

## **St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church**

### **Minutes of Vestry Meeting**

6/23/2026

#### **Vestry Attendance**

Present: Bob Amos, Mike Matthews (Jr. Warden), Richard Murphy, Peter Purcell (Sr. Warden), Bob Rhoads, Dale Marie Sandusky, Lynn Searfoss (Clerk), Luba Skibo, Jim Snow, Jill Storelli

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege, Fr. Sam Tallman, Amanda White

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:50

**Agenda:** Fr. Andrew Hege provided the agenda, which was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the April 2026 meeting were read and approved with corrections.

**Evening Devotions:** The vestry prayed and read the selected scripture and discussed its importance.

**Treasurer's Report:** The report was approved unanimously. Amanda guided the vestry through the financial report, pointing to the new restricted category "Gen Fund Insurance Reimbursal" as well as credit from NC taxes. She confirmed that our pledges are running ahead of budget as are non-pledge contributions. It may be that a few folks still believe they've pledged when they have not. Our Parish Life Receptions are over budget due to a number of recent receptions, which is not a bad thing. We can move more money into that account if necessary. She notes that there is a lot of money held in the Men's Breakfast Restricted Account and suggested that we might want to move some of those funds. We noted how good it is to see the amazing increase in the Gloster Charitable Fund over the past month.

**Outreach Committee:** The committee report came a bit late this month and was not available for the meeting. Fr. Andrew reported that he has made a contribution to the Blowing Rock Elementary School lunch debt from his discretionary fund. It may be that this is something the Outreach Committee could add to their considerations.

**Tour of Homes Committees--**The ticket team met with Michael and organized their work. We must stop using the term "tickets" for the Patron's Party due to ABC board regulations. Everything is "sponsorship."

**Junior Warden's Report:** Mike Matthews reported that the rear wall project is still in process. Geoworks won the bid and will use Appalachian-blend colored block. The construction will begin in late August. Because the cost of this project exceeds the building fund budget, we will use money from the capital fund.

The vestry looked at samples of cushion fabric and kneeler vinyl but did not concur with the recommendation given by the Altar Guild. More color samples will be ordered, and the vestry will look at the samples in the light of the sanctuary as it's hard to see the effect accurately in other lighting.

The sacristy thermostat needs to be replaced.

Mulch will be refreshed before the TOH, but Mike encouraged us to look at the grounds in case there is anything else needing attention before the event.

Some folks have said it is cold in the church if you're seated near the AC registers. Mike will investigate getting diffusers for those vents.

**Senior Warden Report:** Peter Purcell informed the vestry that he has been appointed to the Bishop Search Committee. He provided the vestry with an overview of the process. The committee will hold listening sessions throughout the diocese to give members an opportunity to provide their insights and concerns. He anticipates the bishop election will take place in summer 2027, which is a pretty quick turn-around. Election will require a majority in both the lay and clergy orders at the same vote. Peter requests the prayers of the vestry for the success of the bishop search.

**Rector's Report:** Fr. Andrew followed up on the Senior Warden Report, saying that Bishop José's last day is July 31, and that there will be a farewell picnic at Christ School on August 1. Attendees will need to RSVP very soon. We are also encouraged to contribute to the Bishop's Project, the fund to complete the hermitages at the Valle Crucis Conference Center. This is a great opportunity because there are matching funds.

Fr. Andrew informed the vestry that there is a lot of loss in the parish right now with the recent deaths and leave-takings. He spoke of the upcoming funerals and Gary and Judy's relocating as well as Olivia and Elizabeth's. At the same time, he said, it's important to remember that we are part of a wider church, not just an isolated, local parish.

Michelle Curry has attended the Commission on Ministry and was recommended for postulancy. Her field placement runs from July through September at Holy Communion Episcopal Church in Ashe County. Valerie Purcell and Andy Sicard are serving as vergers and will be doing deeper training through the Verger's Guild over the coming months.

Fr. Andrew reported that Ruth Cox has been providing cleaning and restoration on the Madonna and Child painting. Ms. Cox reports that our painting is a "very fine" 19th century copy of a Spanish altar piece by a 17th century Spanish painter named Lopez-Gonzalez. The restoration is made possible by Marian Church.

**Executive Session--**The vestry briefly entered executive session to hear a personnel update provided by Fr. Andrew.

**Closing and Adjournment:** The meeting closed with a blessing from Fr. Andrew and adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Searfoss, July 21, 2026.