

VESTRY MEETING MINUTES
PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Members in attendance

Neil Willard, Rector
Courtney Daniell-Knapp
Ruth Davies
Will Denham
Ellee de Groot
Jim Key, Sr. Warden
Victor Lamas
Jim Lober, Clerk
Jennifer Macia
Jim Mercurio
Priscilla Plumb
Linda Sylvan
Steven Vaughan
Marie Wehrung
Trent Williams

Members Absent

Allison Marek

Additional Clergy Present

Rev. Alex Easley
Rev. Liz Parker

The monthly vestry meeting of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church was held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017. The meeting commenced at 5:35 p.m.

1. Check-in and Prayer— Rev. Neil Willard opened with a historical perspective on vestries, including their formation and what they do. Neil followed with prayer after which attendees were invited to make known their prayers, concerns and thanksgivings.
2. Recognition and Announcements— Rev. Willard recognized and thanked Courtney Daniell-Knapp and Jim Mercurio for their gracious and committed service as Sr. and Jr. Warden.
3. Approval of Minutes—The January regular meeting minutes were circulated for review and approval. On motion made by Trent Williams, seconded by Ellee de Groot, the minutes were approved.
4. Appointment of Sr. Warden and Confirmation of New Officers—
 - a. The Rector, in accordance with the Code of Procedures announced that he had selected Jim Key to serve as the Sr. Warden for 2017.
 - b. The Sr. Warden appointed Tom Van Arsdel and Michael Chambers to serve as Chancellors for 2017.
 - c. The Rector and Sr. Warden announced that they had chosen Jim Lober to serve as Clerk and Dick Sylvan as Treasurer for 2017. On motion made by Steve Vaughan and seconded by Trent Williams, the Clerk and Treasurer positions were confirmed. A vestry person had been asked to serve as Jr. Warden and that position would be announced shortly.
5. Approval of Parochial Report— This report, which details certain congregational statistics is submitted to the Diocese annually. Upon motion made by Trent Williams and seconded by Will Denham, the report was approved for submission to the Diocese of Texas.
6. Serve Sunday Update— Rev. Alex Easley announced that April 30 is Serve Sunday. This will be Palmer's 4th Serve Sunday, which ministry began in 2015. An average of 200

Palmers have participated in this outreach. Palmers in teams will be visiting and serving at The Beacon, New Hope Housing, Vita-Living, Brookdale Retirement Center and various on-campus activities such as Vocal I.D., Day for Girls—Sewing Project, Be The Match Bone Marrow Donor Registration Drive and various art projects to benefit the Turquoise Center.

7. Living Compass—Rev. Liz Parker announced a new program entitled The Living Compass. This Spring Liz will be conducting an Ephesians Bible Study around growing up and building a balanced life. The program speaks to Faith, Wellness, and looks at our Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind. Participants will take a self-assessment and learn their strengths and areas for improvement. On March 16, The Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner, who developed the program, and his wife, Holly Stoner will be at Palmer to talk to Palmer’s leadership about this program. John Wallace and Liz Parker will be attending a training in Chicago.

8. Financial Review— Jim Mercurio provided this report. Good news is that all 2016 pledge balances were paid by December 31, 2016. The Finance Committee will be focusing on the declining operating cash balances, particularly in 4Q. The operating cash balance as of December 31 was \$449,000, \$172,000 of which is designated. Pledge income for 2017 was forecast at \$1,720,000, which would allow for a balanced budget. We have not yet received pledges in that amount, and the Finance Committee will be watching the budget closely this Spring and make any necessary recommendations. Jim Key expressed great optimism concerning the financial situation and Palmer’s path ahead. Jim Mercurio indicated that the Endowment has agreed to pay for replacement of the air conditioning chillers when needed and provide \$100,000 to supplement 2017 operating funds and if necessary provide a loan by way of a line of credit in the amount of \$200,000.

9. Stewardship Update—Presented by Ellee de Groot and Trent Williams.

As of last week there were 288 pledges for 2017, totaling \$1,579,866, \$140,000 short of the pledge goal. The number of pledging units is good considering average Sunday attendance, which we are striving to increase. Trent Williams made a large number of calls thanking parishioners for their membership and requesting a 2017 pledge. Ideas: Stewardship information will be provided to the Finance Committee for their consideration and input. Neil Willard will be soliciting additional 2017 pledges by letter. We discussed other methods of obtaining additional contributions to the 2017 budget, including possible foundation contributions. Trent Williams observed that we need to increase our membership.

10. Senior’s Ministry—Presented by Ruth Davies. Ruth indicated that there is a restricted operating account for the Gathering Place, a ministry for Seniors, which is no longer in existence. Ruth asked if the name of the account could be changed to “Senior’s Ministry”, an active ministry at Palmer, so that the funds would be available to the Seniors Ministry. On motion made by Victor Lamas and seconded by Linda Sylvan, the vestry approved re-naming the Gathering Place operating account as the Senior’s Ministry operating account.

It was also announced that there will be a March 25 workshop on issues around the caregiving and aging. News regarding the event will be in a forthcoming communication in THE PALMER.

11. Comments by the Sr. Warden—Jim Key noted that he had been on the Vestry 1979-1982, serving as Sr. Warden in 1982. He noted that Neil Willard has a great team in place and a dedicated vestry to guide Palmer in the days ahead. Jim noted that the concerns when he was on the vestry previously were much the same as now, mainly budget, building (the care and maintenance of our historic church) and membership—and in all of this we did well. This is what gives Jim confidence that we will do fine and have a good year.

12. Rector's Report—the Rector will attend the annual meeting of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes (“CEEP”) in Washington, DC, February 22-25;

Other events:

Shrove Tuesday February 28—mardis gras meal

Ash Wednesday—Services at 7am, 12noon and 7pm. Also, Ashes to Go will be provided from 7am to 7pm.

March 25—Senior's Ministry Workshop on Aging and Caregiving

Palm Sunday—The Rector has suggested that Palm Sunday be transformed as Palmer's Feast Day. In addition to being a family name, a Palmer is one who has been on a pilgrimage. Neil has asked for formal permission from Bishop Doyle to have Palm Sunday stand alone, with the passion narrative separated out.

Saturday morning vestry retreat—Neil indicated that we will plan on having a Saturday morning Retreat. Neil is thinking about having Patrick Hall do some family systems work around the church, and, for instance, how do we stand as a non-anxious presence?

13. New Business—Will Denham inquired if there was a vehicle for parishioners to make comments, complaints or suggestions about church operations. It was mentioned that there are periodic Warden's Forums.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm with prayer by the Rector.

/s/ James M. Lober, Vestry Clerk