

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2024

Vestry Members Present: (In person) Jill Storelli, Jim Snow, Buddy Fore, Sue Sweeting, Marshall Culp, Mike Austell (Senior Warden), Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Leslie Billingsley
(Via Zoom) Lynn Searfoss, Burt Mulford

Vestry Members Absent: Michelle Curry, Joe Doswell

Others Present: (In person) Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Amanda White (Treasurer)
(Via Zoom) Fr. Sam Tallman (Priest Associate)

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:46pm.

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.
Jim Snow made a motion to accept the meeting agenda.
Buddy Fore seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the January meeting minutes.
Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve the January minutes as presented.
Lynn Searfoss seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew led a devotion for early evening.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.
Allen Wealth Management continues to work with Michael to get up to date financial packets done. Amanda reports that all day-to-day financial tasks such as payment of bills and payroll remain current. Giving statements recently went out. Amanda is aware that some statements had errors; this is being addressed daily. Amanda noted that giving through the parish website works really well. She is an advocate for that method of payment; checks are fine as well. Cash on hand is over \$400,000 and the trust and endowments accounts total over \$1 million.
A question was raised regarding some issues including less than stellar customer service from Wells Fargo in Lenoir; Fr. Andrew noted others have raised these issues as well. He said the parish will look closely at the banking relationship with Wells Fargo. Andrew noted that in the past we had a person at that branch assigned to our account, but that is no longer the case.

Amanda and Andrew noted the good work Michael has done on the parish database to allow parishioners to access their giving statements in real time, as well as accessing info such as addresses.

Fr. Andrew led a discussion on the Vestry Covenant. Last month he asked Vestry members, in particular new ones, to study the Covenant and give feedback. Several members noted one of the most important pieces of the Covenant is the section that stresses the value of a regular practice of listening closely to each other.

Mike Austell made a motion with a second from Leslie Billingsley to re-adopt the Vestry Covenant as written.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew reviewed where we are in planning for the Tour of Homes. He has discussed the possibility of chairing or co-chairing the Tour with several folks.

Buddy Fore shared that there is a possibility that Suzanne Miller is willing to chair. Andrew will contact her to confirm.

Fr. Andrew shared the allocations endorsed by the Outreach committee this month.

F.A.R.M. Café	\$1,000	Buy Boone Lunch on 2/29
New Directions Mustard Seed	\$1,000	To assist domestic abuse survivors
Compassion International	\$ 500	Tuition for our student
Compassion International	\$ 500	Sri Lanka flooding
Compassion International	\$ 500	For our student/his family-flood damage
Total	\$3,500	

Leslie Billingsley made a motion to approve these donations endorsed by the Outreach committee.

Jim Snow seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bob Finney shared the Junior Warden's report.

Bell Tower: VPC has begun work in the bell tower. The work is expected to continue until mid to late March.

Two problems with the bell tower: Roof leaks: This has been an ongoing problem for some years. Small leaks have occurred and are repaired but new leaks pop up. Multiple issues cause these leaks. Bob provided a detailed summary of the causes and potential repair options accompanied by photos.

Second problem: Condensation in the bell tower: The condensation can be so severe that it causes water to drip into the sacristy. Recently this condensation occurred and could be seen as a layer of water on the walls of the bell tower, the bells, and the plexiglass.

Also, there are numerous pieces of missing plexiglass and open cracks/seams which allow moist air to enter the bell tower. This may be partially corrected by the repairs to the bell tower, including adding insulation to the roof. Also, the fact that the bell tower is made of porous rock allows moisture to enter. A dehumidifier may need to be installed in the bell tower if the problem persists.

Frontal Cabinet in Sacristy: Work will begin on this project after work in the bell tower is complete.

Sacristy Floor: A quote was received from Midway Carpet to install a vinyl floor in the Sacristy at a cost of \$1,768. Gigi Poole has offered to pay for the floor. Work will begin after the frontal cabinet has been installed.

