



Amazing Grace

*A venerable Anglican Church in a world-class city
is looking for a priest to lead us into the future.*

Grace Church-on-the-Hill in Toronto has a 540-family membership,
a 149-year history and we are looking for a new minister.

Our Incumbent will oversee an active parish, a committed staff and
a dedicated group of volunteers. Well delivered sermons, a passion
for Anglican traditions and music combined with the ability
to connect on a contemporary level with an increasingly
diverse community are essential attributes.

For the right person, this is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Here is our story.



Contents

<i>Our History</i>	3
<i>Our Church & Parish Hall</i>	4
<i>Our Location</i>	5
<i>Our Parish</i>	5
<i>Rectory & Adjacent Residences</i>	6
<i>Worship & Ecumenism</i>	7
<i>Sacraments</i>	8
<i>Music & Choirs</i>	9
<i>Family, Youth & Children's Ministry</i>	10
<i>Adult Education</i>	11
<i>Pastoral Care</i>	11
<i>Outreach</i>	12
<i>Social & Fellowship Events</i>	13
<i>Child Care Centre</i>	14
<i>Financial Overview</i>	14
<i>Staff Organization</i>	15
<i>The Pandemic</i>	16
<i>Communications</i>	17
<i>Boards, Committees & Groups</i>	18
<i>Stewardship</i>	19
<i>Opportunities & Challenges</i>	20
<i>Our New Incumbent</i>	21
<i>Our Prayer</i>	22

Our History

The original Grace Church, built in 1874, “to serve God as revealed in Jesus Christ,” was located in what is now the heart of Toronto. But over time, as the city’s downtown became more congested, our elders decided that the church should relocate to the area where many of its members were now residing.



And so, in 1911, vacant property was purchased in the northern outskirts of the city. Two years later, on December 21, 1913, opening services were held at Toronto’s newest house of worship, Grace Church-on-the-Hill. It was a handsome, Gothic-style edifice designed by renowned architect Eden Smith that overlooked the growing residential community of Forest Hill.

However, it was not until 1938 that the original design was finally completed, with additional changes that incorporated a chapel on the south side. In 1955, a two-storey addition to the west was added that now houses a narthex, offices, meeting rooms and the Child Care Centre. In 2001, a columbarium of 216 marble niches, was built in the original baptistry area of the church.

The new “Narthex/Courtyard Project” that was just completed from fundraising during the pandemic, is the latest improvement to our historic building. Grace Church now has a fully refurbished, more welcoming entrance foyer that includes an elevator to make our services accessible to all. The new narthex opens onto a landscaped, multi-use outdoor courtyard, featuring wheel chair access, a cedar trellis and lychgate.



Our Church & Parish Hall

Our sanctuary and nave have been called one of the most beautiful in Canada, seating up to 450 worshippers in our pews, with additional space for another 150 people in chairs. The gallery seats twenty and the side chapel can accommodate another thirty people.

Over the course of our history, Grace Church has been bestowed with an abundance of beautiful stained glass windows, the most recent gift being donated in 2020 to celebrate the groundbreaking work of Archbishop Tutu and the Reverend Li Tim-Oi. We have also received many memorials as legacy gifts, including a world-renowned Casavant pipe organ, bequeathed in 1926. Our remarkable reredos, given in 1946, was designed by internationally acclaimed artist, A. Scott Carter.

The church also has an excellent reputation for promoting the arts. In addition to our outstanding music program, church furnishings have been commissioned from various contemporary Canadian artists, including textile designers, metal workers and sculptors.



Our Location

The church and its adjacent buildings are situated in the lovely residential neighbourhood of Forest Hill, just one block east of Forest Hill Village. The area is noted for quiet streets, public parks and nature walks, scenic cycling routes, excellent schools and shopping.



Close to public transportation (bus, streetcar and subway) and major highways, the church's central location offers easy access to several libraries and other cultural institutions such as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Theatre District, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the University of Toronto campus, Queen's Park, and several shopping areas. Pearson International Airport and the Toronto Island Airport are only a 25-minute drive away and many hospitals are within a 10-minute drive.

