



PALMER MEMORIAL
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
— HOUSTON, TEXAS —

Vestry & Lay Delegate Nominees

FOR THE ELECTION DURING THE
ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025
11:00 AM

EARLY VOTING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

NOTICE OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the main worship space of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church on Sunday, January 26, 2025, following the 10:00 AM Choral Eucharist, the following persons are nominated to serve on the Vestry of the Congregation and to serve as Lay Delegates to the Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. All nominees have consented to their nominations and have given assurance that, if elected to the offices or positions for which nominated, they will serve faithfully

Vestry Nominees

Five persons are to be elected to serve three-year terms, 2025-2028.

Bob Hawley
Bob Ittner
Ken Alexander
Richard Avant
Sue Murphy
Pam Lovett
Shannon Wallace
Rob Vines

Lay Delegate Nominees

*Two persons are to be elected to serve two-year terms, 2025-2026, and two persons will serve as alternates for one-year terms, 2025.***

Claudia Stephens
Jackie Campbell
Connie Wallace
Joan Gallagher

**Each year the Congregation sends four Lay Delegates to the Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Sarah Mesko Breckbill and James (Mac) MacKenzie Hall, the Congregation's two Lay Delegates elected in 2024, will complete their two-year terms with their service in 2025.

VESTRY NOMINEES

BOB HAWLEY



Born into an Air Force family, I lived in seven different locations before I was 10, then settled in western Massachusetts while my father served in Korea. Our family remained in western Massachusetts through my early adult years. I received an AB from Dartmouth College, an MA at the University of London, and an MBA at Harvard University.

My working career has been spent largely in or consulting with the energy industry in corporate planning/budgeting and commodities trading. While working for Gulf Oil in their Pittsburgh headquarters, I was transferred to the Gulf Chemicals Group in Houston in 1976 - where I have lived ever since. From Gulf, I moved to Occidental Petroleum. In between industry assignments I worked as an energy consultant with Price, Waterhouse, Coopers and Gemini. I finished my working career with Meridian Oil, which was subsequently acquired by Conoco-Phillips.

Dawn and I have been married 40 years. We have two daughters - both married and two grandchildren, one of whom was baptized at Palmer this past Thanksgiving Sunday.

We've been members of Palmer since 1993. I was raised Lutheran, Dawn Roman Catholic. We wanted a formative Christian environment for our children and eventually joined Palmer after visiting different churches. We found the Episcopal Church a very comfortable compromise from our previous individual religious traditions. More importantly, Palmer was a very welcoming environment in which to raise our children. Over the years I've been especially involved in the church's outreach and fundraising efforts. John Fields and I managed the Palmer golf tournament for 25 years raising funds for the Palmer Way Station. In addition, I also volunteered at the Way Station for many years and at the same time volunteered at Project ID (an outreach program sponsored by 1st Presbyterian which helped the homeless get their birth certificates and ID's.) I also served as an Angel Flight pilot for 32 years. Angel Flight pilots provide air transport to indigenous patients, typically in our sector coming to M.D. Anderson for cancer treatment.

Palmer's challenges include growing our parish, better use of our facilities, and addressing the shortage of parking. If elected, I hope to assist the Vestry in meeting those challenges.

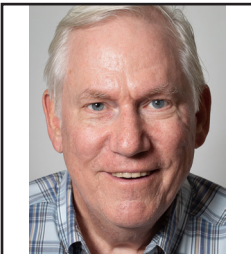


BOB ITTNER

I grew up in Midland and served as an acolyte at Trinity Episcopal through high school. Played basketball at the University of Texas serving as captain my senior year earning a BBA and MBA in finance. I serve three years in the Navy as an officer during the Vietnam war. I had a fifty career in commercial banking retiring four years ago.

Married to Linda at Palmer in 1981. We have four children all married and doing well and five grandchildren seven and under. Linda taught Sunday school for 17 or 18 years at Palmer. As our children were growing up, I was very involved in coaching baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer. Previously, I served on the vestry, two stints as president of the endowment, 11 years on the board and president of Archway Academy, one mission trip to Costa Rica, and try to spend 30 minutes to an hour at the Roy Jones Garden every week. I have ridden in the MS 150 21 years raising over \$500,000 to find a cure for MS.

I marvel at the beauty of Palmer and enjoy the 8 o'clock service. I am interested in helping Palmer in whatever way I can contribute.



KEN ALEXANDER

I am a Rice and Harvard Law School graduate. Susan and I have lived in Houston since 1978, when we married at Palmer following graduate school. I've been a partner at Porter Hedges, LLP for thirty years. I'm a cradle Episcopalian and Texas native. We raised our three sons at Palmer, and our two young granddaughters were baptized at Palmer.

