

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

January 6, 2026

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

Others Present: Janet Mulshine; Rev. Mark Smith

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Clerk's Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Jerry White offered the opening reflection.

Session meets again on Tuesday, Feb.3, 2026. Presbytery meets on Feb. 10. Time for annual evaluations!

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the Dec. 2, 2025 stated session meeting.
- **MSP** Set congregational meeting for Sunday, March 1, 2026 for the purpose of election the new class of session elders.
- **MSP** to approve the 2026 communion schedule (communion shall be performed once a month during Sunday Celebration, at family camp and church retreats, Christmas Eve, Easter and Maundy Thursday services, and upon request for hospital and home visits); 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 and do not require discussion.

Buildings and Grounds: Mark Smith and Janet Mulshine, co-chairs of Buildings and Grounds, presented a design for fencing along Thornhill Dr. that would replace the construction fence. The fencing material would be similar to the guardrail around the deck, continuing the general concept of the deck fencing. To ready the job for completion, two permits are needed: one related to the live oak tree, and the other pertaining to the proximity to the creek. As well, one more architectural drawing is needed showing the proposed permanent fence. Cost estimate: \$10,000 - \$13,000. There is a donor for a portion of the cost.

- **MSP** to approve this plan going forward.

Update on Website/social media contract: Steve McKiernan reported that the contractor is focusing on updating the website. Ben and Katie will evaluate the proposed website changes in mid-February.

Recommendation for allocating \$8,000 tithe: Eloise Gilland, Peace and Justice Committee chair, indicated that the committee recommends dividing the \$8,000 tithe for mission as follows: \$1,000 to El Porvenir; \$2,000 to Mission for the Homeless; \$1,000 to Sabeel; \$2,000 to Presbyterian Mission Homes; and \$2,000 to Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana.

- **MSP** to approve the recommended division of funds.

Update on Electrification Work: Suzanne Jones for the Earth Care Electrification Team provided a comprehensive update on the progress to date of electrifying the MPC campus. (See attached report.) Of note, electric heat pumps have been installed in the manse and rental house, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions and savings in energy expenses. This endeavor reaped \$9500 in free equipment, and rebates totalling \$9200 covered the majority of installation costs. The remaining electrification work is the costliest - replacing MPC's numerous gas furnaces with electric heat-pump-driven heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)

systems. The transition to electric HVAC systems carries a hefty price tag of \$200,000 - \$250,000, necessitating a capital campaign to move this goal forward.

Fundraising Committee Update: Suzanne also delivered an update on fundraising efforts. (See attached report.) The committee's three-year fundraising plan has exceeded targets, raising \$56,000, with the excess going towards electrification of the campus. The committee is requesting session's support for the upcoming More Light Concert and Spring Auction Gala. The specific ask is for session members to donate as they are able towards the purchase of wine to auction, and commit to staffing volunteer shifts. The committee is proposing that the 10% tithe from the gala be divided between National Center for LGBTQ Rights and East Bay Sanctuary Covenant.

By consensus session approved this allocation.

After more than 10 years heading numerous remarkable fundraising efforts, Suzanne Jones and Leslie Louie are stepping down from the committee. Claire Kelly will continue and hopefully others will step up.

Finance Committee Annual Evaluation: Rick Heller presented the annual evaluation for the Finance Committee. There is a need to develop a backup and support to Al Peters, someone with accounting expertise to shadow Al and absorb some of his institutional knowledge.

Personnel: Pat Schwinn reported for Personnel that the committee has received six applications for the organist position and will be interviewing two people this week. Additionally, the committee is requesting approval of a one-time bonus of \$3700 for Kim Rankin in recognition of the additional effort she has extended following the resignation of the church organist. Following discussion of appreciation for Kim's leadership and gifts

- **MSP** to approve a one-time bonus for Kim Rankin of up to \$5,000, to be funded out of what remains in the retired organist's account.

A thank you note will accompany the bonus.

Staff Reports: Katie noted that the Confirm not Conform cohort is going well. Monthly family nights have been well attended, the hope is to build community and engagement, Ben has finished the second round of edits on his book.

Ben closed with prayer at 855 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session

