

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting
January 18, 2022
Via Video Conference

Vestry Members Present: Tim Silver (Senior Warden), Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Patty Patella, Roy McCraw, Marjory Holder, Joe Doswell, Lisa Kaufmann, Chip Monroe, Doug Galke

Vestry Members Absent: Faith Jones, Buddy Fore, Leslie Billingsley

Other Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Amanda White (Treasurer), Fr. Sam Tallman (Priest Associate), Chip Myers

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order with prayer at 5:32pm.

Fr. Andrew shared the meeting agenda.

Marjory Holder made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Patty Patella seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Tim Silver to accept the minutes as presented.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew noted that the amended November 2021 minutes were received and are on file.

Amanda White shared the Treasurers report.

Amanda reported that parish income exceeded expenses this past month by more than \$25,000. One reason for this is that \$11,800 in non-pledged contributions were received.

The parish had a stellar year financially. Total pledges for 2021 were \$466,501. The actual amount contributed to the parish was \$498,538.

Amanda noted that restricted account 7000-01 was zeroed out. A new account (7125-00) is holding the \$50,000 gift from the estate of Ed Springs. Information on that account will be shared at the next Vestry meeting.

Bob Finney made a motion to accept the treasurers report.

The motion was seconded by Roy McCraw.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared a Stewardship report.

As of late last week, a total of 117 pledges have been received totaling \$440,390. Fr. Andrew noted the actual numbers have increased since then. Updated figures will be shared next month. A last round of follow up calls reaching out to parishioners who pledged last year but have not pledged this year is ongoing. A packet of note cards including stamped, pre-addressed envelopes will be given to each Vestry member in the next few days for the purpose of writing notes to each parishioner who submitted a pledge. Fr. Andrew asked that Vestry members let Greta Wilson know when they have completed their notes.

Chip Myers, a St. Mary parishioner who serves on the Diocese of Western North Carolina Leadership Task Force, shared a report on a Vestry assessment requested by the task force for the purpose of strengthening the process of the Diocese and parishes working together more effectively and improving their communication.

One goal of this effort is to identify and equip lay leaders who may be untapped resources in their parishes. The Diocese wants to bring new people to lay leadership. Chip led Vestry members through a leadership questionnaire developed by the Diocese. Chip remarked that our Vestry is the first to participate in this questionnaire. Examples of questions and the answers given by Vestry members are:

What led you to seek Vestry service in your parish?

“Because I was asked and I felt as though I was ready to serve”

“I was pleased and proud to serve”

What is rewarding about participating in Vestry?

“I want to help grow the parish”

“I want to help move the parish forward”

There were several other questions on the questionnaire. In the interest of time, the suggestion was made for Vestry members to review the document and submit their answers to Chip. That will enable Vestry members to have time to give thoughtful consideration to their answers and will provide Chip with a more comprehensive document to submit back to the task force.

Chip also made the Vestry aware that there is a shortage of people to serve on several Diocesan committees. The comment was made by more than one Vestry member, even those who have served as Vestry members more than once over the years, that they were unaware of this need and in some cases did not know of the Diocesan committee structure at all. One commented that they only found out about committees when they saw committee reports. The suggestion was made to Chip that the Diocese needs more “PR” in this area. Perhaps a Diocese representative could join in virtually in a future Vestry meeting to provide details on the need and on the general topic of what committees are in place and what their functions are. While delegates to the Diocesan Convention of course have knowledge about these committees and their mission, the consensus of discussion was that parish members as a whole have not generally been well-informed on this subject.

Another suggestion was to perhaps highlight Diocesan committees and their functions in some sort of regular communication to the parish such as in the parish newsletter. Our parish does have some representation on Diocesan committees now. Parish members or clergy involved this way currently include Fr. Andrew, Chip Myers, Fr. Sam Tallman, Amanda Hege, and Roy McCraw. Sterling Hutcheson just rotated off a committee. The need still exists to include parish members who are not on Vestry or are clergy members. Most committee members serve 3-year terms with the exception of the Finance Committee.

A suggestion was made to make potential Vestry members aware of the Diocesan committee structure and the need for involvement as part of the Vestry discernment process.

Marjory Holder shared an update from the Technology committee.

Joe Raulerson's computer will be replaced this year. His current computer will be used in the choir office.

The addition of a sound reinforcement system in the Nave, which was identified by Fr. Andrew as a pastoral need, is still in the planning stages. The committee is awaiting a proposal from a third company.

The upgrade to the phone system is almost finished.

The permanent solution to the livestream issues is pending.

The committee has received proposals from three sources to address this issue:

Elevate AV	\$13,700 (incl. tax)
WNC AV	\$ 7,394 (plus tax)
Calum Kramer	\$ 2,355 (plus tax)

Details on each proposal were provided to Vestry.

The committee recommends using Calum Kramer pending verification of references. They have been recommended by the Diocese as well. They have done similar work for other churches; 2 in North Carolina and 1 in California. Marjory noted this would move the equipment to the back of the church thereby freeing up the pew currently being used. It would provide a better camera and better sound quality providing significant improvement in what is heard during streaming. One camera would be focused on the front of the church and one could be moved to show the font for Baptisms or the back of the church for concerts. This system would interface with the sound reinforcement system.

Lisa Kaufmann made a motion with a second from Tim Silver to approve the recommendation of the technology committee to accept the proposal from Calum Kramer to install equipment to improve livestreaming pending verification of references.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared one allocation approved by the Outreach committee this month for the Vestry's endorsement:

Girls school in Sri Lanka	\$1,638	tuition, books, uniforms,
personal items and room and board for 1 student for 2022		

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Lisa Kaufmann to approve this allocation.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bob Finney shared the Junior Wardens report.

Bob expressed his thanks to Doug Galke, former Junior Warden, and Jim West who have both been extremely helpful in his transition to Junior Warden.

Bob is continuing the good work started by Doug Galke and the other members of the Play Space Work Group. He has met with Four Forty Four Construction for a proposal on tearing down the existing shed, building a retaining wall, etc. to prepare the area for play equipment and will meet tomorrow with Tony's Construction to get their proposal. Alpine Engineering is coming next week to review the project.

The work group is still looking at companies to use for the play equipment. Bob and Doug both like Carolina Parks and Play who seem like they would be easy to work with. Bob feels it is appropriate at this stage to get Vestry approval for the prep work on the site as it is hard to get companies to commit to doing the work when it is not approved at this point and he also notes prices are going up rapidly.

Bob provided a document to the Vestry which gives extensive details on this proposed project.

Bob reported that a one-inch separation has opened between the organ and the wall. Lincoln Pipes, the company who services the organ has looked at the issue and states there is nothing wrong with the organ. The wall is moving for an unknown reason. A structural engineer is coming in two weeks to assess the problem. They will look at the foundation and the walls. Bob will report back to the Vestry.

The top layer of concrete on the walkway outside the Main Street door to the church is peeling off. Bill Stroh has applied two coats of sealant but the problem has continued. The company who did the concrete work has looked at the problem and does not know the cause. The correct preservative was applied after the work was done. The company who manufactured the concrete is coming to assess the issue. Bob noted that until the temperature consistently stays above 40 degrees the concrete cannot be repaired. He will revisit the issue and report back to the Vestry at that time.

Bob Finney made a motion with a second from Joe Doswell to approve the creation of a play space outside the Mary Garden Wall opposite the Bell Tower not to exceed a cost of \$100,000, half of which will be paid for by donations and to proceed with the site prep work when a company is selected.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bob noted it is important to notify the congregation of this decision and the project as a whole.

Tim Silver shared the Senior Wardens report.

Tim stated his top three priorities for 2022 for the parish are ramping up our efforts to attract younger members and families with children, improve communication within and outside the parish, and increasing efforts to involve the Vestry and lay people more directly in the work of the parish.

Tim noted that efforts to attract younger families should include the play space and the hiring of an education director. Tim stressed the importance of looking at these 2 things in particular as real "faith investments" for the parish which reflect the long-stated wishes of our parish. This was one of the main areas noted coming out of the Holy Conversations we participated in as part of the Discernment process prior to calling Fr. Andrew to lead our parish.

Tim reminded Vestry members to wear their yellow lanyards which identify them to visitors and parishioners as Vestry members.

A question was asked as to why the names of Vestry members are not always listed in the bulletin. Fr. Andrew explained it is not intentional; just a lack of space in the bulletin. Fr. Andrew was asked to include the names whenever possible.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rectors report.

He noted that last Sunday's cancellation of services at the church due to inclement weather was a last resort as he was unable to safely drive to the church. He expressed his thanks to Jim West for leading prayer at the church for those who were able to get there at 8:00. An announcement will go out to the parish by no later than 7:30 notifying all if this happens again or if the office were to be closed due to weather. A suggestion was made to list any cancellations or delays on BooneWeather.com as well.

Due to increased COVID numbers currently, Bishop Jose has reinstated a mask mandate inside all churches in the Diocese through at least 2/6/22. Fr. Andrew reported a staff member tested positive for COVID recently. The parish followed all CDC protocols and no further cases are known at this time.

The ad listing the opening for a Christian Formation Director will go out this week in Diocesan communications.

An ad for nursery workers has been placed and will be sent to ASU soon.

Jim Bumgardner has been diagnosed recently with cancer and has undergone radiation treatments and will undergo surgery at Duke University Hospital on January 31. He will be out for a few weeks recovering and other organists will fill in for him.

A pastoral care team is being formed led by Lynn Searfoss. This team will extend pastoral care beyond clergy and will build on pastoral care resources we currently have and expand the ways we care for each other.

Fr. Andrew is planning to hold a Vestry retreat on a Saturday to be determined most likely in May.

Fr. Andrew will be sending information to the Vestry regarding a Vestry Covenant. Details will follow.

A devotion was led by Fr. Andrew to close the meeting.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second by Tim Silver to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry