**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – October 16, 2019 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=8)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, David Richards, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Deanne Walters, Jon Dohlin, Norma Martin, Juan Minier, Bree Vandenburg

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=2):** Kevin Bowen, Abby Ferjak

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=3)**: Michael Hammett, Bayardo Peralta, Blessing Tawengwa

1. **Call to Order**

Juan Minier led a devotion focused on Diakonia, the Christian lay education program, ending with a prayer through Psalm 100.

1. **Consent Agenda**

The Church Council accepted the consent agenda consisting of meeting minutes and staff reports.

* **Pastor’s Report** — Details pastoral concerns and provides updates about ministry, administrative, building, scheduling and other items. The Council thanks Norma Martin for joining the Call Committee.
* **Meeting Minutes** — Notes from the September Council meetings.
* **Communications & Youth Report** — Provides updates about communications and outreach efforts and youth activities.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to accept all items of the consent agenda as indicated above. The Financial Reports are being pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

1. **Strategic Discussions: Presentations, Feedback, and Actions**

**Accountant and Financial Reports.**

David Richards informed the Council that an accountant is coming in within the next week to help reconcile the small discrepancies that continue to exist. Norma Martin raised concerns about the length of time that has elapsed without accurate financial reports. (No funds are missing; rather, some allocations are incorrect.) Many of the issues relate to the fact that we use two separate, incompatible accounting systems.

Pastor Danielle Miller noted that the purpose of bringing in an external accountant is to not only make the corrections necessary to set us on the right course, but also to evaluate the day-to-day procedures. She suggested the Council approach this issue with creative, constructive options for future improvement, including: having an external accountant come in on a quarterly/periodic basis; hiring a full-time bookkeeper (which is not something that would fit into our present budget); to have an assistant treasurer help out Deanne Walters. Bree Vandenberg suggested we look into partnering with another congregation, or asking others of similar size for advice about what kind of system(s) they use. Jon Dohlin raised the possibility of bartering with a small accounting firm for a space share.

Bree, Norma Martin, and Jon both volunteered to contact congregations and organizations of similar size to ask about their software.

After reviewing and discussing the Financial Reports, the Council expressed its great gratitude to Carla Soraide and Deanne Walters for their dedicated service.

**Latino Ministry Coverage.**

Preaching and presiding is covered through December (including Zachary Stephens-Walters, who will preach!). The potential interim candidate we discussed last month is no longer available for personal reasons.

The full-time candidate that the Call Committee hopes to call is still waiting on immigration paperwork to come through. Even when the green card comes through, this candidate would have to stay with their current congregation for 6 months to a year.

Juan Minier raised the question of holding one of the Christmas Eve services in both Spanish and English. The Council affirmed this idea.

**Robert’s Rules Training.**

David Richards informed the Council that we will receive a guide on Robert’s Rules in advance of the annual meeting.

**Financial Plan Communication and Budget Planning.**

David Richards noted that giving is down this year, as the result of several major donors moving, meaning the next year’s budget will be difficult to balance. How do we inform and educate without alarming?

We already have a budget planning discussion scheduled for November 17 (February 2 is the annual meeting) where we can highlight this fact. Other ideas:

* Sending a letter after November 17 in an eNewsletter or by mail
* Holding additional meetings in January
* Asking the Congregation to be solutions oriented
* Tasking the Financial Planning Team to take this on

And doing all of this while taking care to not overwhelm or obfuscate the larger Mission & Vision goals with these urgent needs.

Deanne Walters led a discussion about developing the 2020 budget. She needs to know: who might be on the Budget Development Committee, and what ministries have expected changes in income or expenses. Someone from the Financial Planning team will be asked to join the team, which also includes Pastor Danielle Miller, David Richards, Ellen Pollan, and Deanne. Ministry leaders will be asked to submit feedback prior to the budget planning meeting.

**Property Concerns.**

Pastor Danielle Miller reported that the boiler needs repair, which is expected to cost under $3,000.

**Strategic Plan Implementation.**

Pastor Danielle Miller led a discussion about the need for a specific plan and timeline for implementation of the Strategic Plan. Where are we now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there? How do we as a Council become a group that actually moves Advent toward that goal, that sets up enduring, sustainable systems, without getting caught up in the day-to-day and focusing on the nitty-gritty, immediate concerns?

* Budget planning—setting a budget that reflects our Mission and Vision
* Codifying our long-term goals in an enduring document, such as by adding bylaws to the constitution
* Spending time in conversation about the Mission and Vision—particularly Council members and Ministry Leaders—so that we are all fluent in the language, keep it top of mind, and have authority in discussing it
* Creating new traditions, like an annual celebration/event that refreshes memories, and reinvigorates and unites people behind the Mission and Vision
* Finding what excites and inspires people to become deeply, authentically engaged
* Making direct, concrete invitations to individuals for ministry needs—volunteers, supplies—and providing the necessary training

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.** Bree Vandenberg will lead the devotional. Miriam Sitz Grebey will be away so Michael Hammett will take minutes.

* **Adjournment — Closing Prayer.**

David Richards closed the meeting in prayer.

***Respectfully submitted by M.S. Grebey, 10/22/19***