

St. Mary of the Hills

Vestry Minutes – May 19, 2020

Via Video Conference

Vestry Members Present: Chip Myers (Sr. Warden), Tim Silver (Jr. Warden), Doug Galke, Roy McCraw, Jim West, E.B. Springs, Sterling Hutcheson and Bill Furr

Vestry Members Absent: Crawford Cleveland, Lisa Kaufman, and Jane Milner

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

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:35pm

A motion to accept the agenda was made by Chip, with a second from E.B.

A motion to accept the minutes of the April meeting was made by Sterling, with a second from Jim.

Fr. Andrew led the group in opening devotions.

Fr. Andrew checked in with everyone on how they were doing. Everyone seemed to be doing well. Chip shared that Garland is recovering from fall and injury to ribs. Chip will be having hip replacement surgery on June 10th and asked for our prayers. It was also shared that a vestry member's friend is dealing with losing his wife to cancer and stated this puts life in perspective. Also, that we are thankful that we can go to work during these times. Tim's mother who is 87 had quadruple by-pass surgery which will be a long recovery, but she is doing well. Doug shared that his grandson, Evan will be celebrating his first birthday on May 23rd. Andrew was thankful for the birthday "parade" which made a wonderful day.

Initial perspective on opening the parish

Fr. Andrew reported the opening of the parish will be done in a safe way according to the guidelines via the Bishop's draft. The Executive Council including Sterling has worked diligently on this. No firm decisions as of this evening have been made. It depends on North Carolina entering Phase 2 which is expected to be announced on May 21st.

Andrew shared a letter from the Bishop Jose which is rooted in scripture. The letter includes the values of trust, gentleness, reciprocity, and compassion for our most vulnerable. He also shared that we will follow guidelines from the CDC.

The Bishop is not requiring any clergy to reopen. Mask wearing will be required in the church building.

Some questions from the Bishop are: high risk categories – how to reach? How to reach those who continue to stay home. How many people can our space hold with social distancing? How to communicate a cap on numbers permitted? Cleaning between services – doorknobs, seats, etc. If someone is diagnosed how will contact tracing work to reach those who were exposed?

Thoughts from Vestry members on the above questions: How do we track everyone who comes in even to drop off or pick up something? Sterling shared he would be happy to answer medical questions.

Andrew shared the four principles which will guide him in this process.

1. Keep the body of Christ together – build unity
2. Always be about enabling people to nourish spiritual life
3. Respect dignity, promote health and wellbeing of all
4. Listen to the science

Andrew shared his initial thoughts on re-opening and would like feedback from the vestry members. He will be consulting with other clergy as well.

At this time he will continue Sunday worship online through June with growing the “team” and will look for ways to offer music.

Pastoral rites performed in the church with the following guidelines (which includes funerals and weddings) with no more than 22-24 persons which is the absolute max to meet social distance guidelines. There will be limited access to the building during the week and it is hard to get cleaning supplies. Keep a list of who is entering and where in the church they are going. “Explore the edges” by finding ways to gather other than Sunday mornings, other ways to gather during the week and also gathering on the lawn or in the close.

Reactions from the Vestry members:

We don’t need to hurry – supportive of these ideas

How do we do this?

Seek other sources for cleaning supplies

This is very complicated

Is a huge responsibility in reopening

Have had a great experience with online coffee minute

Andrew feels what we are doing has created solidarity.

Also, there is still many unknowns.

We are watching the numbers in Watauga County closely. Surrounding counties are beginning to see spikes as testing is increased. The extra time that we are not reopening is a good idea.

Do we have a number as to how many can’t access Zoom? It is felt that high risk folks won’t attend in person for a while.

Andrew has asked Sterling and Lisa (both doctors) to join with he and the wardens in working on the details of plans moving forward.

Doug stated we will need to communicate with the parish our plans and ask for feedback with perhaps a survey. Andrew shared that Bishop Jose is sending out a letter in the next few days, and Andrew will then reach out to the parish about future plans.

Tour of Homes Update: E.B. reported that the Executive Committee and TOH Committee are planning a Gala which will be held on September 24th. It will be held at the Blowing Rock Country Club and there will be no charge to use the facility. The church will pay for the food. It is still to be determined which organizations will benefit. Bishop Gary Gloster is working on that.

