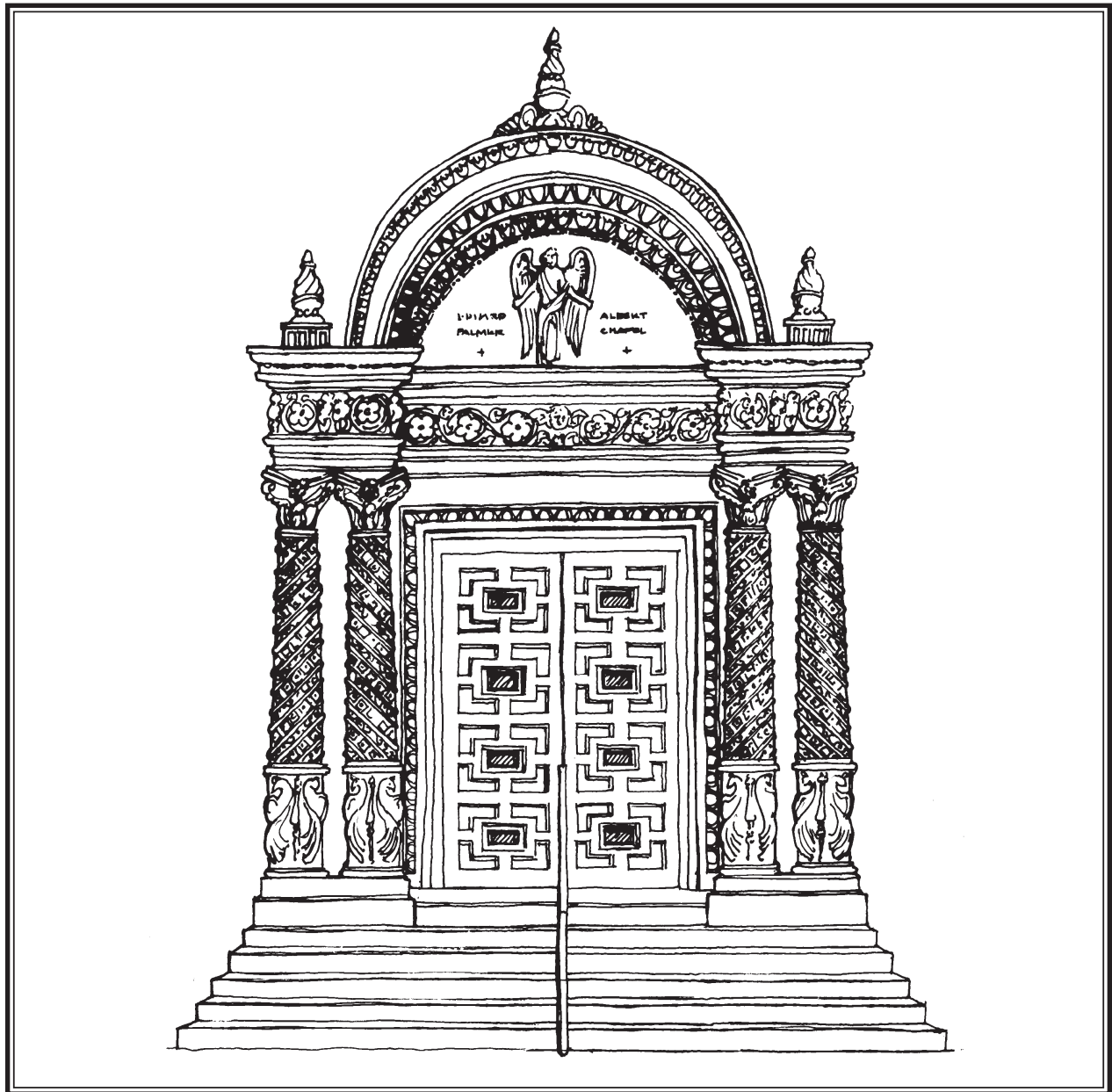


PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

JANUARY 25, 2015

Report of the Senior Warden Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church 2015 Annual Meeting

The 2014 calendar year began at Palmer with a weekend of reflection and vision facilitated by the Rev'd Eric Law. Over 200 people attended what we called "Palmer Family Weekend" and participated in an exercise of historic assessment and contemplation of the future during our season of transition. The event proved to be very beneficial to the church. Together, we created an historic outline of the church and heard from folks of varying tenures at Palmer what they've experienced here. Both positive and negative things were brought forward from a span of over fifty years. We heard that a lack of parking and money are not recent issues at Palmer Church. We also heard about the great love that Palmers have had for their rectors. We gained a healthy perspective on our past and recognized that we have been a bit out of balance with a more inwardly focused thrust which needed to be complemented with more outwardly focused ministries. The event was well-received and gave the congregation a useful historical perspective and laid important groundwork for the arrival later in the year of our new rector.

The Search Committee began the year in "full search mode" for the sixth Rector of Palmer Memorial Church. Working closely with the Bishop and Diocese, a number of excellent candidates were identified and an intense search process began. The committee made numerous visits to conduct onsite interviews and the list was gradually pared. In March, the Search Committee recommended the Reverend Neil Alan Willard as the Sixth Rector of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. The Vestry unanimously approved the recommendation and Neil accepted our call on March 28. The church owes a huge debt of gratitude to the Search Committee and its chairman, George Ferry. I'd like to publicly thank Bishop Doyle and his staff for all their help in this process.

The church began making preparations for the arrival of the Willard family from Edina, Minnesota with a sprucing up of the rectory. Neil, his wife Carrie and their sons Rowan and Ben arrived in Houston the first week of June and began the process of becoming Texans. They came to Palmer from St. Stephens Church in Edina, Minnesota.

Neil's installation service as the Sixth Rector of Palmer took place on September 30 and was officiated by the Right Reverend Andy Doyle, the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas, and attended by many Palmers and other clergy from the Diocese. A festive reception was held afterwards to celebrate the occasion. It was truly a holy event.

The parish sponsored a series of cottage meetings at the homes of parishioners in the fall to introduce Neil and Carrie to the congregation. Neil shared his own history and cast his vision of recommitment to families and children.

The Vestry approved adding the position of Director of Religious Education and Parish Life in September so that the church could live into its commitments to families and children. The search began thereafter and a high caliber candidate emerged. This person has agreed to accept the position effective no later than June 15, 2015. An official detailed announcement will be made in late spring. This person will be responsible for the Sunday School program, Christian Educational offerings for all ages, and supervision of our youth ministry leadership team.

The City of Houston made significant progress in reducing the number of homeless people in the city this year. However, the number of meals served at The Way Station, our ministry to the homeless and hungry, increased dramatically. The church became very engaged in the citywide conversation about how to best meet the needs of this population. Our Way Station

Steering Committee has been considering various options to better serve the homeless for the past several months. Several “town hall type” gatherings were held to widen the conversation within the parish about this topic. The Steering Committee hopes to identify several options in the near future for the church to consider. Many thanks to the members of this Committee who have all worked very effectively this year to support this ministry.

2014 was a very busy and full year in the life of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. There are entirely too many individuals to thank in this report. Thanks to the entire parish for its patience and support. I’d like to thank the Vestry for its faithful service and collegiality during a challenging time. As you know, they were asked to serve an extra year in order to provide continuity during the rector transition. They served the parish well.

We are all very grateful for our clergy staff. Thanks to Neil (and Carrie) for accepting our call; thanks to Father Dub Brooks and Deacon Linda Shelton for their steadfast service; Father Sam Todd for his service during the transition.; and Father Patrick Hall, the missionary to Rice University. Special thanks to our team of non-stipendiary priests: Henry Strobel, John Price, Kit Wallingford and Cynthia Tola, whose assistance is invaluable to Palmer.

Palmer is a very special place. We have a beautiful church located on a very unique parcel of property in a special and busy corner in Houston, Texas. We are a place where many choose to get married and many more are laid to rest. Our music, anchored by a lovely organ and talented singers, is second to none in this city. Our worship tradition is so very sacred. These are all wonderful things and important assets. But our greatest assets are you, the people of this fine place. You continue to provide the love necessary for Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church to make a huge difference to a world in need. There may be fewer of us here than at various times in the past, yet the spirit of love and hope is still very strong.

My prayer for this place is that in the coming year, and in the years ahead, there will be more Palmers to spread the love of Jesus Christ in and around Houston, Texas and expand on all the good work that takes place here. We have great leadership from our new rector and exciting times lie ahead. We are poised to live into the vision that God has in store for us.

*God Bless,
Greg Hambrick
Senior Warden*

Encounter

Wedding Coordinators

This year there was a change in the Wedding Ministry. Having served faithfully, Phyllis Svrcek and Alison Svrcek retired from the ministry in April 2013, and a new Wedding Guild was formed. The new coordinators are Wendy Robertson, Jeanine Baker, Sondra Maxfield and Ragna Case.

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. Within appropriate boundaries, 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.

Other ministries who contribute greatly in this effort are the Altar Guild, the Acolyte Corps, the Bell Ringers, the sextons, and our Music Ministry. We would especially like to thank Kathy Herrin, Linda Bracey and

JR Porter (Altar Guild), Suzanne Miller (Acolytes), Allen Nunley and Lynsey Slavonic (Bell Ringers), Brady Knapp (Music Ministry) and Jimmy PARRALES (Sextons) 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. We, the wedding coordinators, greatly appreciate their gracious and proactive support.

There were 12 wedding ceremonies held at Palmer in 2014, and there are currently 5 weddings on the calendar for 2015.

Wendy Robertson, Jeanine Baker, Sondra Maxfield and Ragna Case

Music

In 2014, Palmer music ministries welcomed Ken Cowan, our new Organist and Artist-in-residence, and Yuri McCoy, our new Associate Organist. In January of 2014 Palmer hosted the RSCM midwinter gulf coast course which was led by Brady Knapp, Director of music, and in July Palmer also hosted the RSCM summer course rehearsals. The choirs provided music for our new Rector, Father Neil Willard's institution service in September. Along with weekly service to the parish including providing music for several memorial services, the choirs provided Choral Evensong services and sang the annual Advent lessons and carols service in 2014.

In May, the adult choir sang a special Evensong that celebrated the music and career of composer and longtime Palmer member David Ashley White, who was celebrating his fifteen-year tenure as Director of Music at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston.

In 2015, David White will become Palmer's Composer-in-residence through a gift made possible by parishioner Norma Beazley. In July of 2015 the choirs will tour New Orleans singing services and an Evensong at historic Christ Church Cathedral. There will be a fun night of Cajun food, jazz and show tunes with the choirs on May 8th in Parish hall. We hope you will join us!

Submitted by Brady Knapp, Director of Music

Sts. Mary and Martha Altar Guild

The purpose of Sts. Mary and Martha Altar Guild is to prepare our church for services that are beautiful and orderly so that worshippers will not be distracted from their worship of God.

Preparing for worship involves the purchase, preparation, cleaning and care of furnishings for the services (wine, wafers, linens, candles, brass and silver, altar hangings, vestments, and decorations), setting out everything that is needed for services and clean-up after services. Along with Palmer's eight regular Eucharists per week, we are also responsible for preparation of all special services, such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter services. These services may take place in any of our four worship spaces: the Nave, St. Bede's Chapel, Holy Cross Chapel or the Columbarium.

JR Porter, Altar Guild Director, coordinates guild activities. Glenn Turner, as head of the Worship Committee, is our liaison. Jeanine Baker is our Encounter Vessel Leader. The group is divided into four weekly teams headed by Kathy Herrin (first week), Vickie Harshbarger (second week), Carole Tabor (third week), and Cornelia Williams (fourth week). These teams are responsible for the coordination of everything that takes place during their week. The Altar Guild rotates duties for all 5th week Sundays. Wendy Robertson and Linda Bracey are the wedding coordinators. Helen Toombs is our supply chairman who inventories, orders, purchases, and delivers supplies. We also work closely with the Funeral Guild who are also Altar Guild members; Vickie Harshbarger, Ann Pittman and Cornelia Williams. Our group of regular members numbered 30 this year. In addition, there are several honorary members and several "Ad Hoc" members who are unable to help in traditional ways, but help us with special projects.

The Altar Guild volunteers for several parish-wide duties, such as serving twice a year at Great Wednesday dinners, and Meet on the Patio receptions.

In June of this year, Kathy Herrin stepped down as the Director of the Guild. Kathy is a long time member of the Guild and served with dedication, care and humor. She served as the Director for over four years and did an outstanding job bringing organization and innovation to the ministry. The Altar Guild is eternally grateful for her participation. Kathy will continue to serve on the Guild and has agreed to chair the week one team.

The Altar Guild hosts a Book Club for its members as an extracurricular activity and a chance to socialize. It is held every other month at the home of one of the guild members. We also host at least one luncheon/training session per year to welcome and train new members.

Working quietly behind the scenes, Altar Guild members preform their sacred duties with a special love and respect for the symbols and sacraments of our faith and worship. Being a member of the guild is a commitment of time and self. It is a labor of love that we perform gladly was a way of giving thanks to God for all that he has so generously given to us. We thank you for allowing us to serve and help enhance the beautiful liturgy that identifies Palmer.

Respectfully submitted
JR Porter, Director

Evangelism

On Ash Wednesday the Lay Ministers of Palmer marked with ashes 924 people. We took to the streets and the rail station to provide this blessing to students, joggers, medical personnel, those driving to and from surgery and treatments, a policeman on horseback, newborns, bus drivers and even those who first said, “I am not worthy”. We did this to remind them, and us, that we came from God, we will return to God...and God is with us today.

Each one was a blessing.

Evangelism is basic and simple: it is Welcome and Hospitality and Community. It is making sure no one feels invisible here. In this mission, The Evangelism Ministry Team knows that we are not alone. All the ministries of Palmer are our strategic partners.

We understand what “collective commitment and efforts” can do.

Together, we are more than a patchwork: each separate and stitched together to form an appealing whole.

Together we are more than a mosaic: many small pieces that form a beautiful assembly.

Together, we are a stained glass window: we reflect the light and the light shines through us. We are meant to be a teaching tool – like the Transfiguration window - to show our parish how to be. And that is beautifully, radically, hospitable.

“He is our Welcome and so we, in turn, welcome all.

Palmer’s Evangelism Ministry Team

St. Michael the Archangel Funeral Guild

The Funeral Guild officially formed a “named” guild in 2011, choosing St. Michael the Archangel as our name. St. Michael the Archangel is considered the patron saint of the dead. It is St. Michael - “who is like unto God” - Prince of the Church, bearer of the standard of Christ and First Archangel, who receives the souls of the saints and leads them to Paradise.

The Guild is comprised of three Palmer Funeral Coordinators – Vickie Harshbarger, Ann Pittman, and Cornelia Williams - and Palmers who volunteer to serve as acolytes, chalice bearers, readers, greeters, and ushers at funerals and memorial services. Currently, we have thirty Palmer volunteers.

In 2014, twelve funeral services were held at Palmer. Palmer clergy also officiated at four off-site funerals. The funeral guild assisted in preparation for these services.

The year 2014 saw the completion of a parish necrology containing the names and date of death of all Palmer parishioners from the founding of Palmer Church to the present time. Prayers are now being offered for our deceased parishioners on the anniversary of their deaths at morning or evening prayer. This necrology is kept current by a Palmer staff member.

We have continued to develop and shape the Funeral Guild in such a way as to enable Palmer to maintain and enhance the beauty of the Anglican tradition in honoring and celebrating the lives of the deceased, and providing comfort, guidance and strength to those who mourn.

As many of our volunteers have told us, serving at funerals provides a final way to honor our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you would like to serve on the Funeral Guild as acolyte, chalice bearer, reader, greeter, or usher, or if you have any other questions, please contact one of the coordinators listed below.

Submitted by:

Vickie Harshbarger

dvaharshbarger@sbcglobal.net

Ann Pittman

annspittman@hotmail.com

Cornelia Williams

cornelia.williams@sbcglobal.net

Change Ringers of Palmer

In the past year, the change ringers of Palmer

- Continued ringing between 9 and 11 am services AND once a month between the 7:45 and 9 am service.
- By year end, had 12 members of the Sunday Service band.
- Lost one member– moved away.
- 11 members of our band are members of the North American Guild of Change Ringers – up by three.
- Participated in the weekly joint practices shared between the three churches in Houston that have change ringing bells.
- Rang for special events including welcoming Rev'd Neil Willard to Palmer, the Houston Marathon, Museum Day (Zone 4) and Palmer weddings (as requested).
- Performed maintenance (twice) on our change ringing bells.
- Held three social event/business meeting for the ringers.
- Recruited actively from the congregation.
- One member of our band was a member of the winning band (from Texas) that won the striking competition at the 7 Towers Festival in Texarkana, Arkansas.
- Published quarterly reports from Houston for the North American Guild of Change Ringers
- Created a video to post on the Palmer Website highlighting our ministry.

Some of the planned activities for this upcoming year include:

- Hosting the 7 Towers Festival in Houston in April (Jointly with two other Houston Churches).
- Continue working to become more fully integrated as a ministry at Palmer.
- Further leveraging the Palmer website in support of the Change Ringing Ministry.
- Getting our change ringing video posted (with sound) on our internal Video Display system to show what

is going on in the bell tower. What we do is visually and aurally interesting and what the bells do is quite eye catching and very hard to visualize and we wish to share this with the parish and the larger community if possible.

Challenges

- It takes a long time, much effort and personal commitment by the ringers and the teachers for the ringers (individually and as a group) to gain ringing skills. It takes an even longer view and time to build leadership skills so that this ministry will persist.
- 10 out of 12 of our Sunday Service band are parishioners. We desire to recruit more parishioners into this ministry. We also desire to build not just ringing skills but ringing leadership skills so that this ministry will continue and thrive.

