

# PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
JANUARY 19, 2014



## **Report of the Senior Warden Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church 2014 Annual Meeting**

The Year of Our Lord 2013 was quite significant in the life of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. The year began as most years do with celebrations and challenges.

The Vestry attended a highly beneficial Wardens and Vestry Conference sponsored by the Diocese at St. Mark's. The various workshops at the conference were very informative and gave us some historic perspective on issues ranging from youth ministry to Diocesan services.

The Vestry set several goals coming out of that conference: 1) hold regular open forum meetings with the parish (Warden's Forums) to communicate information to the parish and answer questions parishioners may have; 2) schedule a quarterly community gathering centered around a meal to foster fellowship and fun and 3) organize Cottage Meetings in the homes of parishioners in the fall as the centerpiece of the annual Stewardship Campaign.

Our first community gathering was held on Friday evening May 10th in the Parish Hall. Entitled "Palmer Homecoming," the event attracted over 300 people. It truly was an intergenerational event as children had their faces painted and enjoyed dancing with adults- all were treated to fried chicken and ice cream. The party attracted Palmers who had been away for some time and created a great venue for all to spend time together with old and new friends. The parish overwhelmingly supported making this an annual event.

June brought a very significant event in the life of Palmer. Father Jim Nutter resigned effective July 1st as the fifth rector in Palmer's history. Jim served Palmer for over eighteen years. The parish grew in many ways under his leadership as the resource base multiplied, the facilities expanded and improved along with the creation of many new ministries. Palmer is very grateful for his leadership and service.

In August, we were stunned by and then grieved the sudden death of Palmer receptionist Ray LeMay, a faithful member of Palmer Church for over 44 years. As a near-constant presence in our office area, Ray was "the face of Palmer" to many. We miss seeing him behind his desk and we miss his wry comments, but we take comfort in knowing that he is in the nearer presence of God.

The summer was spent making plans to lay the groundwork for calling a new rector. The Vestry, upon the advice of the Bishop, decided not to hire an interim rector but instead focus its time and energy preparing for a search process. Prospective names for the search committee were solicited from the parish and over 100 names were submitted. The Vestry appointed a search committee in October led by Dr. George Ferry. Simultaneously, the parish was surveyed to ascertain characteristics sought in a new rector and a team was assigned to produce a parish profile to be used by the search committee. All this work was completed in mid-October and the work of the committee began in earnest. As of this writing, one interview visit has been made and another was being scheduled.

While much time and effort went into the search preparation, the work of the church went on. Father Dub Brooks took the clergy lead in overseeing worship and pastoral care. Father Sam Todd rejoined Palmer in late July on a contract basis to augment the clergy staff. With the help of Deacon Linda Shelton, Father Patrick Hall and a host of non-stipendiary priests (Henry Strobel, John Price, Kit Wallingford, and Cynthia Tobola) Palmer continued its tradition of offering inspirational worship and excellent preaching. We are all very thankful for the work of these incredible priests.

In addition to these clergy, I would also like to thank the lay staff, the host of ministry leaders and volunteers, Sunday School teachers, our wonderful choir and faithful Vestry for their tireless work and leadership.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, the members of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church, for providing the resources, encouragement and overall support needed to keep the church strong in the face of a challenging transition.

I am pleased to report that the morale of Palmer is very high. The parish eagerly awaits the calling of its sixth rector and is poised to live into the vision that God has for this very special place we call Palmer.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Greg Hambrick  
Senior Warden*

## Encounter

### Wedding Coordinators

It is important that the bride and groom understand that a Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses, and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.

*The Book of Common Prayer, Page 422.*

The priest meets with the couple for premarital counseling. Using the Wedding Customary found on church's website, the couple will complete pages with important information. The wedding coordinators meet with couple and plans begin to form. The wedding coordinators are available via email and telephone to help couple through the planning.

Evangelizing plays a part in this process as wedding coordinators work with couple. Palmer Episcopal Church is a sacred place and Marriage is a sacrament not to be taken lightly. Procedures are in place to insure all goes well and all questions or problems are solved as quickly as possible.

For the year 2013, there were nine (9) weddings held at Palmer; for the year 2014, there are eight (8) weddings on the calendar thus far.

*Phyllis Surcek and Alison Surcek*

### The Worship Committee

- Consists of representatives of Acolytes (Adult and Children), Alms Counters, Altar Guild, Baptisms, Chalice Bearers, Clergy, Flower Guild, Funeral Guild, Lectors & Chalice Bearers, Orders of Service, Sunday Morning Celebration, Morning Prayer, Holy Communion for Families service, Mosaic Service, Ushers, Vergers, and Wedding Coordination.
- It oversees the services offered during the year.
- Meetings are on an "as needed" basis and when held normally are in the Chancery at 5:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. Meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend.
- Dub Brooks and Linda Shelton are now the clergy representatives. We thank them for their efforts to improve our liturgy.
- The worship committee continues to sponsor a series of lector workshops held by Caroline Baker and John Proffitt. All Lectors are expected to attend an annual workshop. Carolyn continues to coordinate the Lectors and Margie French is the contact for the Youth Lectors.

*Submitted by Glenn Turner*

## Music

The Palmer music department provides music for all of the Sunday morning worship services throughout the year. In 2013 the Palmer choirs led an Advent Lessons and Carols service, multiple Evensongs, and presented Heinrich Biber's Requiem in F. Organist Sigurd Øgaard organized a Lenten organ series.

July 25–28 the Palmer adult choir, augmented with several youth choristers, were invited to lead the music for multiple worship services during a choral residency at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. Fifty Palmers made the pilgrimage and we sang two Evensong services and two Sunday morning services for over 1000 worshippers. It was a great privilege to receive this opportunity to tour DC and to sing in the National Cathedral, we were one of only a hand full of choirs invited to sing services last summer.

On May 25th the Adult choir presented a "Broadway Cabaret" and dinner theater that was enthusiastically received by the parish. The proceeds from this event served as a major fund raiser to offset the cost of the DC tour. Parishioners, Sacred Arts Interns, and Staff Singers provided a delightful evening of show tunes and popular music and waited tables! Sigurd Øgaard and Brady Knapp accompanied the singers.

During 2013 the Palmer choirs were featured on National Public Radio's weekly broadcast "With heart and voice" on three occasions. The Palmer choir recordings have been featured on NPR on several occasions in past years and this has given Palmer Church national exposure. Our choir recordings have proven to be a very good evangelism tool!

We welcomed the return of Courtney Daniell-Knapp this Fall as a lay volunteer and teacher to assist with the children's music program. Courtney's care for the program, pedagogical expertise, and amazing musicianship has again given a tremendous boost to us all. We are all very appreciative of her extra efforts.

*Submitted by Brady Knapp*

## Sts. Mary and Martha Altar Guild

The purpose of Sts. Mary and Martha Altar Guild is to prepare our church for services that are beautiful and orderly so that worshippers will not be distracted from their worship of God.

Preparing for worship involves the purchase, preparation, cleaning and care of furnishings for the services (wine, wafers, linens, candles, brass and silver, altar hangings, vestments, and decorations), setting out everything that is needed for services, and clean-up after services. Along with Palmer's eight regular Eucharists per week, we are also responsible for preparation of all special services, such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and our Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter services. These services may take place in any of our three worship spaces: the Nave, St. Bede's Chapel, or the Columbarium.

Kathy Herrin, the director of the Altar Guild, coordinates guild activities. Glenn Turner, as head of the Worship Committee, is our liaison. Jeanine Baker is our Encounter Vessel Leader. The group is divided into four weekly teams headed by J. R. Porter (first week), Vickie Harshbarger (second week), Carole Tabor (third week), and Cornelia Williams (fourth week). These teams are responsible for the coordination of everything that takes place during their week. The Altar Guild rotates duties for all 5th week Sundays. Phyllis and Alison Svrcek are our wedding coordinators. J. R. Porter is our supply chairman who inventories, orders, purchases, and delivers supplies. We also work closely with the Funeral Guild who are also Altar Guild members; Vickie Harshbarger, Ann Pittman, and Cornelia Williams. Our group of regular members numbered 30 this year. In addition, there are three honorary members (Wedding Coordinators and one member of the Funeral Guild) and several "Ad Hoc" members who are unable to help in traditional ways, but help us with special projects.

The Altar Guild volunteers for several parish-wide duties, such as serving twice a year at Great Wednesday dinners, and Meet on the Patio receptions.

With the passing of our beloved, very active Altar Guild member Ray LeMay, we were moved to honor him in a meaningful way. After discussion among our group, we decided to coordinate a parish-wide fundraiser for the purchase of a new gold-covered Gospel Book in memory of Ray. This was completed, and the new Gospel was dedicated during the Requiem Mass in November. It is a lovely visual reminder of all that Ray meant to our parish.

George Sayre, Altar Guild member and talented woodworker, built a new velvet-lined shelf large enough to hold both the Gospel and the Revised Common Lectionary. It is located to the right of the pulpit.

The Altar Guild hosts a Book Club for our members as an extracurricular activity and a chance to socialize. It is held every other month at Vickie Harshbarger's home. We also host at least one luncheon/training session per year to welcome and train new members.

Working quietly behind the scenes, Altar Guild members perform their sacred duties with a special love and respect for the symbols and sacraments of our faith and worship. Being a member of the guild is a commitment of time and self. It is a labor of love that we perform gladly as a way of giving thanks to God for all that He has so generously given us. We thank you for allowing us to serve and help enhance the beautiful liturgy that identifies Palmer, and we extend an invitation to anyone who would be interested in doing this work with us.

*Respectfully submitted*  
*Kathy Herrin, Director*

## **Evangelism**

Evangelism is in everything we do at Palmer and beyond. Every member of Palmer is on the Evangelism Team and the Hospitality Team. We are all responsible for preparing our "land" for the coming new leadership. We do this by carrying on and carrying each other. Both Connections Classes this year were full and lively. Both Confirmation days were powerful and spirit-filled. Our on-going prayer for them is that they find the answers they seek, the community they need and the peace of our Lord.

The Hospitality Team (you) has done a wonderful job this year. You have welcomed all visitors, shared your names, asked their names and invited them back. We want everyone who comes through our substantial wooden doors to see what I saw the first time I came into Palmer: I saw a community of faith that is welcoming and freely shares its love. We honor all newcomers. In them, we see their gifts and potential. We want that message made clear to all visitors. We want all visiting Rector Candidates to see, in their first visit, who we are and whose we are.

I want to thank the Vessel Leaders, Vestry and Warden for their strong and faithful leadership this past year. It has made us stronger. It has helped us "prepare the land".

My prayer for you is that you all feel joy and peace in this, the new season for Palmer,

*Catherine Frazier*

## **St. Michael the Archangel Funeral Guild**

The Funeral Guild officially formed a "named" guild in 2011, choosing St. Michael the Archangel as our name. St. Michael the Archangel is considered the patron saint of the dead. It is St. Michael—"who is like unto God"—Prince of the Church, bearer of the standard of Christ and First Archangel, who receives the souls of the saints and leads them to Paradise.

The Guild is comprised of three Palmer Funeral Coordinators—Vickie Harshbarger, Ann Pittman, and Cornelia Williams—and Palmers who volunteer to serve as acolytes, chalice bearers, readers, greeters, and ushers at funerals and memorial services. Currently, we have twenty-nine Palmer volunteers.

In 2013, there were sixteen funeral or memorial services held at Palmer.

We have continued to develop and shape the Funeral Guild in such a way as to enable Palmer to maintain and enhance the beauty of the Anglican tradition in honoring and celebrating the lives of the deceased, and providing comfort, guidance and strength to those who mourn.

As many of our volunteers have told us, serving at funerals provides a final way to honor our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you would like to serve on the Funeral Guild as acolyte, chalice bearer, reader, greeter, or usher, or if you have any other questions, please contact one of the coordinators listed below.

