

Grace United Church Barrie, Ontario



2025 Annual Report



Grace United Church
350 Grove Street East
Barrie, ON L4M 2R7
705-734-0760 • graceucc.ca



Dedicated In Loving Memory

of

the following members, adherents and
special friends of Grace United Church

Larry Desjarlais

Robert Marshall

Donald Browning

George Didwell

Elaine Sterling

James Lang

Colin Gordon

Muriel Kellogg

Joseph Barriault

Brian McGrath

Ethel Byles

Verna Stolz

Ann Smith

Stella Dalziel

Mark Eplett



*Those we love remain with us, for love itself lives on,
And cherished memories never fade because loved ones are gone...
Those we love can never be more than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory, they'll live on in the heart.
They lived... and brought unto the earth a bit of beauty, love and faith.
And now their lives will ever be reflected in our hearts.
Those we love can never be more than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory, they'll live on in the heart.*

Grace United Church

350 Grove Street East
Barrie, Ontario L4M 2R7
705.734.0760

office@graceucc.ca
website: graceucc.ca

Rev. Susan Eagle, B.A., M. Div. D.D.
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Music Director
Janet Kinsey

Board Chair
Paul Burke
705-717-8366
pgfburke@gmail.com

Minister Emeritus
Rev. Arthur J. Storey

Voluntary Associate Ministers
Rev. Bea Arnill
Rev. Thelma Arnott
Rev. George Moore

Technical Team Chair: **Jane Foster**

Lead Audio Technician: **Ken Watt**

Treasurer: **Larry “Murph” Murphy**
Treasurer: **Marcus Lacey**

Junior Church: **Season Karki**

Administrative Assistant: **Joanne Polcz**

Custodian: **Timothy Bridges**

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Monday to Friday • 10 am – 1 pm
705.734.0760

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Perspectives On 2025

It is difficult to capture a whole year in just a few words. A list of events would fill a page or two. A list of leaders and volunteers would take even more space. And the memories of conversations and fellowship would fill a book.

We are blessed at Grace to have so much enthusiasm and support for the many ministries that are carried out by the Grace family.

Weekly worship, midweek activities, fundraisers and fellowship mark the days of the calendar throughout the year.

And each year there is always something new that invites our generosity or creativity. In 2025 we completed the roof replacement and found we were able to raise sufficient funds as to not need to borrow money. Well done, Grace family!

We also celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada with a Block Party that brought dignitaries on a windy cool day. Games and music prevailed with food and storytelling - and even a bouncy castle. Thanks to Emily Harrison for heading up that day.

A 100th anniversary tea and a United Churches of Barrie worship service with former United Church Moderator, the Very Rev. David Giuliano, brought us together for more celebration and fellowship.

We began the year with a musical afternoon concert - "Not Your Grandparents' Hymns" - which was so well received there has been a call for another one. Thanks to Joe Matyas and Janet Kinsey for their diligent planning.

Our outdoor garden, aptly named the Garden of Edith, and our food security programs expanded this past year, changing the lawnscape of the church and also serving as a visible witness to our neighbourhood. Thanks to Edith Elliot and the Outreach Team for their work.

Worship, pastoral care, youth and children's ministry and the constant support of food and fellowship all came together to remind us of how blessed we are to be able to gather as part of the Grace congregation.



I often hear that folks who come to visit find us a welcoming church. It is a goal we seek intentionally. In a world that is fraught with uncertainty and many forms of alienation and isolation, the gift of community is the gift of Christ's presence inviting us to care for each other.

As we make new friendships, as we learn and grow together, as we hold each other in prayer during times of sadness or bereavement, may we remember and give thanks for the fellowship that we share.

My personal thanks to the many people, volunteers and staff, who have made Grace a better, warmer and kinder place. Even as we move forward to face an unknown future, we know we are not alone but travel together accompanied by God's grace.

*In peace,
Rev. Susan*

This year, Rev. Susan spent a lot of time cutting cakes!



BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 2025

The Grace United Church Board of Trustees met twice in 2025, once for a consultation on November 26, 2025, and once for an official meeting, December 9, 2025.

Actions during the year:

Insurance:

The trustees received a recommendation that we seek a building appraisal that would be conducted by a company approved by national United Church.

However, in its discussion of such a proposal, the Trustees noted that a thorough evaluation was conducted by Pauline Chappell about 15 years ago. At the time, replacement value was established and insurance acquired based on that valuation.

Since then, Pauline has used that base line to update the insurance and has calculated increased costs of replacement each year while working with the insurance provider. The trustees feel that we are up to date on insurance replacement costs and thanked Pauline for her ongoing diligence. It was agreed that we did not need to pay for another evaluation.

Potential Roof Loan last year

During 2024 and 2025, Grace sought funding to provide for a new roof for the church. As a precaution, the Trustees applied to have loan approval through the national United Church should it become necessary. Approval was granted for the requested amount of \$78,860.

It was gratifying at this year's Trustee meeting to acknowledge that we did not need to borrow any money for the roof replacement project because of the generosity of congregational members and friends! We have subsequently notified the national church that we will not need to access that funding.

The next meeting of the Trustees will be held on November 19, 2026

Trustee members:

Rev. Susan Eagle, Wendy Brown, Bruce Chappell, Kerry Burke, Nancy Drury, Murph Murphy and Mary Greiner, (secretary).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Susan Eagle

chairperson

What is a Trustee and what do they do?

Trustees are elected by the congregation and act at the direction of the Official Board. Primarily the Trustee Board's role is to ensure United Church property is protected and that the church has proper insurance. Trustees are also involved if there is a land sale, or the church makes any major financial investments that can have long term financial implications for the church.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

It's been my pleasure to sit as board chair for another year. We had a very active year and I would like to thank all of the committee members who generously gave so many hours of their time in 2025.

It was wonderful to see how everyone came together to plan out the 100th anniversary celebration early in the summer. The "History of Grace" display that Barb Mercer created was amazing! It was a special year for us and we can be proud of our celebratory accomplishments.

The completion of the new roof, replacement of the new digital sign, our new basement windows and improvements to the storage shed were major undertakings that took a lot of planning and work. I would especially like to thank Ben Helmond for all of the countless times he was called upon or in most cases, takes it upon himself to make sure that our building and property is kept in good repair and emergencies are dealt with. Thank you to all who are there and ready to roll up your sleeves with Ben and the property team.

And how about that "Garden of Edith"! As each year passes it continues to grow and flourish, thanks to the green thumbs and dedication of Edith Elliot and everyone who contributes their time to the planting and maintenance of the gardens so that fresh food is shared to those in need within our community. On the same note, the food pantry, community food program and Busby breakfast program are only possible because of the selfless hours of time and energy from so many.

Our new association with Delta Bingo has been a wonderful source of new funds, thanks to Larry Squire and all those who volunteer their time.

All of the wonderful fundraising events that take place throughout the year take a lot of planning and work. On behalf of the official board, thank you everyone for all you do!

*Respectfully submitted,
Paul Burke, Board Chair*



Front Row: Deborah Hardwick, Janet Ducette, Edna Caldwell

Middle Row: Richard Pearson, Rev. Susan Eagle, Judi Shields, Barb Mercer

Back Row: Larry Murphy, Jennifer Cheesman, Dave Thomas, John McLean

Absent: Paul Burke, Sharon Squire, Isaac Pearson, Ben Helmond, Marcus Lacey

ADMINISTRATION TEAM

The Administration Team meets monthly, generally on the first or second Tuesday of each month. The team has five members: the Rev. Susan Eagle, Joanne Polcz, our Church Secretary, John McLean, chair, Larry "Murph" Murphy, and Jane Foster, our technical team lead. The vice chair of the Board is supposed to be chair of our team but there is currently no vice chair, so by default I have been the chair since the fall of 2018. Generally the term of the Board chair and team chairs is for three years.

Our role centres around the business office and our Church Secretary, Joanne Polcz. Joanne runs the business office and is Rev. Susan Eagle's executive assistant. The team is responsible for the business office, paying for and maintaining all of its equipment which includes two computers, the photocopier, shredding machine, stationary supplies, as well as Rev. Susan's computer. The team is responsible for all of the sound equipment, projectors, screens and live streaming equipment and computers found in the Sanctuary. We also pay for the monthly charges of Rogers and Bell, for church calendars, kitchen supplies as well as our monthly assessment to the national church. These national assessments amount to 35 percent of our team's annual budget. We are also responsible for arranging the Annual Council Meeting of the church, which took place in mid January.

Joanne manages all the communications within the church, including printing of the Sunday order of service, the agendas and Minutes of the Board and those of its ten teams. All team chairs sit on the Board. She prints the Treasurer's reports, Grace Weekly News, Grace Matters and the Annual Report, and notices for fund raising activities. Joanne is in charge of all the Outside User Groups who use our facilities. There are currently 24 such groups and Joanne has to arrange their meeting times within the church and is responsible for setting and collecting their rents. She has been very successful in this job and Outside User Group contributions to the church operating budget have increased yearly since she took charge of this operation. Last year their receipts were in excess of \$48,000.00. We owe so much to Joanne's competence, and dedication to her job. The warmth of her engaging personality adds so much to the fellowship for all those who volunteer in the running of the church.

If anyone has questions or concerns regarding the functions and operation of the Administrative Team I would be most pleased to speak with them.

*Respectfully submitted,
John McLean, Administration Team Chair*

Church Council Meeting



2025 CHURCH COUNCIL

OFFICIAL BOARD

Chair Paul Burke
Past Chair John McLean
Vice Chair
Secretary Janet Ducette
Treasurer Larry Murphy (Murph)
Minister..... Rev. Dr. Susan Eagle

MINISTER EMERITAS

Rev. Art Storey

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATE MINISTERS

Rev. Bea Arnill Rev. Thelma Arnott Rev. George Moore

TEAM CHAIR OR DELEGATE OF THE

FOLLOWING STANDING TEAMS

Administration.....John McLean (Acting)
Congregational LifeEdna Caldwell / Sharon Squire
FFCE Isaac Pearson
M&P Pauline Chappell (until May 1, 2025)
..... Richard Pearson (after May 1, 2025)
Outreach Judi Shields
Pastoral..... Barb Mercer
Property Ben Helmond
Stewardship & Finance..... Mary Greiner
Worship..... Jennifer Cheesman
Regional Delegates (3)..... Bruce Chappell / Pauline Chappell
..... Deborah Hardwick (Board Member)

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Administrative Assistant Joanne Polcz
Privacy Officer Ministry & Personnel Team
Accessibility Team Chair....
Trustee Representative Wendy Brown

TRUSTEES

Rev. Dr. Susan Eagle (C)	Larry Murphy	Kerry Burke	Wendy Brown
Bruce Chappell	Mary Greiner	Nancy Drury	

2025 STANDING TEAMS

ADMINISTRATION

John McLean Susan Eagle
Joanne Polcz Larry Murphy
Jane Foster

Technical Team

Jane Foster Kathy Watt
Ken Watt Joe Matyas
Daniel Johnson Jack Brown
Judith Banville

Slides Team

Barb Mercer Esther Ewing
Val Darling Marg Parke

Grace Matters Editor Barb Mercer

Web Master Joe Matyas

Facebook Bette McCracken

FAITH FORMATION & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Isaac Pearson Kathy Harrison

Dave Collacutt David Mair

Tuesday Group Bette McCracken

Librarian Linda Johnston

Little Library Nancy Musicco

Peace Labyrinth Coordinator Nancy Drury

Bible Study Nancy Drury

Youth/Young Adults Isaac Pearson

Jen Cheesman Shirley Lucas

Max Moggy Emily Harrison

Junior Church Season Karki /Kathy Harrison

Vacation Bible Camp FFCE Team

OUTREACH

Judi Shields Edith Elliot

Brian Fraser Marnie Lynn

Denton Lucas Lois Marshall

J.T. McVeigh Janice Pearce

Dorothy Sjolholm Morgan Cope

Community Lunch

Broadview Lois Marshall

Busby Outreach Jack Brown

..... Nancy Drury

Busby Dinners Marnie Lynn

Amnesty International Edna Caldwell

Right Relations Dave Collacutt

Little Pantry Edith Elliot

Food Security Project Edith Elliot

PASTORAL

Barb Mercer (Chair) Marian Harris

Debbie Neddeau Jean Coté

Winnie Nevils Carol Bosman

Linda Griffis Erika Garrett

Tim Bridges Judith Banville

Chris Knox Marina Johnson

Roll Clerk Bette McCracken

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Edna Caldwell (Co-C) **Sharon Squire (Co-C)**

Gabby Hodgson Sharon Johnson

Marina Johnson Molly Keffer

Marg Parke Abby Schrader

J

Adult Social Anne Walton

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

Appointed Pauline Chappell (to May 1)

..... Richard Pearson (after May 1)

Vice Chair Official Board

Appointed by Minister Esther Ewing

Appointed by Congregation Jill Shipley-Brown

Appointed by Official Board Paul Wessenger

Appointed by Official Board

Appointed by Official Board

WORSHIP

Jennifer Cheesman Thelma Arnott

Nancy Drury Kathy Harrison

Jason Helmond Marnie Lynn

Joe Matyas Michelle Placido

Phil Lock

Art Storey – Artistic Resource Person

Music Director Janet Kinsey

Communion Anne Walton

..... Helen Watson

..... J

Communion Servers Nancy Drury

Nursery Marnie Lynn

Usher Coordinator Debbie Neddeau

World Day of Prayer Mary Greiner

Lay Reader Coordinator Bette McCracken

Rev. Susan is an ex officio member of all the teams.

2025 STANDING TEAMS

PROPERTY

Ben Helmond Jacques Boulay
Phil Barriault Mike Klein
David Skelly Dawna Vinnels
Ken Watt
Custodial Supervisor Dave Thomas
Kitchen Coordinator Val Darling, Wendy Brown
Fire Drill Coordinators
Elizabeth Willoughby Keith Huyer
Parking Lot Renewal Team
Debbie Neddeau Elizabeth McLean
John McLean Barb Mercer

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

Mary Greiner Dave Thomas
Larry Murphy Marcus Lacey
John McLean Larry Squire
Envelope Secretary Mary Greiner
Assistant Envelope Secretaries
Judi Shields Deborah Hardwick
Additional Names TBC
Offering Counters Janet Ducette & John McLean,
Marian Harris & Flo Thomas, Paul & Kerry Burke
Karen Whitehead & Connie Wiggins
Elizabeth Willoughby
Investment Administrator Mary Greiner
Green Team Bette McCracken
Barb Charlebois Dave Collacutt
Holy Rollers Mary Hirons
Rhythm & Pitch Team **Joe Matyas**
Dave Thomas Jack Brown
Janet Kinsey

MEMORIAL & SPECIAL GIFTS TEAM

Kerry Burke (C)	Nancy Drury	Mary Greiner	Larry Murphy
June Willett	Bruce Chappell	Wendy Brown	

AD HOC TEAMS

TRANSFORMATION TEAM

Richard Pearson	Isaac Pearson
Kathy Harrison	Joe Matyas

ACCESSIBILITY TEAM

Pauline Chappell	David Mair
Kathy Watt	

100th ANNIVERSARY TEAM

Emily Harrison	Deborah Hardwick
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Rev. Susan is an ex officio member of all the teams.

Glimpses of Grace



Our 90+ Year Guests at the Centennial Tea



Rev. Susan & Rev. Brian McIntosh



Animal Blessing



Campfire Evening in July



Camp Simpresca Campfire



Debris from the Ice Storm



All Candidates Meeting/Forum

WORSHIP TEAM

Summarizing a year of worship at Grace United is no easy task! We have had many blessings during 2025, the greatest of which is the opportunity to come together as a community of faith. Let's take a moment to reflect and give thanks before looking ahead to what 2026 will bring.

- Each Sunday, Rev Susan weaves current community issues and familiar scriptures into thoughtful sermons. World events during 2025 seemed to be ever changing, often concerning, and sometimes difficult to comprehend. We are truly blessed by the inspiring and dedicated leadership offered each week by Rev Susan, as she helps us dig deeper into our own beliefs and find the hope and light of God when we are feeling adrift. Each Sunday, worship is supported by music which is thoughtfully chosen and beautifully presented by our talented music director, Janet Kinsey. Songs of quiet reflection encourage personal prayer; traditional hymns help connect our past to the present; the introduction of new hymns and anthems encourages us to keep our faith growing. Guitarist, Paul Burke, also contributes greatly to the hymns in our worship through his positive energy and musicality. A very special music concert "Not Your Grandparent's Hymns" was held at Grace on January 19, 2025, lead by Joe Matyas, Janet Kinsey and Paul Burke, as a fundraiser for music programs and resources at Grace – what a beautiful afternoon of spiritual music and fellowship. With thankful hearts, the Grace worship team acknowledges how blessed we are by our amazing leaders.
- There are several dedicated teams working hand in hand with worship leaders and the Worship Team to prepare for each Sunday's worship service at Grace: Thank you to Debbie Neddeau and the team of Greeters, Barb Mercer and the team of slide preparers, Bette McCracken and the team of lay readers, the Grace Choir members, Anne Walton and the communion preparation team, Nancy Drury and all those who volunteer to serve communion and office staff and volunteers who help prepare bulletins. We also offer a big thank you to our dedicated tech leaders - Jane Foster, Kathy and Ken Watt, and all those who step in to volunteer to run the audio, visual and live stream on Sunday mornings. We very much appreciate your special talents – you make the service accessible to those in the pews and those at home. The expression "it takes a village" applies to congregations too!
- We welcomed many guest ministers and lay leaders in 2025 including Rev. Colin MacDonald, Rev. George Moore, Sandra Ruttan, Patricia Edmonds, Rev. Evelyn McLaughlan, and Rev. Gordon Flint. We are very grateful for the contributions of Sandra Ruttan, a talented member of our Grace family, who shared her music leadership as our supply pianist when Janet was away.
- Guest speakers helped us learn and make connections with our local community, and included Scout leaders and youth on Baden Powell Sunday, Jessica Rawn from "Water First", and Rev Art Storey and Wendy Brown who shared history and knowledge about our stained-glass windows.

- 2025 was full of celebrations for the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada!
 - ◊ A special celebration service was held at Grace UC on June 8, 2025, lead by Rev Susan and Janet Kinsey, with participation from our retired Grace VAM ministers, and included hymns from the June 10, 1925 service and new hymns from the newest UCC hymnbook “Then Let Us Sing”. Written stories were also offered by congregation members, sharing their own experiences in the United Church.
 - ◊ Barrie United Churches including Grace, Burton Avenue, Collier Street and Northwest Barrie celebrated together on the afternoon of Oct 5th, 2025 at Grace. We welcomed special guest speaker Rev. David Guliano, former Moderator of the United Church of Canada, enjoyed the music of the combined church choirs, and shared a beautiful afternoon of fellowship outside at Grace following the service.
- The celebrations continued, as Grace celebrated our 64th anniversary with special guest preacher Rev. Brian McIntosh, UCC minister who has served in the Maritimes and Toronto areas. A congregational lunch followed the service to mark the occasion.
- Other memorable 2025 services included: MLK Day and Black History Sunday; Holy Week and Seder Supper; Pride Sunday; Sunday School and Nursery Recognition Sunday; the opportunity to worship at Camp Simpresca on the shores of Georgian Bay, or enjoy a ‘prayerful piano’ service of music with Sandra Ruttan at Grace; an Animal Blessing service; Orange Shirt Sunday to recognize National Truth and Reconciliation Day; a meaningful Remembrance Day service with our congregation’s honoured veterans and talented trumpeter, Kent Cheesman in attendance; a Book Launch and interview with Rev. Bea Arnill; White Gift Sunday including a Peace Skit and an intergenerational Christmas play reminiscent of the fun and spontaneity of a family Christmas gathering; a joyous choir Cantata and peaceful Blue Christmas service.

Being a member of the Worship Team at Grace United offers an opportunity to contribute to the sacred moments that draw us together as a community of God. Whether we are busy changing the sanctuary decorations, planning for future services, and/or taking on small leadership roles at church on Sunday mornings, each task offers us a chance to deepen our faith and our understanding of how God is alive in this church and community. If you are interested in joining the team, the invitation is open and there is a space for you.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jen Cheesman, Worship Team Chair*

The Blessing of the Animals Service.



Thanksgiving Sunday.



Nursery Report

It has been another exciting year in the Nursery. There continue to be four delightful young boys ranging from 2-6 years old who join in the fun. They are sometimes there all together which makes it extra special to watch how they are growing into a friend group.

Their favourite activities include the art table, the slide, listening to story books, and playing with cars and trains on the 'small town' floor mat. We are fortunate enough to have interesting toys to keep their imaginations active.

There are always two adults working in the Nursery on Sunday mornings to ensure the children's safety. Our room has a positive, happy atmosphere that promotes confidence, social interactions and child-centred learning. There are nine volunteers who staff the room on a rotating basis, and I can say on their behalf that they all enjoy the job and that they are excellent at providing a caring environment.

*Sincerely,
Marnie Lynn*

Peace Labyrinth

Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time generously to create the Peace Labyrinth in Memorial Hall.

And also, thanks to those who attended as caretakers over the Christmas season. Thanks to the guests who took the time to enjoy a prayerful walk or contemplation at the Labyrinth.

I hope you were able to use this sacred space to enjoy the peace and comfort of the unique place and the process of "praying with your feet!"

"God bless to us the path beneath our feet.
God bless to us the ground whereon we go."

*Respectfully submitted,
Beth Fryer,
Veriditas Labyrinth Facilitator*



Music Director's Report

The Grace choir, a talented, welcoming, and dedicated group, was busy right from the start of the year with our Maybe Not Your Grandparent's Hymns concert in January. The brainchild of Joe Matyas, this wonderful afternoon of music involved multiple singers and musicians both from Grace and our surrounding community. It was very well received and offered a rousing start to our 100th anniversary year of celebrations.

The choir has grown in number over this past year and we were thrilled to welcome six new members into our musical family in 2025. Providing a meaningful music ministry in our weekly services throughout the year is a key component of being in the choir. However, it also affords us the opportunity to participate in extra events and special services as they arise. This year the choir provided a singalong in the Chapel at our Anniversary Block Party in May, prepared special music for our June 8 Anniversary service, helped lead the Men's Chorus for Mother's Day and the Women's Chorus for Father's Day, sang with the mass choir at our October 5 combined Anniversary celebrations with Northwest Barrie, Collier, and Burton United Churches and worked very hard to prepare and present our cantata entitled Love Came Down To Bethlehem on the third Sunday in Advent.

But wait, there's more! These musical offerings are in addition to extra services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Blue Christmas Comfort service, Christmas Eve, as well as offering choral support for several celebrations of life over the year. Choir members also provide special music over the summer months. What an amazing group of people these are and how blessed we are to have them so willingly offer their time and talents through their Music Ministry.

Big thanks go out to Paul Burke for sharing his serious guitar skills in our weekly services and to Kent Cheesman for his generous sharing of both his trumpet and vocal talents. Kathy, Ken and Jane, thank you so much for your hard work and dedication in the sound and technical department and thanks to Timothy for being such a willing helper in my weekly choir set-up~ you are all very much appreciated!

Lastly, big thanks go to Rev. Susan for making this such a meaningful and fun ministry of which to be a part and to Joanne in the office for your patience, skills, and sense of humour!

*Respectfully submitted,
Janet Kinsey*



Thanking Rev. Susan for Fifteen Years of Ministry

On July 4, 2010, Rev. Susan Eagle and her husband Joe Matyas were warmly welcomed to Grace Church as Susan began her professional ministry with us after leaving her congregations near London, Ontario. To acknowledge and thank both Susan and Joe for their contributions, leadership and friendship, there were two presentations.



Before Susan went on holidays for the month of August, the Official Board presented Rev. Susan with a One Hundredth Anniversary Stole at the July Board meeting. We felt this was particularly appropriate, not only in recognition of her contributions to the United Church of Canada, but also to honour the service of her brother, father and two grandfathers who were all United Church ministers. Her grandfathers were involved in the creation of the UCC that took place at the Mutual Arena in Toronto and was made official by an Act of Parliament. It is obvious that her heritage has served her well! We at Grace have been the beneficiaries of a legacy steeped in the history and tradition of the United Church of Canada.

As part of our Welcome Back Sunday in September, the Worship Team led the congregation in a further acknowledgment of Susan's fifteen years of ministry to us. Worship Team leader, Jennifer Cheesman, commandeered the service just before the benediction to present Rev. Susan with flowers, recognize her dedicated partner Joe and have the Choir share a song the music director, Janet Kinsey, had created as a tribute. Pictures were shared of Susan's early days at Grace as the congregation joyfully and with great appreciation congratulated and thanked her for her fifteen years of ministry at Grace United Church.



2025 WORSHIP SERVICES

JANUARY *(in person and livestream)* Epiphany

- 5 Epiphany with Epiphany drama
- 12 Baptism of Christ Sunday
- 19 Martin Luther King Sunday, Sacrament of Communion followed by Not Your Grandparents Hymns Concert
- 26 Worship with guest preacher, Rev. Colin MacDonald

FEBRUARY Black History Month *(in person & livestream)*

- 2 Worship
- 9 Celebration of Black History month, story of Measha Brueggergosman
- 16 Baden Powell Thinking Day, Intergenerational service with Guiding/Scouting groups
- 23 Worship and Annual Congregational Meeting & Celebration

MARCH *(in person & livestream)* Lent Theme: **Everything In Between**

- 2 Worship and Communion
- 5 Ash Wednesday Service of Readings and Communion
- 9 Lent 1, Stranger & Neighbour and Everything In Between, PIE Day (Public Intentional Explicit) National Affirming Day
- 16 Lent 2, Faith & Works and Everything In Between, Sacrament of Baptism
- 23 Lent 3, Rest & Growth and Everything In Between,
- 30 Lent 4, Lost and Found and Everything In Between
- **worship cancelled due to ice storm and loss of electricity**

APRIL *(in person & livestream)* Lent and Easter

- 6 Lent 5, Righteousness and Mercy and Everything In Between, and Sacrament of Baptism
- 13 Palm Sunday, Shouting and Silence, drama, Passion Through Eyes of Women
- 17 Maundy Thursday Worship & Seder Supper followed by Overnight Vigil
- 18 Good Friday Worship, with Rev. George Moore and Rev. Thelma Arnott participating Stations of the Cross Today
- 20 Easter Sunrise Worship with other Barre churches at Heritage Park
Easter Worship and Sacrament of Communion with trumpeter, Kent Cheesman
- 27 Holy Humour and Camping Sunday *(no livestream)*

MAY Asian Heritage Month *(in person & livestream)* Easter Season

- 5 Mental Health Sunday and dialogue with Catherine Cilio
- 12 Christian Family Sunday, conversation with David Skelly & Mother's Day Breakfast Recognition of Weavers and Blessing of Prayer Shawls
- 19 Guest preacher, George Moore
- 26 Asian Heritage Sunday, Earth Sunday and dialogue with Jessica Rawn of Water First

JUNE Indigenous History and Pride Month, Pentecost *(in person & livestream)*

- 2 Pride Sunday and Stained Glass Windows History with Rev. Art Storey and Wendy Brown
- 9 Pentecost and Celebration of 100th Anniversary of UCC, Sacrament of Communion
- 15 Father's Day & Indigenous Day of Prayer, Sunday School Recognition, and Pot-Luck Lunch
- 22 Psalm Service with guest leader, Sandra Ruttan
and Intergenerational Worship at Camp Simpresca
- 29 Worship, Canada Day

JULY *(in person & livestream)* Church garden bulletin photos

- 6 Summer Worship
- 13 Summer Worship
- 20 Summer Worship and Sacrament of Communion
- 27 Summer Worship, Guest Preacher: Rev. Evelyn McLachlan

AUGUST *(in person only)* Church garden bulletin cover photos

- 3 Guest preacher, Pat Edmonds
- 10 Guest preacher, Rev. Evelyn McLachlan
- 17 Guest preacher, Rev. Gordon Flint
- 24 Guest preacher, Rev. George Moore
- 31 Guest preacher, Pat Edmonds

SEPTEMBER *(in person & livestream)* **Season of Creation**

- 7 Welcome Back Worship and Barbecue, start of Sunday School and Season of Creation
- 14 Worship and Sacrament of Baptism
- 21 Worship, Peace in Palestine and Israel
- 28 Orange Shirt Day and Sacrament of Baptism
Afternoon outdoor Blessing of the Animals

OCTOBER *(in person & livestream)* **Season of Creation**

- 5 Worship & World-Wide Communion
Afternoon Barrie United Churches worship for 100th Anniversary with Very Rev. Devid Giuliano
- 12 Thanksgiving Sunday
- 19 World Food Sunday & Day for Elimination of Poverty, Sacrament of Baptism
- 26 All Saints Sunday, Sacrament of Baptism

NOVEMBER *(in person & livestream)* **Advent (What Do You Fear?)**

- 2 Grace 64nd Anniversary Sunday with guest preacher, Rev. Brian McIntosh
- 9 Remembrance Sunday with Veteran representatives & Remembrance Ceremony, including remembrance of Indigenous Veterans, Trumpeter, Kent Cheesman
- 16 Worship with Guest Preacher, Rev. George Moore
- 23 Reign of Christ Sunday, Conversation with Rev. Bea Arnill, book launch, "Something to hang on to: a memoir"
- 30 Advent 1: Theme: Hope, World Aids Day, Blessing of Red Scarves

DECEMBER *(in person & livestream)* **Advent & Christmas**

- 7 Advent 2, Theme: Peace, Intergenerational worship service and White Gift Sunday with Children's Presentations: Sound of Peace and Benjamin's Top
- 14 Advent 3, Theme: Joy, Choir Cantata, "Love Came Down to Bethlehem"
Opening of Christmas Peace Labyrinth
- 17 Evening Blue Christmas Service and Candle Lighting, with Rev. George Moore and Rev. Thelma Arnott participating
- 21 Advent 4, Theme: Love, Sacrament of Communion
- 24 Christmas Eve 7 pm Family worship, carol singing, story-telling and live nativity
Christmas Eve, 11 pm Candlelight communion (no livestream)
- 28 Service of Carols and Readings, stories and snacks

BAPTISMS, 2025

Elizabeth Joan Squire Slonchka
March 16, 2025

Ivy May Robinet,
child of Hannah and Luke
September 28, 2025

Kaidyn Zayn Gilmore Hulme,
child of Shawnee and Cameron
April 6, 2025

Liliana Norma Rose Lawrence Vos
child of Rebecca-lynn & Joshua
October 19, 2025

Benjamin Jose Goncalves,
child of Chris and Tracy
September 14, 2025

**Emma Victoria McDonald
and Logan James McDonald**
*children of Launie McDonald and
Seonmi (Sandy) Kim*

WEDDINGS, 2025

Pamela Lynn Currie Blades & Varun Rai
Saturday, February 22, 2025

Christian David Taylor & Stephanie Lynne Esch
Friday, October 17, 2025

CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE, 2025

Ernestine Julie (Muller) Rupprecht
May 2, 1926 – December 29, 2024
January 11, 2025

Maureen Elaine Sterling
September 9, 1932 – June 4, 2025
Saturday, August 16, 2025

Lawrence Omar Robert Desjarlais Jr
Nov 29, 1948 - Jan 8, 2025
Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Leslie Phair
February 17, 1952 — August 19, 2025
Thursday, August 28, 2025

William Robert "Bob" Marshall
January 12, 1939 - February 5, 2025
Saturday, March 1, 2025

Colin Gordon
April 16, 1939 – August 27, 2025
Thursday, September 4, 2025

George Ernest Bidwell
September 22, 1941 – April 9, 2025
Thursday, April 17, 2025

Annelouise (Annie) Costello
May 8, 1980 – September 19, 2025
Thursday, October 2, 2025

Barbara Joan (nee Cole) Browning
November 6, 1932 – December 22, 2024
and

Ethel Irene Chappel Byles
August 28, 1928 – October 13, 2025
Friday, October 17, 2025

Don Browning
November 1, 1932 – February 27, 2025
Friday, April 25, 2025

Joseph Hector Barriault
June 2, 1945 – September 20, 2025
Saturday, October 18, 2025

James "Jim" Wayne Lang
September 12, 1940 – June 7, 2025
Saturday, July 5, 2025

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TEAM

Birthday/Anniversary cake is served the first Sunday of the month for refreshments after worship. Each Sunday two or three members of our team prepare and serve refreshments.

During the year the Congregational Life team joined other teams , such as the Worship team organizing a pot luck lunch after the AGM meeting in February; also on November 2 for Grace's anniversary service, our teams provided lunch for everyone.

Our team and Pastoral Care team held a "Centennial Tea and Dessert Party" on Wednesday, **June 4** at 2 pm to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada. Many delicious desserts were enjoyed. A trivia questionnaire on the United Church was enlightening.

Baden Powell Sunday, February 22 – we served lunch of hot dogs and hot chocolate. Because of a bad snow storm very few people were able to attend. Thanks to the volunteers that took over the food preparation that day.

Sunday, June 8, celebrating 100th Anniversary of United Church, we organized the pot luck meal which was held in Memorial Hall. Close to 100 people joined in.

July 16 the annual Campfire evening was held on a very hot evening.

September 7 – The annual Welcome Back BBQ and pot luck meal was served in Memorial Hall because of inclement weather. A special cake celebrated Rev. Susan's 15th anniversary at Grace

October 5 -The refreshments served after the 100th UCC anniversary service was a great collaboration between the Collier Street, Burton Avenue, North West Barrie and Grace United Churches with our team from Grace organizing this joint lunch.

December 3 -the Ladies of Grace Chinese Dinner was enjoyed by over 60 women with several gentlemen as kitchen staff. Music was supplied by Barb Benson and Clark Bonney.

This year C.L. team has been enriched by the young women and friends who help with various events.

A super volunteer at every event is J who does the set ups and tear downs, helps with preparations in the kitchen, a willing participant at any event happening at Grace.

We welcome all donations of refreshments for the coffee time. Mark them for Sunday coffee time when you leave them.

The Adult Social group (Grace Gamers) is organized by Anne Walton.

John McLean leads the Men's Fellowship lunch on the first Wednesday of the month. All men of the congregation are welcome.

*Respectfully submitted by
Congregational Life Team Co- Chairs- Sharon Squire and Edna Caldwell,
Marg Parke, Sharon Johnson*



Welcome Back BBQ
September 7, 2025

Grace Gamers

Grace Gamers and the Birthday Club gals were welcomed to Barb Mercer's home for a wonderful BBQ lunch in late August. Thank you Barb for hosting all the members. We enjoyed sitting on your beautiful new deck and sharing a very tasty lunch, summer stories and just being together.

Grace Gamers had our Welcome Back Chinese Lunch in September, and again special thanks to Barb for being our Bingo caller and thanks to everyone for bringing a little treasure for the bingo prizes.

Everyone is welcome to join in the fun the last Friday of each month in the Oak Room at 1pm.

*Respectfully submitted by
Anne Walton*



Men's Lunch

We are now entering our third year of the Men's Monthly Luncheons following their disruption during Covid. We are still meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at the Casa Mia Restaurant at the corner of Dunlop and Toronto Streets. As in the years prior to Covid, approximately six to ten of us turn out monthly when we are free to do so. Perhaps there are 20 men who have come at one time or another. It is always a good time for conversation and fellowship, a time where we really get to know each other's past, our aspirations and how we are mutually connected. Any men of the congregation who have yet to attend would be warmly welcomed.

*Respectfully submitted by
John McLean*

FAITH FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEAM

Our committee for Faith Formation and Christian Education was hard at work this year.

Vacation Bible Camp

This year's Vacation Bible Camp was themed around the idea of sustainability and providing needs to all living things. The topics revolved around the need for shelter, air, water, food, community, and how we can show compassion to another. The children played games, we made crafts, learned lessons and sang songs. Each morning the kids watched the adults perform a skit to tie it all together. All God's critters have a place in the choir and they always have a place at Grace camp.

Hallowe'en

In October the moonlit clouds and hair-raising howls of distant wolves accompanied our Halloween party. Children and adults took part in crafts and games, before braving the depths of the basement haunted house. A pumpkin carving contest and a plethora of candy added to the fun.



Hallowe'en 2025

Camp Simpresca

Camp Simpresca weekend was another fun-filled adventure into the remote wilderness of Midland. The banks of Georgian Bay hosted our outdoorsy participants as they played board games and trivia, swam in the lake, roasted marshmallows over the fire and sang songs with good food and fellowship. We look forward to returning for another opportunity to commune with nature and to catch glimpses of an eternal beauty that reveals itself in the glistening branches of a rain watered forest.

Sunday School

Our new Sunday School teacher, Season Karki, has been a wonderful addition to our Grace family. We are currently finishing up curriculum from the United Church's CHURCHx program. We also welcome Sunday School aged kids every Sunday morning at 10:15am to join us for breakfast and socializing before service.

Bible Study

The Bible Study continues to take place at 9:30am on Wednesday mornings. We currently have a rotation of four leaders. We discuss the weekly lectionary passage, usually the New Testament one, and read it three times, using three different translations, and answer three questions, from the lectio divina method. It's really fun if you like winking fun stuff from a passage. There are some very different perspectives in this group. Do come and join us! (We also serve coffee...)

Progressive Christianity Group

The Tuesday Night Progressive Christianity Group is co-lead by Bette McCracken and Dave Collacutt, whose combined credentials comprise adult education, computer-assisted education and curriculum and a weird spiritual history combining humanism, atheism with a dash of evangelical Lutheranism. We move with the seasons, as we can. We have pretty well exhausted the available liberal/progressive curriculum, so we ad lib a lot. Youtube and TED talks are our friends. Last year we covered:

- We finished a re-examination of Islam, a LTQ series entitled The Jesus Fatwah
- A study of Mark, led by Rev James Tabor, that took us through Lent
- An examination of Hinduism and its scriptures
- The fall started with some Walter Brueggemann, a dash of Krista Tippett and concluded with
- A four week Advent series by the Prayer Bench featuring the figures of the nativity scene.

Join us on Tuesday night, via Zoom, 7:15-8:45. It's almost always entertaining!

Movie Night

Also, look out for more announcements about the movie night that meets in the evening on the last Friday of the month. On January 30th we will be screening *Inside Out 2*!

*Respectfully submitted,
Isaac Pearson, Chair, Faith Formation and Christian Education*

World Day of Prayer 2025

The World Day of Prayer 2025 was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 170 Steel Street, on Friday, March 7 at 1:30 p.m. The service was written by the women of the Cook Islands, with the theme "I Made you Wonderful". Fellowship and refreshments were enjoyed after the service. A video about the Cook Islands was played while folks gathered in the sanctuary and a special song created for this service was sung via video during the service. One of the regional dishes served was Lime Cookies. Decorations were many floral bouquets and presenters wore red and white or floral outfits with leis around their neck. About 80 attendees came to enjoy the afternoon. The service was presented by representatives from the following congregations: Westminster Presbyterian, Collier St. United, St. John Vianney Parish, Grace United, Westside Evangelical Lutheran, St. Mary's Catholic, Salvation Army, St. Andrew's Presbyterian, St. Margaret's Anglican and First Christian Reformed Church.

In 2026 the host church will be Collier Street United and the feature country, Nigeria.

Special Sunday Services



Orange Shirt Sunday



Epiphany Sunday



Christian Family Sunday



Pride Sunday



Easter Sunday



World Food Sunday

OUTREACH TEAM

Team Members 2025

Edith Elliot
Edna Caldwell
JT McVeigh

David Collacutt
Elizabeth McLean
Janice Pearce

Lois Marshall
Brian Fraser
Judi Shields

Marnie Lynn

Although efforts to address Food Insecurity have involved many members of our Grace congregation and a lot of our volunteer action and discussion among our Team members, several other outreach projects have also received significant attention over the past year.

Edna Caldwell continues to champion our Amnesty initiatives, providing members of Grace and opportunities to learn about and petition against socially unjust situations throughout the world. Dave Collacutt has begun to provide the congregation with reports from the accomplishments/lack of progress from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Reports on the use of some of our Mission and Service contributions are shared at Sunday services by Thelma Arnott.

Our Lent Loot program informed the congregation about the efforts of a small but mighty organization called Water First that trains Indigenous youth to develop and maintain safe water initiatives throughout Canada. Our congregation provided this charity with \$3000 in support of its efforts.

Mother's Day support for women residing in the Women and Children's Centre resulted in gift bags delivered to 20 women who have required out of home residence. The Georgian Foodlocker was the recipient of donations of cereal collected at our Mother's Day Breakfast co-ordinated by Jack Brown. On December 1, World AIDS Day, our neighbourhood was decorated with several red scarves knit by Grace members.

Rev. Susan has kept the Outreach Team updated on the United Church's social justice initiatives and local issues arising from her work with the Barrie Homelessness and Housing Justice Network. We have continued to provide our church facilities for All Candidate Meetings prior to elections.

The Christmas season launched significant energy among the members of Grace. Rainy Chappell's report on the coordination of gifts and food to a needy family is included elsewhere in this document. Lois Marshall coordinated the collection of warm winter wear through our mitten tree and White gifts supported our neighbours who struggled to put food on the table.

The generous support for our Food Security initiatives has allowed for the expansion of the programs that feed the hungry. We appreciate the support of the Kiwanis Club of Barrie which has continued to fund 120 Busby dinners that are planned, prepared and delivered by Marnie Lynn and her small team on the third Thursday of each month.



Busby Meal Prep
(Judi Shields, Lois Marshall, Morgan Cope, Barb Charlebois, Barb Mercer, Brian Fraser, & Marnie Lynn)

The Barrie Food Bank's weekly delivery of nonperishable food items ensured the filling of the Little Pantry on a daily basis. A significant grant from the County of Simcoe has once again allowed for this outreach to be enhanced through the purchase and distribution of perishable and nutritious food items through a mini market each Tuesday morning. Guests were encouraged to select items that allow for the preparation of more complete meals for themselves and their families. On special days such as Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas, an expanded variety of items were available and small gifts were purchased for the children of the families. This project was managed by Edith Elliot and Janice Pearce, and towards the end of the year we welcomed Kerry Burke, Susan Dube and Kate Putnam who have been keen to take over our Food Security outreach.



Edith also used the financial support from the County to expand our community garden on the Grove Street side of our building. She and her enthusiastic team of volunteers worked hard to ensure a productive crop was realized and distributed.

But none of these initiatives could have been carried out without the support of the Grace congregation. Volunteers have helped to weed the garden, decorate the mitten tree, cook nutritious meals and continually financially support this critical work. We welcome any others who might wish to participate in these critical activities

Preach the Gospel all the time; if needed, use words. St. Francis

*Respectfully submitted,
Judi Shields, Chair*



Pantry Cooking Class



Little Pantry Tuesday Morning Giveaway
(Michelle Copegog & Edith Elliot)

Christmas Sponsorship 2025

This year's family was a mother with three boys, in the age range of little to young man.

It doesn't need to be said that having to be in a shelter is difficult, but it has its own unique challenges for each season and for each age group as well. That said, a nice noticeable part of this year was the range of gift certificates that were obviously for the teen age boy. It was visible that he was seen by members of the congregation. Also, the hope is that a gift certificate allows him to have his own autonomy and the adventure of using them. I am sure that they will be appreciated.

Again, Mary Grenier made a quilt for each of the family members. She is amazing.

When all was put together there ended up being the quilt and a little gift for each person and the money bought three fifty-dollar gift cards to Walmart so that the mother can either use it to buy groceries or presents. Again, the gift cards allow her that choice. The \$25 gift card to Petro Canada will help them get around as well.

A change over the years has been the volume of the support, by volume, I mean the physical size and weight of the loot. Being able to fit it all in a few large gift bags is helpful in the physical managing of the donations, but the thoughtfulness of the gift cards is truly more helpful than volume.

Monetarily there was a cheque for \$100 and a cheque for \$355 and \$50 dollars cash.

Used money to purchase gift cards and added to the ones received.

In total, 6 \$10 gift certificates to Tim Hortons. // \$25 gift card for Walmart, plus the additional ones purchased with money donations. // 2x \$20 + \$25, plus a mystery amount one to Marks Work Warehouse. // 2 Canadian Tire gift cards for \$25. // 1 Petro Canada card for \$25. // 1 \$25 gift card to Sports Chek

*Respectfully submitted
Rainy Chappell*



Christmas Neighbourhood Message

Carol Singing:

"It was a dark and stormy night...." Well, not stormy, but it certainly was dark and cold the night that we gathered for the Grace Neighbourhood Carol Singing. In fact, it was so cold that our small group of singers spent more time sharing cider and conversation inside than strolling the neighbourhood and singing outside.

But still it was a good night of music and fellowship, topped off with a Peace carol sung to the stranger outside the Nativity scene on the Grace lawn.

Nativity Display

The Grace Official Board made the decision this year to provide a more contemporary Nativity scene in addition to the traditional Nativity display on the front lawn of the church.

The contemporary scene provided a holy family protected by a fabric tent. Outside the tent were townspeople/shepherds on one side and on the other an official who was pulling down the protective tent. Thanks to artist Keith Huyer for creating this display with lighting and wrought-iron figures. It brought the Christmas story into focus with contemporary happenings in our world.



Rev. Susan

PASTORAL TEAM



The following members served as the 2025 Grace United Church Pastoral Team: **Judith Banville, Carol Bosman, Jean Cote, Susan Eagle, Erika Garrett, Linda Griffis, Christopher Knox, Timothy Bridges, Marian Harris, Marina Johnson, Barb Mercer, Debbie Neddeau and Winnie Nevils.**

Our team doesn't have many meetings, but we work collaboratively and often behind the scenes to offer emotional, social and spiritual support of the members of our congregation using many different tools and programs.

According to our Ministry Opportunity Outline, the following are the responsibilities of the Pastoral Team.

- Provision of the Weekly Prayer List
- Maintenance and updating of the Church Congregational Directory
- Preparation and Presentation of Memorial Poems
- Twenty & Fifty Year Membership Certificates and Fifty Year pins
- Acknowledgement of special occasions and milestone celebrations
- Welcoming newcomers and encouraging involvement
- Sending of Greeting Cards
- Keeping of the Historic Roll
- Transportation for the Seniors' Teas, worship services and other church activities
- Christmas Memorial Candles
- Christmas Remembrance Packages of homemade treats
- Coordination of the Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Assistance with the distribution of Annual Reports and Grace Matters



An important part of the Pastoral Ministry has become the provision of Prayer Shawls that are created with prayer, blessed and dedicated to the healing of body, mind and spirit and distributed to those who are in need of some extra support during a difficult time.

Anyone interested in knitting or crocheting a Prayer Shawl should contact Barb Mercer at 705 -728-6734. Patterns and wool are available for your use.



A special thank you is extended to Erika Garrett who sends the Greeting Cards on behalf of the Grace Congregation to those who are celebrating milestone birthdays and anniversaries, recovering from illness or mourning the loss of a loved one.

Communication is a key element of pastoral care. It is so important that information about both joys and sorrows in the lives of Grace family members be relayed to the Pastoral Team so that they can be appropriately acknowledged.

Much pastoral interaction happens on a one-on-one basis through a telephone call, a note of congratulations or a cheerful email. Community and relationship building is fostered by group activities and this is where there is an overlap with both the Congregational Life Team and the Faith Formation and Christian Education Team. The Pastoral Team enlists the support of many people beyond our team to achieve our goals and minister to the congregation in various ways. These include the following:

- The Weavers
- The Special Receptions Team
- Wheels-to-Church Volunteers
- The Christmas Cookie Brigade

A great deal of our pastoral work is carried out by the **Weavers** who bring greetings and keep in touch with the families/individuals on their list. They update their families on current and upcoming projects and events, inquire about the well-being of family members and establish special relationships. The Pastoral Team is grateful for this very important ministry and wishes to thank and pay tribute to the Weavers for their work this year. During the year Pat Neil and Karen Nicholson found it necessary to retire as Weavers and we were pleased to welcome Nancy Findlay back as a Weaver and also to welcome our sole male Weaver, Brian Fraser. Our 2025 Weavers were:

- * **Thelma Arnott**
- * **Jean Cote**
- * **Nancy Drury**
- * **Nancy Findlay**
- * **Brian Fraser**
- * **Cheryl Godin**

- * **Glenna Granger**
- * **Linda Griffis**
- * **Marian Harris**
- * **Mary Hirons**
- * **Barb Mercer**
- * **Debbie Neddeau**

- * **Pat Neil**
- * **Karen Nicholson**
- * **Elizabeth Willoughby**
- * **Joan Winter**
- * **Erika Garrett**
- * **Marina Johnson**

Flo Thomas has served as a spare/substitute Weaver to make calls for a Weaver who happens to be ill or away when calls are required. Her assistance is greatly appreciated

This group of Weavers gathered for their annual get-together on April 30th to update lists, share ideas and encourage each other in this important ministry at Grace.

Respectfully submitted
Barb Mercer, Pastoral Team Leader



Left to Right: Barb Mercer, Rev. Susan, Pat Neil, Marian Harris, Jean Cote, Cheryl Godin, Debbie Neddeau, Nancy Drury, Elizabeth Willoughby, Joan Winter, Karen Nicholson, Mary Hirons

HISTORIC ROLL REPORT FOR 2024

Official Membership List for Grace United Church

The Historic Roll is the Official Membership List of Grace United Church and includes the name of every person who ever joined Grace United Church (and therefore the United Church of Canada) in chronological order. That may have been by confirmation, renewal of faith, adult baptism, profession of faith, renewal of membership or transfer of membership from another United Church. When someone leaves our church, by transfer, personal request, death or action of the board, the date and method of deletion are noted beside their name. This record is kept in printed/hard copy form by the Roll Clerk and on computer by the Pastoral Team Leader.

Official Membership on January 1, 2025: 196

Deletions

By Transfer	0
By Death	6
Personal Request	1
Action of Board	<u>1</u>
	8

New Members

By Adult Baptism	1
By Profession of Faith	0
By Reaffirmation	0
By Transfer	0
Renewal of Membership	<u>0</u>
	1

Official Membership on December 31, 2025: 189

Deaths of Members in 2025

Robert Marshall	February 5, 2025
Donald Browning	February 27, 2025
Elaine Sterling	June 3, 2025
James Lang	June 7, 2025
Ethel Byles	October 13, 2025
Stella Dalziel	November 26, 2025

Removal by Action of the Board

Michael Rogers

Deaths of Adherents in 2024

Larry Desjarlais	January 8, 2025
Joseph Barriault	Sept. 20, 2025
Verna Stolz	November 3, 2025

New Members in 2025

Elizabeth Squire Slonachka

Removal by Personal Request

Ryan Harrison

Respectfully submitted,
 Bette McCracken, Roll Clerk and
 Barb Mercer, Pastoral Team Leader



Special Receptions Team



The Special Receptions Team provides pastoral support for bereaved Grace families by arranging receptions for family and friends following funeral or memorial services. The Special Receptions Team can also be called upon for other occasions such as milestone birthdays and anniversaries that families wish to celebrate at the church.

The Reception Convenors are:

Wendy Brown
Marlene Ryan
Kathy Harrison

Debbie Neddeau
Barb Mercer

When there is need for a special reception, one of the Convenors contacts two or more of the Telephone Convenors, who in turn call the people on their teams who have indicated that they can provide food or help or both for special receptions. There are four teams that can be called upon so usually not all teams are asked to contribute to any one reception unless it is an unusually large event.

The Telephone Convenors are:

Team #1 Flo Thomas
Team #3 Cheryl Godin
Spare: Nancy Findlay

Team #2 Marian Harris
Team #4 Lorraine Black

2025 Funeral/Memorial/Celebration of Life Receptions:

Ernestine Rupprecht	Saturday, January 11 th
Robert Marshall	Saturday, March 1 st
James Lang	Saturday, July 5 th
Ethel Byles	Friday, October 17 th
Joseph Barriault	Saturday, October 18 th

This year, we celebrated two Ninetieth Birthdays within our congregation. On Sunday, April 13th, we provided a lunch for everyone who could stay after church to honour **Rev. Thelma Arnott** on her 90th Birthday.

On Saturday, May 24th, the Special Receptions Team provided the refreshments for the family and friends of **David Mair** for an early celebration of his 90th Birthday.

There are no fixed charges for our services and families make a donation as they wish to Grace United Church. In appreciation of services provided by the Special Receptions Team, donations of **\$5,650.00** were made in 2025. Those sandwiches, cheese trays, pickles, goodies and fruit and veggie trays do make a difference!

New volunteers wishing to participate in this pastoral care initiative are always welcome!

Respectfully submitted

Barb Mercer, Pastoral Team Leader and Special Receptions Team Coordinator

Membership Recognition



Our usual recognition of long time memberships at Grace during our Anniversary Sunday Service was postponed this year until the Sunday before Christmas. This was an opportunity to present a Fifty Year Membership Pin and Certificate to Janet Storey. Actually, she has been an official member of our congregation for fifty one years since she transferred her membership to Grace from her home church in Westville, Nova Scotia. At the same time, we paid tribute to her husband, Art's association with Grace Church as our former minister. In United Church tradition, clergypersons don't have membership in their local pastoral charges, but are members of the Region, (previously Presbytery).

As we acknowledge and celebrate both Janet and Art's many and valued contributions to Grace Church, we remain mindful of the dedication and commitment of our Charter Members, all now deceased, but also those others of long standing. These include Joyce Brown, Marilyn Romphf and Bruce and Pauline Chappell with Sixty or more years of membership and Glenna Granger, Barb Mercer, Nancy Findlay and Janet Storey with Fifty or more years as official members.

We appreciate all our members, newcomers, those of long standing and adherents who together comprise the Grace Family.

Respectfully submitted
Barb Mercer, Pastoral Team Leader

Christmas Services at Grace 2025



Advent 1



Advent 2



Advent 3



Advent 4



Blue Christmas



Christmas Eve

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE TEAM

Team members: Dave Thomas, John McLean, Larry Squire, Rev. Susan Eagle, Marcus Lacey, Larry (Murph) Murphy and Mary Greiner.

Stewardship and Finance oversee the finances of the church, including reports by the Envelope Secretary (Mary Greiner), the Treasurer (Marcus/Murph) and the Investment Coordinator (Mary Greiner), as well as other programs deemed to fall under the purview of S & F., i.e., Rhythm and Pitch (Joe Matyas – see separate report). The team brings information on finances to the attention of the congregation through articles in Grace Weekly News, as well as in Grace Matters. The S & F team participate where needed in the Stewardship Service one Sunday a year. All fundraising events come to the S & F team first, so that dates can be confirmed with the church calendar and fit in with other planned events. S & F also has a table at the Job Fair, where we try to recruit more members to join the team.

The Envelope Secretary (Mary) is responsible for providing envelopes to congregation members and setting members up on PAR when requested; issuing Spring and Fall Interim Statements so the church members can keep track of their offerings to GUC, and issuing tax receipts in January for the past year.

She works with the Sunday Counters: Marian Harris, Flo Thomas, Jan Ducette, John McLean, Kerry and Paul Burke, Karen Whitehead, Connie Wiggins and Ellizabeth Willoughby, under the direction of Jan Ducette. Your faithful work is appreciated!

Another important part of the team is putting the donation info into the computer data base, which is capably handled by Judi Shields – thank you!

There are three special offerings: Easter (\$ 1,025), Thanksgiving and Christmas (\$ 3,110) with special envelopes in the pews. Donations go towards Local Operating Expenses.

The Treasurer has a huge job: working on the annual budget with all team leaders, paying and reconciling all bills, and preparing documents for the annual report and year end documents for the auditor, Morrison CPA. Marcus Lacey was the treasurer for 2025, with assistance from Murph.

The Investment Administrator (Mary) looks after the monies originally from the sale of the manse back in 2013, which are invested through Manulife Securities. See the annual report for details.

Report on Roof Repair 2024-2025

Special thanks go out to all the congregation members who supported the Roof Repair Campaign in 2024 – we reached and exceeded our goal of \$125,000! The roof was repaired by Midhurst Roofing over the autumn of 2024 and winter of 2025, with a final payment made Feb. 2025. By meeting the fundraising goal, the result was the loan approved by the United Church of Canada was not needed. Well done, everyone!

New for 2025 – Delta Bingo

S & F, under the leadership of Larry Squire, researched becoming volunteers at Delta Bingo and Grace was accepted as a charity. The first volunteer session was in July 2025. Larry recruited about 13-15 volunteers, who were trained with the assistance of John Imrie. Shirts with the GUC and logo were prepared by Karen Whitehead. Three volunteers are needed at each session. A separate bank account was set up by Marcus and Larry to record revenues received monthly, as well as expenditures. Reports will be prepared and sent to the necessary government authorities. The first revenues received were used to fund the purchase of the new furnace.

Other fundraising events in 2025:

Kiwanis Catering – Special K’s – Dave Thomas is the church liaison with the Kiwanis group; see his report.

Fabulous Food Fair & Craft Market – Eleven craft tables had items for sale ranging from knitted/crochet gift ideas, beeswax candles, outdoor wooden signs, etc. New this year: frozen homemade soups in quart containers, which were well received. The convenor was Mary Greiner. The event was a success, with much support from the community. Thanks to all the bakers and soup makers!

Some of the other fundraisers were: Mother’s Day Dessert Sale -- convenor, Edith Elliot. Plant Sale -- convenors: Bette McCracken and Edna Caldwell. Bradford Greenhouse (gift cards used for church garden supplies). Jams – Edith Elliot. Anthem Adoptions – Janet Kinsey. This year there were free will offerings for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper in excess of expenses. “Not Your Grandparent’s Hymns” was a fundraiser organized by Joe Matyas.

Dinners in 2025 were also successful at GUC, thanks to the help of many volunteers:

The Spring Roast Beef Dinner– Was dine in and take-out dinner, organized by Sharon Squire, Jeff Foerster, Barb Mercer, Cheryl Godin. The meal was: roast beef, mashed potatoes, coleslaw, vegetables, homemade pies.

Strawberry Supper – Two sittings, as well as take-out, this cold dinner with turkey and ham, salads, and fresh strawberries for dessert was a resounding success. Organizers were Sharon Squire, Barb Mercer, Cheryl Godin and Mary Greiner.

The Harvest Roast Beef Dinner - was dine in, as well as take-out. The meal was Prime Rib roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, coleslaw, vegetables and assorted pies. Thanks again to Sharon Squire, Jeff Foerster, Barb Mercer, Cheryl Godin, convenors.

We would like to thank all the convenors and volunteers who gave so freely of their time and expertise throughout the year to make each event a success at GUC.

Fundraisers 2024:

Anthem Adoptions	\$	230
Fab Food Fair & Crafts (soups)		7,747
Special K Kiwanis Catering		5,749
Spring Roast Beef Dinner		4,908
Mother’s Day bake sale/ Plant Sale		1,215
Strawberry Supper		4,358
Harvest Prime Rib Dinner		4,831
Bradford Greenhouse credit		not yet received
Not Your Grandparent’s Hymns (2025)		1,738
Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper		166
Total income fundraising	\$	<u>30,942</u>

*Respectfully submitted by
Mary Greiner & Dave Thomas, Chairs*

Rhythm and Pitch Children's Music

Rhythm & Pitch Children's Music returned to Grace in September for its 13th year of operation. Although enrolment is smaller than it was before the covid shutdown, R & P is still a viable after-school outreach program of Grace, offering elementary school students 32 weeks of music education during the school year — from late September to early June. Music Foundations, Piano and Ukulele classes are being offered on Wednesday afternoons this year. Our wind instrument program has been terminated and guitar lessons postponed for the year. Rhythm & Pitch is a low-cost public education community outreach program of Grace for senior kindergarten to Grade 8 elementary school students. Parents pay a small registration fee and the church provides the space for lessons and most of the program cost through fundraising. R&P is overseen by a volunteer board of Edythe Barriault, Jack Brown, Dave Thomas and Joe Matyas that reports to S&F. Edythe is the on-site coordinator of the program.

*Respectfully submitted,
Joe Matyas, Board Chair,
Rhythm & Pitch Children's Music*

Kiwanis Club of Barrie

We are into the third year of having the Kiwanis Club of Barrie as a tenant at Grace United Church (GUC). Grace is responsible for supplying storage facilities and catering services that consists of dinners/lunches.

Lunches are served on the first three Mondays of the month and Dinner on the 4th Monday of the month.

Catering is supplied to the Kiwanis organization by volunteers at Grace, four teams consist of approximately 4 people. Three teams that cater to the lunch requirements and one team catering to Dinner requirements. This year, we have introduced a new position, Menu Coordinator, Sharon Squire. Her duties are to coordinate the menus between the Kiwanis organization and each catering team.

In September 2025, an updated contract was negotiated which runs from 31Oct2025 to 01Nov2026 and was finalized by both parties on 01Nov2026.

All parties are quite satisfied with the negotiated arrangement and look forward to the coming year.

As required by the substituted contract, a meeting will be held in January 2026 to discuss any problems/concerns related to the contract.

A special Thanks goes out to all the volunteers at Grace that makes this arrangement possible, and we look forward to another successful year.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dave Thomas, Liaison for the Kiwanis Catering Service.*



Kiwanis Dinner
(Cheryl Godin, Jack & Wendy Brown,
Jean Cote)

1st Kempenfelt Bay Scout Group



The Sponsorship of the 1st KBSG by Grace United Church has been a great blessing to the youth and their families and the leadership of Barrie and surrounding Communities. This support has enabled our Scouting Sections to operate robust programs which have produced significant growth in membership, both in youth numbers and in adult volunteer numbers.

The members of the congregation have shown genuine kindness and indeed encouragement in all that we do. In addition to providing a meeting place for the Beaver, Cub and Scout programs. We also would like to express our thanks for the other opportunities your facility has provided for additional activities such as training, interviews and fund raising.

This past year, 1st KBSG added another Cub Pack, enhancing our ability to engage more youth in Scouting activities. This expansion is a testament to our commitment to providing diverse and enriching experiences for young members of our community. As of January 2026, 1st KBSG sections now meet at four churches: Grace United, Trinity Anglican, St. Paul's Anglican and Collier United.

Group Commissioner Barry Mitchell played a pivotal role in driving this expansion. By approaching existing scouters and actively recruiting new ones, we have significantly bolstered our numbers. The efforts of our commissioner have been instrumental in ensuring that each new section is well supported and that our youth receive the guidance and mentorship they need. As a result of these efforts, our numbers continued to grow. We are pleased to report that we now have 125 youth members and 54 Scouters. This growth is a clear indicator of the positive impact our programs are having on the community and trust that parents place in our organization. To support our expanding sections, we have assembled a full complement of 10 Group Committee staff. This dedicated team ensures that our operations run smoothly, and that all logistical and administrative aspects are managed effectively.

The past year was brimming with a variety of engaging activities for our youth. In addition to the section-specific camps, hikes, and outings, they enjoyed an all-sections camp in the spring. Older youth participated in several notable camps and expeditions including a winter camp and a week-long "Haliburton Scout Reserve" summer camp.

It requires substantial funds to run a group of our size. To support our activities, we engaged in various fundraising efforts, including Barrie Winterfest, Scout Seeds, Scout Trees, and Apple Day.

These combined efforts ensured we had the necessary resources to provide meaningful and enriching experiences for our youth throughout the year. We are immensely grateful for the community's support and the tireless dedication of our volunteers and participants. As we look forward to the upcoming year, we remain committed to offering a diverse range of activities and continuing our successful fundraising endeavors.

The 1st Kempenfelt Bay Scout Group offers a robust International Scouting program for the members of our Senior Sections (Scouts, Venturers and Rovers). We participate regularly in World and National Scouting Jamborees and Moots, and we send a contingent to the International Scout Camp in Kandersteg, Switzerland every other year. Indeed, in 2025 one of our Scouters attended the National Scout Jamboree in Australia, and our Rover Crew joined the Canadian Contingent to the World Rover Moot in Portugal. In 2026, some of our members will be attending the camp in Kandersteg with the Canadian Contingent and in 2027 we have a Patrol Unit attending the next

World Jamboree in Poland.

We are truly thankful to have your continuing support as we go about God's work in your community.

*Yours in Scouting,
Scouter Murph
Co-Group Commissioner*

January Concert Fundraiser

Grace's first fundraising event of 2025 was a memorable concert on January 19 titled Not Your Grandparents' Hymns. Performed by two dozen singers and musicians from the choirs of Grace and North Barrie United churches and Janet Kinsey's music studio, the idea for the concert was conceived by Joe Matyas and developed with the assistance of Janet and Paul Burke. The Sunday afternoon concert featured contemporary songs of a spiritual nature by well-known singer-songwriters that most of us wouldn't normally hear in church. The sanctuary was full for the occasion as covers of songs by Bruce Springsteen, Bruce Cockburn, Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Steve Earle, Dolly Parton, Iris DeMent and others were performed. The audience responded enthusiastically to Sandra Ruttan performing Dylan with husband Rob on electric guitar, Paul Burke and Joe Matyas doing solos of Bruce Cockburn songs to guitar accompaniment, Jill Shipley singing an Iris DeMent country tune, Phil Cable covering Valdy and the piano and drumming support of Janet Kinsey and Phil Dalimore. Indeed, the entire two-set program— running 90 minutes — was well-received by the audience who filled the sanctuary on a cold day. Tickets were purchased by donation. The admission price was voluntary, yet the concert raised about \$2,200 for music programs at Grace, including choral music and Rhythm & Pitch Children's Music. The concert was an unqualified success. Attendance and donations exceeded expectations and the performances of the singers and musicians who contributed their time and talents were stellar, judging by the vigorous audience response.



*Respectfully submitted by
Joe Matyas, Organizer*

Girl Guide Units at Grace United Report for 2025

Grace United continues to be a great support of our units with much thanks. We have three units again – 10th Barrie Sparks who meet on Tuesday nights and 2nd Southern Skies Rangers and 14th Barrie Embers (previously Brownies) who both meet on Monday nights. The units are at capacity with waiting lists and have had meetings inside and outside of the church during the school year, breaking for the summer and holidays.

The Rangers moved in last year after bridging with the Embers and found it to be a great location. They have used the kitchen a number of times and hang out in the basement while the Embers meet in the Fellowship Hall above them. Games, crafts and badge work are completed with various outings to experience what our community has to offer.

Thanks to all of the Grace family for their continued support and prayers.

*Yours in Guiding,
Darlene Munro (aka Loon),
Community Guider*



Grace Fundraisers



Not Your Grandparents' Hymns Concert



Plant Sale



Making Cabbage Rolls for the Food Fair



Collecting Tickets for the Harvest Dinner



Getting Bargains at the Spring Bake Sale



Dining by Candlelight at the Spring Dinner because of the ice storm

PROPERTY TEAM

Capital Projects

There were three capital projects we poured our money into this year.

- Flat roof resurfacing
- Heat pump for Memorial Hall
- Replacement windows in Fellowship Hall

All three projects totaled approx. \$166,000

The capital projects were initiated by the need for repairs and the opportunity to access grant money from a United Church initiative called "Faith and the Common Good". With the window project now invoiced we can submit our request for the payout of \$30,000 in grant money.

There are many more capital projects we can tackle if they can be financially supported.

For example; new flooring in Memorial Hall, New carpet in Fellowship Hall (basement), upgrade the vent fan for the kitchen stove, heat pump for the kitchen and a floor drain to catch water spills from the kitchen and avoid flooding the store room below.

Repairs & Issues

Other issues popped up that were not planned for, such as the Ice Storm in the spring, replacement batteries for the emergency backup lights, repair to the sanctuary A/C unit, two water leaks caused flooding in the basement, a second power line for the new digital sign was required, a new hot water tank, a major kitchen clean out, a new furnace and an unplanned extension of the shed roof to store the new garbage bins during the winter months. There were also other minor plumbing and lighting repairs that happen on an ongoing basis.

Outdoor Ground Works

John Imrie and David Skelly did their usual fine job of keeping the lawn cut and the grounds neat and tidy.

Edith and Keith continue to look after the gardening adding colour and contrast to Grace.

Building usage has increased considerably and although it increases our revenue to some extent it also puts more wear and tear on the building. Grace is one busy church as we support community programs with outreach. To date we have had minimal issues to deal with but they do crop up from time to time.

More Manpower on the Property Team –if we can't get more manpower on the property team it will limit the upkeep and improvements around the church. If you don't want to be on the committee but you can help with one or two projects I need to hear from you!

*Respectfully submitted,
Ben Helmond, Property Team Chair*

Earth Day Clean-up Sunday
(David Skelly, Becky B., Dawna Vinnels, Cheryl Godin)



MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

In 2025 we welcomed Season Karki as our youth leader and he has fit right into our Grace community. Thank you Season for a great year in this role!

2024 was a year of health and other challenges for some members of the M&P team and 2025 continued to be a challenge for various members for various reasons. We wish to thank the talented and dedicated members of M&P who have served Grace for years (some for many years), and who have moved on to other challenges, or are simply taking a well-deserved break. A great big thank you goes out to Pauline Chappell, Barbara Moore, Esther Ewing, Paul Wessinger, Brian Fraser, and Cheryl Godin. Your efforts have helped in so many ways, direct and indirect, to help Grace United. Thanks are due also to Larry Murphy – Murph - who is staying on to help with the transition to a new team; Rev. Susan also helps to anchor the team and she too has been invaluable as a resource.

We also wish to thank the people who on the daily, the weekly and monthly keep our lights on and programmes running: Rev Susan and Joe, Janet Kinsey, Joanne Polcz, Tim Bridges, Paul Burke, Kathy and Ken Watt, Jane Foster, and of course all the teams and their chairs.

None of us can claim to know about everything that happens here at Grace (only God and Susan know that!). So many people devote time, skill, or money, or just help by being a friendly face! We have all done our part to continue to make Grace function and thrive as our own little Eden of faith, joy, inclusion and celebration. Whatever you have done this year, it is certain that you did it for love. Thank you all!

*Respectfully submitted,
Richard Pearson, Chair, Ministry and Personnel*

It was a bittersweet day when we had to say farewell to Beryl Vincent and Harry Stockley as we thanked them for their many contributions to Grace and wished them well on their move “back home” to Newfoundland.



ACCESSIBILITY TEAM

This year we saw the addition of Hearing accessories. We have booster packs that can plug into ear buds/phones that will amplify our Sunday Services. A huge thank you to Ken & Kathy Watt for working on this and getting it up and running. A big boost for our hearing impaired.

Ben Kinsey, a Masters' student, is doing a study on Accessibility of people's churches and how it affects their experience as part of a church community. Several of our congregation members will be participating in this study.

*Respectfully submitted,
David Mair*

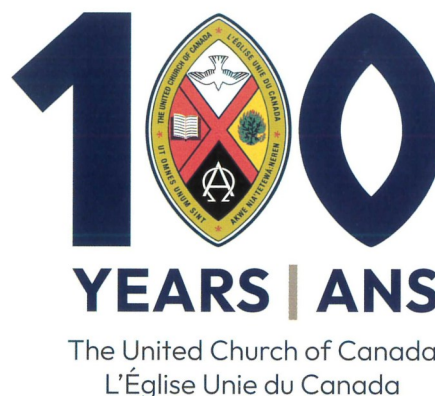
AD-HOC 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Celebrating the 100th year of our denomination involved collaboration and planning across many Teams of Grace United Church, as well as other United Churches in Barrie. Volunteers offered their time and creative ideas and donations were received from local partners, including our own Paul Burke, who donated two large banners and several garden banners to highlight our celebration to the local community.

Events hosted throughout the year included our Block Party in late May, Centennial Tea in early June, Congregational Celebration in early June and finishing with our 100th Anniversary service in the fall. It was a joy to witness our community come together to celebrate such an important milestone and share the history of not just the United Church, but our own community at Grace.

We now look ahead to the future for what the next 100 years hold.

*Respectfully submitted by
Emily Harrison*



United Church of Canada - Celebrating 100th Anniversary



SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL



Introduction

The year 2025 marked the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada, a significant milestone celebrated with numerous events across the Region and the country. Grace United Church was among the many congregations that took part in commemorating this centennial occasion, joining together in recognition of the Church's enduring legacy and ongoing mission.

Regional Projects and Priorities

A key initiative in 2025 was the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of Ministry and Funding Priorities. This committee was established following the June 2024 meeting of the Shining Waters Regional Council (SWRC). After consultation with Communities of Faith and other stakeholders, the final report and recommendations were accepted in December 2025. The six areas of Ministry and Funding Priorities going forward are:

1. Support to Existing Communities of Faith: Congregations
2. Support to Communities of Faith: Community Ministries, Missions, and Outreach Ministries
3. Ensuring there are Sufficient Funds for Regional Needs and Grants
4. Engaging with Children, Youth, and Young Adults
5. Right Relations with, and Justice for, Indigenous Peoples

The Need for a Strategic Plan

The full report and its recommendations are available on the Shining Waters Regional Council website at <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/about/regional-meetings/2025-special-regional-meeting/>.

Communications and Resources

Since its formation through the reorganization of the United Church of Canada, moving from Conferences and Presbyteries to the current Regional structure, SWRC experienced some years of growing pains. The SWRC website now serves as a valuable resource hub, offering improved access to information for Communities of Faith and individual members.

Those interested in learning more about the relationship between our Congregation, the Region, and the United Church of Canada will find helpful information under the "Communities of Faith" section at <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/>. This area includes resources on Congregational Support, Grants and Funding, Youth initiatives, and more.

Lay Representatives

Your lay representatives—Bruce and Pauline Chappell and Deborah Hardwick—are happy to discuss their experiences and to answer any questions you may have about the Shining Waters Regional Council.

*Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Hardwick*

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND BUDGETS

Memorial and Special Gifts Fund

The Memorial and Special Gifts Fund (M&SGF) was set up in August of 1988 to receive memorial and special gifts, deferred givings, bequests and endowments on behalf of Grace United Church.

Most commonly, we receive memorial donations as tributes to deceased members and friends of Grace, and also in celebration of special milestone birthdays, anniversaries, births, baptisms, graduations, etc. The M&SGF is managed by a team made up of the Trustees, plus 2 members appointed by the Official Board. This team makes recommendations for distribution of the funds, which are then forwarded to the Official Board for approval and usually are in support of a special purchase such as communion ware, hymn books, or a major capital project.

The appropriate cards for making donations for the M&SGF can be found in the foyer or are available from the office. Tributes are recorded in the record book, which is on display in a special case and stand in the foyer.

Team members are Bruce Chappell, Wendy Brown, June Willett, Mary Greiner, Nancy Drury, Larry Murphy and Kerry Burke (chair). Reverend Susan Eagle attends the meetings.

2025 proved to be a very busy year for the Memorial and Special Gifts Committee. The team met fairly regularly throughout the year with in person meetings, as well as zoom.

Several proposals were brought forward by members of the congregation as a way of using Memorial Funds to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church.

The team voted to purchase a new larger digital sign at a cost of \$23,000. The existing sign was 10 years old and the technology was outdated. The sign was purchased with memorial funds as well as generous donations from the congregation. Joe Matyas was very helpful in being the contact person between the church and the sign company, providing us with important information. Joe is in ongoing discussions with the sign company regarding software updates and training.

A new memorial plaque was purchased this year and is hanging in the foyer. The names of recently deceased members have been added. I will take the plaque in to see if an adjustment can be made to one of the brass plates.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Burke*



Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting
Grace United Church
February 23, 2025

Attendance: Rev. Susan Eagle, Larry Murphy, Janet Ducette, Marina Johnson, George Moore, Karen Whitehead, Jill Shipley-Brown, Emily Harrison, Myrtle Huyer, Kathy Harrison, Janet Kinsey, Joe Matyas, Ken Watt, Kathy Watt, Jane Foster, Cheryl Godin, Dakota North, Richard Pearson, Marnie Lynn, Kahori Tomiyoshi, Judith Banville, Marg Parke, Edna Caldwell, Padaur Bhatta, Prabin, Chaulagain, Deepak Chaulagain, Jean Cote, Jennifer Cheesman, Michael Klein, Mary Greiner, Pooja Beniwal, Elizabeth Willoughby, Marianne Gentemann, Isaac Pearson, Wendy Brown, Anne Walton, Elsie Morrison, Pat Neil, Mareka Martin, Darlene Munro, Brian Fraser, Adriana Fraser, Deborah Hardwick, Bob Baird, Keith Huyer, Molly Keffer, Marian Harris, Steven Gibson, Abigail Schrader, Gabby Hodgson, Sarah West, Michelle Copegog, J., David Brown, Connie Wiggins, Charles Drury, Nancy Drury, Dave Collacutt, Pauline Chappell, Larry Squire, Judi Shields, Edythe Barriault, Shirley Lucas, Denton Lucas, Bill McKinney, Mary Hirons, Flo Thomas, Dave Thomas, Winnie Nevils, Linda Johnston, Ruth Lawson, John McLean, Elizabeth McLean, Edith Elliot, Joan Walker, Kerry Burke, Erika Garrett, Chris Humber, Barb Mercer, Sharon Squire, Ebrahim Mobarakabadi

1. The combined morning service and Annual Meeting began at 10:30 AM with 80 people in attendance. All were asked to sign the attendance sheets that were circulated.
2. Following the welcome and announcements by Rev. Susan, the congregation joined in singing Hymn: VU 222 "Come, let us Sing".
3. After the Territorial Acknowledgement, lighting of the Christ candle and the call to gather, the Annual Meeting was called to order by the Acting Chair, Dr. John McLean. This was followed with 4 enabling motions.

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Mary Greiner that: the adherents be included in voting procedures at this meeting.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Edith Elliot that: the agenda be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Larry Murphy that: the minutes of the Grace United, Annual Congregational Meeting, held on February 18, 2024, are approved.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Michael Klein that: the report from the Grace United, Church Council Meeting, held on November 24, 2024, is received for information.

CARRIED

4. Rev. Susan led the congregation in a responsive prayer and words of affirmation, followed by a few minutes of Glimpses of Grace photos.
5. The Choir presented the anthem “How Then Shall I Live”.
6. The Chairperson for each team stood when announced by the Acting Chair, Dr. John McLean. He referred to the Annual Report for individual team reports on activities and achievements for 2024. There were no comments or questions from the congregation.

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Mary Greiner that: these reports be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

7. Deborah Hardwick read the Gospel, Luke 6: 27-38.
8. The congregation joined in the singing of Hymn: MV 154 “Deep in Our Hearts”.
9. John McLean referred the congregation to the Message from the Board Chair, Paul Burke, in the Annual Report on page 4.
10. Rev. Susan spoke of the many colours of celebration in our church as seen in our Glimpses of Grace photos shared this morning. February 26th is Pink Shirt Day to promote anti-bullying. On Friday Night there was a Scout Award Presentation Ceremony at Grace to recognize leaders offering core values to our young people. Grace is proud to support this organization and the many other support services which use our space to help people. The opposite to addiction is not sobriety. It’s community and connection. Let’s celebrate the community that we are.
11. More Glimpses of Grace were shown while the offering was collected, followed by Hymn: VU 575 “I’m Gonna Live”.
12. Barb Mercer lit the Memorial Candle and read the names of members and adherents of Grace who passed away in 2024, followed by a moment of silence and prayer.

Rev. David Black
 Barbara Browning
 Patricia Cole
 Bonnie Collacutt
 Alice Crooks
 Ian Darling
 Illa Ellison

Kathleen Eplett
 Craig Hall
 Millicent Huff
 Gertrude Jermey
 Yeb Jermey
 Douglas Leary
 Bill Lummiss

Peter Maule
 Patricia Romkey
 Ernestine Rupprecht
 Florence Smart
 Elizabeth Steers

This is the end of the live streaming.

13. Kerry Burke was available for questions regarding the Memorial Fund Report.

MOTION: Moved by Kerry Burke, seconded by Edith Elliot that: the unaudited 2024 Memorial Fund Report be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

14. Judi Shields was available for questions regarding the 2024 Mission and Service Fund Report.

MOTION: Moved by Judi Shields, seconded by Larry Squire that: the 2024 Mission and Service Fund Report be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

15. Judi Shields was available for questions regarding the 2024 Benevolent Fund Report.

MOTION: Moved by Judi Shields, seconded by Jean Cote that: the 2024 Benevolent Fund Report be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

16. Mary Greiner was available for questions regarding the 2024 Investment Administrator's Report.

MOTION: Moved by Mary Greiner, seconded by Michael Klein that: the 2024 Investment Administrator's Report be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

17. Larry Murphy was available for questions regarding the 2024 Treasurer's Report. Kathy Watt asked why (on page 48) the Budget for 2025 increased to \$190,000 when the actual cost for 2024 was only \$149,993? Murph explained that the budget reflects a positive future-forward spirit, but the costs continue to go up including salaries, maintenance and supplies.

MOTION: Moved by Larry Murphy, seconded by Mary Greiner that: the 2024 unaudited financial statements be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

18. Rev. Susan lead the congregation in the responsive Affirmation of Hope followed by the singing of the first verse of Hymn: VU 401 "Worship the Lord"

19. To start the New Business portion of the meeting, the congregation joined in the reading of "Our Vision of Our Ministry".

20. The Teams were invited to share any new plans for 2025.

21. The Treasurer, Larry Murphy presented the Budgets for 2025.

MOTION: Moved by Judi Shields, seconded by Edna Caldwell that: the 2025 Mission and Service Fund target of \$13,000 be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Wendy Brown, seconded by Shaon Squire that: the 2025 Capital/ Building Fund target of \$40,000 be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Larry Murphy, seconded by Michael Klein that: the 2025 operating budget for the General Fund be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

22. The congregation joined in the singing of the second verse of Hymn: VU 401 "Worship the Lord".

23. The Nomination Report was distributed prior to the meeting.

MOTION: Moved by Pauline Chappell, seconded by Sharon Squire that: the nominations are closed.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Pauline Chappell, seconded by Ken Watt that: the Nominations Report for 2025 be accepted as printed.

CARRIED

24. The congregation joined in the singing of the third verse of Hymn: VU 401 "Worship the Lord".

25. Rev. Susan conducted the 2025 Installation of the Church Council, followed by a prayer and a declaration to recognize and affirm the nominees as leaders in Grace United Church.

26. Pauline Chappell read the names and positions of each staff person at Grace and then expressed thanks to the staff and volunteers at Grace for their hard work and dedication to the church over the past year.

27. The congregation joined in the singing of Hymn: VU 958 "Halle"

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette, seconded by Charles Drury that: the Board act on behalf of the congregation until the next Congregational Meeting.

CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by Janet Ducette that: the meeting be adjourned.

28. Rev. Susan led the congregation in a responsive, closing prayer.

29. The congregation joined in the singing of the fifth verse of Hymn: VU 401 "Worship the Lord".

30. Following the Benediction and singing of Hymn: VU 549 "For All Your Goodness, God", everyone was invited to the Memorial Hall for lunch. Glimpses of Grace were shown as the congregation left the sanctuary.

Dr. John McLean
Acting Board Chair

Janet Ducette
Board Secretary

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Ducette, Secretary

Church Council Meeting

January 19, 2026

Attendance

Rev. Susan Eagle, Paul Burke, Janet Ducette, Barb Mercer, Judi Shields, John McLean, Elizabeth McLean, J., Isaac Pearson, Debbie Neddeau, Kathy Harrison, Edna Caldwell, Joe Matyas, Dawna Vinnels, Janet Kinsey, Colin McLarty, Timothy Bridges, Chris Knox, Sue Kurtz

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm after everyone had helped themselves to refreshments. Rev. Susan read the passage; "We wake to a day" from What Comes from Spirit by Richard Wagamese, followed with a prayer.

Rev. Susan used the reading to look at what it means to be one family. We have a great capacity of heart to give to each other, care for our community and work to make things better. She went on to say that our last Church council meeting was focused on the regional structure of the UCC and some concerns at that time that were frustrating and difficult to accept. This meeting will focus on our own congregation.

Paul Burke laid out the agenda for everyone. We would be looking at the high points and low points of the past year. Then we will try to see where the call of the gospel to our ministry will take us in the coming year. To start the discussion, there are two speakers: Barb Mercer and John McLean.

Barb Mercer has been a member of Grace for 60 years. She agreed that Grace was indeed a family. In the early days of Grace, a group of families started a Sunday School in a local school and then went to various churches for their adult service. Most of these people were from farms in the area or had rural roots. They were used to helping each other, were good neighbours, and close families. After a few years, they decided to start their own church and worked together to build Grace.

Barb credited Rev. Art Storey for coining the phrase Grace family. We shared joys and sorrows, provided an atmosphere of care and concern and had a great sense of humour. We are not alone in this church family. Working together in the church is also a chance for fellowship and getting to know each other, appreciate the strengths, skills and values of each other.

Grace United still has that rural feel. We are welcoming, willing to help and support each other and our community, have an acceptance for individuality, personal faith and differences which enriches our family. She ended with a joke from the internet which was comprised of ten rules for church goers which was probably written in the '50's.

Rev. Susan then called on John McLean to speak. He and Elizabeth came to the church shortly after Rev. Susan. It seems like John was put to work as soon as he arrived!

John stated that Barb Mercer personifies all that is great about Grace. She keeps the history of Grace alive, is caring, compassionate and continues to work hard to promote our mission and stays in touch with members who can no longer attend or have moved away.

Grace is about caring and what we can do to help each other and our community. We have been active in providing food for the community for many years, but, as the need has grown, so have our programs. Grace provides breakfast for the homeless every Tuesday morning. We have a Little Pantry on site which is stocked daily during the week. We give away bags of groceries at the church on Tuesdays. Marnie Lynn and her team make a hot meal for 120 people every month which is delivered to the Busby Centre for distribution. When a call goes out, the congregation at Grace answers.

At this point Paul Burke referred to the agenda. He asked for participation from everyone to share stories and ideas to continue our ministry.

Judi Shields shared that she went to San Francisco with a friend who was studying churches that were successful in attracting new members. One church had installed a Coffee Shop where people came before services and were encouraged to take their coffee in to the sanctuary if they wanted to. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming.

Jan Ducette gave kudos to Janet Kinsey and Joe Matyas for the very successful concert last January, "Not your Grandmother's Hymn Sing". It was well received and drew musicians and singers from other churches and the community.

Dawna Vinnels asked if a rough schedule of the year's main special events could be posted. Even if the exact dates are not readily available it would help newcomers to plan to attend and watch for more information to come.

J. asked, what is a Weaver? Maybe we need to develop some information for newcomers, so they can find out what each team does and see if they would like to volunteer.

Someone asked where the church's finances stand? Are we in debt?

Dawna said she had been in another church recently that had organized its bulletin boards in such a way that it was easy to access information.

J. wondered whether we should have food more accessible for people in the congregation who need help. He has seen this set up in St. Mary's.

Judi Shields stated that the Outreach Team had been considering this. They would like the small, locked bin in the hallway removed and a shelving unit installed to house more food.

Rev. Susan chuckled that when she had come to Grace the coatrack extended all the way to the chapel! We have been busy.

Joe Matyas stated that Grace has a pulse. There is a friendliness at Grace with no ulterior motives. There are lots of volunteers. This Christmas Joe reprised his Merry Christmas video which he had filmed 15 years ago. At that time there were about 50 people who participated. This year there were about 150 people. He was astounded to realise there were more young people than he thought and visible minorities. No one comes to Grace who doesn't want to be here, even the children in the Sunday School. He saw the faces of Grace differently.

Joe spoke of a documentary he saw in November about St. George's Anglican Church in Toronto. When they reopened after covid there were 40 new young people who showed up. They were looking for community, feeling isolated and alienated during covid. Now there are 400 young people at this church. A survey done found that the group of people least prejudiced against church were those in their 20's, most who had no previous experience.

Janet Kinsey stated that Rev. Susan's message at Grace is not judgemental or "preachy". She appreciates Susan's inclusion of current events in her sermons.

There is a relaxed feeling in our church which can be felt in the spontaneous reactions of the congregation. We like to laugh, to clap after music presentations. We genuinely welcome everyone. There are many incidents of one-on-one sharing and support.

Colin McLarty offered 2 suggestions which we could try. If we could use current technology to share information rather than paper, we could save money and reach more people. Also, if we could link into Georgian College's web sites or school newspaper, we could send a targeted invitation to students in September who are lonely or looking for a homecooked meal!

Rev. Susan stated that a few years ago we did have some smaller family suppers which brought in young people and their friends. She thanked everyone for their many ideas and things to think about. Positivity is contagious!

The meeting closed at 8:15pm with a closing prayer by Rev. Susan.

Paul Burke
Board Chair

Janet Ducette
Board Secretary

A Busy Christmas Season at Grace



Keith Huyer's Christmas Display



Nativity Scene on the Grace Lawn



Preparing the Christmas Treat Boxes



Memorial Candles



Ladies of Grace Chinese Food Dinner



Skit Performed on Christmas Eve