

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

Vestry Members Present: (In person) Mike Austell (Senior Warden), Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Lynn Searfoss, Marshall Culp, Buddy Fore, Sue Sweeting  
(Via Zoom) Michelle Curry, Joe Doswell, Jim Snow

Vestry Members Absent: Leslie Billingsley, Jill Storelli, Burt Mulford

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

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

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.

Bob Finney made a motion with a second from Mike Austell to accept the meeting agenda.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the February meeting minutes.

Sue Sweeting made a motion with a second from Bob Finney to approve the February minutes as presented.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew led a devotion for early evening.

Fr. Andrew led a discussion on the proposed outdoor Stations of the Cross to be shared with Rumple Memorial Presbyterian across the street. A set of beautiful bronze Stations has been purchased by an anonymous donor as a gift to both churches. Hope Squires from Rumple shared a model which a member of Rumple has created to give an option for showcasing the Stations showing a Station enclosed in glass and mounted on a wooden post.

On Good Friday, our parish will participate with Rumple on an outdoor Stations of the Cross with photos of the bronze stations mounted on temporary stakes arranged thoughtfully around the outdoor spaces of both church campuses. This will give both congregations as well as the public an opportunity to enjoy this moving experience with the understanding that the exact layout and format is still to be decided upon if approved.

A lengthy discussion took place with various ideas expressed on the project itself, the potential locations of the Stations, the materials used to display and protect the Stations, and how best to showcase this wonderful gift in cooperation with our neighbors in faith and in the community. Andrew urged everyone to attend the event on Good Friday to experience it first hand before making a judgment on the proposed project. The project

will then be forwarded to the Grounds committee which will meet soon after Easter to discuss this proposed project. Hope Squires left our meeting at 6:27 with our thanks for the hard work which Rumble has done so far on this effort.

Andrew again urged Vestry members to attend the event on Good Friday and prayerfully ponder the experience before giving feedback to the Grounds committee.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.

The cash position of the parish remains very strong, as does the trust and endowments balance which stands at \$1,060,771.00 as of 2/29/24.

Michael has completed the January and February 2024 reports done pending some resolution of December 2023 reporting from Allen Wealth Management.

Fr. Andrew noted that Michael has been working with Wells Fargo to get more information on the servicing of our brokerage account to determine if switching brokerage firms is the best option.

Amanda reported that she has explored options on the best decision regarding our CD which will mature on 3/31/24. It started with \$100,000 and has shown healthy growth. After her research, Amanda recommended that the parish renew the CD for 11 months at First Horizon at an interest rate of 4.25%.

Bob Finney made a motion with a second from Sue Sweeting to approve the renewal of the CD as outlined.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bob Finney shared a detailed Junior Warden's report which was distributed to the Vestry and is available for review. Topics covered were the Bell Tower, the work in the Sacristy, the HVAC unit replacement in the nursery, the outdoor Stations of the Cross project, and the walkway in front of the Main Street door. One update to the report-The HVAC system replacement in the Nursery is now complete.

Other business shared by Bob at the meeting:

Plants are dying on the South side of the Play Space. Bob has contacted the landscaping company. They will make it right.

A Vestry member asked Bob about the lights in front of the church. Do they need covers so as not to be such harsh lighting? Bob will change the bulbs to more of a "soft" light and see what the effect is. Bob also suggested if that does not help, he can possibly change the lens to a different color-something warmer and less harsh. Bob asked for suggestions on improvement for the lights.

Mike Austell shared the Senior Warden's report which was distributed to the Vestry and is available for review.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report which was distributed to the Vestry and is available for review. Topics covered included administration and Christian Formation updates, and important upcoming dates as well as data on attendance and worship services. Average Sunday attendance YTD is 114.

Additional updates shared by Fr. Andrew at the meeting:

Vacation Bible School will be offered in partnership with Rumble Presbyterian here during morning hours on June 17-20. An additional day has been added; initially the plan was only to offer 3 days, ending on June 19. The leadership team is complete: Lindsey Herring, Joanna Reule, Amy Ebert, and 2 other people from Rumble.

Joann Hallmark is working to create a wonderful new set of green vestments to replace our much-loved current set. Hopefully they will be ready for Ordinary Time.

Buddy Fore is serving as the Vestry liaison working on the Tour of Homes planning with Chairpersons Suzanne Miller and Billie Rogers. An update will be shared after Easter.

Fr. Andrew and Buddy are working on offering a speaker series during the month of August. There is a possibility we may be able to host Martin Castledine, Head Verger of Westminster Abbey, as well as other dynamic speakers.

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

The Nest Academy, Charlotte NC	\$2,000	aid to immigrant children
April rent for family from Ukraine in Boone	\$1,200	paid to rental agency
Doctors Without Borders	\$2,000	medical care in Gaza
Episcopal Diocese of Navajo Land	\$6,000	to help Native people
World Central Kitchen	\$2,000	for food program in Gaza
Saint Andrews Parish, Field Dalling (United Kingdom)	\$1,000	medical supplies-Ukraine
Immigrant Justice Coalition (Watauga County)	\$1,000	college scholarships
Total	\$15,200	

More details were provided to the Vestry about each of these projects/organizations.

Bob Finney made a motion to approve these donations endorsed by the Outreach committee.

Buddy Fore seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion by a vote of 8 approving and 1 opposed.

Wrap Up Time:

What did we accomplish?

Worthwhile communication which needed to happen

A way forward and a plan on the outdoor Stations of the Cross project

Having Hope Squires attend our meeting and share the work of Rumble members

Approval of Outreach allocations

Discussed August speaker series

How might we improve?

Continue to have documents available to Vestry by Friday prior to monthly meetings

Improve communication

Need to respect the work of our committees

Fr. Andrew urged all to participate as fully as possible at our Holy Week services and gathering opportunities.

Fr. Andrew closed with prayer.

Lynn Searfoss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28pm.

The motion was seconded by Bob Finney.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry