Fairmount Presbyterian Church
2757 Fairmount Blvd
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
Stated Session Meeting
MINUTES
September 2, 2026 - 7:45 p.m.

The September Stated Session Meeting of Fairmount Presbyterian Church was held on Wednesday, September 2, 2026 at 7:45 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, Tim Cuff, Jerry Parker, Gary Sampson, Ruth Wasem, Katie Wetherbee, Susan Wherley, Peg Zitzner.

By Zoom: Steve Chapman

Absent: Nancy Gillombardo

Moderator: Rev. Ryan Wallace, Senior Pastor
Clerk of Session: Ginger Van Wagenen
Guests: Rev. Andrew Genszler, Vanessa Whiting

QUORUM
The Moderator opened the meeting with prayer.
The Moderator confirmed the presence of a quorum.
The Moderator reviewed the docket and, on motion and second, was unanimously approved.
The Moderator introduced guest Vanessa Whiting, and upon motion and second, she was granted privilege of voice.

CLERK'S REPORT

MOTION: to approve the August 2026 Clerk's Report and minutes of the June and July Stated Meetings (all found in the Share Drive)

The Clerk noted that year-over-year attendance increases continue.

Ian Cameron noted a correction for the minutes: the rebate discussed during the Admin Council report at the July Stated Meeting was $34,677.

With that correction and upon motion and second, the Clerk's Report and Minutes of June and July Stated Meetings were unanimously approved.

MOTION: to approve the December 20, 2026 baptism by Pastor Lindsay of Lydia Thompson, born June 4, 2026 to parents Kathryn and Chase Thompson

Pastor Lindsay explained that the Thompsons have moved to Texas but their church home there does not baptise infants, something important to Kathryn and Chase. Upon

motion and second, the baptism was unanimounsly approved.

The Clerk reminded Session that the Endowment Report from Mark Eisiele, Chair of the Endowment Trustees was available in the Share Drive. She also noted that the financial report, as reviewed by Amy Carlson at the Joint Meeting, was also in the Share Drive.

ORDER OF THE DAY:

Capital Campaign Report [moved from Misc business]

Vanessa Whiting reported that she is still forming the Campaign Committee but it will be finalized by next week. The following have already agreed to serve:

Andrew Genszler
Vanessa Whiting
Gordon Landerfeld
Carol Adrine
Laura Desmond
Mark Eisele
Bill Leahy
Ruth Wasem
Sarah Stone
John Zitner

Vanessa would appreciate Session's help with identifying younger members (under age 60). Ideally, there would be 4 younger members. Pastor Ryan suggested that the Nominating Committee might have some ideas on that front. Session members were asked to send any ideas to Vanessa at vlwhiting@aesmgmt.com. Vanessa will also reach out to Council Chairs to get their input, too.

Vanessa has been reaching out to potential consultants and created the first draft of Request for Proposal which will be sent to Brownstone, New Covenant, and Horizon, among others. The ideal consultant is a smaller firm that can come in and help, not just tell us what we already know.

She anticipates that the first meeting of the Committee will be in early October at her home. As she builds out the committee, the intent is to raise the $1million needed to address HVAC.

Governance Task Force - next steps

After the summary provided at the Joint Meeting, the Task Force team (Jesse Bassett, Tim Cuff and Ginger Van Wagenen) opened the conversation for questions and comments. Gary Sampson noted that appreciated the presentation and the reminder that this is about the church and the body of Christ.

Jerry Parker asked for clarification of the numbers of respondents. Jesse Bassett explained that some of the committees were too small to include which explains the mismatch between the 59 total respondents vs the total which includes those who hold multiple positions

Susan Wherley mentioned that the Deacons are feeling demoted, undervalued and less

important. And she noted the confusion about Deacons/Care since 2014 restructure. As she pointed out, Care = Deacons and Deacons = Care. She also noted that, given how Deracons are perceived, it has been harder to get people to agree to serve. Ian Cameron added that there's so much more than Deacons can do.

