

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2023

Vestry Members Present: (In person) Chip Monroe (Senior Warden), Marjory Holder, Mike Austell, Buddy Fore, Leslie Billingsley
(Via Zoom) Burt Mulford, Patty Patella, Joe Doswell, Michelle Curry, Sue Sweeting
Vestry Members Absent: Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Faith Jones

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Amanda White (Treasurer)

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order with prayer at 7:02pm.

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.
Buddy Fore made a motion with a second from Burt Mulford to accept the meeting agenda.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the January meeting minutes as submitted.
A needed correction to the minutes was noted. In the section regarding the proposed sound enhancement system for the Nave, the motion which the Vestry approved should be corrected to read:
Leslie Billingsley made a motion to approve the request of a contract to review for a proposed sound enhancement system from WAVE. The contract will be reviewed line by line by the Vestry, then a decision on further Vestry action on the proposed system will follow.
Bob Finney seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

A second correction was requested by Patty Patella. In the section regarding decorating of the Nave for Christmas, Patty did not do flowers. Buddy Fore and his crew did the flowers and greenery, and Patty Patella and helpers decorated the tree and other areas.

The Clerk will make these corrections and send the corrected minutes to Fr. Andrew. A motion will be made at the next meeting regarding approval of the January 2023 meeting minutes.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.
Income exceeded expenses by a great amount this month. Amanda noted one reason for this is that many people pay their yearly pledge all at once at the beginning of the year.

Marjory Holder made a motion to accept the Treasurers report.
Leslie Billingsley seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared a recommendation from the Finance committee that the church change banks from First Citizens to United Community Bank. The benefits of doing so are reduced fees, staying at a bank in Blowing Rock, and improved customer service.
Marjory Holder made a motion to approve the change in banks.
Chip Monroe seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Amanda White noted that the Finance committee will meet with Jim Runyon on March 6 to finalize last year's audit.

Marjory Holder reported the contract for a proposed sound enhancement system from WAVE is coming soon. The company informed Marjory that the cost has risen 40% since last year when they were first in contact with us. However, the company told Marjory the cost can be adapted in some ways to fit our budget. The company told Marjory that they can do a 3D mapping of the Nave and drawings of what a potential system would look like for a cost of \$6500.

Fr. Andrew gave a background summary of the history of this potential project for the new Vestry members to bring them up to date.

Fr. Andrew reported that the Executive committee has suggested that the Vestry not take action on approval or denial of this project at tonight's meeting. A recent projection of the capital reserve fund which includes the potential expense for this project showed that based on current planning, the life of the capital reserve fund would be shortened by 10 years. After review, Fr. Andrew, the Wardens, and Amanda White all agree with the suggestion of the Executive committee.

Mike Austell made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to approve the study by WAVE for a cost of \$6500 to gain more information.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared the 2022 Parochial Report. This report summarizes all services and activities of the church for the past year.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Leslie Billingsley to accept the Parochial report. The report will be signed by the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Rector and will be submitted to the Diocese.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared the allocations approved by the Outreach committee this month:

St. Andrews Parish, Field Dalling England \$2,400

(to support sending 2 large generators to people in Ukraine)

Doctors Without Borders \$1,000

World Central Kitchen	\$1,000
Episcopal Diocese of Navajoland	\$ 500
Earthquake Relief (Episcopal Relief and Development)	\$1,000
Tuition for child in Durgapur, India (daughter of Episcopal priest the Rev. Swagata Das)	\$ 900
Total	\$6,800

Mike Austell made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to endorse these allocations.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Chip Monroe shared the Senior Warden's report in writing prior to the meeting. Chip noted that we are having a condensed meeting this month due to our meeting night falling on the same night as our Shrove Tuesday gathering and to think about how that goes and how productive we can be in a shorter time period. He noted his ideas about reimagining Tour of Homes outreach are still a work in progress and he will share more on that at a future meeting.

Chip shared thoughts on Lenten practices. He noted most of us are considering what to give up, perhaps even giving up the same thing as last year and years before. Spurred by the Isaiah 56 reading a few weeks ago he is thinking about what to take ON this Lent. Chip shared verses 6 and 7 of that chapter from Isaiah and noted a few ways we could take on a practice such as reading through the Psalms, finding a new podcast to enjoy, maybe choosing a new time of day to meditate or pray, or trying Morning Prayer, either at the church or on your own. While the larger goals referenced in the verses from Isaiah such as letting the oppressed go free and breaking every yoke may be a bit beyond our capability this year, it may be possible to move in that direction in small ways this Lent. Even if we decide to do the tried and true of giving up coffee, sweets, or something else, he encourages each of us to do something a little different as a reminder of the season.