*Submitted by:*

*Vickie Harshbarger*

*dvaharshbarger@sbcglobal.net*

*Ann Pittman*

*annspittman@hotmail.com*

*Cornelia Williams*

*cornelia.williams@sbcglobal.net*

## **Change Ringers of Palmer**

**In the past year, the change ringers of Palmer:**

- Continued ringing between 9 and 11 am services AND once a month between the 7:45 and 9 am service.
- By year end, had 13 members of the Sunday Service band.
- Added and lost two—net gain is no new members to our band.
- 12 members of our band are members of the North American Guild of Change Ringers—up by three.
- Participated in the weekly joint practices shared between the three churches in Houston that have change ringing bells.
- Rang for special events including the Houston Marathon and Palmer weddings (as requested).
- Performed maintenance on our change ringing bells.
- Dedicated a peal board, now on display in the south entrance of the church.
- Held one social event/business meeting for the ringers.
- Recruited actively from the congregation and Rice University.
- One member of our band was a member of the winning band (from Texas) that won the striking competition at the 7 Towers Festival.
- Published quarterly reports from Houston for the North American Guild of Change Ringers

**Some of the planned activities for this upcoming year include:**

- Encouraging our ringers to attend the 7 Towers Festival in Texarkana.
- Have our semiannual ringer's dinners and business meetings for our Sunday service ringers.
- Perform semiannual maintenance on the belfry.
- Ring for special events such as Palmer weddings, other events in the life of the parish, Houston Marathon and Museum Day.
- Continued working to become more fully integrated as a ministry at Palmer.
- Desire to create a video (or videos) that can be placed on our website or on our internal Video Display system that show what is going on in the bell tower. What we do is visually and aurally interesting and what the bells do is quite eye catching and very hard to visualize and we wish to share this with the parish and the larger community if possible.

## Challenges

- It takes a long time, much effort and personal commitment by the ringers and the teachers for the ringers (individually and as a group) to gain ringing skills. It takes an even longer view and time to build leadership skills so that this ministry will persist.
- Nine out of 13 of our Sunday Service band are parishioners. We desire to recruit more parishioners into this ministry. We also desire to build not just ringing skills but ringing leadership skills so that this ministry will continue and thrive.

*Allen Nunley  
Ringing Master*

## Grow

### Palmer Media and Technology Ministries

In 2013, the Palmer Media Ministries became the Palmer Media and Technology Ministries (MTM). We continue to grow in our service to the Palmer community and to those outside of our campus.

Work that the Media and Technology Ministries began or completed in 2013:

- The MTM has covered sound and technology needs for over 160 separate worship services, over 40 special events or meetings, and over 15 weddings or funerals.
- The Palmer Youtube channel was established. This channel allows the MTM to make music, videos, and other forms of media readily available for people looking for more information about the Parish.
- The PalmerLive system was launched. This system allows the parish to broadcast live streaming audio and video of our services to the internet and the world as a whole. The system was constructed and launched as part of the push to increase our presence on the web, and also to make our services available for those who are unable to attend Sunday worship.
- The Palmer Announcement System was constructed and installed. Consisting of 3 LCD TV screens, the Palmer Announcement System broadcasts information regarding upcoming events, outreach ministries, and activities and bright spots on the Palmer Campus.
- The MTM utilized the PalmerCast system to offer over-flow services for 2 of our Sunday Worship services.
- The MTM has begun an campus-wide IT assessment to find ways to better serve the clergy, staff, and parishioners with regards to Information Technology applications.
- The MTM has begun a process to consolidate and inventory the IT systems on campus in order to better serve the needs of the parishioners.
- The MTM has worked with our IT contract agents to minimize expenses and maximize utility for the campus. So far, this work has saved the church \$300 a month.

The Media and Technology Ministries has grown not only in responsibilities, but in offerings and services as well. We look forward to another amazing year of “Spreading the Word of God... bit by bit.”

*Faithfully Submitted,  
Ross Heinsohn  
Director of Media Ministries*

## Palmer Youth Ministries

2013 was an amazing year for the Palmer Youth Ministries. Under the leadership of Ross Heinsohn, the Palmer Youth Ministries continues to grow! By the End of Fall 2012, active youth attendance was at 32. Currently, at the beginning of 2014, we have approximately 45 active youth in our community. The Youth of Palmer continue to build a community of acceptance, reflection, fellowship and Christly love. All parishioners are also to be highly commended for their support of the Youth and the Youth Ministries.

### Key Activities

#### Junior High Formation Retreat – San Antonio, TX

- Teaming up with Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 20 youth and adults participated in the Junior High Formation Retreat to San Antonio, Texas this year, where they learned about what it means to have a firm foundation in Christ.

#### Senior High Mission Trip – Joplin, Missouri

- Fifteen Palmer and Emmanuel youth and adults participated in the Senior High Mission Trip to Joplin, Missouri this year. They worked not only to serve Christ with manual labor, but also in helping to rebuild the relationships that were disrupted by the tornadoes that tore through the city over 2 years ago.

#### Super Summer Lock-In

- A record-breaking 45 Youth attended the 2nd annual Super Summer Lock-In this year. Attendees included youth from St. John's in LaPorte, St. James' in Austin, and our own Parish. The Youth visited the HMNS, did 2 separate service projects, and even had some time for movies and games.

#### Confirmation Class

- In the Spring of 2013, 17 youth attended a semester-long confirmation class, and all were confirmed. The Youth learned about what it means to be a Christian, and what it means to be an Episcopalian. Every Sunday morning, the youth attended 90-120 minute classes where they were taught the confirmation curriculum, and discussed what it means in each of their lives.

#### Galveston Spring Retreat

- Fourteen youth attended the Galveston Spring Break retreat! Over the span of the 3-night retreat, the youth grew closer, learned from each other, and had a chance to relax and have a whole lot of fun in the sun.

We in the Palmer Youth Ministries are pleasantly stunned by the support, love, and acclamations our Youth receive weekly. We're looking forward to an amazing 2013. We truly have an incredible Episcopal Youth Community here at Palmer Church. Come join us!

*Submitted with Peace and Love,*

*Ross Heinsohn*

*Director of Youth Ministries*

## Holy Spokes

Fielded an MS-150 team and continues in the fellowship of riding together.

## St. Andrew's Guild

During 2013, The Saint Andrew's Guild prepared and offered over 2500 meals to the Palmer community. In addition, when there was extra food, the Guild provided more than 250 complimentary meals to the sextons, guards and nursery staff that support Great Wednesdays. We also donated leftovers to the Way Station.

Diners averaged about 100 people a night. However, the actual numbers vary a great deal. In 2013 our high night was 138 diners and our low 68, a 70 person difference. There seems to be no discernible pattern across months or years. Some weeks we run out of food and other weeks we lose money.

Overall we make a little money each semester. The small income we do bring in goes back to the church community through buying of kitchen supplies, dishes, pots and pans, cutlery, tools, tablecloths, equipment maintenance and repair, etc.

Chefs are responsible for creating menus, buying food stuff and staffing the endeavor with volunteers from the Guild. Our meals have represented cuisines from a variety of regions, e.g. Louisiana, China, India, France, Italy Mexico, and Texas. Given the unpredictability of attendance and budget tightness, chefs are challenged to be economical, flexible and creative. No meals would happen without the work of guild members taking on the roles of sous chefs, servers and cashiers.

Great Wednesday nourishes and sustains the Palmers community. An average of 98 people were served each night during the Fall of 13, essentially equal to 97 average of Fall 2012. There is a wisdom to having choir practice, worship and classes together on one night and supported by the sharing of a good meal. On Great Wednesdays, Palmer pulls a variety of people to the church and by nourishing body, mind and spirit builds and strengthens the bonds of our community.

*David Veale*

## **Order of St. Luke**

- Maintained presence in 9 am, 11 am Sunday services and 6 pm Wednesday Healing Eucharist
- Maintained Prayer List
- Sent representatives to Healing Missions

*Submitted by Jacqueline Campbell*

## **Daughters of the King**

Palmer Daughters of the King followed their Rule of Prayer and Service by:

- Praying daily for unity of Christ's Church, the spread of Christ's Kingdom, the spiritual growth of our parish, Palmer's search for a new Rector, and for our Clergy
- Praying daily for the needs of all for whom prayers are requested from the Palmer website "Prayer Link," by e-mail or from the Prayer Boxes
- Holding all prayer requests in strictest confidence
- Offering spiritual refreshment and fellowship at monthly meetings through prayer, discussion, visits to Holly Hall, Bible study and speakers such as Linda Shubert who shared her second pilgrimage on the ancient Camino de Santiago or "Way of St. James"
- Training five new Daughters for induction into the Order
- Co-hosting the Palmer reception and book signing honoring Fr. John Price and marking publication of his book "Revealing Heaven"
- Hosting a Silent Retreat for Women led by Sr. Adeline O'Donoghue at the Villa de Matel
- Hosting a Lenten Quiet Day at Palmer led by Fr. Sam Todd
- Hosting a day of Advent Reflections at Palmer led by Casey Duncan
- Continuing our Advent/Christmas tradition of decorating the Tree in the Tower Room with dozens of handmade Christ Monograms or "Chrismons"

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ann Starks*

## 2nd Story Children's Ministry

This year marked several exciting milestones in the growth of the Children's Ministry. In July, we held the first Vacation Bible School at Palmer Church in four years. This three-day event was well subscribed, having in attendance 48 day campers and 27 youth and adult counselors and troop leaders.

Vacation Bible School marked the beginning of what would become the 2nd Story Children's Ministry, which we launched in early August 2013 to create an environment of love and grace in Christ Jesus for our youngest parishioners. 2nd Story has since launched several new activities for the parish, including a bi-annual Parent's Nite Out, which gives parents a three-hour break from the kids who come to Palmer for a supervised evening of fun, games, and arts and crafts. Our thanks to the Youth Ministry for your support during these evenings!

The Children's Ministry also introduced significant changes in the Palmer Sunday School Program in 2013, enjoying tremendous growth, with 66 children and 19 deeply committed teachers by the end of the year. Under the direction of Father Dub Brooks, we implemented a new curriculum, "Living the Good News," a lectionary-based program designed to keep children and teachers engaged with and informed about the Liturgy, and be entertained along the way. Our teachers served five group levels: Nursery, 18 months to 3 years old, Pre-K, Kindergarten, Grades 1-3, and Grades 4-5.

In addition to this, 2nd Story instituted a monthly Service Project to benefit the ministries of Palmer Church and the surrounding community. In connection with our Blessing of the Animals event, our children prepared "Blessing Bags" full of treats and goodies for animals cared for by the Citizens for Animal Protection (CAPS) organization. . We also held a parish-wide Advent Wreath Making project to kick off the holidays. Again, thanks to the Loft Youth Ministries for your support in these events!

The 2nd Story Children's Ministry is located on the 2nd floor of the Palmer Campus adjacent to the Loft Youth Ministry to which our youngsters will continually transition. We are preparing for continued growth and blessings this year and we welcome everyone to come visit and to participate in our commitment to demonstrate to our young parishioners how we fit into Christ's love and His family.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kaci Timmons*

*Coordinator of Children's Ministry and Music*

## Palmer Memorial Church Endowment Fund

The Trustees of the Palmer Endowment for the year 2013 are James Key, Chair; Alan Christensen, Treasurer; Dawn Hawley, Secretary; Ron Robins; and Martha Bersch. Linda Kelly serves as Counsel.

As of January 1, 2013, the value of Endowment assets was \$1,858,884.43. The major expense during the year was \$74,108.80 representing interest and principal payment on the remainder of the Palmer building fund balance. That remaining balance is now \$150,000 and should be paid off in 18 months unless the Board decides to act sooner. Remaining expenses totaled \$3251.75 all related to the purchase and installation of the Giving Tree Plaque. Contributions to the Endowment for the year 2013 totaled \$17,000. 00. At December 31, 2013, Endowment assets were \$2,115,169.73. Endowment funds are professionally managed by Vanguard Asset Management Services with general direction provided by the Board,

This year has seen the installation of a Giving Tree Plaque recognizing the founding members of the Daphne Palmer Neville Society, a group of parishioners who have included the Palmer Endowment as part of their estate planning. The number acknowledging such a gift has now grown to 57 estates, individuals and families. It is hoped that such a reminder of support will encourage others to include Palmer in their estate planning.

The Trustees have codified in our minutes that the purpose of the Endowment is to generate enough income to support the maintenance and potential capital projects related to the Church buildings and rectory. Presently, the Endowment can act as a source of funds for emergency repair if regular budgetary funds are not available.

When final payment is made on the building note, the Endowment income can be used for capital improvements and maintenance. The principal funds of the Endowment are presently \$975,000.00 and this principal will never be violated, but will continue to grow. The difference between the principal and total Endowment assets represents investment gains which are also retained (as much as possible) to generate further income.

*Respectfully submitted,  
James E. Key  
Chair*

## Serve

### Advent Gift Market

The 2013 Advent Gift Market was held on three Sunday mornings and two Wednesday evenings in Advent. This year an additional option was added to purchase online through Palmer's eGiving website.

Totals are still being tallied, but donations were increased from last year. Collections were designated for the following ministries: Archway Academy, Kairos Ministry, Palmer Place Apartments, Refugee Resettlement Ministry, Way Station, and Yellowstone Academy.

*Ansley Browns and Bobbie Wallingford, co-chairs*

### Angel Tree

Angel Tree provides Christmas gifts for children with a parent in prison. In 2013, parishioners purchased, wrapped, sorted, and delivered Christmas gifts for 74 children. This year we had 7 parishioners deliver gifts.

We would like to thank everyone for all their participation to make this ministry successful.

Coordinators: Alli Jarrett, Karin Farquhar

### Boy Scout Troop 511

Troop 511 has been a part of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church's outreach mission since 2006 when the Troop was chartered. Troop 511 resides in the Twin Bayou District of the Sam Houston Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The mission of Troop 511 is to prepare young men to make ethical and moral decision over their life-times by instilling in them the values of the scout oath and law.

- Membership of 13 Scouts.
- Mentored by six Assistant Scoutmasters, a number of whom also served as Merit Badge Counselors.
- The work done with these boys over the past year, along with both their own efforts and the efforts of their parents, resulted in numerous rank advancements, including one Eagle Scout Award for the troop presented to William Hunter.
- Seven scouts at the rank of Life, three working on Eagle projects.
- Twenty three nights of camping including weekends at Huntsville State Park, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, Village Creek State Park, and a week at Blue Ridge Scout Ranch in Virginia.
- Fund raising was accomplished by boys selling popcorn, a car wash, Christmas poinsettias and a grant from the Seay Foundation.
- Completed two service projects
- Completed a conservation project at Blue Ridge Scout Ranch installing trail steps.
- A food drive which collected over 1900 non-perishable food items, which were donated to a local Church.

*Submitted by Darryl Hadsell, Scoutmaster*

## Church In The Park

Church in the Park is an early Saturday morning ministry outreach serving the less fortunate and homeless people who the Lord has placed before us. We welcome them in with coffee, water and doughnuts every Saturday, 52 weeks a year in the church courtyard and further challenge and engage their hearts through prayer, worship and the Word of God. We begin at 7:30 am and conclude at approximately 9:30 am by distribution of a 120 freshly made sack lunches.

### In 2013 Church in the Park:

- Served more than 6500 of God's people by way of not only physical but also spiritual nourishment.
- Engaged over 12 different multi-denominational/multi-racial Houston surrounding churches/ministries in all levels of service from Greeting, Serving, Preaching, Music, Christian Mime/Drama and Local Homeless services assisting those that desire, with help getting off the street.
- Has been an opportunity for many who are called of God to preach to come and share their gifts as well as those leading worship. This has been a great mentoring and service opportunity for many.
- Has distributed over 1500 Bibles, Christian literature and countless amounts of clothing and toiletries. This year through Warm Hands-Warm Hearts we distributed hundreds of gloves to our friends.

Church in the Park has been an associated ministry of Palmer for over 7 years. It continues to nurture God's people and see an increase and yielded harvest of souls that only the Lord Jesus can bring forth.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Craig Hearn  
Burning Hope Ministries*

## Community of Hope

The Community of Hope is a small group of trained parishioners whose ministry is to create a Christian community of volunteer lay chaplains united in prayer, shaped by Benedictine spirituality, and equipped for pastoral care ministry. COH ministers visited persons in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice settings, special locations serving those in grief, such as Bo's Place, and visitors to the Medical Center who may be connected through our Palmer Medical Center Ministries. Several members also served as Eucharistic Visitors on Sundays, taking the Eucharist to those unable to attend church.

The Community of Hope is sponsored and supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and is now active in many denominations and internationally. Palmer partnered with Christ the King Lutheran Church again in 2013 for monthly education and support meetings. Together we plan to offer a 14-week, 42-hour training course in the fall of 2014 to help trainees discern God's call to them for pastoral care ministry and to equip them to serve as commissioned lay chaplains.

Barbara Cauble retired as chair of this ministry this year and we thank her for her very faithful service. As Palmer hopes to increase our ministry to the Medical Center and those it serves, we would like to strengthen our COH and help more of our members participate in this ministry and discover the blessings of offering pastoral care. Please contact us for more information.

*Linda Shelton, Deacon*

## **Cub Scout Pack 511**

Palmer's Cub Scout Pack 511 is a great opportunity for boys from first through fifth grades to be a part of an exciting and enriching adventure. In Cub Scouts, boys learn by doing, and in Pack 511 the boys enjoy crafts, storytelling, singing songs, going on field trips – all along the way earning badges and awards. Family involvement is an essential part of Cub Scouting, and parents are encouraged to play an active role in the program. This is very evident as our Pack 511 “family” of parents, sisters and brothers is over one hundred strong.

Since beginning our eighth year last September we have a total of thirty-five boys in Pack 511 with diverse backgrounds and faiths from various parts of the city. Our outreach to the community is one of our strengths as 95% of our boys are from outside of the Palmer parish.

