



Asbury Leadership Team Meeting 12.25 Recap

Asbury's Leadership Team met on Tuesday, December 2, 2025 for the team's monthly meeting. In attendance were Bonnie, Rennae, Nathan, Anna, Rogene, Mike, June, Jim, Carly, Kip, and Matt. Also in attendance were Steve Mix (representing Limestone Inc.), Amy Caselli (joining the Leadership Team in January), and Jennifer Falkenstein (consultant with Into the Grey Consulting)

After an opening devotion, a conversation about navigating transition was facilitated by Jennifer. She had the team focus on what we know, what is in progress, and what we do not know. What we know: Pastor Kip will retire July 1, 2026. Asbury will transition from two pastors to one. Asbury's mission, vision, and purpose remain strong. Asbury faces facilities needs and is facing a budget deficit. What is in progress: Work was in progress on the 2026 budget. Evaluation of building needs, discernment around a potential capital campaign, and planning for future staffing were all underway. What we do not know yet: Who the Dakotas Conference Cabinet will appoint as the next Lead Pastor for Asbury. Some financial details and funding sources are still being discerned. Conversation was also had about how we communicate things from the Leadership Team to the congregation and Jennifer offered to send a recommended communication strategy for the team to discuss and implement.

The Trustees sub-group gave updates on the roof and HVAC evaluations which are ongoing. Temporary roof repairs have been made while further reports are pending. Recent HVAC assessments raised concerns about airflow, zoning, and system design, and next steps may include consulting a mechanical engineer and exploring accountability options with contractors. These efforts are focused on ensuring safe, functional, and sustainable facilities for ministry.

The SPR sub-group gave some updates on the search for a Director of Children's Ministries position. Three applications had been received with interviews being scheduled. The position posting was discussed to determine where it was currently posted and what other resources we might take advantage of to advertise the opening.

The Leadership Team continued their work on the 2026 budget, but recognized a need for an additional meeting to finalize the budget. Three possible budget scenarios would be put together to help guide discussion and discernment. As a part of this conversation, ideas were explored to better engage the congregation through clearer communication and a town hall conversation. Several ideas are being explored to improve visibility and access to updates, including printed Leadership Team updates, posted materials in gathering spaces, and prayer-focused communication.

The Leadership Team met again to continue their work on Tuesday, December 16 with Carly, Nathan, Rennae, Rogene, Jim, June, Anna, Mike, Kip, and Steve in attendance. The

Finance sub-group presented the November financial and Treasurer's Reports. Income for November was \$55,388.94 and expenses were \$44,206.22 leaving a positive cash flow of \$11,182.72. For Jan - Nov 2025 Income is \$527,261.06 and expenses is \$562,484.32 leaving a negative cash flow of \$35,223.26 for the year. We did have some extra gifts in November, which really helped and expect there will be a few more coming in December. The reports were approved.

The team then devoted significant time to prayerful discernment and discussion regarding the proposed 2026 church budget. This conversation took place within the larger context of staffing transitions, facility needs, and our shared desire to remain faithful to Asbury's mission while living responsibly within our financial means. The Leadership Team reviewed budgets from 2023 through 2025 and examined projected needs for 2026. Over the past two years, Asbury has experienced approximately an 8% increase in income. At the same time, emerging needs related to staffing, worship leadership, technology, and facilities (especially the roof) would result in a much larger increase in expenses if all proposed changes were adopted at once.

Several budget scenarios were considered, ranging from a "lean" model that removed all new positions to more expansive options that included additional staff support. Throughout the discussion, the team carefully weighed ministry impact, volunteer capacity, and financial sustainability. After extended discussion, the Leadership Team approved a lean 2026 budget totaling approximately \$575,000–\$580,000. This budget reflects necessary restraint while preserving key areas of ministry. The approved budget includes:

- A 20-hour-per-week Director of Children's Ministry for the full year
- An 8-hour-per-week Worship Leader for the Non-Traditional Service
- Removal of proposed Digital Ministry and Director of Operations positions
- Elimination of Vacation Bible School and campership funding for 2026
- Corrections to duplicate Children's Ministry line items

Two members voted against the budget, expressing concern about the long-term sustainability of ministry under a lean model. Their concerns were noted and respected as part of the discernment process.

What This Means Going Forward: The Leadership Team emphasized that this budget represents a starting point, not a final destination. Asbury's leadership remains committed to reviewing the budget monthly and adapting as circumstances change—especially in light of pastoral transitions and future giving capacity. A congregational Town Hall meeting is planned for February 1 to provide space for open conversation about staffing needs, facility priorities (including the roof), and financial realities. This will also be an opportunity to share vision, listen to feedback, and invite the congregation into prayerful discernment together.

The Leadership Team believes that God is still at work at Asbury. While some difficult decisions were required, these choices are being made with care, honesty, and faith. We are committed to communicating clearly, engaging the congregation thoughtfully, and continuing

to seek God's guidance as we move into 2026. Thank you for your prayers, your generosity, and your trust as we walk this path together.

The next meeting of the Asbury Leadership Team will be on Tuesday, December 2 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 106.