

# MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Session Minutes

Nov. 19, 2024

**Elders Present:** Linda Benson;Margaretha Derasary; Rob Elia; Gretchen Garlinghouse; Karen Ray Gibson; Rick Heller; Sari Kulberg; Jean Roggenkamp; Linda Spencer; Jerry White

**Elders Absent:** Leslie Louie; May Tong

**Staff Present:** Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

**Clerks Report:** Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Linda Benson offered the opening prayer.

There will be a congregation meeting this coming Sunday, November 24, immediately following Celebration for the purposes of (1) electing members to the church Nominating Committee; and (2) receiving the audit report from the church auditor.

There will be no session meeting in December. The next regular session meeting is Tuesday, January 7, 2025!

Clerk of Session Susanne Lea reminded elders to sign up for annual committee evaluations.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of Oct. 1, 2024 stated Session meeting..
- **MSP** to approve Form 5B for Katie Kilby, namely, Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate (attached).

**B&G update.** Ben reported that MPC consulted with an engineer about the Ed Building situation. The engineer produced a list of things that should be accomplished in order to rebuild the wall. The additional cost of these items is in the neighborhood of \$10,000. We have not yet had a conversation with Smiles about this development.

**Nominating Committee Report:** Nominating Committee Chair Sari Kulberg informed session that the Personnel Committee might split the duties of the chair such that Carrie McKiernan (current chair) would continue to work with staff evaluation and needs while another of the committee would attend to legal and administrative matters. There is a possible replacement for the chair of Membership and Outreach. Katie has a possible candidate in mind for the Children and Youth Committee.

**Finance Committee:** Finance Committee Liaison Rick Heller presented the attached quarterly financial report for session's review. He indicated there was nothing to comment on at this time.

**Beacons Annual Evaluation:** Liaison Margaretha Derasary went over the annual evaluation of the Beacons program with session. (Attached.) Discussion hit on several important aspects of the program: primary job of a Beacon is to communicate care needs to staff and the newly-forming pastoral care team; pastoral care is not a task of the Beacons; Beacons no longer plan social activities for their region; the program is still regional in terms of communication and sharing information and referrals. A new mission statement is in the works.

**Youth Group:** Katie updated session on the newly-formed ecumenical youth group.

**Staff Reports:** Ben is co-moderator of SF Presbytery and as such attended training in Louisville. He is also a member of the Presbytery's Permanent Judicial Commission, which may be heating up. Kattie is on the path to becoming a Candidate for ordained ministry.

Ben closed with prayer at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea  
Clerk of Session

**Celebration Innovation:** The Celebration Innovation Team presented the attached report and update. Cindy Gullikson and Steve McKiernan have been leading this task force since April, 2023. They report that renewal has been happening, with an expanded approach to music and other aspects identified in the report. The recommendation is to move from a task force to a permanent committee that would emphasize Celebration innovation during its first year, but thereafter look more broadly at innovation and sustainability. This new committee would have a session liaison who would be selected at the April session meeting. Art Paull's concerns as expressed in his letter to session (attached) were acknowledged.

- **MSP** to create a new, permanent Innovation Committee with a session liaison.

#### **Annual Evaluations**

- **Beacons:** Margaretha presented the Beacon evaluation (attached). The process for maintaining each Beacon membership list needs to be streamlined. Susanne will ask Debbie Fallehy (she maintains our membership roster) to notify the Beacon co-chairs when someone moves, disengages, dies or joins the congregation.
- **Adult Ed:** May Tom delivered the Adult Ed evaluation (attached). Several years ago the committee developed an outstanding Purpose Statement that guides its work. This year's classes focussing on Oakland issues was very well received and attended.

- **Celebration Committee:** See attached report. Liaison Cindy Gullikson noted that the committee needs help from younger folks in decorating the church. As well, the “locking up the grounds” process is a “little loose” and needs to be formalized.
- **Children & Youth Committee:** This committee did not meet in 2023 and has not formally met since Talitha left. Now that Katie Kilby is on board to staff the committee, Liaison Linda Benson explained that it is expected that the committee will be reconstituted. 2023 Successes:
  1. We hired Katie, who oversees the Children & Youth program,.
  2. We recently hired Rashno Rszmkhah as Nursery Coordinator.
  3. Godly Play is an exceptionally strong program run by Katherine Palmer-Collins.
  4. Katie has introduced Echo the Story, a new program dedicated to late elementary and middle schools. The inaugural class on Jan. 7 went very well.
- **Nominating Committee:** Liaison Sari Kulberg set forth the mission of the committee and announced that we have four confirmed members to join the next session class!

**Personnel:** Liaison Leslie Louie proposed amendments to the Employee Handbook, per the attached memo.

- **MSP** to approve the proposed amendments to the Employee Handbook.

**Finance Committee:** Liaison Allen Spore presented the financial statements for the endowment trust fund, reporting that we received a 6% increase this year. The investments are handled by the Synod. Finance Committee Rob Elia will review the nature of the investments. As for the six months MPC financials, we are tracking pretty well on contributions. We are going to end up in a deficit situation with respect to B & G expenses for this fiscal year. The committee will review restricted funds to ascertain if any can be freed up for B & G.

- **MSP** to receive the financial reports.

**Auction:** Leslie asked session members to donate money or a good bottle of wine for an auction wine basket.

**Wildchoir Concert:** Wildchoir will be hosting a concert on March 1 to benefit the Palestinian people. Leslie inquired if the group could use or rent space at MPC. Following discussion,

- **By consensus**, it was agreed that we could offer to rent space to Wildchoir for this concert.

**Parish Associate:** Ben proposed that we confer on Rev. Keith Geckeler the title and role of Parish Associate, per the attached agreement.

- **MSP** to approve appointing Keith Geckeler as a Parish Associate.

**Health and Safety Team:** Ben raised the need for a Health and Safety Task Force to review safety protocols and provide training for ushers. Several potential members were suggested: Suzanne Frew (Leslie will contact); Shelly Stafford (Linda Spencer will contact); and Dave Henderson. Ben will be part of the team; Leslie volunteered as well.

- **MSP** to establish a Health and Safety Task Force.

**Staff Reports:** Ben is going to Iona in May for his study leave. Katie attended Godly Play training.

Ben closed with prayer at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea  
Clerk of Session