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

**Present – Voting (n=10)**: Dorothy Clementson, Pastor Danielle Miller, Mary Jordan Samuel, Carolyn Riehl, Kathleen Matson, Bree Vandenberg, Laura O’Keefe, Damaris Maclean, Dorothy Trigg, Amanda Garcia-Harris

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=2):** Aaron Wunsch, Norma Martin

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=1):**  Hans Kriefall

**Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Dorothy C opened us in prayer.

1. **Consent Agenda**

* Pastor’s Report
  + We received two City Council discretionary grants today! $10k for the Food Ministry and $5k for Music Mondays.
  + Manhattan Conference is entering into an intentional conversation around Lutheran witness in Manhattan around support, shared ministry, and how we can strengthen one another and the witness to the gospel in Manhattan. They will be visiting the congregations in Manhattan and reviewing reports and congregational makeup over the next year, and then having conversations about how to move forward. PD was part of work like this on LI previously and there were some interesting and helpful things that came out of it to help strengthen communities overall.
    - Damaris recommended two books for future thinking – *Imaginable* by Jane McGonagall and *The Good Ancestor* by Roman Krznaric
  + The new microphones were all installed today by a stage manager from Juilliard that Jeremy connected us to. Thank you Julius!
* September Minutes
* September Financial Reports
  + Hans provided a current report that noted we are at a YTD deficit of $57k. The two main areas of concern are congregational giving ($30k) and space sharing ($12k).
  + Dorothy T asked if the giving deficit was more due to being behind in pledges or behind in overall giving. Noting that giving is confidential, but Dorothy C did just send out the Q3 statements and pulled a few that are behind. There are a few categories – some who moved, some who have just stopped giving, and some who have historical giving patterns later in the year. PD noted that in 2019 we were at about 60% to budget at this point, and this year we’re at about 67% to annual budget so we’re ahead there.
    - Pledges aren’t always specific about plans for giving to restricted funds, which can cause some budgeting concerns but generally not cash flow issues.
    - Giving & Finance team to look at messaging around restricted gifts pledging to make it clear what people are pledging to restricted funds vs general operating.

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

1. **Constitution Update**

Mary Jordan reviewed the Advent Constitution and the Synod template constitution and made necessary update recommendations to put Advent in compliance with the Synod template.

The ELCA has a model constitution that it encourages congregations to model, and some recommended language for other sections. This model came out in 2022 and our constitution was last updated in 2009.

Mary Jordan shared the 2009 Advent constitution with track changes of what would bring it up to the ELCA model. There are a number of sections that are not required, so rather than track changes there is a table of changes and recommendations.

Ahead of the November meeting, please review and come ready to discuss any questions or suggestions around the non-required sections or any questions or concerns about the required sections. Please share any comments or questions to Mary Jordan directly by **Wednesday November 8** to be prepared ahead of the next meeting.

The goal is to have this approved by Council to be able to share with the congregation in our annual meeting.

Thank you Mary Jordan!

1. **Associate Pastor Call Update**

Pastor Danielle shared an update on the potential to call Hayley or another associate pastor:

When PD first came, we had Pastor Gary who was part time but practically full time, plus a number of other staff members. Many of our programmatic staff have retired or left and we haven’t replaced those positions.

We have been discussing extending a call to Hayley as an associate pastor, focused on first thirds ministry, for a three year period to test the position’s viability to be a growth stimulator.

Advent has a lot of room for growth; we just need to have the will. Our 20s/30s ministry has grown from 7 to 40 people, with 25 who are very active.

The MNYS bishop was going to speak with the bishop of North Dakota, as Hayley is required to consider any calls from her home synod first. At this point the ND synod is not willing to release her until she interviews with a few churches they have identified as potential placements.

Even if Hayley is not able to take a call to Advent, we think we should move forward with an associate pastor call for someone. The first step for this is creating a call committee which Dorothy T has volunteered to head.

We want to also have an initial conversation with the congregation that we want to be able to do this, and gauge the will of the congregation. We’re doing other nickel-and-diming math to find some funds as well as applying for grants, but we want to also bring the congregation along with us with the excitement and will of support. This would need to be part of the giving conversation throughout the end of the year, and we want to think about how to position it well. This can be something to discuss in the November Council meeting.

If Hayley can take this position, it would still be a call process, but there is a model for going through this as more of a known call.

1. **Music Mondays Update**

There was a conversation with Hans, Dorothy C, Aaron, and Norma, along with some follow-up conversations. As we think as a Council moving forward, we need to focus on how we are communicating with regular, consistent, and clear communication, which can help make future conversations across ministries smoother. They spoke about Music Mondays and the vision for the ministry moving forward along with conversation around some of the hard costs around the ministry.

Aaron & Norma shared a proposal with the Council to revisit the initial $20k contribution proposal, which would be a $7,365 annual contribution to Advent. This takes into account bookkeeper costs, office administrator support, and copier charges but not larger administrative or space sharing costs. Dorothy C proposed a slight adjustment to account further for Midday Music to an annual contribution of $9,812.

We discussed the difference between the two proposals and if there is a balance we can find between them.

As a Council we want to ensure that we continue moving forward with future thinking conversations with gratitude and love rather than distrust. Music Mondays has contributed great things to Advent and the community at large especially in a world where the arts are underfunded. And it’s grown so much in a wonderful way that we want to support. We just also want to look at the hard people & financial costs and how there can be some balance and operating support.

Aaron also encouraged the Council (and other Advent members) to attend Music Mondays and experience the program and the community that it creates across Advent and the wider Advent community. Thank you to Aaron & Norma for their dedicated and long work around this ministry. Part of their thinking for the future is about how to maintain and build infrastructure as the budget has gotten larger to cover the needs of the program. This process has been instructive to keep open communication

From a financial perspective, it would make sense to do a yearly review of this contribution amount as well as the ministry overall. October would be a good time for this moving forward so we’re looking at it ahead of budgeting. We will also track the individual costs more closely going into this contribution (Bookkeeper, office administrator support, and copier charges) so that in future years we are making this calculation more reflective of actual costs. This likely wouldn’t create major changes or increases year over year.

Music Mondays have had variable finances year to year and has been lucky to have a surplus for the recent years, but has operated in deficit in other years. We asked if this would cause financial concerns for this year, and Aaron and Norma confirmed it would not.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve a $9,812 contribution for 2023 from the Music Mondays to the general operating fund, to be re-evaluated annually based on continued tracking of actual hard costs.

1. **Nominating Committee Update**

Laura and Dorothy T have both agreed to re-up their 3 years. Dart Westphal has accepted an invitation to join the Council.

We discussed briefly the total number of Council members needed and will review this further in our November meeting when we discuss the Constitution updates.

*Post-meeting update: The executive committee regrouped with the nominating committee via email and confirmed we can constitutionally accept additional Council members, and the nominating committee is continuing to reach out to new potential Council members. They are aiming at a total of 3-5 new members, including Dart.*

1. **Upcoming Meetings**
   1. November 15 at 7pm – hybrid
   2. December 20 at 7pm – hybrid
   3. Please complete the Hospitality Audit ([Digital](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N6SHnrB0a-sex-fUqcwWIZh0xE6A1oqK/view?usp=drive_link) / [Print](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l5QdcWgA0rik3b887jB3OsACdy-Nqo4d/view?usp=drive_link))

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Pastor Danielle closed the meeting in prayer.