**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – January 18, 2023 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Dorothy Clementson, Kathy Matson, Laura O’Keefe, Bree Vandenberg, Michael Hammett

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=0):**

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=1):** Amanda Garcia-Harris

1. **Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Pastor Danielle opened us in prayer.

1. **Consent Agenda: December Minutes and Pastor’s Report**

The Pastor’s Report noted a number of needed parsonage repairs, and we wanted to learn more about what the process for getting these done are. PD talked to Hans & Linda (treasurer & property). They talked to Columbia first, who said the church is responsible because we’re not affiliated with Columbia, but we do pay rent to them so we’re a little unsure if that’s true. In rent stabilized apartments, they only fix things to the lowest possible standard. We should get some more information about what they’re responsible for and what we’re responsible for and then determine the best way to move the larger projects forward. What usually happens for apartment repairs is we’ll need to work with management to get approval on any repairs. Pastor Brown had some renovations done, so it would be good for someone to talk to her about what she did. PD has lunch with her coming up and will talk with her about it.

We noted that the Church Council is ultimately responsible for the apartment. Now that the needs have been shared, it’s our responsibility to budget and assess the larger renovation needs. One small request we should approve now is the microwave cost and include it in the 2023 budget. This budget change was made before the Council voted on the budget later in the meeting.

There was also a note in the Pastor’s Report about volunteer trainings for food ministry & pantry, and we will want to have further conversation about volunteer training across ministry areas. Food ministry is in need of more Council guidance and participation, which could be useful to have more distinct Council representation.

At the next Council meeting (after elections), we’d like to name the areas that could use more Council leadership & liaison and make those assignments/designations. Every working committee should have a member of Council so that we can get more regular reports and checks & balances.

One recommendation from the Latino ministry team is to find more opportunities for bilingual worship, but this feels like a larger Council decision rather than a singular move forward. Latino leadership is worn out and as such the future of the ministry is a bit up in the air more for emotional reasons than strategic reasons.

What was the conversation at the last meeting around Latino ministry & annual meeting reporting? If we’re going to sunset this program, how can we do it in a wider and welcoming way that respects the dedication and resources of this ministry from the last 15 years.

For the annual meeting update, the best plan is to acknowledge weariness and uncertainty but that we’re (Latino ministry & Council) thinking seriously about the future and will have updates later in 2023 about what this multicultural ministry can look like in the future in a way that best serves everyone in the Advent community.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the consent agenda.

1. **2023 Budget**

Hans shared details of the 2023 budget with the Council so we can make final adjustments and approve sending it to the Congregation for a vote.

The good news is that the Stewardship pledge drive was very successful (thank you Stewardship!). We had a dramatic increase in pledges (almost 40% from last year) which gives us a very strong foundation. This indicated to the budget team that there’s excitement for supporting the mission of Advent.

A key number for the income portion of the budget is weekly envelopes (regular offerings from worshippers we can track). The actual for 2022 was slightly under our 2022 goal. Given the success of pledging, we are recommending a 15% bump from 2022 actuals. This is one of the hardest things to project – partially data, partially gut, partially faith.

Advent has often done a stretch budget, but this budget feels doable based on actuals and attendance patterns we’ve been seeing. Rather than a stretch, it can be a challenge/invitation. How do we work together to meet this goal? Invite others, reach out to new folks, an opportunity for all of us to dig deep as a (non-violent) call to arms.

The special gifts line is largely LCC who has asked to reduce rent by 50%.

For grants next year we anticipate getting the $40k city support and we’re confident in being able to find an additional $10k.

We are reducing the draw from the mission fund on schedule to $25k; we have an additional $111k draw for Welcome Center and their team provided a thorough report including financials.

We reduced the draw from the parsonage fund this year to what will actually be needed for parsonage expenses. It’s important to note that we need to come back to find a strategy to reduce draws over time so we can move to a fully operational budget before the funds deplete.

Undesignated funds are a total of various income sources; we typically tithe to the synod 10% of our undesignated funds. In the past it has been just weekly envelopes & grants.

Should we also include special gifts as part of this total? Yes, Council agrees we should.

For our payments to Synod in 2022, we paid what we budgeted for synod gifts, regardless of if we actually made the full amount of budgeted income. For 2023, the budget team recommends we tithe on 10% of actual undesignated funds. We will share with synod what we’ve budgeted, but that we’ll sure up with the final payment up or down at the end of th eyear.

The budget team recommends a 5% cost of living increase for staff salaries.

The food programs income and expenses reflects what the budget team thinks the food program should be spending this year based on their income last year. We did not get a budget request from the food program. They currently have no money in their dedicated account. Last year they spent $40k from the account plus between $60 - $70k. Since they took in about $60k in grants last year, we’re hoping they can duplicate and grow that by about 10%.

Music Mondays had a budget and are confident in their numbers. They anticipate spending about $97k, bringing in $80k and drawing the remainder from their ~$100k reserve.

Music Mondays & Food programs are designated contributions. If they receive more money than they spend, then it remains in their account for future use. If they run a deficit then the church covers.

We occasionally get donations specified for “Food Pantry” or “Community Lunch” often from outside of the congregation. They are technically in one budget line, but how can or should we handle this in the budget, accounting, etc? We don’t currently track it other than what’s on the gift (right now all goes into the food bucket). The assumption is that there’s enough money coming in for food ministry that it ultimately evens out. The only way to change this would be to track it separately, which we could only do if the programs budget accordingly. They would need to have a larger conversation about budgets and planning, which will not be possible for 2023, but necessitates a conversation. We would want to hear how they want to handle it as leaders and work with that desire to make a recommendation.

Hans noted one off-budget item for us: we pulled 5% of mission fund value to put into a dedicated fund for deferred building maintenance which was agreed to by the Council and congregation at the 2022 annual meeting. This will continue for the agreed upon 10 years.

Hans will be working on an additional fund draw report for transparency about what that looks like.

What is the $2500 office supplies line intended to cover? It is based on actuals from last year. We will need a new copier/printer that will continue on a lease program, but could be higher than last year. Current copier charges are $5500 budgeted. We agreed to up copier charges to $7000 to account for this new need. Music Mondays agreed to pay for their copies, which we estimate to be about $2500 which would approximately even out this adjustment.

The utilities budget is $10k even though we only paid $436 due to meter issues which we agreed to flag for ConEd. Only budgeted $16k for electricity but actuals were about $20k so we were closer.

Currently at a $10k deficit budget scheduled, compared to last year where we had a $31k scheduled deficit (and $33k actual). This feels like a good step forward (if we make it!)

We also noted that the deficit as a percentage of the budget is skewed slightly by having Music Mondays & Food ministry in our budget (which even out).

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the 2023 budget with the discussed amendments which Hans will make.

Thank you to the budget committee (Hans, Pastor, Madelyn, Norma, with support from Linda) for your work here!

1. **2023 Annual Meeting**

Date: January 29, 2023 after 11am service, in person with Zoom option

* 1. Food & Fellowship time – Hayley Moe volunteered to manage this and will continue moving this forward
  2. Report collection – current outstanding reports: Council, Nominating, Chorale, Music Ministry, Food Ministry, Stewardship, KEMPS, Treasurer. Should have everything by the weekend. We said the budget would be available tomorrow, but do we want to wait for further reports (investment, finance review, etc). We agreed we should wait to send until Saturday or Sunday (with a firm Friday deadline) so we have as many reports as possible.
  3. Resolutions or concerns
     1. Celebration of the work done in 2022 (PD, Damaris, DT)
     2. Budget approval (Hans)
     3. Council members (DT)
     4. Nominating Committee (DT)
     5. Reapprove Carlos as synodical deacon (Damaris)
     6. Basement update (without a vote)
     7. Council report – this year Council will be looking at what Latino ministry looks like moving forward (acknowledge that we didn’t offer a contract or are doing a search, that this is a time of rest and recalibration); what the future of hybrid ministry can look like (will want to get more data and ensure that we’re meeting the right needs for people online and in person); food ministry. Damaris will write something to share with the Council that we can review and she will read/share at the end of the meeting.
  4. Council nominations
     1. Mary Jordan Samuel & Carolyn Riehl (?) – Pastor Danielle will confirm with Carolyn Riehl, Dorothy T will send questions ASAP

We noted that at our next meeting in February the Council will elect the new officers. Damaris will not serve as president next year, so we will need a new member of Council to step into this role. Thank you to Damaris for your service.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday February 15 at 7pm on Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

We closed the meeting with the Lord’s Prayer.

Thank you to Michael Hammett for your six years of service on Council!

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 1/18/23*