

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

May 6, 2025

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

Absent: Sari Kulberg; Brenda Steinmetz-Vallenas

Others Present: Cynthia Blumgart; Anita Garriott; Cindy Gullikson; Suzanne Jones

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

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

Clerk of session Susanne Lea called attention to the MPC website which lists the names and classes of session members and contains session minutes and agendas.

We have filed for permits on the Ed. Building work and are in the process of setting up a meeting with an engineer regarding the retaining wall on the rental property.

Session meets again on Tuesday, June 3, 2025. Presbytery meets in person on May 13 at Newark Presbyterian Church.

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

Meeting with Prospective New Member: Session met with prospective new member Anita Garriott. Session members shared their roles and responsibilities within the life of MPC, and Anita shared her faith journey to our church. Session wholeheartedly approved Anita Garriott for membership.

Stewardship Report: Stewardship Chair Cynthia Blumgart reminded session members that they are charged with “encouraging the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources.” Pledges make up 67% of our budget. We have 91 pledging units, out of a membership of 180. Add in friends of MPC, and not quite 30% of folks pledge. We could do better! Cynthia explained that most of our top donors are older (70 and above). She identified several issues that should guide session in looking at sustainability at MPC: (1) we are an aging congregation, and need to plan for a decrease in pledges as we lose older members who also tend to be the larger donors; (2) our campus is also aging and that means increased costs of maintenance and repair; (3) we desire to have a full clergy staff notwithstanding issues (1) and (2).

Cynthia challenged session members to become ambassadors for stewardship, planning for education, training, and times of discussion within our congregation to increase giving and the number of pledgers.

Fundraising Report: Suzanne Jones delivered the report on our recent plant sale and auction (see attached). We netted \$24,000!!

The plan is to allocate \$10,000 to the General Fund, tithe 10% to immigrant rights and democracy/climate advocacy groups, and defer the remaining \$11,600 to the Earthcare Committee’s ongoing effort to complete electrification and efficiency upgrades to MPC’s facilities.

Allen Spore of the Finance Committee asked that we defer a decision on the \$11,600 reserved for electrification and efficiency upgrades until we are finished with the budget process.

- **MSP** to allocate \$10,000 to the General Fund, and tithe \$2,400 to immigrants' rights and democracy/climate advocacy groups. We will revisit the deferred amount pending completion of the budget process.

Children & Youth: Katie Kilby went over her letter to session members (attached), as context for the proposal from C & Y to increase the work of Katherine Palmer-Collins. Katie left the meeting as Cindy Gullikson, C & Y chair, went over the proposal (attached) calling for expanding Palmer-Collins' hours and hourly rate for FY 2025-2026, with a view to expanding programs for middle grade/middle school youth in collaboration with neighbor churches, and creating opportunities for connection among our families with children of all ages.

- **MSP** to approve expanding Katherine Palmer-Collins' hours to 10-12 per week, at an hourly rate of \$28.50, plus an additional \$1,000 to cover MPC@Tahoe 2026 children and youth programming, for a total of \$16,000 for FY 2025-2026. This model will be evaluated in the Spring of 2026. The source of funds for this model are as set forth in the proposal, with a net cost to MPC of only \$2,450.
- **MSP** to change the name of the Youth Mission Trip Fund account to Children and Youth Activities Fund.

Strategic Planning: Ben observed that Katie will be ordainable next spring and we need to start the strategic planning process - can you say **MISSION STUDY?**— in anticipation of that event. This includes probing the financial feasibility of adding an ordained staff member to MPC. Additionally, there is no guarantee that Presbytery will approve ordaining Katie to MPC because she has been under our care through the ordination process. Discussion to continue.

Finance Committee: Our third quarter shows us over budget on revenue by \$30,000 and below budget on expenses. Noel is doing a great job bringing in rentals, plus our contributions are above the mark. Expenses are lower in part because we have not hired a nursery coordinator.

Ben closed with prayer at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session

