**Advent Lutheran Church – Church Council Meeting – June 21, 2023 Minutes**

**Present – Voting (n=10)**: Dorothy Clementson, Pastor Danielle Miller, Laura O’Keefe, Kathleen Matson, Mary Jordan Samuel, Dorothy Trigg, Amanda Garcia-Harris, Carolyn Riehl

**Present – Not Voting** **(n=1):** Hayley Moe, Aaron Wunsch, Norma Martin, Lauren Johnson, Deacon Carlos Lopez, Caroline Greene

**Not Present – Excused** **(n=1):** Hans Kriefall, Damaris Maclean, Bree Vandenberg

**Opening Reflection & Prayer**

Dorothy C opened us in prayer.

1. **Music Mondays**

Aaron Wunsch and Norma Martin joined us to share a proposal for an expansion of the Music Mondays program:

Music Mondays would like to expand the series next season, adding four Music Middays concerts. These one-hour concerts would take place on Tuesdays at 12:00 noon and would feature up-and-coming young professional musicians, including from diverse backgrounds. This series would offer music to those in our neighborhood who do not feel as comfortable coming to evening performances (including seniors), providing an additional service to our community. Since the monthly evening concerts are near or at capacity, these additional performances also provide a new way for Music Mondays to further its reach into the community. They will also offer a safe and inviting way for Advent to open its doors to the community on weekdays.

Each concert will last about an hour and will be preceded by a 60-to-90-minute rehearsal. We anticipate smaller audiences, at least initially, for these concerts. Guests will sit up close, providing a more intimate listening experience. Serena Canin, a violinist in the esteemed Brentano Quartet, will curate these four concerts, with guidance from Aaron. She will be present at all events and help to make sure they run smoothly, under the guidance of Music Mondays staff and volunteers. A one-page printed program (8.5x11) will be provided, so copying needs will be minimal. At the end of the ’23-’24 season, we will assess the Music Middays program and its viability. We would like to see Music Middays flourish in the long term but at this time do not anticipate any need for expansion in the next several years.

Aaron additionally shared that this past season has returned to mostly pre-pandemic attendance levels and filling or near-filling the sanctuary for each of the 9 events. Additionally they have grown the budget and scope of the program over the past few years. Part of the mission has always been to foster young talent, and over the years they’ve begun to attract performers in later stages of their career. This new series can help harken back to the original mission, as well as providing space for people who might not want to come to an evening concert. They don’t know if it will be a success, so will evaluate at the end of the year to determine next steps. They don’t anticipate it would expand further than the 4 concerts for the foreseeable future.

Do you have dates or ideas of when within the season you’re hoping to do this? Yes, all fall on Tuesdays at noon and are provisionally on the Advent space calendar. One each in Oct, Nov, Mar, Apr.

Are the musicians compensated? Yes, the musicians are compensated. They’re younger performers, so wouldn’t be compensated at the same level as the evening performers but close. They feel confident about the finances of it based on the current Music Mondays reserves.

Do we have a sense of if it would compete with space sharing that regularly happens on Tuesday afternoons? Tuesday afternoon space sharing upstairs is uncommon. The fellowship area would be difficult as we have a long term contract with people who are here in the mornings until 1pm and another that arrives at 3pm. We’d have to rethink the space use for Midday Music to concentrate on upstairs areas. The MM team doesn’t anticipate this would be an issue as performers for this program would be fewer in numbers, in this case it’s between 1-4 performers and concerts with no intermissions or need to leave between pieces. People may need to use the restroom which could mean a number of people coming down before or after to use the restroom. Pastor Danielle didn’t anticipate this would be an issue for the space sharers in the basement.

Would any of the space sharing groups be interested in attending this? Yes, the morning senior group might be!

