

ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Reports for the Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, August 29, 2021

(via Zoom)

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Annual Meeting Agenda

August 29, 2021

5:00 PM

Join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84184982087?pwd=Z2Y4aTJKZ3FWaWQrQ0JjZFBjUXVQZz09>

Passcode: smoth

Welcome and Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Appointment of Meeting Officers

Secretary

Parliamentarian

Approval of Minutes from August 2020 Annual Meeting*

Treasurer's Report

Election of New Vestry Members*

Rector's Report

Adjournment

***requires vote**

St. Mary of the Hills, Blowing Rock, NC
Annual Parish Meeting, August 30, 2020
Via Video Conference

The annual meeting of our parish was called to order at 11:08am by Fr. Andrew Hege, Rector.

Fr. Andrew and Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry verified that a quorum was present at the meeting. A total of 49 people were logged in for the meeting via Zoom.

Fr. Andrew opened with prayer.

Fr. Andrew began the meeting with the appointment of meeting officers:

Secretary: Elizabeth Sudderth

Parliamentarian: E.B. Springs

The minutes of the 2019 annual meeting were presented for acceptance.

Chip Myers made a motion with a second from Marjory Holder to approve the minutes.

No discussion followed; the approval of the 2019 annual meeting minutes was made by parish vote.

The election of new Vestry members was the first item on the agenda.

Fr. Andrew reviewed the process which led to the slate of Vestry candidates to be considered by the parish. Fr. Andrew had asked that any member of the parish who is considering service on the Vestry carefully and prayerfully consider their abilities and gifts to determine if this is the best use of their time and talents in serving our parish. A nominating committee consisting of the Senior and Junior Wardens and the 4 outgoing Vestry members reviewed all those who were nominated to serve as Vestry members over the course of a few weeks. The four parish members who were selected through this process are Patty Patella, Marjory Holder, Chip Monroe, and Faith Jones.

Fr. Andrew asked for a motion to close nominations and elect this slate of candidates.

Mike Austell made a motion to close nominations for Vestry and elect the four candidates to the positions which will open on January 1, 2021.

Leslie Billingsley seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by parish vote (45 votes recorded).

Fr. Andrew expressed his thanks to all parish members who allowed themselves to be considered for Vestry service.

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.

Amanda reported the parish is in very good financial standing. Fr. Andrew invited those attending the meeting to submit any questions they had for Amanda via the chat function on Zoom. Any questions submitted will be answered by Amanda at the end of her report.

Amanda shared that pledge payments are coming in ahead of schedule so far this year. She noted this is worth highlighting and celebrating during this difficult time. Total revenue is also ahead of what was budgeted for this year and total expenses are under budget.

Amanda reported that the PPP loan approved for the parish of \$51, 630.00 was received on 5/31/20. This will be used for salaries, retirement contributions, utilities, etc.

Jim Runyon is in the process of finishing the parish audit. The Finance committee has finished their work on creating a new financial policy and procedure manual. The Vestry is in the process of approving the manual.

Amanda expressed her thanks to Bob Miller, the previous Treasurer, and Joe Raulerson, Financial Secretary for their hard work in helping to support the strong financial position of the parish. She also expressed her sincere thanks to the parish for the financial support they have continued to provide during this unprecedented time.

A question was asked: what percentage of pledges have been collected so far this year? Amanda answered that 59% of pledges have been collected year to date.

Valerie and Peter Purcell, campaign co-chairs, shared information on this year's Stewardship effort.

The theme for this year's campaign is "How Firm a Foundation". The goal is to provide support which will sustain and support the parish through the unexpected challenges we are facing. Valerie and Peter expressed how impressive it has been to watch the parish under the leadership of Fr. Andrew and the Vestry evolve to meet the challenges of worship during a time of pandemic. Some ways this is happening are the continuing work of the Outreach committee and offering access to worship services via Zoom.

They reflected on a trip to the Holy Land where they observed there continue to be safe places for congregations to thrive even though they are in areas of ruin.

They expressed great hope that someday soon our parish family will be able to greet one another in person again. They shared their joy at being able to celebrate the recent marriage of their daughter. Fr. Andrew officiated at a small outdoor wedding. There was a gentle, peaceful quality to the service and smiles were obvious on the faces of family members even through masks. Several members of the parish helped out with the wedding. In particular they wished to thank Jim Bumgardner who arranged for a violinist, Joann Hallmark who baked the cake, and Greta Wilson who provided the bulletins.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

He expressed his gratitude to the many people who work behind the scenes during this difficult time especially Greta Wilson, Bill Stroh, Joe Raulerson, and Jim Bumgardner. He also thanked the clergy members in our parish who do so much to support him especially Fr Sam Tallman, Bishop Gary Gloster, and Fr. Rick Lawler. He is so appreciative to have such great colleagues.

