



From the Director's Desk

September 24, 2024

I was recently asked by a long-time Montgomery supporter, "I hear there are changes coming to Montgomery. Can you tell me more about what to expect?"

"Of course!" I responded, "Many changes are occurring behind the scenes. The biggest change I hope you will see is the improved quality standards of hospitality and housekeeping." One thing hasn't changed: we have no money. Montgomery has been running a deficit for at least a decade. We struggle to keep up with decades of deferred maintenance.

But we have hope! "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1 Hope, however, is not a strategy. God always provides, but He doesn't want us to sit idly by waiting for a miracle.

There are several opportunities that could directly impact the future of Montgomery, including:

1. The sale of approximately 20 acres of undeveloped land at the front of the property could save the ministry from the compounding financial struggles. We are simultaneously researching a conservation easement in the same area to protect the threatened gopher tortoise habitat.
2. With the pledge of not one, but TWO matching gifts of \$100,000, every dollar that you give is doubled with a little help from our friends! Gifts may be made by check, with "matching gift" in the memo line, or by giving online through our [secure giving platform](#).
3. Our CPA completed the paperwork last July for ERC funds and found us eligible for \$164,000. There have been delays in fund distribution due to widespread fraud, but we prayerfully anticipate receiving the funds by year's end.
4. A local realtor estimated monthly rent at the Lakehouse from \$2000 to \$2500. This adds to our revenue potential as a long-term rental, or short-term rentals as a retreat house. However, there are tax implications for rental property, and so more research is needed. The house needs about \$10k in repairs and a new roof to be habitable.

Would you join us in praying that if the way be cleared, we would follow faithfully in the direction God is leading? More than anything, we want to be sure that we *never end up in this situation again*. We cannot pursue these opportunities without also taking a hard look at our operations. We have a team in place currently scrutinizing every penny of income and expense from the past year to evaluate our financial viability. We are working with a business executive (on loan from DCSI, thank you) to guide the process and assist in developing a business plan moving forward.

As my Presbyterian family, you all have shown up. You have celebrated with me, grieved with me, and encouraged me along the way. You, my Presbyterian family, make me excited to continue in this ministry! While we haven't met all of our revenue goals for the year, two line items that exceed our revenue expectations on the balance sheet are POSA Meetings, and POSA Church Groups. *Thank you*. Thank you for choosing Montgomery as your preferred space for meetings and church retreats! We see you. We are grateful.

In the meantime, we are picking up the pieces from 2024 and moving forward. I have spent the year learning each department and job responsibility at a deeper level, spending many hours in the trenches to continue operations. This has opened my eyes to outdated methods.

I am implementing operational changes in an effort to conserve resources, work more efficiently, and use 21st century technology to our advantage. One such change is a streamlined system for booking groups. You can see the first step of the process with an [embedded guest inquiry form](#) on our website via Monday.com. This captures specific needs from guests in the initial inquiry, reducing the time needed to create an estimate and provide a contract, therefore improving the quality of service provided to our guests. There are many similar changes that we are transitioning to across departments.

2024 has been a challenging year. I appreciate all who have reached out to see how I/we am/are doing, who have shown up to help in times of need, and who have answered the phone to brainstorm ways that we might continue sharing the love of God with all we encounter. This has been a grace-filled year, if we just have eyes to see.

We have continued to move forward with the help of generous donors, who have funded a new AC unit for the dining hall, drinking water fountains throughout camp, and acoustic panels in the dining hall (in progress), resurfaced the walk-in cooler, donated a reach-in cooler, and purchased a Monday.com subscription. Thank you for your ongoing support for the ministry's day to day needs!

In closing, I have a few announcements to share from Montgomery Center:

- We will not be doing a pie fundraiser this year. In reviewing the time, energy, and resources required, we determined that this is not a viable fundraiser. We are grateful for those who have ordered pies to support Montgomery over the years, but regret to inform you that we will not be providing your holiday pies this year.
- Save the Date! This year's gala will be held on **Friday, December 6**. We pray that this is a meaningful time to fellowship and celebrate the season together with friends and family.
- Our biggest fundraiser is coming up at [McIntosh 1890s Day](#) on Saturday, October 12. A day where the sleepy town of 400 explodes to a population of 40,000. Montgomery will serve biscuits and gravy, and pulled pork sandwiches for hungry festival go-ers. Find us on the corner of Avenues F and 7th on the lawn of McIntosh Presbyterian Church!
- Registration for both [Winter Camp](#) (Jan 3-5) and [Summer Camp](#) are live now! Spring retreat dates are set for Feb 28 to March 2.
- The last day to register for Cruising with Montgomery in the Caribbean is quickly approaching! Contact [Jimmy Steele](#) to book your stateroom today.

See our attached calendar of events to learn more about our upcoming programming. We look forward to seeing you at camp again for any of our [upcoming events](#).

Faithful in hope. Patient in affliction. Steadfast in prayer.

Rebekah Rodgers
Executive Director