



Asbury Leadership Team Meeting 11.12.24 Recap

Asbury's Leadership Team met on Tuesday, November 12 for our monthly meeting, led by Team Chairperson Anna Suckow. After an opening question and devotion, the team reviewed the September finances. As of the end of September, giving YTD was \$58,987 under budgeted income while our income was \$5,765 under expenses. It was also reported that we could expect a \$14,000 loss in October. We do expect some end-of-year giving but more of those who give their pledge for the year at one time probably give at the beginning of the year. We do have money in the bank and may be able to borrow from some of the designated-giving funds, if needed.

There was some discussion about why giving has not picked up this fall as it has in the past but there is no one thing that stands out. Steve Mix reported that we had \$72,000 in reserve at the beginning of the year and expected to spend that down. Pastor Kip also mentioned that 2024 was exactly what we expected. We expected that we would not have enough income and we would spend down our reserve. We are about exactly where we thought we would be. It says something positive about our estimates and planning. Kip also mentioned that we are still expecting a \$4,200 health and pension rebate from the Dakotas Annual Conference in December. We are also expecting a \$10,000 special gift from a donor to help launch the full-time Director of Youth and Next-Generations Ministries position.

Discussion was also had about possible cost-saving measures prior to the end of the year and whether there might be some opportunities for additional giving before year end. It was also reported that we have only spent about half of the estate gift that was given for capital expenses and it was suggested that we hold on any further capital improvements until we have had a chance to assess how best to move forward. There was an acknowledgment that the majority of the people in the congregation may not be aware of where we are financially.

Conversation continued with an evaluation of whether Asbury would be in a good position to do a capital campaign in 2025. While there would be an opportunity for us to capitalize on it being Asbury's 75th Anniversary, there was concern about doing a large capital campaign when we are looking at a budget that could be underfunded by as much as \$130,000. There was discussion about whether we could put funds toward people (a congregational growth strategy) and hold off on a capital campaign for a year or two.

The conversation shifted to the 2025 proposed budget. The proposed budget is also presented as a deficit budget. A few of the items that were added to the budget that could account for some of the increase were requests to include camperships in the budget (\$6,000) instead of a special fund-raising project, a proposed audit (\$10,000), and a proposed 3% increase for staff pay (\$11,536). There was an acknowledgement that the apportionments Asbury pays to the Dakotas Annual Conference will be reduced .5% in 2025 and that the final amount will be based on income. There was some discussion of whether Asbury is still a two-pastor church and whether

a staffing change would help to bring us closer to balancing the budget. A move from our current staffing would probably mean needing to create an administrative position to manage things.

The team began to work on revising the 2025 proposed budget by approving the 3% proposed increase for staff. Items that were cut included the camperships and the proposed audit (will put off an audit to 2025). There was also the suggestion that we could cut some cost by reducing little things exterior to the building by using less fertilizer, sand, and water for the grounds and parking lot.

Once revised, the proposed budget had been reduced from \$641,000 to \$625,000 which was approved with the understanding that we would continue to actively look at ways to reduce the budget. This may require some outside-the-box thinking but will also come with intentionally evaluating the budget quarterly, watching expenses closely, and communicating to staff and teams that everything needs to be kept on the table in order for us to faithfully steward the resources of Asbury.

There was discussion about the makeup of the Leadership Team in 2025 due to the ending of terms for Jeff Easter, Anna Suckow, and Nathan Grau. We received no applications or recommendations for new Leadership Team members prior to the October 31 deadline. Nathan is willing to continue, as is Anna, but not in the role of Team Chairperson. Jeff is planning to step off of the team after several years of service on both the Leadership Team and the previous Trustees Committee.

The SPR Sub-Group brought a recommendation to look for an outside vendor as a replacement for the Financial Secretary position that Sarah Wagenaar is resigning from. The recommendation passed and recommendations for possible service providers are being gathered and assessed.

Pastor Kip gave a few ministry updates including the impact of the All Saints Day Ritual of Remembrance where he received several tearful words of thanks. This led into sharing plans for our annual Star of Hope service where Barb Roozen will speak on Wednesday, December 4. The plan for Advent is to do a series titled "The Original Christmas Playlist" with Christmas Eve services at Noon, 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. with the 5:00 service being live-streamed on the Asbury Facebook page and sfasbury.online.church.

Kip also pointed to some of the fruit that we are seeing in the area of Youth Ministry. Several youth are attending the 11:00 service and serving as ushers/greeters. One of the moms said, "It is great to see these youth attending worship together – and WANTING to come to church." Her son was one of the Youth being trained to help with the worship tech. Confirmation has also been going well meeting every other Sunday at noon. For worship service attendance, we are seeing slightly more than last year in person where we are averaging 171 through the beginning of November. Our online numbers are down slightly on the Church Online platform (sfasbury.online.church) at 36 devices logging in each week, but the Facebook page and Asbury Facebook Campus views are similar to last year and we are consistently seeing over 200 views the week the services are uploaded.

The next meeting of the Leadership Team will be Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 106.