

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

May 5, 2026

Elders Present: Deborah Brooks; Cynthia Cudaback; Rob Elia; Tara Flanagan; Karen Ray Gibson; Eloise Gilland; Rick Heller, Allen Spore

Elders Absent: Shelley Kelly; Pat Schwinn; Martha Smith; Jerry White

Others Absent: Susanne Lea. Clerk of Session

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Pro-tem Clerk's Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Eloise Gilland offered the opening reflection. Session meets again on Tuesday, June 2, 2026. Presbytery meets again on Tuesday, May 12 at LOPC. A Joint Celebration with St. John's Episcopal is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, featuring presentations by youth from Confirm not Conform.

Action:

- **MSP** to confirm Session's email approval of the baptism of Anna Capuchino on Sunday, May 3, 2026.
- **MSP** to elect Eloise Gilland pro-tem Clerk of Session. At her request, Session agreed that the meeting could be recorded.
- **MSP** to approve Sloan White as check signer on BMO account and remove Brenda Vallenias as check signer on BMO account.
- **MSP** to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2026, session meeting with the correction to add a "0" to the number "\$26,00" so it reads "\$26,000 to the general fund" in the Fundraising Report section.

Mandatory Reporter Trainings: Ben reported on behalf of the Personnel Committee that MPC will be requiring both child and elder abuse mandated reporter trainings offered by the California Dept. of Social Services. This aligns with PC(USA) requirements and California law. All staff, members of Session, and volunteers in Children & Youth programs are to complete the child abuse mandated reporting general training at <https://mandatedreportertraining.com/california/>. Katie will reach out to volunteers to do the training online. All clergy are to complete the additional child abuse mandated reporting clergy training at <https://mandatedreportertraining.com/california/>. All staff, members of Session, and anyone providing pastoral care are to complete the elder abuse mandated reporting 90-minute training module at <https://cdss.ca.gov/MandatedReporting/story.html>. Taking the tests and receiving certificates may incur a charge of about \$9 each, which can either be reimbursed or requested in advance from Noel in the church office. For both trainings, participants must keep copies of their certificates and forward copies to Ben or Noel by June 30, 2026.

Safe Church Training: Ben reported on behalf of the Personnel Committee that an in-person Safe Church training is scheduled for Sunday, June 7, after church. It has a different focus than the Mandatory Reporter website training. It takes from 60 to 90 minutes and will be recorded. All staff, members of Session, and volunteers are encouraged to take this training.

Buildings and Grounds update: Esteban's work on the external wall of the Ed Building (Grisborne side) has revealed some rot in a post and the existence of termites superficially. An

inspection that will take place will also include the stucco in the ceiling. The amount of the impact on the budget is to be determined.

Electrification Update: Suzanne Jones reported on behalf of the Earth Care Electrification Team that furnace replacement cost estimates were obtained for both the Ed Building and the Manse, as Session had requested at its April meeting. Funding in the amount of \$32,000 is available to begin upgrading MPC's aging natural gas furnaces. Regarding the Ed Building classrooms, the Team learned about a single-room alternative to a centralized heat pump HVAC system called Merino Mono that combines the condenser and air handler in one modular exterior-wall-mounted unit with no ductwork and costs only \$3,800 per room, including installation. From a cost perspective, this unit would be a gamechanger by allowing replacement of all eight of the Ed Building's nine furnaces for only about \$30,000 while also adding a cooling capability. The ninth furnace would still require a conventional heat pump unit which would likely cost about \$20,000. Thus, the total project cost would become ~\$50,000, compared to the minimum ~\$200,000 for replacing all of them with conventional ducted heat pump HVAC systems. The Merino Mono is currently being piloted and will become commercially available later this year. Because it is new, there is no long-term reliability data available yet.

- **MSP** to approve the Electrification Team's recommendations to (1) hire Electrify My Home to replace the Manse furnace now with a heat pump HVAC system at a cost of \$21,000-\$23,000, and (2) install one single-room Merino Mono heat pump unit in an Ed Building classroom at a cost of \$3,800 in late 2026/early 2027 as a test, after which a second unit (and possibly even a third with only a modest supplement to the remaining fundraising monies) could be added to other classrooms in 2027 or 2028.

Either classrooms 5 or 6 may get the Merino Mono unit, as they are the most used and get hot in the summer. Suzanne will contact Electrify My Home to get the Manse furnace replacement on their calendar. Cynthia Cudaback will arrange the logistics. It should be a two- or three-day job. More will be learned about any insurance renewal issues in June or July.

Membership and Outreach: Social Media Coordination position: Steve McKiernan, co-chair of Membership & Outreach, brought a proposal to Session that has the potential to improve MPC's social media presence by authorizing the development of a social media "manual" for the church and templates to use for social media postings. Since this is a specialized skill, it makes sense to offer a monthly stipend to someone with experience in this area. The proposal is for Martha Smith to receive a stipend of \$200/month for a four-month period (initially) to improve MPC's social media presence by:

- Creating a high-level audit of how 3-5 other similar-sized churches are using their social media pages, what they are getting out of them, and how they manage them. Session is welcome to recommend any specific churches they'd like to see analyzed.
 - Crafting of a social media "North Star" document covering MPC channels, goals, intended audiences, and definitions of success.
 - Working with Session to further refine MPC Social Media Guidelines as needed.
 - Developing a content strategy plan consisting of categories of posts, a schedule for each type, and configuring the church's Canva account to simplify the process of creating consistent "on brand" social media postings.
 - Posting static or video content once or more a week to MPC's social media channels and engaging with the audience that responds by reposting, liking, tagging relevant organizations, etc.
- **MSP** to approve the above-described proposal.

Steve said he would check in periodically with Martha regarding her progress. The Personnel Committee will make a recommendation regarding how MPC should manage its social media following Martha's four-month term.

Finance Committee: March 2026 Financials:

Session reviewed the financial statements for the nine months ending March 31, 2026, presented by Rick Heller, who noted that there will probably be a surplus at the end of June 2026 that will roll over to the next fiscal year. It has been a good year so far with more contributions than budgeted. Fundraisers will be needed annually for the foreseeable future; it is hoped they will not be needed to fund operations.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Eloise Gilland
Pro-tem Clerk of Session