

St. Mary of the Hills  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2024

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

Vestry Member Absent: Michelle Curry

Others Present: (In Person) Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Amanda White (Treasurer)  
(Via Zoom) Fr. Sam Tallman (Priest Associate), Mike Matthews (Vestry-Elect)

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:49pm.

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.  
Leslie Billingsley made a motion with a second from Joe Doswell to accept the agenda as presented.  
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the October meeting minutes.  
Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes as presented.  
Leslie Billingsley seconded the motion.  
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew led a devotion for the early evening.

Amanda White presented the Treasurer's report.  
Amanda noted the parish account balances are very healthy; actual income this past month exceeded budgeted income by a healthy amount.  
A significant anonymous gift was given to Fr. Andrew to be used for long-term post Hurricane Helene relief needs to be distributed at his discretion. Andrew noted that money will start to go out in the coming months.  
Andrew noted that the audit report is not complete yet; he has seen a rough draft. The Vestry should have the completed report by next month's meeting.  
Joe Doswell made a motion with a second from Sue Sweeting to accept the Treasurer's report.  
The Vestry approved the motion.  
Fr. Andrew noted that he should be able to report next month on gifts to the parish from 1 or 2 estates.

Fr. Andrew shared a Stewardship tracking document.

Andrew noted that we have received several new pledges which have not been added to the document. Prior to those pledges, we have received 74 pledges for 2025 totaling \$337,678. So far, 45 parishioners have increased the amount of their pledge over their 2024 pledge.

Amanda White shared the 2025 proposed budget.

One topic discussed was whether or not we are being too conservative in our income budgeting. Andrew asked Vestry members to carefully review the proposed budget and give feedback.

Fr. Andrew reported the amount of our Diocesan pledge is \$58,737. This is 10% of our 2023 Normal Operating Income.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to approve payment of the Diocesan pledge as noted.

Buddy Fore seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew reported on the virtual Diocesan Convention which was held in early November. The business of the Convention was short this year; one item approved was to endorse the 10% figure of the Diocesan pledges due from each parish. Fr. Sam Tallman noted that the Diocese is receiving substantial gifts from Episcopal Relief and Development for Hurricane Helene disaster relief.

Mike Austell shared the allocations endorsed by the Outreach committee this month:

Community Care Clinic	\$750
Children's Play House	\$250
Casting Bread Food Pantry	\$1,000
Valle Crucis Conference Center	\$1,000
Compassion International	\$75

Total	\$3,075
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Buddy Fore made a motion with a second from Leslie Billingsley to approve the \$3,075 in donations endorsed by the Outreach committee this month.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew discussed an ongoing request to order nametags for parishioners. Buddy Fore suggested a committee to explore the options and costs of nametags. Buddy and Sue Sweeting volunteered to serve along with one representative of the parish to be named who is not on the Vestry. Fr. Andrew encouraged Vestry members to wear their nametags.

Fr. Andrew shared that Advent learning materials for all ages will be available soon.

The idea of a new pictorial directory was suggested. Several comments were made that we need a training session on Realm as mailing addresses are available through that system.

Marshall Culp submitted the Junior Warden's report to the Vestry and it is available for review. Topics addressed in the report were minor work to finish the Sacristy project, placement of hook on outside of Bell Tower for Christmas wreath, completed repair of Parish Hall fireplace by Blue Ridge Energy, obtaining 2 bids for new retaining wall, review of annual HVAC service contract with Edmisten, and recently discovered damage to outside wall near Fr. Andrew's office.

Mike Austell submitted the Senior Warden's report to the Vestry and it is available for review. Topics addressed included our need to work together as a parish family regardless of our differences, a proposal for Vestry members to team up with others to host Coffee Minutes, and a review of the Outreach allocations for the month.

Fr. Andrew brought a recommendation to the Vestry from the Finance and Executive committees to allow those committees to move funds to the money market from parish accounts. A cap of no more than 3 months operating expenses would be maintained in the checking account.

Sue Sweeting made a motion to allow the transfer of parish funds by the Finance and Executive committees as described.

Jill Storelli seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew submitted the Rector's report to the Vestry and it is available for review. Topics addressed included Advent activities, Diocesan Convention, a 2025 lecture series, and his upcoming time away and clergy coverage.

Holy Eucharists offered YTD:	173
Daily Offices offered YTD:	241
Average Sunday Attendance YTD:	158

Andrew also announced that Bishop Jose has formed a disaster relief committee. He also requested Vestry members save the date of January 25 for a Vestry Retreat, hopefully to be held locally off site from 10am to 3pm.

Wrap Up Time:

What did we accomplish?

Discussed the proposed 2025 budget

Endorsed the Outreach allocations

Reviewed status of pledges

Discussed nametags; formed committee to research

Sought help to host Coffee Minute

What can we do better?

Need our information for meetings farther ahead of meeting time  
Explore age groupings of Christian Formation

Leslie Billingsley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:22pm.

Burt Mulford seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry