

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry
March 9, 2021

Attendees:

The Reverend Ray Buchanan ✓

Vestry Members:

Joe Mulino, Senior Warden ✓

Patricia Ingram, Junior Warden ✓

Ray Zentis ✓ *Excused with regrets*

Bob Earl ✓

Alison Kinch ✓

Kathie Hart ✓

Andi Jerger ✓

Guests - Persons of Interest:

The Reverend Suzy Post ✓

John Thomas Assistant Treasurer ✓

Eileen Carrara, Thrift Shop Manager ✓

Debbie Prather, Treasurer ✓

Paula Paquette, Clerk of the Vestry ✓

Guest: Douglass Lind, Consultant ✓

Opening Concerns and Prayers – Father Ray Buchanan

OPENING DISCUSSION – Father Ray – One of the things that Father Ray has always envisioned at Iona-Hope is to somehow see Vestry process at meetings to be somehow prayer. There is opening prayer. And closing usually. Father Ray has used evening prayer. And that in the middle of the evening prayer, there is the meeting, and then evening prayer continues. Father Ray would like to hear from everyone as to what their experience of prayer is, or your thoughts on prayer. What is prayer to you? There are many forms of prayer, communal, individual. Contemplative prayer is another form. It has been described as a dance between you and God. It can be joyful. It can be a lament. Prayer can be a private conversation with God. What's on my mind, and asking him for some things. It can be prayers many times through the day, short prayers. It can be our dialogue with God, to be in communication with God many times in a day. We can talk to God many times during the day. We can walk with God and talk with God. Individual and private, a lot of times. If we see prayer as conversation with God, what do we talk about? Sometimes, it can be what's bothering us, concerns, fears, what's happening close to us, what's happening in the world. We can stop to thank God for all our blessings, the blessings of the day before, the gifts of the day ahead. We can talk to God about stresses we feel. We can talk to God when we have decisions to make. We can try to ask God to help us accept his will for us. And the answer always comes. Are there things we find difficult to bring to God? Not sure we can really keep anything from God. He knows everything. We are good individually with lament. We tend to not do lament in our corporate setting. How do we become sensitive to the pain other people are feeling? If we join in the lament of others, we join with them to help carry their burdens. Anything we want to learn about concerning prayer? In the Episcopal church, we tend to have times for prayer, morning, noon, evening, at church. It less tends to be all throughout, like meditative prayer. It would be good to learn to open our minds and hearts to receive the messages of God. Prayer beads can help. Being outdoors or in the quiet can help. We look forward to learning about the labyrinth, what it means, and what it

can bring to us. Trying to see our work as prayer: We have a strong Anglican tradition of Benedictine spirituality. Our work can be acts of active prayer being offered up to God. It is enriching to see all the things we do as prayer. And to approach everything we do in prayer. All of life is a journey. It's important that we walk this walk.

INFORMATION

Approval of Minutes – Motion Bob Earl, Second Joe Mulino, to approve previous minutes of February 9, 2021. All in favor.

Group Ministries – No reports at this time.

Announcements – None at this time.

DISCUSSION

Senior Warden Report, Joe Mulino

Thrift Store update. Approval is getting closer. Manager of the complex spoke with the Fire Department person who is issuing the certificate of occupancy. A few things needed to be done again and were completed. Some plumbing items need to be completed. The complex is covering the expenses. The installation of dishwasher and washing machine are expenses we will need to bear. We have one estimate of \$900. Another estimate is forthcoming. Manager will be in town on March 15. Senior Warden and Thrift Shop Manager will meet with her when she is in town. Hopefully, that will be the date when we can move in. Senior Warden Joe received a call from a couple of members last evening. They will be donating \$1000 toward the costs of getting into the Thrift Shop. As soon as their stimulus check is received, they will cut a check to us.

Vestry Consultation

Doug Lind, consultant. He has interviewed some of the Vestry and will interview the remainder soon. This is about the topic of what is needed in order for the Vestry to move into its future. He will report on the outcomes of these conversations when all are received. Generally speaking, the Vestry members trust each other, respect each other, and genuinely like each other. There is mutual concern. We are in an interim time now, of waiting. We are all trying to manage our impatience and to wait on the moving of this virus. There is a lot of energy available, but we don't have the clear direction yet as to what to do. Some people at this time feel less useful than they have at other times (because of the pandemic and limited in person activities). We all need to pay attention to our own spiritual needs and spiritual lives, especially at this time. Further report will follow once all interviews are complete. Time will be dedicate on a future agenda.

Stewardship

Stewardship. Will be discussed within Finance Report

DISCUSSION

Finance Committee – Father Ray Buchanan continues our discussion on what the Vestry needs or wants from the Finance Committee so the Vestry can best do its work. Discussion. Are we seeking to build on what is already in place? Is there any problem with our existing structure? We can end up with groups without direction if we don't have a clear purpose for a group with a tie to what is needed from Finance. We can look back at what is the Vestry from our retreat time. We made big lists of things from the retreat. What is the Vestry supposed to be doing other than supporting Clergy and being financial stewards of the building and activities? So, how can the Finance Committee help you to do those things? We have expenses, needs to generate funds, do we have excess funds that we need to plan for, do we need to change the dashboard so we can better understand the swells and dips and how each year rolls along and unfolds and gets managed? How can the Finance Committee function in a way that best supports what the Vestry is doing? It might be a

good thing if Finance can help us understand? Education on accounting? Should we be going out into the community more? Do we need to generate income more to do some community things more? What else should we be doing to do more of inviting, welcoming, connecting? Do we have a Vestry retreat on the horizon for 2021? We do have one new Vestry person. Perhaps we build on what we already have in place. Finance Committee is the servant of the larger governing body. The governing body makes decisions and then Finance helps to support that ministry or activity. It is like a feedback loop of the project and the means to do it responding to each other. Questions can be asked, if we want to move in some direction, what will it take to get there? The best direction will be the one that serves us the best. We will discuss further next month.

Diocesan Convention

Some people have expressed interest. If any others come forward, please let Father Ray know.

New Capital Campaign

Not discussed at this time.

Strategic Planning

Not discussed at this time.

Invite, Welcome, Connect

Kathie Hart, Chair. A zoom meeting was held last week. The task was to consider eight questions which were provided to the committee. The final two questions were most interesting. After pandemic restrictions are lifted, what would be the ONE thing you would want to see done? Some Festive reopening, pet carnival, face to face coffee hours, pet blessings, social topic groups, lectio divina, supper club. Those were the expressed priorities. The other question was, what is one thing Sacred Ground class was really well regarded and a real lifeline. We may have a transition time now of more Zoom activities to then more in person. It might be nice to add a second in person service, perhaps Saturday night. Do we need to buy more Zoom power so more people can be accommodated. People were craving information as to what is happening? Communicating anything related to further opening and further activities would be great. Labyrinth activities would be great. Flyers outside the labyrinth would be good. Updating sign our front would be good. Festive banners out front would be good so we appear more like a church. Parting lot greeters are great. Lent bags, Advent bags, drive through Advent, drive through birthday, six services weekly, all have been stellar. If we want to do more Zoom or small groups, how do we start to do that? A good place to start is to talk to Mother Suzy, Father Ray, or Senior Warden Joe. All the church wants to know is how it relates to who we are. Clergy usually are the Zoom schedulers. There was a Vestry person assigned to all small groups. We wonder if the Vestry can reach out to their small groups to see if there is interest in doing Zoom activities now. Is Vestry willing to contact their small groups and see who is doing what? Can Marnie Ike send out the list of small groups to everyone? There are names of Vestry members assigned to groups which will need to be reassigned because they are not Vestry people now. What are the restrictions now for outside activities? Right now, no outside groups. This topic will be further discussed below.

Item of Note – Proposed Service Changes

Father Ray has been in discussions concerning some changes to services. We continue to watch the health news. There are people getting We would like to expand the 9:30 service to 50 persons for in person at services. Junior Warden Patty Ingram and facilities carer Ken Owens worked on realigning chairs to accommodate this. Sounds like a good plan. How many people are running over on reservations? We have had more reservations than could be accommodated. Waitlist from one week goes on top of list for the next week. From now til Easter, it would be filled to 50 most probably. Certainly 40-45 would sign up. Some people are alternating now, trying to give room for others to attend.

Second item. We are actively planning for Holy Week. No washing of the feet, but there will be a Maundy Thursday service. We are actively planning a Sunrise service for Easter Sunday. We will ask people to bring their own chairs and to park in the library lot. Easter 9:30 would be 50 and inside. We would not need to have reservations for the Easter Sunrise service since it would be outside and bring their own chairs. Second service will probably not be contemplated until after Easter. On Friday, there is a Deans meeting with the Bishop concerning CDC guidelines.

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. Stewardship report. Thank you to everyone for making calls to people concerning pledges. If someone says they are continuing their giving the same way as always, Marnie Ike needs to know that. \$321,000 is pledged now. Last year we were at \$355,000. If we get another PPP loan, it would be around \$44,000 which would bring us up to a good revenue picture. If it is a loan, it would be around 1% interest. The PPP was received for \$44,000. It is in the bank. We think it is a grant. Some graphs were included in the financial report handed out. Treasurer makes a suggestion that a thank you not be mailed to each person who pledged. Suggests each Vestry member writes seven cards. It can be just a very simple message, but a personal note would be so nice to do. Vestry was in concurrence! Treasurer will organize the thank you note project. Look at the amount of money that has been pledged while the church has been closed. Easier to get pledges when the church is open. Our congregation really stepped up to this immense level in the most challenging time.

Junior Warden Report, Patricia Ingram

Patricia Ingram reported. Maintenance items are being completed as needed. Not anything major going in. Pressure washing, some painting, sprucing things up as more and more people are returning. New light in men's room. Thank you!

Closing Prayers – Father Ray.

Vestry agenda completed 6:03 pm.

Adjournment