

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

August 5, 2025

Elders Present: Linda Benson; Margaretha Derasary; Rob Elia; Tara Flanagan; Karen Ray Gibson; Eloise Gilland; Rick Heller; Allen Spore; Pat Schwinn; Brenda Steinmetz-Vallenas

Elders Absent: Sari Kulberg, Jerry White

Others Present: Al Peters

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.; Margaretha Derasary gave the opening reflection.

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, August 17 for the purposes of approving Rev. Ben Daniels terms of call and ratifying the 2025-2026 budget. Session meets again on Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2025. Presbytery meets in person on August 12.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the July 1, 2025 stated session meeting.

Membership and Outreach: Membership and Outreach co-chair Steve McKiernan presented a proposal for ongoing website and social media management, for \$700 month. Following discussion, it was agreed that Steve would return next month with a pared-down proposal focussing on website design and management.

Democracy Team: Members of the Democracy Team - Art Paull, Susan ten-Bosch Paull and Betsy King - brought forth the attached Declarations and Draft MPC Actions for Democracy. The idea is for session to approve these items, and then bring them to a congregational meeting for congregational buy-in and action. Eloise noted that she had not had a chance to review the Declarations. The Team will return next month with refined Declarations and to discuss the MPC Actions.

Closed Session: Session segued to a closed session for discussion of a personal matter with Personnel Co-chair Carrie McKiernan and member Blake Thompson.

Proposed Budget: Finance Chair Al Peters presented the year ending financials and draft 2025-2026 budget (attached). We ended the fiscal year in the black.

- Per Al's proposal, **MSP** to move \$15,000 from FY 2024-2025 to the B & G Repair Fund.
- Following discussion, **MSP** to approve the proposed 2025-2026 budget.

Leadership Retreat: Westminster Woods is available for our retreat Nov. 14-16. The terms are reasonable: five meals, meeting space, standard rooms (\$190/person) and guest house (\$270/person).

Social Justice Declarations: Pat Schwinn proposed that session establish a process for deciding on when/how to respond on a timely basis to social justice declarations.

- **MSP** to empower a commission of session composed of Ben Daniel, Elolse Gilland, Susanne Lea and Pat Schwinn to act on declarations that come to MPC for timely response.

Staff Reports: Katie reported that the Innovation Committee is revitalizing Prayers for the People as an ongoing part of Celebration. The pastoral care team is working on something akin to the former Companions program.

Ben closed with prayer at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea, Clerk of Session