**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – July 17, 2019 Minutes**

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

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

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=1)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Michael Hammett, Bayardo Peralta

1. **Call to Order**

Norma Martin led a devotion meditating on a prayer of Saint Teresa de Ávila:

*Nothing disturbs you, nothing scares you, whatever happens God doesn’t move.
Patience accomplishes everything. Who has God is not missing anything.
Only God is enough.*

1. **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 June Council meetings.
* **Latino Ministry Report** – Provides updates about the Latino ministry.

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

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

**Financial Reports.**

Deanne Walters explained that the Statement of Activities has not yet been reconciled for June. Being end of Q2, she and Carla Soraide are now looking at the investments. Overall, all are growing (to be expected with market); Parsonage Fund was the only that experienced a net decrease, given withdrawals and growth. Re: Dedicated Accounts, they are still ironing out Food Ministries and Music Mondays. The drop in Weekly Envelope income (last year at this time we were at $185K; this year we are at $169K) is related to some donors who have left, and some people have pledged, but not given.

Norma Martin will ask Carla for an audit on the Equipo El Salvador accounts. Deanne has been discussing with Pastor Danielle Miller the possibility of bringing in an expert in church finance to help with sorting out the remaining budget reconciliation issues. She will also create a July report to be sent around in August.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to accept the Financial Reports as presented, subject to audit.

**Mission Grant Process Review.**

Bree Vandenberg suggested that if Advent plans to internally sponsor grant applications to the Mission Fund under Advent’s 501c3, the organization requesting the grant needs to have submitted a narrative statement to the Council by the April Council meeting, to be approved before it goes to the Mission Fund committee. Essentially, they need to make a case to the Council that this is a financially viable organization. Bree will further this discussion at the September meeting.

**Music Mondays Development Position.**

Norma Martin noted that Music Mondays would like to hire for a new position, which has no financial impact on Advent (they will be paid out of Music Mondays dedicated account).

The aim of this position would be to cultivate individual attendees and donors, being at Advent from 6-10 p.m. for a total of nine concerts. The pay rate is to be determined. Aaron W has someone in mind, referred by a colleague. The total cost is estimated at approximately $5,000, including benefits and background check. This would come out of the Music Monday’s budget.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to approve the position as presented.

**Vacation Bible School.**

David Richards reported that Pastor Danielle Miller says registration for VBS is fairly light at this point. Bree Vandenberg pointed out that many parents make decisions about summer plans much earlier than Advent advertised VBS (which was in May)—many people make their decisions in April.

Pastor Gary Mills reminded the Council that there are 38 students coming from Minnesota to lead VBS.

**Arson.**

David Richards reported that the rainbow flag hanging outside Advent’s side door was set on fire sometime during Pride Weekend, likely Sunday afternoon. (Pastor Gary Mills noted that 78 congregations or synagogues in all five boroughs reported flags being burned during Pride Weekend.) The incident has been reported to the police as a hate crime. The Council agreed that a good solution would be to repair the flag with a new corner, embroidered with a Bible verse.

The flag burning has been reported as a hate crime with the police. Additionally, last Thursday a trash can burned, and about this time last year there was a fire near the front door; both of these are understood to have been accidents.

**Strategic Planning Team Orientation.**

Kevin Bowen gave an overview of the Strategic Planning Orientation Retreat, scheduled for this Sunday. The new teams formed for this second stage of the process have already received bilingual information on Faith Foundations and Methodology. (The Mission and Vision team led by Kevin, Jon Dohlin, and Dorothy Trigg will regroup at the end of August or beginning of September. Mission and Vision Sunday will be September 22.)

For the first hour of this Sunday’s retreat, Pastor Danielle Miller will look at the Gospel, the book of Acts, and the early church, seeking to focus people to enter this process with the right mindset (i.e. Faith Foundations) in two specific ways: (1) That this experience will be a discipleship experience for participants—something life-giving; (2) That people come into the process with a real sense, on the highest level, of why church exists—to come at this with a focus on faith, mission, and vision.

Then, the Retreat will spend time on roles and goals, based on the Strategic Planning Overview document that Council previously received.

Next, the Retreat engage in a discussion of the methodology—“design thinking”—guiding this process. Kevin will lead this, going over the steps we will take to constructively wrestle with these questions as a collective.

The Retreat will end with worship.

Kevin led the Council in a brief discussion of how the Council will be involved and empowered in the process.

* What is empowerment?
	+ Showing teams support
	+ Freeing the teams to do their work, uninhibited
* What does it look like?
	+ Thanking teams for their work and participation
	+ Public acknowledgement: send off or blessing of the teams? E-newsletter? Printed list?
	+ Outlining a clear scope of work for each Council member and team member
* What does it feel like?
	+ That the work you’re doing is making a difference, coming to fruition, being realized

Council agreed that the Council representative on each team should not be the primary leader of each team. It is important to strike the balance between listening and taking active roles as collaborators.

Important to make clear:

* Staff and Council members on each team are not leaders of the committee, nor are they passive observers; they have no larger or lesser voice as a result of their participation.
* How/why we selected each team: the constituencies we wanted represented

Question for Kevin and Pastor Danielle to consider: Who is convening, taking notes, helping kick off, helping lead the meeting? Is it rotating between team members? We don’t want it to default to the staff or Council member each time — that is in conflict with our stated goal that all voices are equal.

**Executive Session.**

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.**Michael Hammett will lead the devotional.

* **Adjournment — Closing Prayer.**

David Richards closed the meeting in prayer.

***Respectfully submitted by M. Sitz Grebey, 7/26/19***