

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

January 7, 2025

Elders Present: Linda Benson; Margaretha Derasary; Gretchen Garlinghouse; Karen Ray Gibson; Rick Heller; Sari Kulberg; Leslie Louie; Jean Roggenkamp; Linda Spencer; May Tong; Jerry White

Elders Absent: Rob Elia

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Others Present: Jan Smith

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Jerry White offered the opening reflection. The next regular session meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025. Presbytery meets in person on February 11.

Clerk of Session Susanne Lea reminded elders to sign up for annual committee evaluations. The audit letter was received into the minutes.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the Nov. 19, 2024 stated Session meeting.
- **MSP** to approve minutes of the Nov. 24, 2024 congregational meeting.
- **MSP** to set March 2, 2025 as the date for the congregational meeting to elect the new class of session elders.

New Active Member: Session met with Jan Smith to welcome her back to active membership status. Session members introduced themselves and explained their various roles; Jan related her church and faith background.

Mission for the Homeless: Allen Spore reported that the winter clothing drive for Mission for the Homeless (MFH) was a huge success! A sustainable annual budget would run around \$175,000 to \$200,000. The \$50,000 grant from SF Presbytery was a big help. But the major donor is looking to reduce her donations by 50%. The biggest expense is housing for very vulnerable unhoused persons. Beginning in 2022, MFH began renting two, three-bedroom homes plus some single occupancy spaces. MFH now houses 9 persons, for about \$12,000/month. Allen is attempting to find housing for several folks with St. Mary's and Bay Area Community Services.

Buildings & Grounds: Susanne explained that in exchange for allowing Friends of Sausal Creek to use our facilities for meetings, the nonprofit gives us California native plants from their nursery. Our Weeding Pals recently planted blue eyed grass, CA fuchsia, alum root, evergreen currant, bee balm and thimbleberry.

Annual Evaluations

- Jean Roggenkamp, liaison to **Earthcare Committee**, delivered the attached annual evaluation. As highlighted therein, the committee is making great progress on their Climate Call Implementation Goals. Notably, the democracy and politics team completed more than 31,200 actions before the election.

- May Tong, liaison to **Adult Education Committee**, shared the appended annual evaluation. This past year, the committee has hosted well-received classes focussed on politics and religion (e.g., interpretive Bible reading, nature of the trinity),

Personnel Committee: Leslie Louie, Personnel Committee liaison, informed session that MPC has not been meeting the state minimum wage requirements concerning Katie Kilby's salary. Labor Code section 515 mandates that exempt employees such as Katie must earn at least two times the hourly minimum wage rate at 40 hours per week. To date, the shortfall is \$3,321. Per Personnel Committee's recommendation:

MSP to make a one-time payment to Katie of \$3,321 plus interest (Finance Committee to determine the proper statutory interest rate), to amend the salary shortfall. Going forward, Katie's current salary must be increased from \$65,200 to \$68,240 beginning January 2025.

Reflection: Session members were invited to reflect on the direction of the church in light of the recent election season and outcome. Worship attendance, Bible Study and the Grief Group have been well attended, and there was a strong response to the MFH clothing drive. New folks have consistently been showing up at Celebration, and a few younger folks have participated in choir. Jean Roggenkamp indicated that interest in the women's retreat keeps growing, as it is acknowledged as a nurturing event. Attendance at Godly Play has been "good," but youth group attendance is challenging. Following the incredible efforts of our community to salvage democracy, Susanne has observed a reluctance of folks to step into leadership roles and actions, while simultaneously seeking experiences that nurture, feed and provide community. Given all this, Ben floated the idea of a leadership retreat this year. Joseph, who helped lead the last retreat, should be available. Karen Ray Gibson and Sarei Kulberg volunteered to assist with retreat planning.

Staff Reports: Ben and Katie gave brief staff reports and Ben closed with prayer at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session