

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
December 19, 2017

**Vestry Present**

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

**Vestry Absent**

Ellee de Groot  
Allison Marek  
Priscilla Plumb

**Clergy Present:**

Liz Parker  
David Wantland

The meeting commenced at 5:30 p.m.

1. Opening Prayer —We commenced the meeting with an opening prayer.
2. Prayers and Thanksgivings— Those in attendance shared their prayers and Thanksgivings.
3. Approval of November minutes—A motion was made by Linda Sylvan to approve the minutes of the November Vestry Meeting; Steven Vaughan seconded and the motion passed.
4. Financial Reports—Jim Mercurio gave this report:
  - a. Finance report
    - i. It is estimated that year-end unrestricted cash on hand will be approximately \$226,091. This assumes (a) that \$130,000 of 2018 pledges are pre-paid; (b) All remaining 2017 unpaid pledges in the amount of \$210,000 are paid; and (c) that \$20,000 in contributions from non-pledgers is received; and
    - ii. Jim stressed need of the Vestry to carefully review the proposed budget for areas in which expense reductions can be made.
  - b. 2018 Budget
    - i. It was felt that presentation of a balanced budget for 2018 is important;
    - ii. The budget categories were reviewed and questions raised concerning certain of the budget components. The Sr. Warden, Jim Mercurio and the

Rector will meet to discuss budget modifications and the budget will be discussed and voted upon at the next vestry meeting.

## 5. Reports and Update

a. Communication Liaison Report—Priscilla Plumb provided a detailed written report concerning the work of the communications group. Among many projects, the principal ones are listed below:

- i. A new video presentation of parish life at Palmer will be released soon;
- ii. 5 pm each Friday is the new deadline for submitting articles to BOTH the Palmer (for the following Tuesday issue) and the Sunday bulletin newsletter (for the Sunday the week after). A combined deadline should be simpler for all concerned;
- iii. The staff recently added two new articles to the “Our Stories” section of the Palmer website: (1) Angel Tree and (2) Longest Night Service. Please take a look!;
- iv. Work around the vestry/lay delegate elections is taking place to get the nominee biographies assembled and presented to the parish as soon as possible; and
- v. Circulation of communications outside of our parish is also taking place and opportunities for doing so in the future we will be utilized.

b. Stewardship—Jim Key, Linda Sylvan and Jim Mercurio spoke regarding stewardship:

As of December 14, 2017, 221 pledges have been made, totaling \$1,241,802. This amount is 72% of our pledge goal of \$1.72M. The average pledge as of December 14 is \$5,619.02. 221 pledges are 72% of our target pledge participation of 300 pledges. There were 295 pledges in 2016, totaling \$1,596,466. The vestry was asked to make calls in early January to solicit pledges from parishioners who have not pledged for 2018. There was some discussion around a future sermon concerning scripture and the tithe.

c. Junior Warden’s Report—Trent Williams

- i. Trent mentioned that there is not yet a date for the delivery of the new air conditioning chillers. He is in regular touch with the contractor about the chiller installation. Work is taking place in the choir loft to provide more air flow in that space;
- ii. 2018 maintenance projects will include maintenance work on the Rectory, estimated at \$20-25K, and approximately \$20,000 in organ maintenance. Rectory maintenance will be a budgeted item; the organ work will be handled outside of the budget; and
- iii. Re-stripping of the South parking lot.

- c. Sr. Warden's Report—Jim Key
  - i. Jim gave the report of the nominating committee and expressed his pleasure with the candidates for vestry and lay delegate. Vestry nominees are Kristie Van Arsdel, Barbara Hass, Burdette Keeland, Fritz Glover, Kaiti Kling, Posey Saenz, Rita Justice, Al Hergenroeder, Ken Alexander and Suzannah Webb. Lay Delegate nominees are Suzanne Miller, Bill Robertson, Rand Key and Denise Zwicker;
  - ii. Jim briefly discussed the topic of by-law revisions and changes that might be considered in the future nomination process of vestry and lay delegates. This issue has been discussed in a cursory manner during the last three years and may be taken up again in greater detail in the future. Jim also mentioned a by-law change which will be proposed, changing the names of "Vessels" to "Councils"; and
  - iii. Jim noted that the next vestry meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 16, with the meeting largely devoted to the budget.
  
- d. Rector's Report—Neil Willard reported the following:
  - i. Neil noted that Christmas Eve services will take place at 3 pm, 5 pm, 8 pm and 11 pm and there will be a service at 10 am on Christmas day; and
  - ii. A Christmas letter will be sent to the Rector a couple of days before Christmas.
  
- e. Associate Rector's Report—Liz Parker
  - i. Liz announced that the "Longest Night" service will be held at 6 pm on December 20;
  - ii. She noted that there was good attendance at the Advent "mini retreat" and that consideration is being given to a Lenten retreat.
  
- f. Curate Report—David Wantland
  - i. Jack Karn, the Regional Director for Jerusalem Peacebuilders ("JPB") who was at Palmer this past fall is now in Nazareth. He will be back in Houston for JPB summer camps and then again at Palmer in the fall. Jack has been working to recruit area youth for our summer programs and is also working to start an interfaith youth group through Palmer with Jewish and Muslim youth;
  - ii. The youth group had a Christmas party on December 17;
  - iii. EYC will be changing its meeting time to immediately after the 11 am service (12-1:30 pm) to accommodate youth schedule conflicts; and
  - iv. **David's Ordination to the Priesthood will take place on Saturday, January 6, at 10:00 a.m.** Jim Key encouraged all vestry persons to attend this celebration.
  
- g. Unfinished Business—None.

h. Call for New Business—None raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

/s/ James M. Lober, Clerk