Our 2013 was action packed. We:

- Participated in Scout Sunday at Palmer showing off our Pinewood derby cars and other Cub “stuff” at the reception in the Courtyard.
- Had our Spring and Fall family overnight camp outs.
- Watched the Cubs of Pack 511 continue to earn various awards in the Cub Scout Program. Nine of our Cubs will earn the highest award in Cub Scouts, the “Arrow of Light” award in February 2014.
- Constructed and raced Pinewood Derby” cars at Palmer
- And most importantly, had a lot of fun!

Pack 511 is a self-sustaining outreach program for Palmer. Our annual popcorn fundraiser had sales of over \$5,200 with a net to Pack 511 of over \$1,600. This, along with our annual dues, supports most our needs. Most importantly, everyone at Pack 511 is grateful that Palmer Church enthusiastically supports us and provides us with a place for our Pack meetings, Den Meetings and all our other activities. From September to May we meet at Palmer twice a month on Sunday afternoons for our Den Meetings and once a month for our Pack Meetings. Without this support and without the facilities at Palmer Church, there would be no Pack 511.

Our future is bright. As we move forward and grow we are blessed to have a wonderful church community to support us. Thank you everyone at Palmer Church!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Roy Lund*

## **Domestic Missions**

This ministry helps victims of natural disasters that have occurred within the US borders, to clean-up and rebuild. Past Palmer work parties have gone to New Orleans and Galveston after hurricanes Katrina and Ike, and in 2012 went to Bastrop, TX, following the forest fires. No trips took place in 2013, but should help be needed, the group will reform to respond.

## **Girl Scout Troop 25230**

In 2013 Girl Scout Troop 25230 completed its 6th and began its 7th year of “building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” The youngest girls in the troop are currently 2nd year Juniors, so the troop that started with Daisies and Brownies back in September 2007 now has advanced to the Junior and Cadette level.

While the traditional Girl Scout troop model is “one grade, one school,” our troop bucks that trend! Our girls

- come from all over Houston
- attend 13 different schools
- represent two levels of Girl Scouts

- Eleven Juniors (all 5th graders) and
- Ten Cadettes (four 6th graders, three 7th graders, and three 8th graders)
- include eight members from Palmer (and 15 non-members of Palmer).

During the current membership year, we have welcomed 4 new members, 1 of whom is brand new to Girl Scouts.

Last year's three 5th grader Juniors completed and earned their Bronze Award by instituting a recycling program at Palmer. They surveyed the campus, spoke with parish administrators, researched what can be recycled in the City of Houston, connected Palmer with the officials at the City to arrange for recycling pick-up, bought and labeled blue recycling bins to be placed around the campus, presented information about the program to the parish and office staff, and created brochures that you'll see posted at Palmer wherever you can pick up information about parish activities. We hope you've noticed the bins, and will contribute to the "greening" of Palmer.

Through the awards the girls earn, the activities they do (like camping), and the opportunities they have to work with girls from outside their circle of friends, they're learning to navigate relationships and developing skills that will serve them as they grow into independent young women. They're also running their own businesses through the Cookie Sales program. It's cookie season – we hope we can count on your support!!

We are extremely grateful for Palmer's continued support of this ministry.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Marie Wehrung  
Leader, Troop 25230*

## **James Ministry**

The James Ministry is a lay ministry devoted to demonstrating Christ's love in action. Our mission is to help meet the short-term, practical needs of our extended parish family, including parishioners, visitors, medical patients-as well as those who care for them. James Ministers are volunteers who can provide those in need with:

- rides to Church
- transportation for doctor's appointments, treatment at the Medical Center, shopping, outings, or trips to and from local airports
- grocery deliveries or simple meals
- occasional outings from the hospital, hotel room or medical apartment assistance with household tasks, such as laundry, dishes, etc time off for caregivers who need a break

This is the perfect ministry for those who can't commit to regular schedules but are willing to serve when available. If you can devote time when you're available to help people do simple but necessary chores they can't do by themselves, you can be a James Minister. It doesn't matter whether you live near Palmer or not, since we get calls for help from all over Houston. All it takes is a willing heart. Please contact Cathy Troisi at [ctroisi@gmail.com](mailto:ctroisi@gmail.com) or 713.661.4233 if you are interested in being a part of this caring ministry.

*Cathy Troisi*

## **Kairos Prison Ministry**

### **The Numbers:**

- 1 prison: Carol S. Vance unit, Richmond, Texas
- 3 Kairos weekend retreats (last one was #51)
- 162 resident inmates attending Kairos
- 7,500 dozen cookies served (as a sign of God's grace)

- 6,300 handwritten letters expressing prayers, encouragement and support
- 12 monthly “reunions” a gathering of all the Kairos community to share & Pray
- 52 weekly “Prayer & Share” groups of volunteers and inmates sharing spiritual walks.
- 20,000 hours by 50+ volunteers and churches to prepare, put on, and sustain 3 Kairos.
- \$30,000 raised from volunteers, churches and communities to support Kairos ministry.

### **The Results:**

Inmates have learned that God loves them through his people the Church. The volunteers have learned that God will provide what is needed as well as what it means to serve those in need. We are all called to serve: *1 Peter 4:10* “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” The most visible form was all the volunteers from the Palmer Community and many other churches in the Houston area that gave of their time, talent, and treasure to men who could not believe that anyone cared for them or would spend time with them: they were surprised by Grace. Additionally, place-mats made by children and letters written by Palmers added to each inmate’s experience of Joy. A less visible, but very important gift was that of supporting the Kairos retreats in Prayer.

The volunteers have witnessed just some of the results: tears of joy from the joyless, love replacing hatred, racial divides melting, gaining a sense of Christian community replacing the all-pervasive loneliness and separation that plagues all prisons. Residents “see” that God really does love them just as they are. They understand that people on the “outside” DO care by sending gifts of food, cookies, letters, Prayers, and supporting and sending volunteers to be friends in Christ. The Kairos community of Carol S. Vance is profoundly grateful giving all praise and thanks to God for you and our shared ministry.

*Rev. John Price*

*Pat Robson*

*David Mather*

### **Palmer Eucharistic Visitors**

The role of this ministry is to share the Body and Blood of Christ with those who cannot be present in church. A group of volunteers, selected by the clergy, takes Holy Communion to the hospitalized and homebound following services on Sunday mornings. During 2013, 129 visits were made and 261 persons received the sacrament.

Deacon Linda Shelton oversees this ministry, and works with clergy and parishioners to identify Palmers who, whether on a regular or temporary basis, should be offered a Eucharistic visit.

Suzie Dennis, as Co-coordinator of the Medical Center Ministries, identifies non-Palmers who would appreciate a visit; these are most often active members of other Episcopal parishes and dioceses who are in Houston for medical treatment and are very grateful for our presence.

Thad Lueders keeps track of active Eucharistic Visitors and assigns three to be on call each Sunday, based on a six-week rotation schedule.

Michael LaRue maintains a list of hospitalized and homebound Palmers and non-Palmers; from this list, and in consultation with Deacon Shelton and Suzie Dennis, Thad Lueders makes calls on Saturdays to find out who would like a visit the next day, and then schedules volunteers to make the visits. Volunteers then let the verger know that they will need a communion kit on the altar at one of the Sunday morning services.

Visits are generally brief, and follow a shortened Order of Service; Blaine Wilson prints copies of these each Sunday, including the Gospel lesson for the day.

We do not attempt to counsel or help with practical issues, but visitors do make reports to Deacon Shelton following their visits to indicate if there are any emergency issues or if referrals to other ministries might be appropriate.

Linda Schmieg Collins, who has been a key part of this ministry as Palmer Pastoral Care Co-coordinator, is taking some time off. Many thanks to Linda for her faithful years of service in organizing and overseeing the Eucharistic Visitor Ministry.

## **Palmer Place Apartments**

Our Palmer Place apartments continue to provide affordable and comfortable “homes away from home” for many Texas Medical Center patients and their families as they undergo treatment for an extended period of time.

Palmer Place is about more than just providing housing; we're a ministry of compassionate volunteers with welcoming spirits who desire to reflect God's love to our apartment guests and to be a reminder that they are not alone on their medical journey.

- Dining room sets were upgraded in two apartments.
- New washers and dryers were installed in all apartments.
- Palmer Place continues to sponsor the fall reception for Texas Medical Center patients and their families from within the IMT apartment complex. We alternate with Grace Presbyterian Church and Kingwood Church of Christ. These receptions provide an enjoyable social time for approximately 75 patients, family members and ministry volunteers.
- Thirty two patients and their families were checked in/out with one less apartment than last year. This is an all time high for Palmer Place check-ins within a year.
- Twenty two dedicated and faithful volunteers facilitated guest placements, check-ins, check-outs, rent collection and maintenance for our five apartments.
- Eight new volunteers joined our ministry during the summer months.
- Holiday door wreaths were hung on each apartment door and Christmas trees were placed in each apartment for our guests to enjoy and to provide some holiday spirit.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Begalke  
Palmer Place Coordinator*

## **Palmer Refugee Resettlement Ministry**

Palmer partnered with Episcopal Migration Ministries and Interfaith Ministries again in 2013 to help welcome and provide support for a sixth family of refugees who were resettled in Houston. Budgeted funds and generous donations of both cash and in-kind donations of gently used furniture, clothing, toys, and house wares helped a team of parishioners furnish an apartment for an arriving family. Groceries and a welcome meal were provided upon the family's arrival in Houston, where they were met by our team chairman and caseworker.

The young family, a mother, father and toddler son, moved shortly after their arrival to Dallas as they had a friend there, the only person they knew in the U.S. They were allowed to keep all groceries, personal items, clothing, and linens provided them.

Though disappointed, we gathered more donations, replaced missing items, and moved furniture to a larger apartment to co-sponsor a family of five and their adult daughter and her child, who arrived from Eritrea in northeastern Africa. They also were met at the airport, welcomed with a hot meal, provided groceries, one month's rent, and assisted with transportation for initial appointments and school registrations. School uniforms were provided younger children and baby gifts were taken for the expectant mother. Some of the high-

lights of our six month co-sponsorship include the family coming to a Wednesday night dinner at the church where they were introduced and a trip to the zoo and a fast food restaurant. A celebration Texas BBQ dinner in a home marked the completion of the co-sponsorship. Two of us have visited them since, sharing recipes over coffee and a holiday visit. Occasional phone calls for encouragement and advocacy also has been provided.

The families Palmer has co-sponsored become friends as we support them in times of grief such as the passing of a grandparent and in times of celebration such as weddings and births. Our compassion and mutual respect far over reaches the length of the agreement with resettling.

Palmer is generous in offering donations in support of refugees and in setting up the apartments. However, we need more involvement from parishioners with the families as they truly benefit from and appreciate most the mentoring and friendship of fellow community members. We plan to offer financial support for a family's resettlement in support of EMM, Interfaith and refugees, but we need to build a team of volunteers before we can commit to full co-sponsorship in 2014. If you can help or want to know more about the ministry, please contact Frances Vonk at [fvonk@yahoo.com](mailto:fvonk@yahoo.com).

### **Palmer Pastoral Care Coordinator**

Linda Schmiege Collins coordinated requests for pastoral care from Palmer parishioners in 2013, notifying and working with clergy when parishioners were ill, hospitalized, or needed other care. She worked with Thad Leuders, Eucharistic Visitor scheduler, to arrange for those who were unable to attend church to receive Communion each week, made phone calls to parishioners to convey Palmer's concern and made referrals for those requesting connections or services of other ministries in the parish, particularly in the pastoral care area. Linda stepped down at the end of the year and currently the coordination will be handled by the Rev. Linda Shelton and Thad Lueders. If you are interested in serving in or may be in need of our services, please let us know by contacting the Rev. Shelton.

*Linda Schmiege Collins*

### **Palmer Medical Center Ministries**

Palmer Medical Center Ministries continue to support God's children who come to Houston seeking medical treatment. We connect them with any of our spiritual and practical ministries who can help them during their treatment periods. We provide Holy Communion on Sundays, and our clergy visit these patients. We depend on parishioners, former patients, and our Palmer website to link us to these incoming patients and their families. We have served people from around the United States, Japan, and other nearby countries.

It is an honor and a privilege.

*Suzie Dennis*

*Palmer Medical Center Ministries Coordinator*

### **Stephen Ministry**

Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one Christ-centered confidential caring ministry based on the conviction that God can work through trained lay parishioners to plant hope and healing in people facing difficult times.

#### **During 2013:**

- Twenty Stephen Ministers provided 480 hours of care to individuals experiencing grief, divorce, illness, job loss, loneliness and/or other life challenges.
- In addition to one-on-one time with their care receivers, Stephen Ministers devote up to 5 hours per month to continuing education and peer support and supervision.
- Stephen Ministry leaders devote an additional 5 – 10 hrs/month in administration and planning.

- An annual retreat is held each January at Camp Allen, for sharing, renewal and spiritual growth.
- During 2013, active Stephen Ministers included: Dianna Archer, Debbie Arnold, Ann Ayers, Dan Cromack, Mary Davenport, Leslie Davidson, Chris Fresquez, Bill Kersten, Jim Lober, Fred Miller, Kay Piper, and Gregoria Smith. Leaders, who also serve as care givers, include Jerry Boldra, Loren Gideon, Richard Donelson, Lois Hamblin, Katie Pannell, Peggy Riley and Mary Ann Starks.
- Three additional Stephen Ministers completed the 50-hr training course in early December and are to be commissioned on January 12, 2014. They are Celia Clowe, Marilyn Hermance and Katrin Milbury.

We feel grateful and privileged to serve in this ministry.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lois Hamblin, Referrals Coordinator*

## **Walking The Mourners' Path Grief Ministry**

Walking the Mourner's Path, an eight week small group offering support for those grieving the death of a loved one, whether family member, neighbor, co-worker or friend, has been offered at Palmer since 2006. Each group is facilitated by two trained persons and a clergy member is present as well. Jeanine Baker, Betty Key, and Sue Hamblen are our facilitators and rotate serving; and, Linda Shelton serves as clergy and is also a trained facilitator. Though Christ-centered, the groups are open to everyone and discussions follow a proven curriculum.

**This year at Palmer we:**

- continued our practice of sending a letter, information brochure and booklet of meditations to those whom we learn have experienced the death of a loved one.
- offered two group sessions, and have now served almost 100 persons since beginning in 2006.
- hosted a training site for the national office of Walking the Mourner's Path. We assisted with arrangements, advertising and recruiting, worship and prayer support so that 16 new facilitators could be trained for new groups to begin in Episcopal and other denomination's churches, and in one hospice site.
- are supporting efforts of neighboring churches, St. Mark's Episcopal and Christ the King Lutheran, as they begin their ministry. We are waiting to start our next group after Easter 2014.
- will explore the possibility of offering a daytime group for the first time, possibly partnering with other groups and facilitators to reach those unable to participate at night.

Each of us view our participation in Walking the Mourner's Path as a privilege and are grateful for the opportunity to be present with and walk alongside people on this very special path. Please contact any of us for more information.

*Linda Shelton, Deacon*

## **The Way Station**

The Way Station serves hungry and homeless clients by providing a hot, nutritious breakfast five days a week, 52 weeks a year on the church's patio. Serving hours are from 7:45 until 9:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

In 2013 the Way Station:

Prepared breakfast for and provided services, toiletries, and access to restrooms, a telephone, and mailing address to more than 7,100 clients;

- Served more than 91,000 meals--an average of 350 meals per day, every weekday;
- Delivered intensive case management services and provided housing vouchers, utility support, clothing, health care, furniture, and referrals to more than 3,000 clients, with the goal to end homelessness and increase stability and self-sufficiency;

- Provided medical care and referrals and mental health services and referrals;
- Served 460 people at our annual Christmas party for clients on December 16 in Fellowship Hall; and
- Dedicated more than \$0.85 of every dollar directly to our mission and programs.

The Way Station has been a ministry of Palmer Church for 22 years. It is an integral part of the church and is not a separate non-profit organization. For the volunteer information/orientation document, please see page 5 of the Way Station's webpage on the church website [www.palmerchurch.org](http://www.palmerchurch.org). The budget for 2013 was \$510,330.00. Funds were raised from 13 foundations and churches and 200 individuals and businesses.

**Way Station Steering Committee for 2013:**

Dan Cromack, Chair  
 Jim Mercurio, Vice Chair  
 David Ahlquist  
 John Fields  
 Pam Harvey: 713.328.0773 or  
 Bob Hawley: 713.529.6196  
 Pat Reed  
 Andy Schatte

**Way Station staff:**

Terry Henry, program director  
 Pat Simmons, client services director  
 Tim Lloyd, case manager

*Submitted by Dan Cromack*

**The Wemmicks**

The Wemmicks is a support group for caregivers who care for their parents. The information shared at the meetings is confidential and offers the caregivers feedback and support on elderly care.

We are a small group of six members. In the second half of 2013, we started meeting at Palmer Church, and for the greater part of the year, we met twice a month.

Currently we are assessing the needs of our group including dates, times, and frequency of our meetings.

This ministry continues to be an important part for caregivers ministering to their parents.

*Victor Lamas*

**Yellowstone Ministry**

The Yellowstone Ministry serves to help connect Palmer with Yellowstone Academy, a private Christian school in the nearby Third Ward that serves low-income students from Pre-K through eighth grades who live in extreme poverty. We serve them with our time, as volunteers, as well as with in-kind donations.

In 2013, we held a successful Lenten drive where we collected monetary donations and school supplies that helped replenish the school's dwindling supply near the end of the school year. We also promoted the "Go Green to Get Green" project where we collected ink/toner cartridges, cell phones and other electronics that Yellowstone will recycle as a fundraiser for the school. We continued to deliver snacks collected every 3rd Sunday, also known as "Yellowstone Snack Sunday." Thanks to donations received through the 2012 Advent Gift Market and a very generous parishioner donation, we were able to provide over \$2000 in supplies and gift cards for teachers to use to purchase classroom materials. We are planning to use additional funds to help with a landscaping project this spring (2014). Our in-school volunteers continue to provide tutoring, field trip chaperoning, and special event support. One Palmer family continues to Shepherd a Yellowstone student. We have continued to build a bond between our church and this wonderful school.

*Anne Warner*