**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – December 15, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=8)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Bree Vandenberg, Deanne Walters, Juan Minier, Laura O’Keefe

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=1):** Sergio Centeno

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=2):** Kika Wright, Michael Hammett

1. **Consent Agenda**

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

1. **Stewardship Update**

Bree updated us on the current Stewardship committee progress. The phone tree has started and gotten some good responses from calls. A next step is checking in with callers to see how their calls are going. The committee will meet again in the new year to assess the phone tree and plan for further direction for next year.

1. **Nominating Committee Update**

Thanks to all members of the committee–Elba Cabrera, Ellie Sudbrock, Frankie Thompkins, Amanda Garcia, and Juan Minier for his leadership. Amanda has resigned as a nominating committee member in order to run for Council. Additional nominees are Kathy Matson and Dorothy Clementson. These nominees will be voted on in the January congregational meeting, to begin terms in February 2022. Juan will email them to get answers for their introductory questions & photos to include in information about the annual meeting.

1. **2022 Proposed Budget Review**

Thank you to the Budget committee (Deanne Walters, Pastor Danielle, Damaris Maclean, and Norma Martin) for their work preparing this year’s budget.

Pastor Danielle shared that the likely pledges are between $250,000 - $275,000 (different from actual pledges because it takes into account regular givers who are not regular pledgers). The committee is recommending a weekly envelopes budget line of $300,000 – not a large increase over likely pledges in order to be a bit conservative about what is possible.

This budget does not include money for a communications position – with Sergio and a new Princeton field student that should help fill in the immediate gaps. That position as it has previously existed was very tailored to the person who held it, and this is not a plan to never fill the position but we are still exploring the future need for this role. We don’t have funds to fill this position so also time to take pause and determine needs of the congregation in order to find the right person in the future.

Additional changes of note include an increase in parsonage costs (planned due to Sergio’s housing costs), an increase in property salaries to hire a part-time handyman/building manager, and the agreed-upon 5% decrease in the mission fund draw. This budget also includes funding for the Welcome Center project, both from the Synod grant and the Mission Fund. Overall, there is a $40,000 proposed budget deficit.

A question was asked for more detail on the recommendation for likely pledges, since the overall pledged amount for next year is slightly lower according to the Pastor’s report. Pastor Danielle shared that it has been common practice to base this budget line on both past giving and pledges since the trend is that people will continue their regular giving year over year even if they don’t pledge. PD went through a list of non-pledged givers and most didn’t have significant participation/life changes that would decrease their giving.

Concerns were raised about budgeting $300,000 in giving when the actuals-to-date are only $234,000, which the committee shared but leaned toward the optimistic. The questions to grapple with are do we propose a lower weekly envelopes and propose a higher deficit? Where are we comfortable being unsure? How optimistic vs pessimistic should we be? We will revisit these questions in January after seeing where we end 2021 (since actuals-to-date are only through November).

Other items of note for consideration: we have been under in expenses recently. The mission fund balance is currently up $100,000 from one year ago, and up $25,000 from January 2021. Space sharing contracts have been increasing recently, though it was budgeted conservatively for this year because of continued pandemic unknowns. There will be a significant budget surplus for 2021, which we could decide to return to the mission fund, put into cash reserves, or otherwise use to balance the proposed 2022 deficit.

We could potentially propose approving this budget conditionally for 6 months with a plan to revisit with Council and the congregation, because there are still so many unknowns for next year.

There will be a separate proposal for granting ourselves mission fund grants for deferred building maintenance to be voted on, not included in this budget currently.

1. **Annual Meeting Planning**

We discussed a meeting schedule with breakout budget & ministry conversations on subsequent Sundays, and decided it would put the congregational meeting too late. The agreed upon schedule is:

* Mon Jan 10 – ministry reports due
* Wed Jan 12 – January Council meeting, via Zoom
* Thu Jan 13 – congregational ministry update meeting, via Zoom
* Wed Jan 19 – congregational budget update meeting, via Zoom
* Sun Jan 23 – congregational budget update pt 2 and any proposals for the meeting, in person and via Zoom
* Sun Jan 30 – congregational meeting, in person and via Zoom following an 11am bilingual worship service

The congregational meeting will take place primarily in the Sanctuary, with the option to join on Zoom. People who speak will need to come to the front and use a microphone in order to be heard by both the room and Zoom. People on Zoom will be projected on the screen in the Sanctuary. The voting process will in part be determined by how many people are on Zoom – we might use Zoom polling & in person hand-raising, or perhaps just hand-raising for all.

We discussed and will need to determine in January how to present the budget proposal along with the mission fund deferred maintenance proposal so that they are both clear & separate, and that the relationship between the two proposals are clear.

1. **Schedule a mini-retreat for Council**

Dorothy will send out a Doodle poll for availability for a mini-retreat in February once the new Council members are elected. The topics will be revisiting our strategic plan & where we are now, and discussing what the new normal looks like and the future plans for Sundays.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Hans closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 12/15/21*