

St. Mary of the Hills  
Vestry Meeting Minutes, July 20, 2021  
Parish Hall

Members Present: Tim Silver (Senior Warden), Doug Galke (Junior Warden), E.B. Springs, Faith Jones, Marjory Holder, Roy McCraw, Gigi Poole, Jim West (in person) Sterling Hutcheson, Patty Patella, Chip Monroe, Lisa Kaufmann (via Zoom)

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

Fr. Andrew requested that all present wear masks.

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order with prayer at 5:34pm.

Fr. Andrew shared the meeting agenda with 2 additional items to discuss: 1) Selection of Delegates for the Diocesan Convention and 2) Letter from Sue Sweeting  
Gigi Poole made a motion with a second from Faith Jones to accept the meeting agenda as amended.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Faith Jones to accept the minutes from the previous meeting as presented.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared a devotion to begin the meeting.

Leadership Check-In:

Fr. Andrew asked those present to share where they have experienced grace recently. Some examples shared were the gratitude at being released from the hospital after a prolonged stay, seeing baby birds leaving a nest, the beginning of healing from the long-term trauma of dealing with caring for COVID-19 patients, reconnecting with long estranged relatives, learning of the turnaround of a difficult life, and hearing the bells in church on Sunday.

Amanda White shared the Treasurers report.

Amanda reported the parish continues to do extremely well financially. She reported we are in a very strong cash position. Year to date 59% of pledges have been collected. The Finance committee continues to work on a “cleanup” of the restricted accounts to determine the origin and usage of each.

A question was asked regarding the purpose of restricted account #7120-12 (Family and Millennial Ministries). Amanda reported this account is intended to be used for outreach and programs geared towards families. Some of the funds in this account were used during the discernment process.

Fr. Andrew reported he is working on a recommendation of how best to use the funds in the Ed Springs trust which are currently held in restricted account# 7000-01 (Temporary Holding Account). Fr. Andrew is in contact with Ed's husband Bo Henderson on how these funds can meet the needs of the parish while honoring Ed's legacy.

Marjory Holder made a motion to approve the Treasurers report.

Doug Galke seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared an update on the virtual Tour of Homes.

The virtual tour of four homes launches on July 23 at 12 noon. The online auction will be active until August 6. There will be a launch party in the Parish Hall on the evening of July 22. A video will be shared at the party lasting about 30 minutes which will feature interviews with previous recipients of grants funded by tour proceeds and segments on flower arranging and the preparation of the "famous" chicken salad traditionally served in the tour lunches.

Fr. Andrew shared the status of our regathering during the time of COVID-19.

With the requirement for masking relaxed in the church on July 4, Fr. Andrew is leaving the wearing of masks during meetings up to the group involved. He encourages those leading meetings to ask for feedback on the comfort level of those attending and to respect those who feel masks should be worn by a group. Lisa Kaufmann shared that in her work as a physician, she is aware that local case numbers have doubled each day for the past four days. While the current total number of new cases remains low, Lisa notes that some of those who are testing positive for COVID are fully vaccinated, some of whom are showing symptoms. Lisa strongly suggested folks be encouraged to wear masks indoors. Sterling Hutcheson noted that children are not eligible to be vaccinated yet and masks will help protect them as well as medically vulnerable people in our parish. Chip Monroe noted that in his pediatric medical practice they have seen many positive test results for COVID but thus far no children with serious illness. Fr. Andrew noted he is in regular communication with the rectors of Holy Cross, Valle Crucis and St. Luke, Boone to compare notes on their handling of COVID precautions and protocols. Faith Jones shared that in the hospital she works in as a nurse in Florida the case numbers are way up and many younger folks are getting sicker with COVID.

Fr. Andrew reported on the process of nominating candidates for Vestry.

Nomination forms are available on the parish website and are at the church.

Nominations are open until July 26.

Fr. Andrew shared the proposed allocations from the Outreach committee for this month.

- 1) Back 2 School Festival  
\$1500.00

2) Episcopal Relief and Development, Al-Alhi Arab Hospital in Gaza	
\$1500.00	
3) Episcopal Church in Navajo Land	
\$1000.00	
4) Burundi School in Africa Dreaming for Change for 5 Rural Girls	
\$ 400.00	
5) Thompson Child and Family Focus, Charlotte	
\$1000.00	
6) The Rev. Mother Swagata Das, Diocese of Durgapur for School Sponsorship	\$ 500.00
	Total
\$5900.00	

Marjory Holder made a motion to accept these allocations from the Outreach committee.

Tim Silver seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

A request was made from a Vestry member for the Outreach committee to include a one or two sentence explanation of what groups who are allocated funds do. Fr. Andrew will pass this request to Bishop Gary Gloster.

