

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



PALMER MEMORIAL
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
— HOUSTON, TEXAS —

Report of the Senior Warden



The Vestry began 2019 with a renewed emphasis on three initiatives: (1) evangelism (which we define as sharing the good news), (2) strengthening the understanding of stewardship among our parishioners and (3) continuing to improve the day-to-day functioning of the parish. Our five Councils were ably led by Victor Lamas (Worship), Linda Sylvan (Stewardship), Roger Hutchison and Shannon Westin (Evangelism), The Rev. Liz Parker and Barbara Hass (Outreach) and Kristie Van Arsdel and Jennifer Macia (Communications). Priscilla Plumb, as the outgoing head of Communications, led the effort to update the Parish Directory and instituted a system for keeping the listing of activities on the website up to date.

In February the 2019 Budget was finalized. Revenues were expected to be approximately \$100,000 less than budgeted which led to budget cuts in some areas and careful expenditure control through the year. Tara McConathy, our parish administrator, does a marvelous job of cash management and has been very patient with me on our almost weekly meetings. As the year ended, our revenues were a little more than two million dollars and expenditures were slightly less, resulting in a small surplus for the second year in a row.

Our Lenten Program began in March with five Sundays of presentations exploring God's forgiveness as the launch point for our own gracious self-examination. Under Cathy Troisi's leadership, a new social justice initiative was launched entitled Palmers Assisting Re-Entry (PAR) to offer assistance to persons exiting prison and integrating into the larger society. Ashes-to-Go was again a very visible and moving outreach ministry to the Medical Center. The Spring was busy with well attended First Sunday receptions, a youth retreat led by Davis Mathis and Serve Sunday activities which give a large number of Palmers the opportunity to go out and directly engage in enjoyable interaction with those who have fewer resources. We are thankful to Abigail Folmar and Kelly Williams for their leadership of Serve Sunday.

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 positive difference in people's lives every day.

The Easter Season was, however, saddened due to the death of parishioners Stuart and Angie Kensinger in a tragic accident. Our Clergy and Parish were very supportive of the family members, and the Rev. David Wantland spoke eloquently at a special service for family and friends shortly after the accident. He also ably handled the logistics for the overflow attendance at the memorial service. Later in the year, a memorial to the Kensingers and their work for Jerusalem Peace Builders was installed in our patio.

In June, Palmer was very visible at Houston's Pride Parade with a booth and our own Space City themed float and some 25 Palmers participating. A Palmer tour video, narrated by Stephen Fox, was produced and a new, larger order of service began to be utilized in our services.

The Fall began with a full Faith Forum program on Sundays and Wednesday programs which always included interesting discussions. Over 70 Palmers attended the Parish Retreat at Camp Allen. The Stewardship program this year featured moving testimonials from members about their experiences at Palmer. These were given in person on Sunday morning, were on the website, and sent out by email in The Palmer. The Stewardship Council provided regular updates as to the progress of annual pledging and contacted any member who had questions.

All in all, our historic and well-loved Parish had another busy year. Most of the daily work is done by our dedicated staff of Tara McConathy, Sue Howard, Jessica Evans, Roger Hutchison and Dustin Jesudason. Jimmy Parrales continues to manage the housekeeping staff and Clarence Hulin coordinates security. Our music program, under Brady Knapp, is the finest in the city. Our Clergy staff remains supportive of all these activities, providing guidance and leadership as required. The Rev. Neil Willard, our Rector, models a collegial style of leadership that allows others to fully function in their areas of responsibility. The Rev. Liz Parker brings her personal and caring presence to pastoral care and outreach, The Rev. David Wantland ably manages our liturgy and youth program, but in reality our Clergy have been available to serve in any area. All this and they provide us with the best preaching in the Diocese.

One last legacy I am pleased to leave is the new (and first) Vestry Handbook. This provides a job description for each Vestry position and an explanation of the duties of each of our Councils. The Handbook will no doubt be amended in the future, but it should serve as a valuable guide to new Vestry members. I wish to thank those who rotate off the Vestry with me this year. They are Priscilla Plumb, Linda Sylvan, Victor Lamas and Jennifer Macia. They have done everything asked of them for three years with a positive attitude and exemplary results. I am thankful to the Parish for the opportunity to have served as your Senior Warden and remain confident that the years ahead will see Palmer Parish continue to be a force for a meaningful Christian presence in Houston and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Key

Senior Warden

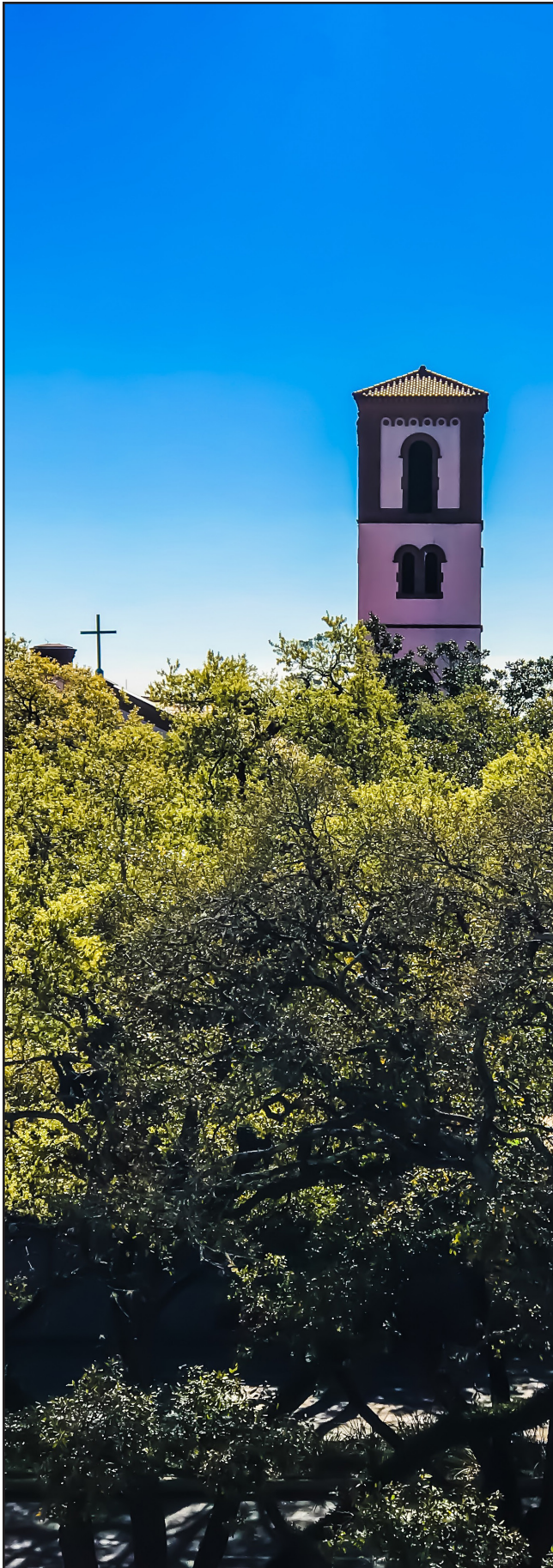


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MINISTRY REPORTS

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 2020 year in hopes to receive enough names for all parish families wishing to participate to do so.

Submitted by Jenn Vaughan

Archway Academy

Archway appreciates very much the support of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church and the relationship that has been built over the last 17 years. With your generosity we are able to offer our high school students in recovery from substance use disorder a special place for these students to receive their high school education and maintain their sobriety. In the 2018-2019 school year Archway served 113 high school students, had a 94% attendance rate, graduated 23 seniors with 96% going to college. 58% of our students

maintained sobriety for the entire school year (no relapses). 21% had two or less relapses, were honest with Archway and their families and resumed sobriety quickly. We view 79% of our students as having worked a successful recovery program. Archway remains the largest sober high school in America and is a model for new schools opening around the country. Palmer is a big part of our success in offering adolescents and their families hope for a future.



Submitted by Brad Deason, Director of Advancement Archway Academy

Baptism Ministry

We baptized 7 children over the course of 4 services. One was held at the 7:45 am service since it was outside of typical baptism dates. Rev. Liz Parker met with the families before the services to discuss theology of baptism. Each family received a special banner, baptism certificates for parents and godparents, a baptism candle, and a letter and wooden pocket cross from Daughters of the King.

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.

» *Sunday Morning Formation Opportunities for Adults*

- Palmer Faith Forum
- Palmer Parenting Class
- Sunday Morning Bible Study Class

» *Weekly Bible Studies*

- Sunday Bible Study - Sundays from 10:15 AM to 10:50 AM in the Family Room
- Wednesday Bible Study - Wednesdays from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM in room A102.
- Men's Bible Study - Tuesdays from 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM in Room A102.
- Women's Bible Study –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.
- Children's Sunday School: This year we began the fifth year of using the curriculum, **Weaving God's Promises**

» *Great Wednesday*

Since the earliest days, Christians have celebrated Jesus through the sharing of worship, ideas and food. Our Great Wednesdays continue that tradition of nourishing body, mind and spirit. Consider Great Wednesday to be a midweek spiritual break, a mini-Sabbath.

- » 5:30-7:00 Dinner is continually served in Parish Hall during this time frame.
- » 6:00-6:45 Taizé Healing Holy Eucharist in St. Bede's Chapel
- » 7:00-8:00 Great Wednesday Programs and Classes

Wednesday night at Palmer poses distinct challenges/opportunities by not being a neighborhood church, but a church that brings people in from all over the area. This, of course, is a wonderful thing. Yet, between the changing rhythms and responsibilities of our daily lives, increasing traffic (over 100,000 people move into Houston each year), and parking challenges, attendance at Great Wednesday has been impacted. This has become especially difficult for families with young children and for those who have trouble driving at night. We are currently exploring new ways of being together that will hopefully ease some of these challenges.

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 at Palmer 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 in the Houston area. The format is a short reading on meditation, 20 minutes of silence and a concluding poem. We added a new time for meditation last year and the group continues to meet from 1:00-1:30 on Wednesdays. After the Wednesday noon Bible Study, we meet in St. Bede's for contemplative prayer using the traditional combination of silence and readings.

Submitted by Gretta Boshara



Community of Hope

The Community of Hope members are lay pastoral care givers at Palmer. Community of Hope training awakens participants to God's call in their own lives and to an understanding of their own gifts for ministry. All are invited to develop their own "rule of life" while exploring compassionate listening and developing their own pastoral identity. The program is rooted in Benedictine Spirituality and is based on a classic 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. Palmers in the Community of Hope include those who minister in hospital settings and those who make pastoral calls to members of our Palmer family in their own homes, senior living residences and in skilled nursing facilities. Another training session will be held in the fall of 2020. We welcome those who would like to find out more and would consider participating 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 2019, we installed three new exhibits in Palmer's Fra Angelico Gallery: "Light of All Creation," "Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory," and one untitled show, - 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 part 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 for people for whom prayer is requested. Monthly meetings, on the third Saturday of the month (except June and July) provide camaraderie, spiritual exploration and study.

Our topics of discussion in 2019 explored grief; forgiveness; "Called," a book written by the Rev'd Barbara Crafton; Taize prayer; and walking the Labyrinth. Our service commitments included the collection of new and gently used bras to benefit women starting their own second-hand business in several countries and the preparation of dinner in the Spring to welcome newcomers to our parish.

We welcome all women to attend our meetings and learn about our order.

Submitted by Sue Howard



Dinner and Discussion Groups

In 2018-2019 there were nine Dinner and Discussion gatherings, all except one at the homes of participants. The presenter of a program on county flood control efforts requested that the meeting take place at Palmer. Our eclectic range of topics -- from H.I.S.D. governance to careers as reporter for the Houston Chronicle or in public health-- is determined by a brainstorming planning meeting in August. We hope to continue this pattern, and we always welcome suggestions of new ideas.

Submitted by Mary Tobin



Downtown Lunch Group

The Palmer Downtown Lunch is an informal gathering at noon the fourth Tuesday of each month (except November and 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 36 years of helping Houstonians in need, providing food and clothing direct distribution services and other assistance. Palmer, a member congregation, continues to support the EAC with funding, food & clothing donations, regular volunteers, valued donors, and event participants. 2019 Highlights Include:

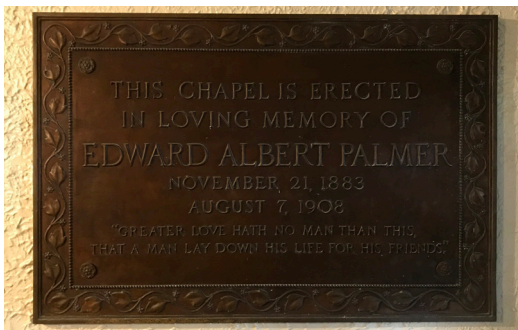


- » Completed three-year Strategic Planning Process, dedicated to honing the services and direct-support needs the EAC provides.
- » Continuing the Boots to Work program, helping people achieve or retain employment requiring workbooks.
- » Improving the quality of food distributed and Increasing the number of families served and assisted more than 1000 children with grade-appropriate school supplies.
- » 2019 had a record number of volunteers and a member of Palmer's congregation completed her Gold Award project at the EAC.

Continued intake monitoring shows the demographics of those assisted includes approximately 80% working-poor families who need the EAC on a temporary basis.

Submitted by Tim Raymond

Endowment Fund



The trustees of the Palmer Endowment Fund (the "Endowment") during the year 2019 were Jere Ahrens, Chair; Bob Ittner, Treasurer; Lynn Morstead, Secretary; Laura Van Ness and Bet Hunter. Linda Kelly serves as Counsel.

On January 1, 2019, the value of the Endowment assets was \$3,506,686. The major distributions of funds during 2019 were \$165,000 representing funds given to the Church for maintenance and repairs, and \$300 per month for maintenance of the rose garden. The Endowment received \$274,286 in contributions for

the year. As of December 31, 2019, the value of the Endowment assets was \$4,466,940. The Endowment assets are professionally managed by Vanguard Assets Management Services within the investment policies set by the trustees.

The Daphne Palmer Neville Society continued to add new members in 2019, 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

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 2019, Jerusalem Peacebuilders (JPB) experienced both tragedy and triumph. The unexpected deaths of JPB Co-Founders Stuart and Angela Kensinger in late-April due to a plane crash left the organization and community reeling. The timing and impact of the tragedy forced JPB to cancel its May pilgrimage to the Holy Land until Fall 2020, however, the loss galvanized the Palmer community and beyond to respond and support JPB in new and life-giving ways. This resulted in JPB witnessing another record-breaking summer, operating five peacebuilding institutes for

over 125+ youth and adults. Volunteer recruitment and involvement surged and JPB's programs were successful across the board. In the fall, JPB hired a part-time Program Assistant to help with administrative tasks, and JPB's Program Director, Jack Karn, continued his outreach and work in the local interfaith community. Jack expanded JPB's in-school programs to reach new Jewish, Christian, and Muslim schools, as well as developed Interfaith Youth Houston into the premier interfaith youth program in Houston.

Submitted by The Rev'd David Wantland & Jack Karn

Library

The Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church Library renovated their space this year with donated tables and some new furniture. There is also a mounted TV for meetings and presentations. We sorted through hundreds of books and now have a well filtered selection available for checkout. For book surplus we have a cart outside the library that people may deposit a donation and take a book for whatever they please. Thanks to all our volunteers who make this possible. Other parishioners interested in becoming library volunteers are welcome. Please contact Sara Haynes at sarahaynes@comcast.net for more information.



Music at Palmer

The Palmer music ministry, which includes choirs and music-making opportunities for all ages, had a full and productive year. We welcomed interim associate organist Kenneth Coleman last summer. Kenny comes to us as the former associate organist for St Paul's United Methodist church down the street. Kenny is a superb musician with a long and diverse background in church music, and he has a generous heart and spirit, pastoral skills, and a spiritual maturity that has proven to be an asset to our musicians and the staff.