Pastor Lindsay said that there is now even more confusion about whether it's Deacons or Care. She noted that the priority after Covid was getting the congregation comfortable with being together. Now Deacons are ready to shift back to one-on-one care and thus are looking for folks with the different skills needed for that work.

Pastor Ryan noted that now is the time to celebrate the work that Deacons have done.

Carol Adrien observed that there isn't a Deacons manual. It would be very helpful to have a written document that outlines what a deacon is and what a deacon does. She also suggested that we provide Deacon training. As Carol sees it, the Deacons's main duty is care of the congregation – opening the table, going to meet and taking communion to the sick and shut-ins – and it is very important duty. Pastor Lindsay agreed but noted that in the past she has asked if folks want communion, and they have said no.

Ruth Wasem agreed that different churches have deacon manuals. Perhaps a separate "hospitality" committee is an option. The survey results tell us it's time to do this.

Steve Chapman cautioned that we need to assure that when talking about the future, we have input from the deacons.

Ian Cameron noted that FPC had 35 deacons in 2014, while now we have 12. FPC's Code of Regulations provides that we can have up to 15.

Jesse Bassett observed that the governance project is focused on FPC's organizational structure as a whole and provides us with an opportunity to reimagine; e.g., where do committees belong in the organization structure? Pastor Drew agreed, noting that when he works on finances with various committees, it draws in the operational structure because some relationships are more direct than before.

Pastor Ryan moved the discussion to our next steps: How do we move into the next phase? Who is carrying this forward? He advised Jesse Basset, Tim Cuff and Ginger Van Wagenen are willing to continue to serve. If Session agrees, what are their marching orders?

There was lengthy discussion about whether the Task Force had sufficient information to move forward. Ultimately, with guidance from the Task Force, Session agreed there was no further research required by the Task Force so the discussion turned to details such as the charge going forward, who should lead, role for Session etc. All agreed, as Carol Adrine put it, "it's not the man, but the plan" and we need a map.

Pastor Ryan broke down the main themes:

Who are the councils/ committees? Responsibilities?

Intergroup communication

Training and onboarding, succession planning, longer term sustainability

Pastor Drew suggested that we could draw an org chart as Session thinks it should be and then see how far we've drifted.

Jesse Bassett noted that there is still a lot to unpack from the survey results to, to do any restructuring in a meaningful way, we need to take the next phase seriously. He recommended that Session form working groups, with representation from Session overseeing each of those groups, while seeking input from Councils and committees.

Ruth Wasem moved to form three working groups (deacons, process/structure/org chart, deeper dive into the report) and report back at Winter Retreat. She noted that her motion doesn't include intergroup communication but she thinks these three tasks need to be done first. The motion was seconded by Tim Cuff. Following discussion, Jesse Bassett proposed an amendment:

> **MOTION: The Governance Task Force members will continue the work on mapping out the process and oversee the work of three working groups:**
>
> 1. **intergroup communication;**
> 2. **organizational structure and processes (including deacons);**
> 3. **training and onboarding (governance knowledge)**
>
> The amendment was accepted by Ruth Wasem, who seconded the motion.

Gary Sampson was concerned whether we have the people power for this. Ginger Van Wagenen noted that the working groups will include members from Councils, Committees, etc. Ruth Wasem wanted to assure that the organizational structure and the role of Deacons doesn't get lost. Carol Adrine assured her they won't!

At this point in the discussion, the question was called and the motion was unanimously approved.

Susan Wherley then suggested that there be at least one other Elder on each working group. Pastor Lindsay added that each should have at least one member of Council. Jesse Bassett agreed and offered that the Task Force will recommend which Elders should serve on which Working Groups and will ask for suggestions for others to participate. The proposed timeline for these initial steps is for the Task force to submit its proposal for next steps, with Elders slotted into the various Working Groups during the week of September 23 with formal Session approval at the October 7, 2006 Stated Meeting.

Ian Cameron volunteered to redline the various versions of Memorial Committee policies and instructions. He also volunteered to send to Care Counil examples of Deacon handbooks from other churches. Finally, Ian noted, as Carol Adrine mentioned, that the Deacons feel marginalized and suggested that Carol convey Session's gratitude for all that the Deacons do. Pastor Lindsay followed up, recommending that individual Elders write thank you notes for Carol to pass along.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Admin Council: Pastor Drew noted that Admin had sent its report by email which is now in the Share Drive, found here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lj8-TePmfltZIuGZFYu1AQsSGqZ5D2qx/edit and

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qDQpqZ0G6XoITwHponnckwB94hcwZQ97/edit

He acknowledged that there are no action items for Session but noted that there are tax issues to resolve pertaining to Anchor, a FPC tenant offering grief counseling, which will require due diligence before signing a long term lease with a for-profit entity.

Ian Cameron reported for Buildings & Grounds that asbestos removal is now complete with the proper documentation; the parking lot sealcoating is complete at a cost of cost $8848 due to increase in oil prices; stucco work on the ramp cost $2500; and the basement pipe replacement is scheduled at a cost of $19,820.

Pastor Drew reported that the boilers inspected and are in good working order. In addition, two active bee hives were deposited in the garth, which pose liability due to allergy. Fortunately, FPC's insurance does cover that liability.

Serve Council rested on its submitted written report, found here: (https://docs.google.com/document/d/11DEXhIph_cUjSR0pFZDk4KCTUpuv-Mvj/edit)

Faith Formation Council reported through Pastor Lindsay that the Junior and Senior high school trips were great and the Council is now looking at future trip locations.

Care Council: Carol Adrine reminded us that Celebrate Sunday is September 13 and they are asking every council/committee to host a table to share information about its activities and how to get involved. Pastor Lindsay asked Council Chairs to send her an email if a table is desired and what size. Both Serve and Admin requested a table.MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Nominating Committee - Susan Wherley and Peg Zitzner reported that they have recruited all of the necessary Deacons, are working on recruiting the next cohort of Elders, and have one Endowment Trustee (which is enough) but hoping for an affirmative response from one more, which would be great

Personnel Committee - Carol Adrine reported that they have finished the annual employee reviews for 2026 and they were excellent. Mark Bassett will begin his pastoral care role during the second week of Oct. Pastor Ryan added that Mark was in town recently and Lindsay coordinated three meet-and-greets for him, including one with members living at Judson Park and Judson Manor.

PASTORS REPORTS -

Pastor Lindsay advised that, with the beginning of the new school year, Faith Formation has been very busy. She also reported that she reached the Church of the Covenant the prior Sunday.

Pastor Drew reported that he has been asked by Reserve Care (formerly Hospice of the Western Reserve) to head a veterans' end-of-life care initiative for veterans, requiring approximately 3–4 hours/month. Pastor Ryan noted that this initiative is consistent with Pastor Drew's terms of call, under which he is obligated to serve the larger church and community.

Pastor Ryan announced that we are well organized going into the new year. He will be meeting with Faith Formation next week and will be proposing some small group worship opportunities, including a small group worship exchange with Iglesia Fuente de Salvacion and Refine Church.

Pastor Ryan also noted that next week, he is hosting faith leaders from Akron, Canton, Youngstown to discuss a broader strategy for dealing with the detention center in Youngstown. Peg Zitzner added that she has been sending information to Pastor Ryan about responses to the fear and tension in Springfield, OH.

MISCELLANEOUS

Susan Wherley reported that FPC was selected for the Interdependence Relay which will be held on the evening of November 19 . They've been talking to partners and working on what it will involve.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Ryan closed the meeting in prayer.

Upon motion, second and unanimous approval, Session was adjourned at approximately 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger Van Wagenen, Clerk