**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – August 18, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Michael Hammett, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Hans Kriefall, Laura O’Keefe, Dorothy Trigg, Bree Vandenburg, Deanne Walters

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=2):** Madelyn Soussoudis, Kevin Bowen

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=2):** Kika Wright, Juan Minier

1. **Consent Agenda**

The Church Council accepted the consent Agenda, consisting of:

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

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

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

**Strategic Plan Update**

There were 2 updates made recently to our strategic plan, to more explicitly include our online participants and our children, youth, and families in each of the three focus areas. Kevin walked us through a brief overview of the changes, which can be read in more detail in the strategic plan document. Thank you to Kevin, Pastor Danielle, and others who brought up the need for these additions and found ways to add and include them in our strategic plan in keeping with the overall goals and ideas.

**Security Concerns in the building**

Concerns about building security have come up from multiple channels, most recently from the basement committee, who need some procedures & guidelines to follow in making renovation decisions. A team will be put together to create a plan that addresses access and security in the building, including but not limited to who has keys, how & when the building is open to the public, door security, and de-escalation training. Damaris will convene this team (suggested members include Kika Wright, Caroline Greene, Frankie Thompkins, Linda Kelly, and Ellie Sudbrock), and a plan will be put together to share with the basement committee and Council by October 15.

**Mission Fund Proposal**

Given the ongoing and upcoming needs for the building such as doors and security, renovation of the sanctuary including paint, flooring, pew removal, new chairs, etc, and the air conditioning in the sanctuary, we need to consider how to finance these needs over the next five years or so. One way to do this would be to continue to suspend mission grants for an additional five years (through 2025) and direct the 5% benevolence to Advent.

With a planned schedule of maintenance and responsible financial planning, we can continue to grow and build our ministry, mission and congregation in a building that is safe and welcoming. And Stewardship committee focus can be on building our own ministries (food, El Salvador, Tanzania, etc).

In advance of the next council meeting, a team of Damaris Maclean, Bree Vandenburg, Deanne Walters, Madelyn Soussodis (and Pastor Danielle as needed) will meet to review and put together more concrete financial scenarios of this proposal. Outstanding questions this team will discuss include: would the 5% only cover scheduled building maintenance? Would we continue to draw additional Mission funds to cover general operating? What is the current fund balance? What are needs that would justify drawing on the principal, vs re-directing interest/benevolence? What other financial options might allow us to do this scheduled maintenance and continue our level of ministry?

This team will bring a more in-depth proposal to the September Council meeting for discussion and vote, in advance of bringing a proposal to the congregational update on September 22. We would not vote at that time, but would wait for a separate congregational meeting.

**Covid-19 Update & Review**

Advent’s current protocols were put together in August 2020, so an update is needed, especially in light of new NYC regulations and the Delta variant. A sub-set of the building committee will review our current protocols and recommend changes for Council to review at our September (?) meeting. In addition to Sunday services and other Advent ministries, additional thought will need to be given to Music Mondays and other space sharers in relation to the new NYC regulations.

We are grateful that our current contact tracing protocols were in place and worked after a congregant who attended the 8/1 service tested positive.

**Tanzania Committee Request**

The Tanzania Committee proposes that Advent sponsor a $500 annual education scholarship to QEMPS, as an ongoing annual budget line. The first 5 years of the scholarship (2021 - 2026) will be covered by an anonymous donor, and putting this in our budget means it is owned as a collective ministry by the congregation. This will be included in the September financial congregational update.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to accept the motion as proposed.

**Music Director Update**

Thank you to our search team who interviewed candidates and helped us find and hire Jeremy Chan! He will start in September, but play in church this coming Sunday.

**Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship Committee, led by Bree and Michael, will have its first meeting soon. In advance of that, a few points for consideration were discussed about information that might help in that work:

* Giving trends over time, and if our current weekly envelope giving is on trend -- Deanne volunteered to put together some historical data on this and will connect with Bree and Michael in advance of their meeting.
  + As of July 31, we are 58.3% through the year and Weekly Envelope giving is at 50.2% of budget. We are $11K lower than YTD last year and $3K lower than same month last year. These stats need to be examined and corrective actions initiated if necessary.
* Weekly attendance, a Sunday Manager used to track this, so Council plans to reinstate a way to track weekly attendance
* The congregation had previously received quarterly giving reports, which haven’t gone out this calendar year. Council would like for that to be re-implemented to help remind members about their giving pledges.

As part of their first meeting, the Stewardship Committee will also discuss Celebration Sunday (Sep 19) and what beyond the service we can do to make that day feel celebratory (i.e. a park gathering, special coffee hour before or after), and is empowered to pull in additional people to help plan that day who are gifted in special event coordination and ideation.

**Miscellaneous**

* Could we have our next meeting in person? Damaris will send a survey out to Council after the meeting for consideration.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 15, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom (or in person). Deanne will close us in prayer.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Hans Kriefall closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 08/18/21*