I currently serve on the Vestry, filling an unexpired term, and chair the Vestry's Stewardship Council. I've previously served on the Vestry under Rectors Jim Nutter and Jeffrey Walker, chaired the Finance and Stewardship Committees, and served on the Rector Search Committee twenty years ago. I currently serve on the Friday Night Dinner & Discussion Committee and with Susan have hosted several of those occasions. I am a lay reader, chalice bearer, and Serve Sunday worker.

My largest volunteer commitment beyond Palmer has been as a Scout leader for 30 years at Troop 55, including as Scoutmaster, and with Susan at the Scouting program at Yellowstone Academy.

From my Vestry, Finance, and Stewardship Council service, I've learned that in important ways, parishioners are the hands and feet of Christ at Palmer. The Vestry's job includes supporting that vital, hard work. Palmer has made significant progress for growth this year, and I'd like to help that continue. Palmer needs to grow, and I am especially optimistic that the addition of our Director of Parish Life and Membership will supercharge those efforts.



RICHARD AVANT

I am honored to be considered to serve the people of Palmer. My wonderful wife Heather and I first came to Palmer after we were married in 1993 at the recommendation of a friend. Upon meeting the friendly parishioners and clergy and witnessing the liturgical emphasis, we immediately felt at home. Our twin sons were baptized at Palmer in 1996 and I served as an usher until 1999 when we moved to The Woodlands. Today, our sons are 29 years old and we are so blessed that they are devoted to the Lord.

I have called the Houston area home for over 40 years. After receiving degrees from Rice and the University of Texas at Austin, I became a management consultant to the energy industry, working at Deloitte and, for the last 19 years, as a Managing Director at Alvarez & Marsal, where I founded and led their energy consulting practice. I have served on and led several non-profit and school boards, and have found joy in successfully leading impactful groups in organizational governance. In my career, I have often served in a fiduciary role as well, which I appreciate is a key responsibility of the Vestry.

I was an active member of a very large Methodist church in The Woodlands, where my activities included five years as a choir member, three years as a member of the Administrative Board, one year as a sixth grade confirmation class leader, and 18 years as a Men's Bible Study leader. We moved into Boulevard Oaks in 2019 and were thrilled to be able to attend Palmer once again. I have joined Palmer's Men's Bible Study on Tuesday mornings and have treasured my time with the group and under Neil's guidance.

Since first attending in 1993, I have always had a soft spot for Palmer, likely for many of the same reasons you do. I love the church's warm community, its formal service, its incredible music, its acceptance of all people, and its support of Rice and the Texas Medical Center. But above all, I love Palmer's focus on the Bible. The aspect of Palmer's strategic plan that is rooted in liturgical excellence speaks personally to me. As Christians, I believe it is our responsibility to learn directly from the Word of God, and I feel we are at our best when we surround ourselves in God's Word. At Palmer, I love how The Book of Common Prayer and the Spirit-inspired music frame the service; the Biblical readings are the focal point and the sermon is built around them. Throughout the Sunday service, the clergy teaches us how to serve God and others by speaking His Word, but also encourages us to continue to share and live the message as we walk out Palmer's doors — where others might see and value things differently than we do. If every day we strive to understand God's message and accept his grace, then we have a strong opportunity to make a difference in our community and the world. This is my personal aspiration, but as I am only human, I fall short. So I am blessed to have my family and the Palmer community to support me and hold me accountable each week.



SUE MURPHY

I grew up in the Seattle area before it was “cool,” and we joked that my mother was the Pope. I literally moved down the west coast for undergrad and grad school, and would have been practicing law in Tijuana had I not moved east to Houston. My intended temporary stay will be 40 years come January, and I blame it all on meeting my now husband, Mike.

His dad being an Episcopalian priest and Mike's attending church more than on Christmas and Easter persuaded me that I should have been Episcopalian all along. We joined Palmer 25 years ago when our younger son was 2, and we felt like we were immediately absorbed into the community. Over the years, I managed the bookstore and served on the preschool board - yes, Palmer had both back in the day - as well as being on the vestry. More recently, however, thanks to work, it's been more just coming to church on Sundays and participating semi-regularly in the 7 am women's Bible study.

Now, I'm blessed to be dialing back on work, and I would be delighted to be able to serve on the vestry if you all will have me. I am inspired by what seems to be a groundswell of support, interest, and enthusiasm since the vestry had the consultant interview, assess, and make recommendations to our parish and clergy, and want to ensure that all of that continues to move forward. Specifically, I am all about Palmer's value of Joyful Companionship: I love the community I have embraced and that has embraced me for 25 years, and I truly want to ensure that is extended to all within the congregation, and others - especially younger families - whose interest in becoming a Palmer is piqued by our Joyful Outreach.



PAM LOVETT

I was raised as a Southern Baptist in Arkansas, and accepted Christ at age nine. Faith, family, and friends have been centering elements of my life since this young age. I moved to Houston after graduating with a business degree from University of Arkansas and met Edgar through mutual friends. When Edgar and I married in 1984, we chose to worship at Palmer, his family's home church. We were blessed with two children, Julia and Gar. At Julia's urging, when she and Gar were young, our family became ushers. When our team captain moved, I assumed the role and happily served, meeting many wonderful Palmers and visitors through the years. When our family team of four dwindled to one, as the children grew up and left Houston, and Edgar died, I retired from this ministry. Serving on Palmer's Endowment Board provided another opportunity to serve our beloved Parish.

I spent my entire career in Houston, retiring in 2022, and enjoyed leadership roles at AT&T/Lucent, Greater Houston Partnership, Sterling Bank and Comerica Bank. Fostering a culture of collaboration, recognition, volunteering, and diversity/inclusion in these organizations led to ongoing business and personal fulfillment. Volunteering has been part of my DNA, both as a parent volunteer and serving on numerous nonprofit boards and advisory boards, including roles as Chairman of DePelchin Children's Center, President of the Junior League Sustaining Club, Chair of The Rose, and Chair of the Better Business Bureau Philanthropy Group.

Participating in Palmer's governance with a fresh perspective flavored by years of positive parishioner engagement would allow me to share best practices from other nonprofit boards. My career and nonprofit roles have provided extensive opportunities to identify and leverage diverse, untapped talents and Palmer has an abundant talent pool. I would welcome the chance to help Palmer continue to flourish.



SHANNON WALLACE

I was born and raised in Houston and grew up attending a Presbyterian church just down the street from Palmer. I received my undergraduate degree from Trinity University in San Antonio and, after working a few years in San Antonio, moved back to Houston for law school, where I met my husband, Rivers. We have been attending Palmer regularly for the past 3 years and were married at Palmer in 2022. We are members of an ushering team along with Rivers' parents and he also helps with the youth group. I practice corporate law at Bracewell LLP, where I've been since graduating law school in 2018. I enjoy cooking, exercise, and Tex-Mex!

My vision for the Palmer community is that it would continue to offer "thin spaces" where people can meet God where they are and grow in the knowledge and love of Christ alongside a joyful and encouraging church family. As a member of the vestry, I'd welcome the opportunity to help with the mechanics that make that vision possible.



ROB VINES

I was born in Pittsburgh and attended Cornell University and the University of Illinois before accepting a job at Shell as a rock physicist and moving to Houston in 1998. I joined Palmer soon after I arrived and have been a member ever since. My wife and son are members of First Unitarian, a mile further up Main.

I am a cradle Episcopalian and come from a family of active Episcopalians. My grandmother was a church secretary for fifty years, my mother is a mainstay in the choir and altar guild, and my father is an usher and was the church accountant for years. I served on the steering committee for the campus ministry at Cornell, and in Illinois I sat on the vestry and was part of the discernment committee for a good friend. At Palmer I have at various times been an acolyte, chalice bearer, lector, and electric guitar player for the Mosaic contemporary service praise band.

Palmer's mission is to know and share the love of Jesus Christ. The liturgy, music, and sermons help me see God's love for us every Sunday, and the people at Palmer show me how to share that love. We do so much here—Archway Academy, outreach to patients in the Medical Center, programs to settle refugees and prisoners, our support of Jerusalem Peacebuilders—through these programs and more, we demonstrate how God works through us to make a difference in the world.

I would be honored to serve on Palmer's vestry as Palmer approaches its hundredth year as a parish.

LAY DELEGATE NOMINEES



CLAUDIA STEPHENS

I moved to Houston two years ago and now work part-time as a Chaplain at Houston Methodist Hospital. I joined Palmer in 2023. Currently, I serve as an Acolyte, Server, Chalice Bearer, and Reader on the altar. Since I spent 25 years in the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, I am now eager to learn about the Episcopal Diocese of Texas by representing Palmer as a Lay Delegate to the Annual Conference.

I am a cradle Episcopalian, and after returning to Texas from NYC, I raised my family at St. James Episcopal Church in Lake Highlands, Dallas. I served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and participated in Bible Studies and Women's Retreats. I led the Annual Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser and initiated the shift from cash to credit and other revenue-producing events. I also co-facilitated Griefshare <https://www.griefshare.org/> at Lake Highlands United Methodist Church.

I received a Master of Divinity at Perkins School of Theology in 2023. I retired from Costume De-sign in 2022 as Professor Emerita at Southern Methodist University Meadows School of the Arts.

