

James Bay United Church

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 2025/11/27

Time: 6:30 to 9:18 p.m.

Location: Sanctuary

Chair: Martin Stewart

Secretary: D'Arcy McPherson

In attendance:	Martin Stewart (Chair) Karen Halliday (Trustee) Gordon Miller (Communications) Scott Jantzen (Member at large) Colleen Nichol (Pastoral Care) Marg Lunam (Thrift Shop) Rev. Greg Powell (Minister) James Troutman (Member at large) Andre Fontaine (M&P/HR) D'Arcy McPherson (Secretary)
Absent:	Joanne Keelan (Thursday Lunch) Diane Monteith (Member at large)

Opening Prayer & Lighting Christ Candle: Greg

Personal Check-in: 1-2 minutes each to share where we are at this moment and to connect a little more deeply with each other, as we wish.

Covenant: We covenant together.... to listen and speak with respect ...to express our views ... to be aware of each other and ourselves ...to be mindful of time, making room for each person to contribute ...to consider prayerfully ... to care about the life of the congregation, the community and the world ... to ask for help as needed ...to meet our commitments.

Approval of Minutes – October 16, 2025 (Colleen/Scott) Carried.

Minister's report (Greg) (See Appendix A)

The Minister noted that most information relevant to this item appears in his report. The current issue of the *Beacon* newsletter includes all Advent and Christmas events. Church decorating is scheduled for tomorrow.

An addendum to the written report was provided regarding the Affirming Committee. It was acknowledged that this work has been delayed, and appreciation was expressed for the patience of those involved. Four individuals have made preliminary commitments to serve and have been contacted, though additional members are being sought. Historically, the Affirming Committee has

focused on matters of sexual identity and orientation; however, there is an opportunity to broaden the scope in light of legislative and societal changes since the origin of the affirming process that occurred prior to marriage-equality legislation.

A congregant with experience serving on previous Affirming Committees has expressed interest in helping guide the direction of the group. The committee will determine its proposed scope as part of its early discussions.

A board member asked whether the national affirming body is open to an expanded scope. The Minister responded that while the national body tended in earlier years to focus primarily on SOGI matters, it is generally open to broader statements from congregations. They typically review and sign off on local statements rather than dictate their content. Another member observed that JBUC would not be the first congregation to explore an expanded understanding of affirming ministry. The Minister noted that other congregations have taken similar steps, and evolving approaches provide helpful precedent. A further question was raised regarding committee membership. The Minister confirmed that no board members are currently serving on the committee. He is willing to participate and suggested inviting an individual from outside the immediate congregation to contribute a gender-diverse perspective.

Board Chair's report (Martin)

- Unhoused Care Policy (Appendix F)**

The Board Chair noted that while the congregation already has an Unhoused Care Policy and a Rental, Tenant, and Use Policy, the current discussion relates more to questions of implementation. A recent situation occurred involving an individual who had set up a tent at the back of the hall. A staff member encountered the person appearing to be in distress and sought assistance.

The Chair described approaching the tent, calling out, and attempting to rouse the individual before returning upstairs to consider next steps. In the moment, calling paramedics seemed the most appropriate first action, with contacting police viewed as a last resort. Both individuals involved found the experience difficult and emotionally challenging, particularly in balancing compassion for the person's wellbeing with concerns for the safety and functioning of ongoing church activities.

- Rental Tenant Access and Use Policy (Appendix G)**

The Board Chair introduced the discussion by noting that several recent tenant-related situations have underscored gaps in how current policies are implemented. While the congregation has both a Rental Tenant and Use Policy and an Unhoused Care Policy, the challenges that arose in recent months were not resolved through the formal application of these policies. Instead, they eventually dissipated as individuals disengaged from the space, leaving the church to continue its activities. The Chair emphasized that policies exist not only to guide decisions at a structural level but also to support congregants who encounter difficult or volatile situations. At present, there is no formal implementation plan to accompany these policies, and the Chair indicated that this will require further work and should be brought back to the board for future consideration. Two board members were invited to assist with shaping that plan.

In response to a question about the nature of the tenant conflict, the Chair explained that tensions had been building for some time and ultimately culminated in an assault on one of the congregation's volunteers. Immediate steps were taken, including contacting police and addressing the situation with those involved. Although the individual responsible returned to the group after several months, many participants no longer wished her to be present. The Chair reflected that such situations can be unpredictable, rapidly changing, and emotionally difficult. He also noted that

despite these challenges, the congregation continues to enjoy many strong and healthy tenant relationships, underscoring the need for balanced, clearly articulated policy.

A representative of a church program shared that, while incidents involving concerning individuals have decreased, volunteers occasionally face difficult situations when staff are not on-site. Having multiple contact numbers available would be helpful in those moments, especially when a staff person is not immediately reachable.

Another board member observed that the policy framework is helpful and mirrors resources used in community organizations, such as “survivor kits” employed in shelters and food banks. Making similar tools available in key areas of the building could support volunteers in guiding individuals toward appropriate services.

The Minister offered a concern that the current policy language moves too quickly toward requiring individuals to leave the premises. In many circumstances, individuals can remain peacefully, and compassionate engagement can be effective. The Chair acknowledged this but noted that the recent incident prompting the discussion was of a different nature, involving a person in a tent, seemingly in distress and non-responsive. In that situation, the usual compassionate approach was not possible due to concerns for both safety and privacy.

The board then discussed emergency response options. The Chair confirmed that paramedics were called during the incident; however, because the individual declined assistance, paramedics could not intervene. The non-emergency police line was contacted as well. Another board member asked about the possibility of social-service responders. It was noted that a crisis de-escalation team exists but now operates with reduced staffing, making it difficult to rely on in urgent situations due to long response times.

The board reflected on the importance of implementation, with one member noting that Appendix F, relating to the Unhoused Care Policy, remains strong and includes provisions for ongoing training. An annual meeting of staff and key volunteers was proposed as a practical first step toward implementation—an opportunity to review the policy, share experiences, update contact numbers, and reinforce shared understanding.

Another board member noted that trauma-informed trainers remain available to the congregation and had previously worked with the church. Scenario-based training and role-play were suggested as effective means of preparing volunteers for varied situations. The Minister added that the implementation plan should include guidance on assessing situations before taking action, helping volunteers discern when to set boundaries and when compassionate presence is appropriate.

The Chair agreed to discuss next steps with another board member, with additional support offered by a third member as the implementation planning begins.

- **Disaster Preparation and Response Policy (earthquake, floor and fire)**

A question was raised regarding whether the congregation currently has a formal Disaster Preparation and Response Policy covering events such as earthquakes, floods, and fires. It was noted that a comprehensive building safety plan does exist, and disaster response is presumed to be part of that broader framework. Further investigation will be required to confirm the details, including identifying who prepared the safety plan completed in 2020 and later revised in 2022.

Several board members recalled past discussions and former committee members who may have contributed to earlier versions of the policy, though records of authorship appear incomplete. The board also discussed the broader question of where church policies are stored, noting that some exist electronically, some in paper form, and that a central, consistent repository would be helpful.

There is a policy and procedure manual in the minister's office, and work is underway to compile and organize policies, including indexing and numbering, but further consolidation is needed.

It was observed that even when strong policies exist, they are only effective if readily accessible during moments of need. Ensuring that disaster-related policies can be located quickly was identified as a priority.

The Board Chair concluded by noting that the relevant members will follow up to confirm the status and location of the current disaster-preparedness materials.

- **Thrift Shop volunteers' celebration**

The board received an update on plans for the upcoming celebration honouring the Thrift Shop volunteers. It was noted that two members of the congregation have generously offered to provide the food for the gathering. Prior to the pandemic, volunteers routinely gathered around a shared meal—often soup—and this tradition was warmly remembered.

One member remarked on how meaningful it had been in the past to sit together over a bowl of soup, enjoying one another's company without anyone needing to break away to serve or attend to other tasks. Several soup options were suggested for the event, including mulligatawny, beef barley, and a Mexican meatball soup.

The board expressed appreciation for the contributions being offered toward the event, as well as for the volunteers whose service is being recognized. It was noted that a member of the communications team will share a few stories during the celebration—lighthearted reflections on “what happens to things that come into the Thrift Shop,” with the understanding that some embellishment may be included for humour.

The celebration is scheduled for December 13. Board members discussed logistics such as setting up tables, arranging tablecloths, and preparing a punch. One board member offered to make the punch, with the Minister offering to “deliver the punch line” during the event. Those providing food indicated they would prefer not to be responsible for dishwashing or cleanup. Communications material will be prepared to promote the gathering.

- **Church and Thrift Shop painting project update**

The board received an update on the status of heritage-related funding and major building projects. It was reported that although progress has been made in the past, support from heritage organizations has diminished significantly, which reflects a broader trend occurring across the city. Many heritage projects are currently stalled, and repeated attempts to contact the relevant funding representatives have gone unanswered. As a result, it appears increasingly likely that the congregation will need to undertake its own fundraising initiative, possibly spread over two years.

The estimated cost of repainting the exterior has now risen to approximately \$100,000, and may increase further. At the same time, the congregation faces substantial additional capital needs, notably the aging furnaces and the overall energy-efficiency envelope of the building. Efforts continue to identify grants or subsidies for electrical upgrades and heating transitions. However, the exterior paint is becoming a more urgent concern: the building is visibly shedding paint, raising the risk of damage to the structure. It was noted that repainting will likely be required within the next 24 months.

The discussion then turned to the heating system. The congregation currently relies on furnaces installed in 1992, when the main floor was raised and renovated; these units are nearing the end of their service life. There is a real possibility that one of the two furnaces could fail. The long-term intention is to transition away from natural gas and move to heat pumps. However, if a furnace fails before preparations are complete, the only immediate option would be to install another gas

furnace—something the board would prefer to avoid. To prevent this, it is important to act soon. A consultant is assisting with the technical assessment, and a fully costed plan for replacing the furnaces and related components will be presented to the board once all data has been compiled.

On the painting side, materials have already been prepared to allow contractors to bid on the work. Recent bids have been in the range of \$80,000, but projections suggest that next year the cost may be closer to \$100,000. The board acknowledged that while the technical side of these projects is well understood, the challenge lies in determining how best to raise the necessary funds. A major fundraising campaign will likely be required, potentially supplemented by a draw on the Victoria Fund with a long-term replenishment plan.

A board member asked whether national church bodies offer support to congregations facing such significant capital needs, particularly those operating as vital downtown ministries. The board reflected that while this may not be impossible, it is uncertain what assistance might be available. Nevertheless, the sentiment that the congregation plays an important role in the wider church landscape was strongly affirmed.

Another member emphasized that the congregation must look at its capital needs comprehensively rather than piecemeal. When considering deferred sewage work, heating replacement, painting, and electrical upgrades, the total investment required could approach \$400,000. Framing the work as a single, multi-year project—similar to taking out a mortgage—could allow the congregation to plan responsibly and avoid stop-gap measures. The concern was expressed that partial or incremental repairs risk wasting resources and failing to address the overall infrastructure needs of the building.

The board discussed the possibility of coordinating these projects under a single contractor or through a structured five-year plan. It was suggested that forming a dedicated sub-committee would help manage the scope and sequencing of the work effectively. The discussion also touched on additional building systems, including sewage connections and fire and security alarms. It was noted that quotes received to date vary significantly and may reflect provider sales agendas rather than objective assessments. An independent evaluation—ideally from a specialist without a commercial interest in selling a particular system—may be needed to ensure clarity before seeking competitive bids.

The board also considered smaller but immediate measures, such as installing programmable thermostats with lockable settings to prevent unnecessary heating when areas of the building are unused.

In closing, the board acknowledged the seriousness of the long-term capital challenges and affirmed the need for coordinated planning, responsible fundraising, and community engagement to preserve the heritage building and support the congregation's ongoing ministry.

- **2026 Board succession planning (retention and recruitment)**

A brief update was provided on ongoing succession planning efforts. Work has been underway to assess which current board members intend to continue and which may be stepping down in the coming year. As the meeting was nearing its scheduled end time, the Chair proposed tabling the discussion and returning to it at the next board meeting.

The board was encouraged to reflect on potential new members who might be invited to serve and to consider a more intentional recruitment strategy. Rather than relying on last-minute appointments or the “last person standing,” the goal is to approach succession in an orderly and thoughtful manner. The Chair emphasized that serving on the board is an honour and an important expression of

commitment to the congregation, and that this should be communicated clearly as part of recruitment discussions.

- **New credit card activated**

The board was informed that the church's new credit card is now available and has been returned to its usual location in the office. A question was raised regarding who typically uses the card. It was noted that the card is primarily used for recurring expenses such as the church's Zoom account, as well as occasional purchases related to books, office needs, and other small operational items.

The Chair reported that efforts had been made to obtain a credit card in the church's name alone, but the issuing institution required an individual name to be associated with the account.

A board member then asked about procedures for notifications related to online banking, as they have recently been granted signing authority and access. The Chair explained that notifications would be provided via text message or email and offered to assist in setting up the necessary access. It was also noted that the bank issued a debit card as part of the account setup.

- **Trustees - fire and security alarm system, and sewage system** – discussion tabled due to time.

Ministry updates

- **Communications (Gordon)**

An update was provided on the work of the Communications Team. Although no written report was submitted for this meeting, a working document is in progress. The team has increased in capacity, with several volunteers now formally confirming their roles. This has enabled more consistent support for the staff member responsible for communications, and the transition between team members in recent months has gone smoothly. It was noted that paid staff across the church are increasingly aware that a formal communications team exists and can provide coordinated support, which has contributed to greater order and clarity in how communications tasks are being handled.

The communications lead also noted the need to address questions related to cash-handling procedures. These include how funds received on various days are managed, the differing payment processes for facilitators of programs such as community choir versus Tai Chi, and the relationship between informal cash practices and the formal bookkeeping system. There are no concerns or red flags at present, but it was emphasized that clearer systems are needed to ensure transparency and long-term accountability. A more complete mapping of cash flow and documentation is expected to be ready for review in January.

A question was raised about whether this work has involved consultation with the church's bookkeeping service; the communications lead indicated it had not yet but agreed this would be useful. Board members encouraged following up with the bookkeeping provider directly. The board then discussed communications processes related to worship and signage. It was clarified that when members wish to contribute items such as poems for the e-newsletter, these can be submitted directly to the communications staff via the established process. Regarding outdoor signage—particularly during Advent—it was explained that responsibility for content typically flows through the Worship Team and minister, who coordinate with the individual who manages the physical signage. Communications will intervene on design or visual considerations only when needed.

An update was also provided on the pledge campaign. A request was raised for a QR code option to facilitate donations, particularly for participants in weekday programs. The

communications lead expressed support for this idea and indicated that a durable, posted QR code could be made available. Questions were raised about whether such links should appear on the website and how donation pathways might be simplified. Some board members noted that the current giving page feels overly complex and that a direct link to the online donation platform could make giving easier. Others noted that the existing page contains information that serves specific purposes and that changes should be made thoughtfully, in consultation with those responsible for fundraising and stewardship communications.

The Chair asked the communications lead and the board member responsible for stewardship to meet outside the board meeting to work through these considerations and return with recommendations.

- **Thrift Shop (Marg - See Appendix B)**

A brief report was offered indicating that all relevant information was included in the corresponding appendix, and there was nothing further to add at this time.

- **Fund Development Team (Karen - See Appendix C)**

An update was provided on the stewardship campaign, noting that the fundraising goal has been surpassed. Most details are contained in the written report, but several reflections were highlighted. A recurring theme in donor comments was appreciation for the church's strong sense of community and its commitment to outreach. This was identified as an important affirmation of the congregation's identity and mission.

A spreadsheet of responses has been compiled, and there is an intention to work with the Communications Team to share selected comments from those who consented to have their words used. The campaign initially generated some uncertainty, but contributions and responses began to flow steadily, offering encouragement.

The volume of volunteer commitments was described as particularly striking. Many respondents pledged significant new hours rather than simply continuing previous contributions. Collectively, the new commitments amount to the equivalent of two full-time positions. These offers of service came from diverse interests and abilities across the congregation.

Given this enthusiasm, it was suggested that the church create a clearer, centralized list of volunteer opportunities—both for the upcoming volunteer fair in January and for ongoing reference. A place on the website where individuals can explore roles and indicate their interest would make it easier to connect people with the areas they feel called to support.

It was also suggested that the church consider providing periodic financial updates—possibly in collaboration with the bookkeeping service—so that the congregation has a clearer sense of the church's financial position throughout the year.

The Minister noted that plans are underway to record a video marking the upcoming "Great Shave" event.

- **Library Team (See Appendix D)**

The board considered a recommendation to establish a dedicated budget line for the church library beginning in the coming year. This would allow for clearer tracking of expenses and better support for the ongoing development of the collection. It was further proposed that the library's annual budget be set at \$500, providing sufficient resources for regular acquisitions and maintenance.

It was moved that the James Bay United Church Board:

- **Create a dedicated budget line for the Library for the coming year; and**

- **Increase the Library's annual budget to \$500, enabling manageable tracking of expenses and ongoing collection development. (Margaret/Gordon) Carried.**

- **Community Choir (See Appendix E)**

The board was invited to confirm that they had reviewed and absorbed the background materials provided in advance. With no questions raised, discussion moved to the recommended path forward. The committee advised adopting Scenario 3, which includes increasing contractor fees and undertaking intentional efforts to grow participant numbers. Attendance has been steadily increasing, and the committee expressed confidence that membership could continue to expand given the enthusiasm of current participants.

During discussion, it was noted that the contractor had not expressed concerns but acknowledged that this approach would shift responsibility back to the ministry. While a shortfall is not expected, it was agreed that realistic contingency planning is prudent, and responsibility for any variance must be formally assigned. A request was made to review the Arts Ministry's budget to ensure clarity around available resources. Questions were raised about whether surplus funds remain within the ministry allocation; it was noted that the bookkeeping service will be able to provide guidance. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

The board extended its appreciation to the program's leadership. The communications lead will inform the program coordinator of the board's decisions along with the board's thanks.

It was also noted that the group is expected to perform on January 18 as an expression of gratitude for the shared use of space.

The board then considered three motions:

No. 1: It was moved that the James Bay United Church Board approves an increase of the James Bay Community Chorus Director's fee from \$100 to \$250/week. (Colleen/Margaret) Carried.

No. 2: It was moved that the James Bay United Church Board approves an increase of the Participant Fee from \$100 to \$125 per season, with the Community Chorus' concurrent goal of increasing member participation by 20% with the assistance of our communications team. (Colleen/Margaret) Carried.

