

**Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes**  
**January 19, 2021**

**Vestry present:**

Burdette Keeland, Senior Warden  
Kristie Van Arsdel, Junior Warden  
Barbara Hass  
Susannah Webb  
Randy Byrd  
Mike Murphy  
David Robinson  
Kelly Williams  
Al Hergenroeder  
Gretta Boshara  
Steven Killworth  
Libby Spoede  
Rand Key

**Vestry absent:**

Rita Justice  
Shannon Westin

**Clergy present:**

The Rev. Neil Willard  
The Rev. Elizabeth Parker  
The Rev. David Wantland

The meeting started at 5:30 PM by Zoom and ended at 6:55 PM.

**Opening Prayer:** For Social Justice

**Minutes:** The December 15 minutes were approved with a couple of spelling corrections: Rand's name was misspelled. The number of people who attended the most recent webinar should read households, not people.

**Finance:** Michael Murphy with Tara McConathy providing details. In summary the vestry approved a budget for 2021 with a \$113,648 deficit. At the annual meeting this budget deficit for 2021 will be announced. Tara noted that the relief assessment from the Diocese probably will appear in the second half of next year's budget, under Miscellaneous.

**Communications Council:** Kristie Van Arsdel. The report on the Christmas Eve and Christmas day services were terrific. There were increased numbers of people and good media coverage. The social media numbers were better than expected. Dustin Jesudason purchased ads on Instagram and other social media outlets.

**Evangelism Council:** Randy Byrd. Weekly meetings continue. Liz said there are five new people attending the "This Is Us" Virtual weekly meeting. She said she has served during her career in six churches and there were never four Bible Studies as active as those that take place now at Palmer.

**Stewardship Council:** Rand Key. They closed pledges last week: For 2021 there are 217 pledges which is down from 253 at the same time last year. However, the 217 pledges are for \$1,406,593, an increase from last year's year to date pledges for \$1,400,280.

**Worship Council:** Steven Killworth. Two big announcements are Dustin Jesudason will be joining the Worship Council as he is such a big part of the work of the council. There are no other major changes. David Wantland said there will be no imposition of ashes this year, although there will be three in-person services and one virtual service.

**Outreach Council:** Kelly Williams. The council had its quarterly meeting last week. The gift giving tally for the Alternative Gift Market was \$19,000, more than a \$10,000 increase over last year. People were in the mood to give. It was a big success. Kelly turned in her official report and she cannot overstate how thriving the outreach committee is. Liz added that her PAR Ministry plans to start a micro loan program to members of the Prison Entrepreneurship community. The Angel Tree Ministry was completed in December with 75 children being served. The January ministry focus is to be announced.

**Building and Grounds:** Gretta Boshara and David Robinson. There was no formal report filed. They completed the final punch list at the rectory with the contractor who they are very happy with. He is making recommendations about what needs to be done ultimately for the long-term maintenance of the rectory including, for example, roof replacement.

**Building Development:** David Robinson. David gave a summary of a potential development area on a 250 x 125 foot lot that is adjacent to the church. There are no formal drawings. The church has met with two of the finest brokers in town who have provided their services pro bono. The possibilities in general terms for developing this property will be discussed with the congregation at the annual meeting. It will be important to manage the congregation and the leadership's expectations.

**Junior Warden:** Kristie Van Arsdel. There is a Code of Procedure committee including John Wallace, Barbara Hass, Neil Willard and Michael Chambers. Procedures to be updated and recommended for change will include a single voting slate for vestry and reducing the number of vestry members from 15 to 12. She expects this will come to a vote in September.

**Senior Warden:** Burdette Keeland. There will be nine candidates for vestry instead of 10, the 10th having dropped out too late to find a replacement. The annual meeting will be next Sunday at 12:30 in a webinar format. There was a vote to replace the member of the endowment committee who is leaving. The three candidates were Tim Driggers, Cindi Tharpe, and Jim Key and the winner based on the vestry vote was for Cindi Tharpe. Burdette thanked the exiting members of the Vestry: Kristie Van Arsdel, Rita Justice, Barbara Hass, and Al Hergenroeder.

**Rector's Report:** Neil Willard. The New Member Task Force is ongoing. He mentioned webinars including one tomorrow night with Sister Helen Prejean. He listed upcoming guests in February, March and beyond. He said there will be an e-newsletter tomorrow's about how to sign up for the annual meeting; people will need to register.

**Associate Rectors' Reports:**

Liz Parker. There is increasing demand for Steven ministries and the Loaves and Fishes Ministry continues to have increased demand. She announced a new activity called Reel Theology in which parishioners can view a designated movie and participate in a Zoom discussion the first Sunday of each month. The first movie to be discussed will be "Places in the Heart."

David Wantland. There were 1,100 people who participated in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, which was as many people as participated in last year's services. He said the Christmas Eve service at Rice was another good example of the great relationship that Palmer has with Rice University. He said there will be an email sent out tomorrow talking to people about how they can vote at the annual meeting.

**New Business:** None

**Old Business:** None

**Closing Prayer:** Burdette Keeland