

St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church

Minutes of Vestry Meeting

5/19/2026

Vestry Attendance

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

Absent: Luba Skibo, Sam Tallman

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege, Amanda White

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:47

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.

Evening Devotions: The vestry read the selected scripture and prayed.

Treasurer's Report: Amanda noted that April and May have been great, financially speaking. Income is far ahead of budget both in pledge and no pledge receipts. This may indicate that the problem with folks not pledging as they thought they did has been largely solved. It was noted that summers are usually the leanest months in terms of pledges, with Dec. and Jan. being the best. Plate offerings are generally better during the summer. But, again, the church is currently in a very healthy financial position.

The Finance Committee: The committee met, and Orian approved the Jan-April reports. His bullet points will be uploaded.

Outreach Committee: The committee met on May 13. They propose 2 disbursements, one to Episcopal Relief and Development and one to World Central Kitchen. The vestry briefly discussed the WCK charity and our long-time support of its work feeding the hungry in disaster and war-torn areas. No motion nor second were needed as the proposal comes from a committee. The disbursements were unanimously approved.

Peter Purcell noted that Habitat for Humanity hasn't been cashing our checks and that we need to find out why. Amanda confirmed that several checks have not been cashed dating back to one lost and replaced during Helene.

Parish Lay Discernment Committee: Michelle Curry's discernment committee has finished their work and has recommended her to the diocese. She would return to St.

Mary's as our deacon once her education is complete, probably in 2-3 years. Fr. Andrew has written her recommendation letter, which requires vestry signatures. She will apply for postulancy and attend the Commission on Ministry Retreat. If accepted for postulancy, she will no longer be able to serve as vergers. Andy Sicard and Valerie Purcell have been training to become our vergers and have been serving.

Junior Warden's Report: We have 2 quotes from Artistic Landscaping along with pictures of Geogrid porous concrete; the job will prevent having to backfill. We will ask Geoworks if they want to rebid. This needs to happen soon so we can get on someone's schedule.

Kneelers: Jim Snow has donated \$6000 to replace the kneelers. The new quote was lower than anticipated and features a sturdier and longer lasting foam padding. We discussed whether to replace the cushions at the same time for a total cost of around \$10,000. Mike will try to bring samples of the garnet and the blue to the next meeting. We will decide whether to use the same color on both or not.

Mike will send his report on the concrete front walk as some committee members did not have access to it.

Senior Warden Report: Peter Purcell provided a brief report of the parish's time without Father Andrew. The congregation stepped up and took care of our needs. Going forward, we need to more fully take advantage of the talents and gifts of our lay leaders. The Diocese was very helpful so long as we ask for assistance. We need to remember to ask for what we need.

He provided an update to the Realm Connect buy-in project, which is going well. A variety of resources are available for us on the drive.

Peter noted that we need to make clear the difference between the current Endowment Campaign and the upcoming Annual Giving Campaign so that parishioners will understand the difference and why both are important.

He urged us to be welcoming to summer visitors, and indeed all visitors.

Rector's Report: Fr. Andrew clarified that the Endowment Campaign is ongoing in June and coincides with the new name for the Gloster Charitable Trust. The Annual Giving Campaign will take place in the fall. We will operate on a team model. Anyone who wants to work on the stewardship talks should contact Father Andrew.

Father Andrew noted that Father Sam is on his way back to Blowing Rock and will be with us throughout the summer. He also reported that farewell opportunities for Bishop José will be shared soon.

He gives his thanks for all who ministered to the parish during his sick leave but is especially grateful to Peter Purcell for all the work he has done.

Fr. Andrew says that the work of recovery continues with lots of support from Bishop José and the congregation. He will have limited hours through May and will work back into a regular schedule.

Our goal should be to see what we've learned about functioning as a community and continuing that work as we move forward.

Closing and Adjournment: The meeting closed with a blessing from Fr. Andrew and adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Searfoss, June 23, 2026.