

MONTCLAIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session Minutes

Nov. 4, 2025

Elders Present: Linda Benson; Margaretha Derasary; Rob Elia; Tara Flanagan; Eloise Gilland; Rick Heller; Sari Kulberg (arrived 8:20); Allen Spore; Pat Schwinn; Jerry White

Elders Absent: Karen Ray Gibson

Others Present: Cynthia Blumgart

Staff Present: Rev. Ben Daniel; Katie Kilby

Clerks Report: Rev. Ben Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.; Tara Flanagan gave the opening prayer.

Session meets again on Tuesday, Dec. 2,, 2025. Presbytery meets Sat., Nov. 15 at Alameda PC. Our leadership retreat is coming up Nov. 14-16 at Westminster Woods.

- **MSP** to approve minutes of the October 7, 2025 stated session meeting.

Stewardship & Legacy Initiatives 2026: Stewardship chair Cynthia Blumgart walked session through the proposed Stewardship/Legacy Initiative rolling out at the end of this year. (See attached). Goals include greater giving from the MPC community and education and support to givers. A committee has been formed and will meet early in December. Thank you Cynthia!

Buildings and Grounds: Susanne, liaison to Buildings and Grounds, reported that permits are forthcoming any day now for the work on the Ed. Bldg. Thus work will soon begin on tearing down the wall on the Ed Bldg. and constructing a new one.

Apartheid-free Pledge: Eloise Gilland informed session that the Peace and Justice Committee (PJC) always takes its cues for such items as the Apartheid-free Pledge from Jewish people and groups. The idea is for session to adopt the pledge and commit, through PJC, to bring it to the congregation for adoption.

- A vote to adopt the pledge was taken and it passed, but just barely. By consensus it was decided that the matter should return to PJC for reassessment.

Resignation of session member: Session segued to a closed session to discuss the resignation of a session member. Returning to open meeting:

- **MSP** to accept Brenda Steinmetz-Vallenas resignation from session.

Finance Committee: Rick Heller presented the quarterly financial statements. Our revenue side is over-budget, a good thing. This is due to an early big donation as well as increased income from miscellaneous rentals. The legacy fund income is the highest it has ever been.

Safety/Emergency Preparedness Task Force: Jerry White reported on the Bay Area Safety Preparedness Summit, attended by Jerry, Susanne and Mark Smith. Three take aways: build relationships with law enforcement and other groups; create an emergency response plan; and train ushers and staff in emergency response.

Personnel: Susanne reported that Ben's family would like to upgrade their dental plan and are willing to pay the additional \$60/month to do so.

- **MSP** to approve Ben's dental plan upgrade as stated above.

Personnel Decision-making group: Ben reported that this group has met once and needs to meet again.

Staff Reports & closing prayer: Ben shared that his childhood pastor tithed \$8,000 to MPC for mission. Ben indicated that the donor would resonate with a contribution to Berkeley Presbyterian Mission Homes. Allen Spore mentioned Mission for the Homeless as a possible recipient of part of the tithe. It was determined that PJC should decide how to allocate the tithe. Ben closed with prayer at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Lea
Clerk of Session