We began 2019, last Epiphany, with a full production of Menotti's beloved opera *Amahl and the night visitors*. Stage Director Carol Streatfeild, Palmer Children's choirs and music director Courtney Daniell-Knapp, and Director of Music Brady Knapp (accompanist) led the event. Palmer sacred music interns and staff singers Emily Kern, Zachary Barba, Brendan Emig, Mohammed Salman and parishioner James Westin sang the title roles. A group of amazingly talented parishioners, many of our Palmer children's and youth choir members, and a few college aged student singers volunteered to sing the chorus parts and made the show a huge success. We had a packed and appreciate room in Autry House last January!

The adult choir led three Choral Evensongs last year with Dr. Knapp conductor, and Ken Cowan, Palmer's organist and artist-in-residence, on the bench. The children's choirs and adult choir joined forces for the annual Advent Lessons & Carols that was followed by a well received egg nog & cookie reception in fellowship hall (thank you Norma Beazley, Johnna Kincaid, Kathy Herring, Ruth Davies and others for your time, talent and hospitality!).

For the annual Roy Jones Memorial All Saints' Requiem & Memorial service the Palmer adult choir offered John Rutter's beloved Requiem setting last November with cellist Shino Hayashi and organist Ken Cowan. We are thankful for Johnna Kincaid and Alice Masquette who helped organize three assisted living hymn sing-alongs organizing enthusiastic parishioners and choristers of all ages. Palmer staff musician tenor Zachary Barba sang a holiday concert of Christmas carols with organist Ken Cowan in December. The Palmer choirs and organist Ken Cowan were featured on several NPR broadcasts throughout the year. Palmer's Composer-in-residence Dr. David Ashley White provided several beautiful new anthems tailor-made for the Palmer choirs. All have since been premiered in services, and published by EC Schirmer and Selah - two of the finest publishing houses for traditional sacred choral music in the country. We are very thankful for parishioner Norma Beazley who has generously made the composer stipend available to Dr. White, the Palmer music ministry, and the parish.



Dr. Brady Knapp, Director of Music, celebrated 20 years of service to the parish and he was humbled to be provided a mini-sabbatical to the UK last summer. This was a generous gift from the parish, the choirs and the vestry specially for Dr. Knapp to be able to attend daily Evensong, worship services, concerts, and recitals. He observed choral rehearsals by leading conductors and well-established British choral ensembles in London, Cambridge and Oxford. A highlight of the trip was being able to watch firsthand master teacher Stephen Cleobury rehearse the choir of King's College, Cambridge. Knapp observed Cleobury during his last month of service to the institution after his almost four decades of service as King's Director of Music. Mr. Cleobury sadly passed away in November of 2019 due to complications from a brain tumor.

A beautiful reception was given in the spring of 2019 to mark Dr. Knapp's years of service as Director of Music to Palmer. Thank you again to all who gave generously to honor Dr. Knapp's service to Palmer Church as Director of Music.

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



Outreach Council

Palmer's enthusiastically participated in Outreach Ministries in 2019, concretely living our mission to know and share the love of Jesus Christ. Serve Sundays continue to be an accessible way to connect all parishioners with opportunities to serve; three Serve Sundays were held in 2019. Palmer's support of the Emergency Aid Coalition included many first time Palmer volunteers. Angel Tree successfully expanded to include support of the Emergency Aid Coalition and December saw refreshed Alternative Gift Giving opportunities. Palmer's relationship with New Hope Housing has grown to now include a designated parishioner as

the contact person for our work there. PAR (Palmer's Assisting Reentry) is off to a great start in seeking ways to support those transition from prison to life in Houston, currently hosting monthly dinners. We continue our support of Star of Hope through donation drives. Our work with the Medical Center Ministry, Palmer Place Apartments, and Older Adults Ministry continues. We are actively seeking ways of supporting refugees and migrants and communicating ways to help with the parish.

We give thanks for the ministry leaders and parishioners who give their time, love, and energy to outreach. Outreach Council meetings are held quarterly and are open to all members of the parish. There are outreach opportunities available for every Palmer and all are welcome to get involved!

Submitted by Kelly Williams

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. 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, comfortable and fully-furnished "homes away from home" for many Texas Medical Center patients and their families as they undergo treatment for an extended period of time. During 2019 we served 25 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 is a ministry at Palmer, but it is also a way of life. Many of our members are graduates of our pastoral care ministries, so even if they're no longer active in the ministry that trained them, they still bring all the skills they learned to their relationships with family, friends and fellow parishioners. The long-term emphasis on pastoral care is one of the things that make Palmer such a strong community.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors, under the leadership of Thad Lueders, go out every Sunday to take Communion to those who are homebound, hospitalized, or temporarily unable to attend church. Gretta Boshara heads up Palmer's Community of Hope, which meets once a month as a group and also visits the homebound and those in nursing homes. Stephen Ministers have walked alongside many individuals in a difficult season of life by providing confidential and emotional support. They also meet on a regular basis for 'debriefing' and mutual support. Laurie Rigby and Richard Donelson head this ministry.

Members of the Order of St. Luke offer healing prayers for individuals at Wednesday and Sunday services. The Rev. John Price oversees the OSL.

Our Older Adult Ministry has provided monthly Lunch and Learn experiences this year under the leadership of George Ferry. John Wallace is the new head of this ministry.

Walking the Mourner's Path is offered every year for those who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Every Advent and Lent, The Living Compass provides Palmer with booklets to enrich our experiences and promote wellness.

Finally, 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

Refugee Resettlement Ministry

"Love God, Love Your Neighbor" guided the Refugee Resettlement Ministry as we responded to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers through partnering with trusted diocesan projects, Episcopal Migration Ministries, and Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston. Though unable to co-sponsor a refugee family, we donated goods and funds to a July Diocesan Drive benefitting Catholic Charities Humanitarian Respite Center, McAllen; donated funds to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, San Antonio for replacement medications for asylum seekers; donated to Team Brownsville for meals for asylum seekers in Matamoros; donated to Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston's Refugee Program for resettlement and emergency services; and, donated to Episcopal Migration Ministries for services across the U.S.

Two of us joined a team from St. David's, Austin to support Team Brownsville in December and shared information at a December education hour and at the Women's Spirituality Advent Retreat focused on Migrant Ministry. Palmer also joined Partners in Welcome, an EMM online program to empower advocates going forward.

Submitted by The Rev'd Linda Shelton

Safeguarding

Our Parish Safeguarding ministry has trained 19 new volunteers this year and re-certified two. The updated Children's Certification has made the initial class shorter and provide more opportunity for discussion around the practical procedural issues that compliances 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.

2020 will see a few procedural changes in the interview and application processes. New training materials for SGC and SGP are expected following the General Convention.

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 25 members in our guild including one new member.

In March, we welcomed our friends and fellow Altar Guild members from Nassau Bahamas – Christ Church Cathedral. We held a mini workshop and invited some friends and members of the Muslim Turquoise Center to join us. We had a great time sharing food, fellowship, and information about our cultures and practices within our communities.



We are pleased to be part of the team to help set up the Taize Healing Eucharistic Services that are held on Wednesday evenings at St. Bede's.

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

Star of Hope: Cornerstone Community

Throughout 2019 Palmer parishioners supported Star of Hope and its Cornerstone Community. More than 30 bags and boxes of donated items were delivered. We concluded 2019 with wonderful Christmas donations of "Books, Blankets, and Socks" for Cornerstone Community clients. But throughout the year, Palmers were responsive to requests for several special requests, including School Supplies and a variety of items like towels, shampoo and other basics. The school supplies helped 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. Star of Hope staff expressed gratitude that when a request or need is communicated, there is always a heartfelt response from Palmers.

Submitted by Joan Glover

Stephen Ministry

This year, Stephen Ministry celebrates 25 years of ministry at Palmer. Since 1995, Palmer has trained over 130 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. This year, we are delighted to begin training a new class of Stephen Ministers in February.

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 530 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. If you or someone you know could benefit from a Stephen Minister, or are interested in becoming part of our ministry, please contact Liz Parker or Laurie Rigby.

Submitted by Laurie Rigby, Richard Donelson, Mary Ann Starks, Stephen Ministry Leaders

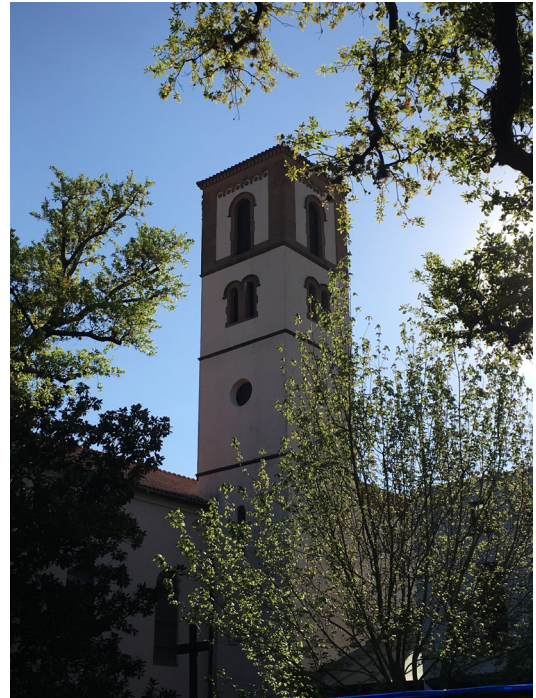
Tower Bell Ringers

We are ringing almost every weekend before the 11 am service. We have rung for 2 weddings and 3 funerals. We have rung for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services. Our band of regular service ringers is steady at 15. We have a recruit this year that is now being systematically trained. We hosted two ringing groups this year. We rang for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing on the moon (program created by Lynsey Slavonic) and also did our 3rd anniversary ring for Hurricane Harvey.

We have made substantial progress installing our simulator, but unfortunately, we had to suspend work when an unexpected maintenance issue arose having to do with our clapper bushings.

In 2020, we plan to focus on improving the evenness of our ringing and expand our number of methods that we know by using our new simulator.

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 2019, 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 spring of 2019, and to date we have had 139 participants in this ministry. 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 2019, 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 sextants, 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 Knap, Ken Cowan and Rashaan A;llwood (Music Ministry), Dennis Kutach (flowers/catering) and Jimmy Parrales (Sextants) 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 (Publications Editor) for his fine work on the wedding leaflets. The wedding coordinators, greatly appreciate their gracious and proactive support.

There were 2 wedding ceremonies performed at Palmer in 2019, (Rev. Willard - 1, Rev. Wantland – 1). There is currently 1 wedding on the calendar for 2020.

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

Worship Council

The Worship Council consists of representatives of Acolytes, Vergers, Lectors, Chalice Bearers, Ushers, Music, Altar Guild, and Clergy. Working with the clergy it oversees and modifies the services as needed throughout the year.

Meetings are normally held in the Chancery at 5:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month. During the summer, we meet only as needed. Meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend.

Submitted by Victor Lamas

Young Adults

In 2019, Palmer Young Adults continued its monthly social gatherings, supporting 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 we have seen the Youth program continue to grow and see an injection of youth and energy. We have grown our relationship with Jerusalem PeaceBuilders Interfaith Youth group as we participate in service work with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim teens across Houston in about 7 or 8 events a year.

In July we joined with 150 youth from around the Diocese as we came together in our very own city of Houston for a week of hurricane relief work in Houston and the greater Houston area. We helped with construction work on many homes that had to be rebuilt after flooding and provided relief for families. We have grown in numbers to a point where we now can split into smaller groups during our meetings and better cater to where our students currently are in life and walk with Christ. We look forward to another year of community and growth.

Submitted by Davis Mathis



NECROLOGY

Below is the List of Parishioners and Clergy Who Died in 2019.

Georgann Tims Filak
A. Robert Hinojosa
Stuart Roben Kensinger
Angela Webb Kensinger
Allen Sparkman
Betty Saxe Mitchell
Pamela Gayle Massey
Patsy Carolyn Caperton Lawrence
Judith Blair Webber
Laurent Bonner Webb
The Rev'd Samuel Rutherford Todd, Jr.
Grace D. Belcher
The Rev'd Henry W. Strobel
Lynn Walling Baker
Murphey Durgin Harmon

*Rest eternal grant them, O Lord: And let light perpetual shine upon them
May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen*

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.

