

**Grace United Methodist Church, Harrisburg
Leadership Council Minutes November 18, 2025**

Present: Pastor Anna Knox, Rick Albright, Lisa Bender, Wayne Bender, Steve Drachler, Amy Hall, Christie House, Brookye Keeney, Jess Schneck, Don Reasoner

Guests: Sue Kompare, Rachel Flowers

Calendar Dates

As we gathered, dates to add to the church calendar were shared.

March 23, 2026 -Wayne is doing a talk about the History of Grace Church at Grace for Historic Harrisburg Association from 6-8 pm. He indicated to them we would also provide a reception. Jan 15 – Feb 5, 2026 are the dates Rick shared about the time the Brazilian students will be at Lebanon Valley College.

Sunday, Feb 1 is the date we should plan to host a meal after worship for the Brazilian students. They will go to the Harrisburg Symphony that afternoon.

Sunday, January 18 - Patricia Maiumi, a young piano protegee who will be traveling with her parents and the Brazilian students, will present a piano recital at Grace Church 2-4 pm including a reception. Rick shared these dates and said he and Marcia are hosting a Brazilian student this year.

Jess welcomed us at 6:34 pm.

Opening Prayer & Devotion Time - Wayne

- Wayne shared 2 Corinthians 4:15, all things happen for the benefit of believers, so that abundant grace, spreading to more people, will cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Wayne had two cornucopias on the table, also called horns of plenty. This references an abundance of flowers, fruit, later corn and produce, often shown in a goat's horn. The contents must overflow the basket. Paul speaks of thanksgiving that overflows. Paul's life didn't call for thanksgiving. His was a tough life and he didn't see the fruits of his work, yet through his faithfulness, he showed grace in reaching people.
- Wayne then brought it a very large cornucopia and asked that we fill it with what we are thankful for.
- Suggestions offered included: new music staff, our current pastor, other pastors in the congregation, the team of people on Council, a release from doing things as we always did them, taking risks, brains and hearts in the room, that we show up for everything, new faces we see each week, filling out welcome forms, our connection with Shelly/Brazilian students, the church being used more by outside groups, for the 50-70 people here today from Planned Parenthood who paid us \$750 to use the church space. Wayne closed with prayer.

There was a brief discussion on what we can give visitors to stay connected to Grace - a welcome packet with a small magnet or sticker, brochures about Grace, etc.

Leadership Development – Jess

Jess shared that she is currently working on a leadership development plan at work, but she hasn't yet written the chapter for when life is crashing around you, which is her life now. Her capacity is low

right now. She suggested we recognize times when we are over our heads and be vulnerable to let each other know when we need to delegate. Jess then led the meeting.

Pressing Issues

The **October Leadership Council Minutes** were approved on motion by Rick and Amy. Thank you to Christie for filling in for Lisa.

A Resolution Granting Authority to the Leadership Council Chair was presented in writing that states that the Leadership Council Chair has full authority to execute documents, enter into agreements, and take legal action on behalf of the church consistent with Council policy. This document is needed so Jess can act legally on behalf of Grace to process the memorial funds designated for Grace Church by Nancy Smith in her will. **Steve moved and Rick seconded a motion to adopt the resolution and it was approved by all.** There will be a note added under the resolution to indicate that Jessica Schneck is the current Leadership Council Chair, effective January 1, 2025.

A New Wedding Policy for Grace was presented in writing, created by Pastor Anna using a variety of resources including one that existed for Grace in the past. This version has been done to be welcoming for LGBTQ persons and generally welcoming for all. Pastor Anna had two wedding requests this week. One couple backed out after hearing from Pastor Anna about our theology in regard to visiting clergy; other one has a tour on Monday.

Discussion on the Policy included adding the words “have been recorded” to the section about the cost for a church member being deducted from recorded offerings given in the past year.

Amy moved we adopt the new wedding policy, Brookye seconded it, and it was approved by all.

There followed a brief discussion that it could be more obvious in the bulletin about how to give online. There currently is a QR code on the back page to lead to the donation page, but might be better to **put the QR code in the bulletin at the Offertory**, or at least a note there that says “To donate online, use the QR code on the back page of the bulletin.”

Discussion of the 2026 proposed budget included having Pastor Anna talk through it line by line to help us see her suggestions and elicit responses.

It was noted that Brookye offered to help with the website and Amy is helping with social media as we don't have staff to do that yet. Discussion about the kitchen pipe repair led to Steve suggesting it can be incorporated into a grant to upgrade the kitchen. Utilities are going up even more than this year's budget. Pastor Anna will ask Jillian about the administrative lines. Our insurance is very high. We can't cut staff as that is how we'll grow. The line for staff totals \$108,000 if we were fully staffed. We didn't spend it all last year as we have not been fully staffed. We appreciate those who've volunteered! Marla suggested not including anticipated grants in the budget itself for accounting purposes. We will vote on the final version in December.

Missionary Hannah Reasoner to visit

- Don shared that Hannah will be in the US/Harrisburg area in the weeks prior to and after May 31 which is her birthday. We should schedule her to speak. It would be great if she could speak at Annual Conference. Pastor Anna will contact Kathy Kind about that. Lisa will contact the

Conference Missions Secretary to connect them in hopes that Hannah can present to area churches.

- An idea emerged to create a community event about Colombia while Hannah is here – have her do a presentation, make it a fundraising event.
- A Colombia related conference – talk to Gloria Merrick at Latino Hispanic American Community Center for support. Ask the City of Harrisburg to promote it. Amy recently had contact with Mischelle Moyer who is the Director of Communications for the city.
- Christie suggested having a section of our website featuring Hannah and Colombia.

Approve a quote from Tom for replacing the Wesley House roof vent cap that blew off over the weekend.

Tom got a rough quote of \$3,800 for this work.

Conversation on the Saving Grace process to redevelop the kitchen and approve the purchase of a new electric stove for the kitchen with an upgrade to the electrical panel.

- Rick's written report of two recent visits was distributed. See the report for additional information. One visit was with staff of the John N. Hall Clubhouse of the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg to see their renovated small kitchen space. The other visit was with the city Health Officer, Nelva Wright.
- Steve was very pleased with the meeting with Nelva, and believes renovating the kitchen to become a commissary kitchen relates to the Saving Grace plan. We learned there is a market for such a kitchen; that there are only a few in the area. Lisa Wolf is working with him on a business plan. Steve commends the plan to purchase an electric stove.
- Rick added that Nelva was delightful. Rick sent her a thank you note. She is glad we asked questions early and noted that she has seen a lot worse kitchens. A warming box was suggested as a way to keep food warm. The hood above the gas stove is fine. We need a separate fire suppression system.
- The visit at the Hall Clubhouse was inspirational. They put in a kitchen in a former small office. They found a 3-part sink for \$200. They do great outreach with 60 kids/day.
- Grace, Lemoyne also remodeled their kitchen. The same group will plan to see it.
- Amy recommends we drive by Hall Manor to see the inspiring Sprocket basketball mural there. There are donors to help cover the cost of the stove, with \$900 already given.
- We need to get bids for the needed electrical upgrade.
- A question was raised about the kitchen pipe repair, which we previously voted to do. Tom is having trouble getting two groups together and has concerns about the contractor. It might be that the pipe repair needs to be wrapped up in a larger kitchen renovation project that is grant-funded.
- It was suggested, and Pastor Anna agreed, that she will invite Grace members/supporters to donate for the electrical work as part of our Christmas giving options.
- Amy will ask Handyside, who did work for her, to see if he does business work.
- Steve encouraged us to consider using diverse companies. The city has a list of contractors who work in the city, but Amy wasn't sure that was a curated list. She believes anyone can get on it.
- There is urgency to this as Russell wants to do a December dinner and needs to have his volunteer cook the food. Catering the dinner was too expensive.

- We agreed that it isn't necessary to select the lowest bid, but to accept the one that is the lowest reasonable bid.
- **Amy moved to promote giving for the electrical work as part of the Christmas appeal, to get three quotes for the work and to use the lowest reasonable bidder to do the work and that any funds that aren't donated come from Line 2170 in the Savings Account. Steve seconded it and it was approved by all.**
- Pastor Anna acknowledged Joy Makin's work in this. She is a former food service director and teaches ServSafe.
- Rachel added that Shannon is also certified in ServSafe and is a chef. Rachel and Shannon are willing to help with the dinners.
- We don't need to remove the old stove yet. There are several options for where to put the new electric stove. We don't need a hood for the electric stove. Even when the old stove is removed, we will keep the hood for later use as needed.

Update on research about requesting an alternative to our current insurance policy from the conference

- Steve submitted a written report – please see it for full information.
- Steve reported that the Book of Discipline allows churches to use a different insurance if the annual conference agrees to it. The Conference requires full replacement value insurance, which is what we are paying for exorbitantly. There is also functional insurance coverage available from outside vendors if the Conference would agree we could use it.
- Steve spoke with Trina at McKissick's today. She affirmed that since we are in the Harrisburg Historic District, if we have a catastrophic loss, we must rebuild in a way to meet their standards to keep the exterior looking historic. The interior can be modern.
- Anna's research led to a response she doesn't understand from McKissick but will share with Steve. Steve will keep investigating.
- Anna learned that to lobby the Conference for an exception, we need to provide a plan for what we would do after a catastrophic loss. She plans to ask other historic churches in the Conference if they want to work with us to lobby the Conference.
- Steve will talk with someone at Salem UCC Harrisburg as we believe they have functional replacement insurance.
- Our church is valued at \$21 million and \$10 million of that is for the Tiffany Window.
- We have a 42,000 sq ft bldg. What would we want Grace Church to look like and to be if the building is destroyed? Restorations are more expensive than building from scratch.
- Partners for Sacred Places and UM Insurance people to consult.
- We need a proposal for what we would do, and take it to the Property and Casualty Committee, and if they deny it, take it to the Cabinet, and appeal for a vote at Annual Conference.
- This is a priority. Jess suggested we form a coalition with other historic churches, Steve agreed, include other denominations, said Don. Paying this insurance hurts. Put it together with Saving Grace, help to shape ministry said Steve. We can return to full replacement value after a few years if desired.
- Steve is working on this. McKissick could help us with a plan. We should have a dream session. Anna offered as an example, to say 20,000 sq ft, stone exterior, modern interior and that whatever plan is submitted, we wouldn't be held to it, but could adjust at the time needed. We

just need a plan for now, to keep us in ministry in the city. Anna and Joyce could present our request and plan to Annual Conference. We should aim to do that this year. We need a detailed plan by early March to get on the agenda for Annual Conference. Wayne, Joyce, Anna can start asap, Steve to join in January.

We need a volunteer to research getting an increased percentage disbursement from the Fluke Trust.

Amy offered to care for this contact with Fluke Trust.

Is there an update on installing a porta potty on our property?

- Anna and Amy were on a call with our neighbor at the Greenlee building, with Father Brommer from St. Patrick's Cathedral, someone from Pine Street and CCU staff. They created an unhoused neighbors task force.
- Downtown Daily Bread reported that the City denied their request for a porta potty because they had no place to put it other than on a sidewalk.
- Father Brommer supports Grace putting it on the inside wall of Wesley House where it is more out of sight. Anna suggested it would likely be where our recycling bins are now by the back steps of Wesley House. It would only be open after Downtown Daily Bread closes at 3:30 until our shelter opens at 7:30 pm. A CCU staff person agreed to lock and unlock it. Bids are needed. This is not an optimal solution. Market Square Presbyterian Church has one. Steve indicated that we should have lighting in the area. Greenlee could offer money. Could be done with an initial phase as a trial run while lobbying the city to approve providing a public restroom for the city.
- We need to get bids and find out if that location is doable. We already voted in principle last month to support this.
- The group is also requesting the City to install a trashcan between Pine Street and Grace.

Sue Kompare commended the Council for our work, and mentioned that she hears compliments about what is happening.

The next Grace Church Council meeting will be Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30 pm online.

Closing prayer was offered by Jess at 8:52.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Bender, Secretary, Grace Church Council