

# MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Session Minutes

Sept. 3, 2024

**Elders Present:** Linda Benson, Margaretha Derasary, Gretchen Garlinghouse, Karen Ray Gibson, Rick Heller, Sari Kulberg, Leslie Louie, May Tong

**Elders Abent:** Rob Elia, Jean Roggenkamp, Linda Spencer, Jerry White

**Others Present:** Rev, Keith Geckeler

**Clerks Report:** Rev. Keith Geckeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. This was a hybrid ZOOM meeting. Rick Heller offered the opening reflection.

The next Presbytery meeting takes place in person on Tuesday, Nov. 12. Session meets again on Oct. 1.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the July 30, 2024 stated session meeting.
- **MSP** to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2024 congregational meeting.

**Buildings & Grounds Update:** Noel Moritz reported that the bathroom fixtures in the Thornhill Room have been upgraded to LED's.

Noel laid out the two options for repairing the Grisborne entrance and wall of the Ed. Building; demo the wall and replace it with a security fence, or rebuild the wall. She has gotten bids from Esteban Vallegas for the two options. The fence option, plus all the adjustments that would have to be made (e.g., rerouting the alarm system, electrical rewiring, new hardware for the doors) would add up to approximately \$26,500 - \$31,000. Rebuilding the wall would come in at approximately \$30,500 to \$33,000. The fence option opens up licensing and space issues for Smiles. MPC would have to find alternative space for what would be lost by eliminating the closed-in porch.

- **MSP** to move forward with rebuilding the wall at an expense of between \$30,500 - \$33,000, subject to Rick Heller's conversation with Ben about this option. The start date would be in about a month.

Noel noted that Yanan Lu and Yuexiao Zhang from Berkeley Mission Homes have been attending Celebration and helping out in the Family Room from time to time. She proposed giving them a weekly grant to help with their rent.

- Subject to discussion with Berkeley Mission Homes, **MSP** to grant Yanan Lu and Yuexiao Zhang a \$100 week grant for one year to help with their rent.

**Sustainability Report:** Finance Committee liaison Rick Heller reported that MPC has a structural deficit of around \$40,000. The deficit is growing and next year it will probably reach \$60,000. B & G expenses, salary increases and inflation collide with some decrease in gifts to produce the deficit. We have working capital of \$150,000, and \$175,000 in the Legacy Fund. Rick proposes bringing together the Sustainability Task Force again and return to session in several months with recommendations. Potential members, in addition to Al Peters and Rick: Jerry White (Membership & Outreach liaison); Cynthia Blumgart (Stewardship chair) and a representative from Personnel Committee. Susanne Lea will contact Jerry and Cynthia; Leslie Louie will work on securing a representative from Personnel.

- **By consensus**, it was agreed to proceed with re-convening the Sustainability Task Force as described above.

**Beacons Brainstorm:** Beacons co-chair Karen Ray Gibson raised the question: has the Beacons program run its course? Do we need to try a different approach? Only a few Beacons showed up at the last meeting and it is hard to find replacement Beacons. Participation of Beacons and Beacon social activities are down. Karen noted that in the past folks have loved the Extended Family and dinner group models. Currently, affinity groups such as the sewing group are popular.

The Beacon's role includes organizing social activities, community building, providing some emergency services, e.g., rides and meals, and serving as a liaison/referral source for pastoral care. It does NOT include providing pastoral care.

Future discussion: share the Beacons mission statement; define what are emergency services.

Keith closed with prayer at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea, Clerk of Session