HVAC system in nursery needs replacement: During a recent preventive maintenance check it was found to be producing excessive CO₂, above OSHA norms which can cause a health hazard. This problem is due to a faulty blower assembly. That part is no longer made, so the furnace needs to be replaced. The system was installed in 1993. It is recommended that both the furnace and AC system be replaced at the same time.

Bob has received a quote from Edmisten Heating & Cooling in Boone giving 3 options, a quote from Boone Heating and Air Conditioning, and a quote from Mountaineer Heating giving 4 options. Bob reviewed these options in detail and took questions from Vestry members.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve Edmisten Heating & Cooling to install their option 3 Rheem All Electric System Heat pump, air handler 10kw heat kit, and a Honeywell digital programmable thermostat to control system (Warranty 1 year parts, 5 years compressor, and 1 year labor) at a cost of approx. \$8,100.

Buddy Fore seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion. Funding is to come from the Capital Endowment account.

Mike Austell shared the Senior Warden's report.

Mike encouraged folks to approach him with issues or questions. It seems that some people may not feel an issue is important enough to ask the Rector, but as Senior Warden, Mike is happy to be available.

Mike reflected that St. Mary's is a parish where we like to, in a very English phrase, "get stuck in". We all know about the Tour of Homes, and the many volunteers that need to be organized. We know about all the food we prepare for an occasional Parish meal like the one we enjoyed on Fat Tuesday, thanks to the organizing skills of Men's Breakfast. We know about providing meals to Hospitality House from our four meal teams. Mike noted there are many other examples we can be proud of, but his point is that strengthening the Parish of St. Mary of the Hills to continue in a mission of building up the whole Body of Christ is our goal.

Mike encourages everyone to be on the lookout for new faces and welcoming them on the day. We previously had new member activities and he would like to see those again. Mike urges Vestry members to engage with both new and long-time parish members to look around and find ways to "get stuck in". A strong church community is built on sharing the love of God through expressions of hospitality, fellowship, service and genuine caring for one another-inside and outside our church walls. Mike hopes to lead a discussion with Vestry over the next few months on how best to spread out the work more, get newcomers involved, and encourage one another to "get stuck in".

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

Fr. Andrew discussed how the parish can begin to more fully use Realm. Michael is working on exploring how we can utilize the system to its potential, something we have not been doing.

Our Vacation Bible School team will include newcomers to the parish as well as seasoned parishioners in partnership with Rumble Presbyterian.

Michael Marshall began work on February 1 as Director of Administration and Finance. Lindsey Herring is getting up to speed in her new full-time role, adjusting to the balance of time between areas of responsibility.

Both Michael and Lindsey are working to determine how best to utilize and incorporate volunteers, and are seeking to invite others to share in their areas of ministry.

Christian Formation Lenten offerings are underway or will soon begin. Andrew encourages everyone to engage in these opportunities as you are able.

Invite, Welcome, Connect: During Lent, Andrew would like to organize a team devoted to welcome, hospitality, and new member connection, using resources from the Episcopal Church. Those who expressed interest in working on this effort include Mike, Jill, Buddy, and Leslie. Let Andrew know if you are interested in joining these folks.

Andrew mentioned the possibility of a Vestry retreat sometime in late spring or early summer. He will share more about this next month.

Important Dates Upcoming:

February 24-The Feast of St. Matthias, Holy Eucharist 9:00am

March 14-Diocesan Chrism Mass and Renewal of Clergy Vows at All Souls, Asheville

March 19-The Feast of St. Joseph, Holy Eucharist 12 noon

March 24 -March 31- Holy Week 2024

June 9-Bishop McLoughlin's Rescheduled Visitation to our Parish

Some Figures from January 2024:

Average Sunday Attendance-94

Holy Eucharists Offered-17

Daily Offices offered YTD-21

Wrap Up Time:

What did we accomplish?

TOH Chair

Beginning formation of group to work on Invite, Welcome, Connect

Beginning discussion on Vestry retreat

How might we improve?

Need up-to-date financial reports

Leslie Billingsley made a motion with a second from Bob Finney to adjourn the meeting at 7:07pm.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry