**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – September 14, 2022 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Deanne Walters, Laura O’Keefe, Dorothy Clementson, Michael Hammett, Pastor Charles Miller

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=0):**

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=3):** Bree Vandenberg, Amanda Garcia-Harris, Kathy Matson

1. **Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Pastor Danielle opened us in reflection and prayer.

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

There was a question about the EFAB grant which Pastor Danielle shared about in the Pastor’s Report. It is about a $20k increase overall which is helpful, but only marginally due to inflation. We are also hoping to hear back about a grant from the City Council soon.

With Vicar Sergio’s internship ending in December, a question was asked about his future plans. He will be meeting with the placement committee soon and there are discussions about future placement, so that is looking positive. If he wants to stay in his current apartment, Pastor Danielle has already shared with him that he can take over the lease from Advent since we guarantor’ed on his behalf.

How big is the congregation at Zion St. Marks? PD will be doing pastoral care duties there as part of her duties as Dean. It is not large, they worship about 18 people weekly, so it’s not a time or workload concern for her.

It is very exciting that chorale is returning. It was shared that there have been conversations around inviting back an unvaccinated person (the rule has been that all Chorale members must be vaccinated). This started internally in the staff & leadership because there were conversations about hunger ministry guidelines (who are still requiring vaccination for working inside, masks optional), and PD encouraged Aaron to speak with chorale members and have a conversation. The people who are most affected need to be consulted. It is unclear at this time what if any decision has been or will be made, but this conversation will be ongoing as needed.

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

1. **Financial Documents**

As a follow-up from the last meeting, Deanne shared that the synod giving was incorrectly going out previously, but she has worked to correct and put us on a schedule to make sure our mission support & giving to the synod will be up to date by the end of the year.

We discussed space sharer income and if we think we can hit the projected budget by the end of the year. PD shared that trends are going up, and she has sent new contracts out this week. More small groups and concerts coming back, and overall space sharing income is on an upswing. Hopefully it will be a solid fall/winter season.

Income is just under 50% which is low for the point we are in the year, but we are almost 60% to budgeted expenses with a $100k deficit. Food ministry expenses are high – are they in danger of running out of money this year in order to meet the need? Yes, and PD is having conversations with the City Council and other granters to find additional funding. Food ministry leaders are working hard to stay within budget for the year. We are fortunate to share a New York State produce grant with Trinity LES so most produce given during pantry or community lunch is covered by that grant at no cost to Advent. Food ministry leadership is working on doing a push to volunteer base for donations for food ministries, but it’s difficult because people aren’t all able to give at the same level.

It was noted that there is money in the Year End Appeal budget line, but we haven’t yet had a Year End Appeal. PD shared that there is someone who gives regularly and dedicated especially for the YEA.

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

1. **Church Administrator Position Update**

Pastor Danielle and the executive committee have been in conversation over the last several weeks about the church administrator position. There is an administrative gap – in the short term PD is handling space sharers to continue fostering those relationships; PD is gathering invoices to send out to Pastor Charles and Damaris for approval; PD is doing payroll & Deanne is willing to do oversight for checks & balances. PD trying to schedule more meetings at the church & Vicar Sergio is committed to being more present in the building. We have a mobile phone so calls will be routed there when someone isn’t there & Sergio is in charge of that. PD is handling administrative email & mail, plus other random things. Damaris will handle bill pay. Hans will handle recording individual giving for internal usage, financial secretary work that will likely remain in the hands of the administrator role.

We would also like the administrator role to help handle facilitating communications – website maintenance, e-letter creation, quarterly mailings, formatting & printing bulletins. This work would not be about content, but about facilitation and administration.

We’ve had conversations about what the administrator role & bookkeeping should look like together. Pastor Danielle and the executive committee think bookkeeping should be contracted out to a separate organization to have someone with that knowledge and skill set. Historically bookkeeping has been supervised by the Pastor, but PD admits that she does not have the skillset to adequately supervise the role. We are in talks with a number of bookkeeping agencies.

Does outsourcing bookkeeping mean temporary people who would come in and out or an ongoing relationship? We would have a dedicated bookkeeper from an agency who specializes in church bookkeeping. We would have to change our software from ParishSoft, likely to QuickBooks. The big concern is how to backup historical data - the agencies we’re talking to would be willing to help with the historical backup. Would they connect with tithely? Yes, they would be able to work with tithely and our system. This also falls in line with the future recommendations coming in from the financial review team – to separate bookkeeping from administrative role, and to potentially switch systems from ParishSoft.

Do we have a goal of when we want to post/hire for the administrator role and the bookkeeping agency? Ideally within a month.

We need a job description, someone to go through applications and interview candidates. Ideally we’d have one other person to interview with PD. Personnel will update & post the job description. PD will skim and cull resumes. Hans will reach out to Madelyn Soussoudis or another person to ask her to be the second interviewer.

In terms of present bookkeeping, right now we’re doing the bare minimum of what we need to do and we will need to catch up when an agency is hired. We want to move quickly so that we don’t want to have to catch up too much. Any organization would take 2-3 weeks of onboarding. What are the next steps? We need people to help make the final decision – the suggested decision makers are Pastor Charles, Pastor Danielle, Deanne, and Linda Kelly.

How does this impact our budget? If we have a parish administrator role at 25 hrs a week plus the bookkeeping agency fee, the rough math puts us at about an $8k deficit (not counting factors outside of salary). This is not a huge difference, but also doesn’t take into account negotiation or 2023 cost of living. But overall it wouldn’t be a large difference annually to split the role. This will be something to keep in mind for 2023 budget development.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to authorize Pastor Charles Miller, Pastor Danielle Miller, Deanne Walters, and Linda Kelly to select a bookkeeping agency.

1. **Pastor Miller as Treasurer**

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve Pastor Charles Miller as Treasurer.

1. **Basement & Building Update**

The cost for design work proposals came back much higher than the team was expecting. The numbers did not include actual cost of construction. There is a disagreement amongst the team about what next steps should be – do we need to consult a new architect? Should we refine our existing plan? Should we pause altogether?

Damaris spoke with a friend in construction/architecture who said our architect firm did exactly what we asked them to do, but on a large commercial scale that we might not need. The bottom line was that it is an expensive project that won’t look that different ultimately. Council recommended that we ask the building team to go back and figure out what we actually do/don’t need.

1. **Stewardship Campaign Planning**

Bree & Michael were leading the Stewardship task force, but Michael is stepping down. We need another volunteer to help lead with Bree, and perhaps recruit another few members. The current team also includes Aaron, Carolyn Riehl.

Stewardship Sunday focus is in November, so to be successful we need to start planning now.

Damaris will send a follow-up email about Stewardship volunteering.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will be Wednesday October 19 at 7pm.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

We closed the meeting with the Lord’s Prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 09/14/22*