St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church



Reports for Annual Parish Meeting Sunday, August 25, 2024

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

AUGUST 25, 2024 9 AM

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER				
OPENING PRAYER				
APPOINTMENT OF MEETING OFFICERS SECRETARY PARLIAMENTARIAN				
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 2023 ANNUAL MEETING*				
TREASURER'S REPORT				
ENDOWMENT & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT				
TOUR OF HOMES REPORT				
ELECTION OF NEW VESTRY MEMBERS*				
RECTOR'S REPORT				
ADJOURNMENT				

Annual Parish Meeting

9 am | August 27, 2023 | Parish Hall

The annual meeting of our parish was called to order with Fr. Andrew Hege, Rector, offering an opening prayer.

Fr. Andrew and Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry, verified that a quorum was in place for the meeting, as 46 voting members were in attendance.

Fr. Andrew began the meeting with the appointment of meeting officers:

Secretary: Elizabeth Sudderth Parliamentarian: E.B. Springs

The minutes of the 2022 annual meeting were presented for acceptance.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes, as presented. No discussion followed; the approval of the 2022 annual meeting minutes was made by unanimous vote.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.

Amanda expressed her thanks to Joe Raulerson, who retired as Financial Secretary earlier this year. She also expressed her thanks to the Finance Committee chaired by Orian Carter for their support and hard work, particularly in the transition among staff members.

She reported the year-to-date parish revenue exceeds expenses. Revenue is above the budgeted amount for this point in the year and expenses are within expected parameters. The 2022 year-end parish net income was \$7,234.23. Cash on hand as of July 1 was \$260,604.

Roy McCraw shared an update on the Trust and Endowments. As of June 30, the Combined Trust and Endowments balance was \$990,189, divided among five accounts – the Charitable Outreach Fund, the Peggy Carlson/Clara Neese Smith Fund, the Mission and Ministry Fund, the Hamric/Mulford Music Ministry Fund and the Capital Fund. Together, these accounts are invested with the Episcopal Church Foundation with State Street Global Advisors.

Anyone interested in making a legacy gift or including St. Mary of the Hills in their estate documents can contact the parish office for more information.

Chip Monroe, Senior Warden, provided a few updates on the work of the Vestry, including the thoughtful and deliberate way in which the Vestry is planning for future capital expenses, utilizing funds from these endowments. He echoed the call for everyone to consider including the parish in

their wills/estate documents, and thanked Roy McCraw and the Sustaining Grace Committee for their work in encouraging new and future gifts to these funds.

Fr. Andrew, on behalf of the Vestry Nominating Committee, presented the candidates for Vestry to begin 3-year terms on January 1, 2024 – Marshall Culp, Lynn Searfoss Jill Storelli (year-round) and Jim Snow (seasonal). Fr. Andrew asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were none.

A motion was made and seconded to close the nominations. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion was then made and seconded to elect the slate of Vestry nominees as presented. No additional discussion followed and the motion was approved to elect the slate by unanimous vote.

Fr. Andrew then shared the Rectors report.

He began by expressing his thanks to the Vestry members who will complete their term of service at the end of December – Marjory Holder, Faith Jones, Chip Monroe and Patty Patella. They have been called upon to make many important decisions over the past three years and have done so with faithfulness, wisdom and discernment.

Fr. Andrew expressed particular thanks to the wardens. Chip Monroe and Bob Finney have been a source of calm strength and wise counsel for him and for the parish. Both have worked exceedingly hard in their roles, in service to the parish.

He shared his appreciation for the hard work of Amanda White as our Treasurer, particularly in light of staff transitions throughout the year that impacted the financial operations of the parish.

Andrew also expressed thanks to Elizabeth Sudderth who serves as Clerk of the Vestry and does an excellent job keeping our records and keeping us on track.

He expressed thanks for the parish staff. He feels privileged to serve as part of a team that includes Greta Wilson, Bill Devereux, Jim Bumgardner and Lindsey Herring. He also noted, with thanks, the good work of Bill Stroh and Joe Raulerson, both of whom retired since the last Annual Meeting.

Finally, Fr. Andrew expressed his thanks to the community of clergy present in the congregation at St. Mary's who are a circle of support and encouragement. Fr. Sam Tallman, Bishop Gary Gloster, Fr. Rick Lawler, Fr. Rick Williams, and Fr. Bob Browning all serve as wise counselors and wonderful friends. He also noted the death of Fr. Bob McCloskey, former rector of St. Mary's and active parishioner, who died in November of last year.

Building on the theme present at the last two Annual meetings, Andrew spoke on the vision – Following Jesus, Forming Disciples.

Noting where we've been, Fr. Andrew highlighted significant moments in the past year.

Godly Play returned on a regular rhythm on Sunday mornings, along with the Rector's Forum and other studies that will take place throughout the year.

The Play Space was completed and blessed on July 2. It is an icon of hospitality and an invitation to playfulness and joy.

The Tour of Homes saw another banner year, with near record ticket sales and more than \$90,000 raised (a final number will be announced in September).

Alongside annual giving, which saw 126 households pledge more than \$476,000 to the operating budget of the parish, the new Sustaining Grace circle welcomed 18 individuals and families who have included St. Mary's in their wills.

Fr. Andrew also called us to deepen our connections to one another.

A new online directory will soon be launched that will help us deepen our ability to communicate with one another.

A Ministry Fair will be held on September 17, sponsored by the Outreach Committee, to help every parishioner learn more about all the ways we share in ministry and participate in new ways.

Bishop McLoughlin will make his visitation in October and a new Confirmation Class kicks off in September for all interested.

Fr. Andrew once again emphasized and encouraged all to remember that prayer and worship are the first work of the church; worship of the Triune God is our primary purpose. Praying for and with one another is at the center of who we are as a parish family as we follow Jesus Christ and form disciples.

Having completed the agenda, and there being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sudderth,

Clerk of the Vestry and Secretary of the Annual Meeting

Financial Report

St. Mary of	f th	ie Hills A	A n	nual M	ee	ting Aug	gust 2	25, 2024
-			Fu	nds January	1-J	une 30 2024		
Revenue	YTD Actual		YTD Budget		Annual Budget		2023 Year End Actual	
Plate Offerings	\$	7,229.23	\$	4,999.98	\$	10,000.00	\$	7,396.15
Pledge Payments	\$	290,135.42	\$	247,500.00	\$	495,000.00	\$	415,882.57
Special Gifts	\$	5,055.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	4,780.34
Non-Pledge Payments	\$	30,148.77	\$	17,502.00	\$	35,000.00	\$	123,555.08
Misc Income Restricted Gifts	\$	5,457.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	600.00
Bank Interest	\$	20,053.84	\$	3,750.00	\$	7,500.00	\$	1,741.47
Uncategorized Income	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	48,058.13
Total Revenue	\$	358,079.26	\$	273,751.98	\$	547,500.00	\$	602,013.74
Expenses								
Giving	\$	54,085.57	\$	55,024.98	\$	110,050.00	\$	88,873.00
Programs	\$	16,903.77		12,750.00	\$	27,500.00	\$	26,432.98
Personnel	\$	185,166.72	\$	169,307.74	\$	334,565.43	\$	298,765.22
Operations	\$	76,693.70		61,875.12	\$	124,950.00	\$	141,077.43
Total Expenses	\$	332,849.76	\$	298,957.84	\$	597,065.43	\$	555,148.63
Bank Accounts								
Operating Checking	\$	49,539.41						
TOH Checking	\$	36,432.09						
Money Market	\$	139,196.25						
CD	\$	141,667.49						
Combined Endowments	\$	1,085,876.80						
Total Cash on Hand	\$	1,452,712.04						
Pledges								
2024 Expected Pledges	\$	498,014.00						
2024 Pledge Fulfillment as of Jun 30	\$	290,135.42						
2024 Balance Due	\$	207,878.58						

Robert 'Bob' Amos

(Year-round member)



How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

6 years

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Men's Breakfast, Parish Workdays, and Tour of Homes volunteer.

