

Fairmount Presbyterian Church
2757 Fairmount Blvd
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
Stated Session Minutes
Agenda
October 1, 2025

Stated Session Meeting of Fairmount Presbyterian Church took place on Wednesday, October 1 at 6:30 pm at Fairmount Presbyterian Church. Members also participated on Zoom using this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83163765327?pwd=ogL8sqluEa9orjOVdQBk4bfbj51iub.1>

THE ROLL

Elders: Rev Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor; Rev Lindsay Harren-Lewis, Ian Cameron, Jim Crosby, Vicki Mentrek, Ben Sperry, Sarah Stone, Nancy Gillombardo, Ruth Wasem, Peg Zitzner, Susan Wherley

Absent: Jerry Parker, Steve Chapman, Peter Scheid

Via Zoom: Peg Zitzner, Ginger Van Wagenen

Moderator: Rev. Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor

Clerk of Session: Sarah Stone

Guests: Rev. Andrew Genszler, Mark Eisele, Ginger Van Wagenen

QUORUM

The Moderator Rev. Ryan Wallace opened the meeting with prayer at 6:35 and determined a quorum. He reviewed the docket and requested any changes; hearing none, the docket was approved. He introduced Rev. Genszler, Mark Eisele and Ginger Van Wagenen and requested a motion to give them privilege of voice. The motion was approved unanimously.

CLERK'S REPORT (see See Full Clerk's Report attached)

Clerk Sarah Stone referenced the minutes of the meetings listed below and requested Session approval. The motion passed unanimously, with the request that several typographical errors be corrected.

MOTION: Session recommends approval of the September 2025 Clerk's Report and minutes of the September 3 Stated Session meeting and August 11 Special Session meeting.

Sarah Stone announced that Ron Schmidt had requested removal from FPC membership rolls She also noted that Presbytery had reviewed FPC's 2024 minutes and approved them without exception.

At the request of Rev. Wallace, Sarah Stone reported that the Personnel Committee had reviewed, updated, and approved a current version of the Personnel Manual. Changes include the incorporation of a new employee expense reimbursement policy developed by Admin Council and other changes outlined in her memorandum to Session to bring the manual into alignment with current practice and policy change.

Sarah Stone then asked for questions. Ian Cameron asked whether it was permissible for Session to hire an attorney who is a member; Rev. Wallace responded that this provision covers employees only, not contractors. Ben Sperry asked about the provision about pets; Rev. Wallace responded it offered FPC flexibility and was up to the Head of Staff. Ian Cameron asked about tracking employee make-up hours for medical appointments; Rev. Wallace responded that this would be the responsibility of the employee's supervisor. Ian Cameron asked about recovering of digital files from a terminating employee; Rev. Wallace responded that FPC had the ability to revoke access immediately and that all FPC documents are backed up on a hard drive.

Ben Sperry made a motion to approve the Personnel Manual as revised and approved by the Personnel Committee. Nancy Gillombardo seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

ORDER OF THE DAY:

Endowment Committee Report - Mark Eisele, Chair, Endowment Committee

Mark Eisele noted that Endowment Committee policy called for an in-person presentation to Session by a committee member at least once a year. He reviewed the elements of the Endowment Committee report for the period ending June 30, 2025 and explained that all endowments are invested as a single pool and the pay-out to sub-endowments calculated individually. The Endowment Committee also monitors manager performance and puts them on a watch list if there are concerns. 90% of the endowment funds general operations of the church. Mr. Eisele pointed out that the Committee uses the June 30 report to determine the next year's endowment draw, and, for 2026, FPC can expect at 4.3% increase.

He described the Committee's current process to evaluate the investment advisor for a possible change. Compass Group has advised the church since 2003. The Committee will meet on October 13 to finalize the RPF draft, will evaluate responses and bring a recommendation to Session in spring 2026.

Rev. Wallace asked about the RFP process, and Mr. Eisele responded that the Committee is developing a compare-and-contrast method using qualitative and quantitative measures. Ben Sperry asked whether FPC would consider using a small part of the endowment for socially relevant investing. Mr. Eisele responded that the endowment funds provide FPC with funds to run the church, including Serve funds for community outreach. Endowed funds must also be spent to express the will of the donors who want to support church operations with their gifts. Rev. Genszler recognised Mr. Eisele's work to standardize the management of 16 different funds and many individual donor restricted funds. Mr. Eisele responded that his goal in cleaning up the documentation of funds is to provide a roadmap for future Endowment Committees. Completing

his report, Mr. Eisele left the meeting with Session's thanks.

Batey 105 Report Update and Process Discussion - Rev. Wallace

Rev Wallace asked if Session objected to Rev. Genszler and Ginger Van Wagenen sitting in on the next part of the meeting, which was to be in executive session. Hearing no objection, Ian Cameron made a motion to begin an executive session, seconded by Nancy Gillombardo. The motion passed.

Elders discussed the Batey 105 Task Force Report and next steps. Completing this agenda item, Session approved a motion to resume regular recording of the minutes.

Rev. Wallace asked the elders whether they were comfortable releasing the report to the Batey 105 committee; there was general agreement that the report should be released, but the committee should be asked to keep it confidential. He proposed that Session consider a special meeting to continue work on future planning for the Batey project and, after polling the elders, arrived at Sunday, November 16 following worship for a special Session meeting. Rev. Wallace will work with the Task Force elders and Sarah Stone to develop an agenda and ways to involve the Batey Committee before or as part of the meeting.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Admin Council: Chair Ruth Wasem referenced the submitted report and asked for questions. Sarah Stone asked for a report on current capital projects. Ian Cameron noted that repair of the parking lot ramp was underway and that a meeting with Tyler Laseter and Scott Harrington, Geauga Mechanical controls specialist, will take place next week. Rev. Genszler added that the heating system is operational for this winter and reported that an emergent situation to get main storm drain lines functioning again instead of running over gutters is well underway and should be completed within a few weeks. Rich Anderson is completing the work, which just passed inspection by Cleveland Heights officials.

Jim Crosby reported that he and Rob Faxon are working on replacing Russ Shaw as attorney, following Mr. Shaw's resignation.

Serve Council: Sarah Stone reported that Serve Council heard from Katherine Chilcote of North Church at its most recent meeting and approved several small grants.

Faith Formation Council: Chair Ben Sperry announced the All-Church Retreat this Saturday and encouraged elders to spread the word. He announced that on October 12 FPC will hold the first of three No Strangers Clubs with volunteer staffing from Council. October 12 will also be the first of six discussions using a new booklet created by FPC that will be introduced at the retreat, focusing on the values of the mission statement. He also noted that Kate Bouldin has joined the board of the United Campus Protestant Ministry, hoping to involve youth and congregation in preparing a meal for international students. Sarah Stone added that FPC has made a \$1000 grant to United Campus Ministries LaBrea Food Program. Rev. Wallace recognized FPC staff for the preparation of the new study booklet.

Care Council: Chair Vicki Mentrek reported that Celebrate Sunday was a success and that Care

Council will also be providing food for the No Strangers Club. Youth will help prepare sack lunches for FPC's regular meal service at North Church. She reported that Care Council is over budget due to price increases and growth of food service programs.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Update from Nominating Committee - Vicki Mentrek, Chair and Susan Whereley

Vicki Mentrek and Susan Whereley reported that the Nominating Committee will present a full slate of candidates at the upcoming congregational meeting, except one elder position. They include

Elders - Jesse Bassett, Katie Wetherbee, Tim Cuff (one vacancy)

Deacons - Una Morehead, Ginny Greggor, Steph Washlock, Julie Egge, Garry Maddox and Sunday Uka

Endowment Committee Mark Eisele, Walter Ginn, John Zitzner, Laura Desmond

Nominating Committee: Ben Sperry, Sarah Stone,, Brian Seekley, Debby Wilbur, Taylor Smith

Rev Wallace turned to the proposed motion from the Nominating Committee requesting an exception for Mark Eisele's election to a one-year term. He explained that Mr. Eisele would like to complete the RPF process and is currently in his sixth year of service, which would ordinarily exempt him from an additional term. After discussion, the elders considered:

Motion: Nominating Committee requests Session approval for an exception to the FPC Bylaws in order to nominate Mark Eisele for the Endowment Committee Class of 2026, extending his six years of service to one additional year. The motion passed unanimously.

Rev. Wallace introduced a proposed change to the FPC Bylaws to establish terms for council members. If recommended by Session, it would be reviewed by the congregation at the October Congregational Meeting. After discussion, he suggested the motion be tabled. Sarah Stone encouraged elders to be responsible for filling their committees.

Rev. Wallace asked Session to select a date for the October Annual Congregational Meeting.

After discussion, Session unanimously approved the meeting date on Sunday, October 19.

PASTORS REPORTS:

Rev. Genszler reported that work is underway in preparing for the FY 2026 budget, with committee chairs reviewing their needs and responding with proposals by November. He anticipates bringing a budget to Session in December for approval. Ruth Wasem reinforced the idea of zero-based budgeting and encouraged council chairs to consider whether there are activities that do not need to be continued.

Revl Genszler reported that he and Sara Gresh will approve the staff benefits package this week with the Board of Pensions. He noted that the 403b retirement fund line is over budget due to

the change to Fidelity and a larger match from FPC. He will connect with Personnel on this issue. He also encouraged participation in Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees on Sundays from 2-3 pm beginning on October 5. He also recognized Ian Cameron and Vicki Mentrek for their daily work on the large capital projects underway.

Rev. Harren-Lewis noted that with the addition of Lisa Nester to children's ministry, she has additional time to take on the calibration of pastoral care. She is pursuing a "Process on Aging and Implication on Ministry" certification and noted the increase in funerals at Fairmount. She also announced she will be leading a whales and spirituality retreat in California next week. Rev. Wallace congratulated Rev. Harren-Lewis on 17 years of ordained ministry.

Rev. Wallace reported that he is sitting on three boards focusing on the state of democracy at the local, state and national level. He is working with 20 executive directors and CEOs in Cuyahoga County, participating with faith, labor, and nonprofit leaders on the state level, and joining a group of faith leaders focused on democracy in an initiative led by Sojourners and the National Alliance of Faith and Justice.

He commented that the program year is off to a great first month, with the introduction of the mission statement and spiritual focus, and worship numbers up significantly over last year. He is leading a Bible study every Wednesday that has attracted a large group of Fairmounters in person and online.

He also noted that this week he will be meeting Congresswoman Shontel Brown along with 25-30 clergy to discuss immigration in Ohio. On Wednesday he, some Fairmounters and members of GCC will be going to the Ohio Supreme Court in Defiance to appear at a case relating to juvenile bindovers.

Rev. Harren-Lewis closed the meeting in prayer at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Stone, Clerk