

## **Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – February 21, 2024**

**Present – Voting (n=13)**: Amanda Garcia-Harris, Linda Kelly, Mallory King, Hans Kriefell, Jason Lillis, Carlos Lopez, Damaris Maclean, Kathy Matsen, Pastor Danielle Miller, Carolyn Riehl, Mary Jordan Samuel, Dorothy Trigg, Dart Westphal

**Present – Not Voting (n=1)**: Hayley Moe

**Not Present – Excused (n=1)**: Laura O’Keefe

### **Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Pastor Danielle opened us in prayer.

#### **1. Welcome of New Council Members**

Pastor Danielle welcomed our new Council Members: Linda Kelly, Mallory King, Jason Lillis, Carlos Lopez and Dart Westphal.

#### **2. Vote on New Officers**

Pastor Danielle reminded the Council that the first act of business of the new Council year is to elect officers. Officers serve one-year terms and are elected by the Church Council. Self nominations or nominations from the floor are welcomed. The executive positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Dorothy Trigg was nominated for President. Hans Kriefall was nominated for Vice President. Mary Jordan Samuel was nominated for Secretary. Linda Kelly was nominated for Treasurer.

**Action (Motioned, Seconded, Approved)**: The Council voted to approve the slate of nominees.

#### **3. Consent Agenda: January Minutes**

The January Minutes were voted on separately from the January Financial Reports given new members were not in attendance but would still like to vote on the Financial Reports.

**Action (Motioned, Seconded, Approved)**: The Council voted to approve the consent agenda.

### **Consent Agenda: January Financial Reports**

Hans oriented the Council on his budget reports and how he typically presents the information each month. He also reviewed his Treasurer’s Report which usually provides any areas requiring more careful review or additional context. This month’s discussion included an explanation on the Music Monday’s discrepancy due to the January bookkeeper costs and clarification on the weekly envelopes being ahead of schedule. Hans explained that some members play “catch up” in January and finish paying towards their 2023 pledge but our books

for that year are already closed meaning they get applied to Jan. 2024 numbers. Some members also pay their full 2024 pledge in January.

Pastor Danielle shared that she likes to look at the 'same month last year actual' column to get a good gauge of how we are doing.

**Action (Motioned, Seconded, Approved):** The Council voted to approve the January financial reports.

#### **4. Pastor's Report**

Pastor Danielle presented some highlights from her Pastor's Report including:

- An orientation on how our worship attendance numbers are reported across in-person and online participants and households reached.
  - *Next Step:* Pastor Danielle will begin including an average in-person attendance in her reports.
- Confirmation that the three Ash Wednesday services were wonderful and that a representative from the Metropolitan Synod of New York even participated in ash distribution outside the church.
- There will be a Good Friday Spanish service given how well-attended the Ash Wednesday Spanish service was.
- The beginning of Table Turning Tuesday is coming up next month. This opportunity will be a time of educational, advocacy and community opportunities. The first event will be on Tuesday, March 26th from 7 pm - 9 pm. There will be a remote piece to Table Turning Tuesdays.
  - *Next Step:* Vicar Hayley will be reaching out to Jason and Blessing for assistance on the virtual component.

**Action (Motioned, Seconded, Approved):** The Council voted to approve the February Pastor's Report

5. **Code of Ethics** - Every year Council members are required to affirm as a Council the code of ethics for financial/business ethics as stated in our constitution. It's also very helpful for our granting purpose as it also counts as our conflict of interest statement.

The Code of Ethics should also be posted on our website and shared with the congregation.

*Next Step:* Pastor Danielle to post Code of Ethics on website and share with the congregation electronically.

**Action (Motioned, Seconded, Approved):** The Council voted to approve the code of ethics.

#### **6. Financial Secretary Approval**

Linda Kelly reported that Dorothy Clementson will no longer be serving as financial secretary. Kirsten Egenes has agreed to serve in that role. Kirsten was involved with the giving team and is familiar with the pledge component of our system.

**Action (*Motioned, Seconded, Approved*):** The Council voted to approve Kirsten Egenes as the Financial Secretary.

#### **7. Update from ULS Council 101 February Session**

Dorothy represented Advent at the February session of the United Lutheran Seminary Faith Formation and Leadership series on “Congregation Council 101.” She shared the PowerPoint presentation and noted upcoming topics for the next three months of the series including “Council Dynamics and Relationships” on March 11th, “All Things Stewardship” on April 8th, “What does our constitution actually say?” on May 13th and “How to be a ministry partner with Pastors and Deacons in your ministries” on June 10th. All meetings will be from 7 pm - 8:30 pm ET. The sessions will not be recorded and Council members are encouraged to attend any that sound interesting and share any key takeaways they may have learned.

#### **8. Council Orientation and Planning**

Dorothy quickly reviewed the Orientation Guide that Bree put together to share with new Council members. It was an important overview for veteran Council members as well. She reminded Council where our governing documents and historical records are kept via Google Drive.

She reviewed the flow of Council meetings, noting that the agenda and materials usually are shared about 48 hours ahead of a Council meeting and are based on items that are reviewed the week prior by the Executive Committee. A general call for items for the agenda will be made to Council prior to the Executive Committee meeting. Most meetings begin with a prayer and the consent agenda and the business unfolds from there.

Dorothy continued with a review of what Advent’s constitution actually says about Council.

Mary Jordan asked for clarification on the August break for Council. This has not been implemented the last few years as building decisions and covid necessitated monthly meetings throughout the summer. Previously, July was the month off so that the August meeting could focus on gearing up for the fall initiatives.

Hans supports having a similar structure as last year where there is a council liaison for each ministry. This practice kept our ministries more connected with

leadership and leadership exposed to the work Advent is doing regularly that may not usually be seen through church business.

*Next Step:* Dorothy to include this topic for discussion on the March Exec. Committee Agenda.

Dorothy also shared with the group the goals that were identified last year as priorities for Council. Ministry goals included lifting up and welcoming the hospitality team, oversight of food ministries and their transitions, supporting the growth of family ministry, and working with the Spanish ministry leadership. Project specific priorities were the basement project, a review/update of the sound system, and the installation of a new HVAC system.

When reviewing the constitution directives, Hans noted how he is always moved by its ask of Council “to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.” He noted the importance of creating a volunteer structure that is broad enough so that the leadership isn’t segregated into an already overworked Council. Creating that base of volunteers will serve as a way of drawing from Advent’s community in a more sustainable manner.

Linda asked about the outcomes of the Annual Meeting activity and that Council, and even the Congregation, would benefit from seeing the ideas generated. Dorothy has already transcribed the handwritten responses and will work on organizing these next to review with Council before sharing wider. Mallory shared that she was impressed by the creativity within her group and thinks the 20s/30s group could be tapped in for a lot of the implementation of some of these initiatives.

Jason felt called to the section that says Council should “emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” He is excited about reaching out to other congregations and hearing what they are doing as far as virtual engagement goes and what online education is being done for families in that vein.

Dart reported to Council on the new tree that has been moved from the bus stop back a bit so that it is more prominent to the church’s property. He and Ricki Ravitts are looking into a protective fence and ways to beautify the space, noting that doing those updates require city permits and appropriate contractor hires.

Mallory shared that she is particularly interested in organizing events for families during the week. These could be meet ups for laser tag adventures, donut runs, and other fun activities that would also encourage folks to invite a friend which would further grow Advent’s community. Mary Jordan seconded this idea and offered to work with Mallory to come up with ideas.

Carlos made the important observation that six board members are in the chorale!

Amanda asked for Council to consider a retreat this year. She felt the last retreat in 2022 was a very thoughtful, engaging and important process for Council to go through.

Kathy updated on her efforts to support the hospitality team. She has experimented with several methods of inviting volunteers to sign up, noting that there could be training for any of the positions that are available. Linda suggested that a one-pager may be helpful that would include a one or two-sentence explanation for each opportunity to make members feel more comfortable signing up. This could also be a fellowship moment later this spring at Coffee Hour after church.

**9. Future Meeting Dates**

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 20th at 7 pm ET and will be hybrid.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Dorothy closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by Mary Jordan Samuel, 2/21/24.*