**Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Meeting Minutes**

**November 17, 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**: **Clergy absent:**

The Rev. Neil Willard The Rev. Elizabeth Parker (on sabbatical)

The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting started at 5:30 PM by Zoom and ended at 6:45 PM.

**Opening Prayer**: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

**Community Sharing**: Burdette gave thanksgiving that his grandson‘s MRI was normal. Rita’s sister Judy had an emergency coronary artery bypass.

**Minutes:** The minutes of October 20 were reviewed and approved with one change; the Women’s Retreat will give 50 percent of the proceeds from its Christmas greenery sale to the church.

**Finance**: Michael Murphy. A team is working on the 2021 budget and that will be presented at the next meeting. We are looking at an approximate $200,000-$250,000 deficit next year based on projected revenues. Fortunately, this year’s expenses and revenue were essentially equal with help we received from the federal government support and relief from the bishop and the Diocese of Texas. At the next committee meeting a budget will be presented with a tiered approach to reducing expenses if there is a budget deficit.

**Communications Council**: Kristie Van Arsdel. Stewardship videos are almost complete. Plans are going forward for Advent. Dustin has taken on many more responsibilities and Sue Howard has taken over updating the website and The Palmer. A presentation was made to the new member task force. Communications will continue to produce videos of worship services and live streaming is planned for worship and classes in the absence of in-person gatherings. The observation was made that our communications are not as effective as we would like, although some regular Palmers are not aware that we have opened up for services on the lawn on Sundays. Later Barbara mentioned that she hadn’t gotten her pledge card and other people mentioned that they had not received any letters from Neil. This is to say that although we have great content, we need to continually revisit our communication methods. The email list is at an historic high.

**Evangelism Council**: Shannon Westin. Highlights include continued expansion of events. Bishop Curry will be Palmer’s guest at the December 9 Webinar. The youth meeting is consistently attended by 17 young people. They are considering doing an overlap Christmas Eve service in conjunction with the Worship Council.

**Stewardship Council**: Rand Key. We have 133 pledges totaling $1,023,000 so far. It was suggested that we might use a targeted call list for those who have pledged from last year but not this year. The vestry would be willing to make those calls.

**Worship Council**: Steven Killworth. All Sunday services were moved outside because the TMC positivity rate rose above 5 percent. The plate offering at Christmas last year was $6,500. There was discussion about having a Christmas Eve service in the parking lot at Rice University with Rice police hired for security. There needs to be technical set up with two screens with a prerecorded sermon and a live component live streamed on Facebook. The approximate cost is $7,000. A motion was made by Al Hergenroeder and seconded by Randy Byrd that the Vestry support the expenditure of $7,000 to support this Christmas Eve service. There were several suggestions as to how we might promote this; it will be marketed beyond the parish through the Diocese Diolog newsletter. A suggestion by Libby was rather than having Christmas flower donations we would request donations to support the event.

**Outreach Council**: Kelly Williams and Barbara Hass. New Hope Housing was the outreach priority for November and Angel Tree will be our focus for December. These opportunities are described on the website. There was discussion about Palmer Place Apartments, which is on hold for the foreseeable future.

**Building and Grounds**: Gretta Boshara and David Robinson. Repairs are being made to the rectory.

**Junior Warden**: Kristie Van Arsdel. She is redoing the code of procedures, which will include a revised voting list of four candidates for approval versus a slate 10 candidates. The number of vestry members will be reduced from 15 to 12. These changes will occur in 2022.

**Senior Warden**: Burdette Keeland. He asked that everyone look at the vestry handbook and see if the information for their committees is up to date. He said the slate of 10 candidates for vestry has been developed and when final this will be brought to the vestry in December. He mentioned the new member task force and said it had not accomplished as much as it set out to do, although two meetings are still scheduled for December.

**Rector’s Report**: Neil Willard. Neil asked for our approval for the youth group taking on the project that involves Advent wreath kits and the vestry approved. He said the number of vestry members will be reduced from 15 to 12 in 2022. Neil suggested that there would be a new format for the annual report which would be an assembled collection of all the “I am Palmer” essays written by parishioners in 2020 to be printed and mailed to parishioners.

**Associate Rector’s Report**: David Wantland. David said everything in his report had been covered. There was a question about what will happen with outdoor services if there is rainy or cold weather. David said we can hold some services in the courtyard; he thought the maximum number of people would be 24.