for lawn cutting at the same price as last year
- The Parking Lot and Driveway:

In June all the pot holes in the driveway were filled with asphalt. Arrangements were made with Eager Beaver Services Corp. to reline the parking lot. The work was completed late July at the reasonable price of \$791. Most of the cost was covered by donations. A tiger stripe was added to the stop sign at the end of the driveway to protect pedestrians.

- A local handy man was employed to repair the damage to the Sanctuary ceiling which was overdue by eight years. The cost was covered by donations.
- At the end of October, the Chief Fire Inspector and his team were invited to do a demonstration for the congregation on the proper use of the different types of fire extinguishers and our defibrillator. The congregation were very engaged and participated in the demonstration.
- The snow plow contract for 2025 was arranged at the same cost as 2024.
- Lori Fitzgerald, our Custodian, retired at the end of December. A card and a bouquet of flowers were presented to her by Doug and Carol Clarke on behalf of the Grace Board, with much appreciation for the excellent work she did for Grace. A new custodian, Lyndsee Wright, has been hired and will begin work on January 7th, 2025.
- Many thanks to Sandy Eagles, Joanne Lougheed, Sylvia McMurchy, and Heike Reck for all the work they do behind the scenes, in particular with the decorations they create for Easter and Christmas. Also, I wish to express my gratitude to Barry Tatchell and Chris Donald for their continued support.

The responsibility of caring for Grace has given me personal satisfaction and helped to keep me in good health. I am grateful for the sense of community that I receive from working with such a great team.

Submitted by,

Doug Clarke

Property Manager

## NOMINATIONS REPORT FOR 2025

### Congregation

Chair James McKinlay  
Secretary Joan McKinlay

### Board

Chair Mary Lou Gignac  
Minister Rev. John Smith  
Regional Council Lay Representative Phyllis Fleming  
Vice-Chair Vacant  
Past Chair Heather Dickson  
Secretary Jim Dolmer  
Treasurer Orleen Anderson  
Ministry & Personnel Jim Dolmer  
Outreach Sandy Eagles  
Worship Carol Clarke  
Membership & Visitation Sandy Eagles

### Faith Formation & Justice

Directors Mary Lou Gignac  
Carol Clarke  
Dr. Christopher Donald  
Sandy Eagles

### Membership Visitation and Communication

Chair Sandy Eagles  
Minister Rev. John Smith

### Telephone Tree, Photos

Hospitality Sandy Eagles  
Diana Dolmer  
Sandy Eagles  
Cradle Roll Diana Dolmer  
Social Dinners Rep Jocelyn Donald  
Pastoral Care Team, Prayerful Ministry  
Vacant

### Faith Formation and Justice

Coordinating Chair Mary Lou Gignac  
Minister Rev. John Smith

### Ministry and Personnel

Chair Dr. Christopher Donald  
Members Jim Dolmer  
Jim Oliver  
Vacant

### Worship

Chair Shirley Woolner  
Minister Ex- Officio Rev. John Smith  
Music Director Ex- Officio Dr. Chris Burton  
Secretary Vacant  
Members Mary Armstrong  
Carol Clarke  
Mary Lou Gignac  
Debbie Potts

**Stewardship and Finance**

Chair	Orleen Anderson
Minister	Rev. John Smith
Members	Kelly Adam Heike Reck

**Green Team Initiatives**

Members	Noreen Baron Diana Dolmer Phyllis Fleming Jim Oliver Heike Reck Therese Samuel Barry Tatchell Phyllis Fleming
Regional Rep	
<b>Board of Trustees</b>	
Chair	Vacant
Minister	Rev. John Smith
Secretary	Vacant
Members	Kelly Adam Jim Dolmer Orleen Anderson Robert McKinlay Dave Robinson Marg Tirpkoff Shirley Woolner

**Affirming Ministry Leadership Group**

Chair	Vacant
Members	Caroline Abbott Mary Lou Gignac Mary Poulin Heike Reck

**Georgian Bay Home Share**

Members	Carol Clarke Diana Dolmer
---------	------------------------------

**GRACE UNITED CHURCH STAFF**

Minister	Rev. Dr. John Smith
Music Director	Dr. Christopher Burton
Administrator	Vanessa MacDonald
Custodian	Lori Fitzgerald

**GRACE GOALS FOR 2025**

1. Develop a sustainability plan that considers collaboration with other churches and using the church's physical assets for sustainable housing and increased rental revenue
2. Recruit a minister and secure supply ministry services as needed
3. Support social justice issues in our Church and community with a focus on green initiatives, Georgian Bay Home Share and becoming an Affirming Ministry
4. Strengthen spiritual growth and care within the congregation

**GRACE UNITED CHURCH CONTACT INFO**

Address: 140 Bruce St. S., P.O. Box 219, Thornbury, ON, N0H 2P0  
 Office Phone: 519-599-2438  
 Email: graceucworship@gmail.com  
 accounting@graceunitedthornbury.ca

Website: [graceunitedthornbury.ca](http://graceunitedthornbury.ca)  
 Facebook: Grace United Thornbury