**Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Meeting Minutes**

**December 15, 2020**

**Vestry present:**

Burdette Keeland, Senior Warden

Kristie Van Arsdel, Junior Warden

Rita Justice

Barbara Hass

Susannah Webb

Randy Byrd

Mike Murphy

David Robinson

Kelly Williams

Al Hergenroeder

Gretta Boshara

Steven Killworth

Shannon Westin

Libby Spoede

Rand Key

**Clergy present**:

The Rev. Neil Willard

The Rev. Elizabeth Parker

The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting started at 5:33 PM by Zoom and ended at 6:45 PM.

**Community Sharing**: Randy said that his niece has been accepted into Vanderbilt and Sanford College. Ruth and Burdette were married two Saturdays ago. Neil said the parents of Rice college chaplain, Sarah Condon were killed in a car accident last week in Mississippi. Please hold them in your prayers.

**Minutes:** The minutes of November 17 had one correction: Neil’s report should state that a decrease in the vestry to 12 members will be proposed and voted on next year.

**Finance**: Michael Murphy. There is a decrease of $158,000 in contributions for 2020. The budget year starts February 1, according to Burdette. Although exact numbers are not provided for the current budget, the summary statement was that the budget is flat for the year with expenses being reduced to match the decreases in revenue. (Neil later said the assessment relief from the Diocese of Texas from Bishop Doyle for six months of 2020 (confirmed) is likely to be continued the first three months of 2021; this would be approximately $46,000, according to Kristie VanArsdel.)

**Communications Council**: Kristie Van Arsdel. The Christmas Eve service has been planned; donations are welcome. The annual meeting will be on January 24th. The response to the great Wednesday interviews has been great; 150 households listened to the interview with Brené Brown and 163 listened to the interview with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

**Evangelism Council**: Shannon Westin. Shannon asked everybody to spread the word to promote the drive-in Christmas Eve service. The Christmas Eve service will be broadcast on a radio station although that radio station was not provided at the meeting. Up to 50 people have been attending Dinner &

Discussion gatherings.   
  
**Stewardship Council**: Rand Key and Rita Justice. Pledges through 2021 have totaled $1,348,000. Actual donations are down $288,000. There are 93 people who pledged for 2020 who have not pledged for 2021. Talking points for phone calls were sent around by Rand and Rita and the vestry agreed that they would call some of the people on this list. Rand will send out that list. Burdette suggested not calling people who had not pledged for 2021 if they have not contributed in 2020. The vestry agreed.

**Worship Council**: Steven Killworth. Videos have been or are being produced for all Christmas season services, including the 5 PM Christmas Eve Drive-In service at Rice (also in-person, in-cars), and a traditional Rite I Christmas Eve service prerecorded and posted at 7 PM. The Longest Night service, also prerecorded, will be posted December 16 at 7 PM. The Christmas Day service will available online Christmas morning and in-person on the South Lawn at 10 AM.

**Outreach Council**: Kelly Williams. The angel tree ministry was completed in December with 75 children being served. The January ministry focus is to be announced.

**Building and Grounds**: Gretta Boshara and David Robinson. The rectory fireplace is now functional. The church HVAC system has been upgraded. Tara has found a lot of cost savings, specifically reduced electricity rates and she got rid of the need for grease traps in the kitchen as we no longer serve the large volume of people we did in the morning. The church grounds have been decorated.

**Building Development**: David Robinson. The site plan figuration has been discussed and this item will be brought to the vestry in 2021.  
  
**Junior Warden**: Kristie Van Arsdel. The code of procedures change will be discussed by Neil at the annual meeting. It will be brought up for later discussion and voted on in September 2021 so the new code of procedures should be in place for the elections of 2022. The vestry election at the upcoming Annual Meeting was discussed; it will be managed by the poll feature on Zoom. We have nine candidates for vestry and five candidates for the Lay ministry. Kristie will continue to work on completing this list.

**Senior Warden**: Burdette Keeland. Larry Wood will be our new treasurer and will be here at the December meeting. He will be replacing Dick Sylvan. Burdette said that they are still working on the proposed budget for 2021. The delay in bringing a budget to the vestry for this meeting was due to the absence of a firm commitment on the relief to be provided from the Diocese of Texas for the first quarter of 2021. Burdett said there will be contingency plans included in the proposed budget for 2021 if a revenue shortfall occurs. Al voiced his concern that the vestry should not be making decisions about budget with a sense of urgency or make these decisions quickly rather they should have time to deliberate. Burdette said he would send out the proposed 2021 budget the Thursday before the next vestry meeting. Al said that at the last vestry meeting the estimated budget shortfall for 2021 would be between $200,000 and $250,000. He was reassured that the proposed budget deficit for 2021 would be much less than that.

**Rector’s Report**: Neil Willard. Great Wednesdays have been a lot of fun and the theme for 2021 will be to invite great people to be interviewed. The curriculum will not be thematic; instead it will be focused on interviews with great people. Neil said his talking points at the Annual Meeting will be: 1) looking ahead; 2) growing the church; and, 3) the property development task force. The Vestry election will take place January 24 at the Annual Meeting.

**Associate Rectors’ Reports:**  
Liz Parker. She is very pleased to be back and enjoyed her sabbatical. She talked about Palmer shepherds and ask people to re-contact the people they had contacted in August. She said 424 people have been contacted through the Palmer Shepherd‘s program.

David Wantland. He mentioned the 5 PM Christmas Eve service and also said he is working on an organizational chart for Palmer.