

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



PALMER MEMORIAL
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
— HOUSTON, TEXAS —

Report of the Senior Warden



The year 2018 began with a great deal of purpose and enthusiasm following the reorganization of our various Councils and the setting of clear goals to be accomplished as the year progressed. Our Communications Council, under the able leadership of Priscilla Plumb, was charged with increasing the visibility of Palmer and our ministries. This effort has been very successful with articles about Palmer in community publications, videos of parish life on our website and numerous visitors to our Facebook page. The Palmer is emailed weekly to our parishioners and contains up-to-date and accurate information as well as interesting graphics.

The Stewardship Council, led this year by Linda Sylvan, organized a stewardship campaign focusing on our many ministries. This 2019 pledge drive continues and we expect to have the financial resources to maintain our current level of activities. Jim Mercurio has been invaluable as our Vestry liaison to the Finance Committee and head of our budgeting process. This total stewardship effort by the Council and careful management of expenditures by our administrative staff has led to the first balanced budget and year-end surplus in 5 years.

The Worship Council, chaired by Victor Lamas, has successfully maintained our high standards of liturgy and organized all the resources needed for that purpose, such as Altar Guild, Acolytes, and Sacramental Assistants. Our Outreach Council was chaired by The Rev. Liz Parker with help from many of our lay members particularly Kelly Williams who organized three very successful Serve Sundays. The Council has researched several other opportunities for meaningful outreach and will pursue those in 2019.

The Evangelism Council is chaired by Roger Hutchison. The Council's efforts to implement a full program of Christian Formation on Sundays and Wednesday nights as well as special events during the year has led to a fuller parish life and sense of community and, yes, more people in attendance.

Pastoral care remains a strong focus at Palmer. Palmer Place Apartments, Community of Hope, Stephen Ministry, Walking the Mourner's Path, Eucharistic Visitors, and our Medical Center Ministry make a meaningful difference in people's lives every day.

There were other wonderful events in 2018 starting with the Ordination of our Curate, The Rev. David Wantland, and continuing with his presence in the pulpit and as celebrant during the year. In April a special fund drive for needed updates and repair to our Fisk organ was met with enthusiasm and over-subscribed, enabling us to fund other needs in the Music Department. Palmers also participated in Houston's Pride Parade, Missionpalooza for youth and Jerusalem Peacebuilders Camp among others; the Parish Retreat and the Women's Retreat, both at Camp Allen, built community and fellowship.

As Senior Warden of an active and historic Parish, my task is essentially to keep all the parts organized. The real work is done by our dedicated staff of Sue Howard, Tara McConathy, Jessica Evans, Roger Hutchison and Dustin Jesudason. Jimmy Parrales ably manages our housekeeping staff and Clarence Hulin coordinates security. The music program directed by Brady Knapp remains the finest of its type in the city. Our Clergy staff prospers under the steady guidance of The Rev. Neil Willard as Rector, and I cannot say enough of the pastoral presence and personal strength of The Rev. Liz Parker. It has been a pleasure to see the development of The Rev. Wantland and the genuine love with which he has been embraced by this Parish.

The parish can also be thankful for the services of our retiring Vestry members, Ruth Davies, Steven Vaughan, Allison Marek and Jim Mercurio. Their judgment and leadership is to be commended.

Although we could do more of our healing and transforming work if we had more resources, I have every expectation that in 2019 Palmer will "go forth to do the work YOU have given us to do."

Jim Key, Senior Warden



Table of Contents

Angel Tree	4
Archway Academy	4
Baptism Ministry	4
Christian Formation Report	5
Christian Meditation	6
Community of Hope	6
Creative Arts Community	7
Daughters of the King	7
Dinner and Discussion Groups	7
Downtown Lunch Group	8
Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC)	8
Endowment Fund	8
Evangelism Report	9
Flower Guild	10
Jerusalem Peacebuilders	10
Library	11
Music at Palmer	11
Older Adults Pastoral Care Ministry	12
Order of St. Luke	12
Palmer Medical Center Ministry	12
Palmer Place Ministry	13
Pastoral Care Ministries	13
Safeguarding	13
Saints Mary and Martha Altar Guild	14
Serve Sunday	14
Star of Hope: Cornerstone Community	15
Stephen Ministry	15
Tower Bell Ringers	15
Ushers	16
Walking The Mourner's Path	16
Wedding Coordinators	16
Women's First Thursdays	17
Worship Council	17
Young Adults	18
Youth Ministries	18

MINISTRY REPORTS

Angel Tree

Angel Tree is a division of Prison Ministries and provides Christmas gifts to children whose parent is incarcerated, on behalf of that parent. In 2018 Palmer Church requested 75 children and received 32 names. Palmer parishioners enthusiastically volunteered with this ministry and we were able to adopt and deliver gifts to 28 children in the homes of 15 caregivers. Due to the significant decline in the number of children we received, many parishioners were unable to participate in the ministry, and those who did were limited to one child per parish family. We will again request 75 children for the 2019 year in hopes to receive enough names for all parish families wishing to participate to do so.

Submitted by Jenn Vaughan

Archway Academy

Archway Academy graduated its 15th class of students in recovery from substance use disorder on Friday, June 1st in the Main Sanctuary of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. The 2017-2018 school year saw Archway serve 106 high school students, with a 58% sobriety rate. At any given time, nearly 1,000 high school students in and around Houston are participating in treatment or recovery programs. Studies show that adolescents re-entering their old schools and peer groups, after rehab, have an 80% chance of relapse within the first 90 days. Archway offers not only a chance to receive a high school education but the community to allow our students to maintain their sobriety. Our students and their families now have hope for a future. We had 21 in the class of graduating seniors in 2018 and 94% have gone on to some level of higher education. They are attending schools such as University of Texas at Austin, St. Edwards University, Houston Community College, Blinn Junior College, University of Houston, Pitzer College and Texas Southern University (just to name a few). There are currently 40 sober high schools in the United States, with Archway the largest and one of the oldest. New schools are looking to form all the time in other parts of the country. As Archway is viewed as the accepted model, many folks interested in establishing a sober high school come to Houston to visit us and see how our school works. Archway is very thankful to our generous supporters and especially Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. Your generosity allows us to serve these young students and give them and their families hope.

Submitted by Sasha McLean



Baptism Ministry

The Baptism Ministry prepared for 13 baptisms across 6 services, the same number as the year before. We have continued the process of preparing for baptisms, where a family must first meet with the Rev. Liz Parker, and then they are officially added to the schedule. There are officially 5 Baptism services throughout the year: Epiphany Sunday, Easter Saturday at the 7 pm Vigil service, Easter II, Pentecost, and All Saint's Day. Another possibility is when the Bishop is present for confirmations, and then, it would be at the 9am service. Parents and Godparents meet with the Baptism coordinator the Saturday before the service to rehearse the logistics of the baptism.

Catherine Beebe

Christian Formation Report

Christian formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation. Every experience in our lives can provide us with the opportunity to express our faith; the challenge we face is recognizing these opportunities and learning ways to live a sometimes-countercultural life in a secular world.

- » *Palmer Faith Forum* – This forum focused on race relations and getting to know our neighbors from Rice University, The Texas Medical Center, The Museum District, neighboring faith communities. We had the opportunity to hear from a diverse group of practicing educators, experienced community leaders, and hands-on researchers. We explored ways that Palmer can be a better neighbor through partnerships, action, and service.
- » *“Where the Wild Things Are – Parenting in an Ever-changing World”* – Through the sharing of classic and modern children’s books, children’s literature, and Holy Scripture, we explored and discussed themes that touch, challenge, and inspire our lives as parents.
- » *Sunday Morning Bible Study Class* – This returning Bible Study class studied the Gospel of Acts.

Palmer also offers four different Bible Studies throughout the week.

- » *Sunday Bible Study* – Everyone is invited to this Bible Study on Sundays from 10:15 AM to 10:50 AM in Parish Hall.
- » *Wednesday Bible Study* – Wednesdays from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM in room A102.
- » *Men’s Bible Study* – This group meets Tuesdays from 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM in Room A102.
- » *Women’s Bible Study* – This group meets on Tuesday mornings at 7:00 AM in the Palmer Library.



Children’s Formation:

Liturgy Preparation (Liturgy Prep) is offered each Sunday as an integral part of the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services. Our average participation numbers have grown significantly this year. We have had as many as 60 children present for Liturgy Prep. The children are led out of church behind the children’s cross during the Gospel hymn and return at the exchange of the Peace. During this special time, the children have an opportunity to worship and learn about the gospel lesson for the day. This special time is spent singing together, praying together, and talking about the gospel or some other aspect of the Liturgy. Liturgy Preparation is offered to all children.

Children’s Sunday School: This year we began the fourth year of Weaving God’s Promises with the focus on Weaving God’s Beloved Community – How we are called by God to live in loving community with one another and fulfill God’s promises for us in the healing of all creation. We learned together that we are called by God to live as One Body in Christ, loving our neighbors as ourselves.



Great Wednesday:

This past fall, we had the wonderful opportunity of welcoming The Rev. Gregory Han, Director, Interfaith Relations, The Department of Interfaith Relations & Community Partnerships (IRCP), Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, as our Guest Speaker for Great Wednesday.

“Having Faith in Houston: World Religions in the Bayou City”

In this lively series, we took a look at the religions that help make our area one of the most diverse regions in the country. We explored what we mean by religion, demographic shifts in religious affiliation, and how to approach studying religions. We spent time investigating key religious traditions of the world, comparing and contrasting, learning and discussing what we find.

OF SPECIAL NOTE: We are especially pleased to welcome Caroline Jesudason, the mother of Dustin Jesudason (Palmer’s Director of Communications), on board as our caterer for Great Wednesday dinners and other special meals.

Submitted by Roger Hutchison, Director Christian Formation and Parish Life

Christian Meditation

The World Community for Christian Meditation, now a presence in over 120 countries, was established in 1975 by an Irish monk, Father John Main. He taught that meditation is as natural to the spirit as breathing is to the body. While meditation is common to many religious traditions around the world, the method of practice may differ. The discipline he taught, based on the tradition of the early Christian Desert Fathers and Mothers, has been observed for over 20 years in St. Bede’s Chapel on Monday nights from 5:30-6:00. Palmer’s Monday night group is the oldest of over 20 meditation groups now established in Catholic and Protestant churches of various denominations in and around Houston. The format is a short reading on meditation, 20 minutes of silence and a concluding poem or scripture.

The newest Houston WCCM meditation group is also at Palmer. From 1:00-1:30 on Wednesdays, after the Wednesday noon Bible Study, we meet in St. Bede’s for contemplative prayer using the same combination of silence and readings.

Submitted by Gretta Boshara



Community of Hope

The Community of Hope is a community of lay pastoral care givers at Palmer. Community of Hope training awakens participants to God’s call in their own lives through experiential discovery and understanding of their own gifts for ministry. All are invited to develop their own “rule of life” while exploring Christian meditation, compassionate listening, lectio divina and pastoral identity. The program is rooted in Benedictine Spirituality and is based on the classic “clinical pastoral education” model used to train chaplains.

The training builds community and develops spiritually centered pastoral caregivers, equipped for ministry in their own families, workplace and civic organizations, as well as traditional ministry situations within the congregation, in nursing homes, hospitals and hospice settings.

Palmer’s in the Community of Hope include those who continue their ministry at St. Luke’s Hospital and three who begin their training this month. We are currently developing our list of those who would like to participate in the next training session.

Submitted by Gretta Boshara



Creative Arts Community

The mission of the Palmer Creative Artists Community (PCAC) is to support and encourage beginning artists as well as professional ones to foster the continuing development of the creative call and to engage arts and artists in the spiritual life of the church. In 2018, we hung three new exhibits in Palmer's Fra Angelico Gallery: "There Is a Season," "Textiles, Tapestries, and Treasures," and "My Soul's in Your Hands" - featuring artists both from Palmer and from other churches and communities in the Houston area. The PCAC encourages all interested artists - young, old, and in between -- to show their work in the Fra Angelico Gallery. For more information, contact Sherry Byrd (Sherry@SherryByrd.com) or Jackie Campbell (jcampbell8404@sbcglobal.net).

Daughters of the King

Palmer's Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is a member of an international group of Daughters that began in 1885. Daughters take a vow that incorporates prayer and service. We maintain a Prayer List, praying daily for our parish and prayer requests. Monthly meetings, on the third Saturday of the month, provide fellowship and study.

Our programs for 2019 are: Gifts through Grief, Gifts through Silence, Gifts through Book Study, Gifts through Forgiveness and Gifts through Friendship.

In 2018, Barbara Haas and Arlene Price lead a DOK training; Sue Howard, Wendy Robertson, Linda Shubert, Catherine Thompson and Laura VanNess became members of our Chapter. This January we are seeking donations of new or gently used bras to benefit women in several countries to start their own second-hand business. We welcome all women to attend our meetings and learn about our order.

Submitted by Jeanine Baker



Dinner and Discussion Groups

The objective of Dinner and Discussion gatherings is to provide an opportunity for fellowship and learning in the context of our shared Christian faith. In addition to a planning meeting in August, there were nine occasions in the evenings of second Fridays of the month again this year. The locations were varied participants' homes.

The planning process involves everyone interested in participating, and the outcome is an eclectic selection of topics. This year's have included a description of Stephen Ministry at Palmer, a survey of the latest research devoted to breast cancer, an expert's analysis of the relationship of the religious right to Texas politics, Palmer's curate David Wantland's story of his route to the priesthood, and a political science professor's interpretation of the mid-term election results. The topics and locations are made known in the "The Palmer" e-newsletter and the Sunday bulletin insert.

Submitted by Mary Tobin

Downtown Lunch Group

The Palmer Downtown Lunch is an informal gathering at noon the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December). We meet at the Cloister Restaurant (operated by Treebeard's) inside Christ Church Cathedral for fellowship among Palmers who live or work in downtown, or for anyone who finds themselves downtown for the lunch hour. We have a steady number of regulars and newcomers, and regularly see members of the Palmer clergy and staff at the lunch as well. Friends and co-workers are always welcome! Look for the reserved Palmer tables in the back. We hope to see you at the next Downtown Lunch!

Submitted by Tom Van Arsdel

Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC)

The Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC) celebrated 35 years of helping Houstonians in need. Palmer, a member congregation, continues to support the EAC with funding, food & clothing donations, regular volunteers, valued donors, and event participants. 2018 highlights include:

- » Expanding help to Hurricane Harvey victims, reaching survivor families in trailer parks who had not received any post-hurricane help -- Aid included providing food and gasoline gift cards.
- » Doubling the number of students helped by the Books & Backpacks Program.
- » Refreshing/reorganizing the facility, making it more welcoming and efficient for client services.
- » Increasing the number of people helped with achieving or retaining employment because of the Boots to Work program to 148.



2019 Goals Include:

- » Increasing the quantity and quality of food distributed.
- » Increasing number of families served.
- » Increasing capacity for sorting large volumes of donated clothing. Deepening the EAC's relationship with member congregations and discussing opportunities for joint-projects where possible.

Submitted by Tim Raymond



Endowment Fund

The trustees of the Palmer Endowment Fund (the "Endowment") during the year 2018 were Jere Ahrens, Chair; Bob Ittner, Treasurer; Lynn Morstead, Secretary; Pam Lovett and Bet Hunter. Linda Kelly serves as Counsel.

On January 1, 2018, the value of the Endowment assets was \$4,034,770. The major distributions of funds during 2018 were \$150,000 representing funds given to the Church for maintenance and repairs, \$300 per month for maintenance of the rose garden and \$200,000 + \$7,125 for Wylie consulting to fund the cost of replacing the air

conditioning chillers. The Endowment received \$12,087 in contributions for the year. As of December 31, 2018, the value of the Endowment assets was \$3,506,686. The Endowment assets are professionally managed by Vanguard Assets Management Services within the investment policies set by the trustees.

In December 2018, the trustees agreed to fund \$165,000 to the Church for maintenance and repairs for 2019. The Daphne Palmer Neville Society continued to add new members in 2018, bringing the total membership to more than 70. The membership consists of those individuals or families who have contributed to the Endowment or have made arrangements in their wills or retirement accounts to contribute to the Endowment. There was no other activity of the Endowment. We will continue to look for opportunities to build the Endowment and the Daphne Palmer Neville Society.

Submitted by Jere M. Ahrens, Chair

Evangelism Report

As the Episcopal Church we exist to follow Jesus and help the whole world to grow relationships with God, with each other, and with creation. Evangelism is one of our most important ministries – this is where we focus on accompanying our neighbors and communities as we all develop relationships with God on the journey.

Highlights:

- » Consistent and well-received First Sunday Welcome Receptions.
- » Enhanced welcome materials including color fold-out brochure.
- » Custom Welcome Tent that is staffed each Sunday following the 7:45 Service and before and after the 9:00 and 11:00 Services.
- » Two successful Newcomer Welcome Dinners held in St. Bede's Chapel.
- » Assorted Parish Gatherings and involvement in Community Events such as The Houston Pride Parade.
- » Partnership with Brazos Bookstore for Author Events that have brought hundreds of new people into Palmer's doors. Palmer representatives and volunteers are always on site to welcome visitors.
- » A series of monthly Evangelism Challenges included in the weekly "Palmer".
- » An intentional focus on Interfaith and Race Relations – with outside guest speakers who are experts in this field.
- » The formation of a new class called This is Us! Getting to Know Anglican Christianity - a great way to get to know the parish—its history, its community, opportunities to get involved here— and to deepen an appreciation of the Anglican way. This class will begin January 27, 2019.



Scripture tells us the word evangelism it is rooted in the Greek word *evangelion*, meaning gospel, glad tidings or good news (see Mark 16:15). With the Great Commission, Jesus sent his followers to go make disciples everywhere, baptizing and teaching people to follow his commandments (Matthew 28:16-20). In the Baptismal Covenant, we promise to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ” and “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself” (The Book of Common Prayer, 305).

At its heart, Episcopal evangelism is a spiritual practice. When we do it, we embody the very life and practice of Jesus in the world (active);

and we are filled with the Spirit and formed ever more into the likeness of Christ (receptive). It's a joyful sharing of what you know to be good news and deep truth, and a celebration of how you see God at work in others' lives and in the world. It wells up from the experience of God's love poured out for us and into us; so much love it can't help but overflow from us in grateful story and celebration.

Join us on this pilgrimage.

Submitted by Roger Hutchison



Flower Guild

The Flower Guild was established in 1999 and operates solely from individual financial donations. Volunteer Dennis Kutach is responsible for all design work, ordering, installation, and take-down of flowers in Palmer's worship spaces, with the help of volunteers during Easter and Christmas. The beauty and the creativity of their work is enjoyed year-round at Palmer but especially at Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas when they pull out ALL the stops! They also bring extraordinary dedication to special Palmer celebrations such as Confirmations, Baptisms, Covenant Sunday and Parish Receptions.

The Guild is responsible for maintaining all greenery in our worship spaces. Thank you, Dennis, for your wonderful work. And by the way, Dennis is always grateful for additional volunteers in addition to financial donations.

Jerusalem Peacebuilders

In 2018, Jerusalem Peacebuilders built upon its 2017 momentum and added another Houston-based summer program for youth from the Holy Land and US. This expansion paid off, with over 50 youth and adults convening at Camp Allen last August. In addition to having its largest and most successful year of summer programming—including an interfaith event at Palmer—Jerusalem Peacebuilders' local program-year work was strengthened with Jack Karn being full-time in Houston to develop relationships with local schools and religious communities for peacebuilding work. As part of his work, Jack has convened an interfaith youth group, including Palmer youth, which gathers quarterly for service projects, visits to faith communities, and dialogue on religious difference. Additionally, the pilgrimage and adult formation classes oriented around peacebuilding continue to have transformative effects on parishioners and friends of Palmer.



Submitted by The Rev'd David Wantland & Jack Karn

Library

The Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church Library committee finalized policies and procedures and began an initial inventory in 2018.

Our goal is to build a “selection” of holdings rather than a “collection” of materials. After the inventory is completed in the Spring of 2019, we will turn our attention to organizing the library, including a section for our Palmer authors. The library will begin to accept donations in accordance with our policies once these tasks are completed. A copy of the library policies and procedures is available upon request. We will add them to the Palmer website this year.

Thanks to Gretta Boshara, Dawn and Stan Crawford, Michelle Lynn, Penny Remick, Mary Tobin, and Fran Wallis. Other parishioners interested in becoming library volunteers are welcome. Please contact Sara Haynes at sarahaynes@comcast.net for more information.



Music at Palmer

2018 has been a robust and exciting year for the Palmer Choirs, which includes music making opportunities for pre-K to adults, with Sacred Arts interns, staff singers, and parishioners of all ages. August brought us a wonderful new Associate Organist Rashaan Allwood. Rashaan is working on an artist diploma at Rice University and studies organ with Professor Ken Cowan, Palmer's Organist and Artist-in-Residence. Rashaan, like Ken, is a very affable Canadian. The music department has much to celebrate in addition to carrying out our leadership responsibilities in weekly worship. In August choir members sang for the inter-denominational Jerusalem Peace Builders' concert, which included Houston Gospel singer Vawn Gretta

Stearns, a Jewish Rabbi and a Muslim Imam. Palmer continues the strong tradition of quarterly choral evensongs, four assisted living sing-alongs, and the popular annual Advent Lessons and Carols. We enjoyed a moving Palm Sunday organ concert by Ken Cowan playing Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix* with choir member Carol Streatfield reading translations of Claudel's poetry. Recordings of our choirs and organist Ken Cowan have been featured on several NPR broadcasts throughout the church year. Palmer singing interns Emily Kern & Kaylie Kahlich were featured in a noon Christmas Carol concert and sing-along with Ken Cowan at the organ. Emily Kern and Brady Knapp also enjoyed providing musical entertainment for the Palmer senior adult ministry in December. The Palmer music dept. hosted/invited the Axiom String Quartet, the University of St. Thomas' faculty string quartet, who played one of their subscription concerts in the nave during the month of October (they will play again this spring!). We began preparation in 2018 for the opera *Amahl* and the night visitors by Gian Carlo Menotti featuring Palmer staff singers, interns, and members of the community! Carol Steatfield our stage director, Courtney Daniell-Knapp (Palmer children's choir director) stage manager, and Brady Knapp music director led the production with joy and enthusiasm! Staging *Amahl* in St Bede's Chapel was a great way to begin 2019, and the perfect way to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. A special thanks goes to all who participated! Palmer treble James Westin was terrific in the role of Amahl (!), Emily Kern sang the role of Mother beautifully, and the three Kings (Palmer staff singers/interns) Mohammad Salaman, Brendan Emig and Zachary Barba were superb!

Dr. Brady Knapp, Director of Music, is celebrating his 20th year of service to the Palmer community this year.





Older Adults Pastoral Care Ministry

The goals for this ministry are to serve our older adults through providing information related to aging and building community through lunches and other activities. In January 2018 the ministry initiated a monthly noon Brown Bag “Lunch and Learn” Series. The topics included presentations on memory loss and what are normal changes, maximizing Medicare benefits, a workshop on using your smart phone better, stewardship of our possessions and passing them on, nutrition as medicine, getting ready for Medicare open enrollment, and walking with death into dying. In December the ministry hosted a Christmas luncheon for our older adults,

staff and clergy. Food was provided by Palmer’s Hospitality Committee and Brady Knapp and Emily Kern provided music and led the group in Christmas Carols. The ministry also participated in sending cards to parishioners who can no longer get out easily and providing snacks for Sunday School.

Submitted by George Ferry

Order of St. Luke

With illness, injury, and attrition in our own ranks, we almost always fielded a two-person prayer team for the 9 and 11 o’clock services and the Wednesday evening healing service. We conducted our Pretty-Good Wednesday offerings during the summer with a pot-luck and a book discussion. Three members attended a healing conference in Lake Charles, Louisiana. We added one new member, and we expanded our service at the Wednesday evening healing service.

2019 hopes and plans:

- » Keep on, keeping on
- » More members
- » Pretty-Good Wednesdays again over the summer
- » Expand our presence in other venues such as nursing homes and hospitals. To this end, one of our members is applying to the Community of Hope to be trained as a Lay Chaplain.