Fr. Andrew shared his gratitude for the Vestry as they meet many new challenges during this time. So far, they have met via Zoom six times! He expressed special thanks to the Vestry members who will be ending their terms

at the end of the year (Crawford Cleveland, Jane Milner, Chip Myers, and Bill Furr). He also expressed thanks to Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry and Amanda White, Treasurer.

Fr. Andrew shared a special note of thanks to Chip Myers, current Senior Warden who has been a constant source of support and counsel to him since he first came to be our Rector. He is looking forward to working with the wonderful folks who will begin their service as Vestry members on January 1.

Fr. Andrew expressed a special note of thanks to his family for their help and support during the pandemic. They have been a constant source of strength during the Zoom worship services and a long, long list of Zoom meetings!

Fr. Andrew reflected on where we left off at the annual meeting last year. There was much excitement at the new relationship between our priest and the parish family. There were plans being laid for a renewed emphasis on Christian formation for all ages, especially children. He loved the fact that the parish was such a welcoming community, asking others from the community to join us. The Stewardship campaign was launched with much anticipation. As time went on after that annual meeting last year, Godly Play started for children and the Rectors forum explored a variety of topics. Work was renewed on the parish website to improve and enhance it to showcase our church in the best way.

Then came Lent. And the start of the pandemic. None of us could have imagined what the past year has held for us as a church and as a parish family. Thankfully, our church staff and parishioners had made commitments to technology prior to the pandemic and were already well-versed in applications such as Zoom.

Fr. Andrew shared his gratitude that the members of the parish have remained faithful to our mission and each other. We have continued to create community in new ways and have continued to support each other and have continued to help be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. We have maintained the work of caring and faithfulness to one another.

Fr. Andrew noted we will continue to follow our Lord into whatever the future holds. One thing is certain-we are following our Lord wherever he leads. We have a strong foundation as we continue to navigate “Church in an Uncertain Time”.

Sterling Hutcheson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:47am.

E.B. Springs seconded the motion.

The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry Nominees

(to serve terms beginning January 2022 through December 2024)



Clyde Van Fore , Jr.

“Buddy”

(Year-round Member)

How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

12 years

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Choir, Flower Guild, Tour of Homes

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

Being able to give back to a community that means so much to me. Helping with the vision for the next 100 years of SMOTH.

Favorite story from scripture?

Upper Room. Holy Spirit.



Robert Finney

(Year-round Member)

How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

5 years

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Men's Breakfast

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

God has provided numerous blessings to me over the years. Serving on the Vestry provides an opportunity to give back to a Christian community.

Favorite story from scripture?

Luke 10: 23-37. A Samaritan man helps a stranger in distress on the road.



Joe Doswell

(Seasonal Member)

How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

8 years

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Men's Breakfast, Usher, Tour of Homes Transportation Committee, Coffee Minute

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

The congregation of St Mary has many talents and we are happy to a part of the church. I look forward to applying my talents where needed.

Favorite story from scripture?

The feeding of the five thousand with two fish and five loaves of bread.



Leslie Billingsley

(Year-Round Member)

How long have you been connected to St. Mary of the Hills?

32 years; since August, 1989.

In what areas of ministry are you involved?

Vestry, Diocesan Convention Delegate, Thanksgiving Lunch organizer, Usher, Acolyte (alongside my daughters), Eucharistic Minister

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?

I'm excited to be on the Vestry again now with this incredibly dedicated young priest.

Favorite story from scripture?

I have many favorites, but what pops into my head immediately is the Good Samaritan.

FINANCIAL REPORT

St. Mary of the Hills Annual Meeting August 29, 2021				
	General Fund January 1 - July 31, 2021			2020
Revenues	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	Actual Y/E
Plate Offerings	\$2,237.00	\$3,208.00	\$5,500.00	\$1,334.00
Pledge Payments	\$301,027.00	\$265,000.00	\$440,000.00	\$464,284.00
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$10,738.00	\$7,583.00	\$13,000.00	\$25,358.00
From Rest. Family/Adult	\$0.00	\$4,025.00	\$6,900.00	\$9,200.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,000.00
Trusts	\$12,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$11,800.00
Bank Interest	\$26.00	\$35.00	\$60.00	\$57.00
Account Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,884.00
Tour of Homes	\$38,150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$77,177.00
Total Revenue (as of 7/31)	\$364,178.00	\$286,852.00	\$477,460.00	\$602,274.00
Expenses				
Giving	\$53,326.00	\$57,198.00	\$96,585.00	\$157,528.00
Programs	\$8,245.00	\$11,119.00	\$20,075.00	\$17,470.00
Personnel	\$166,803.00	\$182,908.00	\$314,486.00	\$283,646.00
Operations	\$41,143.00	\$47,593.00	\$80,350.00	\$66,073.00
Tour of Homes	\$3,527.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,424.00
Total Expense (as of 7/31)	\$273,044.00	\$298,818.00	\$511,496.00	\$528,141.00
Net Income	\$91,134.00	(\$11,967.00)	(\$34,036.00)	\$74,133.00
Cash on Hand 7/31/2021				
Checking Account		\$273,722.00		
Money Market		\$147,132.00		
Tour of Homes Checking		\$39,656.00		
Less Restricted Funds		235,073.00	Includes ToH	
Total Operating funds Available		225,437.00		
Pledges Operations - General Fund		\$465,501.00		
Paid to July 31		\$301,027.00		
Balance Due		\$164,474.00		
Trusts 7/31/2021				
Charitable Trust		<u>339,567.00</u>		
Capital Fund		\$331,936.00	Peggy Carlson/Clara Neese Smith	\$134,861.00

FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I began reflecting on my portion of this Annual Report, I felt compelled to look back at what I've written in my previous two reports as your Rector. Two years ago, we were celebrating our new relationship as priest and people, looking forward to a new beginning and God's good future together in ministry and mission.

Last year, we noted the continued presence of a pandemic lockdown period, when we were unable to gather in-person as a congregation. We reminded ourselves that we stand on the firm foundation of Christ Jesus our Lord and the saints who have come before us in faith.

Reading those reflections, and the collection of reports that accompanied my writing, I am struck at the ways in which no Annual Report ever captures the full picture of a parish's mission and ministry. This is no exception. While this has been another year of challenge, marked by a pandemic that is once again surging in our midst, it has also been a year of incredible growth in the life of this parish.

We returned to gathering in-person for worship, the central act we are called to as followers of the risen Christ. In sacrament, song, spoken word, and silence, we picked up the mantle of daily communal worship once again.

Acts of hospitality, evangelism, and pastoral care thrived via phone calls, e-mails, text messages, and visits with one another. The fabric of our common life has been sustained and supported by a commitment to caring for and loving one another in all life's circumstances.

Faith journeys were nourished in small group studies that fostered deeper relationships and reflection. We are beginning the hard work of wrestling with our racial history as a people and pursuing justice and reconciliation among all God's children.

The needs of our community were met with response by our outreach through dollars raised from an online annual Tour of Homes, by Bread of Life teams that never relented in their quest to feed hungry bellies, and by furthering our commitment to listen to the cries of the world around us.

Even in challenging times, the heart of St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church beats strong the rhythm of God's own heart.

For much of the past two years, folks have asked me about my vision for this community of faith. Who are we called to be? Where are we called to go? To the best of my ability, I've tried to deflect these questions with queries of my own. I've sought to listen, in hopes that I might understand.

Listening and reflecting, I have been moved by a vision that I believe is common among us. It's simple, as perhaps any large vision should be, and it encompasses where we've been as well as where we are called to go.

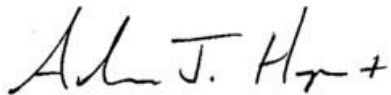
Following Jesus. Forming Disciples.

This is who we are. I'll share more about this vision at our Annual Meeting, and in the weeks, months, and years ahead, our identity and our calling.

We are about following Jesus. We are about forming disciples.

It's a privilege to serve among you as your Rector.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A. J. Hege". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Reverend Andrew J. Hege

Rector

FROM OUR SR. WARDEN

Dear St. Mary's Family,

Many of us, myself included, had hoped that by now the pandemic would be a distant memory and that parish life could return to something resembling normal. But, to quote those famous philosophers, the Rolling Stones, "you can't always get what you want." When I look back over the vestry minutes for the past year, I'm struck by how much time we have devoted to navigating these difficult times. We have examined statistics, studied local ordinances, and sought advice from physicians and nurses, including several who serve faithfully on St. Mary's vestry. Our goal throughout has been to provide steady leadership for the parish and to honor the trust you placed in us. Given the circumstances, I believe we have not only met, but also exceeded that objective.

Thanks to your generosity and commitment, our financial status is sound. With the return to in-person worship, we are again collecting plate offerings, something we had not done for more than a year.

As you can tell from Loy McGill's report, our second virtual Tour of Homes has been a resounding success. The launch party for this annual event also provided a chance for parishioners to get together and watch the video before it went online—the first church-wide social gathering since the pandemic began. Loy and the others on the committee did a tremendous job putting it all together. The parish and the community thank you.

And, speaking of tremendous jobs, Doug Galke has to be the hardest working man in the junior warden business. The beautiful new sidewalk out front is only one manifestation of his efforts. Doug has spent a good bit of the last year, chasing leaks and running down contractors, all to make sure that our 100-year-old building will stand for another century. Offer him a word of gratitude if you get the chance

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize the service of those vestry members who will be completing their terms at the end of 2021. They are: Gigi Poole, Sterling Hutcheson, Jim West, and E.B. Springs. They have all served with distinction and grace during these trying times. Our deliberations and decisions have been enriched by their presence and insightful comments. Congrats on jobs well done.

As we move forward, please keep the vestry in your prayers and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. My cell number is 828-773-9633. I can be reached via email at silverth@appstate.edu. I remain your faithful servant.

Sincerely,

Tim Silver

FROM OUR JR. WARDEN

Doug Galke, Jr. Warden

Completed projects:

SkylineSkybest Fiber optic Internet and telephone service – We received proposals from SkylineSkybest as requested. After an analysis of the costs and level of internet speed we chose to have SkylineSkybest install internet service (replacing Charter) and the telephone line that serves the elevator, emergency systems, and fax (currently AT&T). Installation occurred in February. Replacement of voice lines as the expense to do so exceeded our current costs and the lines are working reliably was deferred.

Replace Beam Smoke Detector in the ceiling of the Nave – At this time the indicators in the Nave occasionally give false warning signals. The ones in other parts of the facility appear to be functioning without problems. We have received a quote from Creekside Electronics to replace the smoke detector in the Nave for \$1,600. Creekside has deducted \$594.18 from the original estimate as a donation to the church. Work was completed on April 6th.

Spring Work Day – May 8 – Successfully raked and weeded all areas of the grounds with the exception of the parish hall side of the church.

Sanctuary Leak (February) – Repair completed by Tyler Burr of Mountain Home Exteriors on May 20th. There have been no leaks since even after a visit by TS Fred.

Concrete in front of the church entrance was cracking and water was puddling and freezing during cold weather – Ronnie Jones Construction subcontracted the removal and install of new concrete with Watauga Concrete Finishers. The new concrete which was poured in July and is slanted appropriately and the color is acceptable. Thank you to Jim West for the referral.

Belltower Leak – Resealed by Ronnie Jones Construction in August. There has been no leakage since even after a visit by TS Fred.

Concrete Steps on Chestnut St. entrance – 01 Masonry, Drew Critcher has agreed to repair the loose flagstones as a donation to the church. The work is scheduled for this fall.

Grounds – The Vestry appointed an ad hoc workgroup in July consisting of Doug Galke, Chair, Jim West, Tim Silver, and Marjory Holder to conduct an evaluation of the grounds and plantings around the church yard. The initial evaluation has been completed by the workgroup and feedback from staff and designated parishioners with knowledge of landscaping and horticulture is in the process of being solicited. The goal of the workgroup will be to establish priorities for enhancement and set standards for routine landscaping. Three priorities that have already become apparent are the need to address the area where our old maple lived, determine if a place suitable to locate a children's playground can be found, and address the general condition of the trees on the Chestnut St. side of the church and maples along the parish hall.

In process:

The ramp to the Chestnut St. entrance needs repair. Efforts are still on-going to find a contractor.

Implementation of a regular church facility maintenance and inspection schedule.

Replacement of street numbers on the post next to the Chestnut St. entrance and movement of St. Mary Sign on the Chestnut St. side of the church closer to the road to assist rescue squad and other first responders locate the facility as our street address is 140 Chestnut Dr. but our facility faces Main St.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Pandemic has not slowed the work of the Outreach Committee during this year. We have given a little over \$25,000 so far this year to a wide variety of agencies and causes including:

Compassion International, to assist our little brother, Pabasara, in Sri Lanka. Immigrant Justice Coalition Student Scholarship, The Empty Chair, Hospitality House, Hunger and Health Coalition and its Mobile Home Delivery Program, Habitat for Humanity Watauga County, Contributions in honor of fallen officers: Sgt Chris Ward and K-9 Deputy Logan Fox, and the George Ligon Family, The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona to assist with work, which houses and cares for 80 to 200 children at our Southern border, Back 2 School Festival, Episcopal Relief and Development to assist with work at the Hospital in Gaza, Episcopal Church in Navajo Land, School in Burundi for girls and Thompson Child and Family Focus.

Our reaching out covers a wide spectrum of localities and responds to a wide scope of human needs. We also, during this year, invited two leaders from our community to speak to the Committee about Housing in our area and the need for more affordable housing. This led to the establishment of a Housing Subcommittee, which involves members from St Mary's, as well as, the greater community in the High Country and other Churches in the area.

A great deal of prayerful thought has undergirded our efforts to minister to the children of Christ whoever and wherever they may be. You, the members of St. Mary's, make theses gifts possible through you pledged dollars. The Committee thanks you for making this ministry possible.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Gary Gloster Chair.

2021 TOUR OF HOMES ANNUAL REPORT

Even in the midst of COVID, St. Mary's knew that it must find a way to be true to its mission to serve others and provide outreach to those in need. And so the tour went virtual, and was successful in generating \$62,000! In 2021, there was hope of resuming our in-person tour experience, but considering information from public health officials and the need to plan in the weeks ahead, the Tour Planning Committee determined that the 2021 Tour of Homes would be virtual. Thanks to homeowner support, four stunning, unique properties were showcased; the homes of Polly and Richard Gambill, Jeff Roberts, Jean and Otis Sawyer, and Lee Rocamora and John Thompson. The four Blowing Rock homes have a variety of interior designs, art, antiques, and spectacular views that the homeowners generously shared on the virtual Tour. Their united commitment to bettering the community through the Tour initiative was inspiring. The video also included a flower design demonstration, a cooking segment featuring tour chicken salad, and a non-profit representative's testament to the essential need for Tour funds. In addition to the virtual tour, an online silent auction was created and linked to the website.

As a recipient of a Justice and Outreach grant from the Diocese of Western North Carolina, St. Mary's used the funding to hire Premier Images to professionally film and edit the video; videographer Douglas Meyers was an invaluable resource throughout this project. OverMountain Studios built the silent auction platform and worked with St. Mary's personnel and Premier Images to integrate the video and auction with our website. Floral designs were made for staging in the four homes, a script was written for the video, and the voiceover was recorded. Press releases were sent to all area publications, and a tour poster was produced and distributed throughout the High Country. Finally, a preview party was held to view the finished video prior to its release. My sincere thanks to the homeowners and the many people behind the scenes who worked to make the Virtual Tour, silent auction and preview party a success.

Through a grant process, all applying organizations received 2020 support from Tour proceeds, recipients including: Blowing Rock CARES, Blowing Rock School, BRAHMS, Casting Bread, Community Care Clinic, Crossnore, Hospitality House, Hunger and Health Coalition, Life Village, Oasis, and Western Youth Network. Some of these agencies serve up to five counties. Because of the community's patronage, these agencies have been able to feed the hungry, clothe those in need, provide shelter, offer educational resources, and fund safe havens for battered women.

Area organizations continue to experience tremendous strain as they respond to needs, and 2021 Tour grant requests received to-date exceed \$90,000. Currently, tour donations and auction contributions approximate \$60,000. Our hope is that with your support and through social networking, the Virtual Tour can continue to generate much needed funds for the High Country. Your generous tax-deductible gifts join those of our homeowners to help fund area non-profit services providing essential support. Together we embrace the spirit of community and make a difference in the lives around us.

Faithfully,

Loy McGill, chair

Planning committee: Ron Armstrong, Carolyn Crutcher, Doug Galke, The Right Rev. Gary Gloster, The Rev. Andrew Hege, Marjory Holder, Suzanne Miller, Will Merrill, Chip Myers, Patty Patella, Tim Silver

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Cover Image

St. Mary of the Hills by Ed Springs, 2020

This new rendition of St. Mary of Hills, by parishioner Ed Springs (1938-2020), reflects the changed landscape of the church's exterior following the loss of the great maple tree that stood on the front lawn for more than one hundred years.

ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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