One concern is that the growth of Music Mondays over the past few years has stretched other Advent resources thin over the years. For example, Hans as the volunteer treasurer spends at least 50% of his time on Music Mondays (depending on the season) in order to cut checks for the musicians, input donations, and prepare separate giving statements for Music Mondays donors. So we need to look at new structures, either MM scaling down (which we don’t want to do) or separating some finances or other administrative processes in order to keep things sustainable for volunteer roles. We would need to talk about a timeline for Music Mondays to have greater financial independence.

There are some advantages to incorporating as a separate 501c3 but also a number of disadvantages, so it’s not a solution that can be taken lightly. Advent used to have a paid bookkeeper, and perhaps that can come back and Music Mondays can contribute to that salary?

Is it possible to have a separate account that is managed by Music Mondays but separate from the main account? This could be difficult for year-end audits and other items, but we can connect with the finance team to get guidance on what a sustainable solution might be.

First next step is to talk to the Finance team about what solution there might be without incorporating. Music Mondays is blessed with resources, so would be willing to contribute financially to help solve this problem. Dorothy C will reach out to move this forward.

Related point, there’s a potential space sharing client looking to book every Monday evening except the Music Mondays nights, so we need to confirm those dates as soon as possible. Pastor Danielle will confirm back to Aaron & Norma when we need date confirmation by.

This is an exciting and programmatically fitting program, and with these two additional conversations moving forward Aaron & Norma will move forward with the planning of this program.

1. **Community Lunch**

Caroline Green, Deacon Carlos Lopez, Lauren Johnson came to share updates on the Community Lunch program.

After the pandemic, Community Lunch increased 3-fold. Pre-pandemic we were feeding ~100 people once a month, and now feeding ~350 people twice a month. It’s a bit sad that we’re not sitting down inside anymore, but we couldn’t meet this increased volume need inside anymore. We also have a wider outreach into the community with the visibility of being outside. There is something special about dining inside and the community aspect of it. You can get food in lots of places, but can’t always get the hospitality experience.

The people who have been leading for the last few years are getting tired and overwhelmed. Some other, newer volunteers are stepping in but don’t have the ability to take on all of the roles that other leaders have been before, particularly some of the behind the scenes work and weekday needs. We have money for the food, but are struggling with volunteers. It’s usually about an hour to distribute, but sometimes the 350 meals are given out in even less time.

The team is trying to find more ways to grow and support the leadership team into sustainable leadership is important. They have tried to take a step back to reorganize how tasks are set and change volunteer outreach in order to revamp the volunteer program. It’s not only a gift for the community but can also be a big gift for the volunteers to be part of these programs. There are some new volunteers since Covid, some long time volunteers, some past volunteers who haven’t been able to come back. It’s a beautiful and special opportunity for both the church and the community. We even have some volunteers who are also program participants. One tricky thing is getting kitchen-confident people. The idea of cooking for 350 scares some people. Dishwashing (and specifically pot-washing) is a particularly difficult task to find a volunteer for. There was previously a person who was paid to come and help clean up, it would be helpful to have this again.

The team is thinking through a number of ideas for how to recruit new volunteers (“Friend-Raising”), and to raise additional funds (“Fund-Raising”) for some much needed infrastructure improvements. One idea is a “fund/friend/thank you event”.

The kitchen as it exists currently is difficult to use for cooking 350 meals, particularly the stove and oven. There was a GoFundMe created a few months ago, which has raised about $10k so far. It’s being thought of more like a capital campaign than a general fundraise for food, but wasn’t launched clearly and needs an OK from Council in order to re-launch

The team has a new oven in mind, which would cost $20k for the oven and installation and be a major game changer for the program. This was the topic of the initial conversation around the GoFundMe – this would be important for the ministry and fairly easy to install and move forward. Does it make sense to move forward with the GoFundMe concept? Does it makes sense to have some sort of event? How can we get to the $20k to support it? If there’s some kind of match from Advent or the ELCA that could help support the GoFundMe that could help a refresh of the campaign. Could volunteers and other folks share outside of the community?

When you talk about trying to increase the leadership team, is that people organizing the volunteers or is that people leading in the cooking/recipes/etc? It’s both. Previously we’ve had one person in charge of leading Friday cooking, and another group who leads the volunteers on Saturday. There’s also the work of ordering the food and working within grant funding & receiving the food. A volunteer has to be here to receive the food and carry it downstairs during the deliveries.

For volunteers it sounds like the team needs both highly committed & skilled people to support leaders as well as day-of manpower support. The team said yes, and that they want to take what people are willing to give.

We talked about a number of ideas that could help the team:

* How can we be more clear about what opportunities are available and when in order to share more roles?
* Could we partner recipe developers with someone who is willing to cook but not be present?
* There are migrants in shelters that aren’t able to cook for themselves, but want to. Is there a way to bring them in and give them an opportunity to cook both for themselves and for others?
* The current sign up system for volunteers is SignUp Genius, and once you’re on the list you’re always on the list. How are those volunteer roles shared with everyone who might be interested?
* Can other Advent groups “take over” volunteer days – not cooking but helping with prep and other things? 20s/30s, Sunday School families, etc.
* We will include more callouts and stories in the e-newsletter, PD will reach out to folks more regularly for a call for stories.
* It would also be great to share more visuals (on IG especially) about what it actually means to volunteer in various roles.

There’s a lot of really exciting work and programming happening but needs more deep strategic conversation for what we as a Council need to know and do to support all of these ministries further. It could be helpful to hear from other congregations who have major programs like these that we could talk to about this. Most other church-connected food ministries are separately incorporated and managed separately from their main church budget.

Are we participating in any type of food justice advocacy in addition to the actions of hunger ministries? We have sporadically in the past but not consistently. That’s something that perhaps the two programs could work together on.

What are the next steps? Need to have a more regular Community Lunch leaders meeting, and one of the things to be doing in that space are thinking of ways to grow the volunteer base as well as the other support needs. Can there be a dedicated “communications person” who can share e-newlsetter and social media content with PD and Hayley for communications – Caroline will take this on for now.

Council will continue to discuss the broader relationship between Council and ministries as well as specific ways we can help support and publicize the opportunities.

The Community Lunch team will follow up with everyone who donated to the GoFundMe to give a thank you.

Who manages the money for the food ministries? Hans and Dorothy C have eyes on all of it, and the ordering and grants are tracked by the ministry leaders. The food ministries aren’t paying people which simplifies finances, as does the fact that most of the grants are for in-kind food vs needing to be paid consistently by Advent as bills.

**Action** ***(Motioned, Seconded, Approved)*:** The Council voted to approve the re-launching of the GoFundMe campaign, focused to a smaller $21,000 amount that would specifically fund the new double convection oven & installation. The re-launch would allow the team to publicize the fundraiser more widely.

1. **Consent Agenda**

There was a question on the Pastor’s Report about what grant funding can or can’t be used on for food ministries. The Spice Collection is for Food Pantry specifically, as Community Lunch typically buys spices for their meals with Advent money. Fresh herbs can be bought but not dried herbs, so this is another opportunity to provide dignity and better service for our guests.

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

1. **Upcoming Meetings**

* July 19 at 7pm on Zoom
* August 16 at 7pm on Zoom
* In-person Council Retreat – September 16 from 10am - 3pm – Amanda volunteered to help the Exec Committee plan the retreat
* Future topics for discussion: Sunday School next steps, Hybrid Worship report, Food Pantry, Hospitality (summer exercise), Parsonage and Condo Management teams

Pastor Danielle has shared a Hospitality audit as an opportunity for us to reflect on various areas of Advent either through your worship at Advent or if you’re worshiping at another church that can inform your opinions. It’s a way to guide and focus our future conversations on hospitality. Please complete by August 30 so we can include it as a discussion in our summer retreat.

Mary Jordan volunteered to work with Hayley and Pastor Danielle on Sunday School next steps discussions. Carolyn and Pastor Danielle are starting conversations around Hybrid Worship planning team.

**Adjournment — Closing Prayer**

Pastor Danielle closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by Dorothy Trigg 6/21/23*