

## **Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – October 17, 2018 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=10):** Pastor Danielle Miller, Pastor Gary Mills, David Richards, Charles Miller, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Jon Dohlin, Norma Martin, Juan Minier, Blessing Tawengwa, Bree Vandenburg

**Present – Not Voting (n=3):** Abby Ferjaks, Nathan Urquhart, Kevin Bowen

**Not Present – Excused (n=2):** Bayardo Peralta, Michael Hammett

### **1. Call to Order**

Blessing Tawengwa led the devotion.

### **2. Executive Session**

### **3. Consent Agenda**

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

- **Pastor's Report** — Details pastoral concerns and provides updates about ministry, administrative, building, scheduling and other items.
- **Meeting Minutes** — Notes from the August and September Council meetings.
- **Latino Ministry Report** – Provides updates about the Latino ministry.
- **Communications and Youth Ministry Report** – Provides updates about communications and outreach efforts and youth activities.

**Action (Moteded, Seconded, Approved):** The Church Council voted to accept all items of the consent agenda as indicated above.

### **4. Strategic Discussions: Presentations, Feedback, and Actions**

#### **Financial Reports.**

Pastor Charles Miller led a discussion of the financial reports.

- Statement of Financial Position (through Sept 2018)
  - Many years, the Church has to temporarily re-route money from other budget lines in order to meet cashflow needs during the summer. (Income typically begins to recover during September.) We did NOT have to do that this year; the \$50k we withdrew from the Mission Fund has covered essential bills.
  - Investments through September 30 have been strong. For instance, the Mission Fund started the year with \$903k, and now, 9 months into the year, is at \$875k 9 months into the year, representing a net decrease of \$28k in the fund, despite the fact that we've withdrawn \$36k (of the \$50k allowed) and have paid out \$45k in grants. This is thanks to an extraordinarily strong market. Parsonage and Tiffany Window fund also grew in value.
  - Notes on the Food Ministries dedicated account:
    - Dedicated accounts are all relatively strong, with the exception of food ministries.

- The account started year at \$21k but is down to less than \$6k at this point, which represents approximately 2 months of expenses.
  - Additional income sources (grants from the city and organizations; congregational donations) may be pursued.
  - The Council will brainstorm ways to increase income for the Food Ministries and also pay additional attention to this matter.
  - The Council may ask for further detail on expenses.
- Statement of Activities
    - Income and expenses are good (not great). On the income side, general non-designated areas (offerings, plate offerings, special gifts) are at 67% (as compared to being at 75% of the budget year). But as compared to year-to-date income, income is almost the same as last year at this time.
    - Spare sharing: we are at 75% of budget due to the good work of Carla, the staff, and the pastors.
    - Over expenditures: There have been funds dispersed for necessary capital improvements such as new refrigerators, new boiler room door in the basement, and other urgent expenses that could not be delayed
    - We are behind our budget by \$2,500, which isn't bad news going into this time of year.

### **Congregational Information Session Recap.**

David Richards gave an overview of activities over the last several weeks related to property concerns.

- Though the results weren't what we would have hoped, we feel encouraged that this is the beginning of a process, that the meetings and discussion have galvanized the Congregation.
- Two items for Council to be aware of:
  - Someone from the Congregation reached out to Helen Rosenthal's office to make her aware of the potential development
  - Someone called the Synod to discuss having the vote nullified

Members of the Council put forth these observations, comments, and concerns:

- There were many hurt feelings, and many people who felt surprised or taken aback. It's worth acknowledging that people felt hurt in this process. Even if inadvertently, we created a situation that made people feel sad, worried and cornered. It's fair to acknowledge that we need to have a dialogue about this.
- It's important for the Council to understand what the narrative is vs. what the truth is. There were some people who were hurt or shocked, but many more who were excited, invigorated, generally on board.
- The first vote (the split ballot vote) was 20 to 1 in favor of development.
- We're asking for people to engage in a process, and we can't be afraid of having difficult conversations.
- It's important for us to recognize that the Congregation is a lot stronger than the prevailing narrative / most vocal concerns might lead us to believe. We shouldn't feed into a narrative that makes us feel weaker than we really are.
- Just because people have questions doesn't mean that we're torn asunder.
- The Council's willingness to cancel the vote shows a degree of dynamism, flexibility, and responsiveness.
- It's important to be able to have these difficult congregations in our church.
- "I came out of this feeling like, wow how amazing that people were willing to wrestle with these questions, to wonder, to engage the process. Makes me feel hopeful, so let's keep that perspective."

- We will come out stronger but need to reimagine our process.
- We're trying to go through this with a spirit of unity and it started getting divisive so we reexamined what we are trying to get out of this vote. Giving people time to learn more, understand the options and realities.

### **Formation of Committees.**

David Richards led a discussion about concerns that the six committees initially proposed may not be the best course of action. Perhaps first, a strategic planning committee should be formed, and then from that, two committees would arise to specifically focus on space and financial issues, within the context of our mission and vision (as determined by the Congregation and Strategic Planning Committee).

Steps toward this plan:

- Form a Strategic Planning Committee (with Council-appointed leadership) to start the visioning process, with significant Congregational input. This Committee would present their findings at the Annual Meeting.
- Then, two committees would be formed:
  - Space/Property Committee, led by 2 co-chairs who were both on the Strategic Planning Committee
  - Financial/Business Plan Committee, led by 2 co-chairs who were both on the Strategic Planning Committee

Timeline:

- At the November Council meeting, the Council will write a general vision statement based on all the various pieces of data (strategic plan from 5 years ago, MSP/call documents, survey results, etc.)
- A Strategic Planning Committee will be convened (chaired by non-Council leaders), to spend the remainder of 2018 leading small discussion groups, workshops, asset mapping process, etc., all working toward to determining our strategy.
- Early January: The Committee and Council will hold a Congregational Visioning Meeting, perhaps on Jan 11 or 12, perhaps offsite, in an effort to gain consensus on the Church's mission. (Could condense informational meetings before the congregational meeting to two [there are usually three])
- End of January: Annual meeting

### **Budget Planning.**

The Council discussed the need for a flexible building intervention plan to deal with issues that arise in the short term (assumption: 2 years). A building engineer assessment will be scheduled.

Pastor Danielle reported that she wrote a grant for \$200k, which would take care of half of the basement code issues.

### **Nominating Committee.**

Pastor Charles Miller rolling off the Council, so will serve on the Nominating Committee. Juan and Jon must be re-elected if they want to be on Council for a second term.

### **Staff Change.**

Pastor Danielle Miller informed the Council that Linda Kelly has decided to end her employment with the Church to return to consulting. Pastor Danielle expressed that the staff, Council, and Congregation is grateful for her service.

Suggestions for this time of transition: hiring an external, part-time bookkeeper, reassigning some tasks to Carla. This will be announced to the congregation soon, verbally during service and then in the e-newsletter.

**Recommendation to Candidacy.**

Mary Button was a member for many years, then moved to Tennessee and worked for a Presbyterian church there. She's now pursuing candidacy for ministry. Pastor Danielle Miller recommended to the Council that Advent become her sponsoring church.

**Action (Moteded, Seconded, Approved):** The Church Council voted to sponsor Mary Button's candidacy.

**Communications Input.**

Kevin Bowen asked for the Council's input and guidance on how to shared complex topics (for instance, the property issues, budgeting, how we are moving forward with visioning, etc.) with the Congregation. David Richards will write letters to the Congregation; Miriam will help Kevin with summary info coming from meetings.

**5. Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday, November 14th at 7 p.m.** Michael Hammett will lead the devotional.

- **Adjournment – Closing Prayer.**

David Richards closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by M. Sitz Grebey, 11/13/18*