**Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Meeting Minutes**

**May 19, 2020**

**Vestry present: Vestry absent:**

Burdette Keeland, Senior Warden

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

Al Hergenroeder

**Clergy present**

The Rev. Neil Willard

The Rev. Liz Parker

The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting started at 5:33 pm by Zoom and ended at 6:35 pm.

**Opening Prayer**: Barbara Hass

**Minutes:** The minutes of April 21, 2020 were approved.

**Community Sharing:** There was community sharing from several members, including Rita Justice, who will celebrate her 75th birthday May 24.

**Committee/Council Updates:**

**Finance:** Michael Murphy. He highlighted that the PPE funds of $143,500 are in the Palmer account. The diocese has forgiven three months assessment, which is the equivalent to $46,000. We have $472,000 in pledges and we had budgeted for $516,000 by this time.

**Communications:** Kristie Van Arsdel. There will be a wardens’ report given at the end of May. The weekly publications of the “I am Palmer” series and Neil‘s essays are included in the Tuesday and Friday worship updates. Dustin says that the number of YouTube hits to Palmer‘s website have plateaued at a level considerably higher than pre-COVID. The bells for the medical center health workers are still ringing daily.

**Evangelism:** Shannon Westin. Weekly bible studies and other gatherings continue by zoom. There was a newcomers’ group event that was kicked off by Tiff’s treats deliveries; clergy and staff participated. The weekly spiritual art class, with about 30 participants, continues. Laura Van Ness continues to lead the Loaves and Fishes ministry which includes help with grocery shopping.

**Stewardship:** Rand Key and Rita Justice. Rand is 12 hours away taking care of his parents. A final slate of candidates for the Stewardship Committee has been developed and they look forward to starting their work soon.

**Worship:** Steven Killworth and Libby Spoede. They met last Tuesday and are continuing to work on how worship will be conducted when we reopen for services.

**Outreach:** Kelly Williams and Barbara Hass. Serve Sunday was held this past week. The activities were to a large extent in the background with some participation. A video was provided by Roger. Outreach funds were sent to eight facilities and that list is available upon request. Masks continue to be made so if someone knows of somebody who needs a mask, please let council members and clergy know. The Sunday Coffee Hour has been connecting people after the recorded service at 10; approximately 60 people participated this last Sunday

**Buildings and Grounds:** David Robinson and Gretta Boshara. The washer and dryer have been delivered to the rectory and they are working well. The chimney appears to be settling into the house and this needs to be repaired, contractors will begin work soon. Parish Hall is being painted and art apparatus will be hung on the walls to display work hung previously along the corridor on the north side of campus. David said we need to be careful about job scope-creep. There are ongoing conversations about what to do with the campus property in the future. A written report was presented.

**Junior Warden:** Kristie Van Arsdel. Some groups are returning to campus, including Archway with a considerably scaled back graduation ceremony. The German school will start in June and there will be a summer camp. The campus, however, is not “generally open.” There was a question about full-time employees being cut back. Some parishioners have given money to support a Junior Warden’s fund to support hourly employees.

**Senior Warden:** Burdette Keeland. Burdette said he will be setting up a meeting with the endowment committee to discuss supporting repairs for the rectory. He also said the bishop has guidelines for opening the church.

**Associate Rectors:**

Liz Parker.

* There was a second round of pastoral calls to parishioners as we emphasize the need to stay connected with one another.
* Palmer Place Apartments Ministry will be in a “hibernating in” period due to reduced demand for apartments and the COVID virus. Two leases are not being renewed and two apartments were bought out. We will revisit this ministry after there is a vaccine. Ministry members will celebrate a closing ceremony Thursday night after 20 years of service.
* The confirmation class was held and there are about 10 potential confirmands. Bishop Doyle visited by zoom on May 3.

David Wantland. David discussed the plan for Palmer, which will be submitted to the Diocese for approval:

* First, there must be a 14-day decline in the virus in the Houston.
* Even when we offer live services, prerecorded services will be offered.
* We are likely to have three services to allow for time to clean between gatherings.
* We will practice social distancing.
* There will be no congregation singing.
* There will be restricted access to restrooms, probably being limited to handicapped accessible facilities.
* Communion will likely be brought to the pew and there will be tongs used to dole out the bread.
* There will be temperature checks.
* A survey will be sent to the parish to find out who intends to return to services in person and how often they intend to return.
* A video on what to expect will be created.

**Rector:** Neil Willard.

* Jeff Bohanski will be ordained as a deacon sometime this summer.
* The chancellorship for the parish has been shared between Tom VanArsdel and Michael Chambers, Tom as head and Michael as assistant; the vestry unanimously approved that they switch roles with one another.
* Davis Mathis will be going back to school to become a teacher and we will be seeking a new youth minister. There will be a going away celebration for him on May 31.
* When we come back to church we will be in Phase 2 of the Diocese reentry plan. There is no specific date established since the timing will be dictated by medical milestones over which we have no control. Palmer will submit its reopening plan to the Diocese next week. A cautionary tale: an elderly priest who held Mass regularly at Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Houston died and five other priests are infected with the virus. Everyone who attended church there is being encouraged to be tested. Phase 3 will be described as a return to normal and Phase 4 will be a compilation of lessons we have learned for future reference.