Submitted by Allen Sparkman

Palmer Medical Center Ministry

PMCM needs YOU! There are several Ministries at Palmer who reach out to aid and assist patients who are here from out-of-town for Texas Medical Center treatment. This ministry offers some of the best Palmer has to offer. In 2017 we helped patients find housing (Palmer Place Ministry), spiritual support (Stephen Ministry), prayers (Daughters of the King, Order of St. Luke), rides to stores and appointments (James Ministry), meals (Moms Helping Hands), Holy Communion (Eucharistic Visitors), and clergy contact. We met people with needs (transplants, cancer care, heart issues, pending serious surgery, etc.) who travelled here from as far away as Malawi, as well as several US states. How do we need you? Contact us if you know of a patient, family member, friend, etc. who is or will be in the Texas Medical Center from out-of-town. We can offer them assistance, a church home, and friendship!

*Submitted by Suzie Dennis,
Palmer Medical Center Ministry Coordinator*



Palmer Place Ministry

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. During 2018 we served 32 patients and their families with our six apartments by 16 dedicated and faithful volunteers.

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.

We visit our patients/families on a regular basis; we add them to our Palmer Church prayer list so that they are lifted in prayer every day; we invite them to worship with us on Wednesday evenings and/or Sunday mornings; we promptly address any maintenance issues in the apartments; we assist those who come without a vehicle to get out into the community if they are able; and we remember them and decorate the front doors of the apartments for various seasons and holidays.

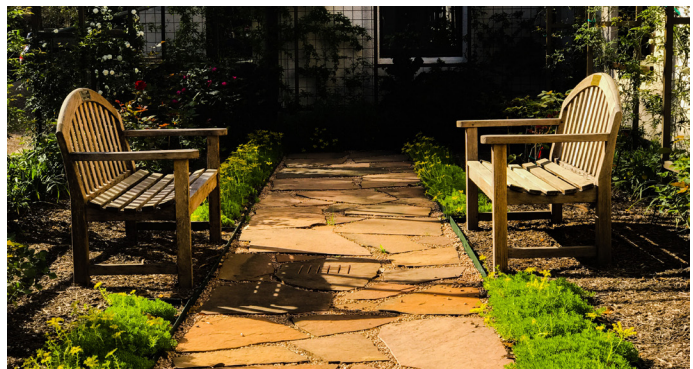
Submitted by Sandra Begalke, Palmer Place Coordinator



Pastoral Care Ministries

Pastoral Care at Palmer continues to be a robust part of our life together. Through our Medical Center Ministry many out-of-town guests receiving short or long term care in the Texas Medical Center have been contacted and supported. Lay Eucharistic Visitors go out every Sunday to take Communion to those who are homebound, hospitalized, or temporarily unable to attend church, sometimes accompanied by our Community of Hope Members. Stephen Ministers have walked alongside many individuals who have found themselves in a difficult season of life by providing confidential and emotional support. The Wemmicks Caregiver Support Group continues to provide fellowship and encouragement to people who are caring for elderly parents. Members of the Order of St. Luke offer healing prayers for individuals at Wednesday and Sunday services and members of the Palmer Meal Train are organized to provide meals to new mothers and others in need. In addition, the clergy visit parishioners and sometimes Episcopalians from out of town who are hospitalized, in other medical institutions or homebound.

Submitted by The Rev’d Liz Parker



Safeguarding

Our Parish Safeguarding ministry has trained 25 new volunteers this year and re-certified three.

This ministry offers the training service to the wider Episcopal Diocese and we have invited at least a dozen trainees through this partnership. We welcomed a new ‘People’ trainer in 2017 and this added to our capacity to serve the community during 2018.

The new training procedures for the Children’s Certification make the initial class shorter and provide more opportunity for discussion around the practical procedural issues that compliance brings up. Re-certification for the Children’s Certification is now available as an online class so long as the participants current certification is still active. This is a useful and time-saving development from the Diocese.

Submitted by Pamela Harvey, S.R.A. Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church



Saints Mary and Martha Altar Guild

The purpose of Saints Mary and Martha Altar Guild is to prepare our church for services in a beautiful and orderly manner. We have 26 members in our guild.

In July, we had a visit from the highly acclaimed Bahamas National Youth Choir. Their performances of song and dance on July 15th brought jubilation and excitement to our parishioners.

In September, we had a day of remembrance for our friend Alma Catlin who died last year and served as an Altar Guild member for over 55 years. A

fair linen was embroidered in her memory and her life was celebrated through blessings and stories.

Our members perform sacred duties with a special love and respect for the symbols and sacraments of our faith and worship. We thank you for allowing us to serve and help enhance the beautiful liturgy of Palmer.

Submitted by Victor Lamas



Serve Sunday

Enthusiasm for Serve Sunday has continued to grow! In April, August, and December of 2018, Palmers worshiped together, and then joined a team to go into our community and serve our neighbors. We had visitors and new Palmers join a team for the first time, as well as many parishioners who have loyally (and joyfully!) participated every time. Each Serve Sunday includes off campus projects around Houston, projects on the Palmer campus, and a donation drive. We served the homeless, the working poor, the elderly, people with intellectual or physical disabilities, seafarers, students, people in recovery, domestic violence survivors, and more. There is flexibility in the ministry for us to continue to meet needs that arise in the community and grow in our support of existing projects. There are opportunities for everyone at Palmer and the goal is 100% participation.

Outreach through Serve Sunday in 2018: The Beacon, New Hope Housing, Vita-Living, Inc., Archway Academy, Yellowstone Academy, The Montrose Center, Emergency Aid Coalition, Plant-it-Forward (refugee farms), AIDS Foundation Houston, Star of Hope (Men's Development Center and Cornerstone Campus), Howard T. Tellepsen Seafarers' Center, St. Dominic Village Senior Center, Bayou Manor Assisted Living, University Place Retirement Home.

Submitted by Kelly Williams



Star of Hope: Cornerstone Community

Throughout 2018 Palmer parishioners were involved with Star of Hope's new Cornerstone Community. We donated a tremendous number of school supplies to families who do not have the resources to buy their own supplies. With Palmer's help, Star of Hope ensured that school-aged children living at the Cornerstone Campus received school supplies, so they could attend school without fear of being left behind. In November an urgent request was received for bottled water for Star of Hope clients who need clean drinking water throughout the year. Once again Palmer overwhelmingly responded. In addition, towels were requested for the hundreds of homeless men, women, and children who take showers at Star of Hope facilities every day. New and "gently-used" bath towels, hand towels, and washcloths quickly filled the special baskets in our reception area. Star of Hope staff now knows that when a request is communicated there is a heartfelt response from Palmers.

Submitted by Joan Glover

Stephen Ministry

Since 1995, Palmer Stephen Ministry has trained over 130 Palmer parishioners as Stephen Ministers, each of whom made a two-year commitment to provide short-term and long-term confidential one-on-one caring ministry. Many Stephen Ministers serve well beyond the initial two-year commitment.

Stephen Ministers provide a listening presence for anyone – parishioner or not, Christian or not – who has suffered any kind of loss or crisis. Over the years, we have cared for more than 525 Care Receivers undergoing grief, job loss, divorce, serious illness, and other troubles. The confidential nature of the ministry keeps us very much "under the radar," as Palmer Stephen Ministers continue to quietly provide care through this unique listening ministry.

Submitted by Laurie Rigby, Stephen Ministry Coordinator

Tower Bell Ringers

We are ringing almost every weekend for call to service before the 9 am service (2-3 typ) and between 9 and 11 am services (6-8 typ). We have rung for 3 weddings and 4 funerals. We have rung for two of the Christmas Eve Services. Our band of regular service ringers is at 15. No new recruits this year.

Dustin created a podcast about Palmer Ringing by interviewing Allen Nunley and Kirk Waldron.

We had two tower maintenance days in 2018.

In 2019, we plan to focus on improving the evenness of our ringing and expand our number of methods that we know opportunistically. I hope we will be able to get an AV recording of our ringing displayed on the internal monitors to demonstrate what it looks like. We purchased a simulator device to aid in our learning process.

Submitted by Allen Nunley





Ushers

The 11:00 usher teams maintained their normal four week rotation throughout the year with each team covering the extra Sunday in each Quarter corresponding with that team's regular rotation. Each team attempted to maintain a roster of at least four members with one having more and this year we have added a few more members to each team to become almost complete. The 9:00 usher teams ended the year on a five week rotation which is essentially the same situation with more members. The 11:00 Ushers and Greeters alternated duties with the 9:00 Ushers and Greeters for the services that were combined for special occasions which were more in number this year and also manned a six week stretch of the combined summer services while the 9:00 teams covered the additional six.

In addition to the normal logistical duties involved with directing the flow of communicants, the teams presented the welcoming face of Palmer and attempted to identify those attendees who were newcomers and give them special attention. We also tried to have them introduced to either

the Greeters or the Clergy outside after the service. The first impression that a first time visitor has of the congregation has a lot to do with their decision to return.

We believe that ushering provides a great way for new Palmers to become integrated into our community and by joining an usher team it will allow them to meet existing members of the congregation and become familiar with the services while being shepherded by long term members. We welcome any newcomers sent our way especially from the "This is Us!" Class. The Ushers, in concert with the Greeters, present the first face of Palmer and we believe that evangelism is most important to growing the congregation.

Submitted by Kirk Waldron

Walking The Mourner's Path

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. In 2018, Jeanine Baker and Betty Key served as facilitators and Linda Shelton served as clergy and trained facilitator. The groups are open to our larger community as a pastoral outreach of our parish. The Rev. Shelton continued our practice of sending a letter, information brochure, and booklet of meditations to those in our parish whom we learn have experienced the death of a loved one. A session was held in the fall of 2018. We 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.

Submitted by Betty Key

Wedding Coordinators

For 2018, the wedding coordinators have been Ragna Case, Jeanine Baker, Sondra Maxfield and Denise Zwicker. As Palmer representatives, these coordinators work in pairs, in concert with the priest performing the marriage, to guide the bride and groom in scheduling and in attending to the details of their wedding ceremony at Palmer. Attention is given to the requirements for marriage in the Episcopal Church and laws

of the State of Texas, with emphasis on the solemn and sacred nature of marriage in the Church. Every effort is made to ensure that all the wedding needs of the bride and groom are met and that everything goes smoothly on the wedding day.

The ministries who contribute greatly in this effort are the Altar Guild, the Acolyte Corps, the Bell Ringers, the sextons, and our Music Ministry. We would especially like to thank Victor Lamas and Linda Bracey (Altar Guild), Suzanne Miller (Acolytes), Allen Nunley and Lynsey Slavonic (Bell Ringers), Brady Knapp, Ken Cowan and Rashaan Allwood (Music Ministry), Dennis Kutach (flowers/catering) and Jimmy Parrales (Sextons) for their wonderful spirit of cooperation and willingness to coordinate the contribution of each of their ministries. Also, a special thank you to Sue Howard for her guidance and assistance with the church calendar and Dustin Jesudason (Director of Communications) for his fine work on the wedding leaflets. The wedding coordinators, greatly appreciate their gracious and proactive support.



There were 4 wedding ceremonies performed at Palmer in 2018, (Rev. Willard - 1, Rev. Wantland - 1, Rev. Brooks - 2). There are currently 2 weddings on the calendar for 2019.

Submitted by Ragna Case, Jeanine Baker, Sondra Maxfield, and Denise Zwicker



Women's First Thursdays

Women's First Thursdays is an informal social group for women that meet on the first Thursday of the month from 6 to 8 pm. Most of our attendees are Palmer members, but guests are welcomed and encouraged. We hope to attract more women to Palmer in the hope that they will be excited by the kind of offerings available.

A planning meeting was held in the spring of 2018, at which a list of potential speakers was drawn up. Once the schedule was finalized a flyer was produced during the summer giving details of upcoming programs, and information was also included in

the weekly "Palmer" and the Sunday bulletin inserts.

Attendees bring an appetizer to share, and drinks are provided. After an enjoyable social hour we welcome our speaker for the month; topics during the past year included a presentation on beginning genealogy, a demonstration of decorating for the holidays, a healthy cooking class, and a discussion of some of the favorite books that our attendees enjoyed during the year. Attendance has been good, and we hope to attract more participants in 2019.

Submitted by Lesley Douthwaite

Worship Council

The Worship Council consists of representatives of Acolytes, Vergers, Lectors, Chalice Bearers, Ushers, Music, Altar Guild, Clergy, Flower Guild, Order of Service proof readers, and Wedding Coordinators. Working with the clergy it oversees the services offered through the year.

Meetings are on an "as needed" basis and are normally held in the A102 at 5:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month. Meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. The Worship Council also orders lay vestments as needed and two were added this past year.

Submitted by Victor Lamas



Young Adults

In 2018, Palmer Young Adults settled into regular monthly social gatherings and supported each other's life events with house blessings, game nights, and meals. The group continues to grow as more people in their 20s and 30s learn about Palmer. They plan to add to this foundation with service projects, a ski trip, and more ways to build community.

Submitted by The Rev'd David Wantland

Youth Ministries

Over the past year, the youth group has held weekly meetings on Sundays, after the 9 AM service for Sunday School and after the 11:00 service for EYC. Through games and various discussions, we have built a community that has grown in number from last year. In addition to our regular meetings, we had a great confirmation retreat to Galveston in April, confirmed eight high schoolers, participated in the summer Diocesan Mission Trip to Corpus Christi and held a youth lock-in at Palmer. We are excited to expand our activities and spend more time supporting our middle schoolers and high-schoolers at their games, concerts, and performances in 2019.

Submitted by Davis Mathis



We would like to thank all our wonderful Palmer ministries. In addition to these reports we'd like to thank Front Office Ministry, Alternative Gift Market, The Boy Scouts, Eucharistic Visitors, The Holy Spokes, the Hospitality Guild, Kairos, Media Ministry, Women's Spirituality and many more.

We would like to also recognize the many community and non-profit organizations that hold events or have found a home here at Palmer. They include Al Anon, Archway, Baylor CHEF Program, Plant It Forward, Scouts, Camp Kesem at Rice, FAIR at Rice, Autry House, Community of Hope, Contemplative Prayer, PDAP, Elite University, FIND (Spiritual Direction), GISH, Guide Dogs, City of Houston Mental Awareness Fair, Turquoise Center, Houston Ballet Folklorico, Jerusalem Peacebuilders, Kairos, Living Compass, Memorial Hermann Transplant Group, Neighborhood Pastors, Better Angels, and Revels.