Our Parish

Toronto enjoys a reputation for being one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, and that status is very much reflected in the makeup of our congregation. We believe the doors to Grace Church should be open to



the world and that our community is a place where the boundless hospitality we've experienced in Christ is something we can share with any and all.

Presently, we have approximately 540 active members and over 265 volunteer regularly. Since the pandemic, average Sunday attendance at both services combined is about 235 parishioners. However, like many other Canadian churches, we are constantly seeking new ways to grow and stay relevant, particularly with our younger members.

Rectory & Adjacent Residences

The parish includes the rectory located beside the church at 352 Russell Hill Road. Constructed of brick and stucco in the Arts and Crafts style, the residence has always been the home of the Incumbent and is a centre for many congregational social activities. It includes seven bedrooms, two bathrooms, living room, dining room, den/study, sunroom, kitchen, and a parking pad for two cars.

The parish also owns two other neighbouring residences that are both rented to tenants. The rectory is currently being refurbished with a new cedar and copper roof to ensure it maintains its historical significance.



Worship & Ecumenism

Spreading God's word, as taught by Christ, is central to the life of our parish. Since Grace Church's inception, we have appreciated and come to expect inspired preaching. We consider well delivered sermons and the ability to connect the readings to contemporary Christian life as essential for any Incumbent.

Lay people take active roles in all services as prayer readers, chalice bearers, servers and choir members. There are two services every Sunday at 8:00 am and 10:00 am. For communion services, worshippers may choose from The Book of Common Prayer, choral Eucharists (using the Book of Alternative Services) or monthly Evensongs.



There are special services throughout the church year during Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Remembrance Day. Parish clergy also conduct regular services for members living in local nursing homes and retirement residences.

For many years, the parish has been involved in the ecumenical cooperation of the nine local churches-on-the-hill. The group's annual dinner for both clergy and lay people has led to several collaborative endeavours, including a joint World Day of Prayer service.

A Lenten Series often includes speakers from other denominations and faiths, as well as from the business community. The annual Good Friday Walk brings together parishioners from all nine churches.

“Our services are beautiful. The bar is high.”

Sacraments

Mandatory and well-structured education and preparation classes for baptism and confirmation are provided by the clergy, and children of mixed denomination families are welcomed. Baptism is celebrated four to six times a year.

Grace Church regularly offers preparation classes for both youth and adult confirmation candidates.

We have an accommodating attitude toward the sacrament of marriage and welcome weddings conducted by outside licensed clergy when requested.

Funerals are often held for parishioners and members of the general public. If requested, services can be made available online.



Music & Choirs

Our exceptional music ministry is a central and defining feature of Grace Church. Since our inception, the program has adhered to a classical British choral tradition and it continues to be a cornerstone of our worship. The two choirs provide a unique choral opportunity for singers of all ages. In our children's choir, young singers are given musical training once a week and join the adult choir for both Sunday services. Our adult choir is made up of volunteer singers supported by eight professional section leads. We usually feature music from the Anglican canon but also include a diverse repertoire of contemporary choral music across many idioms. Both choirs provide exceptional training and, because of the excellence of our program, are also an important source of new membership for the parish.

The music program is guided by the professional leadership of the Director of Music. We often engage talented young organists to support their development and growth. As well, the ministry sponsors an artist in residence, who presently is a gifted Canadian jazz guitarist. We also offer a substantially subsidized annual children's summer choir camp, which is attended by 20-30 children and is an important outreach to our wider community.

Also worth noting is that our church is renowned for its acoustics and is regularly rented by many of the city's best musical organizations and musicians for concerts, performances and recordings.



*“The choir builds community for people of all ages.
Music is central to Grace Church.”*

Family, Youth & Children's Ministry

Pre-pandemic, our Family and Children's Ministry was a robust, well-attended program that offered Church School and Nursery on Sundays. Highlights of our theological year included a large, well-produced and much-loved Christmas pageant, plus a Stations of the Cross children's service on Good Friday. Other popular and well-attended events throughout the year included a Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, Advent wreath making and a family picnic in June. As well, our Youth Group met weekly and led a Sunday service once a year, with a sermon written and delivered by the youth of the parish. The program was run by a Director of Family Ministry. Adults and youth volunteered each Sunday to help with the church school.

Regrettably, since the shutdown, this vital Ministry has endured significant challenges and the children's choir, which is now fully-functioning, is presently the primary means for children to participate in worship at Grace. Our Director, due to pressing family medical concerns, recently resigned and we are focused on new ways to draw young families and youth back to the church.

As we search for our next Incumbent, our goal is to hire a new Director and re-build this key ministry. Strategies are being developed to attract families through our Child Care Centre, our association with neighbouring Bishop Strachan School and our Young Adult social group.



Adult Education

Christian Education is an integral part of life at Grace Church, from weekly worship to special events held throughout the year. The Christian Education Committee, composed of both clergy and laity, plans programs to enrich our understanding of the Bible, the teachings of Jesus and develop a sense of direction between faith and daily life. They include the following:



- A Sunday morning Christian education hour
- Lenten educational evening program
- Fostering partnerships with other Christian and interfaith leaders in our community
- Enhancing the church library with new titles, themes and encouraging parishioners to read books that will broaden their spiritual horizons
- Hosting a very successful Alpha program

“The education programs allow you to express yourself.”

Pastoral Care

In recent focus groups many of our congregants expressed the importance of the Incumbent’s pastoral care and counselling skills. As a result, taking a strong leadership role in our Pastoral Care program will be one of the Incumbent’s most essential duties. Presently, our program offers pastoral care to parishioners in local nursing and retirement homes and can, if requested, reach out to other elderly and lonely people in the community. The program is supported by an active team of dedicated care workers and is a vital conduit to the community that we intend to make even stronger.

“End of life and necessity of spiritual care is a priority here.”

Outreach

Grace Church has a very long history of generous outreach which continues today. It is one of the ways that we live out our faith in Jesus Christ. We actively support local, national and international causes. A sample of our most recent outreach projects include:

- Refugee Settlement – settled three families (2 from Syria, 1 from Iraq) in Canada
- Refugee Constituent Group support – provide support for four other families who are sponsoring refugees personally
- Annual Funding to local, national, and international organizations, consistent with strategic pillars of giving identified by parish
- Ukrainian Relief – fundraising for Ukrainians who re-located to Toronto
- Indigenous Outreach – monthly donations to provide meal program in Timmins, primarily first nations population
- Tiny Guitars – free guitar lessons with donated guitars for kids in the neighbourhood
- Santa Sacs – support for seniors in need with sack of food, clothing and essentials
- Out of the Cold – funding for Metropolitan United food program for those in need.
- Cooking for St. Thomas Huron Friday Meal program.
- Brampton Prison Ministry (The Bridge) – transitional support of recently released criminalized men
- Food Bank – on-going financial and volunteer support of the Churches-on-the-Hill Food Bank

*“There is a real sense of community.
A group of broad-minded people.”*

Social & Fellowship Events

Grace Church parishioners come together several times a year for planned social events that are extremely popular and well-attended. These include:

- **Coffee Hour.** A longstanding Church tradition where congregants come together for a cup of coffee and fellowship after the Sunday sermons
- **Brunches.** These extremely popular and well-attended informal events take place four to six times a year after the 10 am service
- **Annual Parish Picnic.** Held every June at the Bishop Strachan School
- **Grace Once More.** An important fundraising event for the church held every June in a parishioner's home and garden
- **Cabaret Nights.** Organized by our Grace Church Choir, they feature outstanding entertainment by our own choristers and visiting musicians
- **Lenten and Advent Suppers.**
- **Pot Luck Suppers,** plus Commemorative Receptions, Book and Film Club evenings and Pizza Nights hosted by our Christian Education group are other special events that take place throughout the year.
- **Interfaith Dinner.** Held annually in a local synagogue or church for Christians, Jews and Muslims
- **Annual Holocaust Memorial.** Part of our community outreach for many years.



