**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – December 13, 2023 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=7)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Mary Jordan Samuel, Kathleen Matson, Bree Vandenberg, Dorothy Trigg, Hans Kriefall, Damaris Maclean

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=3):** Vicar Hayley Moe, Norma Martin, Ellie Sudbrock

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=4):** Dorothy Clementson, Carolyn Riehl, Amanda Garcia-Harris, Laura O’Keefe

**Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Pastor Danielle opened us in prayer.

1. **Nominating Committee Report**

The nominating committee started in spring of 2023 to fill the openings for 2024 council. We decided to format a survey to distribute to other council members. This was sent in April. We received the survey results by May.

In June we analyzed the results and concluded that we were looking for candidates that had a passion for evangelism and outreach being the number one quality along with experience with organizational management and then education of children and adults being third. The nominating committee agreed that we were looking for candidates who demonstrate positive, effective, relationships with managers, leaders and administrators.

Over the summer we surfaced several names. In August, the nominating committee approached Dart Westphal to fill the seat opened by Brelyn Vandenberg’s cycling off.

In October, we realized we committed an error. Because of a misreading of our constitution, we offered the seat only to one candidate. Also, new knowledge of the resignation from council member Dorothy Clemenson, we needed at least one more seat filled. In addition, the nominating committee could offer three more seats for the 2024 Church Council.

October and November we spent talking to other candidates in addition to Dart Westphal. Blessedly, Jason Lillis, Linda Kelly, Mallory King and Deacon Dr. Carlos Lopez agreed to serve.

We believe we answered the call to find a roster of diverse, committed, faithful members of our community to lead and listen to the needs of Advent Lutheran Church.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The nominating committee certainly had a fun time this year investigating the many gifts our members have to bring to leadership. We believe the roster of our 2024 council nominees are qualified, diverse and will bring a strong voice and even stronger listening skills to serve in leadership at Advent.

We humbly recommend several actions that will serve to onboard our 2024 nominees. It might be useful for new members to have an orientation meeting. Brelyn Vandenberg, as the member cycling off, volunteers to run the orientation, if council agrees. The nominating committee recommends that in the future, council members cycling off would agree to host an orientation for incoming members. Furthermore, the nominating committee suggests new candidates review the Synod’s leadership resources at <https://www.mnys.org/>. Also, I know we are working to add more and more transparency with our governing body. We request that the president send out a monthly, “request for agenda items” before the executive committee meets monthly. That way any council member at large can add an item to the agenda. We believe these items will continue the work of the nominating committee to create a leadership that is transparent, dynamic and effective for our beautiful church body.

Furthermore, at the Annual Meeting, we recommend recruiting six members of the 2024 nominating committee. This is the requirement under the Congregation’s Constitution and will strengthen the process for recruitment next year.

Pastor Danielle also shared a class that United Lutheran Seminary about how to be a Council member that we will look at having members at each month which can help with building a strong and active Council.

Thank you to the nominating committee for your work & dedication to this process!

1. **Consent Agenda**

* Pastor’s Report
  + We talked about the transition for Community Lunch leadership. Leadership between Community Lunch and Pantry has generally been separate but in the transition will be
  + $32k GoFundMe is funding a convection oven replacement & installation, a gravity slide, and the remainder to offset food costs
* November Minutes
* November Financial Reports
  + The congregational giving deficit identified in the summer that we anticipated closing hasn’t. We’re looking at a deficit of $67k, with some of that from the city grant we’re waiting for and almost $40k deficit in proposed congregational giving. The 2023 budget was developed with some ambitious giving estimates growing, which did not ultimately materialize. While the full increase estimation hasn’t been met, we’re seeing some increase year over year.
  + A question was asked about the Parsonage Fund, which has about 4-5 years of useful life left in the way we are currently drawing from it. We are using the Parsonage fund to meet our every day Parsonage expenses rather than investing it in improvements or holding for future Parsonage needs, especially if Columbia ever decides to retake the current parsonage apartment we’re using.

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

1. **Leadership Transition**

Dorothy C has stepped down from Council, and so the role of leading the Council meetings in the interim will fall to Mary Jordan as VP. She will also lead the annual meeting, with support from other members of Council.

She was also the financial secretary, and the executive committee has a number of ideas of who to go to move this forward. We’re thinking about a team, which Dorothy C supports. Hans will reach out to some people to move this conversation forward.

As a full Council we need to think more about executive leadership roles for 2024.

Looking forward to 2024 Council orientation, we discussed having more of a social gathering prior to the full meeting.

1. **Constitution Update**

Will be sending to the Synod before Christmas for a review prior to sharing with the Congregation at the annual meeting.

1. **Budget Team Update**

This budget is very conservative, using the giving from 2023 as the baseline income number for 2024, looking at giving remaining flat rather than increasing by any significant amount. In January we’ll have the actuals for 2023, and we can see where we are and if there was any growth from 2022 to 2023, and we can use that percentage of growth to predict what we might see for 2024. We hope that will give us an increase, but likely a much smaller overall increase (3-5% which is about $15k or so) rather than a 15% increase. This is ultimately a small increase overall so wouldn’t meaningfully change what we’re able to do.

We do still have the CPW apartment expenses in our budget, so could use that as housing for a position if we’re able to find any additional funding.

What if we had two budget options? The austerity budget we’re looking at and a version that includes a 6-month staff position and a 6-month start of an associate call. It’s basically adding $54k to the deficit, including healthcare benefits, etc. What is $54k divided by the number of giving units at Advent? It might help with some of our Stewardship if people have a sense of that. Giving levels are so varied that’s hard to do. Another way to look at it is $54k is about 20% of our budget, so we’d need everyone to increase by 20%. We didn’t get to 15% increase last year, so that’s difficult, but we didn’t have a targeted ask and reason.

If Pastor Danielle talks to the Synod again about funding, is there a tipping point of how much contribution from them would be helpful.

The Mission Fund is a gift, and the more we dip into it beyond the annual interest and rely on it too heavily the more we squander the gift.

Thank you to Hans and the budget team for your work here.

1. **Associate Pastor Call Update**

Vicar Hayley’s candidacy approval process is on January 15.

The idea of having a conversation with the congregation on December 17 would be gauging interest, sharing challenges, be transparent about where we are budgetarily and missionally. We want to come into that conversation with some specific numbers & proposals for people to respond to, rather than put in an open question. Perhaps we look at that as part of the ministry/mission update conversation in January.

When discussing this earlier there was potentially other funding available which hasn’t ultimately materialized.

We don’t want to keep Hayley in limbo forever, and want to make sure she knows how much limbo

Three options on the table:

We don’t have the money.

We look at financials that come in with a little bit of growth, and we add a little bit of growth that gets us enough to give a limbo staff extension without a full associate pastor call.

We commit and either grow giving or cover it from the Mission Fund. Worth noting that for 2023 we’re already using $55k from the Mission Fund to cover general expenses. It’s what the Mission Fund is there to do, but we need to decide to do that with eyes open. Once you drop below $500k the annual return decreases significantly. We also need to know that the Mission Fund is a finite fund and we’d need this position to ultimately be self-sustaining after a certain number of years, stating that clearly at the beginning of the call.

1. **Property Update & Roofing Proposal**

Kamco did the roofing on the 93rd Street side, and we’re looking to finish the work including edging, flashing, and other finalization needs that will finish preventing the roof from leaking.

The full proposal is $51k coming from the deferred building maintenance fund that has about $80k in it.

There was a concern raised about previous roof work contracted with a person who ultimately did good work but did not show up regularly. Pastor Danielle confirmed that was a different company.

This is a great example of the value of the Mission Fund that can help fund important work that is close to impossible to build into a budget.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the roofing proposal from Kamco as presented.

HVAC – PD had conversations with a group that can help us with government rebates if we get a heat pump system. They’d pay for an engineer to look at our whole building for energy efficiency, and then would help us apply for a rebate from ConEd for additional funds. Linda Kelly is meeting with them on Friday to discuss this further. The team hopes to have another update for Council coming out of that meeting.

1. **Annual Meeting Planning**
   1. Dates
      1. Ministry review – Sun 1/7
      2. Constitution review – Tue 1/16
      3. Budget review – Sun 1/21
      4. Annual meeting – Sun 1/28
   2. Agenda
      1. Year in Review (no vote)
      2. Budget (vote)
      3. New Council Members (vote)
      4. Deacon Carlos call renewal (vote)
      5. Property update (no vote)
      6. Anything else to lift up for the year ahead?

We will begin announcing the date in the e-letter this week and send postcards right after Christmas.

1. **Upcoming Meetings**
   1. January 17 at 7pm – hybrid
   2. 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.