

**Fairmount Presbyterian Church
2757 Fairmount Blvd
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
Stated Session Meeting
MINUTES
May 6, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.**

The February Stated Session Meeting of Fairmount Presbyterian Church was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Fairmount Presbyterian Church and was presented by the Moderator, Rev. Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor.

THE ROLL

Elders: Rev Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor; Rev Lindsay Harren-Lewis, Carol Adrine, Jesse Bassett, Ian Cameron, Steve Chapman, Tim Cuff, Nancy Gillombardo, Jerry Parker, Gary Sampson, Ruth Wasem, Katie Wetherbee, Peg Zitzner.

Absent: Susan Wherley

Moderator: Rev. Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor

Clerk of Session: Ginger Van Wagenen

Guests: Rev. Andrew Genszler, Gordon Landefeld

QUORUM

The Moderator opened the meeting with prayer.

The Moderator determined the presence of a quorum.

The Moderator reviewed the docket. After a motion by Carol Adrine and a second by Steve Chapman, the docket was unanimously approved.

A motion was made and seconded to give privilege of voice to Gordon Landefeld; the motion was approved unanimously.

Pastor Ryan then welcomed Gary Sampson, who was elected to replace Jim Crosby. All present then introduced themselves to Gary. Pastor Ryan announced that Gary will join the Admin Council.

CLERK'S REPORT

MOTION: to approve the April 2026 Clerk's report, minutes of the April 1, 2026 Stated Meeting, minutes of the April 8, 2026 Special Meeting, and minutes of the April 26, 2026 Annual Meeting (see share drive)

Nancy Gillombardo moved and Peg Zitzner seconded for approval of this omnibus motion. Session approved unanimously.

Pastor Ryan then gave the floor to Gordon Landefeld, a member of FPC and the current Moderator of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve, for his report (included at the end of the minutes and on the share drive). Gordon's last meeting as Moderator will be at

Fairmount, which is traditionally held at the Moderator's home church. The meeting will begin

at 5:30 pm for dinner with the meeting beginning at 6:30 pm. Gordon reported that Windsong, a safe and inclusive feminist choral community, will perform during the meal. Gordon also reported that at the June 1 meeting, the Presbytery will celebrate June Pride month and the election of the Presbytery's first elected LGBTQ+ Moderator.

Pastor Lindsay expressed her appreciation of Gordon's efforts to help the Presbytery to become less racist, noting his very calm moderator and his sense of the sacredness.

Then at Pastor Ryan's suggestion, Gordon described the Racial Wealth Gap simulation to be held on May 17, 2026, at 12:30 pm at Fairmount during which attendees will explore 12 laws that have specifically targeted non-whites.

ORDER OF THE DAY:

1. Update on Governance Review

Jesse Bassett, who worked with Tim Cuff and Ginger Van Wagenen to develop the governance review survey, provided a summary, noting that

- Changes provided by Elders during the preliminary review had been incorporated into the survey;
- The survey is intended for church pastoral and lay leadership to identify gaps in role clarity, communications, training and understanding of Presbyterian polity;
- Later in the process, Session will reach out to members of the congregation and those who held leadership roles in the past.

After discussion, Session agreed to move the optional name/contact information to the end of the survey and to change the survey's leadership question to focus on current role(s) and then add a question about past roles.

Jesse Bassett offered to draft an email cover letter for the survey that explains its purpose and indicates that Session has identified each recipient as a Fairmount leader from whom we value their input.

Pastor Lindsay suggested that the email also confirm that the recipients will be meeting to discuss the survey during a Council/Committee meeting. She also asked Tim Cuff, Jesse Bassett, and Ginger Van Wagenen if they were willing to attend those Council/Committee meetings to help facilitate. All three agreed.

Steve Chapman noted that the question asking if "governance is confusing" is negative, which he questioned.. Jesse Bassett explained that this is a key survey technique to ask for information in both negative and positive format.

Session discussed whether to send the survey to the Elder Association and concluded not to at this time, unless they are currently in a leadership role.

Session then agreed to this timeline:

- June 16 deadline for survey completed and Council/Committee discussions
- A Session meeting to discuss teaching from the surveys and discussions and plan next steps

Jesse Bassett offered to prepare a guide to facilitate the Council/Committee discussions. It is important that each Council/Committee leader understand his/her role as a facilitator, not the leader. During the discussions (or listening sessions), a recorder should take note of themes, but need not take exhaustive minutes.

