

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2022

Vestry present:

David Robinson, Senior Warden
Danna Kurtin, Junior Warden
David Candler
Margie Dieter
Melanie Fahey
Abigail Follmar
Pam Harvey
Bet Hunter
Jim Rosenbach
Posey Saenz
Libby Spoede
Marie Wehrung
Andy Williams
Lam Yu

Vestry absent:

The Rev. Neil Willard
Rand Key

Clergy present:

The Rev. Ryan Hawthorne

Clergy absent:

The Rev. Deacon Jack Karn

The hybrid in person and virtual meeting started at 5:36 pm and ended at 7:06 pm.

1. **Opening Prayer.** Ryan opened the meeting in prayer.
2. **Community Sharing.** Ryan encouraged community sharing.
3. **Dwelling in the Word.** Luke 1:46-55 was used for the exercise.
4. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes from June 21, 2022 were approved with no corrections. Motion by Andy, second by Danna, and the vestry voted to approve the minutes.
5. **Vestry Councils.**
 - a. **Good News.** Lam announced the council is meeting on Thursday of this week.
 - b. **Worship.** Andy reported the worship council meets on Monday of next week.
 - c. **Outreach.** Marie reported the next meeting is after Labor Day. Serve Sunday is on September 11th and will include both on and off campus projects. Abigail announced there is a blood drive is this Sunday. Bet asked about ways to reach out to communities, local newspapers, etc. to bring awareness for the Serve Sunday offerings.
 - d. **Communications.** Melanie said that communications have continued during the summer. The welcome table outside the nave is collecting welcome back letters for Neil. Information on Serve Sunday will be coming out in The Palmer communications.
 - e. **Building/Grounds.** Abigail reported that there is another work day to paint the second level elevator entry way this weekend if there are volunteers that sign up, otherwise the date will be changed if no one is available. There has been an effort to turn Liz's old office into a nursery for up to 4 kids. The hope is to have the nursery running in the fall and Tara has been running the interviews. The repair for the nave ceiling is being deferred. One compressor on the chiller was repaired and working well. However, a different compressor on the same circuit went down and the issue is being investigated.

There are a few repairs being completed in house recommended by the fire marshal. There is a meeting on Thursday morning related to GISH and occupancy requirements that may incur additional costs to meet the standards.

- f. **Finance.** Posey reported that we dipped into restricted funds and, while not unprecedented, does reflect the typical summer slump for donations. However, it is a bit more stressful this year as the budget was passed with a deficit. The finance committee is working through an analysis if we receive only 80% of pledged funds in addition to other scenarios to prepare for adjustments. Next year it is not advisable to pass a budget with a deficit and there are likely tough decisions ahead. David R. reported the endowment has provided \$86,000 of the pledged \$115,000. The finance committee and staff are considering ways of managing the budget for the remainder of this year and planning for next year, noting everything is on the table for consideration. Ryan said that relying on lay leadership to help fill some of the gaps of paid staff has been successful at other parishes and can also be done at Palmer. Posey reported that Buildings and Grounds would like to have their own fundraising efforts toward a restricted fund but will be mindful that it does not overlap with Stewardship.
 - g. **Stewardship.** Margie announced that the committee has a lot of energy and wants to make it a year-long education process. For the upcoming pledge campaign season, a theme “it is good that we are here” will be used to reflect post-pandemic regathering. Larry from Finance in addition to Melanie and Dustin from Communications have joined the committee. There will be a focus this season of providing education on where funds go and how they are utilized. Margie said that Jessica can run a report to send a gentle nudge to those that are behind this year on their pledge. Bet added that time and talent are also offerings that can be incorporated into stewardship. The stewardship season will start in October with Covenant Sunday on October 30 as a marker to begin collecting pledges which will then be ongoing throughout the rest of the year.
- 6. Warden Reports**
- a. **Senior Warden.** David reported the \$50,000 grant from the Bishop Quin Foundation in addition to a donation from two anonymous individuals have been received. Tucker will start after Labor Day. There will be a letter going out to the parish this Friday in The Palmer and an announcement during the Sunday services about the upcoming strategic planning process.
 - b. **Junior Warden.** Danna said that there has been work going on behind the scenes to plan out a calendar of events, such as the survey, with Tucker and her team.
- 7. Clergy Reports**
- a. **The Rev. Ryan Hawthorne.**
 - i. Ryan reported that Roger, Dustin and the staff have worked hard this summer to provide ample opportunities for fellowship this summer with the Refresh events.
 - ii. Currently 30% of the ~700 people in the database have confirmed their contact information.
 - iii. Fall formation theme is the patterning of our lives.
 - iv. Ryan wanted everyone to be mindful of managing calendars for Palmer with the incorporation of the strategic planning efforts and to be flexible.
- 8. Old Business.**
- a. Danna asked that additional communication be sent out regarding the likely continuation of the “summer service schedule” through the fall as the parish is used to going back to the 7:45, 9, and 11am services.

- b. Pam reported she is swamped doing reference checks for Safeguarding and is seeking assistance if anyone is able to help or knows of someone that can.

9. New Business.

- a. Bet asked if council reports can be sent the week prior to vestry meetings if at all possible. Bet also suggested resuming the vestry person of the day to be present at all services on Sunday to engage the parish.
- b. Marie said she is certified to lead a course on crucial conversations and offered to explore getting a grant to obtain toolkits with course materials for up to 25 people which would ideally be a series if this is something that the vestry would want to consider. It was noted that the timing may be challenging with the upcoming strategic planning process and Marie's departure from Rice.
- c. Ryan said that a calendar meeting is being planned for September for all councils to collect dates to plan out our calendar through May 2023. All councils are encouraged to gather dates in preparation for this meeting.

10. Closing Prayer. Ryan closed the meeting in prayer.