Bob Finney shared the Junior Warden's report in writing prior to the meeting. Progress is being made on the Play Space. If all goes well, it will be finished in mid-April. Carolina Play has been informed that they can begin their portion of the project (putting down the engineered mulch and colorizing the PIP). The current plan is to have the new trees between the fence and the Village Green Condos driveway installed in early April. Work has been completed on the storeroom. The heat sensor has been installed and connected to the fire alarm system.

The two kneelers in the front row of pews have been re-covered with new fabric to replace the old worn fabric.

The inoperative heat sensor in the bell tower has been replaced and the entire fire alarm system has passed its annual inspection.

01 Masonry has been told to begin work on the needed repairs to the rock steps and walkways. Sand has been purchased and is being used as needed in place of the ice melt to prevent further damage to the concrete and/or mortar.

The dying hemlock tree will be removed around March 6.

St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church sign: The sign is showing its age (paint is fading, wood has deteriorated, etc.). Three contractors to do repairs were interviewed, two submitted bids, and one was selected to repair/refurbish the existing sign. The style and color will remain the same. The font size will be increased to make it more readable.

Probable completion of the project is in March or April.

TK Elevator notified the church that the current elevator will no longer be part (electrical and electronic) supported after 6/1/2023. The manufacturing of these parts ceased in 2019 and their current supply of parts on hand will be exhausted at that time. They have provided two options as a solution. One is to purchase a spare part package of nine parts to sustain us in the coming years for a cost of \$15,000 to \$18,199 plus tax. The second option is to “modernize” the elevator by installing all new digital components and other items for a cost of \$130,000. The parts which would be purchased in the spare parts package are not usable in modernizing the elevator since the spare part package will consist of analog components and the modernization package will use digital components. Bob feels it is advisable to make a decision in March or April. He sees four possible options to address to issue:

- 1) Do not purchase anything and maintain the current elevator as long as possible using the existing service contract which expires in August 2027. At that time hire an independent contractor (there is one in Morganton) to modernize the elevator at probably a reduced cost. This has the risk of having an inoperative elevator, due to lack of parts, for an unknown period of time.
- 2) Do not purchase the parts and wait until the elevator becomes inoperative and then modernize the elevator at some point in the future using TK Elevator. The con of this option is that due to inflation TK Elevator’s prices will be higher.
- 3) Purchase the spare parts package now and use it until the elevator has a problem that cannot be repaired using the parts in the spare part package, then modernize the elevator. The con of this option is that we will have to store the parts and that some or most of the parts will not be used and we will have spent money on parts that are not used and will be thrown out.
- 4) Modernize the elevator now using TK Elevator. This may force us into another long-term (5 year) service contract with TK Elevator. This contract may or may not be more expensive than our current contract. This approach would be a major expense against our Capital Endowment fund.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector’s report in writing prior to the meeting.

Andrew highlighted two areas of our common life, one being the season of Lent which begins tomorrow and the second an exciting opportunity for the months ahead.

Lent: Ash Wednesday is tomorrow. Liturgies will be offered at 7:00am, 12:00pm, and 5:30pm. Stations of the Cross will be offered each Friday at 12:00pm. Reconciliation will be offered on Ash Wednesday, Fridays, and at any time by appointment.

The book, *The Lord and His Prayer* by N.T. Wright, is our Lenten book companion this year. Copies are still available from the Parish office as well as online. A hybrid discussion group will meet each Thursday from 12:00pm until 1:00pm. He also plans to offer an evening discussion group later in Lent for those who cannot attend the lunch hour group.

Duke Divinity School Intern: In conversation with the Wardens, Fr. Andrew has submitted an application for St. Mary's to host an intern from Duke Divinity School in the summer of 2023, (May 28-August 6). Due to the generosity of the Duke Endowment, this would come at no cost to the Parish and the intern would be a part of a community of learning with other interns serving faith communities across the High Country. Our commitment will be to find housing for the intern for the 10 weeks that they are living and serving in the High Country.

Average Sunday attendance thru February 19: 105

Holy Eucharists offered YTD: 26

Daily Offices offered YTD: 34

Fr. Andrew adjourned the meeting at 7:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry