Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Date: September 15, 2026
Meeting Format: Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)
Start Time: 5:30 PM

Attendees

Vestry Members Present:
Rev. Neil Willard, Rector
Tom Van Arsdel, Senior Warden
John Wallace, Junior Warden
Sheeba Thomas, Clerk
Ken Alexander
Jacquelyn Campbell
Camille Emig
Rosine Hall
Betty Key
Andrew Kraebel
Pam Lovett
Elizabeth Maynard
Sue Murphy
Shannon Wallace

Assisting Clergy Present:
Rev. Katherine Tuttle

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1. Check-In and Opening Prayer — Rev. Neil Willard

Neil opened the meeting with Evening Prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer* (p. 109).

2. Review and Approval of Consensus Items — Tom Van Arsdel

The Vestry unanimously approved the minutes from the July 21, 2026 Vestry Meeting. The Vestry also received and approved the Financial Summary from Jessica Evans, Finance Manager, along with reports from the Worship Council, Pastoral Care Council, Outreach Council, Congregational and Community Engagement Council, Membership Council, Stewardship Council, Finance Council, and Senior Warden.

3. Senior Warden's Report — Tom Van Arsdel

A. Rectory Study Report

Alicia Renshaw, Chair, presented the recommendations of The Rectory Study Committee, which also included Lauren Davis, Gerry Sandoval, Kristie Van Arsdel, and David Cromack. They evaluated three options for addressing the extensive repairs and mold remediation needed at the Rectory.

Option 1: Repair the Rectory. The estimated cost of the necessary repairs and mold remediation exceeds $500,000. This investment would bring the total amount spent on the Rectory above the property's estimated fair market value.

Option 2: Sell the Rectory and purchase a replacement property nearby. In its current condition, the Rectory is expected to sell for approximately $1-1.2 million (land value). The outstanding mortgage on the Rectory is about $650,000. The committee determined that net proceeds from the sale would be insufficient to purchase a comparable property nearby.

Option 3: Sell the Rectory and provide a housing allowance to the Rector. The sale should generate $350,000–$500,000 in net proceeds. These funds could be used to support an annual housing allowance, allowing the Rector to rent or purchase a home of his choosing.

The Rectory Study Committee recommended pursuing Option 3. After discussion, the Vestry agreed to have a special meeting to make a final decision.

B. Capital Campaign

Pam Lovett and Mike Soika, co-chairs of the Capital Campaign, introduced Glendon Smith of James D. Klote and Associates, the consultant hired after interviewing eight firms. They discussed how the campaign will be phased and answered the vestry's questions about the campaign. A report summarizing key findings and takeaways from focus groups held in October and November will be prepared, with Phase 1 expected to be completed by the end of November 2026.

The Steering Committee and Vestry will review the report in December 2026, with the formal Capital Campaign scheduled to launch in January 2027. Parishioners will have the option to fulfill their pledges over a period of up to three years. The campaign fundraising goal is $10 million.

C. Hermann Park Conservancy Update

Neil Willard, David Robinson, Tom Van Arsdel, and John Wallace met with representatives of the Hermann Park Conservancy (HPC). Plans were made for Palmer's renovation project

management team to meet with the HPC team in the coming weeks to ensure that the two institutions' respective projects are appropriately coordinated and aligned.

4. Stewardship Council Update — Ken Alexander

The Fall 2026 Stewardship Pledge Drive will begin on September 21, 2026. To support the anticipated operating budget needs of the parish, the Vestry unanimously approved a 2027 Stewardship pledge goal of $2 million.

Stewardship letters and/or emails will be distributed to parishioners around September 21. Vestry members were encouraged to submit their own pledges within the coming weeks. At the conclusion of the pledge drive on Covenant Sunday, November 15, 2026, Palmer will hold a celebratory brunch.

5. Rector's Report — Rev. Neil Willard

The Rector's Report was conducted in Executive Session.

6. Gratitude — Tom Van Arsdel

Tom led the Vestry in a time of gratitude.

7. Benediction — Rev. Neil Willard

The meeting concluded with a benediction led by Rev. Neil Willard.

PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary
OPERATING FUND
August 2026

	MTD ACTUAL 2026	MTD BUDGET 2026	YTD ACTUAL 2026	YTD BUDGET 2026	2026 ANNUAL BUDGET	% of ANNUAL BUDGET USED
Revenues						
BANK DEPOSITS						
OPERATING FUND						
CONTRIBUTION REVENUE	$156,392.90	$158,266.66	$1,306,353.15	$1,266,133.28	$1,899,200.00	68.78 %
OTHER OPERATING REVENUE	$37,403.06	$42,344.17	$294,773.53	$338,753.36	$508,130.00	58.01 %
Total OPERATING FUND	$193,795.96	$200,610.83	$1,601,126.68	$1,604,886.64	$2,407,330.00	66.51 %
Total BANK DEPOSITS	$193,795.96	$200,610.83	$1,601,126.68	$1,604,886.64	$2,407,330.00	66.51 %
Total Revenues	$193,795.96	$200,610.83	$1,601,126.68	$1,604,886.64	$2,407,330.00	66.51 %
Expenses						
PERSONNEL	$81,895.79	$90,925.49	$660,294.61	$727,403.92	$1,091,106.00	60.52 %
DIOCESE	$16,311.67	$16,311.67	$130,493.36	$130,493.36	$195,740.00	66.67 %
RECTORY	$1,035.45	$1,833.33	$11,006.28	$14,666.64	$22,000.00	50.03 %
CHURCH BUILDINGS						
BUILDING and MAINTENANCE	$44,149.31	$51,316.67	$395,161.73	$410,533.36	$615,800.00	64.17 %
DEBT SERVICE	$4,027.86	$4,000.00	$32,301.68	$32,000.00	$48,000.00	67.30 %
UTILITIES	$15,431.44	$12,216.67	$96,921.62	$97,733.36	$146,600.00	66.11 %
FELLOWSHIP KITCHEN	$1,367.26	$1,531.25	$12,302.41	$12,250.00	$18,375.00	66.95 %
Total CHURCH BUILDINGS	$64,975.87	$69,064.59	$536,687.44	$552,516.72	$828,775.00	64.76 %
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT						
ADMINISTRATION	$832.39	$1,886.25	$15,054.21	$15,090.00	$22,635.00	66.51 %
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS	$1,109.63	$2,804.16	$8,997.73	$22,433.28	$33,650.00	26.74 %
Total ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	$1,942.02	$4,690.41	$24,051.94	$37,523.28	$56,285.00	42.73 %
MINISTRIES						
COMMUNICATIONS	$4,292.47	$3,966.66	$33,699.93	$31,733.28	$47,600.00	70.80 %
OUTREACH	$400.00	$1,135.32	$6,224.89	$9,082.56	$13,624.00	45.69 %
EVANGELISM	$0.00	$760.42	$3,709.02	$6,083.36	$9,125.00	40.65 %
FELLOWSHIP	$1,519.57	$2,166.67	$23,279.45	$17,333.36	$26,000.00	89.54 %
MUSIC MINISTRY						
MUSIC-ADULTS	$0.00	$1,020.84	$5,552.28	$8,166.72	$12,250.00	45.32 %
MUSIC-CHILDREN	$0.00	$333.33	$2,507.12	$2,666.64	$4,000.00	62.68 %
Total MUSIC MINISTRY	$0.00	$1,354.17	$8,059.40	$10,833.36	$16,250.00	49.60 %
PASTORAL CARE	$0.00	$183.32	$250.00	$1,466.56	$2,200.00	11.36 %
WORSHIP	$148.24	$404.17	$2,414.24	$3,233.36	$4,850.00	49.78 %
PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY	$75.00	$31.25	$75.00	$250.00	$375.00	20.00 %
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA	$5,423.91	$3,500.01	$31,111.41	$28,000.08	$42,000.00	74.07 %
Total MINISTRIES	$11,859.19	$13,501.99	$108,823.34	$108,015.92	$162,024.00	67.16 %
EDUCATION						
ADULT EDUCATION	($357.69)	$1,333.34	$7,819.47	$10,666.72	$16,000.00	48.87 %
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	$106.68	$916.67	$6,952.70	$7,333.36	$11,000.00	63.21 %
YOUTH	($209.11)	$1,083.33	$7,260.20	$8,666.64	$13,000.00	55.85 %
PARISH RETREAT	$0.00	$416.67	$1,600.00	$3,333.36	$5,000.00	32.00 %
Total EDUCATION	($460.12)	$3,750.01	$23,632.37	$30,000.08	$45,000.00	52.52 %
OTHER EXPENSES						
WEDDING MINISTRY	$0.00	$316.67	$600.00	$2,533.36	$3,800.00	15.79 %
FUNERAL MINISTRY	$0.00	$216.67	$2,533.98	$1,733.36	$2,600.00	97.46 %
Total OTHER EXPENSES	$0.00	$533.34	$3,133.98	$4,266.72	$6,400.00	48.97 %
Total Expenses	$177,559.87	$200,610.83	$1,498,123.32	$1,604,886.64	$2,407,330.00	62.23 %
Net Total	$16,236.09	$0.00	$103,003.36	$0.00	$0.00	0.00 %

Palmer Worship Council
August 6, 2026

Present: Neil Willard, Allen Junek, Victor Lamas, Lesley Douthwaite, Brady Knapp, David Madrigal, Libby Spoede, Allen Nunley, David Palma, Jackie Campbell, Elizabeth Maynard.

Opening Prayer – Victor offered the opening prayer.

Upcoming Activities -

- Aug. 9 - Continuation of Adult Formation discussion at 9:00 am in St. Bede's Chapel followed by 10:00 am service with Jerusalem Peacebuilders (JPB)
- Aug. 11 - Interfaith event at 6:00 pm in the Nave w/JPB followed by dinner in Parish Hall
- Aug. 15 - Pride Parade in downtown Houston from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm
- Aug. 16 - 8:00 am baptism and Instructed Eucharist at 10:00 am
- Aug. 23 - 10:00 am baptism
- Sept. 9 - Healing service 7:00 pm in St. Bede's 7:00pm, with bells
- Sept. 14 – Resumption of Eucharistic services for Rice students at St. Bede's Chapel
- Sept. 26 - Wedding in the Nave at 4:00 pm

Clergy Updates -

- Clergy (Mary) has requested that the Altar Guild increase the amount of wine to be consecrated at 8:00 am in efforts to refill the reserve sacrament in preparation for 10:00 am service.
- Clergy (Mary) requested that the back left corner of the altar be used as a landing area for items to be removed.

Music Updates -

- Fall evensong October 4, 4pm, followed by an art show
- Welcoming (back) Valentina Huang, associate organist
- Requiem mass All Saints Day, November 1, 10am service
- Lessons and Carols December 13, 4pm

Service Updates –

- Suggest bulletin is updated on the Palmer site by Thursday (Roger), this will connect with MSP. Readers can be directed to MSP for the readings.
- Encourage volunteers to activate automatic reminders in MSP. Allen J. will look at possible overrides, if needed.
- These changes should eliminate the need for Margie or others to send separate weekly email reminders to volunteers.
- Monitor these changes and advise if there are any issues that may need to be addressed.
- Check with Margie to see if it is feasible to add the Server position to the schedule.

Verger Updates – Libby S.

- Readers and prayers for the upcoming Sunday JPB youth.
- Elise Soika is doing chalice training; when complete, she will begin verger training. David M. supports her being scheduled for the fall.

Acolyte Updates – David M.

- Ella Grino may start as the (incense) boat holder this week.

Lectors Updates –

Ushers / Bell Ringers Updates –

Ushers – Lesley D.

- Switched back to Rite II ushers, who will usher until the start of Advent
- Question: Who prints the orders of service for weddings? Laura Shaver coordinates weekly bulletins and funerals, may take on weddings as well (publishing@palmerchurch.org).

Bell Ringers – Allen N.

- Confirming bells for Sept 9 healing service

Other Business –

- Christmas Eve three services planned (Brady)
- How to follow through on flower dedications? Jessica, Sue, Laura S., Allen need to coordinate efforts (Jackie).
- Next Worship Council Meeting is scheduled for September 3.

Minutes from Outreach Council meeting August 16, 2026

Attending: Zach Rubio, Autry House representative; Danna Kurtin; Denise Allen Zwicker; Rev. Mary Reddick, deacon. Absent: Sue Howard, Jenn Macia, Jeff Dieter

Danna Kurtin offered an opening prayer.

Deacon report: List of Outreach events since last meeting attached. Palmer volunteer numbers and community impact numbers noted. Mary stated we have more unique volunteers recently as well as a few families participating-these were goals. We hope to continue the trend.

Financial report: A reminder of our annual budget along with amounts spent so far was distributed. We are saving funds to use for our large projects at the end of the year. Mary is requesting the designated funds set aside for Outreach categories also be shown in our budget figures so we can follow them.

Casa Mateo report: Deacon Mary was appointed to the newly formed Casa Mateo Task Force that will revision the use of the sanctuary building for modification for future use. The chair will be working on grant applications to fund the plans. Our project is on hold until that process is complete and we can begin to work and plan on the room to be used for prayer and small group activities. That will probably be next year.

New business

2027 budget

We have requested an increase of $4,000-$5,000 in Palmer's 2027 budget to assist with our newest project-the adoption of New Hope Housing Reed unit. Deacon Mary has recently been informed that Outreach may receive additional funds for 2026, which will be helpful for our new projects.

New projects

Reach for the Stars is a new project benefiting Yellowstone Academy. Mary spoke with Yellowstone about their needs, specifically books. The staff informed us that most students do not have a book in their home. They would like to be able to give each student a book as well as have some books in their classroom for common use. They were asked for a specific list of what they want and they provided a dream list of what titles and how many (700+). These books selected by the teachers will support their curriculum as well as prepare the students for their

work. The teachers and staff are very excited-they have never had this type of support in the past. We are expecting a cost of $6,500, which we believe donations will cover. We discussed ways to organize fundraising, and Danna suggested that we use open donations, rather than tiered suggested giving, and the council agreed. We plan to begin the fundraising September 20 and deliver the books to Yellowstone by mid-October. We will place bookplates from Palmer in each book. The school has invited us to come to campus and read to their students on the day we formally deliver the books. We are developing a publicity campaign that includes comments from the teaching staff about the project.

New Hope Housing- Deacon Mary met with New Hope Housing to discuss a project for Christmas. New Hope submitted a proposal that we "adopt" a property and suggested the Reed House. This has been a goal for New Hope Housing since they started, years ago. The Outreach council voted to approve the adoption of Reed House, and we will be the first organization in Houston to adopt a property. They have asked us to conduct two large projects: We already donate school supplies, and we will shift Angel Tree collection away from The Salvation Army to benefit Reed House. We will appoint a committee to oversee the Christmas celebration: gifts and festivities with the residents. Tentative date: December 5. There will be meetings to develop more projects with the facility.. The goal is to engage many different groups at Palmer with our Reed Family during the year.

EAC (Emergency Aid Coalition) In order to support EAC, we will serve at their November Pop-Up Market. And the grocery items we collect for Second Sunday in November will be items used to make a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. They also collect funds to provide a poultry item for each of the families they serve through their Food Pantry for Thanksgiving Dinner-we will make a contribution to that fund. EAC is a partner of New Hope Housing and has a pantry now in the Reed Unit. We will coordinate efforts with these two groups as we can going forward.

In June, Sue Howard was contacted by a nonprofit organization, *Children's Transplant Initiative,* to support families while they are in the Texas Medical Center waiting for or after receiving transplants for their children. Their primary need is a place for their families to gather; they will provide any food or supplies for their work. In future we will work to support them in other ways as we discover them.

We were contacted by St. James Episcopal Church, in the Third Ward, to support *Holy Grill*, a grilling competition to raise funds for the Union of Black Episcopalians youth to attend national and local youth activities. They are reviving it and we were asked to continue our past support. Cathedral, Trinity, and Grace are also community partners for this event. St James is sending representatives to attend our service and be in the Welcome Tent outside for the 10am service on

August 23rd. Please welcome them on that day and consider attending the event on Labor Day at St James.

Palmer is welcoming Blake Burns as the new youth coordinator. We will work with him to assist in any way to engage the youth in the community.

Danna was asked to report on the annual gathering here of the Jerusalem Peace Builders. The group spent most of their time at Camp Allen in exercises and activities. They are 15 year olds and this was their first year of 4 in the program-there were 23 youth participating this year. The final presentation and dinner at Palmer had over 100 to celebrate the completion and awarding the certificates.

A team has been formed and is serving at the Beacon on the second Thursday each month as the breakfast team from 7-10am. It is led by Gail and Joe Adams. It is hope we will expand this to more days in future.

Mary started a discussion about raising new leaders to work on our new projects. We are encouraged to recommend people who are reliable and good team members.

We asked Zach to suggest any activities he and Rev'd Beth Ann might want to participate in this year with the Rice students through Autry House.

Next Outreach Council meetings are scheduled on October 4 and November 22 after the 10am service here at the church.

Zach prayed us out.

Palmer Congregational and Community Engagement Council - August 25, 2026

Submitted by: Lauren Kirkwood
Present: Katherine Tuttle, Joey Hunter, Jim Key, Lauren Kirkwood
Absent: Alex Doan, Franchesca Sentmanat, Beth Anne Nelson, Judith Lutkus, Roger Hutchison

Opening

The meeting began with a prayer asking for open minds and hearts, careful listening, and guidance in discerning how the Spirit is working within the Palmer community.

Community and Attendance

- Attendance at the **8:00 a.m. service** appears to be growing—from roughly the low-to-mid 20s to about 30–35 people on a regular basis.
- Members have noticed a broader and more diverse group attending.
- The committee discussed checking in with regular attendees who have recently been absent.
- The **20s and 30s group** is growing and appears to be developing strong participation.
- Families are becoming more engaged in church activities. A consistent choir schedule has helped.
- Summer attendance at other services has fluctuated, but the overall atmosphere remains active and welcoming.
- The **55+ and the Third Thursday** attendance has been good.

Gen X and Social Connections

- There is a need for a social outlet for people who are no longer in the young-adult group but are not yet part of the retirement-age community.
- A **monthly Gen X lunch or outing** was discussed as a useful way to build relationships.
- Spouses should be welcome, including those who do not attend Palmer.
- Restaurants should be chosen with parking, accessibility, menu variety, and the ability to accommodate a group in mind.
- The group needs a volunteer “lunch captain” or rotating organizers to:
    - Make reservations.
    - Arrive early.
    - Secure tables.
    - Send reminders and invitations.
- The date was set as the first Sunday of the month. The date of the next outing may need to be adjusted because of a holiday weekend.

God Moment Submissions

- Lauren Kirkwood to coordinate with Sue Howard for a list of existing submissions and will encourage others to submit one, with a goal of one new one per month.

Welcoming and Newcomer Ministry

- Lauren Kirkwood will assist in recruiting volunteers to serve as a visible welcoming presence before and after 10AM Sunday services.
- Welcoming does not need to be complicated: greet people, learn names, notice newcomers, and help them make connections.
- Roger Hutchison has produced two new informational sheets to keep on the welcoming table.

Council Membership

- Current members were asked to consider remaining on the council for another year.
- A few possible recruits from the 20s and 30s group were discussed.

Formation and Educational Programming

- Programs are planned through the end of the year.
- An interview session with the new Youth Director is planned and will help the congregation get to know him personally.
- Formation offerings should be coordinated so that programs for Rice students do not unnecessarily compete or overlap.
- There was interest in a **comparative religions series**, possibly beginning in January.
- Potential presenters could include a rabbi and others knowledgeable about different faith traditions.

Reel Theology

- Reel Theology is being retired with a final gathering in September planned. The Third Thursday group will be included.

Closing

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the committee's work, encouragement to recruit and renew leadership for the coming year, and a closing blessing.

Minutes for Membership Council Meeting

Date: 8/13
Start: 7:05 PM
End: 8:15 PM
In attendance: Katherine Tuttle, Sue Howard, Kyle Raece, Cindy Wallace, David Wallace.
Absent: Rebecca Snyder, Stephaine Davidson, Joan Gallagher, Rob Vines

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on planning the upcoming newcomer brunch and discussing strategies for welcoming new members to Palmer Church. Katherine led the discussion about the brunch scheduled for after the 10 AM service on Sunday, which will pair with an instructed Eucharist and accommodate approximately 15 registered newcomers. The council discussed logistics including seating arrangements, name tags, and food ordering from Flying Biscuit, with Sue handling the catering arrangements and Katherine planning to make announcements at both services about the event. The group also reviewed plans for the fall newcomer class series, deciding to reduce it from four to three classes focusing on Episcopal Church history, Palmer's mission and vision, and a campus tour with Neil. Additional welcoming initiatives discussed included creating yard signs for community outreach, placing informational materials in local retirement high-rises, and potentially having a booth at the Rice Village farmer's market for St. Francis Day pet blessings. The conversation ended with a discussion about transitioning future council meetings from Sunday eback to Zoom meetings on weeknights.

Next steps

Katherine

- Send the spreadsheet with the list of newcomers attending the brunch to Cindy and David
- Talk to Roger about designing online donation cards to match the current set of pew cards.
- Follow up with Jimmie Ann Brown about organizing a monthly pew refresh with her crew
- Propose a few evening times (excluding Thursdays and Sundays) for future council meetings via Zoom and check with Joan, Stephanie, and Rob.
- Talk to Roger about creating yard signs for events like Christmas or Blessing of the Animals.
- Follow up with Joan about contacting high-rise retirement homes in Rice Village to place pamphlets/booklets about the church

- Start working on getting a booth at the Rice Village Farmer's Market for the Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Day
- At the 20s and 30s group meeting in two weeks, suggest they choose an outreach project to do as a group.

Cindy and David Wallace

- Try to get Rivers, Shannon, or Reese to attend the newcomer brunch as a participant to connect with the younger attendees.

Sue Howard

- Ensure there are clip-on name tags and a sign-up sheet for new name tags at the newcomer Brunch
- Talk to Jimmy this week about the room setup for the newcomer brunch in St. Bede's

Summary

Newcomer Brunch Planning Meeting

Katherine discussed plans for a newcomer brunch after church on Sunday, with approximately 15 registered attendees. Katherine provided details about the expected attendees, including new families and individuals who had recently joined the congregation. These names will be emailed out to the group separately.

Instructed Eucharist Service Planning

The team discussed plans for an upcoming Instructed Eucharist service paired with a newcomer brunch. Katherine and Allen will lead the service, using a previous bulletin since Neil won't be available as he's helping Rowan move onto campus. The group agreed to hold these services every other year rather than annually, as they want to avoid making the experience too repetitive while still providing educational value to newcomers who may not be familiar with Episcopal rituals and symbolism.

Event Shepherd Planning Discussion

The group discussed plans for an upcoming event where they will serve as shepherds to help guests find their way to different tables. Katherine emphasized the importance of not clustering shepherds together but instead dispersing them throughout the room to ensure better inclusion. Sue agreed to provide additional name tags and clip-on options for attendees who might not have them. The conversation also touched on the presence of welcome cards in the pews, which Cindy noted was a positive development.

Pew Refresh Initiative Success

Katherine reported that the pew refresh initiative successfully reduced the overwhelming number of stewardship materials in pews and improved the visibility of welcome cards, resulting in more completed cards being returned. She plans to work with Jimmie Ann Brown and her team to conduct monthly deep cleans of the pews to prevent materials from accumulating. The discussion concluded with Katherine seeking input on the appropriate level of discussion for the upcoming welcome brunch, balancing newcomer introductions with informative content.

Newcomer Brunch and Welcome Plans

The team discussed plans for an upcoming newcomer brunch and welcome class. They agreed to keep the newcomer class brief and relaxed, with Katherine planning to announce details at both services and encourage attendees to take bulletins home for reflection. The group confirmed they will hold the event in St. Bede’s with approximately 25 expected attendees, and Sue will coordinate with Jimmy about room setup. The team also discussed adjusting the fall newcomer class format from four to three sessions, focusing on the Episcopal Church and History, Palmer Ministry leaders, and a campus tour.

Newcomers Class Series Refinement

Katherine and Cindy discussed refining a newcomers' class series, deciding to focus on three key topics: a "living mission, vision, and values" presentation highlighting church ministries, church history, and a tour led by Neil. Sue agreed that focusing on core church elements and keeping the series concise would be effective. They determined that the ministry tour component would be particularly valuable as it would give newcomers more opportunities to interact with Neil.

Ministry Fair Restructuring Plans

The team discussed plans to restructure the ministry fair, deciding to alternate between an outreach-focused fair and a ministry-focused fair in future years. They noted that the current format was well-attended but lacked focus, and the proposed change would better align with the busy spring calendar which includes Easter, Ash Wednesday, and the annual meeting. The discussion concluded with Katherine asking for input on ways to improve welcoming and hospitality for new members as they prepare for their programmatic year starting in September.

Church Outreach Strategy Planning

The group discussed strategies to reach more families with young children at Palmer Church. They agreed to explore creating yard signs and flyers to welcome people, with Katherine planning to

discuss this with the new Director of Communications, Roger. The team also considered placing pamphlets in retirement and mid-rise buildings in Rice Village, though they noted the need to approach this carefully. Additionally, they discussed the success of previous farmer's market outreach and considered planning for future events like the Blessing of the Animals.

St. Francis Day Event Planning

Katherine proposed organizing a St. Francis Day event at the Rice Village farmer's market on October 4th, where they could set up a booth to offer pet blessings and engage with the community. Sue mentioned that Dominique Shelton, who is connected to Hope Housing and Emergency Aid Coalition Market, might be helpful in connecting with the farmer's market. Cindy suggested involving the 20s and 30s group in planning outreach activities, potentially allowing them to develop their own community service initiatives.

Meeting Schedule Time Change Discussion

The group discussed moving their meetings from Sunday evenings back to Zoom in the evenings, with preferences for Wednesday at 7 PM or earlier, avoiding Thursdays and Sunday nights. Katherine will propose specific times to the group and check with members about their availability. The council also discussed the importance of in-person meetings for new members and planned to schedule an in-person gathering before summer.

Sept. 15th 2026 Parish Life Vestry Report
Prepared by Sue Howard and Katherine Tuttle
Updated Sept. 11th, 2026

At Bishop Monterroso's visit on 4/26/26 we celebrated 18 Confirmands:

- 13 Confirmations
- 7 Receptions

New Confirmed Members by transfer (1)
Reactivation: (1)
New baptized members (1) (Not baptized at Palmer in 2026)
Baptisms (10)
People who attend the Spring 2026 Newcomer Class (17)
People who attend the Summer 2026 Newcomer Brunch (15)
People who Attended the Fall 2026 Welcome Class (10)
Members who have transferred out since January 2026 (7)
Active Members who have died in since January 2026 (1)

Summer Program Highlights:

- Chair Yoga Thursdays at 9:30
- Special evening book event with William Steel on June 3rd.
- Pizza night with 20/30s+ Young Professionals group
- Bible and Brunch with 20/30s+ Young Professionals group
- 55+ Third Thursday Outings: Beach Day in June, Lanier Library tour in July, Food Bank in August.
- Popsicles on the Playgroup (PoP)
- Roger is leading a Sunday morning parenting class that is growing in size (9 am). It's the same time as the children's formation hour and choir practice.
- Adult Formation highlights: Allie Keifer led a discussion on Music in the Early Church. Allen and Katherine led a summer series on Atonement theories, Parish Life Check-in co-led with Roger and Katherine.
- Family Pool Party in August with over 60 people.
- Largest blood drive in recent memory through Gulf Coast Blood (14 doners)
- Great participation from Palmers with JBP institute hosted at Palmer including an interfaith dinner and worship service.

Pastoral Care Council Meeting Agenda
August 3, 2026 | 6:00pm

I. **Welcome + Check-in's**
II. **Prayer**
III. **Communications Update(s)**
    A. Ministry Descriptions
        1. All ministry descriptions have been received from Laura, including, Mourner's Path, Funeral Guild, and Stephen Ministry. Community of Hope on hold, and Healing Service pending launch.
    B. Spoken announcement paired with bulletin insert
        1. Loaves & Fishes, Laura Van Ness (recap)
            a) Laura Van Ness delivered the announcement and received good reception. Key learning: Keep announcements to approximately 3 minutes maximum. Laura felt that 5 minutes would have been too long for the congregation, even though more content could have been included.
        2. Stephen Ministry, Linda Schubert
            a) Allen will contact Linda to schedule a spoken announcement.
            b) Proposed dates: August 23rd or 30th.
            c) Will note twofold approach: 1) Inform congregation about availability of Stephen Ministry for those facing challenges, and 2) recruit potential Stephen Ministers, emphasizing the rewarding nature of the ministry
        3. Eucharistic Visitors, David Madrigal
            a) Planning for late September/early October (after Linda Schubert's announcement) Note: Don't schedule immediately after Linda's announcement to avoid announcement fatigue.
        4. OSL: Consider scheduling a spoken announcement paired with bulletin insert for OSL in latter half of fall/early winter to remind congregation about prayer ministry availability during worship services.
IV. **Healing Service:** Wednesday, September 9th at 7:00 PM in St. Bede's
    A. Service Elements
        1. OSL - OSL members will be positioned near the back of the chapel in two locations: the Coventry cross where and near to the fresco of the Virgin Mary. OSL members offering healing prayer will come forward with Allen to bless the oil at a certain point in the service

2. Music - Allen will coordinate with Brady to plan music selections, organize a cantor, and arrange for pianist
3. Misc. - Liturgy will be "A Public Service of Healing" from Book of Occasional Services, featuring a Litany of Healing (in place of Prayers of the People), includes Eucharist.
    a) Olive Oil**:** Jackie will provide olive oil for anointing, and Allen will procure a vessel.
    b) Votive Candles: approved for incorporation during time for anointing; Allen will coordinate with Victor for setup.

B. Hospitality - Allen will confirm with Jimmy's team to provide lemonade, tea, water, coffee. Katie will coordinate DOK reception details with Pam/ Stephanie.

C. Communication
    1. Signage - Roger creating street banner to be displayed starting Thursday, September 02, 2026 (6 days before service). Council advised to add date/clarification (e.g., "This Wednesday" or "Wednesday Night") to avoid confusion, as banner currently only says "Wednesday." Banner designed without specific date so it can be reused quarterly, and hopefully, monthly.
    2. Handouts - Small cards created with date, time, and address on front, and Prayer for Quiet Confidence from prayer book on back (for those unable to attend). Cards will be: available in church office, at welcome tent, on tables throughout church, and given to Ruth and Don for hospital visits.
    3. Tuesday Email - Lead article on Tuesday, August 31, 2026 (week before service). Include healing service information in subsequent Tuesday emails (not as lead article but as recurring item). Allen will work with Roger and Sue on implementation.
    4. Bulletin Insert - Sunday, September 05, 2026 (Sunday before service)

V. Misc. Updates + New Business

A. Pastoral Care Ministries Half-sheet - Not yet completed; scheduled for August. Allen will work with Roger to create one-page Pastoral Ministries document

B. Eucharistic Visitors bulletin revamp - Scheduled for August; David Madrigal requested Allen work with Roger to revamp Eucharistic Visitor Service leaflets to make them more consistent with Sunday bulletin format.

VI. Pastoral Updates - Identified but scrubbed from minutes

VII. Closing Prayer - Compline

Communications Council — First Meeting Report

August 27, 2026 | 6:00 pm | Palmer Library

Present: Roger Hutchison, Grant Moss, Sandy Harrison, Peter Yacoe
Unable to attend: Catherine Thompson (last-minute work emergency), Alex Junek (out of town)

Gathering & Introductions

The Communications Council held its first meeting on August 27. We began with introductions and a simple question: **How did you find your way to Palmer?** This opened our conversation around one of the central themes of the evening—the importance of relationships, welcome, and storytelling in how people experience Palmer.

Roger shared a collection of recent Palmer communications, including print pieces as well as website, social media, and Constant Contact statistics. The response was extremely positive. Council members described Palmer's current communications as **fresh, current, colorful, and alive.** They particularly appreciated the growing consistency among the various pieces—the sense that they belong together without feeling overly coordinated or "matchy-matchy."

Stories, Hospitality & Welcome

Before the meeting, council members were invited to reflect on two things:

- Come with one Palmer story you think deserves to be told.
- Pay attention to the different ways you encounter Palmer—emails, social media, the website, Sunday communications, the campus, and conversations. Notice what catches your attention, what tells our story well, and where you see possibilities.

This led to a rich conversation about communications as something much larger than publications, emails, or social media. **Communications is also about telling Palmer's stories and extending hospitality and welcome.**

Several personal examples illustrated this. Betty Key was remembered as the reason someone returned to Palmer because she remembered and called that person by name. Katherine Tuttle's quick response after someone submitted a visitor card was highlighted as another powerful example of welcome.

The Newcomer Classes led by Katherine Tuttle and Sue Howard were also mentioned as an important part of that experience. Their leadership helps newcomers learn more about Palmer while also creating relationships and helping people begin to find their place within the parish community.

Pastoral care was also identified as an important part of Palmer's story, with Jeff Carowitz mentioned as an example of the care and connection people experience here.

What Makes Palmer Palmer

The group talked about Palmer as something of a **"unicorn" in the church world**—a special and somewhat unusual place that feels different from many other churches.

There is a sense of life and energy here. Palmer feels full, with a broad range of ages and a particularly visible and growing presence of children and families. There are so many different opportunities for worship, formation, service, fellowship, and connection that it would be difficult not to find some way to become involved.

The conversation also identified an opportunity to increase Palmer's visibility among young professionals—people who are no longer college students but may not yet be raising young children. This "in-between" group represents an important part of our wider community, and there is an opportunity to strengthen and grow Palmer's Young Professionals ministry while finding new ways to connect with and tell the stories of people in this season of life.

Several specific examples were named:

- Monthly parish potlucks are a highlight and help create community.
- Short-term Thursday evening and Lenten classes, particularly when accompanied by a simple meal, make participation possible for people with demanding work schedules.
- The presence of so many children and families communicates vitality and hope.
- The breadth of Palmer's ministries provides many different entry points into parish life.

These are not simply programs to advertise; they are stories that communicate something about **who Palmer is.**

Worship, Space & Connection

The group was particularly enthusiastic about the way Neil handles Sunday announcements. His approach was described as personable, natural, and real, and as something that helps create connection within the worship experience.

This led to an interesting conversation about Palmer's beautiful architecture. While the church building is one of Palmer's great gifts, its scale and design can also create challenges. The physical distance and elevation between the congregation and the clergy and altar party can sometimes feel hierarchical.

Neil's conversational approach to announcements helps bridge some of that physical distance. The question was also raised about whether clergy might occasionally preach from a location other than the lectern as another way of creating a greater sense of connection and proximity.

Current Communications

Council members have noticed and appreciated the recent improvements to Palmer's communications. They specifically mentioned:

- Improvements to the website
- The Palmer app
- The revamped Palmer e-news
- Greater visual consistency among print and digital communications
- A fresh and current overall presentation of Palmer

Looking Ahead

The strongest theme emerging from this first meeting was that **Palmer communications should continue to be rooted in storytelling, hospitality, and welcome.**

Our communications should certainly help people know what is happening, but they can do more than convey information. They can tell the stories of the people, relationships, ministries, worship, care, and moments of welcome that reveal who Palmer is.

The evening was extremely positive and encouraging. Council members brought thoughtful observations, personal experiences, and a genuine enthusiasm for Palmer and its story. This first conversation provided a strong foundation for the work of the Communications Council moving forward.

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
Finance Committee Minutes
August 12, 2026

Attending: Rosine Hall, Pam Harvey, Scott Sublett, Jessica Evans, Danna Kurtin, Pam Lovett, Shannon Wallace, John Wallace. Absent: Tom Van Arsdel, Joan Gallagher, Richard Avant, Jeff Dieter.

I. Opening Prayer

II. Mimi Holt and Bonnie Choy from Blazek & Vetterling, 2025 draft audited financials presentation

1. Our Auditors made a lengthy presentation regarding audited financials for 2025. They reviewed the process, the limits and guarantees of this audit, certain changes in how Palmer's audit is presented, and requirements before the audit report becomes final.

    a) At their recommendation, we previously allowed them to adjust reporting of certain items so that we are more fully in compliance with reporting on a modified cash basis, such that certain transactions are reported differently than last year. This adjustment resolves the need to add a note to the audit regarding how we record donations paid in advance. Thus, for this one year, the audits of 2025 and 2024 will not be reported together on a two-year comparison basis.

    b) We were asked questions about any knowledge of fraud, or malfeasance. None were known. And Pam Harvey and Jessica will have to sign and submit a letter that the Auditors composed for us printed on Palmer's letterhead.

    c) After Review of the Consolidated Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets- Modified Cash Basis as of December 31st 2025, all questions were answered and the Finance Committee approved the audit.

III. Action Items

1. We reviewed and unanimously approved the June 2026 meeting minutes as there was no July Finance Committee meeting.
2. We reviewed and unanimously approved the July 2026 financial reports. The YTD contributions are above budget, $1,150 versus $1,108 budget. Usually, During summer months contributions are less than budgeted so this is great. Overall we have a budget surplus of about $4000. We have an annual surplus of $86,000. This is all very good news.

IV. Discussion Items

1. Building capital campaign.

    a) Pam Lovett reported that that have interviewed 8 different consulting firms and will shortly pick the firm to represent us during the 3 year capital campaign. She related differences in approach and cost and reported that the committee will pick a firm shortly.

    b) Pam Lovett also reported that the Palmer Endowment has approved an expenditure from the Endowment of $440,000 to fund the studies and planning needed to determine total cost of the improvements.

2. Rosine Hall reported that Ken Alexander Requested that the Finance Committee begin work on next year's budget and after discussion we decided that we would attempt to prepare a draft budget for 2027 in September.

V. Closing Prayer

September 8, 2026 Stewardship Council Report to the Vestry

The Stewardship Council met most recently on August 31, 2026 at 3:30 PM CDT by Zoom.

Attending:
Ken Alexander, Chair
Jeanine Baker
Andrew Grizzle
Betty Key
Not attending:
Andrew Kraebel
Pam Lovett
John Wallace
Peter Yacoe

The meeting focused on finalizing stewardship materials and planning for the upcoming stewardship season. The group discussed the draft stewardship letters, the initial drafts of which were prepared by Andrew Grizzle. Roger Hutchinson assisted in preparing the 2027 Stewardship Pledge Card drafted by the Council. We decided not to plan to put envelopes in the pews for the return of pledge cards. Roger Hutchinson is working on the website to make online giving clearer. Ken suggested having Jeanine and George speak at services or write articles during the stewardship season, to which Jeanine agreed. Andrew Grizzle and maybe Katy Grizzle (and Robert?) will be among the speakers about Stewardship during services this fall. We are looking for additional speakers.

The group discussed the importance of participatory giving and stewardship in maintaining their church community. The group discussed the importance of participatory giving and how over 80% of their funding comes from annual pledges.

We discussed the desirability of a Warden's Forum following the 10 am service on September 20 at which stewardship would be one topic for discussion among others.. Subsequent to the meeting, we learned that the Wardens and Neil have scheduling conflicts that day. A Warden's Forum is tentatively scheduled for October 11.

We discussed plans for sending the model Stewardship 2027 letters to the Vestry by email, with instructions. Subsequent to the meeting the Council reviewed the draft instructions, and they were sent out with the model letters by email on September 6, 2026 to all Vestry members. The plan is for letters to go out to Palmers on or soon after September 21, 2026, the day after Neil will preach on Stewardship at services.

Discussion Items at September 15, 2026 Vestry Meeting
We would like to

1. review plans for the preparation and sending my mail and/or email the Stewardship 2027 letters to Palmers,
2. review plans for the Warden's Forum on October 11, 2026,
3. discuss plans for further Stewardship activities leading up to Covenant Sunday on November 15, 2026, and
4. answer any questions about these matters.

Senior Warden Report

For the September 15, 2026 Vestry Meeting

1) Special Committees for Capital Campaign and Centennial Celebration
   a) Pam Lovett and Mike Soika completed interviews of potential fundraising partners and recommended we hire James D. Klote & Associates. The Vestry has approved this choice and a contract has been signed. Pre-campaign work will begin in the near term.
   b) The Centennial Celebration Committee will be chaired by David Madrigal and David Palma, and Mark and Catherine Beebe. We are incredibly grateful to all of them for agreeing to lead us as we plan to celebrate our Centennial.
2) Human Resources and Staffing update
   a) Blake Burns has started as Palmer's new Youth Minister.
   b) We have made an offer to fill the position of Director of Operations, and the offer has been accepted. An announcement will be made in the coming weeks.
3) The Palmer Endowment agreed to make a landmark gift of $440,000 to fund the pre-bid phase of the Campus Renovation Project, and to provide the seed money for initial work to be done by James D. Klote & Associates for the Capital Campaign. An announcement of this gift was made to the parish, and we are incredibly grateful for the vision and generosity the Endowment Board has shown in making this gift.
4) Camille Emig has agreed to lead efforts to secure grants and funding from Endowments and Foundations. Thank you Camille!

5) Campus Renovation Project
   a) The special taskforce consisting of Michael Massey (chair), David Robinson, Burdette Keeland, Gail Adams, Eileen Raese, John Cutler, John Hawkins, Gerry Sandoval, and Ken DeLorenzo has been working to sign up contractors in the areas of engineering, architecture, security, audio/visual, HVAC, and property surveying to provide critical specifications and bidding information.
   b) Additional work on space planning and potential new features is underway. The first formal update to the Parish happened on June 21, and a workshop on the planning process happened on July 19. An additional meeting will happen in October.
   c) The Rectory Study committee has submitted a report and recommendation to the Vestry for consideration.

6) We have our next meeting scheduled with the leadership of the Hermann Park Conservancy on September 15

The Rector's Report for the Sept. 2026 Vestry Meeting from the Rev'd Neil Alan Willard

1. As you all know, I had open heart surgery on Tuesday, June 16, for a mitral valve repair and maze procedure at Houston Methodist in the Texas Medical Center. For that, I was fortunate to have a world-class cardiac surgeon who has performed thousands of these same procedures. I am also fortunate to work here at Palmer with talented clergy and staff and with talented lay leaders, including the wardens and the rest of the members of the Vestry. I'm grateful both to them and to all of you for keeping things going while I was focused on my recovery from this medical adventure that began rather suddenly last April. I came back to the church office gradually during the month of August, amid seemingly endless follow-up medical appointments and cardiac rehab. The latter, which takes place a short walk down Fannin Street, will continue three times a week for several more weeks. My low, persistent atrial fibrillation that began this entire journey as a result of its random discovery continued after my surgery. So as I got closer to the three month mark after my surgery, it was recommended that I have a cardioversion to try to shock my heart back into regular rhythm. That procedure took place on Monday, August 31, and, thanks be to God, has thus far been successful. I'll have a follow-up appointment with my cardiologist the day before our Vestry meeting, and I'll mark 13 weeks after my surgery on the day of that meeting. Again, I'm grateful for life.

2. From Friday, October 2, through Sunday, October 4, I will be at Camp Allen for the Palmer Men's Retreat. I will, however, be back in time to officiate at Evensong that Sunday at 4:00 p.m.

3. From Monday, October 19, through Wednesday, October 21, the clergy will be away at Camp Allen for the annual clergy conference of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. As always, attendance is mandatory, so we'll all be there with the Bishop.

4. In late October, my wife Carrie and I will make a short trip to North Carolina to visit my mother. The reason for going at that point on the calendar is because we are going to be invited to attend Wake Forest University's Presidential Inauguration. As you many recall, the new president of Wake Forest University, which is my alma mater, is Dr. Peter Rodriguez, formerly Dean of the business school at Rice University. He and his wife Kathleen and their family are members of Palmer. So this personal trip will be an opportunity to share with them greetings from all of us here.

5. On November 5, I will be participating in a workshop on multifaith collaboration through the Boniuk Institute at Rice University. An interesting part of that for me is that I was one of many invited participants in the research upon which that workshop will be based. And you can learn about that research, called the *Houston Religious Leadership Project: Revitalizing Interfaith Leadership in Houston and Beyond*, here: https://boniuk.rice.edu/research/houston-religious-leadership-project

6. From Friday, November 6, through Sunday, November 8, I will be at Camp Allen for the Palmer Parish Retreat.