**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – March 15, 2023 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Dorothy Clementson, Kathy Matson, Laura O’Keefe, Carolyn Riehl, Mary Jordan Samuel, Amanda Garcia-Harris, Bree Vandenberg

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

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=2):** Damaris Maclean, Carolyn Riehl

1. **Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Dorothy Clementson opened us in prayer.

1. **Consent Agenda: February Minutes and Pastor’s Report**

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

1. **February Financial Reports**

Hans shared the February financial reports in advance and there were no questions.

Hans shared one question for discussion – we have had a number of “special gifts” recently that are technically part of the undesignated funds, but which have been given for specific expenses or are in-kind donations. Should we include these amounts in tithing to the synod? The money can’t be spent on our budgeted expenses, it must be used for specific purposes (like microphones) which aren’t currently in our budget. The recommendation is not to include it in our income that we would tithe from to the synod. For background, the Special Gifts line was only used to track donation income from LCC and LMHE (when they rented the CPW apartment).

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the February financial reports, including Hans’s recommendation about income tithing.

1. **Council Roles & Constitution Review**

An excerpt from the constitution was shared with the council in advance on the Council’s roles & responsibilities. We noted the importance of understanding what the Council's role is vs the Pastor vs the congregation. There’s a ministry aspect that is high on the list – we often concentrate on the more trustee-like roles and business, and we sometimes forget about the importance of guiding the mission & ministry life of the church as well.

It was also noted the need to do long-range planning is included in these responsibilities. This is something we can finally get back to after feeling like we’re treading water during COVID, as well as setting more short-term goals. We know we can’t do all things at all times, so where do our priorities lie?

Council’s role isn’t to DO all of these things, but to empower and oversee that ministry can be done. There is also a mention about promoting a congregational climate of peace and goodwill.

Another area we called out was that Council members are expected to be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons – this is a tall order! In a future iteration perhaps we add “striving” to this line, knowing it’s something we can practice but not get perfect all the time.

We also reminded ourselves of the clause that Council may enter into contracts up to 5% of the annual budget for items not in the budget, a threshold question that has come up before. We noted the contradiction between 5% in one clause and 12% in another clause, shared that we generally understand this to mean the 5% number can be individual contracts and 12% is cumulative for the year (ie could enter into two 5% contracts but not a third that would be 4% because the cumulative total is over 12% higher than the budget). Note that there is the possibility of congregational meetings outside of the annual meeting, if something comes up that is of enough significance that we could draw people together outside of January.

We will need to convene a team to update the constitution soon, at least to update the boilerplate to the ELCA constitution (which would supersede ours if there was ever a question). The last update was in 2009.

Council is also responsible for the employment & supervision of the salaried lay workers – generally this has been delegated to the Personnel committee who reports into the Council, and day to day supervision falls to Pastor. The Council & congregation also approves the budget with salaries. We all feel like this has been working and there isn’t a need to micromanage the staff. If/when there is an issue it goes to Personnel who can escalate to Council.

There are only 4 standing committees written into the Constitution. Currently the Executive Committee serves as the Mutual Ministry team in support of the Pastor, which is by choice of Pastor Danielle.

1. **Standing Committees & Council Representatives**

It’s important that each one of the vital standing committees and/or ministries have a Council representative and that we hear from them regularly, either from a written report that’s part of the consent agenda or providing an agenda report with concerns, questions, budgetary matters, etc to the Council in a timely way. Below are the standing committees and their assigned representative.

* 1. Spanish Ministry – *we’d like to ask Damaris if she has interest/time as she was involved previously, otherwise Laura O’Keefe has volunteered*
  2. Food Ministry (Pantry/Trinity Partnership & Community Lunch) – *Dorothy Trigg & Laura O’Keefe*
  3. Space Sharing – *Hans Kriefall*
  4. Stewardship – *Dorothy Clementson & Kathy Matson*
  5. Property – *Mary Jordan Samuel*
  6. Basement Project – *Laura O’Keefe*
     1. This has been on hold for a bit, and the committee has expressed the need for direction from Council in order to move forward. We will plan to make this a top agenda item for the April meeting, gathering documents and proposals to give direction. What the remaining budget can cover is limited and very different from where we were at the start of the project.
     2. Why is this separate from Property? We broke this project out as a separate committee to review and move forward the potential basement renovation as part of the Synod Grant Welcome Center. There is crossover, but wanted to keep separate so as not to overload the Property committee who are also dealing with the maintenance of the building.
  7. Finance – *Hans Kriefall*
  8. Personnel – *Hans Kriefall*
  9. Nominating Committee – *Bree Vandenburg*
  10. Investment Committee – *Damaris Maclean*

Thank you to all Council members for your willingness to serve!

A few other teams that we should keep on the radar for potential further liaisons & reports: Welcome Team, Hybrid Worship Team, and Family Ministry.

Liaisons will connect with their individual committees to determine an appropriate reporting schedule. At any meeting you’ll be presenting, please share the desire to be on the agenda and any supporting materials with Dorothy Trigg. Council should also be asking for information whenever it’s desired, if there are questions or concerns about a particular area, ask the liaison to go to the team to discuss and bring updates accordingly.

1. **2023 Council Priorities**

The Executive Committee met in advance and put together a memo about potential priorities for the Council and congregation for the future, with the goal of being aligned on where to focus our efforts.

*Ministry Specific:*

* Lifting Up the Welcoming & Hospitality Team

*Potential action Ideas include:*

* + Incorporate trainings for greeters and other interested members of the congregation
  + Create more lay-driven involvement in worship
* Providing Supportive Oversight of the Food Ministries

*Potential Action Idea includes:*

* + “Inviting the ask” from the Food Pantry & Community Lunch Ministries so we can see what support or assistance they may need.
* Supporting the Growth of Family Ministry

*Potential Action Idea includes:*

* + Explore ways to keep the current young children engaged in Advent life while making space for the infants/toddlers that we are seeing more of in church.
* Working with the Spanish Ministry leadership team   
  *Potential action Idea includes:*
  + Explore the needs within the Advent community and how Advent can provide resources to meet those needs

*Project Specific:*

* Basement Project

*Potential Action Idea includes:*

* + Determine the status of this project.
  + Identify if the scope of the project would be better suited for some of the larger building needs.
* Review/Update of the Sound System

*Potential Action Idea includes:*

* + Perform a larger review of the sanctuary sound system and what repairs/replacements are needed.
* Installation of a new HVAC system

*Potential Action Idea includes:*

* + Determine the potential needs from the Property Committee around this priority and obtain relevant proposal for Council’s Review.

Is there a dedicated person to the Welcoming Team to help coordinate and organize? There's an effort to re-organize having lay ministry coordinators for readers, ushers, etc. The welcoming piece goes beyond the act of ushering into focusing on how we create a space that is welcoming and encouraging. What does follow-up look like? Are there trainings that can be done to help support congregants into creating a more welcoming community?

The goal is to re-gather the ministry coordinators after Holy Week. For the welcoming piece, we’d ultimately be looking to create a task force to determine how to move forward. This can be an agenda item next month to have a discussion on what hospitality can look like and brainstorm what we might look for in a team.

The Spanish Ministry team feels they won’t be able to provide details about next steps until the Fall.

Should the future of hybrid ministry be a priority? There will be a team for this lead by Pastor Danielle & Carolyn Riehl.

The thought about updating the HVAC system came up while thinking about the idea of welcoming & hospitality, part of which is our space. We need to look at possibilities for how to fund, and what this cost would look like.

A few other project-specific items we could use specific task forces for: Parsonage Repair, CPW Condo Maintenance (neither of which are part of the Property Committee responsibilities), fundraising request policy report in the near future (Damaris).

It is important to keep in mind the overlap between the various ministry priorities, and how they can tie in to each other in exciting ways. For example we can find places to tap families and 20s/30s groups into worship and other ministry areas.

There used to be a “ministry fair” in the Fall to help explain what various ministry areas do which can help get people more involved.

Stewardship in the past has helped pull people into ministry areas as well, “Time, Talent, and Treasure” on your pledge card to identify ministry areas you might be interested in.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday April 19 at 7pm on Zoom. We will focus on the Basement Project as well as Welcoming/Hospitality Ministry.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Pastor Danielle closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 3/15/23*