

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2020 at 5:30pm

Via Video Conference

Vestry Members Present: Chip Myers (Sr. Warden), Tim Silver (Jr. Warden), Doug Galke, Roy McCraw, E.B. Springs, Sterling Hutcheson, Jane Milner, Bill Furr, and Gigi Poole

Vestry Members Absent: Jim West, Lisa Kaufmann, and Crawford Cleveland

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Amanda White (Treasurer), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Fr. Sam Tallman and incoming Vestry members Faith Jones, Patty Patella, and Marjory Holder

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

A motion to accept the meeting agenda was made by Chip Myers with a second from E.B. Springs.

The Vestry approved the motion.

The minutes from the prior meeting were reviewed. A needed correction was noted. In the section describing the Vestry discernment process, a word needs to be changed from sale to slate. Chip Myers made a motion to accept the minutes with the necessary correction. Bill Furr seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

The Clerk will make the correction as noted.

Fr. Andrew led a leadership check-in with Vestry members. He asked for examples of moments of grace those present have experienced recently.

Examples shared were a walk on the beach, taking part in moving and challenging discussions on racial reconciliation, and feeling a closeness to God through the Zoom worship services.

Andrew shared that a close friend of his recently passed away. The friend was a young priest.

Fr. Andrew shared a Tour of Homes update. He shared he has heard much praise for the virtual tour of the home of Bo Henderson and Ed Springs. At least several hundred people have viewed the virtual tour.

Andrew reported that around \$62,000.00 has been raised in the Tour of Homes effort thus far.

The Tour of Homes committee will begin reviewing grant requests soon to determine how the funds will be donated.

E. B. Springs shared an update on the effort to acquire the service mark for the name and image for the Tour of Homes. He reported the N.C. Secretary of State's office has received the request.

Fr. Andrew shared that the Executive Committee recently met with the Outreach Committee to discuss goals and priorities with a focus on the geographic reach of where the outreach funds will be shared. As shared in earlier Vestry meetings, the current breakdown is roughly as follows:

50% local

25% state

12.5% national and 12.5% international

Andrew reported that the actual allocation of funds from the Outreach committee in 2019 was as follows:

- 64% local
- 3% state
- 16% national
- 17% international

Thus far in 2020, 89% of Outreach funds have been donated locally.

Andrew also noted that including Tour of Homes grants, which are all donated to local groups, more than \$100,000 was donated locally by St. Mary's in 2019.

The Outreach committee is working on updating the geographic breakdown of how they will allocate funds going forward and how best to use our outreach dollars. It was noted that flexibility is needed, as unforeseen events such as natural disasters can occur at any time. A Vestry member noted they were so impressed at the serious reflection and due diligence of the members of the Outreach committee.

Fr. Andrew shared updated Diocesan guidelines received a week ago allowing for indoor worship services of up to 25 persons at the discretion of the parish. Fr. Andrew met on Sunday afternoon with the Wardens and members of the parish in the medical field, Faith Jones, Patty Patella, Chip Monroe, Lisa Kaufmann, and Sterling Hutcheson to discuss this updated guideline. After weighing several factors including traffic flow, cleaning processes and availability of appropriate cleaning supplies which will disinfect surfaces but will not damage our artwork, woodwork, and stained glass windows Fr. Andrew has decided not to increase the capacity of our indoor services at this time. He encourages participation in Communion in the Close.

Amanda White shared the results of the 2019 audit, conducted by Jim Runyon. A copy of the audit report was sent to all Vestry members prior to this meeting.

A strong set of financial policies and procedures were developed for the parish, which was one of the previous recommendations of the auditor. That effort was led by Ron Armstrong, Roy McCraw, and Fr. Andrew.

Amanda noted there has been a tremendous amount of progress over the prior audit. Some of the actions taken which were detailed in the audit report are:

- 1) Vendor Master file has been improved to remove duplications and show full corporate names (still some issues but improved)
- 2) Weekly cash count sheet preparation has improved (still needs improvement)
- 3) Parishioner gifts via Foundations are now being noted on Parishioner statements as non-deductible
- 4) Tour of Homes gala tickets are now split between donation amount and food amount
- 5) Financial Secretary notes that IRS rules for proper cutoffs of parishioner gifts at year end are now being followed and parishioners are notified of rules
- 6) Payments from parishioners related to weddings, funerals, and memorial garden reservations are now not included as tax deductible gifts per the Rector.

Roy McCraw asked that a letter of engagement be sent to Jim Runyon requesting him to do our next audit.

Roy McCraw made a motion with a second from Gigi Poole to accept the audit report.

The Vestry approved the motion and the parish office will send a copy of the report to the Diocesan office tomorrow.

Amanda also shared the monthly financial report which was sent to all Vestry members prior to the meeting.

The new report format was used for the first time at this meeting and was seen as a great improvement to the prior format. Fr. Andrew expressed praise to Roy McCraw who found this new format and shared it with Amanda and the Finance committee.

Amanda reported the parish net income is up this year so far. The trust and endowment accounts continue to rebound. Pledges are on target as anticipated.

Amanda shared that the PPP funds are exhausted.

An error was noted on the balance sheet. The correct income figure from the Tour of Homes should be \$64,000.00 rather than \$80,977.03

Sterling Hutcheson made a motion to accept the financial report with the notation for the balance sheet to be corrected as described. Roy McCraw seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Chip Myers shared the monthly report of proposed allocations from the Outreach committee:

\$1000.00 for California fire relief

\$1000.00 for Hurricane Laura relief

Both these donations will be made through the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund. It was noted that this organization is widely known for staying until a job is done. For example, they are still doing work in the areas so greatly devastated by Hurricane Katrina 15 years ago.

Sterling Hutcheson made a motion to approve both these donations. Doug Galke seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew updated the Vestry on the upcoming Diocesan convention to be held virtually on November 13-14. An effort is being made to gather delegates in person in small groups for discussion if possible following all COVID-19 protocols to allow for a more personal feel to the experience. One possibility being explored is to meet with delegates from St. Luke's, Boone and Holy Cross, Valle Crucis as a Deanery in a large space to allow for social distancing. Fr. Andrew noted that much important work is planned at the convention this year, such as the vote to provide a full time priest at ASU.

After asking for volunteers, Fr. Andrew proposed that Chip Myers and Doug Galke be our delegates to the virtual convention this year and that Faith Jones and Amanda White be the alternate delegates.

Tim Silver made a motion to approve the delegates and alternates proposed by Fr. Andrew.

Sterling Hutcheson seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared that work will begin at the next Vestry meeting on the 2021 parish budget. He recently sent a survey to Vestry members asking for their input on priorities in building a budget for next year and feedback on where we are as a parish. So far he has received 7 responses and will send the survey out again this evening. He asked for feedback as to the most important areas that need attention in the upcoming budget.

Examples of responses were improving technology, children and youth Christian formation, supporting current staff appropriately, and fellowship opportunities.

Andrew led a discussion on how to address these priority areas. In the area of technology some areas that need improvement are the website, our social media presence, broadcasting service quality including a better microphone for Sunday morning services and our camera quality.

Currently the parish agreement with the company who provides website support costs between \$500.00 and \$1000.00 a year. Upgrading the agreement to provide better design would cost between \$2000.00 and \$3000.00 a year. The technology committee was working on improving the website before the pandemic.

Fr. Andrew noted the proposed addition of a part time staff member to coordinate Christian Formation for all ages is on hold during the pandemic.

The Vestry members are urged to complete the survey from Fr. Andrew if they have not done so.

Tim Silver shared he has no current pressing issues to share as Junior Warden. He asks those present to reach out to him if they become aware of issues which he needs to address. Doug Galke asked Tim if he is aware of an issue with the Sacristy exterior walls. Tim was not aware of this and will reach out to Paul McGill, previous Junior Warden for information on the problem.

Chip Myers stated he has no pressing issue to share as Senior Warden, and welcomed the incoming Vestry members.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

He reports there will not be a fall Diocesan Clergy conference this year. Andrew reports he is still serving as the Dean of the Mountain Deanery. He receives updates from the Bishop every other week. He reports the Bishop is beginning to return to visiting parishes when he is able to. Fr. Andrew notes our parish had been on the Bishop's visitation calendar for this past spring prior to the pandemic. It is uncertain if that visit will take place in the spring of 2021.

The Bishop is considering regional gatherings for confirmation.

Andrew continues in the Clergy in Community program through Wake Forest. They are meeting again online during the first week of October. He is greatly enriched through this experience of interacting with clergy from several denominations. A colleague of his in this experience shared the outlook that this period of pandemic can be viewed as a period of adolescence, rather than as an eternity. Andrew believes our parish will grow and develop in unexpected ways through this challenging time as we learn new things about ourselves. He shared some of the things he misses most about seeing parish members in person are shaking hands and hugs. He prays for all in the parish family daily and stressed this time will pass.

Gigi Poole led an evening devotion prepared by Fr. Andrew to close the meeting.

Gigi Poole made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56pm with a second from Jane Milner.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry