**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – March 17, 2021 Minutes**

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

**Present – Excused** **(n=2):** Pastor Danielle Miller, Kika Wright

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=4):** Kevin Bowen, Madelyn Soussoudis, Aaron Wunsch

1. **Call to Order**

The Council split into small groups and prayed for one another. Together, the Council prayed for those people who were murdered yesterday in Atlanta, and for their families, friends, and community.

1. **Consent Agenda**

The Church Council accepted the consent Agenda, consisting of:

* Pastor’s report
* February meeting minutes
* Financial reports:
  + January 2021 Statement of Activities
  + February 2021 Statement of Activities
* Property Committee report for February 2021

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

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

**Review of Council Responsibilities: Covenant and Council Structure**

Damaris Maclean gave an overview of the Constitution (located in the Council Google Drive) and the Council Covenant (created March 2019, also in Google Drive) and asked for any amendments or discussion. There were none. She also encouraged Council members to commit to doing all reading and preparation for meetings in advance. Council members expressed their appreciation of the hyperlinked meeting agenda!

**Finance Discussion: Payroll Protection Program**

Deanne Walters and Madelyn Soussoudis reported that the second PPP payment of $66,580 was received via direct deposit into the TD Bank account on February 18.

Immediate past Council president David Richards filed the Loan Forgiveness for PPP1, and the first step of that approvals process is complete; he is willing to process the Loan Forgiveness for PPP2 if Council agrees. The Council agrees, with gratitude to David!

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to ask David Richards to continue managing the PPP loan forgiveness process.

Council direction is needed on where to direct the second PPP funds (which we expect to be forgiven in full). The second PPP was not included in the Advent 2021 budget. It should be used within the eligibility rules for total Forgiveness, which is primarily to help fund payroll costs, including benefits. To ensure a seamless and hopefully total Forgiveness, the recommendation is to halt the draws from the Mission Fund and use the new PPP funds to cover payroll expenses until the loan is fully used. Mission Fund draws can be resumed when necessary.

Discussion:

* When did forgiveness of PPP1 come through? Roughly 6 months
* Estimated timeline for forgiveness of PPP2? Estimated 8-12 months
* How long would it take us to use the PP2 funds exclusively for payroll (maximum allowable time is 24 weeks)? Rough estimate between 2-3 months

Council agreed with the recommendation to pause draws from the Mission Fund until the PPP2 funds have been used.

**Finance Discussion: Piano Fund Deficit**

The Piano Fund ended 2020 with a balance of ($10,199.57) after the proceeds of the old piano sale had been applied. Council direction is needed on how to resolve this negative balance. Resolution should be in process before the next congregational budget review.

Council agreed that the amount should be considered a loss on the books, but also acknowledged that the investment in the new piano supported our ministry needs and space sharing income.

**Strategic Planning and Council Goals**

Kevin Bowen led a discussion about Council’s progress on its goals for the first three months of the year and the goals for our next three months.

Review of our January to March goals:

1. Organize a successful Annual Meeting: the Council deemed this a success!
2. Know Advent’s mission (love, community, transformation) and strategy (Sundays, small groups, community center): Council members did a self-assessment activity; if individuals need to review this, documents are located in the Google Drive
3. Answer 3 strategic questions:
   1. Phased or simultaneous development? Somewhere in between: “growth area development,” meaning we will sustain all three areas at their current level, but focus on expanding/growing one area at a time, starting with Sundays, then small groups, then a community center
   2. One or two English-language services on Sundays (when we return to in-person/hybrid worship)? Simplify to one English service on Sundays and pilot a new Sunday schedule (9am chorale/Sunday School, 10am English worship, 11am bilingual community time, 12pm Spanish worship)
   3. Doubledown on Spanish-language worship, or pause? Temporarily reduce frequency of Spanish worship and aim to resume weekly schedule once we return to an in-person/online hybrid mode of worship
   4. For more information, see detail document on Google Drive.
4. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Council and Staff
5. Continue to support ongoing ministry

Goals for April through June: conversation to be continued.

Between now and the April meeting, Kevin asks that Council members:

1. Review our Mission and Strategy in Google Drive
2. Review Three Questions Answered document and add comments
3. Contribute to April to June goals document in Google Drive

**Building Reopening Conversation: Music Mondays**

Aaron Wunch presented a proposal to the Council regarding expansion of in-person Music Mondays.

The experience of hearing music live, in person, is highly valued by those in our neighborhood, he noted, many of whom have been isolated for a long period of time. Currently, a small number of invited guests (donors) have been allowed to sit in on concerts, with a suite of safety procedures developed by the Property Committee (including masks, social distancing, and contact tracing).

The proposal is for an expansion of this program, allowing up to 40 units (one or two people sitting together) to attend, with tickets assigned by lottery (random selection from the Music Mondays email list).

Council agreed to approve the proposal as presented.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Church Council voted to approve the proposal to expand Music Mondays, as presented.

**Building Reopening Conversation: AA**

AA has asked to be allowed to resume in-person meetings only for those who have been vaccinated.

Discussion:

* The basement is currently set up exclusively for Food Ministry; could AA meet in the sanctuary? Would we ask them to limit their use of the building to the sanctuary, and close the bathrooms and kitchen (like Music Mondays is doing)?
* Could we take this moment of significant change as an opportunity to rework our arrangement with AA, i.e. asking them to meet at a different time/on a different day (something that staff has considered in the past, as it would allow staff to set up for Sundays on Saturday); asking AA to set up the space they use in a certain way after they’re finished; etc?
* Council suggests that Pastor Danielle Miller facilitate a conversation between AA leadership and Advent staff to jointly develop a proposal and bring it to Council.
* AA is one of the longest standing community services that Advent hosts, and the Council affirms that the church’s continued support of and partnership with this program is a priority.

**Building Reopening Conversation: Worship**

In Pastor Danielle Miller’s report, she asked Council to consider the possibility of Pentecost (May 23) as a return to physical worship date. We would be looking at moving into a hybrid worship model, she explained, maintaining an online presence while adding an in-person service (adapted for safety conditions, i.e. congregational song will likely not return until fall). Pastor Danielle also recommended surveying worshippers, especially those who attend only online, about their experiences and what they are looking for as we prepare to transition.

Kevin Bowen reported that staff is thinking through the logistics of hybrid worship and plans to test it with a small group as conditions allow. The Council has agreed to form a subcommittee to work with the Pastor and staff on ideas for a return to in-person worship. Conversation to be continued.

**Committee Updates**

* Investment:
  + Members: Jim Kelly, Madelyn Soussoudis as Council Treasurer, Deanne Walters as Council member, Pastor Danielle Miller
  + Rich Merhige has been invited
* Basement Committee:
  + To oversee programming, design, finance of basement
  + Members: Linda Kelly, other members to be determined
* Stewardship:
  + Council has offered support and directed the last Stewardship Campaign; please consider whether you’d like to lead/join this committee
  + No current members; this committee may go dormant for now to be re-organized before the end of year pledging at the latest.
* Audit:
  + Members: Garald Farnham (new), Lauren Johnson (continuing), Dart Westphal (continuing)
* Personnel:
  + Members: Pastor Danielle Miller, Damaris Maclean, Norma Martin, Hans Kriefall

**Black-Owned Businesses**

We will discuss this in April.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer.**

Damaris Maclean closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by M.S. Grebey, 03/22/21*