Our **Stewardship and Welcoming and Engagement** committees are deeply committed to finding innovative new ways to bring our members and new families together for church events.

“We also like to have fun. We like each other.”

Child Care Centre

The Grace Church Child Care Centre and its staff of thirty highly trained early learning specialists have been providing an outstanding child care program to the community since 1991. Offering an all-day planned curriculum experience to 90 children, ages three months to five years, our centre has a long waiting list. In a recent City of Toronto survey, it scored 3.9 out of 4.0 to rank it as one of the finest pre-school facilities in Toronto. The centre is extremely successful and contributes significantly to our financial stability and often brings new families to the congregation.



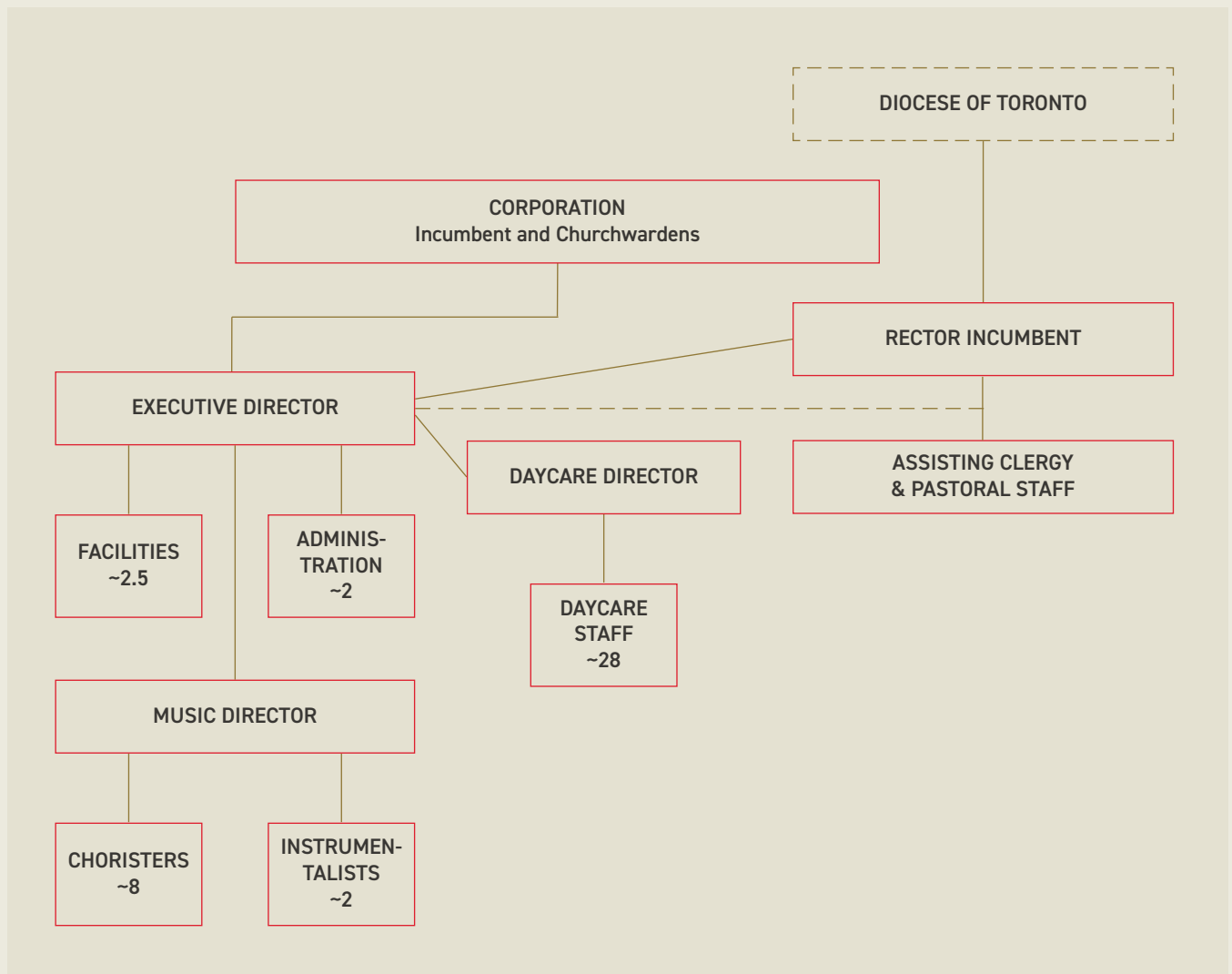
Financial Overview

Our parish has a deeply involved Finance and Investment Committee that oversees the fiscal health of the church. Highlights of our current financial status include:

- Annual budget of approximately \$1.25 mm
- Offertory receipts increased during the two years of Covid lockdowns
- Diversified revenue streams with income from facility rentals and a large Child Care Centre operation in addition to offertory
- Budget operates on a balanced basis annually
- Recent success in raising a significant amount of money from the parish to fund the Narthex-Courtyard renovation and renewal project
- Cash and investments of approximately \$3.5mm
- Significant planned giving program in place

Staff Organization

Grace Church is well-staffed, and the oversight of our employees is a key role of the Incumbent. The Executive Director monitors the day-to-day operations of the Church, provides strategic direction and works closely with the Incumbent. The Director of Music and the Director of the Child Care Centre administer their functional areas. Other staff members manage finance, property and office administration. The wardens meet monthly to review all aspects of the organization.



The Pandemic and the Indomitable Spirit of Grace

On Friday, March 13, 2020, after receiving a directive from the Diocese of Toronto, Grace Church and its daycare centre were shut down because of the global pandemic. In its distinguished history, our church had never missed a single Sunday service. So, between receiving the notification and the 8 am service on March 15, a makeshift videotaping system was hastily put together.

Admittedly, the tapings that were done that Sunday were somewhat amateurish but despite many obstacles and technological “curveballs”, they were nonetheless streamed to YouTube and Grace Church’s 146-year-old record of over 7,800 consecutive Sunday services remained intact. Over time, the production values and quality of our Sunday service broadcasts have improved immensely. They are now integral to all our services and are streamed to viewers all over the world.



“During the pandemic, we sang with headlamps on, outside in November”

Communications

For the last three years, both Sunday sermons, as well as other church functions such as funerals and weddings, have been streamed online on YouTube. With a fully computerized audio/video system that consists of eight cameras and state of the art audio/video equipment, the production values of our transmissions are exceptional.

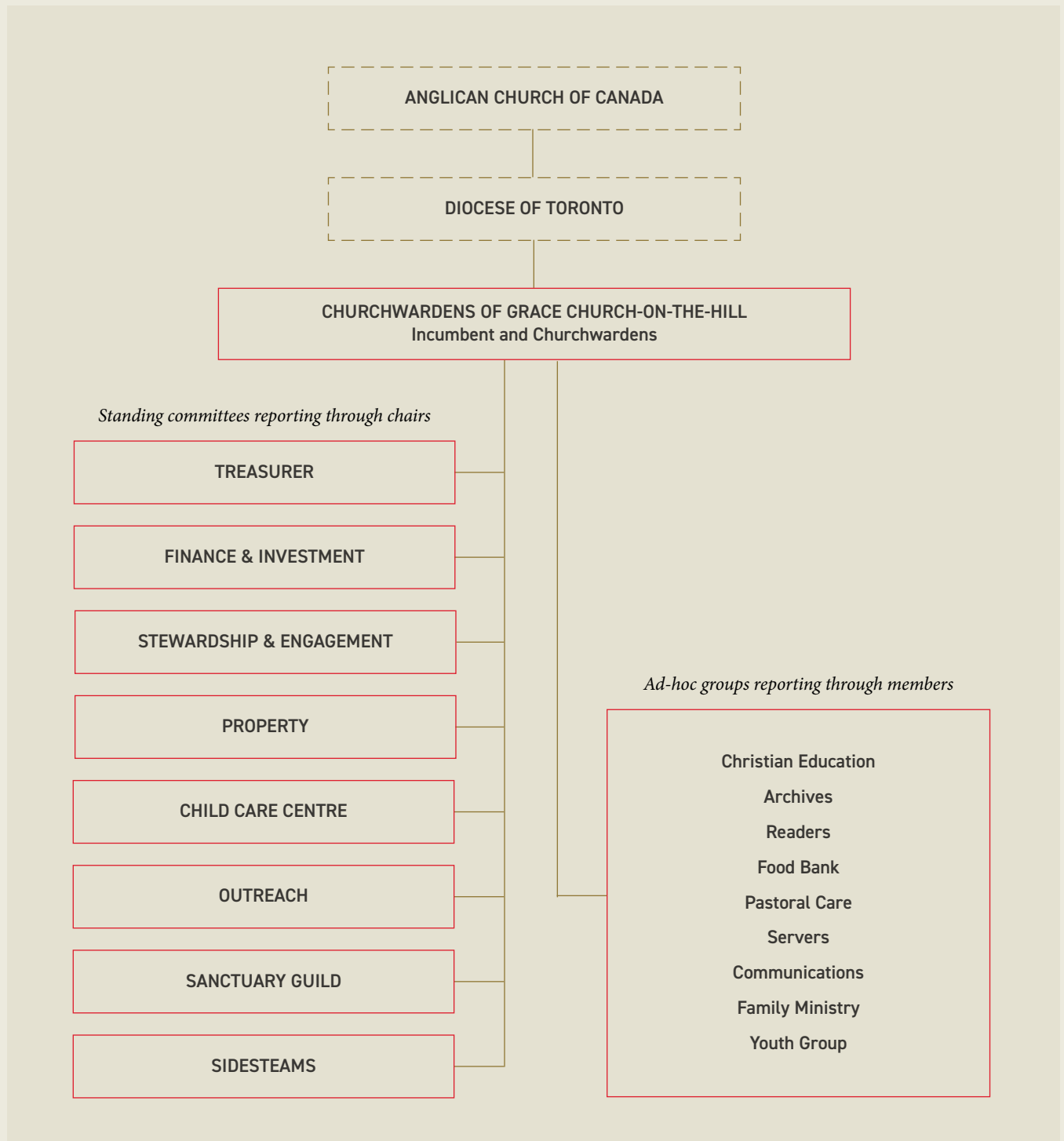
In addition to YouTube, all of our transmissions are made available on the Grace Church website which has been operating for over twenty years. Our e-newsletter, sent out twice a week, reaches all our parishioners and provides information on all church activities for the coming week. The Grace Church Legacy is an online quarterly publication that is sent out to promote legacy giving. The Church is also active on several social media platforms to engage the congregation and others.



*“The livestream was so important during COVID.
It allowed me to stay connected to my faith and my community.”*

Boards, Committees & Groups

PARISH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Grace Church has always been blessed with abundant volunteer participation on our various boards, committees and groups. These include:

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is made up of several lay members, the Wardens and the Incumbent. The primary focus of this committee is fundraising, to ensure a steady flow of income for the Parish. It also oversees **Welcoming** and **Engagement** efforts and proposes parish events where fundraising is involved. As such, this committee represents Grace Church's largest lay-led group. Stewardship also encompasses the **Lonsdale Society**, which is an organization dedicated exclusively to encouraging legacy giving.

BOOK AND FILM GROUP

This popular and active group meets six times a year to discuss recent publications or view noteworthy films.

CARIBOO GROUP

The Cariboo Group is a women's group formed in 1942 to be "prayer partnered" with missionary dioceses in remote parts of Canada. Their efforts are now focused on needs that are closer to home, such as the Churches-on-the-Hill Food Bank, New Circles and Pitching Our Tent in northern Manitoba. Presently, the shared leadership is a group of three volunteers who meet three times a year, "as long as we are able."

VINTAGE CLOTHING SALE

Every November, Grace Church holds a highly popular Vintage Clothing Sale which attracts hundreds of shoppers and raises money to support our music ministries. Volunteers meet throughout the year to sort, price and display donated clothing. It is a highlight of the Grace Church calendar.



“You feel warmly and fully welcomed here.”

Opportunities & Challenges

For most of the pandemic, Grace Church was essentially shut down, with our only lifeline to the congregation being the broadcasts of Sunday services and other events that were streamed on YouTube. One of the few benefits of the Covid years was that we were able to step back and re-assess our church and its role in our lives. It gave us an opportunity to consider what we love about it – and that led to candid dialogue about what needs to be improved or changed. The result was a strategic visioning process from which we were able to ascertain four key areas of opportunity and challenge that we feel need to be addressed by the parish and our new Incumbent to help us share the Gospel and grow God's kingdom.

- 1. GROW AN ACTIVE CONGREGATION ACROSS ALL AGES, ETHNICITIES AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN.** The new Incumbent must have the courage and creativity to deepen and expand the offering that Grace Church currently presents in a way that will attract and retain new members. Since our inception, loving, as taught by Jesus, and discerning God's will have always been at the heart of Grace Church's mission. In the next decade, it will be critical to introduce a new mix of worship, education, outreach, and social opportunities. In so doing, the goal is to appeal to and engage new, active, involved parishioners and make our church a destination in the city.
- 2. FOCUS ON AND BUILD OUR FAMILY MINISTRY.** The one aspect of Grace Church that has suffered the most from the effects of the pandemic is the children's ministry. This vital ministry that introduces young people to the teachings of Jesus, will need to be rebuilt. Pre-pandemic, the church school was vibrant – with large-scale Advent pageants, children's services, education programs, and events. Currently, our children's choir is the only initiative that engages children and youth. Attracting young families and providing a compelling offering for them to remain, such as our esteemed music program and a revitalized children's ministry, will be imperative.
- 3. PRIORITIZE FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND NEW REVENUE STREAMS.** While our financial position is strong, the new Incumbent will need to prioritize the financial health of our parish and undertake to diversify Grace Church's revenue streams. Augmenting the offertory with alternative resources will be critical to ensure that Grace Church maintains its financial strength and continues to evolve and build on its vision.
- 4. DEVELOP A CAMPUS PLAN.** There is an opportunity to more fully realize Grace Church's vision by re-evaluating our property and assets. There is tremendous potential – spiritual, educational, financial and pastoral – to be realized in our main property, rental homes, rectory, and other properties. Initial planning for this consideration has already been initiated by a leading group of architects. Leadership and commitment to this program will be a top priority.

Our New Incumbent

We hope that this document has enabled you to gain some insight into our church family, our passion for God, our style of worship and our commitment to the Gospel message and the Grace Church Community that we serve.

Finding the “right person” is a daunting task. However, thanks to a series of recently-conducted focus groups within our congregation, we received thoughtful and illuminating guidance from our peers to help us define the qualities that we are seeking in our new Incumbent. Through their views we have concluded that the very special person we are seeking is someone who:

- Is an inspiring preacher and caring spiritual leader
- Is a person formed by daily prayer and deeply rooted in Christian faith
- Is in-tune with today’s world yet embraces traditional Anglicanism
- Appreciates that our music ministry is a top priority
- Will take a prominent role in our Outreach program
- Will participate enthusiastically in our Pastoral Care
- Be open to technology and further expanding our ministry, both locally and globally
- Will manage, inspire and lead an enthusiastic staff that possesses a rich diversity of skills and interests
- Participate actively in fundraising initiatives and the financial oversight of the Church
- Is welcoming, open-minded and has a sense of humour complimented by passion and charisma
- Will encourage and support us in our faith journeys as we become better stewards of God’s Creation.



*Grace Church will always be a spiritual home
for our enduring commitment to God and
the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*We pray that you are the “very special person”
whom we can welcome to lead our family.*



*To indicate your interest in this position,
please contact Bishop Andrew Asbil, aasbil@toronto.anglican.ca*