**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – April 21, 2021 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=11)**: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Michael Hammett, Miriam Sitz Grebey, Hans Kriefall, Juan Minier, Laura O’Keefe, Dorothy Trigg, Deanne Walters, Bree Vandenburg, Kika Wright

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=4):** Bekah 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
* March meeting minutes

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

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

**Finance Report for 2021 First Quarter**

Madelyn Soussoudis and Deanne Walters gave a review of reports and first quarter financials.

* Deanne expressed confidence in improved reporting processes for 2021, through procedures such as having Ministry leaders review reports periodically.
* For the first quarter of 2021, non-designated giving is at nearly 27%, higher than expected.
* We have received the second PPP loan.
* Parsonage expenses are slightly higher due to turnover of renters (painting, etc).
* Food ministry expenses are high due to bills from 2020 that were paid in 2021; we have met with the ministry leaders to go over sources of income and expected expenses.

The Council approved the following signatories on our accounts:

* TD Bank:
  + Carla D. Soraide, Director of Administration and Finance (continuing from 2020)
  + Madelyn Soussoudis, Treasurer (new)
  + Deanne R. Walters,  Assistant Treasurer (continuing from 2020)
  + Damaris W. Maclean, President Church Council (new)
  + Hans Kriefall, Prior Treasurer and Council Member (continuing from 2020)
  + David Richards, Prior President and PPP Loan Administrator (continuing)
* Morgan Stanley accounts:
  + Deanne R. Walters, Assistant Treasurer (continuing from 2020)
  + Damaris W. Maclean, President Church Council (new)
  + James Kelly, Committee Chair & IC Member (new)
  + Madelyn Soussoudis, Treasurer (new; view only access)

The Council approved the following members of the Investment Committee:

* James Kelly, Committee Chair & IC Member, Voting
* Caroline Green, IC Member, Voting
* Nathan Urqhart , IC Member, Voting
* Rich Merhige, IC Member, Voting
* Deanne Walters, IC Member, Voting, Council Member
* Madelyn Soussoudis, Treasurer, Non-voting
* Danielle Miller, Pastor, Voting

**Black-owned Businesses Request from the Church of Heavenly Rest**

Pastor Danielle Miller explained that the Church of Heavenly Rest is doing outreach to faith communities, to bring communities together around supporting Black-owned businesses and vendors by compiling a list of contacts. There is no hard and fast commitment required from us, and we have already shared the names of vendors/businesses Advent has worked with. The document will be a living list, potentially useful for future property endeavors.

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

**Update on In Person/Hybrid Worship: Council Engagement Questions**

Pastor Danielle Miller and Kevin Bowen reported that starting in May, we will have outdoor services in the park with full congregational singing. Then, on May 23, Pentecost, we will beta-test a hybrid in-person/online worship service in the sanctuary for 35 worship units (35 pods with advance online sign-ups) at 11am (English) and 12pm (Spanish), with outdoor fellowship between. The following week we will return to a virtual model, to evaluate, make adjustments, and plan for the future. We have $1,500 remaining in the hybrid worship budget for worship tech needs. Pastor Danielle and church staff feel excited and optimistic about this plan.

In the coming week, the Council members will individually consider whether they are comfortable serving in person, in various roles, during the May 23 service.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Review**

Pastor Danielle Miller has in the past recommended Advent undergo a DEI review for policies, procedures, hiring, etc. Pastor Danille and Damaris Maclean met with consultant, mediator, and facilitator Korin Mills. She would guide us through doing an evaluation of our own work, making it sustainable for the congregation.

* **Review of Proposal from consultant Korin Mills**
  + Intention: To assess the ways in which, and the degrees to which, we are an anti-racist, inclusive congregation, and to develop a plan to continue growing in that direction.
  + Steps of the process according to the consultant:
    - Alignment: Clarity calls with key stakeholders
    - Application: Facilitated project meeting
      * Optional additions: Learning event(s); executive coaching
    - Continuation: Closure Meeting and Insights review
  + Financial investment: $7,900 for a 3-month retainer (tentatively May to August)
* **What might be the results or outcomes for Advent?**
  + Identifying areas of our policies, practices and procedures that are not inclusive or which maintain a status quo rather than guiding us toward growth and inclusion in all areas.
  + Becoming a more diverse congregation
  + Helping in our thinking about being a bilingual congregation
  + Unifying our members who speak different languages
  + We could ask the consultant for examples of outcomes other clients have seen
* **How might we fund this?**
  + Reconciled in Christ commitment ($600) - appropriate use
  + Synod Council Meeting expenses/external meetings ($900) - no longer needed because virtual
  + Strategic Initiatives ($1000) - unallocated
  + Thrivent Action Cards ($750) - 3 action cards of $250
  + For the remainder, which would be $4,650…
    - Donations from congregation (“Mission Moment” and specific one-time ask)
    - Grants?

The Council affirmed interest in pursuing this process; in allocating funds as described; and in fundraising for the remainder.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to approve the proposal to pursue and fund a DEI Review as presented.

**Building for Mission Grant**

Pastor Danielle Miller reported that she, Madelyn Soussoudis, and Linda Kelly met with Gayle Ruege, Assistant to the Bishop, Karen Falco, COO, and Donna-Mari Fieldsa, Director for Finance, Administration and Grants. The synod is ready to move forward with the $200,000 Building for Mission Grant. The money would likely be released as $100,000 in 2021 and $100,000 in 2022.

They have asked us to provide a timeline and scope of the project and then will release a grant agreement. Laura O’Keefe, who has agreed to convene our Building Team, is currently working to build out the team that will oversee this work.

The Council expressed gratitude to Pastor Danielle, Madelyn, Linda, and especially Laura!

**Acknowledgement and Gratitude**

* Bekah Anderson, who is graduating in May
* Hayley Moe, who is returning for a second Field Education experience

The Council is so grateful to Bekah and Hayley for their generous spirits, leadership, and all the many contributions they have made to our congregation. Bekah, we wish you all the best and will be praying for you—please stay in touch! Hayley, we are so happy to spend another year with you!

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 19 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer.**

Damaris Maclean closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by M.S. Grebey, 04/21/21*