Pastor Drew urged that the Facilitation Guide emphasize that the listening sessions are not an opportunity to complain, that the exercise is targeted on governance processes, not people.

Ruth Wassem asked for a number for the ideal group size. Jesse Bassett suggested 10 --15 people.

Ian Cameron asked whether Admin should combine Building & Grounds, Finance etc. or do each separately? After discussion, Session agreed that Admin should make that decision.

Session then discussed whether participants could attend the meeting of a Council/Committee of which they are not a part. Ultimately Session agreed that, to keep the results clean, the participants should only attend if they are a member of that Council/Committee.

Pastor Ryan polled the Elders on whether to hold a Stated Meeting on July 1 or 8? After **July 1 at 6:30 pm** was chosen, Ian Cameron moved to cancel the previously scheduled May 20, 2026, Special Meeting and to set July 1, 2026 as a Stated Meeting. After a second by Steve Chapman, the motion was approved unanimously.

2. Update on Capital Campaign

Pastor Ryan drew our attention to the job description for the Campaign Committee, noting that it is not critical that Session approve it during this meeting. He then asked for questions and comments.

Jerry Parker asked whether it is realistic to include foundations and loans as funding sources. Pastor Drew noted that Fairmount is not dependent on those sources but since they are out there, we should explore them. Pastor Lindsay observed that a Presbytery loan is a good resource to pursue. Ruth Wassem reminded Session that FPC will need

to borrow money to get started; the buildings and grounds needs are too urgent to wait, so a Presbytery loan is something we should consider. Pastor Ryan confirmed that the Campaign Committee will look at all these options, and then make a recommendation.

Pastor Lindsay questioned the \$3 million goal in the job description, wondering how it was arrived at. Pastor Drew responded that, in drafting the job description, he simply kept the goal at \$3 million as a placeholder. Ultimately, the goal will be the decision of the Campaign Committee.

Jesse Bassett asked for the campaign timeline. Pastor Drew answered that it will be a multi-year campaign with Tim Cuff adding that, if the Campaign Committee decides Fairmount should use a consultant, the consultant will have thoughts on this and other topics. Tim urged Session to wait to refine the timeline until the Campaign Committee makes that first decision whether to retain a consultant.

Tim Cuff asked for clarification that Session will be giving “ownership” of the campaign to the Committee? Pastor Ryan and Pastor Drew both answered in the affirmative, with Pastor Ryan clarifying that there will be one or two Elders on the Campaign Committee and that, at some point, the Committee's decisions about campaign goal, hiring a consultant, etc. will come back to Session.

Ruth Wasem reminded Session that Fairmount will need to deficit finance if it's going to hire a consultant. Also, given that Fairmount will need to borrow as the work begins, Session will need to be sure the timeline is tight. She also noted that members of the Campaign Committee may want to know the timeline before accepting the role. Pastor Drew reminded Session that the Committee won't be managing the contracting timeline (i.e., the timeline of the contractors engaged) but the Committee will need to consider the amounts of those contractors. Ruth Wasem expressed agreement that Fairmount should borrow as necessary to begin the work at the same time the Committee and Session are doing the visioning work, to which Pastor Drew agreed.

Tim Cuff observed that a consultant will help guide and identify the large donors for the “Quiet” portion of the campaign. Pastor Drew remarked that if Fairmount hires a consultant, it will need a well-defined scope of work. Ian Cameron asked whether Fairmount would use a Fairmount consultant or one who is unaffiliated, to which Pastor Ryan responded that the Committee will make that recommendation. Pastor Ryan proposed that Session provide the draft job description to the Committee for their review and then return to Session with its questions and comments.

Steve Chapman asked whether individuals who are not members of Fairmount could serve on the Campaign Committee. After discussion, Session agreed that they could.

Pastor Ryan then turned the discussion to Session's nominations for the Campaign Committee. He noted that Peggy Roberts has decided that she cannot serve as co-chair but will support the campaign. He also announced that Vanessa Whiting has agreed to chair the Campaign. Applause followed. Vanessa now has the draft job

description and Session's nominations and is actively identifying others. Pastor Ryan confirmed that Session will need to vote on the job description and the composition of the Committee following recommendations from the Committee.

Session then began a general discussion of the members of the Committee but since the Committee will make its recommendation on membership, Session left any further discussion on the topic until then.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Admin Council: Ruth Wasem reported that Admin had no action items. It is keeping busy as noted in the written report but saw no need to repeat that information at this meeting.

Ian Cameron reported that Fairmount's consultant has advised that we hire Osborne, our structural engineer, which will cost \$6,000. In addition, the boiler pipes from the boiler room to the dining room are rotting/leaking, which will cost another \$19,000. This work needs to be done before the next heating cycle, or we'll be facing a potential crisis. These expenses are within the \$500,000 previously approved by Session, but he would prefer Session confirmation before proceeding. Pastor Ryan recommended that Session confirm that these expenses fit within the previous \$500,000 approval. Tim Cuff made the motion, Katie Wetherbee seconded and Session approved unanimously.

Ian Cameron further reported that Fairmount has several permits that haven't been closed. He has been working to complete the close-outs.

The lighting permit presents an issue. Although the City of Cleveland Heights has confirmed that the lighting is now approved, there remains a safety issue/safety hazard that we need to address. Buildings & Grounds has asked Jon Miguét, Fairmount's trusted electrician, for a quote for the work, which Ian reports will be expensive. Finally, Ian reported that Fairmount does not have a fire sensor in the Sanctuary, so he has asked Fairmount's trusted electrician for a quote on that work as well.

Pastor Drew provided a financial report, confirming that Fairmount is on budget. Treasurer Amy Carlson is working to combine/collapse some of our designated funds. Pastor Drew also reported that Fairmount is close to submitting the filing for the solar project by the May 15 deadline.

Steve Chapman asked about pledges. Pastor Drew responded that Fairmount budgeted a conservative goal but still has some work to do to achieve that goal. The pledges are roughly similar to last year. He reminded Session that deficit budgeting is necessary because 45% of Fairmount's revenue comes in during November and December.

Serve Council: Steve Chapman reported that at its last meeting, Serve had a good discussion about its goals and responsibilities and it is creating a survey to present to

Session that will help define needs over the next several months which will assist Serve to determine its priorities and how to spend money allotted to it.

Faith Formation Council: Pastor Lindsay reported for Susan Wherley that planning is underway for Middle and High School trips this summer and they are working on fundraising, especially for the High School trip. Pastor Lindsay reminded Session of the William Birkett Williams lecture on Wednesday, May 13, featuring Leah Rampy, author of *Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees* as well as the Women's Retreat ("What Women Know") on May 16.

Care Council: Carol Adrine reported that she has met with the Deacons; reviewed the lovely Honor Brunch, noting the great participation by Deacons, our Pastors and youth (still awaiting the expense report from Vicki Mentrek); commented that planning for the Strawberry Festival is underway, complete with the Rocket Car; noted that Care has been sending cards to the homebound and congregants celebrating birthdays (53 cards in May, 40 in April); and reported that Care voted to put Lisa Cameron and Oona Morehead on Nominating Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Update on Personnel Committee. Upon Katie Wetherbee's motion, seconded by Nancy Gillombardo, Session voted unanimously to appoint Gary Sampson as an Elder on the Personnel Committee.

Pastor Ryan reminded Session that since Gary Sampson, who had been an at-large member of the Personnel Committee, has become an Elder representative, Session needs to appoint a new at-large member. Session agreed to provide the list of nominees to Gary Sampson and Carol Adrine, our Elder representatives on Personnel, for them to determine who to nominate. Once they have made their determination, they will return to Session for a vote. Jesse Bassett recommended that Gary and Carol should avoid recommending someone who will be on the Campaign Committee.

Carol Adrine reported that the Personnel Committee is amenable to Pastor Ryan's suggestion to fill Peter Horth's pastoral care role. Pastor Ryan noted that he intentionally did not fill the role when Peter left in 2024 until we determined if needed to fill it. Fairmount does have the money, and pastoral staff has determined that Fairmount needs those extra hours for calls and visitations. Pastor Ryan noted that one candidate is a retired pastor who will be meeting with two groups of Fairmounters over the next two weeks. The proposal calls for the candidate to work 10 hours/week.

Nancy Gillombardo questioned whether our congregants will be open to meeting with a stranger and suggested that we just pay more to Pastor Lindsay, who demurred. While extra money is always nice, Pastor Lindsay noted that Fairmount needs more pastoral care hours. Pastor Lindsay added that she has met with the candidate and really likes him. He has been both a pastor and a hospice chaplain so he has a wonderful skill set; he is an older man which will suit some of our parishioners; and adding him to staff will

help change the culture that outreach by anyone other than the Senior Pastor is inadequate. Steve Chapman noted that every one of our pastoral staff has been “a stranger” when first arriving at Fairmount.

Pastor Ryan mentioned that there is a second candidate to act as a month-to-month Serve Council fellow who, among other things, would accompany immigrants to ICE check-ins and court hearings and help train Fairmounters to assist.

PASTORS REPORTS

Pastor Drew relayed Keith Mills’s report that our electricity costs have already declined by \$1000. He will be working with the Earth Stewards and Christine Winters to communicate this news to the congregation. Pastor Drew also noted that he will be out for Navy time for three weeks in June. Fairmount will pay for two weeks as “study leave” and the third week is unpaid.

Pastor Lindsay reported that she has four memorials, a wedding and staff retreats coming up.

Pastor Ryan reported that he has concluded the Bible study on the Book of Genesis and noted some recent and upcoming events including the last Rush Hour concert; the Elder Association lunch; the Nature Walk that included children (with mixed results).

Pastor Ryan further reported that he recently preached to Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom in Youngstown; finished his second to last meeting as a Trustee of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve; made numerous hospital and pastoral visits; attended the recent EQUAL group meeting where Pride month and queer prom planning is underway; attended and served at the Honor Brunch; and met with TaNnika Sheppard (Regional Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches USA) and Felix Muniz (Cleveland Nueva Luz) to discuss collaborating on interdenominational, interracial Christian spiritual formation.

Finally, Pastor Ryan reported that he has been engaged in the numerous tasks preparing for end-of-year programming and transitioning into summer programming and schedules.

Pastor Ryan ended with the reminder that our first summer worship will be on **May 24 at 10 am**, which will include communion.

Pastor Ryan gave that closing prayer and, upon motion, second and unanimous approval, Session was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger Van Wagenen, Clerk

Fairmount Presbyterian Church
2757 Fairmount Blvd, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
May 6, 2026 Stated Meeting

Gordon Landefeld, Moderator

As you may know, I was born into Fairmount, was a youth here, and came back as an adult. I was a youth leader in my 20s. I was a Sunday school teacher, deacon, trustee and elder in my 40s and 50s. I was Clerk of Session a few years ago, and even now am asked to fulfill a duty as President of the Corporation. And now I'm the moderator of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve for one year, ending June 1, 2026.

The moderator is the leader of the Presbytery – like the bishop of the Catholic Diocese with some very important differences. Because the Presbyterian Church is democratic, the moderator functions as a solely as a meeting leader, an ombudsperson, and a spokesperson.

Other moderators from Fairmount have included, in 1978, Rev Hank Andersen; in 1983, Elder Kitty Borchert. Later Kitty attended seminary and became a pastor. In 1994, Rev Kitty's husband, Elder Frank Borchert Jr, was elected Moderator. In 2007, long before Rev Jessie MacMillan became interim pastor at Fairmount, she was elected Moderator. And in 2011, while she was at Fairmount, Rev Missy Shiverick was Presbytery Moderator.

Our Presbytery has had at least two Black Moderators, Rev Isaiah Pogue from St Marks in 1956, and much more recently, Rev Carmen Cox Harwell.

I celebrate each of you. Some of you were children at Fairmount. Some of you have been deacons and trustees. Now you are Elders. Few people in the pews can imagine church leadership. Now two of you are commissioners at Presbytery, and someday one of you, including possibly Rev Ryan or Rev Lindsay may be Moderator of the Presbytery.

On June 1st, in a few weeks the Presbytery will have its stated meeting here, at Fairmount. We expect to elect co-moderators, Rev Stephen Blonder Adams, pastor at Old Stone Church downtown, and Rev Meredith White, pastor at Noble Road Presbyterian church. Rev Stephen is our Presbytery's first LGBTQ+ senior pastor. The PCUSA started inviting LGBTQ+ pastors in 2011 – and a former pastor at Noble Road Presbyterian was the person who made that happen – Rev Tricia Dykers Koenig.

I hope you will all be able to attend. It is rare that the Presbytery is held here, and it's only because the final Presbytery of the moderator is held at their home church. We will have a delicious meal before the stated meeting, in Andersen Hall, and we'll then hold the meeting also in Andersen Hall. I will ask Clerk Van Wagenen to please send you the Presbytery invitation when it's available in a few weeks. Thank you!