

MPCC Report to Presbytery

February 1, 2020

This report contains 2 parts: Introduction: BOD Report of November, 2019, and Introductory Report from MPCC Executive Director, Monica Williams.

MPCC BOD Report to Presbytery

MPCC concluded a challenging yet rewarding year, having navigated requirements to close our loan to renovate the Center while continuously operating the facility on 'skinny rations', ever-present deferred maintenance and legacy rebuilding issues.

At every juncture and obstacle the BOD relied upon the consistent voted support of the Body for the reclaiming and renewal of MPCC's mission and ministry, for which we are truly thankful.

As mentioned at the October, 2019 Presbytery meeting, it was our goal to hire an Executive Director by 12-31-19 so as to enter 2020 with this vital position filled such that we could immediately begin rebuilding the facility and professionally managing the entity. Our personnel committee advertised the position, vetted applicants, interviewed finalists, and by unanimous vote the BOD extended the offer to become Executive Director to Monica Williams. Monica's introductory statement is included as part of this report, and she is present today to meet as many of the Body as possible.

The BOD is fully aware of the huge scope of work ahead and of the imperative that we manage the effort with transparency and accountability to the Body. We know every decision will likely be scrutinized and in some cases second-guessed. Our only motivation in this work is the success of MPCC such that its

mission and ministry can be enhanced and preserved, and to that end, the BOD is committed to bring to bear all our combined experience and abilities.

Consistent with the October, 2019 vote of the Body to ratify changes to MPCC governance, the BOD retained the services of an outside CPA firm with extensive 501C-3 experience. We also transitioned to QuickBooks accounting software and established a new Operating bank account at BBVA bank in Keystone Heights, FL.

Construction contracts have been agreed upon and – as we meet today – (we hope) renovation of the main buildings and road have begun.

We thank the Body for your consistent support and pledge ourselves to the Mission and the tasks at hand.

Grace and Peace.
The MPCC BOD



Montgomery Center

Welcoming All

Winter Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine Executive Director, Monica Williams Introductory Report

02-01-2020

1- Personal Presentation:

I was born in Medellin, Colombia. My parents were youth pastors and my mom was also a missionary to the farmers in the mountains of Medellin. I owe to my grandma my devotion and love for God and His Word. She taught me and made me memorize chapters of the Bible, pray daily, and attend church almost every day. I have had a close relationship with God since I was a little girl. I wrote letters to God and learned to understand His answers through His word and His comforting peace.

I went to a Catholic school for elementary and middle school, and all my teachers were highly educated Catholic nuns. They not only taught me academic excellence, but also discipline and commitment as a way of life. I went to a Jewish school for high school, where I had the opportunity to learn about their culture and I participated in their most significant celebrations. I had the opportunity to meet and study with ministers from many different churches and denominations, including Catholic priests, in the Baptist University in Colombia.

I have served God in many different churches since I was 9 years old. I taught the younger class in Sunday school. I was part of the young missionary girls in the church where my parents served. I have been blessed to work with many different denominations. This has taught me to understand, love, and respect differences.

I learned that the best place I could be is in the center of God's will, after many life experiences, trying my own ways, my own agendas, and failing many times. It is in the center of God's will where I have seen the splendor of God's glory. I learned that I would always find success in following God's agenda, because He knows everything, He has all power and He has it all figured out.

I came to the United States of America on July 20, 2005, to work with Faith Church of the Redlands, where I served for more than fourteen years. I worked in many different ministries of the church and my most significant work was with children and youth. I was the director for our children's ministry coordinating volunteers, establishing and organizing programs, creating curriculums and restructuring the building to serve our children better. I am a co-founder of the school owned by the church, Faith Fellowship School, where I served in all areas, as ESE teacher, chaplain and principal. The school serves typical and special needs students from K5 through 12th grade and I was able to establish all the services and programs that are currently serving the students and their families. I left the school after hiring and training all the staff that

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took over my administrative functions. I am currently their professional adviser. I moved to Micanopy, FL on June 23, 2018 when I married the love of my life, Frank Williams. My husband is the Assistant US Attorney for the Northern District of Florida. We have seven kids, one granddaughter, and another one on the way. We are raising a 10-year-old daughter, who is the reason I got connected to Montgomery.

My husband and I are members of the McIntosh Presbyterian Church, where my former pastor recommended us to go. It was there I found two of the first people that I met in church when I first came to the States, Debbie and Bert Ayers. My husband and I love the church and its people, and we were embraced with love by the church. I am currently a ruler elder, willing to serve my church in every way I can.

I am convinced that God brought me to Montgomery and that He has a big plan and purpose for this NEW SEASON. My first experience with the Center was through my daughter's attendance in summer camp for the past two years. I saw the potential and the needs of Montgomery. I communicated some of my suggestions to Tommy Lane, who asked me to meet with Lexi and share with her the same suggestions. I offered my full support and help to Lexi as a volunteer.

When my husband and I learned that Montgomery needed an executive director, my husband said: "You would be the perfect fit for that position and you will help that place succeed. Send your resume to Tommy and let's see what God wants." I prayed, asking God to lead me to His perfect will and to prevent me from getting myself in a place where He wasn't calling me. I told Him, "God don't let this go through if Montgomery is not your perfect will for me. I know that I will succeed in anything that You call me to do, not in what I would pursue". God gave me peace and spoke to me through His word; He basically started giving me a plan of action, even before the job was offered to me. He spoke to me through Psalms 127:1-2 and the book of Nehemiah, in how I needed to lead the renovation of Montgomery. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days, seeking God first, in unity with many families, and following God's plan.

2- My Vision for Montgomery Center:

We are living in a time when young people are moving away from the church, and worse than that, they are moving away from God. Montgomery can help to reverse that. I am constantly seeking God and I am committed to work hard with the Board of Directors and my staff in restoring our testimony and relationships among us, with the Presbytery and with all the businesses that we have worked with.

The greatest thing that I heard in McIntosh church was that the Lord's Supper is not a Presbyterian table, but the **Table of the Lord**; it was there where I felt peace and joy to participate in the Lord's Supper. Now we need to restore Montgomery, the house of the Lord, where everyone is welcome. We need to share our blessings and practice Jesus' presence in meeting the needs of others. We need to keep moving toward being welcoming and practicing Jesus' presence with kindness, love and integrity.

Montgomery is in a critical situation, but we can make it better than ever. My staff and I can't do this alone. We need all of our Presbyterian family's commitment, support, diligence and work. I am sure that the previous Program Director would have been totally successful if she had full support, enough resources, and a good Executive Director to help her skills and gifts flourish.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Corinthians 1:10

I am sure that together we will find wisdom, great ideas and amazing skills that are fundamental in the TRANSFORMATION of Montgomery and in the RESTORATION of our relationships and reputation. The presence of God calls us into a relationship. We need to restore our old

relationships and establish new ones. We have a responsibility to reach out to the people that loved Montgomery once, and bring them back into that love. We all know that we need money, but 'Many Hands Make Light Work'/'Many Hands Make the Dream Work.' I have a plan and it will work faster if many hands take small pieces of it at a time. Help me get people to join us, let's walk together in this process. We will plan events to show every step of the way. Let's be the voice with every single step we take. Let this be the healing process for everyone that has been wounded by the past.

Rev. Cliff Lyda preached in our church and his message was a confirmation to me of what God has called me to do in Montgomery. He preached about practicing the presence of Jesus, which means: transform our minds, be bold, do things differently, do strange things, start to say yes to the things that others will say no to, change ourselves into something that we are not, keep working and changing, be inner directed, etc.

Many members of the Presbytery have approached me, offering very specific help. From the Board of Directors, Roger Martin, offered to be our Ambassador. He is committed to promote summer camp and our sponsorship program in the 58 churches of the Presbytery of St. Augustine. Glenn Dickson has offered to help in fundraising. Rebekah Rogers is helping us with the website. Marcia Graham has offered to not only be my spiritual support, but connect me with the churches in Jacksonville. I need all of you and your skills in action!!!

3- My Plan and Initial Report:

THE REDEMPTION PLAN; Clean, Organize, Restore and Unite Montgomery!

In the last month, I have been learning Montgomery in every way possible, through meetings and walking through the property. This has helped me to identify the overall needs of the Center and make an accurate diagnosis of the current situation of the property, its staff, resources and relationships.

- I met with Lexi Green, receiving information regarding requirements of the Executive Director and Program Director, also understanding the current administration and programs.
- I met with the staff, understanding their functions, dynamics, frustrations, ideas and expectations.
- I had a phone conference with Joel Winchip, the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association. He provided information about PCCCA and all the resources that they offered to us. He suggested I visit other Presbyterian centers and meet their directors.
- I met with the community through Keystone Safety Net Alliance, meeting the leaders of our community. I learned about the needs of the community, services and possible partnerships to put Montgomery in the spotlight.
- I met **Karen Lake**, Keystone's **Mayor**, and we talked about the possibilities and ways Montgomery could be of help and a solution to some of the most critical problems in the community. She mentioned that we would be compensated by the government when serving some of the needs of the community.
- I met **Tina Baker** and we talked about creating a program for kids at risk, which will be funded by the government as well. We will meet again in a month, to meet the person who can help us in the process.

- I met **Michelle Goytia**, coordinator of the **Family Services Department** and we talked about mutual services and our sponsorship program.
- I met with **JoAnna Weldon** the President of **Answers** and we talked about finding ways to become part of the answers to women and kids.
- I met with many professionals to help me look at the property through specialized eyes, helping me to prioritize the most important needs of the property.
- I met with **Jim Bertie**, a friend who owns an AC company. He brought his crew to evaluate and diagnose the condition of each AC system on the property. His short conclusion is a lack of cleaning and maintenance, inappropriate installation, and violation of codes. They sent me a written report and he committed to inspect our equipment once or twice a year at no cost to us.
- I met with **Jim McNeil**, a friend who worked as an Inspector for Alachua County. He suggested prioritizing projects. He will come back to give more detailed advice.
- I met with **Jesse Browning**, he owns a construction company and he is quoting some of the most important restoration and building projects that will help us meet the safety codes for our compliance.
- I met with **Aaron Vurgason**, he owns an electricity company. He looked at our entire electric system and he will send us a proposal to take care of the violation of codes, so we can be in compliance for the fire inspection.

My conclusion after all these meetings and what I have seen is that we need to CLEAN, ORGANIZE, RESTORE and UNITE Montgomery, even before remodeling. The property, resources, commercial reputation and our name are dirty and need to be CLEANED. Our property, administration and resources need to be ORGANIZED (creating policies and procedures; project and purchase orders, inspection reports, schedules and meetings). Our ideas, dreams, resources and agendas need to be UNITED. We need to RESTORE everything that is broken. There are too many things that are broken that could cause the center to be shut down and the remodeling/restoring more expensive. For example, we are not in compliance with the fire department and the issues haven't been addressed.

Our plan MUST be the **REDEMPTION Plan** and we need to act on it!

4- My New Ideas:

Let's start the future: Montgomery and its ministries are not dead, it has been reborn. Let's seek together the NEW glorious days!

My early morning driving to Montgomery every day has been very enlightening! Most of these ideas have come to me in my early driving.

We should create small and regular events for our Presbyterian churches, to give them the opportunity to walk with us in the process of "Cleaning, Organizing, Restoring and Unifying" Montgomery center. Below are some of the ideas that I have, based on our needs and the people that are willing to get involved in very specific projects.

- **Making Our House Beautiful Again:** With this project we will invite the churches to come and be a part of making our house a beautiful place again. I would volunteer our McIntosh Presbyterian Church. I will talk to my Pastor about it. First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach is on board for an amazing project.

- **Family Free Fun Day:** First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach will come in February and they want to do a significant project. I suggested that they take care of the "Playground and its surroundings." After this is done we would invite all the Presbyterian churches to come and see our NEW playground area and have some fun with us. The food could be simple and free, or not, that is something that we can work out with our Farm to Table service.
- **Montgomery Center, God's Fixer Upper:** A house of great value has to be renovated and decorated. We would allow one family to come and stay for a weekend, for the cost of refurbishing one bedroom/cabin. My family started this project and we remodeled the Inn, room 102, which would serve as a model for future families. My in-laws will decorate another Inn room, but we still have 8 more rooms in that building and many other rooms in other buildings that need our love.
- **Ancient/Prehistoric Weapons:** My husband will contact some archery organizations that he knows and who know him, to renew our archery program. He is also contacting one of our friends, a Viking, who makes arrowheads and atlats to invite him and possibly include this in our archery program.
- **Preserve and Recover our Environment:** Our niece, Rachel Townsend works with the national parks in Gainesville, and they are working on a project to preserve and recover our nature/national parks. Rachel is willing to come and evaluate our trees and plants in general, to give us her professional advice. My daughter works with the US Department of the Interior in the National Parks Headquarters. If we get on board with this project, we will get Montgomery in the national loop as an environmental organization/resource.
- **Agape Love:** There is no love like God's inclusive love. We want to let others know that we welcome all, so I thought about a conference about being inclusive. My sister is part of an organization that trains educators in being Inclusive. I am going to talk to her to see if they will come here and help us with that, after we evaluate their curriculum.
- **Festivals:** I asked Zach about this community and the things that will attract people and he says that there is nothing to do here. SO! I thought about contacting the organization that puts together some of the festivals that we have in our district, like the Medieval, Art, Native Americans, Prehistoric and other festivals. We can bring some fun events to the community and it will get us in the spotlight as a community center.
- **A House for Everyone:** Promoting Montgomery in other churches and institutions for their conferences, retreats and programs. I have access to many Hispanic churches that are connected to the International Bible University.
- **Fourth Quarter, Men's Ministry:** My husband got on fire with the idea that Tommy has been talking to him about for a while now. He asked me to reserve Montgomery for 200 men for a retreat in October. He will talk to Tommy about it, but I am thrilled after listening to him and our friend **John Riley**.
- **Sponsorship Program:** Allowing people to sponsor our campers, this way more campers will have the opportunity to be part of our programs and we will have enough funds to create more successful programs.
- **Bring your Business and Partner with Us:** Contacting services and business to meet the needs of our community.
- **Red Cross:** Becoming a shelter for families of this community affected by natural disasters. The government funds this.
- **Youth at Risk:** Creating educational programs in partnership with other organizations.

Looking forward to many NEW IDEAS, until they become Montgomery Family Traditions!!!

Monica Williams
Executive Director