

Fairmount Presbyterian Church  
2757 Fairmount Blvd  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118  
Stated Session Meeting  
Minutes  
December 3, 2025

The December Stated Session Meeting of Fairmount Presbyterian Church took place on Wednesday, December 3 at 6:30 pm at Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

#### THE ROLL

Elders: Rev Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor; Rev Lindsay Harren-Lewis, Ian Cameron, Vicki Mentrek, Peter Scheid, Ben Sperry, Sarah Stone, Steve Chapman, Nancy Gillombardo, Jerry Parker, Peg Zitzner, Susan Wherley

Via Zoom: Ruth Wasem

Absent: Jim Crosby

Moderator: Rev. Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor

Clerk of Session: Sarah Stone

Guests: Rev. Andrew Genszler. Incoming elders Carol Adrine and Timothy Cuff

Via Zoom: Amy Carlson, Treasurer

#### QUORUM ..

The Moderator Rev. Wallace opened the meeting at 6:43 with prayer and determined a quorum. He reviewed the docket and asked for changes; hearing none, the docket was approved. The Moderator introduced guests, and asked Session to grant them privilege of voice. Hearing no objections, privilege of voice was approved.

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

Sarah Stone requested approval of the motion below:

MOTION: Session recommends approval of the November 2025 Clerk's Report and minutes of the November 5 Stated Session meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

She also noted the receipt of a letter of transfer for Hope Fry and asked for a motion to approve her membership. The motion was approved unanimously. Rev. Wallace noted that a new members' class would begin on January 11.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY:

Review of 2026 Draft Budget Treasurer Amy Carlson began review of the draft 2026 budget by

outlining FPC's revenue history over the past three years. She noted that while budgeting is often conservative, end-of-year giving has regularly exceeded revenue projections. In 2024 this was evident when FPC projected tithes and offerings of \$740,000 and received \$800,128. She noted that RPC has received a final ERC payment of \$47,772 in FY 2024. In 2026, a grant from the Cleveland Foundation of \$17,000 will add \$10,000 in revenue not forecast in the 2026 draft, improving the projected bottom line from (\$99,984.70) to (\$89,984.70).

Amy Carlson reviewed salaries and benefits, the largest expense category. Personnel has revised the budget to project the addition of a Care Associate Pastor at mid-year only. The largest increase is the change in FPC contributions to staff 403(b) retirement plans. FPC provides a 1% employee match with an option to match up to 2.5% in staff contributions, and five staff are participating at the maximum level. While there was a large increase in 2025 due to catch-up payments, this line will normalize at \$11,905.98. Rev. Wallace added that overall personnel expenses were project at \$958,000 in 2025 and are increasing to \$983,000 due to a 3% COLA increase and benefits.

Reviewing administrative expense, Amy Carlson focused on Maintenance Supplies and Services, which is reduced to a combined total of \$75,000 from the projected actual of \$103,400 by removing long-term capital expense and projecting only routine maintenance expense. Jerry Parker asked which expenses were removed, and Amy Carlson replied that most of the HVAC expenses are forecasted now as capital expense. Once these repairs are completed, they will reduce future utility costs. Ruth Wasem added that the long-term capital expenses would be funded by a future capital campaign.

Jerry Parker asked how Fairmount would fund the projected deficit. Amy Carlson replied that previous surplus dollars have been put in FPC's money market operating account and this account would be the source for any deficit funding. The money market and operating account currently total approximately \$600,000. Amy Carlson also briefly reviewed the status of donor reserve accounts, indicating that she and staff are investigating their use for operating expenses when appropriate.

Rev. Wallace explained that Session could choose to ratify the budget this evening or in January after year-end giving was known. Rev. Genszler reported that currently 87% of projected giving (\$526,000 )for 2024 has been received. Sarah Stone added that at 12/2/24, FPC had received \$597,000 in pledge payments and went on to receive over \$800,000 in tithes and offerings after year end. Rev. Genszler added that free will offering is increasing, while Ian Cameron noted that there are fewer FPC members than three years ago. In response to a question from Jerry Parker, Rev. Wallace noted that staff follow up to on non-payment of pledges.

Rev. Harren-Lewis expressed concern that the budget projected only a small increase for congregational fellowship and events when costs and programming are increasing. Amy Carlson agreed, and discussion focused on the use of donor restricted accounts or the free will offering that is given at Breaking Bread. Amy Carlson and Drew Genszler agreed to research this issue and return to Session to approve up to \$4,000 to the hospitality budget line in January.

Rev. Wallace asked whether there was a motion to approve the budget. He noted that possible

cuts could include the pastoral care position and the voluntary denominational participation fee.

Susan Wherley made a motion to approve passage of the proposed 2026 budget as projected, with the revision of including an additional \$10,000 in revenue from the grant from the Cleveland Foundation. After a short discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

#### COUNCIL REPORTS:

Admin Council: Chair Ruth Wasem referenced minutes of November Admin Council meeting, noting that there were no action items for tonight. She commended Rev. Genszler and Ian Cameron for the audit of capital improvements for exclusion from the operating budget, referencing the \$500,000 budget Session approved for future HVAC improvements. She reported that Rob Faxon and Drew Genszler continue to work on FPC's legal counsel. Jerry Parker asked if the church's attorney would be a member. Rev. Genszler replied that Rob Faxon was willing to review routine contract matters and the expectation would be that the church would hire specialized counsel for HR matters and complex contracts. Rev. Wallace added that in addition to Rob Faxon, another church member who is a labor law specialist has assisted FPC recently.

In response to a question from Jerry Parker, Ian Cameron noted that FPC has received a quote for \$375,000 for repair of stonework around the Garth entrance, but the next priority would be receiving engineering quotes for the boiler repair.

Faith Formation Council: Chair Ben Sperry reported on a developing relationship with United Protestant Ministries at CWRU, including a recent church dinner and upcoming dinner on February 8. He asked for volunteer support for the December 14 No Strangers Club. Steve Chapman commended the "Getting to We" performance that attracted audiences of 100 people per night and Ben Sperry noted that FPC and GTW director Debra Plummer would continue to collaborate.

Care Council: Chair Vicki Mentriek reported that Council discussed the 2026 budget and is working on potential services for FPC's older members.

Serve Council: Chair Steve reported that Serve Council now has two new members. At its November meeting, Council approved its final \$19,000 in grant funds to the Hunger Network, Greater Cleveland FoodBank and ReSource Cleveland, which each received \$6,500. ReSource Cleveland is leading a program to provide emergency funding for those who recently lost SNAP benefits due to federal legislation.

As part of the Serve Council report, Rev. Wallace called on Peg Zitzner to report on next steps in the conversation with the Bridges to Batey committee.. Peg Zitzner reported that the Bridges to Batey group is investigating establishing a separate 501(c)3 organization to direct the Batey ministry. If this idea was not practical, the committee would work with FPC to stay under the church's corporate umbrella but with an outside partner to administer the program.

Rev. Wallace reported that FPC has been in active conversation with the Bridges to Batey team

on possible administrative models, with the Bridges to Batey team most recently opting for a model of independent governance. A joint meeting of Session and the Bridges to Batey committee will discuss questions and concerns and communication to the congregation, as well as FPC's future involvement as a funder and youth trip partner.

Ben Sperry asked about whether International Partners in Mission would be involved, and Rev. Wallace indicated that IPM would be an option if the Batey project remained under FPC. Sarah Stone recognized Peg Zitzner for her role in facilitating the discussion and characterized the independent governance as a common step in the maturation of non profits.

Jerry Parker asked about the status of restricted funds dedicated to the Batey project. Peg Zitzner responded that this is yet to be decided, saying the status of reserve funds was a key reason why the Bridges to Batey team is leaning toward a separate 501(c)3, to avoid what might happen if a ministry partner ceased operation. Rev. Wallace added that Sunday's special Session meeting will be a preliminary step in working through the details of this process. Ian Cameron added that Session should never make a 25 year commitment without funding in place.

#### MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Rev. Wallace reported that Session is ahead of schedule in electing officers for the coming year. He asked Session to consider the following motion:.

MOTION: Session approves the election of the following officers for 2026-2027, effective January 1, 2026.

President: Ruth Wasem

Vice President: Steve Chapman

Treasurer: Amy Carlson

Clerk: Ginger Van Wagenen

The motion was passed unanimously. Rev. Wallace also asked elders to complete the information form for the January 9 Session Retreat.

#### PASTORS REPORTS:

Rev. Harren-Lewis requested Session approval for two weddings and baptisms: -

MOTION: Session approves the marriages of:

Margaret Ehgott and Richard Spatz on March 13, 2026

Noah Boksansky and Grace Prorok on June 6, 2026

The motion was approved unanimously

MOTION: Session approves baptisms on January 11, 2026 of  
Grace Prorok  
Jana and/ Garrett Yenyo  
Erica Bergen  
The motion was approved unanimously

Rev. Genszler indicated he had no report.

Rev. Wallace reported that

- Jonas was freed from immigration detention and is living in the area, working on his immigration status with his attorney.
- Great work by Rev. Harren-Lewis and Kate Bouldin has launched a special Advent session
- FPC has received a grant of \$17,000 from the Cleveland Foundation to foster an ecumenical network of LGBTQ+ congregations, and 8 congregations from different denominations will meet on December 8 to begin work. \$10,000 of the grant will fund his and Kate Bouldin's salary and is applicable to the FPC budget.
- IGAH is opposing the presentation by the Center for Christian Virtue, a group designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, at Cleveland's City Club. IGAH is determining what the response will be.
- ReSource Cleveland and clergy members are meeting with County Administrator Chris Ronayne to discuss a long-term solution to migrants who have permanently lost SNAP benefits.
- Session is asked to complete the information form for the upcoming retreat. Rev. Wallace will be reaching out about future council assignments.

Rev. Harren-Lewis closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Stone, Clerk