

ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Reports for the Annual Parish Meeting
August 24, 2025

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Annual Meeting Agenda

August 24, 2025

9:00 AM

Welcome and Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Appointment of Meeting Officers

Secretary

Parliamentarian

Approval of Minutes from 2024 Annual Meeting*

Treasurer's Report

Endowment and Investment Report

Tour of Homes Report

Election of New Vestry Members*

Rector's Report

Adjournment

***requires vote**

St. Mary of the Hills

Annual Meeting

August 25, 2024

The annual meeting was called to order with Fr. Andrew, offering an opening prayer.

Fr. Andrew welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. It was established that a quorum was in place as 41 voting members were in attendance.

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

Secretary: Olivia Knight, in the absence of Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry and Parliamentarian: E. B. Springs

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting, as presented. No discussion followed; the approval of the 2023 annual meeting minutes was made by unanimous vote.

Amanda White – Treasurer’s report. Amanda shared that each month as she reviews the finances of the parish she is always reminded of the generosity of this parish. We are well ahead with revenue exceeding our expenses and are in a healthy cash position. Total cash on hand is \$ 1.4 Million.

Pledges -\$ 498,000 - Fulfilled to date - \$ 329,00 - Remaining Balance - \$ 168,000

Endowment and Investment Committee Report- Fr. Andrew

As of June 30th, the Trusts and Endowments totals were: Charitable Outreach \$ 316,690, Peggy Carlson, Clare Neese Smith Trust Fund \$ 130,792, Capital Fund \$ 533,640, the Mission and Ministry Endowment \$ 59,608, and the Hamrick Mulford Music Ministry Endowment \$ 45,147. The committee members meet quarterly to review the performance of those funds that are entrusted to us and are invested with the Episcopal Church Foundation and States Street Global. The committee members are Roy McCraw, Bob Miller and John Carlson.

Anyone interested in making a legacy gift or including St. Mary’s in your estate documents can contact the parish office for more information. We are so grateful for this support as these gifts will continue to support the ministry and mission of the life of this parish.

Tour of Homes - Fr. Andrew - \$ 95,600 – net profit.

Good work was done by so many in our parish and beyond. Chairs for the 2025 Tour will be Billie Rogers and John Jordan. John will serve in 2025 and 2026 and will need a co-chair for 2026. The Outreach Committee will review the grant applications and all funds will be distributed to local agencies.

Fr. Andrew, on behalf of the Vestry Nominating Committee, presented the candidates for Vestry to begin 3-year terms on January 1, 2025 – Bob Rhoads, (seasonal) and Luba Skibo, Mike Matthews and Bob Amos (year round). Fr. Andrew asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were none. A motion was made and seconded to close the nominations.

A motion by Marjory Holder to elect the nominees by acclamation was made, with a second from Mary Galke. The motion carried.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rectors report.

He expressed his thanks to the Vestry members who will complete their term of service at the end of December – Leslie Billingsley, Joe Doswell, Buddy Fore and Bob Finney. Their participation and support during their term is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to Chip Monroe, past senior warden, and current wardens Mike Austell and Marshall Culp.

He expressed his appreciation to Amanda White, Treasurer who is a wise steward of the funds entrusted to us.

Andrew also expressed thanks to Elizabeth Sudderth who serves as Clerk of the Vestry. We would not function without her. She reminds us of what we have done and what we haven't done and she is a great gift. Thanks to Olivia Knight for recording minutes today in Elizabeth's absence.

He shared his appreciation for a wonderful staff that inspire him and make him laugh and calls us to a deeper life in this parish. To Michael Marshall, Director of Administration and Finance, Bill Devereux, Director of Hospitality and Facilities, Jim Bumgardner Organist and Choirmaster, and Lindsey Herring, Director of Christian Formation and Communications. We have four choral scholars at the present time and thanks to our nursery assistants taking care of our youngest parishioners.

Since we met last year Greta Wilson, who was our parish administrator, retired. I am immensely grateful for her many years of service.

Thanks to the clergy whom I share this community with: Fr. Sam Tallman, Bishop Gary Gloster, Fr Rick Lawler, Fr. Rick Williams and Fr. Bob Browning.

Significant moments in our parish during the past year:

Joined with Rumble Memorial for Vacation Bible School in June.

Bishop Jose McLoughlin confirmed or received ten in our parish.

You would be amazed how often folks gather in this place, both in formal and informal ways to receive the goodness of God's grace. It is a privilege to walk through here day by day and to see the ways in which we are being formed as disciples. This is an active and growing parish. Average attendance each Sunday was 157 with 138 eucharists, 3 weddings, 3 burials, the Daily Office was held 169 days and each day we prayed for a parishioner.

Michelle Curry has served one year as our Verger, which is a volunteer position. Thank you Michelle for your service and commitment.

It has been a privilege and a gift to have served this parish these past 51/2 yrs. It is a joy to share in this life as your priest and pastor. I see the power of the Holy Spirit working through us and celebrating God's love among us. Where we are going, who we are to be, and our deeper commitment as we welcome all people. Our doors are open to all.

