

SUMMARY OF INDABA CONVERSATIONS AT DIOCESAN CONVENTION 2015

The 163rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of Iowa, as in the past two years, gathered in circles of around eight individuals for something called Indaba. Indaba is not unique to Iowa, is a form of conversation that has been used at Lambeth and other places around the world, and Iowa's practice of Indaba has been included in a book on the subject published out of the Anglican Communion Office.

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Special thanks to the Chief Listening Team of Kathleen Milligan, Suzanne Peterson, Elizabeth Popplewell and Meg Wagner for their work distilling and compiling this Summary, which will inform the Work of the People, this year's plan focus, our diocesan work and that of the Board of Directors over the course of this coming year.

Indaba #1

Question: *Five of the issues which clearly surfaced during General Convention this year related to 1) racial justice; 2) same-sex marriage; 3) climate change; 4) gun violence and 5) alcohol. Perhaps there were others which engaged or energized you or your congregation. How have you engaged any of these? Are there resources that could help you with this work? How might the Diocese be of help on a local or chapter level?*

General Reflections

We are not all of the same mind on any of these issues. We recognize that we need more guidance and resources about how to have these conversations without being divisive. We also need more resources that help us to read and understand biblical teaching on these issues. We know that these are all multilayered issues and several are interconnected.

We firmly believe that our churches need to be safe havens for all God's people and we may not know how to do this work but we know we have to.

SAME SEX MARRIAGE

We feel like there has been a general agreement with recent decisions and are surprised and glad we are moving on to other things. But we also recognize the need to foster continuing dialogue in our local contexts where there are people who are still struggling and we are proud that General Convention made space for people who hold different understandings.

We know that personal experience has the ability to transform perceptions.

GUN VIOLENCE

We are all horrified by gun violence and we know we need more resources to talk about it. We feel there is a danger of us becoming numb because gun violence has become so commonplace. We believe we need to solve the societal issues like racial inequality, poverty, mental health issues, etc. that lead some people to thinking that guns are a solution. We are frustrated by interest groups and political forces that seem so big and are barriers to change.

We recognize that “gun control” is a complex issue in our state, as we have a lot of hunters and also farmers who have guns for protection.

CLIMATE CHANGE

We can't seem to agree on a definition of climate change and it feels big and overwhelming and we need more education and to counter misinformation.

We know there are small steps that individuals and churches can take to address climate change. The buildings that we inhabit have many things that could be adapted/changed. We know that other organizations doing good work to address this, and we wish we were doing more.

As an agricultural state, we are both responsible for and very sensitive to pollution of our ground and waterways.

RACIAL JUSTICE

There was a wide range of response to this question – from not recognizing there is a problem with racial justice HERE (“We don't have a problem with race in the Midwest”) to feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of it.

We believe that racial justice is not just a matter of race but is a large, complex issue that includes immigration, language and cultural differences. We need more education and programs like *Just Faith* to help us talk about racial justice and white privilege.

We wonder if we are more comfortable with people when they are our “project” rather than our neighbor.

We know that racial injustice is partly a function of government policy (past and present) and that we need to educate people about the history of racial injustice. We could work together as a diocese to lobby for policy changes that address racial justice issues.

We know Iowa's demographic is changing and that we need to work with other churches and organizations within our communities. Our churches may not have much diversity but it does exist in our communities. We want to connect with other parishes to find out how others are engaging in this work.

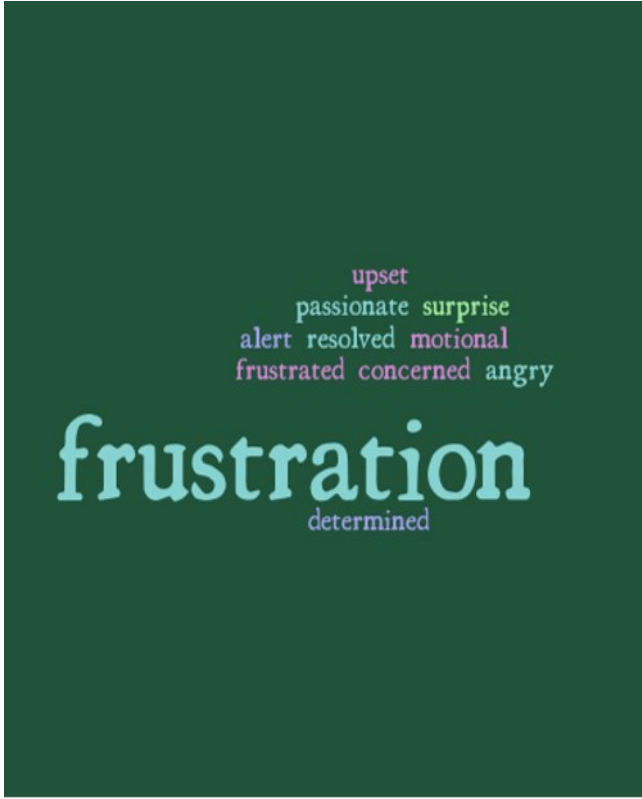
We see our Baptismal covenant as a resource to help us be agents of reconciliation and people that respect the dignity of every human being.

ALCOHOL

We are glad the issue is being addressed and wonder if we need fewer events that serve alcohol. We recognize the importance of working with people in recovery and families affected by abuse.



↑SAME SEX MARRIAGE



↑GUN VIOLENCE



↑CLIMATE CHANGE



↑RACIAL JUSTICE

Indaba #2

Question: ***In what ways can we, individually, and corporately, either reform existing structures (personal, physical, organizational and liturgical) or form new structures that will help us share the eternal message in our place?***

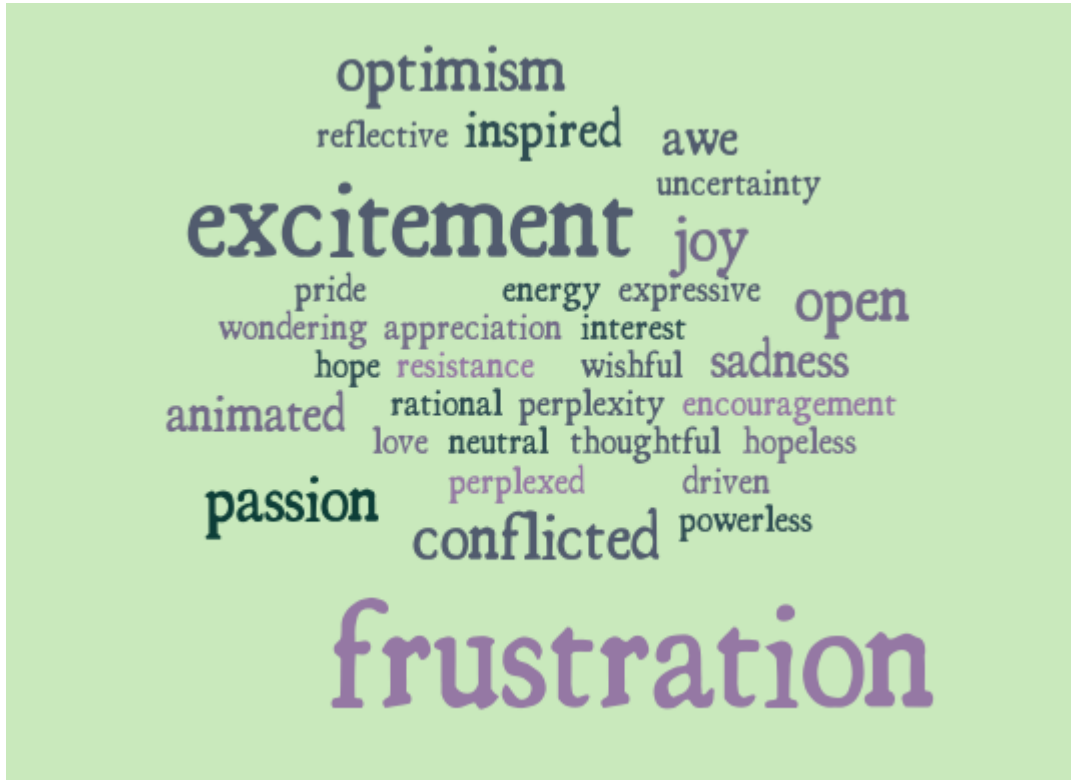
We need resources and guidance about ways to have intentional conversation about our structures and how ministry is shared by all. We recognize the Importance of empowering laity and providing formation opportunities for all ages. We need to examine our power structures. Some feel that our organizational structure limits our ability to develop initiatives on a local level.

We want to examine our spaces and explore ways of getting out of the building and into the community – meeting people where they are and creatively ministering out in the world. We need to look at how we use our buildings and potentially open them to other uses and consider renovation opportunities. How do we do something creative in a space that has limitations? We have concerns about altering our church spaces – expense, historical restrictions, attachment to the building as a place you go for traditional prayer, etc.

We want changes to have purpose and reflect new realities. We wonder what needs to die in order to allow for new life. We have some fear of what we might be asked to relinquish and in giving things up, we have concerns about how we stay grounded in our Episcopal identity.

We recognize the power and Importance of advertising and social media and wonder how we can best utilize them as tools for evangelism.

How do we create structures that foster the building of relationships – in community, interfaith, global, or person to person? We experience tension because of our divided focus between bringing in new people and ministering to the people who are already here. We know we need to make new disciples not just new members.



↑INDABA #2