**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – November 17, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Bree Vandenberg, Deanne Walters, Juan Minier, Kika Wright, Michael Hammett

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=0):**

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=1):** Laura O’Keefe

1. **Consent Agenda**

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

1. **Financial Report**

Deanne gave a financial update, sharing that while weekly envelopes continue to be a bit low, we also continue to be below budget. We are hopeful that end of year giving will balance out the lower weekly envelopes a bit. The budget committee had its first meeting where they discussed expected expenses for 2022, and they will look at cost of living increases with the Personnel Committee. Next they will look at income in early December after pledges come in, plus additional expense evaluation after getting input from ministry leaders. The committee will be prepared to bring a budget for discussion in Dec & Jan Council meetings.

1. **Stewardship Update**

The Stewardship Committee is trying to rebrand “stewardship” to the Advent Giving & Stewardship team - a more friendly & descriptive name, since “stewardship” isn’t a common word. The committee has been busy planning & getting ready for Thanksgiving Sunday, which is this Sunday Nov 21. They had 3 mission moments leading up to this from Dawn Trautman, Hans Kriefall, and Amanda Garcia-Harris, sharing their personal stories about the importance of giving and what it can do for individuals and the congregation. Thank you for sharing your stories!

In addition to the mission moments, an e-letter went out today with information about Thanksgiving Sunday. Bree is organizing a phone tree of calling to encourage people to sign up for automatic giving, and giving them information about how to switch to automatic giving through their banks or Tith.ley. Bree asked for Council volunteers to help make calls, thank you all for assisting. Thanksgiving Sunday will act as a kick-off to encourage giving and different related programming throughout the year.

1. **Hiring Undocumented Workers**

Pastor Danielle asked Council to consider convening a task force to research the implications of hiring undocumented workers (who have ITIN numbers but not social security numbers). This group would research and seek input on the many factors around this decision, including but not limited to: the legalities, the ethical and mission-driven implications both for Advent and for the potential workers, the safety and well-being of the potential workers, and the practicality of if we could process payments in our current systems. This is an overarching ethical question with practical implications, and there have been candidates for previous positions who could have been successful but who we weren’t able to hire.

The goal is for the task force to do this research and bring a proposal to Council in January. This is being considered now so that we are making a conscious determination either way as a Council and a congregation. Dorothy Trigg will lead the committee, Bree Vandenberg will join, and they will work with Pastor Danielle to identify one or two additional members. Juan Minier will share input as well.

**Action:** The Church Council affirmed moving forward with this research, with 1 abstention.

1. **Nominating Committee Update**

Juan is working with the members of the nominating committee to prepare to share nominations with Council in December. We are looking to fill 2 or 3 positions on Council for 2022. Many committee members have shared names, and Juan is working with the committee to contact those people to determine their interest. We will share a mission moment in the next week or two encouraging worshippers to nominate people or to self-nominate. Thank you to Juan and the committee members for taking on this important task!

1. **Sergio & Latino Ministry**

Sergio starts on December 1, and on December 5 there will be a welcome celebration. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. We are excited for Sergio to begin, and for this moment of reimagining our Spanish ministry.

Additionally, thank you to Deanne for helping to search for an apartment for Sergio! We are hoping to have an approved application this week.

1. **Building Needs update**

This will be a Personnel committee hiring recommendation, but Pastor Danielle shared a request from the property & building committees to have someone on regular staff for building maintenance (~5 hours/week) and there is a building maintenance line in the budget.

1. **The New Normal**

This is going to be an ongoing conversation, and is something to be discussed further in a future focused meeting or retreat. As a starting point and food for thought, Pastor Danielle shared a few articles about new trends in church engagement nationally and globally in a (sort-of) “post-covid” world. Generally, the shifts have been in reduced engagement and attendance, and certainly a different kind of engagement from many worshippers, which we have been seeing at Advent as well. This ongoing and future conversation will be about focusing our planning and church building on what the church is now, in this time when we have all been changed, and not trying to rebuild the church of 2019. At Advent specifically, this will involve thinking about what it means to create community with our online worshippers and what it means to be a hybrid congregation. There is more to come here, and an important conversation to continue having.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Bree Vandenberg closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 11/17/21*