

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2019

Vestry present

Victor Lamas

Burdett Keeland

Jim Key, Senior Warden

Linda Sylvan

Jennifer Macia

Susannah Webb

Rita Justice

Kristie Van Arsdel

Priscilla Plumb

Al Hergenroeder

Barbara Hass

Randy Byrd

Gretta Boshara

Steven Killworth

Clergy present

The Rev. Neil Willard

The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting was called to order at 5:30. Randy Byrd opened the meeting with a prayer.

The minutes of the February 19, 2019 meeting were approved.

Community Announcements: Randy Byrd's mother is in the hospital; Burdett's wife Ruth is hiking in Patagonia; Rita's brother-in-law had a successful cardiac ablation; and Betty Key is doing well.

The **Financial report** was given by Jim Key. Jim said that cash flow is doing well; people have prepaid their pledges. We have \$414,000 in cash but \$198,000 of that is designated; therefore we have approximately \$200,000 in operating cash. The goal being three months of operating budget so we are short of that approximate \$300,000 level. On the revenue side we had \$484,000 in income which is ahead of budget. Expenses total \$373,000 which is over the budget of \$363,000. Tara is anticipating a budget shortfall and is keeping her eye on the parish's expenses. Jim informed the Finance Committee that the stewardship campaign is below expectations but at this point no cuts in the budget are specifically designated. This may be necessary next month after we get in the total numbers at the end of the pledge drive. Jim will try to get more from the endowment: he asked for \$200,000; they pledged \$165,000.

The **Communication Council** report was given by Priscilla Plumb. (See report below.) The podcast of the Lenten class offering by David Whiteland is on the website. There was a news article in the Village News about Eating Well, an Older Adults Lunch and Learn and Women's Night Out presentation by parishioner Libby Spoede. There will be a book discussion by Patton Oswalt on March 26. The architecture tour video has taken longer than expected to get produced. The Palmer editorial calendar was reviewed.

The **Evangelism Council** report was given by Randy Byrd with content provided by Roger. 10 families provided food for the monthly First Sunday reception. Mardi Gras drew 150 people; 1,200 people received ashes from the Ashes to Go ministry. David Wantland held a meeting with the ushers. The Men's Retreat was a success and the welcome tent will be moved to the Main Street entrance.

Outreach Council - Liz Parker was not here so Burdett Keeland gave the report. The next Serve Sunday will be May 5. The PAR program (Palmer Assisting Reentry) was mentioned. Liz also met with David Goldberg and we are considering helping out with the pantry at Iglesia Episcopal San Pedro/St. Peter's in Pasadena.

The **Stewardship Council** report was given by Linda Sylvan. We have 283 pledges compared to 288 last year. The goal was 315. We have pledges totaling \$1,546,976; we are \$103,000 short and if we don't raise that that we will have to make cuts. There was a discussion about the nature of the cuts including closing the church on some evenings to reduce custodial and security costs and also the music budget may need to be cut. We need to get to \$1,650,000 to avoid making cuts.

There have been several initiatives to try to get previous pledgers to pledge with limited success. We have 600 "units" in the church defined as people who have given checks in the past few years. 288 pledgers last year provided 80% of the budget. We have another 300 people who give who provide \$133,000. There were 53 people from last year who had not pledged this year and now that's been reduced to 25 in the last few months with initiatives from the stewardship committee. Four people who will not be giving for various reasons accounted for \$50,000 in giving last year. Jim discussed and Neil agreed with an initiative that will downplay the stewardship season and talk about stewardship throughout the year.

The **Worship Council** report was given by Victor Lamas. Six members of the Bahamas Altar Guild attended the Altar Guild Conference March 15-17; 27 people in all attended. There were workshops and it went well. Tara and Michael Massey have identified repairs that need to be made to the altar in the Nave. Burdett is working on getting bids. It was observed that some kneelers are split and there may be some water damage near the sanctuary door that hopefully can be addressed with painting.

The **Junior Warden's** report was given by Burdett Keeland. It was summarized by a table showing the budget, total spent and remaining costs in various areas with emphasis on the rectory, building and maintenance, HVAC maintenance, HVAC preventive maintenance and landscaping. There was also a section on repairs to be done that are not in the budget.

Clergy reports

Neil Willard gave the **Rector's Report**. Wednesday of this week starts regular programming. He'll be going to Rice on Wednesday to join a rally sponsored by a Muslim student union at Rice dedicated to the Muslims killed in New Zealand this past week. On April 7 there will be a reception honoring Brady Knapp and a larger reception at noon the cost of which will be carried by outside donors. A Living Compass Lenten retreat will be offered by John Wallace on March 30.

David Wantland gave his report. Davis Mathis' youth retreat was held this past weekend at Surfside and it went well. David and others are revising the Sunday morning service bulletin, getting rid of the trifold. He is conducting a class starting this Wednesday called "Everything Happens For A Reason And Other Lies I've Loved" which includes a discussion of the practice of the prosperity gospel. David said an initiative is being launched to get more diversity into the greeters and ushers. A Safeguarding God's People class is being offered this Saturday at 9 AM; certification lasts for five years.

Jim Key announced that there may be a capital funds drive for the front steps project that will start in the summer; donations will be matched by dollar for dollar by the Palmer Endowment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50.

Vestry Communications Liaison Report

March 2019

Public Relations

Palmer Stories Web Site Postings

- Jim Lober reflection on Palmer Men's Retreat
- Davis Mathis reflection on Palmer Youth Retreat
- Podcast Preview of Lenten Class Offering: David Wantland
- Diocesan Council Experience Shared by a Palmer Lay Delegate: John Wallace

Media Outreach

Village News, (In Progress):

- Jerusalem Peacebuilders: checking with David Wantland and Jack Karn on best approach
- Ashes to Go on Ash Wednesday

Press Coverage

- Ashes to Go?
- Dialog: Altar Guild Conference Announcement

The Palmer E-Newsletter

- Every Tuesday + Special Palmers

Campus Signage

- Ashes To Go for Ash Wednesday
- Weekly Friday Noon Stations of the Cross outside Nave on Fridays
- Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday banners go up March 25 (capitalizing on high numbers of guests expected for the March 26 Patton Oswalt book discussion)

Marketing Materials

- Architecture Tour Video featuring Stephen Fox (planning to produce this month). This will be promoted outside Palmer to Houston Historical Society and possible Rice University. Considering best timing that would enhance Palmer stewardship initiatives.

Youth Communications

- David Wantland and Davis Mathis managing ongoing targeted communications + Facebook and Instagram posts
- Winter/Spring Calendar on the Web Site and in The Palmer E-Newsletter

Upcoming Membership Initiative

Parishwide campaign to encourage members to enter/update their directory information and photographs in the Church Directory and to use the Church Life app on their phones. We are hoping the Vestry and Evangelism Council members will be highly visible in this effort. This

initiative will be conducted in the Breezeway after the 9 and 11 AM services three Sundays in the Easter Season: April 28, May 5 and May 12. Volunteers will help parishioners enter their information to the directory online and usher them to the Family Room where photographs will be taken. This kind of initiative was last undertaken in 2014 as a way to properly “Welcome the New Rector.”

Recent and Ongoing Events Open to the Public

- Women’s Night Out March 7 with Linda Shubert
- Young Adults Tacos on the Patio February 21
- Bible Studies Tuesday Mornings and Wednesday Noon
- Axiom Concert February 9
- Brazos Bookstore Marlon James February 10
- Lunch and Learn February 21: Retirement Transition
- Mardi Gras Dinner March 5

Upcoming/Ongoing Parish Initiatives

- Lenten Study “Everything Happens for a Reason,” by Kate Bowler, with David Wantland
- Older Adults Lunch and Learn Museum Tour March 21 with Gretta Boshara
- Brazos Bookstore Patton Oswalt March 26
- Palm Sunday Parish Photo
- Church Directory Update Drive encouraging parishioners to enter and/or update their directory information in MyPalmer. Will include photo updates as well. What is the best timing for this, which will occur over the course of several weeks? Easter Season through Spring.
- Youth Bible Study 3rd Wednesday evenings

Advertising

Holy Week and Easter Schedule in late March: Outsmart, TMC Pulse, Houston Family.
Circulations: Outsmart: Published Monthly, 200,000 Readership; Village News: Published Weekly, 35,000 Readership; TMC Pulse: Published Monthly (December/January combined), 30,000 Readership; Houston Family Magazine: Published Monthly, 4.2 million Readership

Sources for News About Palmer

- The Palmer (weekly + special editions)
- Bulletin Inserts
- Palmer Website: Palmer Stories
- Palmer Facebook Page
- Palmer Instagram Page
- Local publications (See above under Advertising)
- Dialog