I walked a 500-mile pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Spain in 2016. I went again with my brother in 2022, and last year, I volunteered in an albergue (hostel), nourishing and assisting other pilgrims on "the way." Pilgrimage embodies endurance, compassion, forgiveness, joy, pain, laughter, sorrow, and love. As I struggle, rejoice, and renew my walk with Christ daily, I feel compelled to live out these values of Christian pilgrimage as best I can.



JACKIE CAMPBELL

I was born in Canada, but immigrated at age two with my mother to Galveston, where she was recruited to work as an R.N. at UTMB. We soon found our church home—Trinity Episcopal. After graduating from Ball High, I attended the University of Houston on scholarship, obtaining a B.A. in English/Journalism teacher education, and a B.S. in nursing from University of Texas in 1976. I worked as an R.N. for approximately 7 years at St. Joseph Hospital in the behavioral health division, where I met my soon-to-be husband, Larry Root. We married at Palmer in 1983. I decided to change careers once again, and graduated from UT Dental Branch in 1986, working briefly as a general dentist on a full-time basis. When we started a family, I found a part-time job with PerioHealth Professionals, where I have worked for the past 36 years, and at present, one day a week.

Three years ago, Larry lost his battle with acute myeloid leukemia, but before he became sick, he witnessed the marriages of our two sons to wonderful women and met our first grandchild. I now have 5 healthy grandchildren, a source of much joy.

I've been attending Palmer since 1983, participating in various capacities: enrolled in EFM, served as a Sunday school teacher, on the vestry for 4 years, and on the planning committee for the women's retreat for two years. Presently I serve as a Eucharistic Visitor, a member of the Order of St. Luke, a member of DOK, and a member of the Palmer Visual Arts Council.

My passions include painting and art making, gardening, reading, and visiting my grandchildren.

The guiding principles of Palmer that I most resonate with are liturgical excellence, the beauty of which can move me to tears, joyful companionship found within thriving small groups, and bold curiosity. I'm especially grateful that Palmer is a safe place to explore, learn, ask questions, nurture others and be nurtured.



CONNIE WALLACE

My husband John and I have been members of Palmer for over 35 years. We were married here 38 years ago. When we had children, Nicholas and Anna now, we wanted a church home to raise them in and Palmer was the right one for us. Through the years, I have been active in various ministries, from ECW, landscaping grounds, the Sacred

Ground group and JPB, to serving in the lay ministry as chalice bearer, acolyte and verger. I have also been on the Vestry. We have formed many wonderful and meaningful relationships at Palmer and have had the privilege of watching so many Palmer children grow into adults and have families of their own. Palmer's liturgy and music have inspired me, given me solace and comfort when I need it.

For the last 15 years, I have been active in the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary as a volunteer and a leader. It has been rewarding to work directly with people and play a small part in helping them. Palmer's Serve Sunday has also provided an opportunity to reach out to the Houston community. The openness and willingness of Palmer to include all has been a guiding principle that is very meaningful to me. I attended Diocesan Council meetings when John was a delegate and learned more about how the Episcopal church works as a body. I am excited to be at Palmer as we continue our journey exploring new ways to serve each other and the community.



JOAN GALLAGHER

I was raised in Queens, New York, in a large and devout Irish Catholic family. I attended twelve years of catholic school and then earned a BS in Computer Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania. I moved to Houston in 199, newly engaged to my husband Frank Dittoe. Our two sons

Ryan and Kevin are in their early 20's. I retired in 2020 after spending the bulk of my career in the oil and gas industry, including 25 years in executive roles leading human resources and IT.

My Palmer love story began in August of 2015 when I was seeking a new church home to strengthen my faith relationships and feel embraced by a church community that welcomed all. From the moment I walked in the doors I felt like I had found a new home. It was further reinforced by hearing my sons talking in the car on the way home, about trying to do the things the priest had said to think about during the week - I knew we were in the right place! Since then, I have joined many Serve Sundays, attended the annual Women's retreat since 2017 and have been part of the Stephen Minister team since 2020; I was commissioned in 2021. The opportunity to be part of this listening ministry and to meet weekly with a care receiver and support my fellow care givers has been an extremely rewarding experience.

Our mission statement speaks to our "joyfully engaged and welcoming church" which resonates greatly with me. As I recently shared during a Sunday Stewardship presentation, there have been many times I have showed up at Palmer in spiritual need and felt a sign from God that I am in the right place; a sermon that strengthens my faith, a song that lifts my heart, a Psalm I find during communion meditation to give me wisdom, or a conversation with a fellow parishioner that is just the boost I need. It is my vision for Palmer that we can continue to welcome each new visitor to our church, into our family so they can know and boldly share the love of Jesus Christ that I found here with all of you. Thank you for considering my candidacy.