No. 3: It was moved that the Arts Ministry budget takes on the responsibility of covering any shortfall for 2026. And that the success and viability of the program be reviewed in the fall of 2026. (Colleen/Scott) Carried.

Other

Indigenous Drum Custodianship Request

The board received a preliminary inquiry regarding the possibility of the church serving as a home for a sacred Indigenous drum. A member reported having spent the day with an Indigenous lawyer who is deeply committed to reconciliation work and is seeking a space to house his powwow drum. He hopes to drum on Saturday afternoons as an ongoing practice of cultural continuity and reconciliation. Given the congregation's engagement with reconciliation efforts, the suggestion was brought forward for the board's consideration. Saturday afternoons are generally quiet in the building, making the proposal potentially feasible.

The board learned that the drum is considered sacred within the Indigenous community. It is a communal drum used in ceremony and shared practice, often accompanied by medicines. The drum is made of buffalo hide, and the drum keeper is Cree from the prairies. Practical needs include a stand on which the drum hangs and a storage bag; beyond this, the immediate question is whether the church is open to exploring the possibility further.

The Chair asked about the specific requirements involved in hosting the drum. In discussion, it was noted that for most of the year the drum would not impede space use, though there may be approximately twelve weeks annually when alternative arrangements would need to be made. These considerations would need to be clearly addressed in conversation with the drum keeper and appropriate church contacts.

Another board member shared a personal connection: a family member in Vancouver, also prairie Cree, is training as a sacred drum keeper. This member expressed appreciation for the visual and spiritual presence such a drum could bring to the space and offered to help facilitate a preliminary conversation.

The Minister noted that receiving such a request should be regarded as an honour, particularly in light of the powerful experiences shared during recent reconciliation-related gatherings.

Action: The board agreed that the member who brought the request forward will connect the drum keeper with another board member to begin an exploratory conversation.

Human Resources (M&P) (Andre)

[The board entered an in camera session to receive staffing-related updates. Discussion was held and guidance provided as appropriate.]

[The board resumed in public.]

Closing Prayer: Colleen

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

APPENDIX A

James Bay United Church | Board Report

Minister's Report - November 2025

Here is some of what's been capturing my attention:

1. Advent is here! Yikes—Look ready! Our complement of services and activities looks much like last year's.
2. As the Fund Development Committee, we thought our original pledge goal was ambitious, so we bumped it a little higher. And then we surpassed that! The response was so touching, not least because of the reasons *why* folks give. (Refer to Karen H's report.)
3. The Sunday morning children's program has had several successful weeks, and some without any children. Our discernment continues
4. Youth and young adults' programming remains on my mind. Ela van Sertima and I are still scoping and discerning. More and more, I feel the needs of our young adults and see this as an area of offering for James Bay UC.
5. It's always exciting when folks take the initiative to meet a need in the church. I'm thinking of the Wednesday evening soup and conversation group, but also the games night and so many others. It's a sign of a healthy organization when these things can take shape organically.
6. I have submitted my resignation from the chaplaincy work at William Head Institution. My time there has been rewarding (and it never quite reached its potential). My hope is this allows me to focus more on James Bay UC.

With much gratitude,
Greg

APPENDIX B

James Bay United Church | Board Report

Thrift Shop Report - November 2025

It has been a busy fall at the shop, we've noticed that many new customers are finding us, introducing themselves and that makes us happy. We are grateful for an expanding demographic; the word is out, it's a great place to visit.

As always, donations abound (sometimes overwhelming us, but not for long) our volunteers are expert sorters and manage to send things out in all manner of directions in order that they are put to best use.

We were happy to be a part of the Great Big Open House in the fall, it was fun and our volunteers felt connected and appreciated. Thanks to the organizers of that event.

The leadership team and the sale day cashiers are grateful for the ongoing and cheerful help from Jackie and Scott as we sorted the challenges of our "square" for cashless sales. It makes a huge difference to be able to offer this option for our customers and it's *really* great when it works seamlessly!

We currently have 34 active volunteers, many of whom were able to attend a summer hot dog party. We always have a good time when we get to just be together; eat, chat, relax, tell stories. It's a recipe for great "family time".

Our last day of sales will be December 13 and then we will happily take a break for Christmas before we begin the Great Annual Refresh in early January. Opening day for 2026 will be February 6.

Marg Lunam

APPENDIX C

James Bay United Church | Board Report

Fund Development Team

November 24, 2025

The 2025 Thanksgiving Appeal ran from October 26 through November 9. Unlike the fundraising campaigns of previous years, this year was a pledge campaign - a commitment for planned givings in 2026.

We received 55 pledge card responses (physical and online) from multiple congregations.

We surpassed our initial goal, and the campaign's final total was \$116,987 in tithes and weekly or monthly donations for 2026. Additionally, over 4,059 collective volunteer hours were indicated. Some respondents also agreed to have the giving reflections shared publicly, and we will work with the Communications Team on this.

Of note, the theme of "community" - both in a feeling of belonging to a community as well as James Bay United Church's connections within the community came up in comments and discussions, which really embodies our 2025 guiding theme of "Building Bridges".

For everyone who came down to coffee time during the 3-week campaign, we asked them to think about why people might choose to give to James Bay United Church. They then "voted" by dropping a token (or two) into pre-labelled jars that resonated with them. Below are the top 5 reasons:

1. **Community Belonging:** I am part of a church family at James Bay United Church and want to support our shared life together.
2. **Mission Impact:** James Bay United Church is doing good work in the community and beyond, and my gift makes a difference.
3. **Love for God and Neighbour:** Giving to James Bay United Church is an expression of love and compassion.
4. **Sense of Purpose and Joy:** Giving to James Bay United Church brings me fulfillment, joy, and spiritual growth.
5. **Inspiring Vision:** I believe in James Bay United Church's vision and want to help make it a reality.

A special thank you to Colleen Nichol for her "Why I Give" video, as well as the Communications Team, Candis, and the many congregation leaders who shared our message throughout the community.

Respectfully,
Karen Halliday
Rev. Greg Powell

APPENDIX D

James Bay United Church | Board Report

Library Liaison Report – November 3, 2025

Background

The Library currently operates with an estimated budget of approximately \$70, which is housed within the wider Lifelong Learning budget. While some resource purchases can be supported through other ministry areas (e.g., Worship, Pastoral Care), the existing allocation limits the Library's ability to remain current and visible to the congregation.

Recent Activities

- Ongoing work by Bonnie and others to strengthen the Library's presence and usability.
- Efforts underway to increase congregational awareness, including the addition of eye-catching signage.
- Exploration of adding a comfortable used easy chair to create a more welcoming reading and browsing space.

Rationale for Budget Enhancement

To support growth, visibility, and the regular acquisition of relevant resources, a more appropriate annual allocation is needed. A modest investment—such as the ability to purchase one new book per month, along with small operational expenses—would significantly enhance the Library's role as a congregational resource.

Request to the Board

That the Board:

1. Create a dedicated budget line for the Library for the coming year; and
2. Increase the Library's annual budget to \$500, enabling manageable tracking of expenses and ongoing collection development.

The Library Liaison will maintain accurate records of expenditures and ensure alignment with congregational priorities.

Conclusion

The Library continues to serve as a valuable resource for the congregation, offering thoughtful and spiritually enriching materials. Enhancing its visibility and updating the collection will encourage greater use and engagement. The Liaison welcomes any feedback the Board may wish to provide regarding the Library's future direction.

APPENDIX E

James Bay United Church | James Bay Community Chorus

Dear JBUC Board members,

At our October 16th Board meeting we agreed that Gordon Miller and Colleen Nichol would look at the financial impact (risk-assessment) of updating the remuneration for the Choir Director of the James Bay Community Chorus. The proposal is to raise the Director's remuneration from \$100 to \$250 per rehearsal to bring things more inline with other community choirs in the city.

Please familiarize yourself with this information ahead of the November 20th Board meeting so that we can answer questions and prepare to vote on the Motions below.

Many thanks,
Colleen and Gordon

Background

- 1) When the Community Chorus was initiated in the fall of 2021, there were no fees asked of the participants for 2021 and 2022. All costs were covered by JBUC as part of its Arts Ministry outreach to the community.
- 2) From 2021 through 2025 the choir director has been receiving \$100 per rehearsal.
- 3) In 2023 in order to sustain the program, a suggested participant fee of \$100 for each of its two seasons was set in place.
- 4) The JBCChorus membership has grown from strength to strength as people from the surrounding community are drawn in by its high quality of leadership, engaging choral experience, welcoming nature and its sense of authentic community.

3 Scenarios

Based on (historical and current data) a paying membership of 30 participants for 35 rehearsal weeks (for two choir seasons annually) and raising the Choir director's fee to \$250, you will see in the charts below the potential financial impact of 3 different scenarios:

Scenario ONE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NO CHANGE TO Choir attendance• NO CHANGE TO Participant Fees• INCREASE Director's fees to \$250/week	
Projected 2026 Revenue 30 participants X \$100/season X 2 Seasons	\$6,000.00
Projected 2026 Contractor Fees 35 weeks total at \$250/week	\$8,750.00
Shortfall	-\$2,750.00

Scenario TWO: • NO CHANGE TO Choir attendance • INCREASE Participant fees to \$125 per season • INCREASE Director's fees to \$250/week	
Projected 2026 Revenue 30 participants X \$125/season X 2 Seasons	\$7,500.00
Projected 2026 Contractor Fees 35 weeks total at \$250/week	\$8,750.00
Shortfall	-\$1,250.00

Scenario THREE: • Advertise and promote the choir to increase participation by 20% (+6 new members) • INCREASE Participant Fees to \$125 per season • INCREASE Director's fees to \$250/week	
Projected 2026 Revenue 36 participants X \$125/season X 2 Seasons	\$9,000.00
Projected 2026 Contractor Fees 35 weeks total at \$250/week	\$8,750.00
Projected Potential profit	\$250

Gordon and I are recommending that we pursue Scenario THREE. And as such, offer the following 3 motions:

MOTION #1: That the James Bay United Church Board approves an increase of the James Bay Community Chorus Director's fee from \$100 to \$250/week.

MOTION #2: That the James Bay United Church Board approves an increase of the Participant Fee from \$100 to \$125 per season, with the Community Chorus' concurrent goal of increasing member participation by 20% with the assistance of our communications team.

MOTION #3: That the Arts Ministry budget takes on the responsibility of covering any shortfall for 2026. And that the success and viability of the program be reviewed in the fall of 2026.

APPENDIX F

James Bay United Church | Board Report

Compassionate Response Policy for Unhoused Persons

Board Presentation – Draft

Responding to Unhoused Persons with Compassion & Practical Safety

Purpose: Review the draft policy and recommended actions.

Why a Policy Is Needed

The issue is growing across James Bay. We need clarity so people feel safe and supported, and so we respond with dignity and consistency.

- Increasing presence of unhoused persons on JBUC property
- Safety concerns for congregation, staff, volunteers, and unhoused individuals
- Complex situations involving mental health, substance use, and crisis behaviour
- Congregants often unsure what to do
- Need consistency and predictable responses
- Desire to remain compassionate while protecting people and property

Core Values

This approach aligns with the United Church's commitments while ensuring safety is never compromised.

- Compassion & dignity
- Pragmatism – we acknowledge our limitations
- Non-violence & de-escalation
- Trauma-informed understanding
- Safety First – for everyone
- Collaboration with expert agencies

What the Policy Covers

This gives us a predictable, practical operating framework.

- When congregants may approach someone
- When congregants must not engage
- When to call 911, police, fire, or ambulance
- Partner agencies to contact
- Safety protocols for volunteers and staff
- Options for a trained volunteer response team

- Recommendations for training
- Property stewardship measures

When It's Safe to Approach

The goal is not enforcement—it's respectful presence and gentle redirection if needed.

- Congregants may approach A PERSON ONLY IF:
- They feel safe
- Person is calm
- No drug use occurring
- No threatening behaviour
- No visible weapons
- Interaction can be brief and respectful
- Always in pairs

“Hello, I’m with the church. Are you doing alright?
How can we help, and how can we keep the space safe for everyone?”

When Not to Approach

These situations require expert response. Congregants should step back immediately.

Do NOT engage if:

- Active drug use
- Intoxication or unpredictable behaviour
- Aggression or threats
- Delusional or mental health crisis
- Weapons visible
- Overdose suspected
- Fire hazards
- Major property damage
- Large encampments or debris fields

Emergency Decision Tree

Clear thresholds help prevent hesitation or unsafe involvement.

Call 911 for:

- Suspected overdose
- Unconscious or medical crisis
- Violence or immediate danger
- Fire or open flames
- Person in extreme distress
- Call Victoria Police (Non-Emergency):

- Trespassing/refusal to move from entrance
- Vandalism not currently violent
- Repeated problematic behaviours

Community Partners

Partnership is crucial—these teams are trained to help in ways we cannot.

JBUC will collaborate with:

- Our Place Outreach
- Cool Aid Society
- AVI Health / PHS
- Island Health Street Teams
- Victoria PD Community Liaison
- CRD Bylaw Services

Used for:

- De-escalation support
- Referral to services
- Advice on repeated issues
- Safe needle removal
- Mental health outreach

Safety Measures for Congregation

This keeps volunteers confident and prevents unnecessary risk.

- Never approach alone
- Keep public interactions short
- Maintain visibility; avoid enclosed or hidden areas
- Keep church doors locked unless monitored
- Incident logbook for patterns
- Clear Sunday morning protocols
- PPE for volunteers (gloves, naloxone if trained)

Property Stewardship

- These measures help reduce overnight sheltering and improve safety without being punitive.
- Improve lighting
- Remove concealed spaces inviting shelter
- Compassionate signage
- Consider security cameras (privacy compliant)
- Maintain sharps containers
- Clean-up procedures with trained personnel

Training Recommendations

Training empowers us and reduces risk.

Annual or semi-annual training from:

- Our Place Society
- AVI/PHS (Naloxone, overdose response)
- Victoria PD (de-escalation)
- Island Health MHSU teams (crisis response)

Topics:

- Trauma-informed communication
- Safe conflict de-escalation
- Overdose recognition
- Mental health crisis indicators

Volunteer Response Team (Recommended)

Creating a dedicated team prevents well-intended but untrained people from unsafe involvement.

A small, trained team (6–10 people) responsible for:

- Primary engagements with unhoused persons
- Coordinating with police and outreach teams
- Handling incident response
- Supporting Sunday volunteers
- Maintaining safety equipment and logs

Benefits:

- Consistency
- Reduced burden on general congregation
- Higher level of safety
- Stronger relationships with outreach teams

Pastoral Care Boundaries

Clear boundaries protect both the minister and individuals receiving care.

The ministry may offer pastoral presence but does not:

- Provide ongoing counselling
- Give rides
- Enter encampments
- Transport people in personal vehicles
- Offer cash or personal resources

Implementation Timeline

Phase 1 – Immediate (0–1 month):

- Approve policy
- Distribute quick-reference sheets
- Begin incident log

Phase 2 – Short-Term (1–3 months):

- Meet with Our Place & AVI to establish partnership
- Recruit Response Team volunteers
- Schedule training sessions

Phase 3 – Medium Term (3–6 months):

- Install signage and lighting
- Review patterns via logbook
- Adjust procedures as needed

Phase 4 – Annual:

- Policy review and update
- Full team refresher training

Decision Requested from the Board

The Board is asked to:

- Approve the Compassionate Response Policy (with revisions as needed).
- Authorize creation of a Volunteer Response Team.
- Approve pursuing training partnerships with local agencies.
- Approve any minor budget items needed (training materials, PPE, signage, lighting improvements).

Conclusion

This policy strengthens our ability to:

- Protect the safety of congregants
- Treat unhoused individuals with dignity
- Support realistic and sustainable action
- Fulfill our mission as a compassionate community church

Questions & Discussion

APPENDIX G

James Bay United Church

Rental Tenant Access & Use Policy

Purpose

James Bay United Church (“the Church”) welcomes a wide range of community groups to use its property, facilities, and equipment. This policy outlines the expectations and responsibilities of all rental tenants to ensure that the building remains safe, clean, and accessible for all users and for the ministries of the Church.

1. General Expectations

- 1.1 All rental tenants must sign a Rental Agreement that includes fees, designated times of access, and acceptance of this Rental Tenant Access & Use Policy.
- 1.2 All tenants agree to use the facilities in a responsible, respectful manner consistent with the values of James Bay United Church.

2. Access to the Building

- 2.1 Tenants may enter and depart the building only within the specific times stated in their rental contract.
- 2.2 No member of a tenant group may enter the Church or begin setup before the designated rental time.
- 2.3 One person from each tenant group will be designated as the Key Holder.
 - This person is the only individual authorized to hold a Church key.
 - Keys must not be copied, shared, or transferred to any other person.

2.4 Key Holders must ensure that, upon departure:

- All exterior doors are securely locked

- All lights are turned off
- Thermostats are turned down to the posted setting
- Windows and interior doors are properly secured

3. Use of Facilities

3.1 Tenants have access to the bathroom facilities, and are responsible for monitoring the responsible use of these spaces by participants.

3.2 Tenants must leave the portion of the building they use clean and tidy, including:

- Tables and chairs returned to their original configuration
- Floors free of debris or spills
- Garbage placed in appropriate bins

3.3 If the kitchen is used:

- All dishes must be washed, dried, and put away
- Countertops and equipment cleaned
- The gas stove must be turned off
- The serving hatch must be closed, and the kitchen door locked

3.4 Tenants must report any damage, malfunctioning equipment, or safety concerns immediately to the Church office or Property Team.

4. Restrictions

4.1 Tenants may not access areas of the building not included in their rental agreement.

4.2 Storage of tenant materials is not permitted unless expressly approved in writing.

4.3 Use of candles, open flames, or hazardous materials is prohibited unless specifically authorized.

4.4 Activities must comply with all applicable laws, noise bylaws, and Church safety protocols.

5. Building Care and Janitorial Services

5.1 The Church will maintain the building in good condition, including janitorial service.

5.2 Tenants are responsible for additional cleaning charges if their use results in conditions beyond normal use.

5.3 Any damage caused during the rental period will be repaired at the tenant's cost.

6. Compliance

6.1 Failure to comply with this policy or the terms of the rental agreement may result in:

- Additional fees
- Revocation of rental privileges
- Loss of key access

6.2 James Bay United Church reserves the right to update or amend this policy as required.