

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

Attendees:

The Reverend Ray Buchanan ✓

Vestry Members:

Joe Mulino, Senior Warden ✓

Patricia Ingram, Junior Warden ✓

Ray Zentis ✓

Bob Earl ✓ *excused*

Alison Kinch ✓

Kathie Hart ✓

Andi Jerger ✓

Guests - Persons of Interest:

The Reverend Suzy Post ✓ *excused*

John Thomas Assistant Treasurer ✓

Eileen Carrara, Thrift Shop Manager ✓

Debbie Prather, Treasurer ✓

Paula Paquette, Clerk of the Vestry ✓

Ken Owens and Donna Owens, Sextons ✓

Guest: Douglass Lind, Consultant ✓
Margaret Carr and Rob Ricca ✓

Opening Concerns and Prayers – Father Ray Buchanan

Prayers are invited for thanksgivings and celebrations, intercessions.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Father Ray Buchanan – Father Ray wants to do something a little different this evening. We will be dropping our masks and saying, welcome to the Iona-Hope Vestry. Videotaped. Done. Now, four people need to volunteer to be filmed saying one sentence after the meeting. Three people need to be filmed after the meeting and say one good thing about something that happened at this meeting. One person will record a message thanking the congregation for their heartfelt support of the church. Alison Kinch, Kathie Hart, Deb Prather, Andi Jerger volunteered.

INFORMATION

Approval of Minutes – Motion Joe Mulino, Second Patti Ingram, to approve previous minutes of October 12. All in favor.

Group Ministries – Small Groups – Members and Leaders – Meeting will be held next Wednesday, November 17 at 5:30 pm

Announcements – Interfaith Thanksgiving service, November 21, 4 pm, Cypress Lake Methodist. The six congregations we usually gather with are invited. One hour long. This Saturday at 10 am next to the Labyrinth will be a Pet Memorial Service. Anyone interested can attend. Anyone with ashes that they wish to scatter can attend.

Visitor Comments – None at this time.

DISCUSSION

Senior Warden Report

Joe Mulino, Senior Warden

Thanks to Kathie Hart, Alison Kinch, and Paula Paquette for the refreshments done this past weekend after all three services. It was nice.

Stewardship. Father Ray's letter went out last week. Senior Warden Joe's letter went out today. The Giving Committee letter will go out next week. Then, a mailing will be done with pledge cards. Joe will be doing a slight presentation at all three services soon also (homily). If at all possible, members of the Vestry should get their pledge cards in as soon as possible. Then, we can announce that commitment.

Vestry Consultation

Doug Lind, consultant

This Vestry has been changing a lot lately. There seems to be a lot more energy than ever before. There is a lot more support going on around the room for each other. There seems to be a lot more sound coming out from people around the room also. He wants to leave people with a question. Decisions made are made from a point of discernment. What happens between and among people here leads people to have a closer sense of God's will for this place. This takes discernment. We are sitting and listening to discover the movement of the spirit through the body which leads to discernment. We are a small group of people pulling all the oars. Doug can sense the struggle of much work to be done to keep the ship moving forward. The more we sense God's spirit moving through the body, the easier the work becomes. The question is, what do we need to happen in order to discern God's will?

Invite, Welcome, Connect

Kathie Hart, Chair, Invite, Welcome, Connect

Kathie Hart reported that she sensed a shift toward very positive action in the I-W-C group at the last meeting. The committee can use some more people. Please let Kathie know of anyone who may be interested. December 1 at 4:15 pm will be the next meeting. Invite people were appreciative of the people keeping the website up to date. We are a "believe out loud" church. Suggested we include that on the website. Can we light up the sign outside? Suggestion from Welcome group that Vestry take some responsibility for welcoming people at the welcome desk. We also still want other people from the congregation involved as welcomers. Perhaps, if we just had a coordinator, it would be helpful. Especially at the 9:30 service, that would be helpful because of the size of the attendance. We have been talking about a welcome gift. Samples were passed out, of magnets. We also have cell phone cleaners that can be given out. Following up with visitors was discussed also. The Connect group provided leadership of the refreshments at the Labyrinth this weekend. And the Small Groups meeting will be underway also. Patty Ingram will look into coordinating the welcome people at the 9:30 service.

Festive Reopening - We are looking into a Sunday afternoon event before Ash Wednesday and Lent. The group is considering renting a pavilion at Lakes Park as a location and Pops Barbecue as a caterer. The only available date is February 13 for the Lodge at Lakes Park. Pops is available on the 13th also. Suggestion that we don't do The Lodge, but rather do pavilion C-1 which is a larger, less bells and whistles, but can accommodate more people. Outside, a great meal, games, activities, maybe a Vesper service. Cost per person is around \$10-\$12 per person, not including drinks. The group talked about doing a tent at the church, but the pavilion idea seems better. Sunday, February 13th has been reserved just so that the date would not get taken. What does the Vestry think about the concept and this type of event? Preferable that it be separate from the Bishop visit. There's enough already going on that day. Recommended that the church cover the cost? 18 percent gratuity also. Then ask for a goodwill offering? People often are happy to donate toward an event like this and they often donate more than the suggested \$10. Everyone is welcome. It will be good to let people know all are welcome. There are people in Invite, Welcome, Connect ministry who are committed to making this happen. Preferred date is February 20.

Motion to move ahead with the planning of this event, Joe Mulino, second, Ray Zentis. All in favor. We will try for the 20th, but we will use the 13th if the 20th is taken.

Clean-up day. Invite, Welcome, Connect is suggesting a clean-up day of the facilities (reorganization and cleaning) be held. The proposed date is for the Saturday after Thanksgiving, 27th, beginning at 9:30 am. Yes. Junior Warden and Sextons will be consulted so things turn out the way they need to be.

Group Assignments

Alison Kinch

Congregational Survey results. To summarize, no-one is really emphatic one way or another about anything in terms of having events at certain times or days or before or after services. People expressed that they would like things to do after services, but no solid requests one way or another. Not on Wednesday nights seemed to be a preference. But, some people said things in the morning, others said things in afternoons. No strong opinions. There is interest, thought, in attending meetings and events. Shawl ministry is running again, on Fridays. We can change times and dates as we move forward with reopenings. Just because something was always done one way or another on a particular date and time, it doesn't have to be done that way all the time or ever again. We can switch things up. There is some interest, though, in having things to do after services. We had 72 responses. Thanks to Marnie Ike for getting this done on our behalf. We need to decide what will be best rather than relying on other people to tell us what to do. But then, there is always the danger of being criticized for the decisions made.

Thrift Store Update

Eileen Carrara, Thrift Shop Manager

October report was distributed. Everything is going super well. Today is the 9th day of the month and we are already at \$10,000. We need volunteers to help. Donations are coming in. We need helpers. We need to recruit. We can take people shopping there and maybe they will volunteer after they see how nice the place is. It is a friendly, clean, kind environment and nice to volunteer at. People are needed to help with bagging to support the cashiers. We do need help with sorting donations, cleaning things, etc. We do have enough cashiers; we need helpers for the cashiers for bagging, etc. The financial side of this is wonderful. We are also so glad that our manager, Eileen Carrara, is so glad and joyful about the thrift shop. It reflects everywhere and we are grateful for her.

Stewardship

Report above.

Reopening Timelines

December 1st will begin the Vestry study for Advent. Further details will be forthcoming. Letter received yesterday from the President of the Standing Committee. When we elect delegates for convention this year, the delegates will serve as delegates for the Election of Bishop Coadjutor which will be held on April 2nd as well as the fall Diocesan convention which will be held in person in Punta Gorda.

Father Ray thinks it is time to take next steps in reopening. Proposes we move to masks optional for services beginning this weekend. We can invite groups to begin meeting also with masks optional. We can begin doing coffee or drinks after services, but not food yet. People seem generally in favor of this. Lee County positivity rate has been low and has stayed low now. Food issues can be discussed next meeting. We will do the cleanup of The Gathering Place and then start to think about indoor coffee hours. We need to look at the Bunn coffee maker. Is the water turned off? Outside coffee hour was fabulous.

Christmas. We will be having Thanksgiving service. Advent Lessons and Carols will be done. Sunday after Christmas will be Christmas carols. On Monday evening after Advent 4, we will do a Blue Christmas. There will be a Taize service at the beginning of December. Drive through Nativity and Paper Bag Pageant and Greening of the Church, some of the main people are not available, and we are having issues with that. Some core people that are involved with Greening of the Church and the Drive Through are the same people and

not available. We have options. We can cut back on the amount of decorating we do. Vestry can be a recruiting group. We can skip greening and put all of our resources into maybe ONE service? Senior Warden Joe said the Paper Bag Pageant has been the largest service of the year and a money maker, too. Suggests we do that and skip the Drive Through. Can we decorate earlier? We are down seven people who usually decorate. We need more volunteers if we want to do the church the way we usually do it. It's for the 19th? If we choose not to do the Drive Through, we can do the decorating since our time is freed up. Do we skip the Drive Through? Do the Pageant? Green as much as we can? We will drop the Drive Through, green in the afternoon, and focus on the pageant.

DECISIONS

Finance Committee, Deb Prather

A financial report was emailed ahead of the meeting together with preliminary financials. Income jumped because of including the PPP money. It shows that we took in \$71,000. \$43,000 was the PPP money. Although it was spent, it was a way to make it show. \$4,000 reimbursement was to thrift store. A report had a typo on it showing \$6,000. Payroll for the thrift is \$2,288.10 monthly. Marnie Ike would like to back that out of the \$20,000. Payroll must be done out of one account. So, therefore, we have to charge back the amount of Thrift Shop payroll out of the Thrift Store revenue and accounting. What an amazing job this church has done through the unbelievable times we have experienced. We closed a Thrift Shop. We opened a better Thrift Shop. We are all still here. We have not lost many members at all. It is truly praiseworthy of God that this has all happened. Thrift Store rent for month of October was \$24,000. We never received the invoice for September so two months were paid in October. That's why it was high. Last week Marnie Ike wrote the checks to two food banks and LIFE. The checks were not picked up last week. Now, they were. They are sent out. We are still very much involved in LIFE. There will be a cash crunch at the end of the year. We will need to do a Christmas letter and the donations should go into the operating fund so that we can try to end the year in the black. We now have a new computer in the booth because we were having trouble with the other one.

Junior Warden Report

Patricia Ingram, Junior Warden

Irrigation was completed. There was a break in a main pipe. It costs us \$60 more than expected. It was \$1,800, including the maintenance done, as invoiced quarterly. Sanctuary lights are done. Pole lights. We are still working on the problem. We need a lift truck to get this done so we are looking for a contractor to provide the best price as possible. We can either hire someone to do the whole job (lift truck and installation) or we can equipment rental the lift truck and get a lighting contractor to do the actual bulb work. Junior Warden continues to look into costs and options. We will NOT staff a lift truck ourselves. We had a lot of major things all at once and they are getting done.

Closing Prayers – Father Ray. Thank you to everyone here for all that has been accomplished this evening. THANK YOU.

Vestry agenda completed 6:08 pm.

Adjournment

*Respectfully submitted,
Paula Paquette, Clerk*