**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – May 18, 2022 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=10)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Hans Kriefall, Dorothy Trigg, Bree Vandenberg, Michael Hammett, Dorothy Clementson, Amanda Garcia-Harris

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=2):** Deanne Walters, Pastor Sergio Centeno, Frankie Thompkins

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=0):**

1. **Opening Reflection & Prayer**
2. **Consent Agenda**

On the financial reports, it was noted that we are slightly below where we should be at this point in the year in income, making this the first time in the year we’re in the deficit portion of the budget. It’s something that could get corrected in the fall and with larger celebrations later in the year, but we need to be mindful of how we’re tracking throughout the year and keep an eye on it. It is expected that our percent to our income goal relative to percent through the year will decrease further in the summer.

There will be a congregational update on the building project after the service on Pentecost (June 5) where Karl and Ellie will give a brief update with where we are right now.

One outstanding question from the Pastor’s report is if we feel ready to allow eating in the church and fellowship hall. The Council agreed that yes we can allow this, particularly due to its importance to AA and Latinx congregation.

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

1. **Report from Pastor Sergio on Spanish ministry**

Pastor Sergio shared a report with the Council on what he’s experienced and learned about our Spanish ministry, and where he sees the future of this ministry for Advent. The full report is on the Council drive.

A few highlights of the report share that after observing the neighborhood and looking at demographic information, Pastor Sergio believes that Spanish-only ministry could be limiting our reach and possibilities. There is a significant population of Latine/Latinx young professionals in the area who are bilingual and might not be looking for a Spanish-only experience, or might be looking for forms of connection beyond worship.

From the report: “I think we need to create a stronger bonding with those organizations and begin to be in partnership with them. With that said I will recommend treating the latinx ministry program like a church planting style (out of the box style) and offer leadership training and support families with kids with parenting workshops and other exploratory alternatives to call the attention of those families with kids and the LGBTQ community organizations around us.”

After reviewing the report and hearing from Pastor Sergio, Council

There were some ideas and thoughts building on what Pastor Sergio shared: we used to have a Saturday night “dinner church” which is a format that might be interesting to a different demographic. It was also said that it can be worth expanding what we consider to be “sacred moments” – food, dance, music, art, etc can all be sacred in the right context.

We also discussed Spanish & Latinx ministry in the neighborhood, elsewhere in the city, and the country. It was noted that there are other churches very close to Advent experiencing the same problem like Trinity Lutheran, West End Presbyterian. There are some similar financial and engagement problems across the 3 congregations, but on Good Friday the stations of the cross joined them together and it was successful. We can find ways to connect with them further with additional cultural activities.

What are successful Latinx ministries in other parts of the city/country?

* St. Peters. Nurturing the cultural aspect of Latinx worshippers' lives has been what makes it successful. It makes church meaningful for them.
* Washington DC has a similar project and seeing results & participation
* In Boston they created an art venue in an empty church on non-worship days, connected with the community in regular programming.

What is the goal of this ministry? Pastor Sergio believes it to be to address the needs of the Latinx community regardless of language.

We also discussed the Catholic church as part of the Latinx heritage, both positively and negatively. While there are many Latinx people and families in the area, some of whom used to come to Advent for the after school learning program to seek enrichment activities, but regularly attended a Catholic church in the area. Not everyone will be looking for Church, and more specifically for a Lutheran church. And while the Catholic church can be a big part of the Latinx culture and heritage, it’s also true that many young professionals are statistically less religious. Church has stopped being meaningful to them. But if the church can become meaningful for them, they’ll look to support its ministries.

It was asked if the participants in Spanish worship feel connected to and supported by the Advent community? Pastor Sergio says less so right now, but he’s hoping that in the future everyone can feel connected to the 11am service and 12:30pm is an additional opportunity to connect.

Thank you to Pastor Sergio and the Spanish ministry team for your leadership and vision!

1. **Report from Hunger Ministry Team**

Frankie Thompkins shared a report with Council about the current state and potential future of hunger ministry at Advent. The full report is in the Council drive.

The biggest changes over the last few years have been the dramatic increase in numbers, mostly because of need, and also in part because we’ve received additional funds allocations when other pantries shut down.

In response to the question “What do you recommend for the future of the hunger ministries at Advent? What is your vision” Frankie responded:

* Ensuring alignment on the hunger ministry and Advent's mission – are we really living out Advent’s mission within the food ministries? Figure out ways to ensure we are.
* Be seen as a leader in the community and serve as a 'hub' for other food ministries to share best practices, resources, volunteers, training opportunities, etc – if you’re starting a pantry, or are a struggling pantry, or need to cook for soup kitchen we are a place you could turn to for information.
* More frequent check-ins with Council and the congregation to ensure accountability and that all areas of ministry are aligned.
* Increased accountability and financial transparency, with a better process for financial and impact tracking

Frankie shared that the possibilities for the future of the hunger ministries are vast, and in part based on where and how much resource (time, personnel, money, etc) we are willing to spend. Some costs for possible enhancement are easily quantifiable, like a new stove or a ramp down the stairs to assist with bringing food downstairs (which also has the potential to save us money in the long run).

Are there additional, outside of the box ideas that you would invite us to consider?

* A functional Community Center in operation more regularly – space is a challenge, but even a set time for community activities could be helpful.
  + What would this look like? A place where someone could come to get a sandwich/ready-made food, or to talk to a resource (landlord, counseling), or to get help signing up for a library card to use the internet. A place that offers resources – we can’t solve everyone’s problems, but we could help them get to the solution.
* Loading dock and/or more dedicated food storage area
* Walk in fridge or cold room

How can we share information like this with the congregation? Maybe Council can get a “hunger report” each month, like the Pastor’s Report, which then gets translated into the meeting minutes.

Thank you to Frankie for sharing this information and to all of our hunger ministry leaders!

1. **Council Retreat**

The Council is encouraged to re-read the Spanish, Hunger, CYF reports prior to retreat to come ready to discuss & brainstorm.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 15, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Damaris (and Silas) Maclean closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by D.Trigg 05/18/22*