*Allen Nunley
Ringing Master*

Grow

Palmer Youth Ministries

The year of 2014 saw lots of activity and change for Palmer's Youth Ministry. Weekly gatherings, study halls, bible studies and reflection times were faithfully offered and attended under the leadership of Ross Heinsohn, and youth retreats were supported actively by attendees and assisting parishioners. There were lock-ins for middle school and high school students as well as mission trips, fun events and holiday celebrations. The youth served dinner alongside the St. Andrew's Guild to raise funds and engage in the spiritual process of ministry with others.

A healthy crop of young people were confirmed by Bishop Harrison in June, invigorating the entire year. Late in 2014 Ross left the employ of Palmer Church for secular pursuits and he has been missed. In the interim months of awaiting a new Director of Religious Education, Palmer's Youth Ministry has been excellently served by volunteers under the leadership of Courtney Daniell-Knapp. Dr. Elizabeth Maynard, a Palmer and Clinical Psychologist, met with the youth on several occasions and encouraged the youth to ask questions and share personal feelings to help them deal with their sense of loss. Other young adults who grew up at Palmer and volunteered to serve the Youth Ministry are: John William Fields, Walker Hambrick, Mollie McDonnell and Ashley Tucker.

EYC activities featured a scavenger hunt in November and then we proceeded into Advent with Advent I care packages for Palmer college freshmen and Advent II delivery of Angel Tree gifts to children with parents in prison. The annual Christmas Party included an ugly sweater competition and white elephant gift exchange and a delicious meal cooked and served by Kathy Fields, Greg Hambrick, Johnna Kincaid, Joan Schell and Nancy Tucker.

Two Palmer youths, Caroline and Elizabeth Kent, attended a Diocesan Happening weekend at Camp Allen in November.

Palmer youths, their parents, the Diocese and the entire Episcopal Youth Community look forward to what God will bring to Palmer in 2015. We look forward not only with eagerness and joy, but with faith that the best is yet to be.

*Submitted by
The Rev'd Dub Brooks*

Holy Spokes

Fielded an MS-150 team and continues in the fellowship of riding together.

St. Andrew's Guild

During 2014, The Saint Andrews Guild prepared and offered over 2300 meals to the Palmer community. When there was extra food, the Guild provided more than 200 complimentary meals to the sextons, guards and nursery staff that support Great Wednesdays. We also donated leftovers to the Way Station.

Diners averaged about 93 people a night. However, the actual numbers vary a great deal. In 2013 our high night was 126 diners and our low was 60, a 66 person difference. While there is a general downward trend of fewer diners over the semester, each week is different. There seems to be no discernible weekly pattern across months or years. Some weeks we run out of food and other weeks we lose money.

Overall, we make a little money each semester. The small income we do bring in goes back to the church community through buying of kitchen supplies, dishes, pots and pans, cutlery, tools, tablecloths, equipment maintenance and repair, etc. This year because of the generosity of the estate of Charlotte Brashear and the memorial contributions made in her name we were able to make major improvements in the kitchen. New safety mats were purchased and new plumbing additions have made the kitchen safer and easier to use. In addition, new good looking trash receptacles have been bought for Parish hall.

Chefs are responsible for creating menus, buying food and staffing the endeavor with volunteers from the Guild. Our meals have represented cuisines from a variety of regions, e.g. Louisiana, China, India, France, Italy, Mexico, and Texas. Given the unpredictability of attendance and budget tightness, chefs are challenged to be economical, flexible and creative. No meals would happen without the work of guild members taking on the roles of sous chefs, servers and cashiers.

Great Wednesday nourishes and sustains the Palmer community. There is wisdom in having choir practice, worship and classes together on one night and supported by the sharing of a good meal. On Great Wednesdays, Palmer pulls a variety of people to the church and by nourishing body, mind and spirit builds and strengthens the bonds of our community.

David Veale

Daughters of the King

Palmer Daughters of the King followed their Rule of Prayer and Service by:

- Praying daily for unity of Christ's Church, the spread of Christ's Kingdom, the spiritual growth of our parish, Palmer's search for a new Rector, and for our Clergy
- Praying daily for the needs of all for whom prayers are requested from the Palmer website "Prayer Link," by e-mail or from the Prayer Boxes
- Holding all prayer requests in strictest confidence
- Offering spiritual refreshment and fellowship at monthly meetings through prayer and discussion
- Training two new Daughters for induction into the Order
- Hosting a Lenten Quiet Day
- Hosting a morning of Advent Reflections based on the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor's book, Learning to Walk in the Dark led by the Rev'd Linda Shelton
- Hosting a study of Chrismons and their symbolism
- Continuing our Advent/Christmas tradition of decorating the Chrismon tree in the Tower Room with dozens of handmade Christ Monograms or "Chrismons" for the education and enjoyment of the parish.

*For His Sake,
Sue Hamblen*

Palmer Memorial Church Endowment Fund

The Trustees of the Palmer Endowment for the year 2014 were James Key, Chair, Alan Christensen, Treasurer, Dawn Hawley, Secretary, Martha Bersch and Jim Mercurio. Linda Kelly serves as Counsel. Ron Robins rotated off the Board early in 2014 after five years of faithful service and sound advice.

As of January 1, 2014, the value of Endowment assets was 2,115,169.73. The major expense during the year was \$72,054.09 representing interest and principal payment on the remainder of the Palmer building fund balance. That remaining balance is now \$68,000 and should be paid off in 9 months unless the Board decides to act sooner. The only major expense in the year was \$23,000 to help with refurbishment of the Rectory prior to the Rev. Neil Willard and family moving there. Contributions to the Endowment for the year 2014 totaled \$21,800. At December 31, 2014, Endowment assets were \$2,173,483.73. Endowment funds are professionally managed by Vanguard Asset Management Services with general direction provided by the Board. The rate of return for our funds under management was 10.9% in 2014.

