

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

January 2, 2024

Elders Present: Linda Benson, Margaretha Derasary, Mike Forbes, Gretchen Garlinghouse, Cindy Gullikson, Helen Hutchison, Sari Kulberg, Leslie Louie, Jean Roggenkamp, Linda Spencer, Allen Spore, May Tong.

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel, Katie Kilby

Others Present: Suzanne Jones

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order. Gretchen Garlinghouse offered the opening prayer. This was a hybrid ZOOM meeting.

- **MSP** to elect Linda Spencer as Clerk Pro Tem.

The next regular session meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024. The next Presbytery meeting takes place online on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024. Session approved the Port Chicago 50 Resolution by email vote on that on Dec. 6. February annual evaluations are Celebration; Children & Youth; B & G; Nominations; Beacons.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of Nov. 7, 2023, stated Session meeting, as amended.
- **MSP** to approve minutes of Nov. 19, 2023, congregational meeting.
- **MSP** to hold a congregational meeting to elect new session elders on February 25th, 2024.

The proposed 2024 Communion schedule is as follows: Communion shall be performed once a month during Sunday Celebration; at family camp; at church retreats; at Christmas Eve, Easter and Maundy Thursday services; and upon request for hospital and home visits.

- **MSP** to approve the 2024 communion schedule; to authorize baptisms for those presented for baptism during Celebration services; to authorize Youth Group fundraisers, and to authorize email votes on matters needing immediate attention that arise between session meetings.

MPC electrification projects report. Suzanne Jones gave an update on the electrical panels' upgrade for the rental house and the office. Suzanne stated that in the unlikely event of a surge, these buildings would not be protected. She reported that additional bids have been received. Rental house and office upgrades are expected to run between \$4,500 and \$4,000, respectively. This is just for the panels, not the appliances. Allen Spore reported that Finance Committee has authorized this expenditure with the understanding that the fundraising goal for this year is \$20k. However, Allen, recommends checking in again in February when after the quarterly finance report will be provided to Session. Suzanne is concerned that delaying action will make it harder to contract with an electrician.

- **MSP:** Suzanne Jones is authorized to enter into a contract with an electrician; Session will confirm the source of funds in February.

B&G update. Ben provided the report by sharing an email from Noël. \$4k is remaining in the 23/24 budget. We are working to detect a water leak from an unknown source. Exterior manse painting is on hold until weather permits. Scouts will be doing a garden clean-up project.

Pastoral Care Survey. Katie thanked Helen and May for their work on the survey. Currently, 21 digital and 3 mail-in responses have been received. Ideally, they would like to get 50 responses. The plan is to boost responses with a targeted email and another Celebration announcement.

Peace & Justice. Linda Spencer reported that Betsy King has stepped down the Faith Trio. The committee is looking for a replacement. Betsy is active with the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails, a highly effective organization. Betsy would love to have others at MPC engage with ICJJ. Allen reported that the Adult Ed partnership with PJ has gone well. Sari reported that Giving to the World has raised \$6,785 so far this year.

Earthcare: Jean Roggenkamp reported that Earthcare includes six diverse groups with a range of activities. Food and climate work included creating, revising, and implementing MPC's climate-friendly food policy. Democracy in Action continues to engage a large number of people. Kira Keller is replacing Linnea Gullikson as a co-chair of Democracy in Action. The Electrify MPC group is working to engage more MPC'ers in PG&E's 100% renewable program. Climate spirituality has evolved into hosting Celebration a couple times a year.

Personnel report. Leslie Louie highlighted this year accomplishments including hiring a nursery coordinator and hiring Katie. They hope that children and youth programs will be rejuvenated. The committee is revisiting what their scope should be. One outcome could be recruiting new members. Carrie McKiernan is nearing three years as chair. Leslie acknowledged Carrie's great work. If she steps down, Personnel will need to find a replacement. Gretchen raised a concern regarding the lack of first aid/CPR training at MPC. Leslie suggested that the Health and Safety Team be formed. Ben would like this to be on the Session agenda for discussion next month.

Finance Committee Report. Allen Spore reported the committee's membership as: Cynthia Blumgart, Kathleen Donnell, Brant Nicholas, Al Peters, Allen Spore, and Jerry White. Allen extended accolades to Al Peters and Noël Moritz for their work on MPC finances. Allen suggested that they offer another Budget 101 class for the new session members.

Parish Associate. Ben would like to designate Rev. Keith Geckler as a Parish Associate. Keith is already functioning in this capacity. No action is needed from the Presbytery of SF as this classification is now defunct within the denomination. Historically Parish Associates are retired, ordained pastors who are congregation members. This action can be done at Session's discretion and/or with a congregational vote. Keith's work would include serving communion during Celebration and moderating Session in Ben's absence. Keith currently is serving communion to homebound folks. Ben will confer with Keith about having the congregation approve this designation at the next congregational meeting.

Winter Clothing Drive. Allen Spore reported that the drive far exceeded his expectations. MPC responded generously to the appeal. Allen would like to develop a longer-term relationship with Vincent.

Katie's Inquirer status: Helen Hutchison reported that Katie's inquirer packet has been submitted. Katie thanked Helen and Ben for their support. The next steps will be an interview with the Presbytery followed by a psychological analysis.

Staff Reports. Katie reported that *Eco the Story* curriculum will be started for middle school and upper elementary children. Katie had eight participants in the Weary World, Advent group. She is considering leading other groups like this as there is a need for it. During Lent Ben will be leading a four-session interpretative Bible reading class. Ben will be offering another retreat at Mission San Antonio de Padua over the weekend of May 10th. Ben noted that attendance had been declining at MPC and nationally. However, at MPC attendance during Advent matched pre-pandemic levels. This includes some new people. Ben is very happy about this increase in attendance!

Ben asked for prayer requests and ended the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Spencer
Clerk Pro Tem