

GRACE  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Session Snippets
- Mission Moment
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# Good Gracious Gracious

## April 2026

### It is finished

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

*John 19:28-30*

As this newsletter comes out, we are in the middle of Holy Week: the time from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday where we put particular focus on the last week of Jesus' life. This year, I have been thinking a lot about one of the last things Jesus said before he died on the cross: "It is finished." We find this pronouncement in the Gospel of John just before Jesus "gave up" (or "hands over") his spirit.

What does Jesus mean by it is finished? Maybe this seems like a question with an obvious answer, but I think Jesus' choice of words has at least a couple of interesting implications. First, it suggests that Jesus isn't on the cross by happenstance or bad luck. Jesus *chose* to die on the cross. Sometimes critics of Christianity suggest it is a cruel God who would force his son to die. But that isn't what happened! Out of love for the world, Jesus decided to do the difficult and right thing. Last month, we wrote a bit about obedience, and here is another example of Jesus choosing to obey his Father's will over his own comfort. His sacrifice means our life, and this is a beautiful gift Jesus gives to us!

Secondly, although Jesus declares "it is finished," the story of God working in the world isn't done. Jesus has completed everything God wished him to accomplish as a human living in the first century, but God's story of salvation isn't over. Jesus is still coming back, first in his resurrected body, and then later at the Final Judgement. And Jesus will still send the Holy Spirit, who continues to work within us and through us in the world today.

I think this struck me particularly in light of our conversations around calling a pastor to Grace Church. This is a wonderful goal, and one that may have seemed out of reach just a couple of years ago. At our annual meeting in March, the congregation approved a plan that will hopefully, by God's grace, allow us to start a search sometime in the next year. These are exciting times! But we have to be careful when the time comes not to think our work is done because we have reached the goal we have set. God is always inviting us to look for the new place where he is working and to follow.

Happy Easter! He is risen indeed!

Meg Patterson & Denise Allen-Macartney, Interim Moderators

## Session Snippets – Linda Clarke

I'm writing this during Holy Week, a time to draw close to God and reflect on the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, his ultimate victory over sin and death. May we be filled with gratitude and awe at the incredible love the Father has for us!

God continues to bless us at Grace with answered prayer. I would like to extend a big welcome to Heidi and Ryan who have joined the congregation and jumped in to use their gifts of music in the worship team. I can see how delighted Kim is to welcome them.

Last month, Session assembled a small group of mathematical minds under the leadership of Pastor Meg to examine the financial position of Grace Church to see how soon it might be feasible to call a settled pastor. They came up with a proposal and presented it to the BOM and Session for approval. The end result was presented to the AGM last Saturday evening. Let me briefly outline the timeline and details. A motion was passed at the AGM to pay down the -ve balance in the Miracle Sunday fund by transferring money from the Building Maintenance Fund of \$80,000. This leaves a balance of \$33,698.57 in the Building Maintenance Fund for the replacement of an HVAC unit, for example. We also have a Contingency Fund of \$75,000 which was set up to cover budget shortfalls which we thought might be the case after the congregation became substantially smaller in November 2023. Thanks be to God, we have ended the past 3 years with a surplus. Therefore, a decision was made at the AGM to transfer \$50,000 from the Contingency Fund to the Pastor Fund. That brings the Pastor Fund to a balance of \$71,370.78. The financial ad hoc group recommended that a reasonable milestone before starting to search for a pastor would be \$100,000. Given that a search for a pastor usually takes at least 6 months, that would give us additional time to aim for a minimum of \$150,000 to have in the Pastor Fund. This fund would ensure that there would be sufficient money to pay a pastor for at least 3 years following his/her hiring. Fundraising and promotion efforts will be undertaken. Stay tuned!!

Pastor Meg informed us of another source of funds from a Renewing Ministries Grant available through the national church, PCC. This grant is for congregations like us who are going through a 'rough' patch and need a boost to help get over financial stress. This is a declining grant which would mean, if approved, we would receive a certain amount the first year and less each subsequent year for a total of 3 years. This would be applied to the stipend of the minister who would be called to Grace Church. There's work to do to prepare to apply for this grant such as determining goals and objectives for our church. This will require a few congregational meetings to brainstorm and plan what our goals and priorities might be and what we discern God's plan is for us. Ideally, the application should be ready in June to allow time to move through the necessary levels of Presbytery before approval.

*Continued on page 3*

## Session Snippets (continued)– Linda Clarke

If you have questions about anything I have written here, please don't hesitate to talk with any of the elders or members of the BOM. If all goes according to our human plan, we might be searching for a new pastor in 2027. I have a request. Please pray for our discernment of God's will and His perfect timing. We humans can make all the plans we want but we must acknowledge that God is sovereign and in control of all things. Let our prayers be focused on recognizing the Lord's plan and doing our part to see that plan through to fruition.

Another thing we covered at the AGM was our 'Leading with Care' review. It is essential that anyone working with the vulnerable to maintain a safe church environment must read the policy and abide by the directives within. You can read the policy on our church website. Also, it is important to know the fire escape plan and lock-down procedures. Know where the extinguishers are located. We will be having a fire drill later this spring when the weather is warmer. We won't interrupt the service. The children in Sunday School will be accompanied outside from the classroom to the back of the parking lot near the basketball court. Adults in the sanctuary will exit the front door and proceed to the street side of the parking lot away from the building to give room for emergency vehicles if necessary. Parents can reunite with their children at that time.

For this week, let us focus on the events of Holy week. Please attend the Good Friday service where we will meditate on Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. Then return on Sunday to celebrate Jesus' triumphant resurrection from the tomb. Hallelujah!! He has risen!!

*<sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

*<sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." Matthew 28: 5-10*



Yohana leading the Palm Sunday parade!

## **Africa Inland Mission (AIM)**



Serving and equipping the church of Jesus Christ to make disciples of the peoples of Africa.

The mission of AIM is to see "Christ centered Churches established among all African peoples."

Today, hundreds of Africa's unique ethnic people groups remain unreached – that's over 300 million people with no viable witness to the good news. Africa Inland Mission serves, equips, and mobilizes churches and believers from the global Church to advance the gospel among Africans who have the least opportunity to hear about Jesus.

United by Christ's love, they welcome laborers from many nations and cultures to step out into cross-cultural ministry and find their place in the Great Commission. Wherever they minister, they follow the model and teaching of Jesus as they walk in humility, build relationships, embrace learner attitudes, and strive to live as people that belong in our communities. They serve on diverse teams, and in collaboration with varied ministry partners, giving testimony to the truth and beauty of the Body of Christ. Their passion is to see the worship of Jesus Christ spread among Africans around the globe – through individual lives fully committed to him, and collectively through Christ-centred churches. Africa Inland Mission has been leading people into meaningful ministry for over 100 years in South Sudan, Uganda, Chad, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania and E. Africa. Grace Church supports Dan MacKinnon in his work with AIM Canada. Dan has been serving with AIM since July 2020 in the role of church/mission liaison within Canada. His work is varied. He is available to lead workshops related to missions, ministry, or caring for our pastors. He attends Mission conferences and supplies displays and materials. He is available to preach and share the work of AIM. He encourages local missionaries working with the African diaspora in Canada. He connects with Canadian supporters of Mission work. He has always had a heart for missions so it is good to see him serving this way. Continue to pray for the work of AIM in Africa and in Canada.

*"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.'" Rev. 5:9*

## Hazelwood—Questions! By Donald Corbett (Living Faith Bible Church)

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

1 Peter 3:15-16

As many of you know, one of my passions is music. Throughout my life I have been blessed with the opportunity to make music with some incredible groups. It has been an honour to perform vocally with small community ensembles in local halls to massive choral groups in the awesome setting of the ancient Rochester cathedral; to play bagpipes around the world from the beaches of Normandy to the Edinburgh Tattoo; and most recently to be part of a small Celtic band known as Shabraque-Celtic.

A few days ago, Shabraque was performing, in Perth, ON, alongside the RCMP Pipes, Drums and Dancers. After the morning's rehearsal, we were enjoying a bit of lunch, when one of the fellows from the Pipe Band turned to me and said, **“Do you believe the story of Noah's Ark is true?”**

I thought about it for a moment, and said, **“I have no reason not to believe there was a great flood. In fact I have been to places in the Middle East where there were signs of hydraulic action in places that defy any other explanation. So yes, I believe that the flood occurred and see no reason to dispute the Biblical account.”** He thanked me for that and went on to tell me how difficult it was to get a simple answer to Biblical questions.

On the way home that evening I reflected on his comment, and realised that his was just one of many challenging questions people might ask about the Bible, or our faith.

Psalms 118:8 says, **“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.”** So by extension, I suggest we are better served by basing our response to these tough questions in the Word rather than in our own wisdom. With that in mind, I spent a few hours researching how one might respond to some of the common questions people ask about the Bible, or our faith.

