Small and Rural Church Taskforce 4:30 p.m. April 27, 2022

The meeting opened with prayer led by Doug. The Rt. Rev. Kym Lucas visited with the group for about 15 minutes. She thanked the group for taking on this task. Small church is historical! It started as small house churches and for 2000 years, there are still small churches. Bishop Kym described small churches as 25 or less as has been discussed in meetings with bishops and clergy from our province, Province XI. There is no “one size fits all” and she hopes to build conversation space around small church. Bishop Kym would like to see how to get structures to fit our (post-Covid) reality—how to support local ministry. It doesn’t take a whole lot of people to do ministry in a place—just commitment. Bishop Kym said that we don’t need to solve all the mysteries of the universe on this. She wants us to learn more about what churches are doing and build relationships and conversation on it. She would like to see a “Small Church Corner” on the Diocesan website as a resource once our task is completed.

Questions and answers for Bishop Kym:

Ann asked if the regions can be more structured to help with clergy. Bishop Kym replied that that is one possibility but also that she is in conversation with her counterpart in the Methodist church on sharing clergy between denominations once the canons were worked out. Ann also shared how St. Luke’s Westcliffe have survived, and thrived, on supply priests. They treat them like family inviting them to church events that support the surrounding community.

Kaye reached out to the Lay Pastoral Leader in Kremmling asking what they need. The reply was support in continuing education, communication with other LPLs, and updated training. Is there a plan for this? Bishop Kym replied that the Office of the Bishop is currently working on all levels of discernment, communication, and training. Kaye also asked about Deacons serving Communion. Bishop Kym said that there is discussion about this within the church though nothing is decided yet.

Lisa asked about mission churches like St. George Leadville being different than other small churches. Bishop Kym said that any church with 25 or fewer in attendance fit the small church model.

The meeting moved on after Bishop Kym. Each member was asked to speak about 5 minutes on the bullet point that resonated most with them. From that discussion, small groups were suggested.