



## Iona-Hope Episcopal Church

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[www.ionahope.org](http://www.ionahope.org)

The Rev. Ray Buchanan  
Rector

The Rev. Suzy Post  
Associate Priest

January 12, 2021

Dear Friends,

The events of the past year and, especially, the past week have been difficult for all of us. The pandemic and resulting isolation combined with increased public conflict has taken its toll on our community. People have died without benefit of the celebration and worship of the gathered community and some have begun to question our faith and the faith of those around us. It has been difficult.

I am writing for two purposes. The first is to remind us that we are never without hope. Hope is manifested in many places – the goodness of others, willingness to give freely, and the courage to stand for what is good and right. And this is not something that is done alone. In the words of the 18<sup>th</sup> century hymn

Blest be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds  
is like to that above.

We always have hope because God's love manifested in Jesus Christ is forever present in the Church and in Iona-Hope. God's love binds our hearts.

I know that it is difficult when we are unable to be together as we were. Our services are limited and small, conducted without social gatherings that are so important to you. Zoom and live-streaming hold us together but are not the same. We yearn to hug each other.

**We say YES to God through Growth, Outreach and Diversity**

But God still loves us and shows us even through our socially distanced contacts.

My second purpose is to ask you to consider your pledge for 2021. Iona-Hope has continued its presence with you and the community in the various ways that are available to us while maintaining a safe environment. We completed the construction project and have paid all costs while continuing to pay our staff and all bills. We are transitioning the thrift store and bearing some of its costs while working through the transition.

We restarted limited in-person services and have increased the number of live-streamed services. All the while, you have supported our community of faith with your prayers, encouragement and financial contributions.

Thank you for your support. Could you indicate to us your contribution for 2021 so that we can continue to grow in service of God's love? We are including attachments to assist with this including a pledge card and instructions for pledging online. Please respond by January 31, the date of our Annual Parish Meeting. More about this later.

We understand your situations. Some of you may be able to increase or maintain your commitment while others may need to decrease. Please do what you can. Also, if your situation is difficult or dire and you need financial assistance, please contact me or Mother Suzy at 239.454.4778 for a CONFIDENTIAL conversation.

I pray for you daily. Please know that I cherish you and miss our times together. I maintain hope that soon you and I will be able to be together in ways that we all seek.

Until then, please pray. Pray for me, Mother Suzy and the staff, all of Iona-Hope, our community, nation and the world. Pray for your friends and enemies. Please pray for peace.

And know that God loves us all through each other.

Peace,



The Very Reverend Ray Buchanan

Rector