One of the best articles I found was written by Matthew Ruttan; interestingly enough, I will have the opportunity to meet Matthew in early May. I give him full credit for his inspiration for this devotional.

There are usually two types of questions people will ask you about Christianity. There are the big ones like, *“Why does God allow all the evil in the world?”* However, people, more often, want to know why you do what you do? Why do you go to church, read the Bible, or look at things differently?

So how might we respond when someone questions our faith? 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV) says, **“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”**

Peter's intended audience were those Christians (Jews and Gentiles) who were facing questions about their faith – often to the point of persecution. His aim was to encourage and teach.

**“Always be prepared”.** Consider some of the questions you may be asked, like, *“Why do you read the Bible? It's so out of date!”*; or *“Why waste your day off going to church on Sunday morning?”* When you have determined what your response will be, bounce it off one of your Elders. Why plan ahead? Because people don't like “dead air”, so if your response is too long in coming, they'll say something else and you've missed your chance.

**“Give the reason for the hope that you have”.** Your response should include WHY your faith gives you hope. This will almost always lead to another question, and now you have begun a conversation.

**“Do this with gentleness and respect”.** Your responses should be clear, articulate and delivered with strength and conviction. Be open and honest about your faith and always aim to keep the conversation going. After all, the person may not be challenging you; they may be seeking to find out why you are not as wrapped up in the world's daily dilemma as everyone else seems to be. They may be seeking Jesus.

**What is my reason for the hope that I have?** As a man with a passion for Christ and music, kindly allow me to respond through song. *“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness (Matthew 7:24-27).”* And it is through my hope that is rooted in his name that I can face the storms of life and feel *“peace like a river in my soul (Isaiah 66:12).”*

I would love to hear your reason for the hope you have!

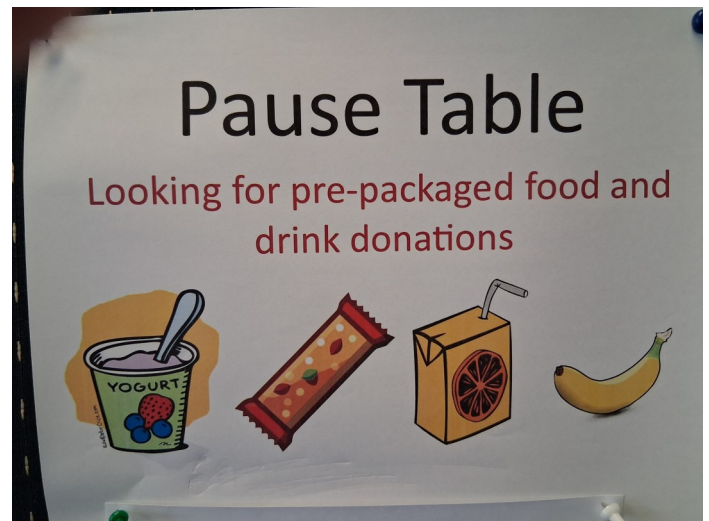
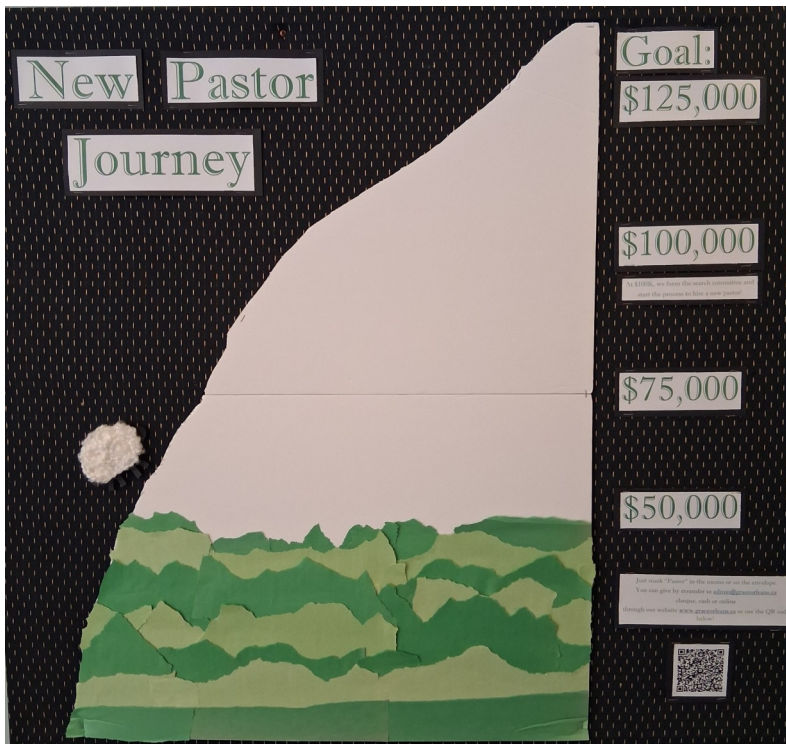
God Bless,  
Donald

# Update from the office....

We are in middle of Holy Week as I write this article and a lot is going on!

As you have just read from Linda's Session Snippets article, we made some exciting announcements at our Awesome Grace Moments AGM potluck on Saturday March 28th. The big news is that our plans for getting a new pastor are underway! And you can help us get that pastor faster! On Easter Sunday you will see our fundraising display (photo below). Our goal is to raise \$125K in the Pastor Fund. As of the end of 2025 we had raised over \$21K. At the AGM, we re-allocated \$50K from the Contingency Fund so we are currently sitting at just over \$72K!! Once we hit \$100K, the search committee will be formed and the hiring process will begin. We are on the road, up the hill and heading towards a new chapter here at Grace. I, for one, couldn't be more excited. (Which might be evident from my crafting bonanza....the sheep is so cute!) If you would like to help make this a reality, just mark "pastor" on your envelope or in the memo of your

donation! As always you can give by etransfer, cheque, cash or online at [graceorleans.ca](http://graceorleans.ca). You can even use the QR code on the bulletin board display!



Another important update—the Pause Table at Carleton is happening **Monday April 13th**. There has been a big change! The university is no longer allowing any homemade items—only pre-packaged food. This means we will not have our big sandwich making event on Sunday. We are looking for donations of individually packaged food items (yogurt cups, juice boxes, bananas, cereal bars, microwaveable popcorn, etc). Donations can be placed on the top shelf of the cloakroom. (Except for the yogurt—put that in the fridge and label it. LOL) \$ donations are also accepted. Please send me an email (or etransfer) by Wednesday April 8th so we have time to go out and purchase items (Costco run!). Any donations need to be brought to the church by Sunday April 12th.

# Kids Corner

APRIL  
2026

Kids Club Kids Club held an Easter themed event Friday March 27th with fun Easter themed games, craft and snack. Leslie had the kids tell the Easter story by showing a series of pictures and asking about its role in Easter. (donkey, kiss, rooster, cross, dice/bones, etc). The kids were engaged and showed their Bible knowledge! The group consisted of 9 girls and 9 boys so they were divided into 2 groups for craft and some of the other activities. Praise God for so many kids coming out!!

The new youth group organized by Living Faith Bible Church and co-sponsored

by Grace, R.O.K.C, also held their youth event following kids club. (8pm to 11pm March 27th)

The day camp, What's Cooking, has had a lot of interest and is at our full 30 kid capacity. We are collecting resumes for the summer student position(s) and have received more qualified applicants than in previous years! We will get confirmation of our funding in late April or early May. Living Faith will hire one and Grace will hire the other summer student. We are hoping and planning to have Majelle back this summer and look

forward to meeting our newest student! Stayed tuned for awesome volunteer roles! You can register online and paper a sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board next month.

If you would like to help Sunday mornings by being a second body (a position I like to call "crowd control" LOL), please speak to Majelle Sunday mornings or contact the office.

If you have any questions or wish to help in children's ministry, please contact me in the office at [admin@graceorleans.ca](mailto:admin@graceorleans.ca)

PRAYER PUPS BY JEFFREY SMITH



# Grace's Ministry Groups

The six functional groups and there leaders are:

1. Worship Coordination: Brian Wilson
2. Discipleship: Linda Clarke
3. Pastoral Care: Yohanna Kimoun
4. Faith Sharing: Linda Clarke
5. Temporal Support: Shirley Blank
6. Personnel Support: Linda Clarke



## Opportunities to Serve!

- **Fundraising Committee:** looking for people to help plan, setup, take down, cook, and participate! Talk to Linda, Shirley or Arlene for more info.
- **Want to be part of the meal ministry?** Contact the office or speak to an elder.

**Contact the church office for more information on how you can help!  
admin@graceorleans.ca or by phone at 613-824-9260.**