**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – February 15, 2023 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=11)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Dorothy Clementson, Kathy Matson, Laura O’Keefe, Carolyn Riehl, Mary Jordan Samuel, Amanda Garcia-Harris, Bree Vandenberg

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=1):** Hayley Moe

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=0):**

1. **Opening Reflection & Prayer**

We did a round robin to introduce existing and new Council members, introducing ourselves and sharing what we enjoy and appreciate about serving on Council.

Pastor Danielle opened us in prayer.

1. **Vote on Executive Committee**

The Council must elect executive officers annually. The executive positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Dorothy Clementson is nominated for President. Mary Jordan Samuel is nominated for Vice President. Dorothy Trigg is nominated for Secretary. Hans Kriefall is nominated for Treasurer.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the slate of nominees.

Thank you to all nominees for their willingness to serve, and to Damaris Maclean for her service as President for the past 2 years.

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

We discussed a few points from the Pastor’s Report. We’d like to get a team/task force together to assess hybrid worship and needs for both in person and online communities. The task for the team will be to explore hybrid worship as it currently stands and look toward what the future might hold. There are some people already involved in these areas of worship that Pastor Danielle will recruit for the team, and she asked Carolyn Riehl to join the team as the Council representative/co-chair, based on her experience with both in person and online worship. Dorothy Trigg also recommended Mary Trigg for the team, based on her experience with both in person and online worship as well as past collaborative worship planning experience

We also noted that it would be helpful to have in person data numbers as well as data on who worships online in real time and numbers throughout the week. For now, the hospitality team will count in person numbers and online numbers can be pulled from Facebook analytics.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the creation of a hybrid worship task force, co-chaired by Pastor Danielle and Carolyn Riehl.

We discussed an update on the sanctuary sound system. An online worshipper did an analysis of our existing system and made some recommendations about what is available in the marketplace and what would best suit our needs to replace our dying microphones. There are a few people who have pledged to donate specifically to upgrading our microphones. There have also been requests for hearing assistance devices. The microphone upgrade would be fairly straightforward, but the hearing assistance will require further conversation.

A few questions that came up around this update:

* Would property need to be involved in this? No because it wouldn’t affect the physical property, it would be much like fixing the piano or organ.
* What are the budget implications? It’s like they are special gifts designated for this project, so it isn’t currently in the budget but also shouldn’t negatively impact the budget. Some money for this is already coming in.
* Are we getting competitive bids on this? Sweetwater is the main supplier of systems like this and the company we’ve used for projects like this previously, we have a standing relationship with them. We are not currently getting competitive bids but can if necessary.

With the February election of new Council officers, there was not an Executive Committee session ahead of this month’s meeting, and we discussed the importance of making sure that we do have Executive Committee sessions ahead of Council to review pastoral and staff updates along with any other work happening. This will ensure we have productive and efficient meetings, so we can come to the Council with an agenda of information to stay informed and know what needs to be discussed, or voted on. There was agreement from all that this procedural step will be helpful both for Council and for Pastor Danielle to improve communications and procedures.

We noticed that Pastor Sergio is leading a small group and were curious about what his next step after Advent is or will be. He’s still affiliated with Advent currently and feels at home in our community. He reached out that he’d like to continue his film small group as a volunteer with the dedicated group of folks who have been part of that group for a while. He’s currently interviewing for a few opportunities and we hope to be able to announce his next steps soon.

There were a few different global relief effort requests noted in the Pastor’s Report. How can we help support and lift up these opportunities? We discussed that perhaps they could be lifted up during the offering introductions. It was recommended that we develop a process for how to respond to requests like this that will likely continue coming in over time. The goal of this process would be to allow us to respond to requests efficiently and procedurally, without cannibalizing on Advent’s regular fundraising needs. Damaris Maclean will lead a small task force to develop this policy. There’s a lot of administrative detail for how donations come in and get paid out. Bree Vandenberg and Hans Kriefall also agreed to participate.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the Pastor’s Report.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the January 2023 meeting minutes, with 2 abstentions.

1. **January Financial Reports**

Hans highlighted a few areas that are good to look at monthly as a brief “training session” in addition to a few notable updates:

* We have applied for and should qualify for an $87k employee retention credit as a result of our PPP loans. Thank you to Madelyn and Linda for finding this and moving it forward!
* Linda and Norma have been straightening out our disability and workers comp payments and we are expecting credits here as well. Any refunds will be put into the Mission Fund which currently acts as the general reserve.
* Statement of Financial Position – this report tells us where our cash is at a moment in time. We’re pulling a set amount from the Parsonage fund and Mission fund to support operating expenses. Those numbers will shrink in the second quarter when we reduce this draw as budgeted.
* Basement renovation fund – 50% of anything else we do for the basement will be represented in this line.
* The general reserve is zeroed out as we used it to cover our deficit from last year.
* Statement of Dedicated Accounts – If we end up raising money for a particular cause or project it would come into this page. Food ministry started the year with $45k and has already brought in $15k. They have been spending money at a sensible pace. A few accounts that need to be paid out include Seafarers, Lutheran World Relief, and the KEMPS (Kibeta English Medium Primary School) scholarship fund. Pastor Danielle and Hans will connect separately to confirm the scholarship payout schedule.
* The Meghan Kelly memorial fund has $25k in it currently. This fund was dedicated to move the Jesus and the children window and the project is complete. We should discuss with the Kellys how else to spend it so that it’s not still sitting there.
* We noted that afterschool program isn’t active any more but still has $1300 in a dedicated account. It’s a small amount of money, but we should determine how to use that money, probably for another youth program.

We are ahead of our budget overall 1 month in! Income is exceeding expenses! This is in part because a large donor gives their donation annually which came in in January (this is also reflected last year if we compare YoY). We received the final payment of the Latino Ministry synod grant, which will go into the operating budget for now. Space sharing is very healthy! Amanda is doing a great job tracking and receiving payments for our space sharers. Hans is still going to look into the gas charging (or lack thereof) issue with ConEd.

We also did a brief column heading review in the statement of activities. From left to right they are:

* Annual budget as approved by the congregation
* YTD actual is received as of Jan 31
* YTD as % of budget; YTD Last Year
* Current Month Actual
* Last Year Month Actual.

An idea was shared for a different column to show YTD budget as an actual number instead of a percentage which could help reduce the math necessary to benchmark. Hans can take another look at what other columns might be and see what might work better for folks.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the January financial reports.

1. **Nominating Committee Conversation**

Bree is coming off of Council this year and will be leading the nominating committee. She spoke with the other nominating committee members (Ellie Sudbrock and Norma Martin) and they want to ensure membership numbers are accurate and up to date so that they have a solid group of people to choose from. They are developing a schedule for the year to keep the team on track. In the spring they will send out a survey to existing Council members to determine what kind of people we need for Council. In the summer they will develop a list of potential people to join Council, and ask them in the fall to have people ready to go in January.

If you have any ideas of folks for future Council members please talk to Bree!

1. **Code of Ethics**

Every year we are required to affirm as a Council the code of ethics for financial/business ethics as stated in our constitution. It’s also very helpful for our granting purpose as it also counts as our conflict of interest statement.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the code of ethics.

1. **Synod Assembly Representation**

We have 2 lay members who will represent us along with Pastor Danielle and Pastor Jim, and Hayley will likely attend as a visitor. The Synod encourages looking for diversity of representation (gender, age, etc). The assembly will now be every 2 years instead of annually to help ease congregational budgets. The Council should nominate people to reach out to to ask to attend, and we discussed a few potential options including Aaron Wunsch, Dorothy Clementson, Carolyn Riehl.

In future years, we will aim to vote on this at the annual meeting as noted in the constitution.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve Dorothy Clementson, and authorize Pastor Danielle to recruit a second person.

1. **Building & Property Committee Update**

Mary Jordan Samuel shared a brief update from the property committee. They aren’t requesting anything from the Council (yet). Three things they wanted to highlight:

* There is currently roof work being done to help solve some water in the basement
* They processed paperwork for a third party inspection of the Lula which needs to be done annually.
* They are working with the food ministry team to review the broken kitchen vent and get some bids to help get that fixed.

1. **Nonprofit leadership training**

Dart Westphal would be available and willing to do a “nonprofit governance” training to help the Council with things to think about and policies, etc. It would be great to do this separate from a Council meeting, and ideally in person. Hans will work with Dart for some scheduling options, ideally a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon.

1. **Council Meetings & Process**

As the new Executive Committee determines priorities and plans for the Council this year, we discussed the need for balance between staff leadership trust and the need/desire for more council involvement in regular business functions to help ensure the Church runs smoothly as an organization. We also discussed wanting more Council representation on committees to be able to have regular reporting back to Council. We noted that meeting on Zoom has been difficult and has resulted in a bit of a loss of function and general spirit. It was suggested that the Executive Committee discusses a schedule for meeting more regularly in person.

1. **Next Meeting**

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

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Pastor Danielle closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 2/15/23*