During my visit with the Vestry and Search Committee I asked what do you want to be celebrating in five years? Many of those things we are celebrating this morning. We dreamed of being an active and growing parish that is welcoming to people of all ages and stages of life. We said we want to celebrate the joys of children wiggling, giggling, and at times crying in our midst. We said we want to be a place that was not just interested in what is going on within these four walls, but deeply invested in the life of our broader community. This is an active and growing parish because of the power of the Holy Spirit working through us. I said that if growth of life and self preservation is the goal I am not sure if I am the right person. But if growth and life for the sake of advancing the growth of Jesus Christ is the goal, I am all in. Four words that I return to and pray over are welcome, worship, wonder and work. We are called through the Gospels, The New Testament and our Baptismal Covenant to welcome all in Christ's name. May we continue to be and deepen our commitment to being a welcoming community for all people.

Having completed the agenda, and there being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47am.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Knight

Secretary (in the absence of Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry)

NOMINEES FOR VESTRY

2026-2028

Richard Murphy



How long have you been a member of / connected to St. Mary of the Hills?
2 years

What areas of ministry are you involved in at St. Mary's?
Tour of Homes

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?
I look forward to getting more involved with leadership and being a more integral part of the church family

Favorite Bible Story?
John 3.16

Peter Purcell

How long have you been a member of / connected to St. Mary of the Hills?
12 years.

What areas of ministry are you involved in at St. Mary's?
Eucharistic Minister, Chair of Stewardship Committee, member of various church committees over the years.

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?
Valerie and I have always been members of our parish church, wherever we lived. We raised our children in the Episcopal Church and are grateful to be members of Saint Mary's. If called to serve in the Vestry I would be excited to have the opportunity to serve our Church by offering my time, and my life skills and experience.

Favorite Bible Story?
John 11:35; Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus.



Dale Marie Sandusky



How long have you been a member of / connected to St. Mary of the Hills?
22 years

What areas of ministry are you involved in at St. Mary's?
Choir, ECW, Tour of Homes, Bread of Life team for Hospitality House.

What excites you about serving on the Vestry at this time?
Being involved in growth and nurturing the ministry of St. Mary's. I look forward to being able to offer what I can to assist in the growth and maintenance of St. Mary of the Hills. This parish has meant much to me through these years. I want to do what I can to help grow and sustain this beautiful space and wonderful members.

Favorite Bible Story?
When Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me."...God's love is open to all, no one is left out.

Financial Report 2024-2025

Funds January 1-June 30 2025

<u>Revenue</u>	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	2024 Year End Actual
Plate Offerings	\$ 7,341.39	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 16,414.13
Pledge Payments	\$ 285,953.74	\$ 247,500.00	\$ 495,000.00	\$ 535,450.32
Special Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,270.81
Non-Pledge Payments	\$ 56,640.00	\$ 17,502.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 96,920.29
Use of Facilities	\$ 900.00	\$ 4,999.98	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 9,985.04
Bank Interest	\$ 4,829.61	\$ 4,249.98	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 24,721.18
Grants/Refunds/Returns/Allowance	\$ 1,851.18	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Revenue	\$ 357,515.92	\$ 281,751.96	\$ 563,500.00	\$ 688,761.77
<u>Expenses</u>				
Giving	\$ 62,643.50	\$ 58,768.50	\$ 117,537.00	\$ 118,783.09
Programs	\$ 14,704.83	\$ 16,000.02	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 33,120.03
Personnel	\$ 189,419.18	\$ 184,179.70	\$ 368,359.20	\$ 350,463.05
Operations	\$ 78,529.43	\$ 67,426.50	\$ 136,053.00	\$ 149,523.15
Total Expenses	\$ 345,296.94	\$ 326,374.72	\$ 653,949.20	\$ 651,889.32
<u>Bank Accounts</u>				
Operating Checking	\$ 175,898.68			
TOH Checking	\$ 49,806.20			
Money Market	\$ 143,793.66			
CD	\$ 147,457.03			
Combined Endowments	\$ 1,353,004.54			
Total Cash on Hand	\$ 1,869,960.11			
<u>Pledges</u>				
2025 Expected Pledges	\$ 495,000.00			
2025 Pledge Fulfillment as of Jun 30	\$ 285,953.74			
2025 Balance Due	\$ 209,046.26			

2024-2025 FAST FACTS AND FIGURES

2024

159 - Average Sunday Attendance

329 - Easter Attendance

415 - Christmas Eve & Day Attendance

201 Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist

264 Daily Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer)



8 Baptisms

8 Confirmations

2 Receptions

4 Marriages

4 Burials



2025

168 - Average Sunday Attendance YTD

334 - Easter Attendance

201 Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist

264 Daily Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer)

5 Baptisms

1 Marriages

8 Burials



FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

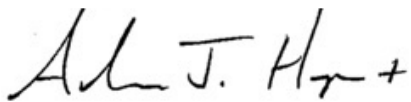
On the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, Bishop Brian Cole invited us to consider an icon – Mary of the Silence – as an image to guide us in our common life. There is more than enough noise in our world, he reminded us; the Blessed Virgin's sign to quiet ourselves is a calling to model something different.

For more than a century, this congregation has gathered in Blowing Rock, at the corner of Chestnut and Main. The particularities of our mission might have shifted through the years – from summer chapel to year-round worshiping community, for example – yet our vocation has remained steadfast, to follow the risen Christ together.

2024 was another year of significant growth in the life of our parish – more people seeking the solace and solitude of this place in worship, more opportunities for study and formation as disciples of Jesus, more engagement with the community we call home and its present needs and concerns. We lived through the impacts of Hurricane Helene's assault on these hills and found new ways of connecting with and supporting one another.

The years ahead will call us to continue to adapt and be flexible as we live into our calling. Mary of the Silence reminds us not to be in a hurry, to pause and listen, to seek not our own strength but that of the living God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Faithfully,



The Rev'd Andrew J. Hege

Rector



TOUR OF HOMES BLOWING ROCK

2025 REPORT

Tour of Homes 2025 was again a success due to the efforts of all the church members and community members involved. The committee chose "Who Is My Neighbor" as the theme of the Tour this year in light of the horrific reconstruction of our area because of Hurricane Helene. Father Andrew made a very moving and compelling speech at the Patron's Party held at Blowing Rock Art and History Museum on Tuesday, July 15th. It made me proud to be a member of this church. The Patron Party had about 75 people in attendance, plus some complimentary guests (owners of the homes on the tour). The food was amazing, and the flowers (donated) were incredible. Vietri vases filled with bouquets were sold at the event for fundraising. One of the homes, the Gravely house, is owned by the founders of Vietri, a beautiful Italian-based ceramics, dishes, and home goods company.

- Over 1000 people attended **the Tour**. The weather was perfect. The shuttles again presented a problem in the earlier part of the day due to all the attendees coming at the same time. We incorporated the Ben Long Frescos into the tour, which seemed to go well and strengthen the 'Who Is My Neighbor?' theme. Flowers were provided by individual florists at each of the homes. One of the florists will need to be reimbursed, but the flower budget was well contained. Reports on the homes were very positive!
- **Drivers and Loaders** were fantastic. So much effort with not a word of complaint. When we realized people were standing in line for an hour or more, several more volunteer drivers stepped in. Andy Sicard truly showed his strength.
- **Hostesses and Hosts** did a fantastic job. Experience led to great hospitality.
- **The Tour Lunch** was held at BRAHM, again working the neighbor theme. Farm Café did an excellent job as always. We ordered 300 lunches, knowing that about 120 were presold. We sold most of the 300, though a few at the end were discounted. Chicken salad and falafel were each served with a mixed green salad, bread, a cookie, and dessert.
- **Bake Sale** was amazing! All the items were sold, including floral arrangements.
- **Timeless Treasures** was also great - as always. Items not purchased were donated to Village Thrift at the end of the day.
- Marjory Holder was quite busy giving talks within **our church** to visitors. I feel this is the unspoken gem of the Tour of Homes. We have so much interesting history.
- Several folks arrived at the end of the day to help with **clean-up and break-down**.
- **Volunteer lunches** were donated by Chick-fil-A on Thursday and 2 church members on Friday. All were very appreciated!

Financials will be finished at the close of August and we anticipate the total amount of funds raised to exceed \$85,000 to support outreach grants.

Looking to next year, we have been approached by 3 homeowners who would like to us to consider their homes for the 2026 Tour. We have 2 possible chairs for the event and a location for the Patron's Party. The Lunch, Drivers and Loaders, and Bake Sale each have potential committee leaders confirmed. A flower committee has volunteered for the Patron's Party and one of the homes. We also have a volunteer coordinator for the event!

Billie Rogers
Co-Chair

The 2024 Blowing Rock Tour of Homes granted over \$90,000 to 32 Local Non-Profit Organizations! The St. Mary of the Hills Outreach Committee received over \$182,000 in requests from programs serving those in need, demonstrating that the work of the many volunteers who pitched in to make this year's Tour a resounding success is more urgent than ever. The programs feed the hungry, clothe the needy, provide shelter and sanctuary, offer educational and recovery services, and care for children.

The following programs received grants last year:

Hospitality House Shelter and WeCan
Community Care Clinic
Hunger and Health Coalition
WAMY
Western Youth Network
Blue Ridge Conservancy
Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture
Casting Bread Ministry
Back2School Festival
Blowing Rock Cares
Blowing Rock Library,
Blowing Rock Parks and Recreation,
Blowing Rock School,
Blowing Rock Women's Club
Blowing Rock Police Department
Club 12
Women's Fund of the Blue Ridge
Crossnore School
F. A.R.M. Café
Habitat for Humanity
High Country Caregivers
Mediation and Restorative Justice Center
Mountain Alliance
BRAHM
OASIS
New Direction Mustard Seed
Quiet Givers
Valle Crucis Conference Center
Watauga Arts Council
Watauga Children's Council
Watauga Community Housing Trust

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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