This year has seen further growth in the members of the Daphne Palmer Neville Society, a group of parishioners who have included the Palmer Endowment as part of their estate planning. The number acknowledging such a gift has now grown to 60 estates, individuals and families. It is hoped that such a reminder of support will encourage others to include Palmer in their estate planning.

The Trustees have codified in our minutes that the purpose of the Endowment is to generate enough income to support the maintenance and potential capital projects related to the Church buildings and rectory. Presently, the Endowment can act as a source of funds for emergency repair if regular budgetary funds are not available. When final payment is made on the building note, the Endowment income can be used for capital improvements and maintenance. The principal funds of the Endowment are presently \$996,800.00 and this principal will never be violated, but will continue to grow. The difference between the principal and total Endowment assets represents investment gains which are also retained (as much as possible) to generate further income.

Respectfully submitted,
James E. Key
Chair

Serve

Advent Gift Market

The 2014 Advent Gift Market was held on all four Sunday mornings in Advent. Donations were also received via online donations through the Palmer eGiving website, as well as donations dropped off at the church office.

Donations during the 2014 Market totaled \$9,822, and were designated for the following ministries: Archway Academy, Kairos Ministry, Palmer Place Apartments, Refugee Resettlement Ministry, Way Station, and Yellowstone Academy.

Plans for the 2015 Advent Gift Market include once again running the Market all 4 Sundays in Advent to provide more opportunities for people to select and make donations, improving online donation directions/options, and pursuing the capability to make Advent Gift Market donations via credit card in person.

Ansley Browns and Bobbie Wallingford, co-chairs

Angel Tree

Angel Tree provides Christmas gifts to children of incarcerated parents on behalf of those parents. In 2014 Palmer Church was assigned 49 children and was able to serve 42 of those children from 32 caregivers. Always a favorite ministry, many Palmers volunteered throughout the process. This year the Palmer Youth Group was able to deliver gifts to four homes and experience the joy of giving to those children.

Johnna Kincaid

Boy Scout Troop 511

Troop 511 has been a part of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church's outreach mission since 2006 when the Troop was first chartered to the church by the Boy Scouts of America. Troop 511 resides in the Twin Bayou District of the Sam Houston Area Council, an area that includes 16.5 counties. The mission of Troop 511 is to prepare young men to make ethical and moral decisions over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Key Troop 511 facts for 2014:

- Troop Membership of 25 Scouts
- Troop Adult Leadership of 6 Assistant Scoutmasters – dads of Scouts, some serve as Merit Badge Counselors too
- Many families within the troop have one or both parents who actively serve as volunteers within the troop, Merit Badge Counselors, and Troop Committee Members.
- The number of Scouts by rank include: 6 Scout, 5 Tenderfoot, 2 Second Class, 1 First Class, 2 Star, 9 Life (3 of which completed their Eagle Projects in 2014).
- 23 nights of camping including weekends at Weiden Ranch, Camp Strake, Martin Dies State Park, Camp El Rancho Cima, the Bourne Lakehouse, Garner State Park, Schlitterbahn New Braunfels, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, Palmer Lock-In, and a week at Camp Constantine in Texas
- Scouts earned money by having 2 car washes, a bake sale, selling Christmas poinsettias, and selling popcorn in addition to receiving a grant from the Seay Foundation.
- Service projects include collecting food for the Palmer Way Station and Emergency Aid Coalition, performing a Flag Day Ceremony for War Veterans, and clearing trails at the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

Submitted by Darryl Hadsell, Scoutmaster

Church In The Park

Church in the Park continues to serve as an early Saturday morning ministry outreach serving the less fortunate and homeless people who the Lord has placed before us. We welcome them in with coffee, water and doughnuts every Saturday, fifty-two weeks a year in the church courtyard and further challenge and engage their hearts through prayer, worship and the Word of God. We begin at 7:30 am and conclude at approximately 9:30 am by distribution of 120 freshly made sack lunches, clothes and toiletry bags.

In 2014, Church in the Park:

- Served more than 6500 of God's people by way of not only physical but also spiritual nourishment. Countless people have made decisions for Christ and as well, many have been healed of sickness.
- Engaged over 15 different multi-denominational/multi-racial Houston surrounding churches/ministries in all levels of service from Greeting, Serving, Preaching, Worship, Christian Mime/Drama, Toiletry Bags, Clothes and Local Homeless services assisting those that desire, with help getting off the street.
- Has been an opportunity for many who are called of God to preach to come and share their gifts as well as those leading worship. This continues to be a great mentoring and service opportunity for many.
- We were pleased this year to receive the Palmer Youth Group who came and became the hands and feet of Jesus in service to God's people.
- Distributed over 1500 Bibles, Christian literature and countless amounts of clothing and toiletries.

- Church in the Park continues to be an associated ministry of Palmer for over 8 years. It continues to nurture God's people and see an increase and yielded harvest of souls that only the Lord Jesus can bring forth.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Craig Hearn

Burning Hope Ministries

www.burning-hope-ministries.org

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832-465-2541

Community of Hope

The Community of Hope is a small group of trained parishioners whose ministry is to create a Christian community of volunteer lay chaplains united in prayer, shaped by Benedictine spirituality, and equipped for pastoral care ministry. COH ministers visited persons in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice settings, special locations serving those in grief, such as Bo's Place, and visitors to the Medical Center who may be connected to us through our Palmer Medical Center Ministries. Several members also served as Eucharistic Visitors on Sundays, taking the Eucharist to those unable to attend church.

The Community of Hope is sponsored and supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and is now active in many denominations and internationally. Palmer partnered with Christ the King Lutheran Church again in 2014 for monthly education and support meetings. A 14-week, 42-hour training course was offered in the fall of 2014 to help trainees discern God's call to them for pastoral care ministry and to equip them to serve as commissioned lay chaplains. One Palmer participated in the class.

As Palmer hopes to increase our ministry to the Medical Center and those it serves, we would like to strengthen our COH and help more of our members participate in this ministry and discover the blessings of offering pastoral care. Please contact us for more information.

Linda Shelton, Deacon

Cub Scout Pack 511

Palmer's Cub Scout Pack 511 is a great opportunity for boys from first through fifth grades to be a part of an exciting and enriching adventure. In Cub Scouts, boys learn by doing, and in Pack 511 the boys enjoy crafts, storytelling, singing songs, going on field trips – all along the way earning badges and awards. Family involvement is an essential part of Cub Scouting, and parents are encouraged to play an active role in the program.

This is very evident as our Pack 511 "family" of parents, sisters and brothers is over one hundred strong. Since beginning our ninth year last September we have a total of thirty-six boys in Pack 511 with diverse backgrounds and faiths from various parts of the city. Our outreach to the community is one of our strengths as 95% of our boys are from outside of the Palmer parish.

Our 2014 was action packed. We:

- Participated in Scout Sunday at Palmer showing off our Pinewood derby cars and other Cub "stuff" at the reception in the Courtyard.
- Had our Spring and Fall family overnight camp outs.
- Participated in Twilight Camp, a week-long summer day camp and attended a Harlem Globetrotters game.
- Pack 511 was in the Grand Marshall's Parade at Rodeo Houston, riding on an antique firetruck after a day of learning about horsemanship.
- Watched the Cubs of Pack 511 continue to earn various awards in the Cub Scout Program. Two of our Cubs will earn the highest award in Cub Scouts, the "Arrow of Light" award in February 2015.

- Constructed and raced “Pinewood Derby” cars at Palmer.
- Nine of our boys were promoted to Boy Scouts, most of which went to Palmer’s Troop 511.
- We recruited a large number (10) of Tiger Cubs (first graders) this year which will sustain our Pack’s health for future years.
- And most importantly, had a lot of fun! Pack 511 is a self-sustaining outreach program for Palmer.

Our annual popcorn fundraiser had sales of over \$4,500 with a net to Pack 511 of over \$1,350. This, along with our annual dues, supports most of our needs. Most importantly, everyone at Pack 511 is grateful that Palmer Church enthusiastically supports us and provides us with a place for our Pack meetings, Den Meetings and all our other activities. From September to May we meet at Palmer twice a month on Sunday afternoons for our Den Meetings and once a month for our Pack Meetings. Without this support and without the facilities at Palmer Church, there would be no Pack 511. Our future is bright. As we move forward and grow we are blessed to have a wonderful church community to support us. Thank you everyone at Palmer Church!

*Respectfully submitted,
Brandon Moncla
Pack 511 Committee Chair*

Girl Scout Troop 25230

Girl Scout Troop 25230 completed its 7th and began its 8th year of “building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” The youngest girls in the troop are currently 1st year Cadettes (6th graders in middle school), while the oldest three (and original members) are now freshmen in high school! That means the troop that started with Daisies and Brownies back in September 2007 now has advanced to the Cadette and Senior level. While the traditional Girl Scout troop model is “one grade, one school,” our troop bucks that trend! Our girls • come from all over Houston • attend 13 different schools • represent two levels of Girl Scouts

- Seventeen Cadettes (nine 6th graders, six 7th graders, two eighth graders) and
- Three Seniors (all 9th graders)
- Include eight members from Palmer (and twelve non-members of Palmer).

During the current membership year, we’ve added one new member to the troop. Last year’s three 8th grade Cadettes completed and earned their Silver Award (the highest award a Cadette Girl Scout can earn) by instituting the “Adopt-a-Pot” Beautification Project at Palmer. Each girl invested a minimum of 50 hours learning about beautification options, scrubbing and oiling the teak patio furniture, cleaning up flower beds, researching flowering plant options, assembling flyers, making announcements, and organizing members of the parish to help with the beautification project. Thirteen Palmer families jumped right in by each adopting a pot on the patio, making a donation for their preferred plants, then coming to a workday to pot their plants. Since then we’ve had other Palmers offer their assistance to keep the program alive - the exact intended outcome of such a project!

In addition, five of last year’s 5th grade Juniors completed and earned their Bronze Award (the highest award a Junior Girl Scout can earn) by creating activity packets for use by troops engaging in weekend camping at two of our Council Girl Scout camps up in Conroe. They learned a lot about being flexible (Council rejected their initial project idea, saying Council was going to take it on itself), giving and taking (with each other and the adults involved), and sticking with it, even when the going got tough, patience wore thin, or interest waned. They finally delivered their packets to the campsites in early November.

Through the awards the girls earn, the activities they do (like camping), and the opportunities they have to work with girls from outside their circle of friends, they’re learning to navigate relationships, and developing skills that will serve them as they grow into independent young women. They’re also running their own busi-

nesses through the Cookie Sales program. It's cookie season – we hope we can count on your support!! We are extremely proud of our girls' accomplishments, and grateful for Palmer's continued support of this ministry.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marie Wehrung
Leader, Troop 25230*

International Missions

The trip to Montero, Bolivia, was highlighted with a celebration at Hogar Sagrado Corazón (a girl's orphanage) and completion of one and a half homes in the local Guaraní village. There were eleven Palmers on this year's mission trip, including two families. The entire group appreciated their hard work and how well the adults and younger team members worked together. As is the usual custom, the team sponsored an ice cream social at the orphanage, and that was followed by a dance and music program by the girls. There was also the annual basketball game, easily won by the orphanage team.

In the Guaraní community the team worked with three families on two adjoining lots to build new homes. A mud hut was torn down to make room and the one home completely finished included putting in a new floor (something usually done later if the family wants it). The second home was half completed, but funds were left for a local team to finish construction. During the lunch hour each day the team played soccer with the local children. According to reports, the adults were more active than the younger team members (go Burdette!)

At the end of the week, Dr. Chavez, director of the CSRA (the clinic that is our sponsor), presented each team member with a certificate and a big thank you for their work. The ceremony was held in a new clinic that Palmer donors helped fund and mission teams helped build.

