

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

February 4, 2025

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

Elders Absent: Gretchen Garlinghouse, May Tong

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Others Present: Pat Schwinn

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Sari Kulberg offered the opening reflection. Session meets again on Tuesday, Mar. 4, 2025.

Presbytery meets in person on February 11. There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, March 2 to elect the new class of session elders and to replace Leslie Louie, who will be leaving one year early to co-chair Personnel Committee.

Clerk of Session Susanne Lea pointed out the annual evaluation schedule. Jan Smith's thank you letter was received into the minutes.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the Jan. 7, 2025 stated Session meeting.
- **MSP** to approve the 2024 statistical report.

The proposed 2025 Communion schedule is as follows: Communion shall be performed once a month during Sunday Celebration; at family camp; at church retreats; at Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday and Easter services; and upon request for hospital and home visits.

- **MSP** to approve the 2025 communion schedule; to authorize baptisms for those presented for baptism during Celebration services; to authorize Youth Group fundraisers, including a pancake breakfast and BBQ; and to authorize email votes on matters needing immediate attention that arise between session meetings.

Meeting with prospective new member: Session met with Anna Marie Nilsson about formally joining MPC. Session members introduced themselves and explained their various roles; Jan related her church and faith background.

- **MSP** to accept Anna Marie Nilsson as a member of Montclair Presbyterian Church.

Electrification Update: Suzanne Jones reported that someone outside the church gave MPC a windfall donation for the electrification work. We now have funding to replace the gas stove in the rental unit with an induction stove. Still to be accomplished: changing the furnace and water heater in the rental. We have purchased a new electric heat pump/clothes dryer for the manse as well as a new washing machine.

Report on Response to Trump Administration: Suzanne and Art Paull alerted Session that the Earthcare Committee and PJSC will be bringing forth recommendations to session regarding climate and immigration, respectively.

Finance Committee Report: The quarterly financial statements were received into the minutes. Finance Com. Liaison Rick Heller informed session that we are "on budget" with respect to the

financials, but continue to face a structural deficit, which today is in the neighborhood of \$60,000. To realistically gauge sustainability, we need five year projections from personnel, B & CindG and stewardship.

B & G Update: Ben revisited the Ed Bldg. dilemma: rebuild the wall or tear it down and put up some type of fencing. We consulted an engineer to draw up plans, hoping to avoid permits. Ben explained that reverting to a porch and not enclosing the space saves us \$3 - \$4K, but we have to figure out how to meet the needs of Smiles with that solution. Smiles prefers the wall solution. The engineers we have consulted with now inform us that both options would require a permit. A permit would add about \$7,000 to the overall cost and delay the project by 4 - 5 months.

- **MSP** to proceed with permitting the Ed. Building wall project, maintain it as an enclosed hallway or porch, and contact Smiles about cost-sharing the differential between a fence and wall.

Children & Youth Com. Request: Cindy Gullikson for the C & Y Committee requested that Godly Play Teacher Patricia Palmer-Collins be allocated additional paid hours through June 30, 2025 to attend and collaborate on Youth Group gatherings.

- **MSP** that up to \$800 be reallocated from the Nursery Coordinator budget to the Godly Play Teacher budget as needed to fund up to six additional hours per month for Katherine Porter-Collins to support Youth Group programming from now until the end of the fiscal year.

Innovation Committee: Cindy reported that the new Innovation Committee will meet on March 23 after Celebration.

Annual Evaluations

1. **Peace & Justice Committee:** Liaison Linda Spencer shared the attached Peace & Justice Committee evaluation, noting that it is a small committee with a large remit, and Eloise Gilland, its chair, would like to step down but no replacement has been found.
2. **Children & Youth Committee:** Liaison Linda Benson presented the appended report, highlighting the restarting of youth programming, the presence of a strong Godly Play program and the successful Christmas and epiphany pageants. We continue to struggle with finding a Nursery Coordinator.
3. **Buildings & Grounds:** Susanne delivered the annual report (attached), commending Noel Moritz for her excellent oversight and the Weeding Pals for their faithful work, and acknowledging the brisk business we are conducting with short term rentals of campus spaces.
4. **Personnel Committee:** Liaison Leslie Louie shared the Personnel Committee evaluation, noting that the committee has updated the Employee Handbook, and that she will begin co-chairing the committee as "project manager."
5. **Personnel Committee:** Chair Sari Kulberg presented the attached annual evaluation. We have a full complement of nominees for the next class of elders

Sanctuary Church: Ben reviewed MPC's history as a sanctuary church. We were declared a sanctuary church in 1972, providing physical sanctuary for someone during the Vietnam War period. In the 1980's we rented a house for immigrants from Guatemala and El Salvador. Now it appears that Trump's government is not honoring sanctuary in churches. Discussion followed about MPC's role as a sanctuary church at this juncture.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session