

St. Mary of the Hills  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
May 16, 2023

Vestry Members Present: (In person) Chip Monroe (Senior Warden), Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Patty Patella, Joe Doswell, Sue Sweeting, Marjory Holder, Burt Mulford

(Via Zoom) Leslie Billingsley, Mike Austell, Faith Jones, Michelle Curry

Vestry Member Absent: Buddy Fore

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

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:55pm.

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.

Marjory Holder made a motion to accept the agenda.

Sue Sweeting seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the March meeting minutes.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Chip Monroe seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared a devotion for early evening and spoke briefly on the importance of being quick to listen and slow to speak as this evening's reading highlighted.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.

The interest rate on our Money Market account has increased from 3% to 5%.

Pledges are on track with what is expected at this point in the year.

Vestry members discussed the appropriate amount of cash to keep on hand in the parish checking account and the advisability of moving some funds to a higher yield option.

Burt Mulford made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to move \$56,000 from the checking account to the Money Market account with the plan to re-evaluate the status of the accounts in 6 months.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Sue Sweeting made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to approve the Treasurer's report.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew reported that the yearly audit has been completed. The Finance Committee will review the audit and share the report with the Vestry at an upcoming meeting. The audit must be submitted to the Diocese by August 31.

Chip Monroe shared the Senior Warden's report.

Chip shared how gratifying it is to see Vestry members and other members of our parish family hard at work around the church, whether it be in a worship service or behind the scenes doing Tour of Homes prep or financial paperwork. He is continually reminded of what good hands we are in as we seek to move forward with God's help.

Parishioners leading up the Tour of Homes this year have been working on a concise statement to sum up the mission of the Tour to use as they ask local businesses for support this summer. Here's what they came up with:

“Ever pursuing the call to extend hospitality to the stranger and care for those in any need, the members of St. Mary of the Hills

Episcopal Church organize and plan the welcoming fundraiser that is the Annual Tour of Homes, with 100% of the profits going to local charitable causes.”

Chip asked Vestry members to consider their thoughts on this statement. He still wonders if there is any parish energy towards a tighter focus for the Tour proceeds.

Bob Finney shared the Junior Warden's report.

The fence behind the Play Space has been reinforced. Kids can play now!!! The cement/glue that attached the fence to the masonry wall had come loose, probably due to high winds. The contractor made the repair to reinforce the fence. All the work is complete with the exception of planting trees on the south side of the fence. Fr. Andrew reported a Blessing of the Play Space will take place on a date TBD.

The grounds committee wants to build a retaining wall in front of the flower bed directly outside the main door to the church. Bob contacted O1 Masonry to confirm the price they quoted last year (\$5,900) is still valid. He received confirmation the quote is still accurate. The wall will be similar to the wall around the Play Space in color and design. The money was budgeted in the Reserve Study and will come from the Capital Endowment funds. Other contractors wanted over \$7,000 to build the wall. The wall will not be built until after David Aldridge completes the landscaping work in the flower bed. The boxwoods in this flower bed have blight and need to come out.

Bob made a motion with a second from Chip Monroe that the Vestry approve the expenditure of \$5,900 from the Capital Endowment account for the building of this rock wall by O1 Masonry.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bob reported the yard sale was successful with proceeds of \$326.17. The church got rid of many unneeded items. We now have adequate storage room for items coming in for Timeless Treasures.

Marjory Holder reported that WAVE has completed their analysis of the Nave in regards to the proposed sound enhancement project. Prices have increased again. The company will revisit their earlier plan and submit a price to the church that is fiscally possible.

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

Compassion International: Tuition for Pabassara	\$456
F.A.R.M. Café: Disc Tournament Sponsorship	\$ 1,000
Moms Demand Action (A grassroots movement of Americans fighting for public safety measures that can protect people from gun violence)	\$ 1,000
Episcopal Relief and Development: (Tornado and Disaster Relief)	\$3,000
Total	\$5,456

Bob Finney made a motion with a second from Burt Mulford to endorse these allocations.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew met today with members of the Outreach committee to discuss the epidemic of gun violence in our nation. Andrew shared a letter with the Vestry that Bishop Gary Gloster recently wrote addressing this issue. Andrew led a discussion with the Vestry asking for suggestions on ways to help acknowledge and address the problem. One suggestion was to sign Gary's letter as a group. Another was to have a candle burning constantly in the Nave to honor all victims of gun violence. An idea of helping to promote gun safety education for children and families was discussed. It was noted the organization Sandy Hook Promise has good resources for that type of effort. Also, the importance of teaching grandparents to store weapons safely when family members are visiting was mentioned. The stunning fact is that gun violence is now the leading killer of children from the ages of 1 to 19.

Andrew noted his strong conviction that sometimes the church is called to be "political but not partisan or personal". He noted the need for the church to take a leading role in "harm reduction and cultivating life". He mentioned the possibility of inviting Bishop Jose to meet with us to discuss this issue. He noted that we need to be about praying and remembering that one of our Baptismal vows is to be about peace.

Fr. Andrew shared his Rector's report.

A joint picnic will be held with Rumble Presbyterian at Davant Field on May 21.

A Pentecost picnic will be held on May 28.

We are participating in Vacation Bible School in partnership with Rumble from June 12-June 16.

Lindsey Herring will be offering a summer formation class.

Our Seminary Intern from Duke Divinity School, Mitchell Eithun, will be with us from June 4-August 20.

Andrew noted that Pentecost marks his 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary with us. He is feeling reflective as we are entering a new season and feels the turning of a page. Also, the formal end of the COVID 19 health emergency that loomed so largely over his ministry and all our lives was declared this week. He wonders-what does our next 4 years look like? This has Andrew thinking about “empowered leadership”. What committees need to be empowered to do their work? What committees that don’t exist need to exist? This is an exciting time to be at St. Mary’s; new people are finding us.

Michelle Curry asked for Vestry help with involving children 3 years old and up to help bring up the elements during worship.

Bob Finney reminded everyone of the parish work day on June 3 starting at 8:30am.

Fr. Andrew will be on vacation in early June. Fr. Sam Tallman will be back with us to lend a hand during that time.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Joe Doswell to adjourn the meeting at 7:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry