**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – January 20, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=9)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, David Richards, Michael Hammett, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Deanne Walters, Hans Kriefall, Damaris Maclean, Juan Minier, Bree Vandenburg

**Present – Excused** **(n=2):** Jon Dohlin, Blessing Tawengwa

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=4):** Rebekah Anderson, Kevin Bowen, Hayley Moe, Madelyn Soussoudis

1. **Call to Order**

The Council split into small groups and prayed for one another.

1. **Consent Agenda**

The Church Council accepted the consent Agenda, consisting of:

* Pastor’s Report
* November 2020 Council Meeting Minutes
* December 2020 Council Meeting Minutes

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

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

**Goals and Priorities for 2021**

Kevin Bowen led a discussion about making progress toward our goals over the next three months.

This month, Council members will independently review [Advent’s Ministry Strategy](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I5UiDYu5WnczvC03E4JNMYfJqSjultRH?usp=sharing), then meet in small groups to discuss one of three strategic questions with their group. Council members will come to the February meeting prepared to give updates from their group’s discussion. New Council members will also be onboarded and added to the three groups.

Kevin explained why knowing and taking collective ownership of Advent’s Ministry Strategy is so vital. When there’s not collective ownership, the passage of time and turnover of members and staff leads to a lack of direction; to asking the same questions and holding the same conversations; and to the feeling of going nowhere, or going in circles. When there *is* collective ownership, even in the face of change, there is continuity, momentum, a sense of direction, etc., and thus growth and progress in our mission and vision.

What to Know About Advent’s Mission Strategy:

* Three focus areas:
  + Sundays: optimizing the hours we spend together on sunday mornings—worship, coffee hour, sunday school
  + Small groups: new program that we heard people wanted in our visioning process; deeper relationships,having more conversations, increasing discipleship
  + Community center: faith-filled launch site of HOly Spirit transformation; an expansion of ministries like Food Ministries, to position advent as a center that is providing services and a hub for social organizing throughout the week
* Timeframe: 10 years, 2020-2030, with the idea that we will do a new visioning process in 2029/2030
* Origin:
  + 2019: we started with a big vision retreat, listening groups, different teams, input from pastors, staff, and congregation, concluded with a vision retreat in Jan 2020 where we shared to great/enthusiastic reception
* Kevin will email out archive docs and a worksheet about this.

Three Strategic Questions:

* The Council will break into 3 subgroups, to each explore one of the three following questions:
* Phased or simultaneous development?
  + Phased: develop one area (Sundays, Small Groups, Community Center) at a time, over 1-3 years each. We would see progress more quickly on the first priority area (worship), but wouldn’t see progress on the other two for a while.
  + Simultaneous: Develop all three areas concurrently. We could grow small groups and a community center alongside worship, but risk spreading ourselves too thin and not seeing much progress in any area.
  + GROUP: Deanne Walters, Damaris Maclean, Pastor Danielle Miller/Kevin Bowen
* Commit to or pause on moving toward being a bilingual church?
  + Facing significant challenges:
    - Call process stalled
    - Staff and volunteers have been covering for the last year and are overextended
    - Budget to hire another staff member is diminishing
  + Reasons to overcome those challenges:
    - We have a dedicated, core membership
    - This is central to our identity and values
    - Ties into our mission to welcome all people to explore God’s love
    - If we work to overcome these challenges, we might have to let up somewhere else
  + GROUP: Juan Minier, Michael Hammett, David Richards
* When we transition back to in-person/hybrid Sunday worship, will we do 1 or 2 English services? Some notes on where this idea came from:
  + First, from the Strategic Planning Process, because this meets two needs: building deeper relationships and building stronger bilingual community)
  + From Online Worship in 2020
  + GROUP: Breen Vandenberg, Hans Kriefall, Miriam Sitz Grebey

Putting these questions together, we see that they involve trade-offs. For instance:

* If we commit to doing bilingual, we will develop one area at a time
* Doing all three areas at once while also committing to bilingual could fail

Schedule for tackling these questions:

* January Council Meeting: Introduce questions and form groups
* Between meetings: discuss question with your group
* February Council meeting: Group updates and feedback; new members will join a group
* Between Meetings: Discuss question with group
* March Council Meeting: Group presentations, discussion, reach a conclusion together

**Central Park West Apartment Update**

Pastor Danielle Miller reported that the prospective tenant is aiming to move at the end of January or beginning of February. Apartment has been cleared out but the walls need repainting; the building staff is doing it now, and up to $5000 is being taken from the Parsonage Fund to cover those costs. She is also updating the Memorandum of Agreement, which Hans Kriefall will review with a lawyer’s eye. They will make a monthly donation/special gift of $2,700 (which is more than the agreed donation from LHME, but still below market rate rent for the apartment).