We have applied for a grant from the Diocese to fund a free virtual tour of one house. Along with the tour there would be an appeal for donations with a suggested donation of the cost of a tour ticket. At this time this is a proposal. Details are still to be worked out.

Chip made a motion to send a letter to the congregation and prior year’s attendees appealing for donations.

E. B. seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

E.B. reported that when the Executive Committee realized we aren't having the tour this year there was concern that another group could do a tour perhaps in the fall. E.B. has contacted Art Duval, a trademark attorney, who will charge around \$300 to complete the process for trademark (service mark is the appropriate term for this process). E.B. requested a resolution from the Vestry to pay him up to \$400. E.B. will make an equal donation to the church for the attorney fees for this process. The application fees which will be \$75.00 each for the two applications to be submitted and the postage for the mailing of the submission of documents will be paid for by the church.

Ed Springs is drawing a picture of the church with red door which would be the "Tour of Homes Blowing Rock" service mark.

E.B. requested a resolution from the Vestry to approve paying the attorney up to \$400. Loy McGill, Leslie Temple and Ed Springs will be paid \$1.00 each for their work on this and will sign a form to give the church rights to the logo.

E.B. made a motion to approve this resolution.

Roy seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Vestry vacancy: Effective immediately Sharon Battaglia will no longer serve as the seasonal member of the Vestry. She has a remaining term of 1 ½ yrs. Andrew reported that the nominating committee that would submit a name to fill this vacancy are Roy McCraw, Bill Furr, Chip Myers, and Tim Silver and Amanda White.

Chip made a motion to approve this nominating committee.

E. B. seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Amanda reviewed this month's financial report. There is a good cash balance on hand. She reported that the market is improving and trusts and endowments are doing better. Also, 42% of pledges year-to-date have been collected.

Bill Furr made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report.

Jim seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

PPP Application: Joe took the application to First Citizens on April 23rd. Amanda received a call on May 8th that the application had been denied due to no funds available.

Joe submitted an application to First Horizons and it was approved. Andrew signed the paperwork and funds should be received tomorrow – May 20th. The total to be received is \$51,030.00 and must be used within eight weeks. This loan will be forgiven when the appropriate documentation is submitted.

The question was raised as to should we take these funds. Andrew stated that non-profits may have a real need as the months go by with this crisis and felt we should accept the funds.

E. B. suggested that we set up a separate checking account to disperse these funds and Amanda stated that this has been done.

Jr. Warden's Report: Tim reported on the drainage problem in the basement and shared that Jim has worked on this with him. The gutters are not draining properly, drainage pipes are clogged and some of the pipes are under concrete. A portion of the concrete will have to be replaced. The bid from Greene Construction is \$47,000 and the bid from Contero Landscaping is \$15,000. Good references were received on Contero Landscaping and he would provide digital photos on progress. Jim offered to be the informal supervisor. Tim has tried to get other estimates, but has not gotten responses. Tim and Jim will meet with Contero one more time.

Chip made a motion to hire Contero Landscaping for \$16,500 with a 10% contingency.

Bill seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Bill asked if this will include a preventative maintenance agreement. Tim will let us know.

It was decided to hold off on hiring Tarheel Basement at this time.

Bill has told Tim that he has heard of a chemical to kill the coronavirus. He believes it would cost around \$600.00. This could be something for Tim and Andrew to keep in mind. Bill will send the name of the chemical to Tim.

Sr. Warden's Report: Chip submitted a request from the Outreach Committee to send the remaining \$5,000.00 which was approved last month to the following agencies: Hospitality House and the Hunger & Health Coalition to each receive \$2,000 and Casting Bread to receive \$1,000.

Jim made a motion to approve the request.

Tim seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Chip reported that Evensong will be presented on Zoom this Thursday, May 21st. at 5:30.

Rector's Report: Fr. Andrew reminded everyone of Evensong.

He shared that "Thy Kingdom Come" - the days between Ascension and Pentecost is the time we are called to pray intentionally for each other. He has listed resources to guide our participation during this time.

On May 17th (last Sunday) there was a worldwide outage for Zoom. Plan B was not well in place at that time. Plan B is better now which is YouTube Live capability.

Andrew is participating via Zoom with his Wake Forest Continuing Education Program. He recently had a daylong session with colleagues.

The Executive Committee is meeting weekly during this time.

Bill made a motion, with a second from Tim, to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 pm. The motion passed.

Respectively submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth