**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – July 21, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=11)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Michael Hammett, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Hans Kriefall, Juan Minier, Laura O’Keefe, Dorothy Trigg, Bree Vandenburg, Deanne Walters, Kika Wright

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=3):** Madelyn Soussoudis, Linda Kelly, Fred Grumm

1. **Consent Agenda**

The Church Council accepted the consent Agenda, consisting of:

* June Meeting Minutes
* Financial Reports for June 2021:
  + Dedicated Accounts
  + Statement of Activities
  + Statement of Financial Position
* Communications Report
* Pastor’s Report

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to accept the Consent Agenda.

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

**Secretary Update**

Miriam Sitz Grebey is moving away in mid-September, so August 2021 will be her last Council meeting and this meeting (July 2021) will be her last as secretary. Miriam nominated Dorothy Trigg to be the new secretary; Dorothy accepted the nomination and the nomination was seconded.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council elected Dorothy Trigg as Council secretary, beginning in August 2021.

Thank you, Dorothy! Miriam will schedule time with Dorothy before the August meeting to transfer knowledge and information on duties and responsibilities.

**Elevator Presentation**

Fred Grumm and Linda Kelly presented information about options for repairing/replacing the elevator. The Property Committee makes the recommendation of installing a LULA, or limited/use limited application elevator/lyft hybrid, instead of a traditional elevator (which, although it supports more weight, is expensive to install/maintain and would require significant construction in the elevator pit).

Description and advantages of the LULA: LULA is a cross between a commercial elevator and wheelchair lift that supports 1,400 pounds and works best in short distances, up to 25 feet (it can only go up one stop). They are less expensive to install and maintain and can be installed in our current size elevator shaft/pit. They can accommodate a variety of things: wheelchairs, strollers, food ministry supplies unloaded from a pallet, etc.

The Property Committee received bids for both “custom” or “box” lifts and, after consideration, recommended we proceed with a proposal for a custom, non-proprietary lift. The total suggested budget for this is $150,000 ($125K for the proposal from Innovative Elevator; $5K for rebuilding walls after install; $20K for required HVAC work). These funds will come from the Synod grant/our matching grant. We will need to submit contracts to the Synod and then they will release the funds. (Their plan is to release $100K in 2021 and $100K in 2022.)

Despite having a higher initial cost, a custom, non-proprietary lift would require fewer changes to the shaft and fewer machine room changes (thus less work by a general contractor), and would streamline the permitting process to the NYC Department of Buildings (because a custom lift can be classified as a “modification/modernization rather than installation of a new lift). Additionally, the specific lift selected is made in the U.S.A. and uses off-the-shelf parts that could be procured locally, which will help to hasten repair times in the future.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to approve the recommendation brought by the Property Committee.

The timeline for completion depends somewhat on Department of Building approvals; possibly by end of year, more likely early next.

**Roof Update**

We are still waiting on a contract for the roof and a pricing estimate for the sidewalk shed.

**Financial Update**

Madelyn Soussoudis shared main takeaways from the mid-year financial review and analysis.

Advent budgets three Financial Accounts. They share the same TD Bank checking account but recordkeeping is separate.

* Food Ministry: This account is in fine shape. Even if no additional grants are received (the worst case) and spending continues at the same rate during the second half of 2021, there are sufficient funds in the Dedicated Account to cover FM expenses.
* Music Mondays: Expenses have been slightly greater than income. Even if income and expenses continue at the same rate (the worst case) during the second half of 2021, there are still sufficient funds in the MM Dedicated Account to cover the year end expenses.
* General Operations: We started this year with a budget deficit. However, thanks to the second PPP loan (which we did not anticipate and did not have in the budget), as well as City grants, Advent is on target to complete 2021 close to budget. We have had more income than we planned for, which has allowed us to freeze additional draws from the Mission Fund. Also, the higher income we are receiving from Seafarers has allowed us to freeze draws from the Parsonage Fund.
* There are some budget areas worth highlighting, or taking some preemptive action.
  + Income:
    - Weekly Envelopes: This income line is down for no obvious reason. The Stewardship Committee is requested to review this income flow in detail. Is 2021 giving consistent with pledges or historical giving; are fees higher than expected; is this the normal flow? How do we reach out to givers?
    - Space Sharers: This has not been strong this year, as expected, leading us to anticipate a shortfall of some $17K at the end of this year.
  + Expenses:
    - Mission Support (2021 planned expenses increased by $12,048 to cover Mission Support expenses budgeted but not paid in 2020)
    - Instrument Maintenance (unexpected organ repair)
    - Tiffany Window Insurance (this will be covered by dedicated account)
    - Program Salaries (unexpected intern)
    - Staffing Expenses (Personnel Committee to review the staffing worksheet)
    - Gas and Electricity (higher despite building not being open; increase may be to additional refrigeration requirements for Food ministries; this will be reviewed)
    - Communications (front-loaded expenses this year to meet hybrid worship needs)
  + Overall expense lines are higher than expected but don’t require a midyear adjustment.
* In summary:
  + Income is up about $50,000 (largely thanks to PPP)
  + Additional expenses are approximately $42,000
  + This leaves us ahead at midyear by about $8,000 in net changes to the approved budget (acknowledging that we started the year with a deficit in our budget of $33K and planned to take draws from our savings). With no additional improvements in the next 6 months, we could still have a deficit at the end of the year but it will be lower than planned.

**Congregational Building and Budget Update**

Damaris Maclean opened discussion of giving a Congregational Update, including the latest information on structure, basement, and overall financial health (including roof, lift, and other building concerns). The Council discussed potential dates, landing on a midweek Zoom at 7pm on 9/22, following our “homecoming” Sunday on 9/19.

**Proposed Model for Corporate and Non-Profit Partnerships**

Pastor Danielle Miller shared ideas from a recent meeting about ways to engage non-profit and corporate sponsorships for our Food Ministries. She asks for Council’s input/review.

**Music Director Update**

Pastor Danielle Miller reported that after many interviews, two promising candidates have emerged and been brought in for multiple interviews. The Search Committee hopes to make a final decision and recommendation to Council soon. Because this will likely fall between Council meetings, the Council heard descriptions of the candidates, feels supportive of both/either, and agreed to empower the Committee to make the final decision.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to empower the Search Committee to make the final decision and job offer to their top choice candidate for Music Director.

**Investment Committee Report**

Damaris Maclean reported that the Investment Committee met to discuss the financial results of our funds held by our investment advisor, Morgan Stanley. Before their next report, the Committee will have a discussion with Morgan Stanley about rebalancing and manager selection, as well as whether any funds should have these allocations changed due to the proposed needs for funds from Council. Further, the Committee will review the Investment Policy document. Members of the group have volunteered to review our documentation which has been in force for quite some time, to see if any recommendations should be brought forward to Council for amending the document.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 18, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Damaris Maclean closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by M.S. Grebey, 07/21/21*