

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry
December 8, 2020

Attendees:

The Reverend Ray Buchanan ✓

Vestry Members:

Joe Mulino, Senior Warden ✓

Patricia Ingram, Junior Warden ✓

Ray Zentis ✓

Bob Earl ✓

Margo Farrara ✓

Alison Kinch ✓

Robin Mills ✓

Andi Jerger ✓

Debbie Prather, Treasurer, Member ✓

Guests - Persons of Interest:

The Reverend Suzy Post ✓

John Thomas Assistant Treasurer ✓

Eileen Carrara, Thrift Shop Manager Excused with regrets

Patrick Hunt, Stewardship ✓

Paula Paquette, Clerk of the Vestry ✓

Guest: Douglass Lind, Consultant ✓

Opening Concerns and Prayers – Father Ray Buchanan

OPENING DISCUSSION

Father Ray would like to pick up with Doug Lind's suggestion to discuss how we feel the Vestry is functioning. General discussion. One member feels fragmented, missing everyone, but the pandemic has caused this, and left a feeling of fragmented. Another member suggested that a Vestry retreat be scheduled so conversation can be done outside of the time constraints of a regular meeting. A few members are going off Vestry so the remaining persons should maybe gather to figure out how to continue with new persons coming on most effectively. It has been a really hard time for everyone without real human contact. The pandemic has affected everyone greatly, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Everyone is just so tired. We can't do anything in person. We have to wait. It has been a really difficult year. Not everyone has gone back to attend the in-person services at church. Someone said that emails have not been received. The info goes out weekly on Fridays. Maybe some folks are not receiving communication from church weekly. We send two to three emails per week. Check with the office. No-one ever could have planned for the situation we are in with the pandemic. Suggest the Vestry be as maximum caring and supportive of each other as possible. The most the Vestry can come together as a whole and to support each individual member would be great. There is a lot of anger and despair in the world right now. Someone commented that the Vestry has done a good job keeping the morale and spirits of the church up. The congregant contacts were good and helpful. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. We are in God's hands even though we feel despondent sometimes. One member expressed being so grateful for the Vestry meetings, even if they are on Zoom, and for the companionship of other Vestry members. One member said she sees the Vestry as a seesaw with a lot of people on one end and a few people on the other end. The people who are on the top end with the less number are doing about 80% of the

work of the Vestry. This is causing people to be really tired and stressed out. Hopefully, not burned out. This member said it would be good to see the work of the Vestry spread more evenly among all the members. Another member said there are a few people doing a lot of things. Even coming to the services. If people don't see the Vestry at church, they feel like they won't attend either. Perhaps we can make some calls to people who we don't see to find out if they did receive the info in emails. One person said she envisioned the Vestry more like as a family unit operating together toward one goal. It perhaps doesn't seem like it is operating like that. Some action steps will need to be taken as to HOW to move ahead now. The conversation was great. Now, we can think about action steps. Some items will be discussed under the heading of annual meeting.

Information

Approval of Minutes – Motion Joe Mulino, Second Patty Ingram, to approve previous minutes of November 10, 2020. All in favor.

Group Ministries – No reports at this time.

Announcements – We have planned and sent out the email concerning Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. We cannot do the regular pageant. We are doing a drive through pageant with four stations. The last stage is in front of the Columbarium where some gifts will be given out. There are things we need help with at 5 pm on Christmas Eve. It will be wearing masks and social distanced. Let Senior Warden Joe or Father Ray know if you can help. Helpers are needed. At 8 pm on Christmas Eve will be a Candlelight Service, 30 seats by reservation. Plus helpers. Christmas Day will be a 9:30 online only service of Morning Prayer. Sunday after Christmas will be a service of Holy Eucharist. Father Ray will be off the week following that. Mother Suzy asked that everyone go back to their contact lists to provide information about the fact that we are back to in person services and to tell them about the Christmas schedule.

DISCUSSION

Senior Warden Report, Joe Mulino

Update on Thrift Store. At the end of November, Joe found out through the owners that the AC company just walked away from the project and the plaza ownership could not get in touch with them. Joe recommended Coastal Cooling to them. Rick Ike and one of the owners made contact and they have made an arrangement for the work to be completed. They will also be maintaining the entire plaza moving forward. Load calculation has been completed and sent to the owner. The owner is now submitting this to the county. Joe went into the thrift store yesterday with Manager Eileen Carrara. They discovered some water inside from rain. Rick Ike found the problem with where the rain was coming in. It is repaired. We do not know when we will get a certificate of occupancy. Ceiling panels will go in once inspections are completed. The store will not open until after New Year. Joe Mulino and Rob Ricca are coordinating to get Christmas decorations done at church. Margo Farrara is helping also. Moving help was offered by some members.

Vestry Consultation

Doug Lind, consultant. What Doug is observing from churches around the country is that people are looking for the ministry of presence. People are looking for people to be present to them. An item brought up earlier was phone calls. People are used to phone more than they are used to zooming. There is some technology anxiety. Zooming can be very tiresome. Some people get very frustrated due to not being able to do technology as well as they would like. Feeling like we have been touched by someone personally is very important. The time before a meeting begins can be very important to say something personal, before the meeting starts. Concerning the retreat idea, we will need to plan that differently still.

When it is done in a Zoom format, it will really need to be broken up into different time blocks. Perhaps one hour at a time, hour and a half at most. You might need breakout groups also, perhaps three people in a small group. You would see more conversation in a smaller group. It is difficult to stare at a screen for a long time. Doug Lind will assist with future retreat activities in whatever way he can. It seems these days that there is not an awful lot of energy in the room. It can be so important that there be energy in any given gathering. Energy is so low nowadays. Something has happened in the last month all over throughout companies and organizations that there is a discouragement that this has gone on too long. There is an increase in anger, disorientation, all sorts of things. It is taking so much more work and so much more energy to get things done. The highest performers are struggling to keep getting things done. Doug Lind will assist with the retreat or hoe to bring energy into our gathering time, whatever. Deb Prather expressed she would be glad to receive a list of people and to make calls. Mother Suzy commented that if anyone cannot do their calls, please let Mother Suzy know and she will reassign the calls. Everyone has different abilities right now.

Congregant Contacts

Will be done again.

Stewardship

Patrick Hunt, Stewardship. This has been a very tough time. We have to be good stewards of God's gifts. We need to continue to tell people about the continuing good news, the Good News of God. The good news of the Thrift Shop. We are encouraging people to give electronically if they can. We will send out pledge cards to those who need. We will run the campaign solely by email as much as possible, but mail will be provided to those who do not do email. Many people are not coming down to Florida this year. The budget is stressed. Pledges are being paid. Loose plate revenue is down. Patrick will work with the Generating Excitement About Who We Are is the theme. It would be so nice to see people at services. It was so familiar a place was church. We can get that back.

Annual Meeting

Father Ray was on a Zoom call today with Bishop Dabney Smith and presbyters, those in charge of parishes. There is not a diocesan-wide policy concerning Covid19 because all the areas are so different. Our bylaws do not require that we gather in person for the annual meeting. Suggestion it be held on the last Sunday in January and that it be done by Zoom. Not our favorite, but a necessity it seems this year. We can look at videotaping some reports. That way, people can look at them after the fact also. The Vestry election does not need to happen at that time.

Margo Farrara is resigning end of December, 2020. Of the three people that roll off, Debbie Prather and Robin Mills are not opting to stand for election again. Andi Jerger would like to NOT stand for a full three-year term. Andi would like to fill out Margo Farrara's term. So, we have three open positions. Kathy Hart is interested to run for Vestry. With all this in place, we would have seven people on the Vestry. This would be acceptable according to bylaws.

Zoom meeting last Sunday in January with a presentation of the spending plan and an election at which one person is presented for election. General conversation indicated agreement with this plan.

New Capital Campaign

Not discussed at this time.

Strategic Planning

Not discussed at this time.

Invite, Welcome, Connect

Not discussed at this time.

Mardi Gras 2021 Recipient

Not discussed at this time.

DECISIONS

Finance Committee, Deb Prather

Financial reports were emailed earlier to Vestry. Any questions about finances? Treasurer Deb Prather reported on finances as of this date. According to the non-reconciled statement we are \$20,974 in the red. Communication will be sent asking people to reconcile their pledged amount with what we show as paid. Stewardship campaign will happen in first quarter of 2021. A Christmas letter will be sent mid-December asking for contributions to support the Thrift Shop and its reopening. All Thrift Shop expenses are paid to date. It will need money to open. A deficit is notated for the year for the church overall. We have a conservative and responsible staff that does not spend money if it is not needed. Discussion of next year's budget. Discussed outreach grants usually made by the Thrift Shop. Keep them in? Remove them? Monies have not come in for church operations from the Thrift Shop in 2019 or 2020. Suggest the contribution from the Thrift Shop to the church be kept in as a line item for 2021 budget. Operating account will pay for the Thrift Shop opening. Hopefully, it will get paid back as the Thrift Shop opens and does so well. Spending Plan is presented as it is. If any changes are asked for, it would need to be done by way of a motion. Joe Mulino makes a motion to accept the Spending Plan as it is. Second, Alison Kinch. We generally think the new location will be a great benefit and income should increase. Our Manager has some great ideas for our store. We are confident. Comment that we should leave outreach in the proposed Spending Plan. All in favor of the motion.

Junior Warden Report, Patricia Ingram

Patricia Ingram reported. Carpet was fixed in Sanctuary. Some roof repairs have been made. The restoration because of water damage is almost done. Repairs have been covered mostly through insurance. We have to pay a part of the deductible only. This has been very skillfully taken care of.

Closing Prayers

Father Ray expressed his appreciation to everyone for all they do. The Vestry is so important for the good functioning and health of the church.

Vestry agenda completed 6:07 pm.

Adjournment