

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
Minutes of Vestry Meeting/Annual Retreat
May 13, 2017

Vestry Present

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

Vestry Absent

Linda Sylvan

Clergy Present

Rev. Liz Parker
Rev. Alexandra Easley

Guest Speaker

Rev. Patrick Hall

The May meeting of the Vestry and the annual Vestry Retreat commenced at 9:00 a.m. at the bay home of Betty and Jim Key.

The retreat commenced with an engaging presentation by Rev. Patrick Hall in which he described the elements of Family Systems theory in the context of our parish family. He recommended various resources for study, including a book entitled, *Failure of Nerve, Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*.

At noon, a break was taken for lunch, after which the following agenda items were discussed:

1. Opening Prayer—Given by Liz Parker.
2. Concerns and Thanksgivings—Those in attendance shared their prayers and Thanksgivings.
3. Approval of Minutes—Motion to approve made by Marie Wehrung; second by Victor Lamas. Motion carried.
4. Financial Reports—
 - a. Budgetary status—Jim Mercurio reported on the available cash balance. The balance is currently \$200,000, composed of the unrestricted operating fund cash balance, plus \$50,000 contributed by the Endowment. The 2017 pledge balance is approximately \$80,000 short of the amount needed for a balanced 2017 budget. Expenses exceeded revenues for the previous month by \$79,000. Jim noted that monthly expenses are approximately \$175,000.

- b. Update on designated funds—Jim reported that the Designated Funds Balance is \$165,000.
 - c. Stewardship—As noted above, when funds received from the endowment are taken into account, the 2017 campaign is approximately \$80,000 short.
 - d. Insurance Premiums—The insurance premiums and coverages will be reviewed for the Vestry by counsel. A report will be made to the Vestry.
5. Junior Warden’s Report—No report. Issues related to a proposal for a new Main Street sign were covered by the Rector.
6. Senior Warden’s Report given by Jim Key—
- a. Social Initiatives for community building—Jim discussed several items of interest, including “Girls Night Out”, a program starting in the Fall and will involve several activities. It is an outgrowth of the Evangelism Council and is largely the idea of Jennifer Vaughan. Jim also suggested that we consider having a Spring afternoon parish-wide reception, as held in the past. More news on these as planning progresses.
 - b. Brews & Buddies—To be held Thursday, May 25, 5:30 p.m. at Valhalla, in the basement of Keck Hall, Rice University. Sponsored by the Palmer Men’s Fellowship.
 - c. Initiatives in Adult Christian Formation for the Fall—Neil Willard and Bet Hunter are lining up speakers for the fall around an education theme.
 - d. June Vestry Meeting—will be held on Tuesday, June 13 at Palmer.
7. Clergy reports
- a. Rector—The Rector announced that May 21 would be Alex Easley’s last Sunday at Palmer and that her first Sunday as Rector of the church in Seguin would be June 18. He expressed great appreciation for her service at Palmer as our curate. Neil indicated he had interviewed two Curate candidates who are completing their Curate programs and that he would like to have another Curate at Palmer for the next two years. Neil announced that the Brazos Bookstore is looking for a venue for larger book signings than can be accommodated at the store or other facilities. Tara and Neil showed the bookstore representative Palmer’s facilities as a possible site for future events. Neil handed out design documents related to a proposed sign to replace the current one at the Main Street side of the church. This is to be discussed at a later date, and no action was taken.
 - b. Associate Rector—Rev. Parker reported that two groups are taking part in the Living Compass course and that John Wallace would Chair the Wellness

Council. She noted that there would be a Wellness Fair at Palmer on October 14, which was proposed to Palmer by the City of Houston. She announced that September 23 the Episcopal Health Foundation will present an 8 hour course in Mental Health First Aid Training. She announced that there would be an adult confirmation on Wednesday, May 24, at 6:00 p.m. in St. Bede's and that Bishop Doyle would be present to do the confirmations. Liz reminded us that Vacation Bible School—for adults and children—will take place in the evening, July 10-13. The theme for the school will be *Wizards & Wonders*.

c. Curate—Alex expressed thanksgiving for her time as a Curate at Palmer. She noted that (1) Kelly Williams would chair Serve Sunday going forward; (2) that Catherine Thompson and Jeff Bohanski will be chairing the June Costa Rica mission; (3) that Linda Shelton will be supervising Outreach; (4) that Liz or a new priest will lead the Womens' Bible Study and (5) that Roger Hutchison is working on a list of items for the youth, and that Megan Henry will chair the Youth Task Force and work on developing that program. The Vestry thanked Alex for her great work at Palmer.

8. Unfinished business—None
9. Call for new business—Marie Wehrung asked that we consider how the information provided by Rev. Hall at the morning session can be incorporated into the work of the Vestry in our decision making and how we bring issues to the Parish.
11. Adjournment—The meeting and retreat ended at 3:10 p.m.

/s/ James M. Lober, Clerk