



---

# PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

---

## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

---

Bringing the peace of Jesus to the whole world.

# Sr. Warden's Report

Tom Van Arsdel

*Sr. Warden*



*“2025 was a busy, productive, and blessed year for the Palmer Community. It was a year characterized by growth, purposeful direction, generosity, and countless blessings for which we give much thanks.”*

# Annual Report 2025

## **Palmer – and its Vestry - continued to live into Palmer’s 5-year Strategic Plan called Come. Be. Palmer.**

*As a reminder, our Come. Be. Palmer plan is based on the following community concepts:*

### **Vision**

Bringing the peace of Jesus to the whole world.

### **Mission**

To know and share the love of Jesus Christ through deep understanding of our relationship with God, ourselves, and our neighbors, in a joyfully engaged and welcoming community, dedicated to thoughtful and focused service, inspired by worship that renews curiosity about all of creation.

### **Guiding Principles**

Liturgical Excellence  
Joyful Companionship  
Bold Curiosity  
Spiritual Sanctuary  
Loving Service

The Strategic Plan’s Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles informed the Vestry’s work in 2026. Not only is our work benchmarked against the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, but the Vestry conducted a special meeting in April to measure our progress and chart any changes that may be required to accomplish the plan’s mandate and objectives. What resulted was a productive year of meaningful progress, which I’m excited to share with you now.

To just highlight a few items of positive news at the outset, in March, we signed an agreement for parking access in the Hermann Professional Garage next door. In so

doing, we increased our parking capacity and allowed better access for visitors, those with mobility challenges, and young families. Parking will continue to be a focus of our efforts as our corner of the city grows, changes, and evolves. Simply put, our ability to provide parking is absolutely essential to our growth plans.

We welcomed two clergy members this year, our Associate Rector Allen Junek and our Deacon Mary Reddick. We received a generous financial gift that will allow us to hire a full time Business Manager. With these additions, we are moving closer to the strategic alignment in staffing provided for in the Strategic Plan.

To help manage our Strategic Plan initiatives we organized our action plan into strategies, objectives, and tactics. The progress in these areas is noted below:

### **Overarching Goal**

By the centennial of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in 2029, our congregation will see an increase in active participants by increasing the accessibility to Christian teaching and spirituality for all ages, meaningful and joyful congregational connections, loving service that embraces the greater community, and inspiring and relevant worship that renews curiosity about all of creation.

### **People Strategy**

Our Director of Parish Life Katherine Tuttle has re-established the Membership Council and Community Engagement Council, which are critical to our growth and retention plans. Also, we have fully implemented the Shelby Next system, which has improved parishioner records, integrated calendar and scheduling, and improved financial support

# Annual Report 2025

and tracking. In 2025, we introduced the Palmer app from which we can access church information on our phones.

As many of you heard on Christmas Eve, Father Willard announced a generous anonymous gift to fund the position of Business Manager, which has been a glaring need for many years. We are so grateful, and frankly overwhelmed, by this person's generosity. The size of the gift will ensure that the Business Manager position is funded for many decades to come.

## Place Strategy

The principal focus in this strategy has been securing a comprehensive assessment of our campus properties as we approach our 100 year anniversary in 2029. The Diocese of Texas paid for an initial assessment by its preferred contractor, Cavalry Construction. That report shed some light on certain repair issues, but we decided to seek a report that addressed root issues and provided a road map for restoring our campus for the next generation of Palmers. At the same time, we are considering possible changes to the campus to better suit the anticipated uses the Palmer community will have in the coming years.

A working group headed by Jack Harvey conducted a safety and security self-assessment and met to consider and implement changes to our security protocols and infrastructure.

We continue to monitor the developments and changes in connection with Hermann Park and the Texas Medical Center to ensure our street and parking access needs are being addressed.

## Program Strategy

Katherine Tuttle and her team are working on the various objectives and tactics outlined in the Program Strategy. She and her team have already expanded our offerings to include both Sunday and non-Sunday programming, offering Palmers new ways to engage and find community.

Mary Reddick now chairs our Outreach Council, and has begun the process of re-evaluating and energizing our outreach program, with the goal of expanding our impact beyond our periodic Serve Sundays.

## Pay Strategy

As noted earlier, the people of Palmer were very generous in 2025, allowing our Finance Council to do more and plan with confidence. Our robust stewardship program set a realistic goal of increasing pledges by 10%, and we ended up realizing a sizable increase in total pledged dollars. With these efforts, the ultimate goal of the Finance Committee is to increase our cash reserves in coming years, which will provide financial stability.

## Looking Ahead to 2026 and Beyond

The fulfillment of our Strategic Plan is to have a Palmer community that is engaged, mobilized for growth, has the structural capacity to foster and support it, and is prepared to celebrate 100 years of Palmer in 2029. To that end, the Vestry made two significant decisions in October. First, in anticipation of the substantial work our campus will need coming out of the property assessment, the Vestry commissioned a Capital Campaign. It's the first new campaign for capital funds since 2003 when the bridge building was constructed. We are very pleased to announce that the campaign will be

# Annual Report 2025

co-chaired by Pam Lovett and Mike Soika. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Pam and Mike as they lead our fundraising efforts to restore and remake our campus for the start of the second Palmer century. Look for more details about the campaign later this year.

Secondly, the Vestry commissioned a committee to begin planning for our 100 year celebration in 2029. Our goal is to plan and execute a celebration that is worthy of the amazing and inspiring history of Palmer in all its many forms. We expect to announce leadership of that committee soon.

I have been honored to serve with so many talented, passionate and faithful staff and parishioners who have worked very hard to achieve so much progress this last year and build a base for further development of our Strategic Plan.

These individuals include (outgoing vestry members noted in bold):

## Vestry Members and Council Liaisons:

John Wallace, Junior Warden

Sheeba Thomas, Clerk (2) 2024

Shannon Wallace (3) 2025

Ken Alexander (3) 2025

Sue Murphy (3) 2025

Pam Lovett (3) 2025

Betty Key (2) 2024

Rosine Hall (2) 2024

**Kip Krause (1) 2023**

**Jeanine Baker (1) 2023**

**David Madrigal (1) 2023**

**Michael Massey (1) 2023**

**Dick Viebig (1) 2023**

Chancellor – Michael Chambers

and Shannon Wallace

Treasurer – Pamela Harvey

## Clergy and Program Staff:

**Rector** – The Rev'd Neil Willard

**Associate Rector** – The Rev'd Allen Junek

**Deacon** - The Rev'd Mary Reddick

**Director of Parish Life and Membership** -

The Rev'd Katherine Tuttle

**Director of Children's and Youth Ministries** -

Roger Hutchison

**Director of Membership** - Sue Howard

**Financial Manager** – Jessica Evans

**Sextons** – Jimmy Parrales

**Facilities Coordinator** – Gerry Sandoval

**Security Contractor** – Clarence Hulin

**City of Houston Police Department** – Mike

Collins

## Music Staff:

**Director of Music** – Dr. Brady Knapp

**Organist and Artist in Residence** – Ken Cowan

**Associate Organist** – Laura Smith

**Composer-in-Residence** – David Ashley White

**Children's Choirs** – Courtney Daniell-Knapp

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Van Arsdel

Senior Warden



# Pastoral Care

Having accepted a call to join Palmer's clergy team in late August, it has been a privilege to step into a parish shaped by the deep commitment of so many dedicated lay ministers. My initial months have been devoted to careful listening, attuning myself to the rhythms of parish life, and discerning with lay leaders how best to strengthen and coordinate the care we offer to one another.

In accordance with the parish's strategic plan, and in consultation with the Rector, I convened the Pastoral Care Council: a representative body of lay leaders who meet monthly to assess needs, share updates, and chart a cohesive vision for pastoral care at Palmer. Our early work has focused on articulating the core commitments that guide pastoral ministry—connection, companionship, and communication—and on identifying the structures that will allow these commitments to flourish. Together, we have established two primary goals for 2026: developing a parishwide communications initiative to highlight the breadth of pastoral ministries, and implementing a unified log to streamline informationsharing across ministries while maintaining confidentiality when appropriate. Together, with the support of clergy and staff, these goals will elevate pastoral ministries and opportunities across parish life.

The Pastoral Care Council has also begun a comprehensive review of Palmer's pastoral ministries. This review will help us clarify how parishioners access these ministries, how volunteers are both recruited and supported, and how we can better communicate the availability of care across the parish's various communication channels. In addition to this structural work, the Council undertook an immediate act of care by coordinating Christmas cards for parishioners experiencing grief or a significant life transition. This gesture, though simple, reflects the heart of our shared ministry: the conviction that—in the Body of Christ—no one walks alone.

As I look ahead, I am grateful for the many individuals who embody pastoral care at Palmer with humility and grace including, but not limited to, the members of the newly formed Pastoral Care Council: Laura Van Ness, Katie Pannell, Ruth Davies, Don Quast, Rivers Wallace, Laurie Rigby, Jackie Campbell, and Diane Quast. Their commitment to Palmer's pastoral ministries make it possible for this parish to be a place where burdens are shared, joys are celebrated, and in all things, the love of God in Christ Jesus is made known. It is an honor and privilege to join in this work, and together I look forward to supporting Palmer's pastoral ministries that are both deeply rooted and responsive to the needs of our time.

“And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.” (BCP 366)

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev'd Allen M. Junek  
Associate Rector

# Parish Life

In just a little over a year, there has been tremendous growth and new life at Palmer supported by your prayers, time, energy, and resources. We have celebrated 15 baptisms (2 adults and 13 children), and received 26 confirmed members as well as 9 baptized members. We conducted our largest newcomer welcome class in recent memory, and as I write this, we are already preparing for our next welcome class as new people continue to come to Palmer each week. Our average worship attendance has increased in a noticeable way and there is a joyful and hopeful energy imbuing our community.

When we ask new members why they have decided to become involved in Palmer, the majority have shared that it was due to the warm welcome they received; people walking them around the building, sitting with them their first Sunday in the pews, greeting them outside the front doors, and following-up with them afterwards. Thank you for helping make Palmer a welcoming place!

In addition to enhancing our ability to welcome people to Palmer, we have expanded our Parish Life ministry groups. Here are some highlights from the year of programs we have started:

- Older adults yoga class, meeting weekly.
- Monthly community outings planned by Parish Life.
- In-person contemplative prayer group, meeting weekly.
- 20/30s ministry group, meeting monthly.
- Semi-annual Parish Picnic in Hermann Park.

- Sold-out intergenerational summer musical.
- Monthly potlucks after church.

Existing programs have also seen new growth:

- Largest newcomer class in recent memory (over 40 participants).
- Largest Advent wreath making event in recent memory.
- Increased volunteer participation and opportunities.
- Increased community outreach.
- Increased participation in most ministry groups.
- More structure to adult formation offerings and increased participation.

More important than all this, is that people are finding support, community, meaning, and spiritual growth here. Members and guests report finding Palmer to be joyful, relevant, inspiring and spiritually grounded.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev'd Katherine Tuttle and Sue Howard



# Outreach

This year was a robust year for reaching out from Palmer. Many wonderful volunteers managed multiple events and in late August, a Deacon joined the staff to join in with Outreach also. Here follows a recap of the activities:

PAR (Palmer Assisting Re-entry), guided by Cathy Troisi and Denise Zwicker and affiliated with PEP (Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program), sponsored monthly dinners and fellowship at Caleb House; PAR also delivered special dinners at Easter and Christmas and hosted the residents to a Space Cowboys game.

Yellowstone Academy continued under the leadership of Barbara Hass. And in the spring Roger Hutchison and Palmer youths provided 2,000 Easter eggs for their annual hunt.

Serve Sundays, guided by Jennifer Macia, organized groups to:

- sing hymns at the Belmont and nursing homes-Brady Knapp and Johnna Kincaid
- volunteer at the Beacon led by Michael Massey
- work at Hope Farms led by Pamela Longley
- provide lunch at New Hope Housing Sakowitz led by Tom Van Arsdel and Pam and Jack Harvey
- provide lunch at New Hope Housing Brays Crossing led by Shannon Westin and Archana Raghavan
- provide lunch & Bingo for New Hope Housing residents, led by the DOK (Daughters of the King) under leadership from Linda Shelton and Jeanine Baker
- Numerous on-campus projects led by Michael Fahey

Other outreach activities included:

- A Food drive for Minaret Foundation in the fall led by Linda Blench
- Angel Tree affiliated with Salvation Army led by John Wallace gave 90 gifts to children and seniors
- The DOK donated Spanish Bibles to Casa Mateo for their residents who had gone without prior to the donation.

Archway Academy currently has 48 students enrolled in classes on campus. Jerusalem Peacebuilders hosted 27 youth to their Summer Institute here in August. Many Palmer members assisted with that event at Camp Allen as well as on campus at Palmer. JBP staff member, Blake Burns, also taught a workshop here at Archway Academy for their students.

In the fall, the Outreach Council was re-formed and began to review activities and organizational structure. Members of the council are Deacon Mary Reddick, Jeff Dieter, Sue Howard, Danna Kurtin, Jenn Macia, Linda Shelton, and Denise Zwicker.

Going forward the activities will be scheduled more frequently throughout the year and will occur on various days of the week rather than on a couple of Sundays a year. We are excited to welcome new ideas for reaching out from Palmer and have instituted a process for that. Please contact Deacon Mary to access that information and with your questions.

Also in the fall we renewed a long standing relationship with EAC (Emergency Aid Coalition) to assist by donating funds, clothing and food. When Food Stamps were not funded by the government for several weeks, Palmer set up a path to order much needed food on-line that was delivered directly to EAC, making food

# Annual Report 2025

available to distribute much faster at a time when speed was essential. Palmer assisted by donating generously. We also delivered over 100 baseball caps when they were completely out, which is a clothing item the homeless really need.

Next year we will be assisting EAC in a variety of ways. The organization offers essential services, including sack lunches, an appointment based food pantry, clothing and a nurse staffed health clinic greatly needed by the homeless and working poor in our area. Additionally, the EAC now offers food pantries in 4 New Hope Housing units.

We also renewed our relationship with LOTS (Lord of the Streets) which is an Episcopal church for the homeless in our area. We sent a group to their facility for a workday and began to collect shoes and blankets for them. We plan to organize more events to support them in 2026. Their Vicar, the Rev'd Brad Sullivan came to Palmer to speak at the Formation Hour in the fall to share new ways LOTS is expanding their ministry to include housing.

The Outreach Council is ramping up to renew and expand ways Palmer can serve the needs in our neighborhood. We need your prayers and support, with donations of all kinds and your time. Please watch for our notices so you can join in, and ask us questions or share your opinions and suggestions. The Council has slightly modified our name to Palmer Reaching Out.....come join us to do just that!

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev'd Mary Reddick, Deacon and Outreach Council Chair



## Palmer Reaching Out



# Worship

In 2025, we started an initiative to help new parish members and families play a more active role within the Worship Ministry by bringing up the offering of bread and wine during the 10:00 service. This has helped new members and families feel more connected to our community.

We continued to see an increase with participation in Lenten and Holy Week activities, with a 22% spike over 2024 in attendance to Holy Week and Easter services.

May 4th was a special day when we witnessed Bishop Monterosso confirming one of the largest groups of confirmands at Palmer. Later that evening, at Evensong we commemorated the 20th Anniversary of Installation of Bells at Palmer. The Palmer Change Ringers cohosted the annual 7 Towers Festival May 1-4 at Palmer, St. Paul's Methodist Church and St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Ringers from 7 Towers in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas participated with ringing, education and festivities. It was a joyous celebration!

In the second half of 2025, our clergy family grew as we joyfully welcomed The Rev'd Allen Junek as our new Associate Rector and his husband Alex, and our new Deacon The Rev'd Mary Reddick. Their ministries bring a wonderful chapter of faith and support to our community.

In October, we conducted an Acolyte training session and welcomed new members to this ministry and to the Altar Guild as well. On the evening of October 6th, together The Rev'd Beth Anne Nelson, we hosted and celebrated, with Rice students included a Taize prayer

service in the Nave. It was a special evening, and the Worship Council is hoping to host another Taize service in 2026.

Our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services showed a 14% increase in attendance from 2024.

The Worship Council is appreciative for the leadership and support of our clergy:

The Rev'd Neil Alan Willard, Rector

The Rev'd Allen Junek, Associate Rector

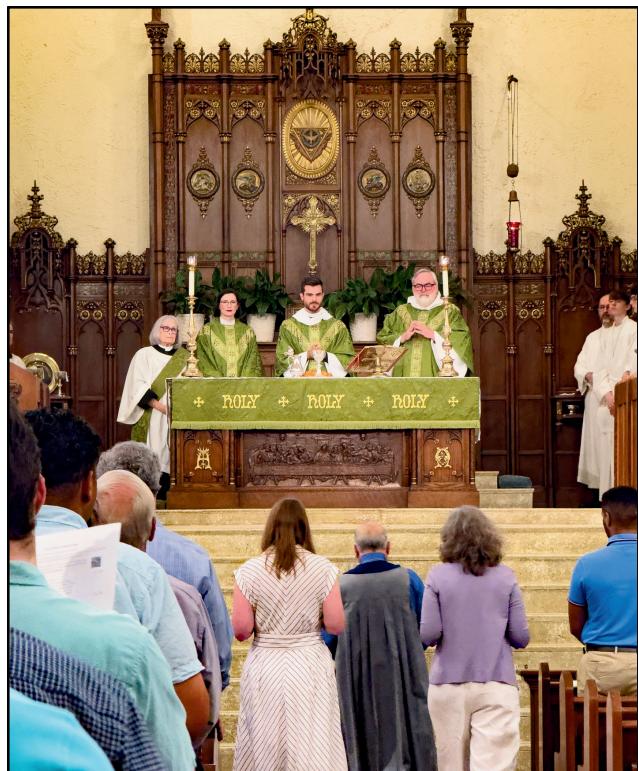
The Rev'd Mary Reddick, Deacon

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

The Rev'd Beth Anne Nelson, Diocesan Missioner to Rice University

We give thanks for the Palmer community, especially those who offered their time and assistance to this ministry and we are looking forward to another year of bountiful praise and worship in 2026!

Respectfully submitted,  
Victor Lamas, Worship Council Chair



# Music

The Palmer music department enjoyed an abundant and busy year of music-making, service and outreach during 2025. We said farewell to our superb associate organist Sunkyung-Noh Smith, and this fall we have welcomed Laura Smith, who studies with Ken Cowan and is a Master of Music candidate at Rice. Laura has a Bachelor of Music from Baylor University, and was the organ scholar for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Waco during her undergraduate studies.

The Music Program with the indefatigable creativity and HELP (!) of Kelli Soika, the Soika family singers, Pam Harvey, Johnna Kincaid, and many others (an army of costumers and happy stage hands!), performed Benjamin Britten's beloved chamber opera Noye's Fludde last summer. The large, enthusiastic, amazingly talented intergenerational cast of Palmers brought the parish community the gift of staged music. We had lots of fun and the fellowship was meaningful for all. A special thank you goes to Brendan and Camille Emig (Mr. and Mrs. Noah!), Guy Streatfeild (God!) and God's wife Carol Streatfeild, our superb stage director. Bravo! Courtney Daniell-Knapp's many extra hours were also central to our success and her love for the community is greatly appreciated. The orchestra (thanks Mike Fahey and Alan Austin!), the soloists and choristers of the cast, and our nightly kitchen crew (thanks Mike Soika and friends!) helped to make "the Fludde" a blessing for all who participated and all who attended! Thanks be to God! We will look forward to another parish wide musical production in the near future TBD/TBA! "stay tuned y'all!"

The adult choir offered two Choral Evensong services, the annual Requiem (setting by Sir. John Rutter who turned 80 last year), and the yearly Advent Lessons and Carols.

During 2025 the choirs again collaborated with Palmer's growing and vibrant Visual Arts Guild. Susan Alexander, Jackie Campbell, and many others helped organize wonderful fellowship opportunities and beautiful receptions after the Evensong services. There were impressive "art shows" in parish hall that highlighted our many Palmer artists and rich and varied visual arts culture.

Parishioners and choristers combined for several assisted living sing-alongs. These opportunities brought great outreach to neighboring communities. Palmer's Organist & Artist in residence, Ken Cowan, and our Palmer choirs, were featured on various NPR broadcasts during 2025.

The Palmer choirs work very hard together as a team, each and every voice remains a faithful steward making inspiring music for weekly worship services. Our singers serve year round beside the clergy, the altar guild, bell ringers, and every parishioner who sings with joy in the pews. For all who serve at Palmer we give great thanksgiving as a community. Thank you all for your love of service and hospitality. Happy New Year!

Respectfully submitted,  
Brady Knapp, Director of Music

# Noye's Fludde



# Finance Council

The Finance Council continues to offer their guidance and financial expertise to the Parish. The Treasurer is Pamela Harvey who took over from Larry Wood in February 2025. The 2026 Chair of the Council is Rosine Hall who took over from Dick Viebig. The Council would like to thank the past Treasurer and Chair for their dedication and expertise.

2025 has been a year of growth in membership and new members which has benefited the pledging landscape for Palmer through the last year and into 2026. As always, we are very grateful to those Parishioners who have made their pledge commitment, allowing the Finance Council to have a level of certainty in the new year budget.

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church ended the financial year 2025 with a surplus for the first time in many years. This surplus was mostly caused by two reasons, firstly the receipt of Employee Retention Tax Credit funds from the government which were not expected in the budget (netting circa \$75k), and the avoidance of employee costs by not having an Associate Rector for most of the year. The Rev'd Rev Allen Junek has now filled this role.

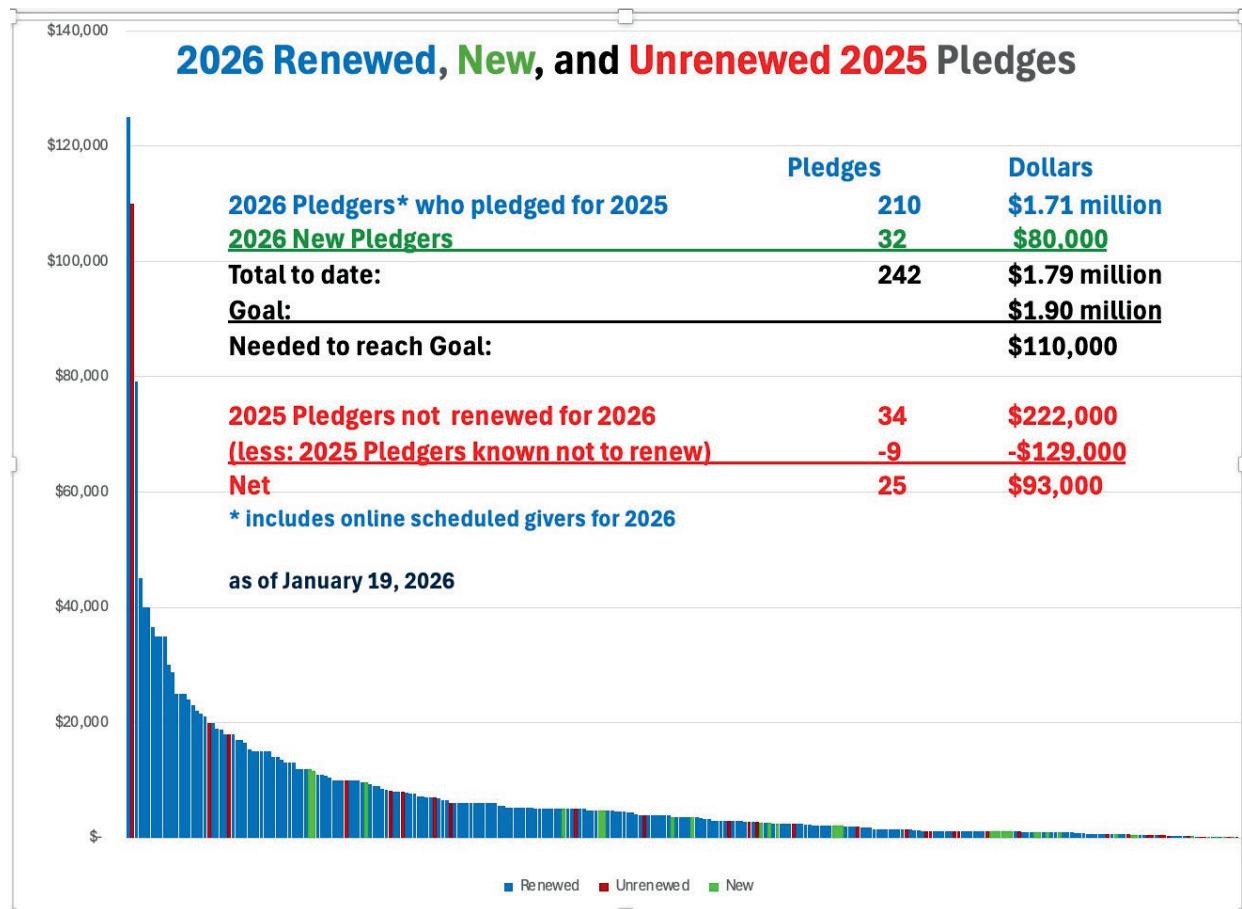
For 2026, the Finance Council recommended and Vestry adopted a budget that approves compensation raises for Palmer contractors to bring them in-line with market rates, this will cost the Church circa \$26k. The 2026 budget also has funds to improve the grounds around the playground, an expected cost of \$15k. The Diocese assessment rose by \$17k between 2025 and 2026, this increase is also reflected in the budget.

	2025	Budget 2026	Increase/ (decrease)
CONTRIBUTION REVENUE	1,863,730	1,892,000	28,270
OTHER OPERATING REVENUE	516,444	508,130	(8,314)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>2,380,174</b>	<b>2,400,130</b>	<b>19,956</b>
Total PERSONNEL	958,693	1,090,176	131,483
Total DIOCESE	177,945	195,740	17,795
Total BUILDING and MAINTENANCE	563,824	615,800	51,976
Other expenses	503,830	497,484	(6,346)
<b>Surplus/(Loss)</b>	<b>175,882</b>	<b>930</b>	

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela Harvey, Treasurer, Finance Council

# Stewardship Council

The graph and chart below summarizes the results of our Stewardship efforts for 2026.

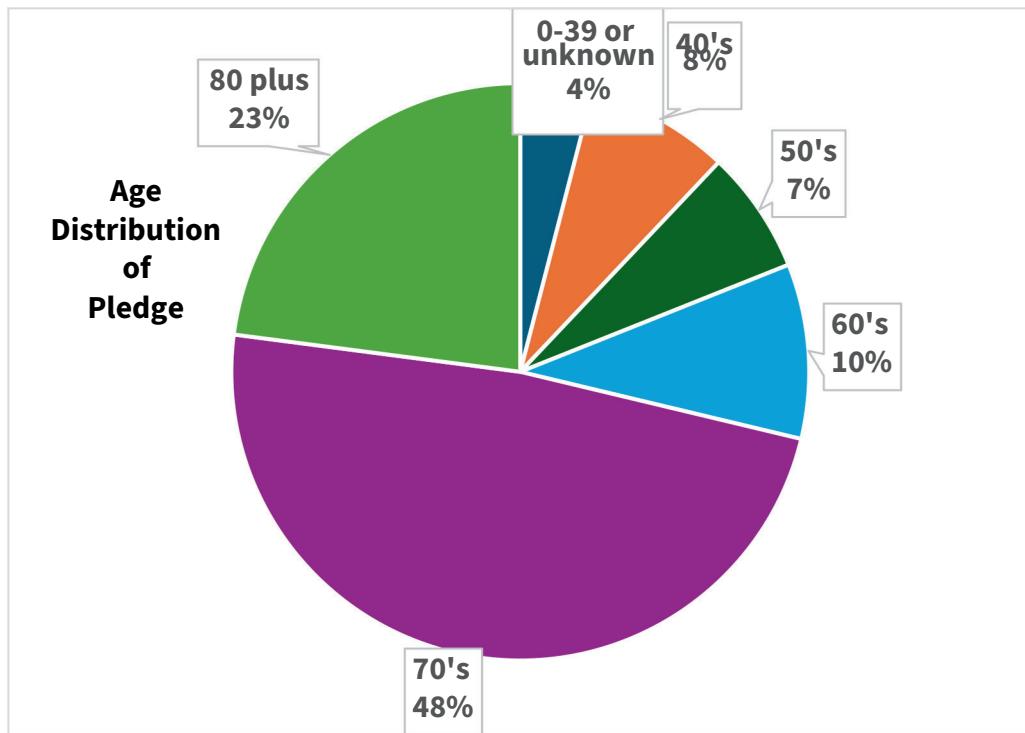
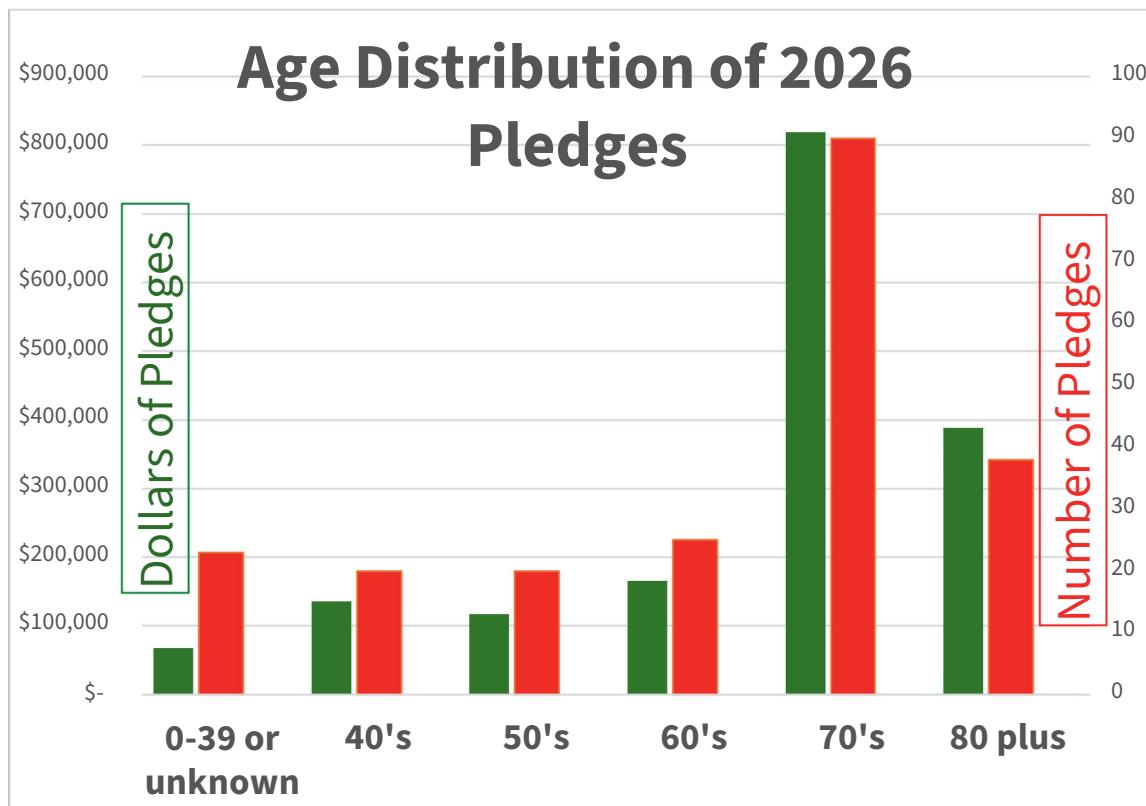


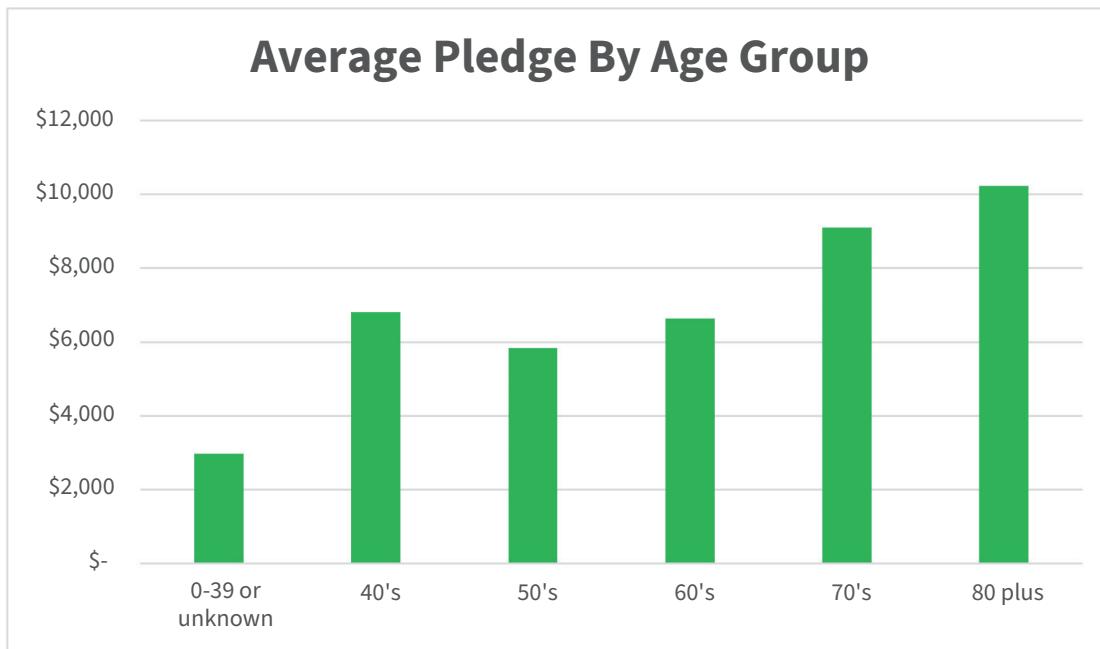
Palmers collectively increased their pledging 2.5% for 2026 over 2025. Palmer has received 242 pledges totaling \$1.79 million for 2026, short of the goal we set of \$1.9 million (about 9% over the 2025 pledge total). This compares to 247 pledges for 2025 pledges of \$1.745 million.

The good news is that there are 32 “new” 2026 pledges to-date that total \$80,000. Nevertheless, as is typical, “new” pledges were not enough to offset the loss of previous pledging households that have not pledged for 2026. The increase in total pledges occurred thanks to the increased pledges of 57% of renewing pledging households, for which we are grateful.

Our pledges are top-heavy. Just 33 pledges out of 242, each of \$15,000 or more, provide 53% of total pledges. The challenge this presents is exemplified this year, in which we lost several of our largest pledges from 2025. Some of these were because pledgers moved from Houston, while others are still at Palmer.

An additional challenge is shown by the age distribution of our pledgers, as shown in the graphs below.





The above charts show that about 70% of our pledge dollars come from pledgers who are over 70 years old. Moreover, the 70-79 age group represents about **90** pledging households, our largest “decade” by number of pledges. By contrast, the next younger “decade,” the 60-69 age group is just about **25** households, just 28% of the number in the 70-79 age group.

This is a marked change from Palmer 20 years ago. At that time, the largest age group pledgers was in their 50's, and one of the smallest groups were people in their 70's. There was a significant decline in pledging households from 2013 to 2023. Palmer disproportionately lost younger families, while retaining older members. Our existing group of Palmers, as it ages, is unlikely to replace all the resources provided by our members over 70 years of age.

These demographics have important implications for Palmer. Significant growth in our membership, most especially for those adults 20 to 60, will be essential for Palmer to maintain its budget into the future.

In the last 18 months, Palmer has markedly improved its efforts to attract and retain new and younger families, and the addition of a business manager and other staffing changes should provide further help in 2026. The number of pledges has increased modestly since 2023. To change the demographics affecting stewardship giving, however, we need to support and accelerate these improvements

Attracting new families to Palmer requires engagement of clergy, staff, and volunteers supported by a budget that prioritizes these efforts.

## **Expanding Stewardship at Palmer**

The Palmer Vestry, along with the Stewardship Council, took on the task of individually contacting every active Palmer family to request a pledge for 2026 in advance of Covenant Sunday. This effort showed improved results in getting pledges in timely so that the Finance Council could formulate an intelligent budget, for which Stewardship pledges provide over 80 per cent of Palmer's resources.

In 2026, the Vestry plans to undertake additional efforts to recognize Palmers who have pledged, to improve retention of previous pledgers, and expand education on the spiritual foundation, means, and necessity of Stewardship pledging. The Stewardship Council is most grateful for this team effort, and for the good humor shown by Palmers in response. Few of us really enjoy asking our fellow Palmers for money, but knowing that we are doing essential work for Palmer to serve our Lord motivates us just the same.

Let me ask that when you see members of the Vestry and Stewardship Council, extend your thanks to them for this work. And answer their calls and emails, too!

## **The Stewardship Council**

Jeanine Baker  
Rosine Hall  
Betty Key  
Pam Lovett  
John Wallace  
Peter Yacoe  
Ken Alexander, Chair

# Buildings and Grounds

## Rectory

There was a fair bit of activity at the Rectory this year, and fortunately much of it was routine maintenance and repairs. Equipment repairs were made to the dishwasher (still under warranty), and the refrigerator. Routine HVAC maintenance and cleaning was completed, and one of the smaller bathrooms was refurbished, due to moisture accumulation. Preventative termite treatment and pest control steps were also completed. Freeze-damaged plants were removed from the yard, and tree branches affecting the roof were trimmed back to safe levels.

## Palmer Campus Interior

Regularly scheduled City Health and Fire inspections were conducted, with required follow-ups successfully completed. This work included replacing several sprinkler heads and purchasing additional replacement parts for future needs. Minor plumbing leaks across the campus were repaired, along with associated painting and ceiling tile remediation. Cavalry Construction conducted campus-wide building and structural reviews, resulting in repairs to a section of the roof over the office area, and HVAC inspections were completed, including replacement of the fresh air intake fan in the fall.

## Palmer Campus Exterior

The two main areas of focus during the year were the South Parking Lot and the Rose Garden next to St. Bedes Chapel. In order to mitigate against slips, trips and falls in the South Lot, a significant portion of the lot was repaved and restriped. This involved smoothing the surface and removing small potholes, which were potential hazards

through the parking area. In the Rose Garden, it necessary to significantly trim the climbing roses whose branches were intruding on the eaves and roofling of St. Bedes. This was in addition to the routine maintenance and care provided by dedicated Palmer volunteers. On the children's playground, equipment repairs were done in response to a site inspection, providing a safer environment for Palmer's youngest members and our German School tenants.

## Looking Ahead

The Facilities Staff and the Buildings & Grounds Council spent many hours this year preparing a response to the requirements of the Strategic Plan adopted by Palmer in 2023, addressing goals and objectives for Master Campus Planning within the Place Pillar. An Engineering Assessment Project proposal was developed outlining the steps and estimated costs needed to ready our parish campus for the next generation of Palmers, including projections related to congregational growth. This proposal was vetted with the Diocese, which approved \$40,000 in cost sharing, and we remain hopeful for additional support in the future. Building & Grounds identified funds within Palmer, obtained approval for their use, and proceeded with implementation of the work, which is expected to be completed by the end of February 2026.

Stay tuned for good things ahead.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kip Krause, Building & Grounds Council Chair

# Children and Youth

**Children's and Youth Ministries at Palmer** are rooted in relationship, presence, and trust. Over the past year, we have focused on creating spaces where children, youth, and families feel welcomed, supported, and engaged in faith through worship, learning music, and shared life together. What follows is a snapshot of that growing, life-giving work.

## **Children's Choir & Faith Formation**

Children's Choir takes place on Sunday mornings and reflects a strong partnership between Children's Ministry and Palmer's Music Ministry. We are deeply grateful to Courtney Daniell-Knapp and Brady Knapp for their leadership and collaboration. During Children's Choir, Roger Hutchison leads a Parenting Class, offering parents a meaningful space for conversation, learning, and connection.

## **Liturgy Preparation**

Liturgy Preparation (Liturgy Prep) is offered each Sunday during the 10:00 service. Children are invited to depart just before the Gospel and return to the sanctuary before Holy Communion. During this time, children gather for prayer, Bible stories, conversation, and community—exploring the rhythms and meaning of worship in age-appropriate and engaging ways.

## **Family Faith At Home Initiative**

Over the past year, Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church has participated in the Family Faith At Home peer-learning initiative, sponsored by Chalice Press and funded by the Lilly Endowment. Palmer was selected as one of only 14 congregations nationwide from 93 applicants and designated as a mentor congregation—affirming our commitment to thoughtful, relationship-centered faith formation.

This year, we held our first eight-week Family Faith At Home session with families with young children. The group met on Sunday afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00, gathering for shared meals, prayer, conversation, and hands-on practices focused on integrating faith into everyday family life. Many afternoons naturally extended onto the playground, reinforcing the importance of relationship, joy, and unstructured time together. Building on this foundation, Palmer is now preparing for a 2026 series of Family Faith At Home classes.

## **Youth Ministry Highlights**

Youth Ministry met regularly throughout the year, building community through conversation, creativity, and time outdoors—including walks to Hermann Park. The Fall 2025 theme, “God's Love Is More Than Enough,” shaped our gatherings, with monthly themes including Abundance, Table & Community, Give & Grow, and Waiting with Wonder. As a culminating project, the youth designed and built a collaborative art installation, a beautiful mosaic table inspired by the Garden of Eden.

## **A Growing, Life-Giving Community**

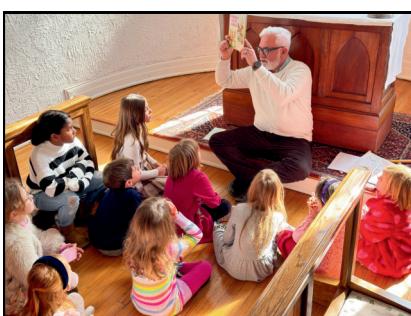
Of special note, there has been a significant increase in the number of young children and their families at Palmer. This growth is visible across parish life—in Liturgy Preparation, Children's Choir,

# Annual Report 2025

the Parenting Class, the Parish Retreat, on the playground, and in the nursery. This season has been deeply life-giving.

Thank you to all who contributed time, care, and leadership this year. Your support continues to shape a vibrant, welcoming community for our children, youth, and families.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roger Hutchison  
Director of Children's and Youth Ministries



# Endowment

The Endowment began in 2025 with an asset value of \$5,394,340. During the year, \$245,000 was distributed from Endowment funds to the parish. The Endowment received \$89,136 in contributions for the year. As of December 31, 2025, the value of the Endowment assets was \$6,141,904, and the Endowment's corpus/principal, which will never be violated, was \$3,337,515. Since inception, the Endowment has provided more than \$4 million to the parish, to provide for the current support of the ministries of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. Funds are primarily intended for the preservation and upkeep of the Palmer campus and rectory. The Endowment assets are currently professionally managed by Mercer (a business line of Marsh) in a mix of Vanguard funds within the investment policies set by the trustees. The 2025 net return for Palmer's portfolio was 16.78%. The trustees of the Palmer Endowment Fund during 2024 were Mike Soika, Chair; Alisha Renshaw, Treasurer; Cindi Tharpe, Secretary; Jere Ahrens, and Dawn Hawley. Ken Alexander served as legal advisor. Jim Rosenbach was elected by the Vestry to the Board in July 2025 to replace Mike Soika. The Daphne Palmer Neville Society's membership has reached 73. The membership consists of those individuals or families who have contributed to the Endowment or have let the Board know that they have made arrangements in their wills or retirement accounts to contribute to the Endowment.

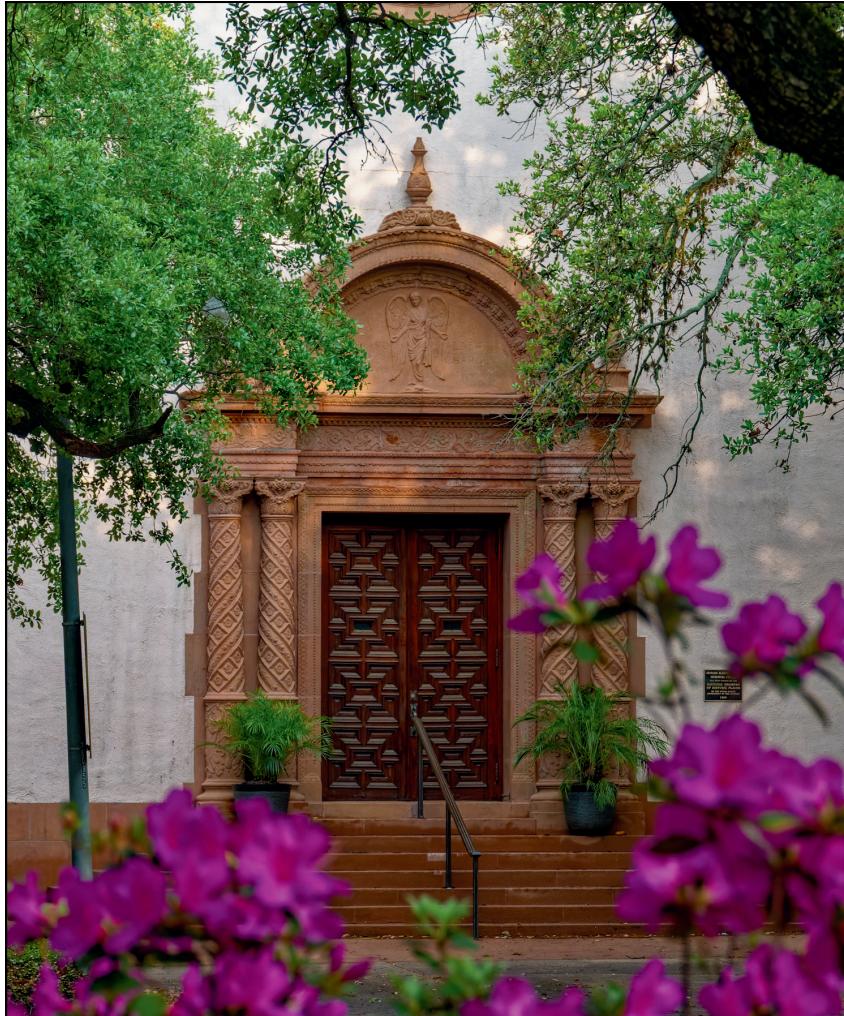
The Board amended and restated the Articles of Incorporation and revised the Bylaws in 2025.

We will continue to endeavor to build both the Endowment and the Daphne Palmer Neville Society and to look for opportunities to inform the parish about what they are and how they support the ministries of the Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Rosenbach, Endowment Board Chair



# Necrology Report



## In Memory

Dudley Van Ness

James Williams

Thomas Michael Niermeyer

Jerome Banks Brown

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord:  
And let light perpetual shine upon  
them. May they and all the departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in  
peace, and rise in glory.

Amen.



Easter 2025



God of grace and glory,  
you are faithful from one  
generation to another: Grant  
to us, as Palmers, the courage to  
know and boldly share the love of  
Jesus Christ, that our own hearts  
and the world around us may be  
changed and reflect more and  
more your great mercy and  
compassion; through our  
Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.