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

Contributing on a larger level to my new church's life. (Bob was confirmed during Bishop McLoughlin's visit in June of this year.)

Favorite story from Scripture?

The Good Samaritan

Michael 'Mike' Matthews

(Year-round member)



How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

1 year

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Men's Breakfast, Building Maintenance, Hospitality House Bread of Life Team, Tour of Homes (set up and loading), Annual Picnic setup and take down.

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

Getting more involved with church activities and the fellowship associated with this group.

Favorite story from Scripture?

The Flood and Noah's Ark

Luba Skibo

(Year-round member)



How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

12 years total; confirmed 10 years ago

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Altar Guild, Acolyte, Eucharistic Minister, Lector; Hospitality House Bread of Life Team member; Vacation Bible School (VBS) leader

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

An opportunity to use my corporate leadership experience for the benefit of my spiritual community.

Favorite story from Scripture?

The scene from John's gospel when Jesus saw his mother near the cross, following him to the end and his very powerful last message to all: "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

Robert Rhoads

(Seasonal member)



How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

6 years

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Building Committee, Tour of Homes

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

I have worked with Vestry and Staff on a number of infrastructure and renovation projects at St. Mary's.

I appreciate that this rather old physical facility needs considerable "tender loving care" and am happy to continue contributing. I feel that being on the Vestry would give me a bigger picture of the physical needs of the facility and the financial resources available to maintain and improve it.

Favorite story from Scripture?

Too many favorites, but if I have to pick one, it is when Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night to ask deep questions. I have come to appreciate that Nicodemus was one of the most important Jewish leaders of that time, yet he had the vision and humility to come to this itinerant preacher for insight.

From Our Rector

Dear Friends,

For more than a century, St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church has stood at the corner of Main Street and Chestnut Drive in Blowing Rock. In each generation, the doors of this place have been opened to God's people for prayer and proclamation, sanctuary, silence, and song.

The years of 2023 and 2024 have continued to shine forth with so many tangible expressions of God's goodness poured out upon our common life at St. Mary of the Hills.

Earlier this summer, we welcomed more than thirty children to a 'Hometown Nazareth' Vacation Bible School. Each day, our parish hall was filled with joy of music and the hustle of a first-century marketplace where new foods were tasted, crafts constructed, and games explored. Above all, in every corner, our children encountered the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. In 'Mary's House' and in their tribe groups, they learned from scripture and were met by people who exuded the love of God in every interaction.

Over the course of the past year, dozens of adults and children have engaged in the life-long journey of Christian formation, through Godly Play, Bible study, book conversation circles, and other study groups. Each and every gathering is significant, an expression of God's grace.

When Bishop McLoughlin made his visitation to St. Mary's in June, he confirmed or received more than a dozen individuals into the fellowship of this community. Even more, he remarked about it being a sign of God's grace and goodness that people were moving closer to one another in order than we fit just a few more folks into the pews for worship.

Once again, more than a thousand guests passed through the four homes on this year's Tour of Homes and many more stopped by the Parish Hall to peruse Timeless Treasures or take home a treat from the Bake Sale. The front lawn welcomed many for a delicious lunch as laughter and conversation filled the air.

Thanks to the generosity of faithful folks from this parish and far beyond, the 2024 Tour of Homes Blowing Rock will once more disburse grants to local non-profit agencies who are about building up the kingdom of God by feeding those who are hungry, housing those experiencing homelessness, sheltering those experience violence and abuse, caring for children and their families, and striving for a more just community for all to call home. Another a sign of God's goodness in our midst.

The generosity and faithfulness of this parish stretches deep and wide. Because of your generosity, the Vestry passed its 2024 budget with another record amount pledged in support of common mission and ministry. 133 households in our parish committed a total of more than \$500,000 toward the annual operating budget of the parish. That is remarkable, a sign of God's goodness recognized in this community of faith.

Following this Annual Meeting, a new Vestry class will join an already deeply thoughtful and engaged group of leaders who are thinking creatively and imaginatively about our future as God's people gathered at St. Mary of the Hills.

In the weeks ahead, we'll make commitments of time, talent, and treasure as we look toward 2025, and we'll continue the vocation of worship and prayer, formation and outreach that are at the heart of what it means to follow Jesus together.

Earlier this year, I celebrated my fifth anniversary as your priest and Rector – a joy and a gift with each new day. In that vein, I have spent much time reflecting on the hopes and dreams expressed by the Vestry in 2019, when we first sat together to discern how God might be calling us together. So many of the gifts of grace listed above are tangible expressions of those hopes and dreams, made real by the power of the Holy Spirit moving in and through each and every member of this parish.

As we look toward the years ahead, I am thinking much and praying fervently about the vision that will guide us and have been sharing this conversation with key leaders. I believe that, as we look forward, we are called to anchor our life together in four words that form a strong foundation to undergird our every work –

Welcome

Worship

Wonder

Work

At our Annual Meeting, I look forward to sharing more about each of these, what they've meant to me as I have prayerfully considered them, and what they might mean for us as a community if we allow them to be guiding pillars in our life together.

By the grace of God, good things lie ahead.

Faithfully,

The Rev'd Andrew J. Hege

ALJ. Hr+

Rector

From Our Senior Warden Mike Austell

As those who served before me have said, serving as your Senior Warden has been a pleasure. As we vote to add new members to the Vestry, I want to commend those finishing their term of service and encourage more parishioners to consider joining the Vestry in the future. The Vestry, as servant trustees, plays a crucial role in managing the financial and physical assets of the parish to enhance our mission and ministry here in Blowing Rock and to a broader world through our outreach. Our parish has a unique character comprising permanent residences and seasonal members, so we are part of a much broader cross-fertilized Episcopal ministry than most churches experience. This is a blessing for this parish.

Working with our Rector, Father Andrew; our Junior Wardens, Bob Finney and Marshall Culp; the Vestry; our Treasurer, Amanda White; and our new Administrator, Michael Marshal; and all those who preceded us in the endeavors of this church, I can say that our finances are in excellent condition. Bob Finney completed a survey of all the components of the Church's physical facilities and the maintenance and replacement requirements for each. He used this assessment to forecast how long our capital fund would last. Bob has pushed to have a permanent addition to this capital fund yearly, to ensure a sufficient reserve. While we have begun this, the requirements will be bigger than the current allocation provides. Marshall Culp has taken over from Bob Finey and will keep this assessment updated as a tool for the Vestry in our approval of future budgets and this capital reserve fund. Thank you, Bob, for your service. Our strong financial position is a testament to our past and present teams' diligent work and, most importantly, our parishioners' continued support. We are truly grateful for your contributions.

Having just completed the 66th Blowing Rock Tour of Homes, we are entering the period of receiving applications from the groups we support in the local area. This should be another banner year for support. Thanks to everyone who assisted in the Tour, especially Billie and Suzane for their leadership. The Outreach Committee is responsible for reviewing these applications for Tour Funding. The committee also oversees the church's Outreach Budget and makes significant recommendations for approval by the Vestry. These activities are key to the mission and ministry of this church.

Listening is a key part of the Senior Warden's job. I have received several suggestions and brought them to our team's appropriate people. I hope you continue to make your concerns known to me and future Senior Wardens.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve our church. I look forward to seeing our ministry grow in the coming years.

From Our Junior Warden Marshall Culp

It's never easy to follow someone like Bob Finney in the role of Junior Warden but due to his strong leadership, he made it an easy transition.

