

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

Vestry Members Present: (In person) Chip Monroe (Senior Warden), Marjory Holder, Sue Sweeting

(Via Zoom) Michelle Curry, Joe Doswell, Mike Austell, Buddy Fore

Vestry Members Absent: Leslie Billingsley, Burt Mulford, Patty Patella, Bob Finney, Faith Jones

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

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:51pm.

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.

Marjory Holder made a motion to accept the meeting agenda.

Sue Sweeting seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve the January 2023 Vestry minutes as corrected by the Clerk.

Chip Monroe seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Sue Sweeting to approve the February 2023 Vestry minutes.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared the Treasurer's report in Amanda White's absence.

Income exceeded expenses by \$30,885. The major reason for this was that actual pledges were \$68,774 vs. budgeted amount of \$36,667.

Expenses were higher than budgeted amount by \$4,125 due to a doubling up on Diocesan Pledge (Line item 4864-00) payment in February for January and February.

Fr. Andrew reported the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the church move \$100,000 from First Horizon Money Market account (earning 3%) and add \$10,000 from checking account to create a CD totaling \$110,000. Three options were given for the CD:

- 1) First Horizon 12 month CD 4.30% interest (rates subject to change)
- 2) First Citizens 7 month CD 4.15% interest (rates subject to change)
- 3) United Community 11 month CD 4.25% (rates subject to change)

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Chip Monroe to move the \$110,000 as described and create a 12 month CD at First Horizon. This will leave \$150,000 in the First Horizon Money Market account.

The Vestry approved the motion.

An additional pledge was received last week. The parish has now received 124 pledges totaling over \$475,000.

Jim Runyon is in the process of finishing the parish audit for 2022. The Finance committee will share the results with the Vestry when he submits his report.

Sue Sweeting made a motion with a second from Michelle Curry to accept the Treasurer's report.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

Andrew highlighted our Lenten offerings. Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation continue on Fridays. Lindsey Herring continues to offer an introduction to Centering Prayer as well. The book, *The Lord and His Prayer* by N.T. Wright, has been our Lenten book companion this year. More than 35 copies have been distributed from the parish office and Andrew is aware of a number of folks who purchased their own copy online or for an e-reader. Mindful that Thursday at noon doesn't work for all, Andrew has added a session on Tuesday, March 28, 5:45-7:00pm, to catch up on conversation about the whole book and the ways in which our Lord calls us to pray as disciples. All are welcome!

Throughout the Lenten season, Andrew has been teaching in the Rector's forum about the ways in which we worship in Holy Week. The forums have been well attended and the conversation rich. Andrew attached a schedule of Holy Week services in this month's Vestry packet and encouraged everyone to make every effort to attend and be a part of this sacred pilgrimage.

In conversation with the Wardens, Andrew has submitted an application for our parish to host an intern from Duke Divinity School in the summer of 2023, May 28-August 6. He expects to receive notice confirming our placement by the end of March. He will travel to Duke Divinity School in May for an orientation and to meet one-on-one with our intern. Housing options for the intern have been confirmed. Faithbridge, Boone UMC, and First Presbyterian, Boone will also be welcoming Duke Divinity School interns to their congregations this summer.

Average Sunday attendance thru March 12-83

Holy Eucharists offered YTD-43

Daily Offices offered YTD-52

Fr. Andrew's Recent Reading:

The Pastor's Bookshelf: Why Reading Matters for Ministry
(Austin Carty, 2022)

The Congregation in the Secular Age: Keeping Sacred Time Against the Speed of Modern Life

(Andrew Root, 2021)
Lark Ascending: A Novel
(Silas House, 2022)
God, Christ & The World: A Study in Contemporary Theology
(Michael Ramsey, 1969)

Chip Monroe shared the Senior Warden's report.

Chip reflected on the awesome privilege and responsibility of the Vestry's management of the financial resources of our parish. He noted the difference between managing these resources and financial management of his medical practice. In the medical practice, they are generating income from their work and the work of their staff. Regrettably, too often, sick children create the work and the income for the practice. But that is part of the business of medicine.

At church, however, the money we are managing comes from donations. The parish staff certainly works very hard, but in the end whether moved by spiritual reasons or tax write off purposes, parishioners donate to fund the activities we are involved in. The Vestry is then charged to spend these funds as wisely as possible, with God's help.

Chip has been increasingly aware of that burden/responsibility lately, especially as it involves our proposed sound system. He is moving towards the idea of advocating for a special capital campaign for the system, whether quietly among a few interested and able parishioners or more widely. Chip is just not sure that a new sound system should come out of either regular pledges or our capital endowment. He notes that sound enhancement is a worthy project but believes it may fall outside the bounds of things we should routinely fund with regular donations. He notes it will be great to have good data on which to base a decision once the engineering study is done. He notes work is already underway on that thanks to Marjory and others.

Chip asked for feedback on this issue and anything else. He looks forward to conversations!

Marjory Holder shared an update on the sound enhancement project.

WAVE came to the church and took measurements. They will prepare the engineering study; then we will have a cost to work with. Fr. Andrew took them to the basement to see what the situation is as far as what would need climate control.

Bob Finney was not present for the meeting, but sent a written report.

Play Space: Carolina Play still needs to colorize the poured in place (PIP) foam around the equipment. They need 3 days of dry weather and 50+ temperatures to complete that work. Expect it to be completed in April. David Aldridge Landscaping will plant the trees and other plants around the play space in April. The trees and labor will be a donation. Special thanks to Carmen Patella for arranging this.

The dead hemlock tree has been removed and stump has been ground out.

Flower bed in front of church: The flower bed directly in front of the main door of the church will be reworked by David Aldridge most likely in April. The plan is to clean out the bed, plant new dwarf Rhododendron bushes, install some large rocks, and possibly a

Japanese Weeping Maple. It doesn't grow very big (about 5 ft.) and would be planted so as not to block the view of the red door entering the church. There is also a plan to plant an Appalachian Red Eastern Redbud tree in the area where the dying Maple tree had been (NW corner of the building). This tree will grow to about 15' in height. Annual flowers, bulbs and perennials will be used to fill in the vacant areas and provide additional color. Once again, David Aldridge is providing the plants and his services as a donation to our church. Our expense will be for the Redbud tree and the flowers. Prior to starting the work, we have to locate the electrical line that runs from the church building to the exterior lights to ensure the line is not cut while digging. Finally, the grounds committee would like to build a retaining wall on the west side of the flower bed to prevent soil erosion. The wall will match the wall around the play space. Money for this project is to come from the Capital Endowment account (previously identified project in the Reserve Study).

Elevator: As mentioned at a prior Vestry meeting, the elevator needs to be modernized as it will no longer be part supported after June 1, 2023. Bob recommends that this project occur in 2027 when our current service contract expires.

Parish Workday: Planned for June 3 with June 10 as a rain backup date. The focus will be on spreading mulch and planting flowers.

Yard Sale: Planned for April 22 from 9am to 10:30am for parish members and 10:30am to 12 noon for the general public. Now that we have contracted out our yard services, we have an excess of yard equipment that we need to sell due to reduced storage space. The purpose is to reduce the amount of unneeded tools and generate a small amount of cash to support future landscaping/grounds work. We also plan to sell some unneeded general-purpose tools.

Exterior lights: The lights in front of the church either work erratically or not at all. Bob thinks the problem may be faulty timers. An electrical company has been contacted to investigate and repair. Eventually (probably next year), the large light that illuminates the front of the church will be replaced with an LED fixture to reduce energy consumption.

Fr. Andrew gave an update on the Tour of Homes via Joann Hallmark.

Five houses will be on the TOH this year, all in the Green Hill Circle area. This will make it possible for folks to walk to each house once they have been transported from the church to Green Hill. The gala is planned for July 20. The proposed cost for the gala ticket is \$150. This amount is within the average ticket price of earlier TOH galas and other galas in the Blowing Rock area. Buddy Fore suggested the possibility of a party at no cost for everyone involved in putting together the tour, perhaps the week after the tour. Buddy reported that the expenses for the gala have been totally underwritten this year. So far, \$24,000 has been pledged to the tour and checks are already starting to come in.

Fr. Andrew led a conversation on a book he is reading, *The Congregation in the Secular Age* by Andrew Root. He shared a few brief passages and facilitated a discussion on the book.

Fr. Andrew led a prayer to close our meeting.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to adjourn seconded by Marjory Holder at 6:50pm.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry