

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church  
Minutes of the Vestry  
May 24, 2022

**Attendees:**

The Reverend Ray Buchanan *excused*

**Vestry Members:**

Paula Paquette, Senior Warden ✓

Alison Kinch, Junior Warden ✓

Ray Zentis ✓

Bob Earl ✓

Rob Ricca ✓

Kathie Hart ✓

Kathleen Ulm ✓

**Guests - Persons of Interest:**

Eileen Carrara, Thrift Shop Manager *excused*

Joe Mulino, Treasurer ✓

Bella Tousignant, Assistant to the Treasurer *excused*

Margo Farrara, Clerk of the Vestry *excused*

Ken Owens and Donna Owens, Sextons ✓

Douglass Lind, Consultant ✓

**Opening Concerns and Prayers –**

Prayers are invited for celebrations, intercessions, ourselves, others. Prayers were offered for numerous concerns.

Opening conversation on Volunteers: Senior Warden Paula Paquette opened our meeting to conversation about Vestry goals, the directions we are heading, so much that has been accomplished this year since the new Vestry convened from February. The question posed for this afternoon's meeting is, what are we doing to even further increase our place in our community and the ways we are going to further serve our community, how are we finding volunteers who will carry forward Iona-Hope and our mission into our community, and where do we see our vision from Vestry retreat and subsequent conversations taking us?

Kathie Hart discussed a few topics that emerged from the Vestry Retreat she attended (held at DaySpring). The retreat spoke about what makes one church unique and different from any other place. That concept was described as the "Sacred Bundle" of the church which means that which the church group would carry from one place to another, those things that are the most sacred and valuable and important to the church. If we try to define this for Iona-Hope it would work much better to have a group of people wider than the Vestry working on this. A wider circle. At the "Unpacking Connect" webinar which Invite-Welcome-Connect listened to online, spiritual gifts discernment was cited as a very important process and growth tool for churches. Note just the gifts discernment where a person identified their own gifts, but discernment that looks deeper which is facilitated and amplified by group process. There is an upcoming program, online, being hosted by Virginia Theological Seminary continuing education programming, called "How to Supercharge Your Congregation Through Community Partnerships". It is being held June 2 and 9, 3:00-4:30 pm.

The question was asked, do we seek out a church because we are dissatisfied with something – either our church or something we feel like we are missing in our life? Each Vestry member and our Treasurer went around the table and talked for a half a minute each about, why we are at Iona-Hope (versus any other place) and what our sacred connection is with Iona-Hope. Some of the reasons cited included the following.

One person said the church fulfills a need. They enjoy the service. They enjoy seeing new people at service. It's good to see continual movement and growth. Another said the music was very appealing. Iona-Hope is a community, a church that is very much more than a building. One person said they had not been to church for years and something seemed to be missing. The music and liveliness were the first appeal. Then, the fact that people remembered her name was so important and meaningful. Iona-Hope seemed different from the get go. There was a sense of belonging here. One person said their previous denomination was not being decisive about affirming LGBT matters. She sought out a place that was affirming. We feel accepted at Iona-Hope. This is a place where we can serve Christ's Kingdom in so many ways. Iona-Hope is a place where we can be uniquely our true and genuine selves without judgement or criticism. Someone mentioned a quote: "True belonging requires you to be truly who you are."

If we start to want to take action and to define our next steps, we probably want to have conversation outside of the Vestry meeting which is just an hour long so we can spread out in our conversation. Vestry agreed it wants to take defined action steps, but we are not sure yet how to do that. We are looking for what will connect us with our community more closely. We are not quite sure yet how to reach for that. Ray Zentis reported on the demographic information that has been made available to him about the characteristics of our community. He said the information is extensive. But, just the demographics does not explain why people are coming from far away just to be with Iona-Hope. We think that the great next step is to try to define what is our SACRED BUNDLE. We offer the love of Christ to all who are here. What is the particular way we do it? It is important to be faithful to who we are. It's not all about numbers. If we are faithful to who we are called to be, then we will flourish. We will seek out what our joint venture may be with other community partners.

We will find our starting point at THE SACRED BUNDLE.

## **INFORMATION**

**Approval of Minutes** – Motion, Ray Zentis, second, Rob Ricca, to approve previous minutes of April 26. Discussion. Date at the top of the minutes is noted as April 26, 2022. Under announcements, first page, "The office staff replacement is a concern." It is noted as a complete sentence (delete the "as Man" at the end of it). Under Vestry goals, we note that, Quite a few of our groups are just groups, not SMALL GROUP ministries (instead of saying not REAL ministries). Under the Addition to Minutes, please note that Kathleen Ulm also voted in the affirmative for the motion. Six in favor, one abstention.

**Group Ministries** – Finding Hope group is not happening at this time. Animal Ministry has numerous projects underway. Further report soon (Kathleen Ulm). Topics include creating niches for pets and having memorial plaques for pets by the scatter garden. Hiking Group is successfully hiking (Kathie Hart). Sacred Ground group is beginning again with Mother Suzy Post on June 7. "Wisdom of the Body" book group is convening beginning May 31 (Kathie Hart).

**Announcements** – No announcements at this time.

**Visitor Comments** – None at this time.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Senior Warden Report**

Paula Paquette, Senior Warden

No further report than the items above.

### **Vestry Consultation**

Doug Lind, consultant

Father Lind stated that he has been attending numerous Board and other types of meetings at churches since 1964 and he has never heard such an exhilarating and positive meeting such as this one this afternoon. He is delighted for all we are accomplishing. He called our gathering fabulous and spectacular. We are truly discerning where God is leading us in this place.

### **Vestry Goals**

Discussed above.

### **Invite, Welcome, Connect**

Kathie Hart, Chair, Invite, Welcome, Connect

Kathie Hart has a scheduled meeting tomorrow with Father Ray Buchanan to discuss and work on the process of a guest coming to the church, to the welcome of them, to the inviting of them to join by way of the yellow card, and then follow through to encourage involvement of that person or persons in the activities and life of the congregation. This, it seems, is the key to our warm welcome to and warm inclusion of persons into the life of Iona-Hope. Kathie thanked Rob Ricca for his work coordinating our Welcome Desk activities. This has gone superbly well. Thank you, Rob. Kathie asked if anyone is interested to attend the Virginia Theological Seminary continuing education programming, "How to Supercharge Your Congregation Through Community Partnerships" (June 2 and 9). She will forward the information about this program.

The idea was brought up again as to whether we can invite new people attending a service to introduce themselves before service. It seems this used to be well-received.

Conversation included that we need to be mindful of the fact that we have an online group and we don't want to leave them feeling left out in any regard. Kathie Hart will bring this to the Rector in her meeting.

### **Thrift Store Update**

Bob Earl, Thrift Shop Day Manager

Things are going really well. It is summer season now. Business is a bit slower. Some volunteers are away for the summer. Revenue for the 12 months since the Thrift Store moved to its new location is the highest ever, at \$308,000. Bob expressed thanks to Eileen Carrara, Thrift Store Manager, for her excellent leadership, to Treasurer Joe Mulino for locating the Paddlecreek location, and to all the volunteers who have made this great success possible.

### **Ukrainian Immigrants**

There was a meeting recently at Iona-Hope to discuss the possibility of sponsoring a Ukrainian family to live here. The process seems very complicated and big, and perhaps beyond what we can do, but, we can certainly support Ukrainians or other refugees in other ways, maybe putting together hygiene kits or other items for people. Lutheran Social Services, Episcopal Relief and Development, and Church World Service are all doing great work. Perhaps we can support projects through them. Kathie Hart made a motion, seconded by Bob Earl, to start discerning what Iona-Hope members may wish to do in support of the goal of assisting refugees. This will be done by preparing information for our bulletin and screens at service to try to find out the church's interest in this. Gladiolus Food Pantry and the Thrift Shop might be helping partners in this effort. All in favor.

### **Finance Committee Changes**

Not discussed at this time.

### **New Capital Campaign**

Eventually, we will need to have one. Let us just remember this and let the idea brush by us today.

### **Strategic Planning**

We are working on strategic planning in many things we do. Nothing specific needed at this time. Let us just remember this by name at this time.

### **Mardi Gras**

Not discussed at this time.

## **DECISIONS**

### **Finance Committee, Joe Mulino, Treasurer**

A financial report was emailed ahead of the meeting together with financials for April, final. Treasurer Joe presented summary information for this past month. The line of credit was paid back (\$30,058). Treasurer Joe will reapply for the line of credit for the summer in case the cash might be needed. The final payment for funds loaned to the Thrift Shop for start-up was paid back in full (\$22,413). Henceforth, the Thrift Shop will only need to reimburse payroll amounts. The question was raised as to where the grants applications are and what next steps are. We will ask at the office tomorrow. We think five or six applications were received. The Thrift Shop managers will review the applications and make recommendations for grants. Thrift Shop outreach donations will be increased from \$20,000 to \$25,000. Treasurer Joe provided some comparison numbers for 2022 versus 2021. Plate to date in 2022 is \$22,613. In 2021, it was \$13,000. Pledge to date in 2022 is \$117,750. In 2021, it was \$107,107. Finances are in good shape.

### **Junior Warden Report**

#### **Alison Kinch, Junior Warden**

A report was given by the Junior Warden. The changing of the lightbulbs continues as a project. To more efficient bulbs. Alison Kinch and Patty Ingram were up on the roof of The Gathering Place recently to clean gutters and check the roof. It seems to be holding up at this time. THANK YOU to our Junior Warden for her excellent work!

Thank you to Donna and Ken Owens, our Sextons, for all their great work taking care of our facilities. They will be going north June 25 and returning mid-October. We wish them a wonderful summer. We will miss them. We will look forward to their return!

**Closing Prayers – Paula Paquette.**

**Vestry agenda completed 6:03 pm.**

*Adjournment*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Paquette, Acting Clerk*