There were a number of key projects that were completed during his tenure in the past year:

Project Updates:

- (1) New HVAC unit was installed which covered the nursery.
- (2) Bell Tower concrete repairs were done to visible cracks, stonework and roofing to divert water to the outside including replacing one of the Louvers.
- (3) Upfit to the Sacristy which included new flooring, cabinetry and shelving to enhance storage space. Redirected an existing heat and air vent for warmer temps in the winter and cooler temps in the summer.
- (4) Vestry approval for 7 bronze roof shaped design to house the year-round display for the Stations of the Cross Icons in conjunction with our across the street neighbors at Rumple Presbyterian.

Joe Bigley, a local sculptor and Executive Director of WNC Sculpture Center and full-time lecturer at Appalachian State University will personally be in charge of the project. 5 Stations will be placed in the Close and one mounted on each of the lychgate walls.

(5) We have contracted with Artistic Design Landscaping (ADL) in late fall of 2023 and they have been instrumental in clearing, relocating, pruning and strategically planting perennials and annuals around our church campus. It will be exciting to see our grounds come alive after several full growing seasons under ADL's watch.

Future Projects:

- (1) Repair/replace flaking concrete in front of the church at the two red doors.
- (2) Replacing the wooden retaining wall/bulkhead on SE corner of building.
- (3) Repair/refurbish Lych Gate roofing.
- (4) Parking lot asphalt crack repair, seal and stripe.

Thanks to Fr Andrew and Bill D. we have a new chair cart for stacking and rolling 13-16 of our black plastic and metal chairs per trip.

From Our Christian Formation Director Lindsey Herring

What a year it has been for Christian Formation. As we continue the work of lifelong learning and discipleship, our exploration of God's love always leads us to new ways of embodying Christ in the world.

Our partnership with Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church has grown over the past year, with several new and ongoing learning opportunities. We held a joint Family Night that included food, fun, fellowship, Godly Play and spiritual practices for adults and children of all ages at St. Mary's, which brought in roughly 60 congregants from both churches. In conjunction with our Outreach Committee, a new class, "From Despair to Hope," sparked anti-violence and gun control conversations in the context of Christianity. (The conversational class is ongoing and all are welcome to attend.)

Our Vacation Bible School partnership with Rumple continued and VBS was held at St. Mary's in June. Volunteers from both churches worked diligently and prayerfully to share God's love with our children. The parish hall was transformed into Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, replete with marketplaces, ancient crafts and visits to Mary's house. As part of this four-day Formation rooted in Scripture, children talked about their "God Sightings," or the movement of the Spirit in the everyday, as well, and noted some of those sightings on paper sheep. You can find this on the second floor across from the elevator. The children's reflections are truly inspiring!

In addition to our Sunday morning Formative experiences of Rector's Forum and Godly Play, we engaged in seasonal studies, prayer practices including Centering Prayer and Evening Prayer, and topical book studies relevant to various seasons. We learned about the power and joy found in the practice of Confession and Holy Eucharist with Father Andrew and studied Thomas Merton's "New Seeds of Contemplation" with Father Sam, to name a few.

Several parishioners underwent deep discernment about the Episcopal faith through Confirmation classes in the spring and fall. In June, 10 people were confirmed and received into the Episcopal Church during Bishop McLoughlin's visit. Our newest Confirmands continue to find new ways to be involved in the church and follow God's call in ministry.

In the coming year, we'll be further exploring what it means to do God's work in community. We're expanding our community partnerships with St. Luke's Episcopal Church and Boone United Methodist Church to include joint training with the Godly Play Foundation. Following the training, a few of our volunteers will be newly certified Godly Play trainers. This adds another layer to children's Formation on Sunday mornings by deepening our knowledge of Godly Play techniques and connection to the Divine.

We're also looking forward to what lies ahead as we work with the Western Diocese of North Carolina, the Episcopal Youth Network and Forma (Network for Christian Formation) on offerings for parishioners of all ages, including those in middle school and high school.

If you want to learn more about our children's ministries, exploring spiritual practices individually, as a family and in community, or you simply want to be involved more, swing by Christian Formation Director Lindsey Herring's office.

2024 Tour of Homes Annual Report

by Billie Rogers, Tour co-chair

Based on a wrap-up meeting with Michael Marshall, parish Director of Administration & Finance, it appears we had approximately 1150 people go through the Tour on Friday, July 26. Best estimate of Patron Party attendees is about 187.

Income:

Tour revenue	\$41,250
Patron donations	\$41,525
General donations	\$16,740
Timeless Treasures	\$ 9,590
Bake Sale	\$ 2,765 (lemonade was \$370! So proud of the kids!)
Tour Café	\$ 4,626
Raffle	\$ 3,100
Silent Auction	\$ 7,175

Estimated total expenses \$41,000

Total Estimated Net Profit for TOH: \$95,600

- Michael and the Tour chairs, Suzanne Miller and Billie Rogers, worked to get individualized accounting for each part of Tour of Homes this year. We also purchased signage that can be used for many years to come (hopefully) so money was spent on infrastructure of the TOH.
- The 2025 TOH Chairs will be Billie Rogers and John Jordan. Head of Transportation will be Andy Sicard. Marshall Culp and Joe Doswell will assist again. We are hoping most of the chairpeople will volunteer to do it again as they were OUTSTANDING! Robert Kling and Tom Veale will not be available for the Bake Sale as they will be on a cruise.
- Currently, the 2025 TOH will be on the same day as the Symphony by the Lake (4th Friday of July) since the orchestra cannot do it on the 3rd Friday.
- Suzanne and Billie have a good start for the homes on the tour but this needs to be discussed with John Jordan.

From Our Outreach Committee

Outreach is a part of the very nature and essence of Christian life. To follow and love Jesus Christ is to be connected with our neighbors far and near and to reach out to them with love and compassion. This forms the essence of the work of our Committee.

As of July 10, we have allocated the following:

- \$14,000 to local causes
- \$2,000 to state needs
- \$6,000 to national causes and
- \$11,600 to international needs

We continue our relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Navajoland. With Sue Sweeting's help and a massive email campaign, we are exploring in-depth their unbelievable need for clean water that is not available in many of the homes and villages of our First Nation sisters and brothers in Christ.

The efforts of Watauga Housing Trust have secured the first home in the Junaluska Community and Boone, and it is fast becoming a home for someone who needs affordable housing. St. Mary of the Hills played an important role in this project by offering financial assistance.

Our concerns about the plague of gun violence led us to join forces with Rumple Presbyterian and we conducted six sessions that drew 30 participants. Our theme was "From Despair to Hope." Plans are being made to meet and explore by Zoom with the Rev. Stan Wilson and his "Guns to Gardens" program. This effort takes guns that people surrender and turns them into garden tools. More information about this project will be forthcoming.

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 4 pm. We pray, discuss all manner of issues that face people in our community and the world beyond. We decide on ways and how we might help in these and other situations. Any who would like to join us are welcome.

Outreach Committee Members:

Mike Austell, Lynn Coulthard, Michelle Curry, Judy & Gary Gloster, Susie Greene, Amanda Hege, Torre Hinnant, Olivia Knight, Loy McGill, Tina McKnight, Patty & Carmen Patella, Clare Tager and Sue Wilders

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Monday-Thursday: 9 am to 4 pm Friday: 9 am-noon

Parish Staff

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The Reverend Samuel V. Tallman | Assisting Clergy

The Right Reverend J. Gary Gloster | Assisting Clergy

Dr. James Bumgardner | Organist/Choirmaster

Lindsey Herring | Director of Christian Formation & Communications

Michael Marshall | Director of Administration & Finance

Bill Devereux | Director of Hospitality & Facilities

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