Fr. Andrew shared a request for allocation of funds to ASU Presbyterian Episcopal Campus Ministry.

The request is for an allocation of \$2500.00.

If approved this will be an annual request. These funds would be given to Fr. Corey Kundert, the full-time priest on campus at ASU. He works with Rev. Stephanie Hankins, Presbyterian minister, who also serves as the associate minister at Ruple Presbyterian. These funds would help support this ministry including maintaining the meeting space. Our parish is not the only church supporting this ministry. The Diocese makes a major financial commitment to the ministry.

Marjory Holder made a motion to approve this allocation.

Tim Silver seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew proposed choosing two delegates and two alternates to the Diocesan Convention to be held on November 12 and 13 at a location to be determined in the Foothills Deanery (most likely in Hickory or Morganton). At this time the plan is to hold the Convention in-person. Several important issues will be addressed at the Convention this year including approving revisions to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Fr. Andrew asked for volunteers from the Vestry members.

Gigi Poole made a motion to approve Tim Silver and Patty Patella as delegates and Faith Jones and E.B. Springs as alternates to the Diocesan Convention.

Jim West seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew presented a letter from Sue Sweeting requesting the Vestry to consider investing in a playground area.

Sue feels this would benefit the parish as well as the children and families who would enjoy it. It would be a place for young families and parishioners to gather. Sue noted being able to enjoy a playground improves a child's mental and physical health and would attract young families into the life of the church. She pointed out that in our discernment process of calling Fr. Andrew to be our rector, one of the goals identified in our parish profile was the desire to increase the number of young families in the church. Discussion as to the possible location of such an area on our grounds indicated one option as being the area directly on the left when leaving the Mary Garden heading toward the front lawn. This would be an option if the current shed was moved to another area. Doug Galke noted the work group beginning to look at the long-term landscape plan for the grounds could consider this as part of the overall plan. That group has met once and is reviewing all outside areas of the church to see the status and needs of each space.

Tim Silver made a motion with a second from Faith Jones to endorse the idea of adding a small playground on the church grounds. If approved, the subcommittee working on the evaluation of the grounds will be asked to include exploration of this project to their agenda.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Doug Galke shared the Junior Warden's report.

Doug reported the work by Watauga Concrete Finishers on the concrete sidewalk in front of the door facing Main Street is only one step from completion. The concrete work is finished; when it is sufficiently cured one additional process of acid washing will be done to better match the surrounding areas of concrete. Hopefully this will be done by the end of August. They were able to repair the concrete near the left side hand rail on the Chestnut Street entrance as well. We will need to secure another contractor for the ramp and loose slate on several of the stair treads. Doug asked Ronnie Jones for a recommendation.

The sealing of the bell tower is scheduled to be done in the next two weeks weather permitting.

As noted above, the work group reviewing the grounds met once in July. They are in the process of evaluating all areas of the grounds. They are planning to meet again at the end of July and the goal is to have their review completed by the end of August.

The AED machine is functional. Doug is contacting the provider of the machine to determine the recommended preventative maintenance needed.

Fr. Andrew noted there is a preventative maintenance schedule being developed for all electronics and equipment, etc. in the building including the AED.

The proposed CPR training for staff and parish members is on hold due to COVID restrictions.

Tim Silver shared the Senior Warden's report.

Tim thanked Doug for all his hard work as Junior Warden. He thanked all who have pulled together to make this years virtual Tour of Homes a reality during this difficult time. Marjory Holder noted a total of 31 items have been donated for the online Tour auction. These items have a total estimated value of over \$16,000.00!

Fr. Andrew shared he will be on vacation from July 24 through August 2. Fr. Sam Tallman and Fr. Rick Lawler will fill in for him for the two Sundays he will be away. Fr. Andrew has often stressed to the congregation the importance of rest and renewal and will be modeling that advice!

Fr. Andrew reminded the Vestry that Sunday, August 15 is the Feast of St. Mary. There will be choral evensong at 3:00 that day for the first time since the pandemic began. The annual parish meeting will be held at 9:00am on Sunday, August 29 in the Parish Hall. Zoom participation will be available.

Fr. Andrew and Fr. Sam are planning a fall Christian Formation series. Details will be announced soon.

The topic of emergency preparedness came to the forefront during a medical scare after a recent wedding in the church. The person was not seriously ill, but Fr. Andrew will follow up with the Blowing Rock Fire Department and Police Department to make sure our signage adequately directs emergency responders.

Fr. Andrew will send a survey to Vestry members soon to determine their availability for a fall Vestry retreat. Fr. Andrew would like to include the newly elected Vestry members.

E.B. Springs made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm.

Marjory Holder seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry