

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting Minutes January 23, 2025

Vestry Members Present:

The Rev'd Neil Willard, Rector
Abigail Follmar, Senior Warden
Tom Van Arsdell, Junior Warden
Sheeba Thomas, Clerk
Ken Alexander
Jeanine Baker
David Candler
Margie Dieter
Pam Harvey
Rosine Hall
Betty Key
Kip Krause
David Madrigal
Michael Massey
Dick Viebig
John Wallace

Vestry Members Absent:

None

Assisting Clergy Present:

The Rev'd Katherine Tuttle, Director of Parish Life and Membership

Assisting Clergy Absent:

N/A

The hybrid in-person + Zoom meeting started at 5:30 PM.

- 1. Check-in and Opening Prayer:** Neil invited personal updates and began the meeting with prayer.
- 2. Dwelling in the Word:** Katherine Tuttle read a passage from *The Velveteen Rabbit* and asked those present to reflect on what it means to be a “real” church community. Joyful companionship, spiritual sanctuary, liturgical excellence, and the search for good news were among the thoughts offered.
- 3. Review and Approval of Consensus Items:** Minutes from the November 19, 2024, Vestry meeting as well as consensus items and reports from the Stewardship Council, Finance Council, Deferred Maintenance Group, Senior Warden, and Rector were all unanimously approved.

4. **Senior Warden's Report (Abigail Follmar):** Abigail noted that the Annual Meeting is coming up on Sunday. At the meeting, the 2024 finance report and 2025 budget will be presented by Larry Wood and Dick Viebig, respectively.

Emails have been sent to 400 parishioners to facilitate electronic voting. 70 parishioners have e-voted. 11 parishioners voted early, in person.

A potluck luncheon will be held directly after the Annual Meeting. During that time, a video created by the National Episcopal Church will be played. A photographer will also be available to take photos for uploading to ShelbyNext.

Palmer Place Apartments will close after the leases end in 3/2025.

This Sunday, the Education Hour will involve a presentation about the upcoming Diocesan Council meeting.

5. **Stewardship (Ken Alexander):** Ken reflected on this year's successful stewardship efforts. The pledges received allowed the vestry to adopt a balanced budget today in advance of the Annual meeting. Ken expressed that the stewardship drive worked because the entire vestry participated in the effort and reached out to parishioners personally. He also noted that the increased candor and transparency about Palmer's finances was critical. During the drive, the vestry promised that it would deliver "more Palmer" to the parish, as reflected in more active ministries and programs – something people are excited to support.

The reinvigorated Covenant Sunday celebration was also successful; the majority of pledges were received by that date. This allowed the Finance Council to have a meaningful look ahead for the 2025 budget.

While there were successes, he noted that we need more pledgers and a broader distribution of the size of pledges. We currently rely on a small number of pledgers to account for the bulk of revenue. In both 2024 and 2025, 26 people have pledged 50% of the total amount pledged.

Going forward, he recommended that Palmer deliver more of what it has done in the past 8 months to invigorate the congregation, particularly regarding growth in programs and efforts toward building preservation. He mentioned that the vestry also needs to get to know as many parishioners as possible and listen to their desires and concerns.

Finally, we need to maximize use of ShelbyNext.

6. **Finances (Dick Viebig):**

1. Endowment: going forward, the Endowment will disburse funds to Palmer on a monthly rather than twice-yearly schedule, to moderate swings in revenue

2. Archway Academy: This is Palmer's largest outreach ministry. Revenue generated is about 1/3 of market value.
3. German Preschool: Uses about 1/3 of the space of Archway. Revenue generated is near market value.
4. Waldron Fund: approximately \$100K remains. This fund is earmarked for building maintenance.
5. Miscellaneous income: These were funds given by the federal government to non-profits that did the right thing by continuing to pay their employees during the pandemic.
6. Family Foundation grant supporting Director of Parish Life: Rather than funding position for 3 years and then having the parish pick up 100% of salary + benefits thereafter, it was suggested to request of the foundation that Palmer be able to use the same funds over a longer period of time, with a slow progressive reduction in the parish's use of foundation funds until the parish transitions to completely supporting this staff position.
7. Laity Staff Salaries: These will increase by 5% in 2025. These salaries remain on the low side.
8. Music Department Interns: budget has been restored to 2023 levels after previous cuts.
9. Security Services: budget includes a small hourly rate increase
10. Building Maintenance: This is >\$500K per year
11. Rectory Mortgage: This is approximately \$500K

Vestry unanimously approved the budget proposed by the Finance Committee.

7. Deferred Maintenance: (Presenter: Kip Krause)

The Waldron Fund is being used to support needs that include overhauling the air handler, repairing the roof in the nave, obtaining a roof inspection, obtaining a professional engineering assessment, addressing rectory flooring issues, and maintaining a contingency budget.

Abigail noted that the Diocese has a program to assist with campus assessments. Abigail and Tom will look into this.

8. Vestry Meetings

1. Vestry Retreat will take place on 2/15/25
 - a. Betty Key will work on the meeting agenda
2. Strategic Planning Meeting slated for April 2025
 - a. Betty Key proposed that the formation of Parish Councils be among the agenda items

9. Gratitude Reflection

Abigail Follmar offered thanksgiving for vestry members ending their terms

- David Candler has served on Vestry for 4 years, with extensive contributions to the Buildings and Grounds subcommittee
- Margie Dieter has served on the Stewardship Subcommittee and has been integral to the “Safeguarding God’s People” program
- Pam Harvey has served on the Finance Council and has also been integral to the “Safeguarding God’s People” program

Abigail also thanked Ken Alexander for serving the 3rd year of an unexpired term and now beginning a new 3-year term on vestry

She also thanked Neil for all the support and guidance he provided to her and Tom Van Arsdell.

10. **Closing Prayer:** Neil closed the meeting in prayer.

Palmer Worship Council Meeting Minutes

January 2, 2025

Attendees: Rev. Neil Willard, Margie Dieter, Brady Knapp, Danna Kurtin, Victor Lamas, David Madrigal, Allen Nunley and Rev. Katherine Tuttle.

Prayer – Victor opened the meeting with prayer.

Upcoming Activities -

- Jan. 6 – Epiphany (Burning of greenery in Courtyard at 5:30 pm)
- Jan. 18 – Wedding at 5:00 pm in the Nave
- Jan. 26 – Annual Meeting following 10:00 service, Parish luncheon at Noon
- March 5 – Ash Wednesday with Ashes to Go from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm and services at 7:00 am, Noon, and 7:00 pm
- March 7 – Stations of the Cross at Noon on Fridays in Lent
- March 9 – Great Litany during 10:00 Service
- April 2nd and 9th - Lenten Music Concerts in the Nave at Noon
- April 13 – Palm Sunday
- April 17 – Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 pm
- April 18 – Good Friday Services at Noon and 7:00 pm & Stations of the Cross at 1:30 pm
- April 19 – Easter Vigil Practice Rehearsal at 10:00 am and Service at 7:00 pm
- April 20 – Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 am and 11:00 am

Clergy Updates –

Christmas Eve services were well and evenly attended. Starting January 12th and going through March 2nd, 10:00 am services will be Rite II and bread will be provided. Ushers will also look at requesting family members to bring up the Offering (bread and wine) during this timeframe. Rite I Service schedule (w/wafers) will start March 9th and go through April 13th (Palm Sunday). Rite II Services (w/bread) will start April 27th.

Kirking of the Tartans (KOT) – Neil would prefer the scheduled date to be outside of Advent.

Action Item - Margie and Denise (new KOT Palmer contact) will further discuss possible dates and plans for the future.

Music Updates -

Upcoming Lenten Music Series during will be on April 2nd and 9th at Noon.

Service Updates -

Nothing to report

Verger Updates -

Nothing to report

Acolyte Updates -

Nothing to report

Lectors Updates -

There was verification that Sarah Breckbill would still like to train readers and has requested a break from scheduling the readers. Margie requested assistance with getting correct information on the readings for each Sunday, as she sends the readings out to the scheduled readers each week. Neil will contact Dustin to get the correct reading information to Margie.

Ushers / Bell Ringers Updates –

Danna is working on revising the Usher schedule to go through Lent and is looking at possibly creating a list with substitutes.

Bell Ringers –

Allen reported that not all the bells are ringing. He will test and report back.

Plans are being made to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Installation of Bells at Palmer during May 1 – 4, 2025. More information will follow.

Other Business –

Victor will prepare the sign up list for volunteers to provide Ashes to Go.

Victor will also look at contact changes needed for Palmer website regarding Ministry Contact updates and will provide list for next month's meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2025.

Stewardship Council Report to the Vestry

January 14, 2025

2025 Stewardship Pledges

1. As of January 10, 2025, Palmer has received:
 - A. 226 Stewardship Pledges for 2025
 - B. \$1.691 million in pledged dollars
 - C. About \$17,000 in scheduled on-line contributions for 2025 under the old ACS system from 11 contributors who have not submitted a pledge. However, we need these 11 contributors to renew these scheduled on-line contributions under the Shelby Next system for them to be collected. It is unlikely that the entire \$17,000 will be renewed, but it is likely most will.
 - D. If we are successful in getting these scheduled 2025 contributions reinstated, that will bring our gross pledge dollars for 2025 up to \$1,708,000. That slightly exceeds the intermediate goal that the Finance Council and Stewardship Council set for 2025 of \$1,700,000, albeit short of our top goal of \$1,770,000.
2. By comparison, at this time last year, we had \$1,513,000 pledged for 2024.
3. The following chart summarizes the breakdown of 2025 Pledges.

Row Labels	Count of Pledges	Sum of 2025 Pledges	Sum of 2024 Pledges	Change % 2025 vs. 2024	Percent of 2025 Pledges	Percent of 2024 Pledges
Decreased Renewed Pledges	30	\$ 221,450	\$ 332,430	-33%	13%	13%
Increased Renewed Pledges	106	\$ 1,072,962	\$ 924,485	16%	45%	47%
New Pledges ¹	45	\$ 111,445	\$ -	100%	19%	
Renewed Pledges - No Change	56	\$ 302,340	\$ 302,340	0%	24%	25%
Grand Total²	237	\$ 1,708,197	\$ 1,559,255		100%	
2024 Pledge but no 2025 Pledge	35	\$ -	\$ 62,057			15%
						100%
1. includes some scheduled givers not previously accounted for as pledges						
2. Assumes all scheduled 2025 online giving updated to Shelby Next, about \$17K						
			Percent of Goal			
2025 Total Pledges		\$ 1,708,197				
2025 Top Goal		\$ 1,770,000	96.5%			
2025 Intermediate Goal		\$ 1,700,000	100.5%			

4. Analysis:

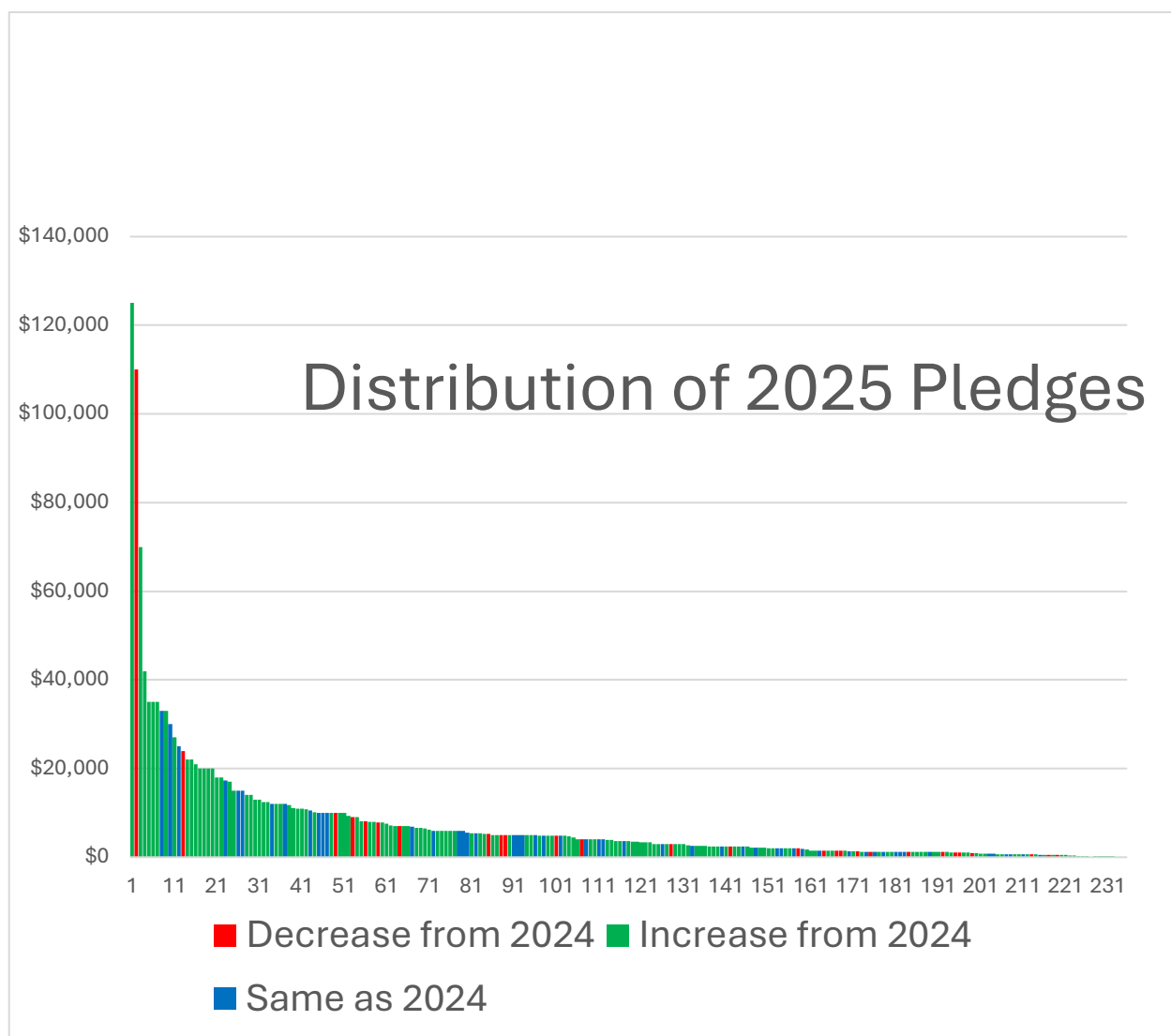
A. Key to the increase in pledged dollars for 2025 over 2024 was that 45 per cent of 2024 pledgers increased their pledge for 2025, and the addition of 46 pledgers who did not pledge in 2024.

1. Of the 45 “new” pledges, 17 are from people who have recently affiliated with Palmer, 22 are from people long-affiliated with Palmer, and 6 are from people who have been affiliated with Palmer in the past, and appear to have become active again after an absence. In short, our greatest success in adding pledgers has been with people who have been affiliated with Palmer for some time but who did not pledge for 2024.

2. It is notable that the “new” pledges substantially exceed in number and amount the “lost” pledges, i.e. pledgers for 2024 that have not pledged for 2025.

3. The biggest negative impact on 2025 pledge dollars came from the thirty 2024 pledgers that did renew, but for reduced amounts.

4. Reduced or dropped pledges from 19 pledgers in 2024 accounted for about \$200,000 in reduced pledge dollars.
5. Reaching the number of pledges and amount of pledge dollars at this date has assisted in formulating a rational budget for 2025.
6. The distribution of dollars among pledges is shown in the chart below. It is largely unchanged from 2024, although the pledgers have changed somewhat.



Assessment of 2025 Stewardship Efforts

1. The Stewardship Council believes the following materially contributed to the improved Stewardship results to date for 2025.
 - A. Vestry that collectively increased their pledges 32% between 2023 and 2024
 - B. Letters accompanying the quarterly giving statements sent to all givers
 - C. Personalized letters from Vestry members to parishioners seeking pledges
 - D. Candid information-sharing with parishioners by letters and presentations about Palmer finances and Stewardship
 - E. The Rector's sermons and remarks on Stewardship throughout the fall Stewardship season
 - F. The emphasis on making pledges by Covenant Sunday
 - G. Remarks on Covenant Sunday about how pledges support budget plans for "more Palmer" in 2025
 - H. Excitement over the addition of a Director of Parish Life & Membership
 - I. The celebratory brunch on Covenant Sunday
 - J. Regular updates published about progress toward Stewardship goals for 2025
 - K. Vestry member personal calls, emails, and letters to prospective pledgers
 - L. Improved website information regarding Stewardship
 - M. Timely "thank you" notes from the Vestry and the Rector to pledgers.

2024 Pledge Status

- A. As of January 13, 2025, there are 68 pledges for 2024 with outstanding balances, ranging from 2% to 100% of the 2024 pledge. Of these, there are 25 with an outstanding balance of 100%. The total outstanding balance is \$106,576. This represents about 7% of total 2024 pledges.
- B. Palmer will be mailing out year-end statements to contributors later this month that will reflect the payment status on the contributor's pledge, if any.

Looking Ahead

1. The Stewardship Council is in the process of evaluating what worked and what didn't in our 2025 efforts to refine plans for 2024.
2. We expect that the full implementation of Shelby Next membership and accounting software will materially improve our stewardship efforts. We need to better coordinate our pledging via cards and on-line forms with on-line giving.
3. There are significant challenges ahead. We anticipate losing some of our 2025 pledges in 2026, including some of our largest pledges, because of pledgers retiring or moving away from Houston.

Your Stewardship Council,

Ken Alexander, Chair
Jeanine Baker
Margie Dieter
Rosine Hall

Betty Key
David Madrigal
John Wallace

Finance committee meeting 19 December 2024 – Vestry review

The Finance Committee met to discuss the November 2024 financials.

The cash position for the Church remains stable. The Finance Committee were hopeful for an on-budget end to 2024.

- The Finance Committee (FC) is recommending that the Vestry discuss moving the restricted funds for the Parish Life position (circa \$250k) to a high yield savings account. The FC also discussed the overage in comparison with budget for this role in December, Jessica explained there are a lot of one-off set up costs in that line item for the month.
- The Finance Committee also recommend forming a sub-committee of Vestry and FC members to go through each restricted fund and examine whether it should still be restricted or not.
- The Finance Committee discussed at length and respectful and transparent way they could review salaries as part of the budget process.
- Currently the Endowment are proposing \$245k for 2025 but this is subject to a final review following the end of 2024.
- The FC had an initial discussion about the data they would like to present in the Annual report and the annual meeting.

The Finance Committee expressed its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to past and current members of the stewardship committee for their tireless efforts on the 2025 pledge position.

PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Statement of Expenses
December 2024

	MTD ACTUAL 2024	MTD BUDGET 2024	YTD ACTUAL 2024	YTD BUDGET 2024	2024 ANNUAL BUDGET	% of ANNUAL BUDGET USED
Revenues						
OPERATING FUND						
CONTRIBUTION REVENUE	\$239,000.19	\$142,609.38	\$1,727,572.22	\$1,711,313.00	\$1,711,313.00	100.95 %
OTHER OPERATING REVENUE	\$5,742.00	\$30,766.89	\$473,506.28	\$369,204.00	\$369,204.00	128.25 %
Total OPERATING FUND	<u>\$244,742.19</u>	<u>\$173,376.27</u>	<u>\$2,201,078.50</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>105.79 %</u>
Total BANK DEPOSITS	<u>\$244,742.19</u>	<u>\$173,376.27</u>	<u>\$2,201,078.50</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>105.79 %</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$244,742.19</u>	<u>\$173,376.27</u>	<u>\$2,201,078.50</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>\$2,080,517.00</u>	<u>105.79 %</u>
Expenses						
PERSONNEL	\$68,463.18	\$75,395.01	\$906,050.83	\$904,741.00	\$904,741.00	100.14 %
DIOCESE	\$14,900.67	\$14,900.63	\$178,808.04	\$178,808.00	\$178,808.00	100.00 %
RECTORY	\$1,004.65	\$1,383.37	\$10,921.90	\$16,600.00	\$16,600.00	65.79 %
CHURCH BUILDINGS						
BUILDING and MAINTENANCE	\$41,529.58	\$41,624.23	\$541,319.24	\$499,489.00	\$499,489.00	108.37 %
DEBT SERVICE	\$5,310.96	\$5,259.37	\$59,145.23	\$63,112.00	\$63,112.00	93.71 %
UTILITIES	\$9,866.22	\$12,275.00	\$135,587.43	\$147,300.00	\$147,300.00	92.05 %
FELLOWSHIP KITCHEN	\$873.36	\$1,133.37	\$17,377.64	\$13,600.00	\$13,600.00	127.78 %
Total CHURCH BUILDINGS	<u>\$57,580.12</u>	<u>\$60,291.97</u>	<u>\$753,429.54</u>	<u>\$723,501.00</u>	<u>\$723,501.00</u>	<u>104.14 %</u>
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT						
ADMINISTRATION	\$15,047.91	\$1,927.88	\$33,529.05	\$23,135.00	\$23,135.00	144.93 %
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS	\$425.87	\$2,604.13	\$32,674.71	\$31,250.00	\$31,250.00	104.56 %
Total ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	<u>\$15,473.78</u>	<u>\$5,590.38</u>	<u>\$78,893.46</u>	<u>\$67,085.00</u>	<u>\$67,085.00</u>	<u>117.60 %</u>
MINISTRIES						
COMMUNICATIONS	\$5,723.03	\$3,033.26	\$46,401.69	\$36,400.00	\$36,400.00	127.48 %
OUTREACH	\$4,321.68	\$1,041.63	\$11,887.26	\$12,500.00	\$12,500.00	95.10 %
EVANGELISM	\$390.92	\$666.63	\$8,039.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	100.49 %
FELLOWSHIP	\$2,732.40	\$1,500.00	\$21,845.10	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00	121.36 %
MUSIC MINISTRY						
MUSIC-ADULTS	\$4,399.33	\$1,045.76	\$12,021.42	\$12,550.00	\$12,550.00	95.79 %
MUSIC-CHILDREN	\$469.13	\$333.37	\$4,241.27	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	106.03 %
Total MUSIC MINISTRY	<u>\$4,868.46</u>	<u>\$1,379.13</u>	<u>\$16,262.69</u>	<u>\$16,550.00</u>	<u>\$16,550.00</u>	<u>98.26 %</u>
PASTORAL CARE	\$0.00	\$179.24	\$360.85	\$2,150.00	\$2,150.00	16.78 %
WORSHIP	\$957.49	\$404.13	\$4,558.68	\$4,850.00	\$4,850.00	93.99 %
PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY	\$0.00	\$31.25	(\$60.00)	\$375.00	\$375.00	0.00 %
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA	\$7,040.10	\$3,249.89	\$43,398.38	\$39,000.00	\$39,000.00	111.28 %
Total MINISTRIES	<u>\$26,034.08</u>	<u>\$11,485.16</u>	<u>\$152,693.65</u>	<u>\$137,825.00</u>	<u>\$137,825.00</u>	<u>110.79 %</u>
EDUCATION						
ADULT EDUCATION	\$465.07	\$1,166.74	\$12,381.34	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	88.44 %
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION	\$453.20	\$833.37	\$10,294.20	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	102.94 %
YOUTH	\$272.73	\$916.63	\$12,136.48	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00	110.33 %
PARISH RETREAT	\$5,281.64	\$416.63	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	100.00 %
Total EDUCATION	<u>\$6,472.64</u>	<u>\$3,333.37</u>	<u>\$39,812.02</u>	<u>\$40,000.00</u>	<u>\$40,000.00</u>	<u>99.53 %</u>
OTHER EXPENSES						
WEDDING MINISTRY	\$0.00	\$316.63	\$2,910.00	\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00	76.58 %
FUNERAL MINISTRY	\$0.00	\$216.63	\$6,056.52	\$2,600.00	\$2,600.00	232.94 %
Total OTHER EXPENSES	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$533.26</u>	<u>\$8,966.52</u>	<u>\$6,400.00</u>	<u>\$6,400.00</u>	<u>140.10 %</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$189,929.12</u>	<u>\$172,913.15</u>	<u>\$2,129,575.96</u>	<u>\$2,074,960.00</u>	<u>\$2,074,960.00</u>	<u>102.63 %</u>
Net Total	\$54,813.07	\$463.12	\$71,502.54	\$5,557.00	\$5,557.00	

**Deferred Maintenance Team Meeting
September 11, 2024**

Meeting attendees:

- Abigail Butler
- Kip Krause
- Michael Massey
- Gerry Sandoval
- Ric Tharpe

Agreed Next Steps:

- Gerry to meet with Ric to discuss HVAC repair data and ideas for the organ /choir loft.
- Gerry to attempt repairs on the playground gap once the weather permits.
- Finance Team to include roof inspection contract as a regular budget item in future years.
- Campus Assessment Team to explore obtaining a professional campus-wide assess for repairs and upgrades.

Discussion:

We began the meeting by reviewing a short list of items that were gathered initially by Kip Krause, David Candler and Gerry Sandoval as part of an early 2025 budget effort. This list included items related to roof inspection and repairs for the Nave, St. Bedes and the flat roof of Section A. Also included were HVAC repairs and maintenance, some work on one of the elevators, and foundation repair on St. Bedes/Autry House.

One important item that was raised in the following discussion had to do with the air conditioning issues in the choir loft. This is a complex issue, involving both the comfort of the choir members during services, and especially the issue of maintaining the right temperature for protection of the organ. Per Gerry, the current setpoint for the Nave is 68 F degrees; this keeps the temperature range between 65 and 75 degrees. Various alternative solutions were raised, including special air conditioning for the organ, trapping the cooler air in the choir loft through various ways. Gerry has captured various temperature datapoints that he will soon share, which should help with our understanding of the problems.

HVAC Repairs include overhaul of one of the two air handlers at St. Bedes Chapel. We currently only run one of the air handlers due to this issue, and the best course is to repair the defective one. Also, this include adding a Variable frequency drive (soft-start motor) to protect the air handler.

One of the elevators had an issue with the door motor (bearings) and this probably should be addressed soon as a safety item, even though it currently is still functional.

We discussed the cost and scope of a campus-wide assessment, with estimates ranging from \$8,000 to \$25,000. The team considered hiring a professional for a thorough assessment and agreed to include a contingency fund in their budget.

9/11/2024

**Deferred Maintenance Team Meeting
September 11, 2024**

Two other areas were discussed: replacement of stained-glass coverings, which was deferred until 2026, and repairs to the playground area. We acknowledged outstanding issues and the need for repairs to a 25-year-old playground equipment and the potential risks involved, noting that it was predominantly used on weekends. Further discussion on the playground is warranted but is best done in another meeting.

We discussed an issue with the flooring in the family room of the Rectory. The problem is identified as water seeping up from underneath the house, causing the flooring to deteriorate and crack. The team discussed the need for further inspection and potential repairs, which could range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 depending on the extent of the damage. They also considered the possibility of this issue being related to a previous insurance claim. We will investigate further and determine the necessary steps to address the problem.

We also discussed the problems with the foundation of St. Bedes / Autry House. This is not an urgent item and requires more extensive study. Therefore, it is moved to Fiscal 2026 considerations.

Summary:

Top priority items for 2025 are:

- Roof repairs in the Nave,
- Campus-wide roof inspection contract,
- HVAC repairs and maintenance,
- Rectory family room repairs, and
- Professional assessment of the entire campus to confirm worklist

Senior Warden Report

For the December 21, 2025 Vestry Meeting

1. Annual Elections

a. Vestry Nominees

- i. Bob Hawley
- ii. Bob Ittner
- iii. Ken Alexander
- iv. Richard Avant
- v. Sue Murphy
- vi. Pam Lovett
- vii. Shannon Wallace
- viii. Rob Vines

b. Lay Delegate Nominees

- i. Claudia Stephens
- ii. Jackie Campbell
- iii. Connie Wallace
- iv. Joan Gallagher

- c. Meet the Candidates was held Sunday, January 12. The session was recorded and is posted on the website.
- d. Early Voting will take place in the conference room on Sunday, January 19 (location due to anticipated cold temperatures).
- e. Electronic voting will be open Sunday morning through the following Wednesday at midnight. Voters by this method will be encouraged to use their phones or computers (iPads will not be available at the church for this purpose).
- f. Early voting and counting volunteers are being recruited.

2. Outreach Updates

a. Palmer Place Apartments Closing

- i. Palmer Place Volunteers have been thoughtfully working through a discernment process with the ultimate decision being made to release the apartments and sunset the ministry.
- ii. Remining patient stays will be organized around the lease expiration of the two apartments in March 2025. Decisions on how to best store or liquidate furniture and goods ongoing.
- iii. The Outreach Council may elect to study the current need and ability to recruit new volunteers to restart the ministry at a later date.
- iv. The efforts of the dedicated volunteers was significant, so please take time to thank these individuals: Sandra Begalke, Les and Leslie Douthwaite, Jane Richardson, Peggy Raish and Lauren Kirkwood.

b. Refugee Resettlement

- i. While Palmer did not receive a new family to directly sponsor in 2025, Linda Shelton was able to support five other families through Interfaith Ministry by providing numerous items off of Amazon Wish Lists. Materials included beds and bedding, a computer for a family to start a small business, clothing and toiletries.

3. Upcoming Dates

- a. 1/19/25 Early Voting Begins
- b. 1/21/25 Vestry Meeting – Budget Approval
- c. 1/26/25 Annual Meeting
- d. 2/1-7/25 Annual Diocesan Convention
- e. 2/9/25 Ministry Fair
- f. 2/15/25 Vestry Retreat

The Rector's Report, January 14, 2025, from the Rev'd Neil Alan Willard

1. There will be a Celebration of New Ministry for the Rev'd Ryan Hawthorne, Palmer's former Associate Rector, at Grace Episcopal Church, 4040 West Belfort Avenue in Houston, on Saturday, January 18, 2025, at 3:00 PM. Bishop Hector Monterroso, Assisting Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, will be presiding over this liturgy in which Ryan will be instituted as Grace's Second Rector. All are invited.
2. Last month we experimented with a slightly altered schedule of worship services on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Day service was held, as usual, at 10:00 AM. The services on Christmas Eve were held at 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00 PM. This even spacing between each service allowed plenty of time for parking turnover, which has often been a problem between the first and second services in the past, leading to folks waiting on the sidewalk to enter the church while others were still leaving the first service. Also, our members and guests attending these three services were more equally divided between them than in any previous year during my tenure at Palmer. The bulletins throughout the Christmas season included an insert with an overview of activities and events that will be happening at Palmer this winter and spring.
3. With respect to the search for our next Associate Rector, I've spoken with one priest who would have been my first choice. That priest would have jumped at an opportunity to serve at Palmer under different circumstances, but timing would not allow this person to do this right now. So I'm circling back to the Canon for Transition Ministry to find out the names of other priests whom I may consider, including the possibility of waiting to call a curate as we have done several times.
4. The last few summers we've held potluck luncheons once a month after the 10:00 AM Choral Eucharist, and this past fall we continued holding potluck luncheons about once a month. This will continue in 2025, beginning with the day of our Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 26. These have been well attended, and the time of the 10:00 AM Choral Eucharist has allowed people to linger and visit with one another in the parish hall after they've finished eating. That was one of the things we hoped would happen as a result of the current Sunday morning worship schedule, and it is something we are seeing on Sundays without a potluck too.
5. Beginning Sunday, January 19, we will be standardizing the bread that is used in our worship services when we are using Rite II liturgies. Previously, when ushers bought the bread on the Sunday they were serving, we never knew exactly from where the bread would be coming, and many times it would be more flakey than we would have preferred for breaking into small pieces during the administration of Holy Communion. That's stressful for the clergy as they administer the consecrated bread and also for our Eucharistic Ministers when communicants decide to dip that consecrated bread into the consecrated wine in the chalices the Eucharistic Ministers are holding. Everyone who has tasted this new bread, as a test, loves it.