The organization also plans to rent one office space during the first month of CWP apartment occupancy, and up to three in the next six months.

**Treasurer**

David Richards reported that Madelyn Soussoudis has agreed to be treasurer (non-Council member), with Deanne Walters as assistant treasurer. The Council voted on these appointments.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to appoint Madelyn as treasurer and Deanne as assistant treasurer.

**2020 Financial Review**

Deanne Walters reported that Advent ended 2020 with a surplus of approximately $17K, which will go back into the Mission Fund. An initial review of the PPP forgiveness indicates that the entire amount ($66,580) will be forgiven.

Pastor Danielle Miller noted that we will be completing 2020 Mission Support in early 2021, but we will remain in a surplus position. 2020 will be officially closed out after the January 2021 numbers have been reconciled (because some year-end gifts arrived after December 31).

David Richards added that he has submitted the application for $66,580 to the 2021 PPP loan cycle, but we may not qualify (since showing a 25% loss in income in one quarter is required; with our Food Ministry/Music Monday income [even though it’s dedicated and not general income for us] our largest loss was more like 18%).

**2021 Budget**

The proposed self-grants from the 2020 and 2021 Mission Fund (estimated at a total $90K, which is the sum of 5% of assets at the end of each year) is likely more than we would need to repair the roof (estimated at $60K); the difference will go toward the deficit/building needs and repairs.

Deanne Walters highlighted the following from the proposed 2021 budget:

* The budget shows a deficit of $46K (which will be partially offset by the self-grant funds that remain after roof repairs)
* The budget does not include any pastoral/staff expansion
* The budget includes a draw from the Mission Fund of $35,000, which is 10% less than last year, in line with the Council’s commitment to the Congregation
* The Special Gifts income line is higher because it includes expected increased donations from the Central Park West apartment tenants
* Space Sharing income line is a bit higher because it includes expected additional office rentals
* The expense line for worship increased from $2000 to $5000 at staff request to accommodate hybrid in-person/online worship
* An expense line for small groups has been added at $1000

This information will be presented to the Congregation on January 31 at noon.

The Council also agreed to allocate a portion of the 2020 surplus to staff bonuses, in recognition of how the Advent staff went above and beyond this year in the face of the pandemic. The Personnel Committee will determine specific distributions.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to allocate some funds for staff bonuses, tasking the Personnel Committee to distribute the bonuses to staff members as they see fit, in recognition of the staff’s dedication and extra work throughout the exceptionally difficult year of 2020.

**Annual Meeting Prep**

The meeting will take place February 7 at 4pm. David Richards will work with staff to plan/script the meeting.

Topics for Agenda:

* Approval of [2020 Annual Meeting Minutes](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19eLnw5rb8Ug0wLk9yCCirdDorJBZ-OyJ/view?usp=sharing)
* Carlos/Adolfo as Deacons
* Election of Council Members
* Appoint Nominating Committee
* Reconciled in Christ Modified Requirements
* VOTE: Funding of Synod Matching Grant
  + Ask congregation to give us the authority to spend up to $200K from the Mission Fund, with the Council committing to explore options (capital campaign, etc) to repay ourselves
  + Share language/details of MOU
* VOTE: Granting ourselves the Mission Fund grants for 2020 and 2021
  + Including discussion of roof repair
* VOTE: 2021 Budget

Still to do:

* Need to send a postcard announcing the meeting
* Set a phone number and link in advance so that those without internet access can attend
* Determine how to offer a Spanish language option/breakout room/etc.
* Draft an MOU for Synod grant (assigned to Miriam Sitz Grebey and Brelyn Vandenberg)

**Farewell to David Richards**

The Council expressed its sincere gratitude to David Richards for his service as Council president. As Pastor Danielle Miller wrote in her Pastor’s Report: “You have been and continue to be such a strong partner and ally in ministry… You are a faithful servant of God. It is not a flashy thing. It is simply at the core of who you are—resolutely God’s own and you live that way.”

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 17 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer.**

Hans Kriefall closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by M.S. Grebey, 01/20/21*