

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

Dec. 2, 2025

Elders Present: Linda Benson; Margaretha Derasary; Rob Elia; Tara Flanagan; Karen Ray Gibson; Eloise Gilland; Rick Heller; Sari Kulberg; Allen Spore; Pat Schwinn

Elders Absent: Jerry White

Others Present: Art Paull; Rev. Mark Smith; Martha Smith

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Ben left shortly thereafter to be with his step mother in hospital. Rev. Mark Smith took over as moderator. Rick Heller offered the opening prayer.

Session meets again on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026. Presbytery meets on Feb. 10, 2026.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the Nov. 4, 2025 stated session meeting.

Outreach Subcommittee of Policy & Democracy Com.: Martha Smith and Art Paull presented pro-democracy messages for various locations/formats, namely the parking lot, as an MPC banner, and for bumper stickers. (See attached.) In crafting these messages, the outreach team considered the following questions: Is the message clear? Does it strike the right balance between positivity and firmness? Is the slogan strongly associated with another movement? Is it true to our beliefs? Ben and Noel will coordinate messages with Smiles.

- **By consensus** session signalled its affirmation of, and support for, the work of the Outreach Subcommittee.

Fundraising for Cello Lessons: Katie Kilby informed session that Katherine Palmer-Collins has initiated a Go-fund-me campaign to raise money for private cello lessons for Anna Capuchino, one of MPC's youth. The ask is for MPC to serve as the vehicle to receive the funds.

- **MSP** to allow MPC to serve as the vehicle to receive funds designated for private cello lessons for Anna Capuchino for six months..

Parish Associate: Ben has recommended that session designate Rev. Mark Smith to serve as parish associate, along with Rev. Keith Geckeler and Rev. Kathy Ray. Following discussion of the role of parish associate:

- **MSP** to designate Rev. Mark Smith to serve as Parish Associate.

Personnel: Susanne reported that Music Director Kim Rankin has been working extra hours following Marcia Roy's retirement as church organist. The Personnel Committee recommends that MPC compensate Kim for her extra work. Remuneration for the additional compensation will be sourced from the remainder of Marcia's salary.

- **MSP** to use funds from the remainder of Marcia Roy's salary to compensate Kim Rankin for extra hours worked.

Safety Committee: Susanne reported that members of the Safety Committee recently met with Capt. Aaron Smith of the Oakland Police Department. We did a walk through of the campus with Capt. Smith. He will prepare a report with recommendations and thereafter meet with session. He will also update the official premises report maintained by the department.

Debrief Leadership Retreat; next steps: Conversation took place about the leadership retreat. Here are some of the learnings expressed: Most churches our size do not hire second pastors. And once you have a second pastor, it is hard to let that position go. The question for MPC is this: Do we need a second ordained pastor, and if so, is Katie the right person and how do we fund the ordained position? We need to evaluate what we want and what we can afford. There is a need for caution in terms of what we decide. It's interesting to note that when folks were asked what is the most important thing to them about MPC, it was the community. Ben will be pulling the personnel decision-making group together. Presbytery will be voting in February on new first year pastor terms of call, which will start at \$85,000 and move to \$95,000 the second year. Katie currently receives \$66,000 a year plus some benefits.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session