

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Date: May 2026

Location: Iona-Hope Episcopal Church

Presiding: Rev. Jenny Scott-Jones

Opening

The meeting was called to order with prayer. The April Vestry Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

The Finance Committee reported that the church remains in a stable financial position.

- Current checking account balance: **\$98,503**
 - Pledges received to date: **\$186,000** of the annual pledge goal of **\$292,000**, leaving approximately **\$106,000** to be received during the remainder of the fiscal year.
 - The line of credit has been fully paid off. The committee recommended that it not be renewed when it expires in August, as the church no longer appears to require bank debt.
 - Audit follow-up work continues to ensure prior recommendations have been implemented.
 - FEMA reimbursement may provide an additional **\$12,000** in budget relief.
 - Monthly operating expenses are currently estimated at approximately **\$37,007**.
 - The Thrift Store has transferred **\$60,000** to the church, including **\$20,000** for remediation expenses and **\$40,000** toward its overall pledge commitment.
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Thrift Store Report

Eileen provided an update on Thrift Store operations.

- Sales have slowed to approximately 50% of pre-May levels, which is consistent with expected seasonal trends.
- Twenty-five grant applications were received before the May 15 deadline and are currently under review.
- The Vestry approved the warehouse access construction project at a cost of **\$11,600**. The project will create direct access between the common area and warehouse, improving operational efficiency by eliminating the need to transport items outside.

- Copies of the contractor's Florida license and insurance will be obtained before construction begins.

The Vestry also approved increasing the pickup driver's compensation rate from **\$75 per hour to \$85 per hour**, effective June 1, 2026. Consideration of an increase to \$90 per hour was deferred until January pending a review of fuel costs.

Property Committee Report

Patty reported the following maintenance updates:

- Air conditioning maintenance has been completed, and the system is operating well.
- Fire system batteries were replaced, resolving previous error messages.
- The projector remote sensor was repaired after becoming detached due to heat.
- A permanent solution is still needed for access to the projector area.
- Drainage and gutter improvements performed well during recent rainfall.
- Security cameras will be reinstalled following completion of the gutter work.

The committee also noted that electrical circuits in the Gathering Place continue to trip when multiple coffee makers are in use. Further investigation into the electrical capacity of that circuit is needed.

New Business

Holy Cow Congregational Assessment

The Vestry discussed the proposal from Holy Cow Consulting for congregational development work. The total cost is **\$3,750**, with the Diocese offering to pay half of the expense.

It was agreed that a separate Zoom meeting would be scheduled with consultant Susan to allow additional discussion before a final decision is made.

Insurance Update

The Diocese will present two insurance options at an upcoming meeting:

- Remaining with Church Insurance under a revised coverage plan, or
- Transitioning to Brown & Brown, which could potentially save the church approximately **\$12,000 annually**.

No action was taken pending additional information.

Stewardship and Legacy Giving

Discussion centered around improving the church's legacy giving program. Members expressed concern that the current process lacks sufficient documentation and follow-up procedures. The Finance Committee will continue refining the program with an emphasis on current giving opportunities and tax-advantaged charitable planning.

The Vestry also discussed stewardship themes for the upcoming fall campaign. The previously suggested diocesan theme was not favored, and an alternative theme based on the hymn *Amazing Grace* ("The Lord has promised good to me") was proposed for further consideration.

July 2 Interfaith Gathering

Planning continues for the July 2 Interfaith Gathering, which will conclude the Faith 250 series. Attendance is expected to be between 40 and 50 people, with food planning taking into consideration kosher dietary practices.

Committee and Ministry Updates

- A Welcome Committee is being organized.
 - Work continues on launching a church newsletter in July.
 - The Special Events Committee will meet to coordinate upcoming activities.
 - Welcome calls to visitors continue through the yellow card ministry.
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Action Items

- Jenny will schedule a Zoom meeting with Holy Cow consultant Susan.
 - Marcia, Margo, and Patty will coordinate food planning for the July 2 Interfaith Gathering.
 - Jenny and Marcia will organize the Welcome Committee.
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 - Debbie, Patty, Margaret, and Jenny will finalize the newsletter format and content.
 - Margo, John, and Patty will coordinate Special Events planning.
 - Helen and Eileen will review thrift store finances and audit items.
 - Patty will investigate the Gathering Place electrical circuit issue.
 - Security cameras will be reinstalled following gutter completion.
 - Finance Committee will continue development of the Legacy Giving program.
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Upcoming Events

- **May 28:** Vestry Discernment Meeting with Rev. Gail Avery
 - **May 28:** Diocese Insurance Presentation
 - **July 2, 5:30 p.m.:** Interfaith Gathering at Iona-Hope Episcopal Church
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Prayer Concerns

The Vestry offered prayers for:

- John and Teresa as they recover from a recent automobile accident.
 - Teresa's continued healing and recovery.
 - Susan as she awaits biopsy results and addresses ongoing health concerns.
 - Allison and her family.
 - Gail.
 - Thanksgiving for the safe return of Patty's cat, Storm.
 - Healing for John and Teresa's cat recovering from a kidney infection.
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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer.