

LIVING FAITH STORY

FOR THE

PORT DOVER WOODHOUSE

PASTORAL CHARGE



GRACE UNITED CHURCH

18 CHAPMAN STREET WEST PORT DOVER, ON



WOODHOUSE UNITED CHURCH

2154 HWY 24 SIMCOE, ON

MARCH 2023

**WHAT DO YOU ENJOY
MOST
ABOUT OUR CHURCHES?**



WordItOut

The Port Dover Woodhouse Pastoral Charge

The Port Dover Woodhouse Pastoral Charge has a history richly steeped in the Methodist Church. Since 1853, Woodhouse Wesleyan Methodist Church, the country church, and Grace Methodist Church, the town church, were paired together as a two-point pastoral charge.

In 1925, both congregations became part of the United Church of Canada. Relations between the two churches have remained friendly and supportive. Both churches have members that are loyal, dedicated to their various projects, and services that the United Church has established, and are instrumental in participating in worship and spreading the word of the gospel.



A survey completed in February of 2023 provided information about why our members attend church. We come to Sunday Worship to enjoy the fellowship of church members, to be part of a worship experience, to develop a relationship with God and because the atmosphere is welcoming and friendly. We also enjoy our ministers!



Our future hopes for supporting God's mission are similar to other aging congregations which are to increase the number of people who attend church. Specifically, we would like to connect with younger generations and families, develop opportunities for volunteers, engage in worship that is biblically based with uplifting music, continue to offer online services for folks who cannot attend church in person and ensure that members that are shut-in, or reside in nursing and retirement homes have their spiritual needs met.

How we work together

A beautiful directory of member photos, committee pictures, events and contact information was published in January 2023.

Woodhouse and Grace share: An Office

Administrator who

works 20 hours per week, a Traditional Order of Service, Hymns- Voices United, More Voices United, and shared Choirs for special services, Manse Committee, Mission and Outreach Committee, Ministry and Personnel Committee, a Finance Committee, Pastoral Care Committee and a Pastoral Charge Board.



Woodhouse has 33 active members and Grace has 107. On average there are 57 views for the Live Stream Service.

Our congregations are very supportive of Mission and Outreach donations. We support the following each year: Ryerson Beach Camp, Caribbean Workers Outreach Project, Canadian Food Grains Bank, Lakewood Elementary School, Port Dover Lifeline Food bank, Refugee Resettlement Committee, and a benevolence fund that the Minister can use at their discretion.



Special projects have also been taken on for local social service agencies including: Indwell low income housing, Youth Unlimited, and Church Out Serving, Nations United programing at Ohsweken, Six Nations Food bank and Red Cross appeals.

As a Pastoral Charge we are looking forward to more social events as the COVID pandemic recedes and we can gather safely. A survey of the congregation in February 2023 gathered more than 100 suggestions. Here is summary of the top themes:

- Hosting of musical performances in our sanctuaries
- Small group studies, clubs and events
- Outdoor social events
- Breakfasts, lunches or dinners that build community
- Cooking food that can be shared with others
- Game nights for all ages
- Continuing education workshops

**The Rural partner: Woodhouse United 9:30 a.m.
Service**

*Mission: To be a welcoming church family that follows God,
lives by faith and is united by love.*

Woodhouse Church had its first gatherings in 1800. The Sanctuary, Sunday school room and kitchen facilities continue to provide a gathering place for local families and organizations.

The focal point in the Sanctuary is a painting by local



artist, the late Edgar Cantelon entitled, “Come Unto Me.”

The congregation at Woodhouse can be described as small in number but mighty in spirit! Thirty five worshippers, on average, gather each Sunday at 9:30 am. for the morning service. A dedicated volunteer organist and pianist

provide inspirational music each week. Activity kits are available for children when they attend church. Much support is generated for local food banks, social agencies and United Church Mission projects. Many members knit hats for Juravinski Cancer Centre. We also enjoy a greeting card ministry.

A group of 50 and 60 year olds lovingly referred to as “The Youth Group”, take on many of the leadership roles. In 2022 the Woodhouse congregation accepted 5 members by transfer into their church family. The UCW has been invigorated with new retirees and continues to meet on a



monthly basis. Coffee times, Soup and Chilli lunches have been a popular addition to the social time following the regular service.

A historically significant cemetery is part of the property and is managed by an independent cemetery board.



The buildings and grounds at Woodhouse have been well cared for by a dedicated group of Trustees. In the past 5 years, the washrooms were renovated, a new well was dug, a French Drain was installed in the parking lot, an accessible ramp and railing added, the kitchen was remodelled, the Sunday School Room was painted, new tables and chairs purchased, floor jacks and supports installed and an outdoor shed built. Future projects include: repairing stain glass windows and adding storms,



repointing bricks, adding a filtration system to the water, and refurbishing the front door. We are an aging group of volunteers so we find ourselves having to hire contractors for some of the work which increases the

costs. Donations, fundraising events and investments have created revenue sources to cover the costs of these projects. Members at Woodhouse describe themselves as “being life family”, we share, support and love each other...and sometimes we disagree!

The Urban Partner: Grace United Church: 11 am. Service

Mission: Grace United Church is a welcoming family of Christian Faith, committed to living, learning, growing and sharing God's Love; acting with acceptance, caring and joy in our community and the world.

Grace United Church also has strong roots in Methodism. In 1847, a large frame building was erected on the corner of Chapman and St. George Streets. This building later became the Sunday School Wing of our current church. A



Christian Education Wing was built in its place in 1962. The present Sanctuary will seat 300. It has many beautiful stained-glass windows and is architecturally pleasing. An electronic pipe organ captures your attention and is a focal

point of the sanctuary. Upgrades to the sanctuary include: a Grand Piano, new sound system, projector and screen, live stream equipment, new lights and the rebuilding of the large stained glass window at the back of the church. The building has been made fully accessible with ramps, an elevator, chairlift and updated washrooms. Several community groups rent the facilities at Grace.

Grace United celebrated its 175th Anniversary in 2022. Activities included: a joint picnic held at Woodhouse; a mini-putt outing to the Arbourtown Mini Golf;



creation of a cookbook of favourite recipes from Grace Congregation members;
a 2023 calendar that highlights historical events with photos; 175th Anniversary Service with guest speaker Rev. Jenny Stephens and a roast beef dinner for the community.



The membership at Grace over the last 10 years has been changing. Fewer families with young children attend. Long-time family members are represented along with new retirees to Port

Dover. Approximately 60 – 70 people attend the worship service. A Music Director provides music for a 20-member choir and inspirational pieces to complement the morning worship. Messy Church and Sunday School programs are currently under review.

A church council comprised of representatives from committees meets monthly. Subcommittees for Finance, Stewardship and Visioning, Music and Worship, Buildings and Grounds, Trustee Committee and Christian Education are in place and functioning well. Grace members feel one of their strengths is supporting projects that include the entire congregation and community.



Most recently, they have helped with Haldimand Norfolk REACH and Youth in transitioning out of foster care, assisted a family after a house fire left them needing everything and helped the Sea Scouts that needed assistance with fees and programming costs.

Annual events that successfully raise friends and funds include:

- Community suppers:
Shrove Tuesday, St. Patrick's Day, Anniversary celebrations
- Friday the 13th - food, coat check and use of washrooms
- Spring Rummage Sale (currently suspended)
- The Fall Affair bazaar (under review)



Other Programs being hosted at Grace include:

- Bible Study in daytime for the Pastoral Charge
- UCW
- Weekly Prayer Service
- Spirit Journey lecture series each Fall with a focus on social justice issues
- Coffee time at 10 a.m. before worship service (suspended due to COVID concerns)



- Lift Up Your Spirit Women's Group



As part of Grace United's active involvement in the community, their facilities are rented to several recreational and social-based organizations on a weekly and monthly basis. Some of these organizations include:

- Stonebridge fitness class
- Tai Chi
- Dover Uke Heads
- T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)
- A.A.
- Embers and Girl Guides
- Duplicate Bridge Club
- Hand and Foot Card game
- Bagpipers
- Community Sing-along Group



Port Dover Woodhouse Pastoral Charge Future Ministry Goals

The Grace and Woodhouse congregations are both concerned about future membership at our churches. Reaching younger members and families as well as encouraging current members to re-engage with church is important. Use of live stream to allow more people to be apart of church needs to continue and possibly be expanded.



Developing inclusive value statements and looking at affirming ministry opportunities for all members of our community is an area that requires exploration, education and discussion.

The Finance Committee and the Pastoral Charge Board will be reviewing policies in regards to how our churches share expenses.

Members are hopeful that our new minister will help us to:

- Grow in faith and members
- Continue the great ministry that exists
- Encourage a sense of wonder and joy
- Develop community linkages

The Community of Faith Committee thanks all who participated in updating the Living Faith report. Members include: Kathryn Bannister, Penni Lewis, Lisa Jo Malcomson, Georgia McCormick, Arlene Navarro, Lori Stetson, Lynn Stone and Heather King (Chair).