**Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Meeting Minutes**

**March 24, 2020**

**Vestry present: Vestry absent:**

Burdette Keeland, Senior Warden Al Hergenroeder

Kristie Van Arsdel, Junior Warden

Rita Justice

Barbara Hass

Gretta Boshara

Steven Killworth

Susannah Webb

Randy Byrd

Shannon Westin

Mike Murphy

David Robinson

Libby Spoede

Rand Key

Kelly Williams

**Clergy present**

The Rev. Neil Willard

The Rev. Liz Parker

The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting started at 5:30 pm by Zoom and ended at 6:40 pm.

**Opening Prayer**: The Rev. Neil Willard

**Community Update**: Burdette Keeland: Because of the COVID-19 we are going to do the meeting via Zoom. We are also going to skip some of the standard reports.

**Minutes**: Approved the minutes from February 18 with 2 changes.

**Rectors’ Report:**

Neil Willard reported that Bishop Doyle has been providing guidelines related to COVID-19, revised weekly, for churches in the Episcopal Diocese Texas. In addition to those public guidelines, he has also sent weekly to heads of congregations more information about the science and the public health advice he has been receiving that has informed those guidelines so that we can answer questions people might have about them. He has also let the heads of congregations know what steps have been contemplated but not yet implemented and what steps either have not yet been contemplated or won’t be contemplated. That’s helpful because it allows us to shape our own messages to our congregations in ways that will hopefully minimize contradictions between the Bishop’s future requirements and our own words now.

As of this evening, in-person, corporate worship is suspended throughout the diocese until March 30, although Bishop Doyle has already said that suspension is likely to be extended beyond that date. We are allowed to use the church to provide online worship for the congregation, but we should abide by the recommendations of public health officials to have no more than 10 people at a time gathered together for any purpose. We are also allowed to have some church staff work in the church office in order to perform necessary duties, but we should encourage as much work to be done from home as possible. In addition to online worship, we are moving our Bible studies and some other gatherings to online formats as well. That has gone better than one might have expected.

Liz will have more information about contacting everyone in our parish directory and other ways of supporting those in need. David will have more information about our shift to online worship while we are in exile from the church building. And the Junior Warden will have more information about how we’re going to manage the church campus while it’s closed to the public but open on a limited basis for certain functions.

**Associate Rectors’ Reports**:

Liz Parker reported on Community of Hope, Steven Ministers and clergy making phone calls to everyone in our data base to check in and offer support. Everyone we reached was appreciative and a side benefit has been the opportunity for Sue Howard to update our directory. She also reported on Loaves and Fishes forming a team to make grocery and pharmacy runs and mentioned Palmer’s sewers were busy making masks (Barbara Hass had already talked about this.)

David Wantland said 1) Our attempt to livestream liturgy hit some serious hurdles (along with many other churches weighing down Facebook Live) so we’ve decided to prerecord all future Sunday liturgies. We will be recording on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Palmer as long as we are able to do so. 2) A big thank you is due to Dustin Jesudason, who’s been working around the clock to get us set up with AV and to produce our liturgies and service bulletins. In addition to purchasing new equipment, he continued to fine tune the quality, as is evident in recent service recordings. All vestry members were asked to reach out to him with a word of thanks for all of his hard work. This can be done at djesudason@palmerchurch.org. 3) We have plans for observing Holy Week with a combination of Zoom live interactions and prerecorded materials. Information about how to participate/what to prepare will come out on Monday of Holy Week with guides, links and additional resources. Thanks to Roger Hutchison who has been working with us to get those off the ground.

**Junior Warden**: Kristie Van Arsdel. In consultation with Tara, Neil and Burdette, we are paying the 14 hourly staff through Saturday, March 28, and then only for the time they actually work beyond that. For security guards and sextons, that is Tuesdays and Thursdays. Nursery workers and Officer Gaspar will not be called upon until we resume worship at the church. Gerry will continue as needed for things like repairs around campus and the rectory. We will continue to monitor and provide updates. Kelly Williams suggested we ask the hourly staff to let us know if they are struggling financially.

**Senior Warden:** Burdette said he attended the Finance Committee with Mike Murphy on March 12. At that meeting there was discussion of $240,000 in cash with $180,000 in the restricted funds. Expenses are $180,000 a month. We are going to be watching the money situation very closely with the COVID-19 going on.

**Unfinished Business.** None

**Call for New Business.** None