Approximately \$19,000 was raised this year to fund two homes, support for the senior girl's education and housing at Hogar Sagrado Corazón, support for the care of indigent children and a nursing salary at CSRA.

The international mission team for 2015 has been invited to San José, Costa Rica to work with the Episcopal Diocese of Costa Rica, an outreach program of the Diocese of Texas. The trip is scheduled for Saturday, May 30 to Saturday, June 6, 2015.

*Respectfully submitted,
Burdette Keeland and George Ferry*

James Ministry

The James Ministry is a lay ministry devoted to demonstrating Christ's love in action. Our mission is to help meet the short-term, practical needs of our extended parish family, including parishioners, visitors, medical patients-as well as those who care for them. During the past year, we provided meals, rides to church and medical appointments, prescription pickup, and grocery shopping to those in need.

Cathy Troisi

Kairos Prison Ministry

Joseph is a convicted felon nearing the end of a long sentence at TDCJ. Normally that is all that you'd ever know about Joseph. But thanks to Kairos, Joseph meets 30 men from the Free World who don't want to know why he is prison or for how long. They only want to get to know him and share time with him over a weekend called Kairos. "These men don't want nothing from me; I don't get it. Why are they here to see us prisoners?"

Well, we tell them, God calls us to this ministry and we show up trusting that God will provide: provide a smile, a greeting, a hand shake, and later ~ when trust is there, a hug.

We form small "Family Groups" and talk about our faith, our lives, and our failures as well. We become vulnerable, open, and honest. God seems to honor that kind of sharing, and slowly the men open their hearts.

Palmer, YOU enable men and women just like yourselves to “go forth” into the dark environment of a prison and shine the light of Christ to inmates who are used to the dark. The inmates always wonder what’s in it for us. Well, to be honest, there is nothing more gratifying than to see a man full of hate and fear suddenly, over the course of a weekend, discover that God and his Church really do care and that Jesus is made real in the Community of believers right inside a Texas Prison. Lives are changed; hearts are filled with love instead of selfishness. Connections to the Christian community are made new and restored. Men who have experienced Kairos are changed and will look back to that experience as a big turning point in their lives and your gifts, people of Palmer, help to sustain this vital ministry of the Church. God is good! All the time.

In 2014, we went to the Carol Vance Unit three weekends – in March, June, and October. These weekends typically start on Thursday afternoon with the “Outside Team” doing the shopping for the groceries and the setting up. On Friday, the “Inside Team” arrives and will go into the Unit to meet with the 42 Men in White who have been selected for the weekend. Those from Palmer who were actively involved in all of these weekends were Carole Mather, David Mather and Pat Robson. Linda Moore and Betty Walter joined us on the October weekend. This was their first Kairos as volunteers. Fr. Price helps out as his schedule permits.

Profoundly grateful,

Carole & David Mather, the Rev’d John Price, Pat Robson

Palmer Eucharistic Visitors

The role of this ministry is to share the Body and Blood of Christ with those who cannot be present in church. A group of Lay Eucharistic Ministers, selected and overseen by the clergy, takes Holy Communion to the hospitalized and homebound following services on Sunday mornings. We saw increased need this year, and in response, began sending more Eucharistic Visitors out on Sundays. Including visits made by Fr. Sam Todd, 201 visits were made and 530 persons received communion in 2014, doubling our number of communicants and reflecting a 55% increase in the number of private home communion visits from the previous year.

Deacon Linda Shelton oversees this ministry, and works with clergy, staff and parishioners to identify Palmers who, whether on a regular or temporary basis, receive a Eucharistic visit. Suzie Dennis, as Coordinator of Palmer’s Medical Center Ministries, identifies non-Palmers who would appreciate a visit; these are most often active members of other Episcopal parishes and dioceses who are in Houston for medical treatment and are very grateful for our ministry. Ruth Davies assumed the role of Palmer Pastoral Care Coordinator in the fall and helps us make sure parishioners are visited and cared for as needed.

Thad Lueders assigns three Eucharistic visitors or more each Sunday, based on a six-week rotation schedule. Visits are generally brief, and follow a shortened Order of Service; Blaine Wilson prints copies of these each Sunday, including the Gospel lesson for the day, and trains new ministers.

Eucharistic Visitors do not attempt to counsel or help with practical issues, but they do make reports to Deacon Shelton following their visits to indicate if there are any emergency issues or if referrals to other ministries might be appropriate. We hope parishioners will let us know when they or someone they know might benefit from this very special ministry of connection to our worship and Palmer community.

Faithfully,

The Rev’d Linda Shelton, Deacon

Palmer Place Apartments

Our Palmer Place apartments continue to provide affordable and comfortable “homes away from home” for many Texas Medical Center patients and their families as they undergo treatment for an extended period of time.

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.

During 2014:

- New furnishings for the apartments included two new bedroom sets; one new dining set; one TV console; two recliners; and one coffee table.
- Palmer Place continued to sponsor the fall reception for Texas Medical Center patients and their families within the IMT apartment complex. We alternate with Grace Presbyterian Church and Kingwood Church of Christ. These receptions provide an enjoyable social time for approximately 75 patients, family members and ministry volunteers.
- Thirty patients and their families checked in/out of our five apartments.
- Twenty dedicated and faithful volunteers facilitated guest placements, check-ins, check-outs, rent collection and maintenance for our five apartments.
- Three new volunteers joined our ministry.
- Holiday wreaths and door mats were placed at each apartment doorway and Christmas trees were placed in each apartment for our guests to enjoy and to provide some holiday spirit.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Begalke
Palmer Place Coordinator

Palmer Refugee Resettlement Ministry

Palmer partnered with Episcopal Migration Ministries and Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston again in 2014 to help welcome and provide support as we co-sponsored the arrival and welcome of our seventh and eighth refugee families or cases as they were resettled in Houston.

- A ministry team, consisting of past and new members, was informed and readied for the anticipated match of a refugee family with our Palmer parish and team of volunteers.
- Donations of household items and furniture were collected and stored until the match was made.
- Education and information regarding refugee resettlement was studied and applied to the current pool of knowledge.

In the spring of 2014, we, at Palmer, informed Interfaith Ministries that we were ready to co-sponsor another refugee family. We remained in that ready state for six months and in November we were given the word we would be paired with a young single mother coming from Eritrea through an Ethiopian refugee camp. Maryam and Mohammed arrived on December 11, 2014. Prior to her arrival we moved donated furniture and new and slightly used household items into a one bedroom apartment in Southwest Houston. One month's groceries and rent were also provided through budgeted funds and your generous donations. Four of us met them at the airport and helped transition them to the modern accommodations that would be their new home. In the next two weeks we visited with gift baskets, repaired items in the apartment, and helped with an educational grocery shopping expedition. We also helped to establish a community for Maryam consisting of introducing her to other persons with similar backgrounds. Our partnership commitment with Interfaith and this young family will continue six months or through the spring of 2014.

We were also pleased to respond to a special request from Interfaith Ministries and offer additional donated furniture, new and used household goods, as well as financial support for one month's rent and groceries for another Episcopal Church sponsored refugee who arrived in December. This single and elderly woman came to Houston from Cuba and had no contacts in Houston, other than her Interfaith Ministry caseworkers.

We are grateful to this parish for your support and generosity and we invite you to join us in reaching out to refugees in welcome.

Respectfully,
Francis Vonk, Chairperson

Palmer Medical Center Ministries

Palmer Medical Center Ministry has continued to reach out to Non-Palmers who are here at the Texas Medical Center for treatment. We rely on Palmers, past care receivers, other Episcopal churches, and anyone who knows about us to inform us about these patients. Palmer's location at the northern tip of the TMC beckons us to reach out to those who are here as strangers in need of practical and spiritual assistance as they face complicated medical issues. We have served people from not only Texas but also as far away as Hawaii and many other parts of the lower 48. The tender care our ministries offer has been a lifeline for these patients. We bring them Holy Communion, and we offer them the gift of prayer and Holy Unction at our Healing Service. We continue to receive notes of thanksgiving from former patients.

Suzie Dennis

Palmer Medical Center Ministries Coordinator

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one Christ-centered confidential caring ministry based on the conviction that God can work through trained lay parishioners to plant hope and healing in people facing difficult times. We are often seen as the "after" people, caring one-on-one with individuals after the funeral, after the divorce, after the job loss, etc, listening and encouraging as they work through the challenges that significant events often bring to one's life.

During 2014:

- Twenty-one Stephen Ministers provided 305 hours of care to individuals experiencing grief, divorce, illness, job loss, loneliness and/or other life challenges.
- In addition to one-on-one time with their care receivers, Stephen Ministers devote up to 5 hrs/month to continuing education and peer support and supervision.
- Stephen Ministry leaders devote an additional 5 – 10 hrs/month in administration and planning.
- An annual retreat is held each January at Camp Allen, for sharing, renewal and spiritual growth.
- During 2013, active Stephen Ministers included: Dianna Archer, Debbie Arnold, Ann Ayers, Celia Clowe, Dan Cromack, Mary Davenport, Leslie Davidson, Chris Fresquez, Marilyn Hermance, Bill Kersten, Jim Lober, Fred Miller, Kay Piper, and Gregoria Smith. Leaders, who also served as care givers, included Jerry Boldra, Loren Gideon, Richard Donelson, Lois Hamblin, Katie Pannell, Mary Ann Starks and Laurie Rigby.
- Two additional Stephen Ministers completed the 50-hr training course in early December and are to be commissioned on January 11, 2015. They are Priscilla Plumb and Stella Yeung.

We feel grateful and privileged to serve in this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Hamblin, Referrals Coordinator

Walking The Mourners' Path Grief Ministry

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. Jeanine Baker, Betty Key, and Sue Hamblen are our facilitators and rotate serving; and, Linda Shelton serves as clergy and is also a trained facilitator. Though Christ-centered, the groups are open to our larger community as pastoral outreach of this parish.

This year at Palmer we:

- 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.
- offered two group sessions, and have now served 109 persons since beginning this ministry in 2006.

Each of us view our participation in Walking the Mourner's Path as a privilege and 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.

Faithfully,

The Rev'd Linda Shelton, Deacon

The Way Station

Way Station serves hungry and homeless clients by providing a hot, nutritious breakfast five days a week, 52 weeks per year on the church patio. Serving hours are from 7:45 AM – 9:30 AM. Way Station has been a ministry of Palmer Church for 23 years. The 2014 budget was \$385,000.

In 2014, with your support, the Way Station:

- Served more than 95,925 nutritious meals - an average of 368 people per day.
- Provided 9,600 Metro trips, assisted 2,076 clients with obtaining legal identification, and provided assistance with rent and utility support, clothing, health care, class/school tuition, work clothes and boots, furniture and other referrals.
- Provided more than 378 preventative medical care screenings and mental health services and decreased the burden on our city's emergency rooms, including TB tests, counseling services, HIV tests, flu shots, blood pressure screenings and diabetes services.
- Dedicated more than \$0.91 of every dollar directly to our mission with an average cost per meal of \$0.41

2014 Steering Committee:

Dan Cromack, Chair; David Ahlquist; John Fields; Bob Hawley; Pam Harvey; Jim Mercurio; Pat Reed; Andy Schatte; The Rev'd Linda Shelton, Ex Officio; Terry Henry, Program Director; Pat Simmons, Client Services Director.

Submitted by Dan Cromack

The Wemmicks

The Wemmicks is a support group of caregivers who care for their elderly parents or loved ones. We provide a warm, caring environment where confidentiality is assured to those who may desire assistance and support in caring for their family members. We are now meeting at Palmer Church on various Sundays following the 11:00 a.m. service.

Current Status - 7 members

We welcome any individuals to our group who may need assistance or support while caring for their loved ones. For more information about the Wemmicks Group, please contact Victor Lamas Jr. at 7138647647.

