

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021

Vestry present:

The Rev. Neil Willard
David Robinson, Senior Warden
Gretta Boshara
Randy Byrd
Melanie Fahey
Rand Key
Steven Killworth
Danna Kurtin
Mike Murphy
Jim Rosenbach
Posey Saenz
Libby Spoede
Susannah Webb
Kelly Williams
Lam Yu

Vestry absent:

Shannon Westin, Junior Warden

Clergy present:

The Rev. Elizabeth Parker
The Rev. David Wantland

Clergy absent:

The meeting started at 5:30 PM by Zoom and ended at 7:11 PM.

1. **Opening Prayer.** Neil opened the meeting in prayer.
2. **Community Sharing.** David Robinson encouraged community sharing.
3. **Minutes.** The March 16th minutes were approved with no corrections. Motion by Steve, second by Danna, and the vestry voted to approve the minutes.
4. **Council Reports.**
 - a. Finance Council – Posey highlighted the conversation with the endowment committee to establish a new restricted account versus using the surplus funds from last year to increase the budget line items for maintenance. In the interim, the list of outstanding maintenance items will be prioritized. An increase in the budget may be asked of the vestry in the future as the review continues. The pledges are ahead of schedule and budgeted expenses are down. David Robinson believes there may a vacancy on the endowment that may need to be filled by vestry vote in the near future.
 - b. Worship Council – Steve reported the services are back inside the church at both 8am and 11am while 9am remains outside. The pre-recorded videos will be changing to a live stream of the 11am. The leads for each area are reaching out to their teams as we slowly start to add acolytes, ushers, etc. back into the services.

- c. Outreach Council – Kelly reported there was a meeting last week with PAR to discuss microloans. The groups continue to have a slow return for some of the ministries. Danna commented it is great to see the diversity of the groups Palmer is connected to in the community. Ideas are being formed for a Serve Sunday in May for on campus activities.
- d. Evangelism Council – Randy said there were 20 participants in the Storytelling Workshop on Saturday. There will be a 6 week evangelism series coming up called Embracing Evangelism led by Roger. The Wednesday webinar series continues each month.
- e. Communications Council – Susannah highlighted the Jerusalem Peacebuilders webinar is tomorrow (Wednesday) and to also honor the 2 year anniversary of Stuart and Angie Kensinger. Susannah also asked for feedback on communications.
- f. Stewardship Council – Rand said they will start to plan for the fall stewardship drive. If you are creative, Rand asked for ideas for a theme. Rand added that Roger, Dustin, and the clergy were helpful last year to send one coordinated message on stewardship.
- g. Buildings and Grounds Council – Gretta said there is \$21,000 to spend on repairs which will be prioritized and focused on the rectory, specifically the back and side porch. Other items identified for repairs included concrete repairs in the courtyard as the outdoor service moves to the courtyard during the summer. The Easter offering covered the landscaping refresh.

5. Warden Reports.

- a. Senior Warden – David deferred his discussion to the task forces.
- b. Junior Warden - Neil provided a report from Shannon that they will continue to monitor the test positivity rate. Neil added there will be a pilot meeting of the finance and endowment committees with vaccinated persons in-person and a virtual link for those not able to attend in person.

6. Task Force Reports.

- a. Membership Task Force – Neil said the storytelling workshop was a part of the task force and engaging in evangelism. The task force continues with their work including the series on evangelism.
- b. Property Development Task Force – David Robinson described the concept of developing part of the property and consider engagement with JLL development company as the brokerage firm. Gretta added that in addition to discussion with the congregation, there will be discussion with Palmer’s neighbors in Hermann Park, Rice University, the Medical Center, the diocese, and the city. Neil said the property is essentially divided into the historical half and the other half which has the opportunity to develop. The following was read to the vestry:

“An open discussion about the concept of developing part of Palmer Church's property will be the heart of the property task force's agenda for the vestry meeting. Neil, David and Gretta will update the vestry on the status of the process to date and present the task force's recommendation for an asset brokerage company for the vestry's consideration and approval. The results of the vestry's discussion and feedback will form the foundation for a meeting with the diocese in order to share a preliminary sense of our direction and goals for potential development. The task force is particularly looking to the vestry for ideas about effective ways to communicate the development concept to the parish as a whole.”

There was discussion about the potential benefits of development, including financial and continuing Palmer's ministry. There were also questions and a request for more information. After the discussion, it was decided the task force will prepare a presentation to the vestry in approximately 2 weeks to provide the vestry with more information and as a way to gather feedback ahead of a presentation to the congregation.

7. Clergy Reports.

- a. The Rev. Neil Willard – Neil said David's last day is tentatively August 15th. The new curate, Ryan, will start on August 16th and we may be able to get a grant to cover part of her salary. Neil shared he is applying for a sabbatical and will share news when he has information to share.
- b. The Rev. Liz Parker – Liz thanked David Robinson for his leadership and work on the development task force.
- c. The Rev. David Wantland – David was traveling and lost connection before being able to make his report.

8. Old Business. None.

9. New Business. None.

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