

Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – November 14, 2018 Minutes

Present – Voting (n=10): Pastor Danielle Miller, Pastor Gary Mills, Michael Hammett, Charles Miller, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Norma Martin, Juan Minier, Bayardo Peralta, Blessing Tawengwa, Bree Vandenburg

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

Not Present – Excused (n=2): David Richards, Jon Dohlin

1. Call to Order

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

4. Strategic Discussions: Presentations, Feedback, and Actions

Mission and Vision Committee.

Michael Hammett opened discussion about the working proposal for the Visioning Team. The goal is to have seven members, including three conveners (one from the Congregation, one from Council, one from Staff). Fourteen invitations have been sent out. (Those fourteen were selected by Executive Council, pulled from the larger list brainstormed at the last Council meeting.)

The Visioning Team will prepare, lead, and involve the Congregation in creating, accepting, and owning a collective Vision and Mission for Advent. Steps include:

- Preparing the Congregation to Vision (December – January)
- Understanding the Context (February)
- Empowering & Gathering Responses (March – April)
- Synthesizing and Refining the Results (May – June)

Points raised by Council members:

- The Team should periodically update the Council and Congregation, at Council meetings and perhaps during Sunday coffee hours
- The Conveners should set the tone that the Team is there to listen and accept input and feedback

Property Conversation.

Pastor Gary Mills reported the church recently had to pay \$8500 in urgent repairs to the elevator (a piece of which broke, and then caused other pieces to break). We have been warned about two other parts that are in bad shape, as well as the motor. If the motor goes, there is a valid argument for replacing the entire structure rather than continuing to apply patchwork fixes to such an expensive piece of equipment. Consequently, the elevator is mostly out of service now, except for the most urgent accessibility needs on Sunday. The elevator issues have caused one space-sharer to discontinue their relationship with Advent.

He also reported that the firm Gerner Kronick + Valcarcel Architects (GKVA) did an assessment of the costs related to reconfiguring the basement floor and upgrading bathrooms. The estimate came in between \$452,250 and \$537,349. (Note: the estimate includes basement HVAC, which is only related to doing necessary relocation of ventilation on that level of the building, and NOT related to repairing heating and air conditioning in the Sanctuary.) The estimate does NOT include a Certificate of Occupancy or anything related to the kitchen.

GKVA does not do building envelope assessments, but the principal told Pastor Gary that our Rand proposal is still accurate (and that Rand is the “the best firm in the city” for this kind of assessment) since it was performed within the last 10 years. GKVA suggested that we increase the total estimate by 5% per year to account for inflation and degradation.

The other most immediate property need is the shaving of the sidewalk, which we have received a bid for \$1,255.

With regard to the question of individuals funding certain property needs, the Pastors agreed that Advent encourages individuals interested in supporting specific projects to reconsider their overall stewardship, so as to avoid project-based giving.

Pastor Danielle Miller that she waiting to hear back on a \$200,000 grant for basement repairs. She also noted that it is important for Council, as elected leaders, to be informed of these sort of detailed updates on property matters, so that the group is equipped to provide honest, transparent answers (including the valid answer: “I don’t know but I’ll find out!”) to members’ questions about our building.

Additionally, Pastor Gary reported that the Property Committee will be reorganized after the holidays.

Emmaus Collective.

Two years ago, Advent hosted an anti-racism workshop sponsored by the synod. Last year, we had eight members of our Congregation participate in an anti-racism group exploring and dismantling white privilege. The intention has always been to continue and broaden our anti-racism work. Intentions are important; actions more so.

Pastor Danielle Miller and Pastor Gary Mills reported that the pastoral staff has heard some comments from Advent members that do not align with Advent's identity as an inclusive, open, welcoming congregation. In an effort to address this and to engage in the Gospel call for justice, Advent will join with a new anti-racism initiative called the Emmaus Collective.

To join the collective, the Congregation's entire staff and leadership team must attend anti-racism training. Additionally, a quorum of members (the same number required constitutionally for a congregational vote or an annual meeting) must attend anti-racism training.

As a member congregation of this collective, Advent will do one racial justice action, anti-racism action, or direct action in the surrounding community annually, as well as contribute one-tenth of 1% of our annual budget to the Collective (roughly \$600).

Two churches in Brooklyn also belong to the Collective. Advent will be the third in the city. The Emmaus Collective is not a Lutheran-only initiative. The 2018-2019 year will be this pilot program's first.

The Council expressed their hearty support of joining this initiative, and agreed that the Call Committee searching for Pastor Gary Miller's replacement should be deeply involved with this effort.

A motion was made to affirm the direction in which the Pastoral staff is leading Advent with regard to this anti-racism initiative and membership with the Emmaus Collective.

Action (Moteded, Seconded, Approved): The Church Council voted to affirm the Pastors' plan to lead the church into membership with the Emmaus Collective.

El Salvador Report.

Norma Martin reported on the recent meeting of the Sister Church Program in El Salvador. The meeting was attended by 80 people, with Norma and Kelly Kandler representing Advent.

Norma presented several facts: The Lutheran church in El Salvador is second largest in Latin America, with 57 congregations and 13 mission points. Major issues facing people in El Salvador include the privatization of water, emigration. The church's goals are sustainability, transparency, and communication, most recently demonstrated with an audit of the synod CK. Programs include evangelism and education (including training for pastors in psycho-trauma therapy and Lutheran identity).

Norma recommends Advent include our donation to our sister church in the budget; Pastor Danielle Miller noted this is part of the budget recommendation for 2019.

The Council thanked Norma for her report and her faithful service as a part of Equipo El Salvador.

Finance Update/Treasurer Update.

Deanne Walters has accepted her nomination as Council treasurer. The nomination will go to a vote.

Pastor Danielle Miller elaborated on the proposal to redistribute the tasks previously assigned to a part-time financial staff position (12 hours a week, formerly occupied by Linda Kelly) among the Council treasurer, the staff administrator, the pastors, a payroll company, and volunteers. The proposed redistribution of tasks is

outlined in detail in a separate document. Reimbursements and checks will require a paper form (found in the office) to be filled out; Carla will pay the bills and get a secondary signature from the treasurer.

Budget Planning.

At the next meeting the Council will review a preliminary financial budget for 2019.

Annual Meeting.

January 12: Vision & Mission Retreat, from 10am to 2pm.

January 13: Ministry Update, at 10am and 12pm.

January 20: Budget Meeting, at 10am and 12pm.

January 27: Annual Meeting, timing proposal:

- 9am English-language worship
- 11am bilingual worship
- 12pm Annual Meeting with lunch
- 1:30pm Spanish-language worship

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

5. Next Meeting

The next Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday, December 19th at 7 p.m.** Bayardo Peralta will lead the devotional.

- **Adjournment – Closing Prayer.**

Michael Hammett closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by M. Sitz Grebey, 11/19/18