

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
June 19th, 2018

**Vestry Present:**

Kristie Van Arsdel  
Ruth Davies  
Barbara Hass  
Al Hergenroeder  
Jim Key, Sr. Warden  
Jim Mercurio  
Priscilla Plumb  
Linda Sylvan  
Jennifer Macia  
Steven Vaughan  
Susannah Webb  
Allison Marek

**Absent:**

Victor Lamas

**Guests:**

None

**Clergy Present:**

The Rev. Liz Parker, Associate  
The Rev. David Wantland, Curate

**Absent:**

The Rev. Neil Willard, Rector

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM.

**Opening Prayer** – Liz Parker opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Prayers and Thanksgiving** – Those in attendance shared their prayers and Thanksgivings. Prayers were offered for Jennifer Macia's daughter who graduated and will be spending a year abroad in India. Steven Vaughan shared thanksgivings for celebration of his 15 year wedding anniversary in Greece.

Barbara Hass enjoyed a recent wedding in Kentucky. Jim Key will be traveling with his grandsons soon.

**Approval of Minutes** – The May minutes were approved with no corrections needed. Al Hergenroeder moved the approval of the minutes and Ruth Davies seconded.

**Financial Report** – Jim Mercurio reviewed the most recent church financials. Our cash balance is approximately 200K. Prior year pledges (as budgeted) are essentially all in. As well, open plate and unpledged monies appear to be on track, those these numbers are a little hard to budget for. Expenses YTD are ~ 10K below budget. Jim Mercurio briefly mentioned the discussion at the Finance Committee about consolidation of designated funds. The strategy is to consolidate and streamline the funds where possible. The Finance Committee also passed a motion that will evaluate any future proposed designated funds prior to approving the fund. The annual church audit is complete. The auditors recommended better flow of information between the church and the endowment. Mechanism are being put in place to facilitate this exchange of information.

### **Reports and Update**

**Communication** – Priscilla Plumb reported on various upcoming activities that the Communications Council has been overseeing. The publications calendar and social media stats were reviewed and reported. So far, efforts to improve communications at Palmer seem to be working. Jennifer Macia noted that we do a great job of publicizing events but that sometimes there isn't information afterwards to communicate how an event went to inform those not in attendance.

**Evangelism** – There hasn't been a recent Evangelism meeting. Numerous events are coming soon, including the PRIDE parade. There was a brief discussion about how we can best follow up with people who have not been at Palmer recently.

**Outreach** – The Outreach Council will have a meeting at the end of June to plan future strategy.

**Stewardship** – Linda Sylvan reported that Stewardship planning is ongoing. Total pledges are now up to 287. Covenant Sunday will be October 28<sup>th</sup>. There is no plan for a band this year. Rather tables will be set up in the courtyard and upstairs in the Parish Hall. Linda requested ideas and names for possible members of the Stewardship Committee. She recently met with Roger, Dustin and Ruth. The cottage meetings will be called Gatherings. Parishioners can sign up online. Vestry members are encouraged to attend. There will be 2 off campus meetings and 3 on campus meetings. Each Gathering will have a different focus – Outreach, Pastoral Care, Formation, Music, and Architecture.

**Worship** – On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the Bahamas Youth Choir will sing at 9:30 and 11:30 with lunch to follow.

**Junior Warden's Report** – The new phone system will be installed by the end of the summer. Archway will be paying some of the cost and needs to finish signing off on some of the paperwork. All aspects of the chiller installation are complete. As well, the new internet installation has taken place. The AC system at the Rectory is still working, though not as efficiently as it should. The plan is to get through the summer and then install a new AC system in the fall.

**Senior Warden's report** – Jim Key reported that we will not have a Vestry meeting in July. The August meeting may be moved to a different date depending on Vestry member availability. Jim will send out an email to check when people will be around in August. Jim Key then discussed the proposed consolidation of certain funds in the restricted accounts. The Finance Committee met recently and proposed the following changes. Please note that the text below is taken from those minutes and has been modified to reflect discussion as the Vestry meeting.

- a. Combine Outreach & Serve Sunday to one fund under "Serve Sunday"
- b. We will work to find out more about the Homeless Ministry Fund and possibly use these funds with our other similar outreach groups or to have on hand when individuals with these specific needs come to Palmer for help.
- c. Memorials and Palmer Archive can be combined. The new fund will be call the Palmer Archives Fund. Initially some of this fund will be used to restore and frame several of our older Parish Easter photos.

- d. Palmer Endowment Suspense – This is a holding account when people purchase niches or donations are made “in memory of” and we occasionally transfer these funds to the Endowment.
- e. The Alma Catlin fund will be consolidated into the Alter Guild Fund
- f. The Palmer Golf Outing fund will be closed and the balance combined with the Men’s Group Fund and renamed Men’s Bible Study Group Fund.
- g. The Davies Memorial fund will be combined into the Media Ministries and may potentially be used for some AV upgrades to St. Bede’s.
- h. The Thanksgiving Dinner fund is not active anymore and will be used to pay the deficits from the Community of Hope and Yellowstone and then move any overages to the general operating fund. Once that is completed all three funds can be eliminated.
- i. The Storm Relief Fund will now be called the Disaster Relief Fund and it is proposed that some of the fund (amount to be determined) will be retained for future disaster relief. David Wantland is responsible for the Palmer response to Harvey and Betty Key is Palmer’s liason with the Diocese for Harvery response. Betty has represented Palmer in meetings with other large Episcopal parishes. An offshoot of that is the newly formed NE (Northeast) Coalition, a loosely organized group of non-profits and small churches in northeast Houston. That area is in need of a great deal of Harvey recovery work. Betty has attended one of their formation meetings and Neil Willard will be attending a meeting at the end of June. Priests from several other large Episcopal parishes plus Stacy Stringer, our Diocesan Harvey coordinator, have been in attendance. Palmer is in discernment about its possible role in this endeavor. Jim Mercurio suggested staying in contact with our parishioners affected by Harvey and the clergy and other staff will do so.
- j. Debt Service also has \$1300 and we would like to make a one time payment to the debt and then close that line.

Motion made by Steven Vaughan to approve the changes and consolidations to the designated funds and seconded by Kristi Van Arsdel. Motion passed.

### **Clergy Reports –**

Neil Willard, Rector, was not present, so no Rector’s report was given.

Liz Parker, Associate, urged people to attend / consider volunteering at General Convention. She recommended that those who are able attend the July 5<sup>th</sup> presentation by Mandy Neal who will be speaking to the Palmer Older Adults about various financial matters. As well, Liz and Linda Shelton are planning on having a special forum this Sunday to discuss immigrant family separation.

David Wantland, Curate, noted that summer at Palmer is full of fun events. Pentecost and the recent Iftar dinner were a success. As well, we have the PRIDE parade, Missionpalooza and the Jerusalem Peacebuilders Camp coming up soon.

**Unfinished Business** – None

**New Business:** Jim Key briefly mentioned that Paul Martin has completed the initial plans for the new and improved entrance to the Nave. Susannah Webb noted that Palmers may be able to start parking at Rice for free on Sundays pending some efforts by George Webb.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Vaughan, Clerk