

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2023

Vestry Members Present: (in person) Bob Finney (Junior Warden), Marjory Holder, Leslie Billingsley, Mike Austell, Sue Sweeting, Burt Mulford
(via Zoom) Faith Jones, Michelle Capen, Joe Doswell, Chip Monroe (Senior Warden), Buddy Fore

Vestry Member Absent: Patty Patella

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Mitchell Eithun (Seminary Intern)

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

Fr. Andrew requested acceptance of the meeting agenda.
Sue Sweeting made a motion to accept the agenda.
Leslie Billingsley seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew requested approval of the May meeting minutes.
Marjory Holder made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Sue Sweeting seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew led a devotion for early evening.

Fr. Andrew shared the Treasurer's report in Amanda White's absence.
Effective 7/1/23 the parish payroll will be handled by an outside company, ADP. The contract for the service is through the Diocese and support is available as needed.
The Finance committee has begun to review the yearly parish audit and is pleased with the report thus far. The committee will share the report with the Executive Committee once their review is complete, then share with the Vestry later this week.

Chip Monroe shared the Senior Warden's report.
Chip encouraged Vestry members to attend our meetings in person whenever possible. Zoom is certainly a valuable tool for our seasonal members, when traveling, and whenever it is the only way we can participate in Vestry meetings we would otherwise have to miss, but Chip noted it is so important to communicate face to face as much as we can. Sometimes it seems those joining via Zoom cannot participate as fully in discussions as those who are present in the meetings. Chip noted the importance of being able to listen to one another both audibly and in non-verbal communication facets during discussions.

Chip expressed thanks to the years-long and yeoman's effort of Marjory Holder and others researching the need for and options to address the sound issues in the Nave. Thanks to those efforts we now have before us an official plan and cost quote for a sound enhancement system. Chip proposed we discuss the quote and plan at this meeting, then use the next four weeks to discuss it with other parish members more widely, giving ourselves plenty of time to get feedback. This will enable Vestry members to "read, mark, and inwardly digest" the proposal while aiming for a final vote at the July Vestry meeting. Chip stated this is a big project and taking these weeks to let the proposal settle while gathering feedback from parish members is probably wise.

Bob Finney shared the Junior Warden's report.

Bob shared his thanks to the 21 people who participated in the work day on June 3. Those who volunteered their time and talents that day were Marshall Culp, Pete Page, Greg Rhoads, Conrad Jones, Joe Dulaney, Doug Galke, Donna Kerns, Butch Kerns, Ron Armstrong, Olivia Knight, Bill Stroh, Elizabeth Sudderth, Sam Tallman, Carmen Patella, Patty Patella, Mary Galke, Bonnie Holder, Jim West, Susie Greene, Bill Devereux, and Joe Doswell. These volunteers completed several tasks including spreading mulch over the front flower beds, planting flowers, cleaning the stove in the kitchen, moving furniture, and cleaning pews. The age range of the volunteers was from 61 to 88 with an average age of around 75. All but 2 of the volunteers were from the 8am service. Three Vestry members and one priest associate participated. These numbers bring up a potential problem. The church can no longer rely on volunteers for heavy work due to the demographics of an aging population. The same people show up for parish work days and many had various health issues which prevent them, for example, from lifting anything heavy. This same group of volunteers will probably not be available in 3 to 5 years.

The Grounds committee believes we need to increase the awareness of volunteer activities at the church. One means of accomplishing this would be to have a brunch after a 10:10 service in conjunction with a "ministry fair" where parishioners can learn about various ministries (i.e., ECW, Men's Breakfast, choir, outreach, Hospitality House, grounds committee, building committee, technology committee, etc.).

The Grounds committee also recommends the church hire a landscape designer to develop a plan for a low maintenance landscape design that would be less costly to maintain both in terms of manpower and purchasing plants each year. The yard also needs to be more kid-friendly. On the suggestion of the committee, Bob met with Paul McGill who is experienced in this area. Paul agrees that we need a low maintenance landscape design, but Paul is unable to develop the plan. He suggested we contact a professional. Paul is gathering names of qualified people to give to Bob. Bob also consulted with Bo Henderson about the landscape. Bo concurred that we need to thin out plants and obtain professional services. Bob then met with Cory Cathcart, Landscape Specialist for the town. He agreed that we have too many plants, and they should be thinned and that we should seek professional advice. He provided names of suggested plants that would better suit our needs of lower maintenance and color. Bob has reached out to Thrivescape, McManus Farms and Landscape, Diversified

Landscaping, Sugar Mountain Nursery and Landscaping, and Rogelio Romero Landscaping for quotes on a plan including a schedule for maintenance that would include possible aid from parishioners in a focused way if we continue to hold outdoor work days. This plan includes 3 projects recommended by the Grounds committee:

Project One: (this has been approved by the town Planning Dept.)

Plant 12 emerald green Arborvitae on south side of fence between play space and Village Green Condos parking lot (to be done in September or October)

Plant 7 Hybrid Rhododendron on west side of play space to fill void between existing Rhododendron and play space

Project Two: Front Flower Bed

Remove all existing plants (including poison ivy!)

Place 1 medium size boulder in flower bed in front of front door of church

Plant 7 to 10 dwarf Rhododendron and/or dwarf Mountain Laurel or Globosa (Globose Colorado Spruce) in flower bed in front of front door.

A short rock wall is planned to be built along west border of flower bed which was approved by Vestry in May 2023

Project Three:

Current perennials in long flower bed beside sidewalk (Main St.) are bunched up and need thinning. The plan is to create islands of plants

surrounded by mulch. Need guidance on what to keep and what to move

Desire a low maintenance landscape that has seasonal color (spring to fall) using perennials, bulbs, and annual flowering plants. Desire to keep

budget for buying annual flowers each year at around \$350

Need a detailed schedule of maintenance that can be used by both landscaping company and parish volunteers at potential work days. Schedule

will address weed control, pruning, fertilizing, mulching, etc.

Play Space update: David Aldridge, who volunteered plants and services, has so far only delivered topsoil. Carmen Patella has been unable to reach him for an update. Mr. Aldridge had been going through health and family concerns. The Grounds committee is worried that planting the trees now may not be advisable since it is past spring planting season. The committee recommends finding another source for the planting even though Mr. Aldridge had volunteered the plants and labor. Currently there is no confidence that he can or will want to move forward with his offer. Bob has contacted the companies listed above for quotes as outlined.

Bob suggests the Vestry approve the hiring of a landscape designer to be tasked with developing a low maintenance landscape plan as detailed above for the church. Cost TBD; no funds to be spent without Vestry approval. He also requests approval of finding a different source for the work Mr. Aldridge had offered to donate. Cost unknown currently. No funds exceeding \$5,000 will be spent without Vestry approval. Funds to support this proposal are to come from Money Market (Savings) account.

Bob noticed on the work day some areas of peeling paint on the church exterior. He has not had the opportunity to do a detailed inspection. The Building committee will meet on June 22 to conduct a survey of the building exterior to determine needs.

Marjory Holder shared an update from the Technology committee. Marjory will send the report to Vestry members later tonight from WAVE detailing their recent review of the Nave in regards to the proposed sound enhancement plan. The livestream is fixed as of today.

Fr. Andrew shared the allocations approved by the Outreach committee this month:

Back 2 School Festival \$2,000

Watauga Community Land Trust \$5,000

(This grant is help establish a partnership with the Junaluska Heritage Association to fundraise for purchasing a Boone home as a part of Watauga Community Land Trust's mission to create and conserve affordable housing units. The committee has discussed the need in the area for affordable housing for many months and believes that this is a significant step in making a compassionate step forward. The committee also sees this as an opportunity to work with our Black sisters and brothers in the county).

Compassion International \$60 increase in yearly contribution for a total of \$516 starting in 2024

Leslie Billingsley made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to endorse these allocations.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew asked for approval of a proposed Vestry Nominating Committee to choose candidates for discernment to serve on Vestry for 3-year terms beginning on January 1, 2024.

Fr. Andrew proposed that the outgoing Vestry members, Chip Monroe, Marjory Holder, Patty Patella and Faith Jones, and Junior Warden Bob Finney serve as the Nominating committee.

Leslie Billingsley made a motion with a second from Mike Austell to approve this Vestry Nominating committee.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew asked for approval of trustees for the Trust and Endowment Funds. The proposed trustees are Bob Miller, John Carlson, and Roy McCraw.

Sue Sweeting made a motion with a second from Mike Austell to approve these trustees. The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

Andrew expressed his thanks to the Vestry for supporting him as he enjoyed a good amount of vacation with his family. This time off allowed him to rest and recharge as

well as spend blessed time with his family. This time off would not have been possible without the great support of Fr. Sam Tallman, who always tends the liturgical and pastoral life of the congregation so faithfully, and the support of Senior Warden, Chip Monroe, as well as each Vestry member. Andrew encourages everyone to make space for sabbath time, whether travelling, or simply finding space in your regular rhythm to cultivate time for refreshment. In addition to being good for one's physical and mental health, it is an essential part of Christian discipleship; Jesus regularly retreated for rest and brought his disciples with him. Go and do likewise!

Full Pews in Worship-this past Sunday was a full Summer Sunday, as were the weeks before. He asks that we remember we are all greeters in the life of the parish. We can do this in many ways including welcoming folks to the parish, helping them find their way to the restrooms, the nursery, parish hall, etc. Hospitality is a ministry that belongs to all of us!

Formation-Godly Play will be offered monthly in June and July, returning to a weekly schedule in mid-August. Andrew will also lead a few "Coffee Talks" this summer during the 9:00 hour. Lindsey Herring will offer a Centering Prayer workshop beginning next week. Mitchell Eithun will lead a book study in July.

Tour of Homes-Gala tickets are going fast; contact the parish office if you've not yet reserved yours. Beginning this week, sign-up sheets will be in the Parish Hall for all sorts of ways to volunteer for the Tour (drivers, loaders/starters, bake sale, etc.)

Summer Seminary Intern-Mitchell Eithun, Duke Divinity School-Mitchell is with us for 10 weeks until Sunday, August 20th. Mitchell will be serving and leading in worship, preaching on several occasions, leading a book study in July, sharing in pastoral care, and engaging in many other facets of parish ministry. Last week, he served as a leader at Vacation Bible School; this week he will lead a Godly Play story for our children. Please join Andrew in welcoming Mitchell to our parish and be sure to find time to connect with him over a meal or coffee in the weeks ahead.

Average Sunday Attendance thru June 18-111

Holy Eucharists offered YTD-92

Daily Office offered YTD-108

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Bob Finney to adjourn the meeting at 7:17m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry