

APRIL 2020



THE PALMER WARDENS' REPORT



IN THIS LETTER

- An Update from the Rector and Wardens
- Sustaining Our Ministries
- Sustaining the Church Staff
- How You Can Help

AN UPDATE FROM THE RECTOR AND WARDENS

In this season of Easter, we pray that you are well and are taking the steps necessary to care for yourselves and your loved ones. We continue to pray for our congregation, our community, and the world as we enter a new normal during this time of minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Thank you for your continued patience in our life together and for your support of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. The positive comments to clergy and other staff members and your energy in meetings and online gatherings, including our online worship, is welcomed and much appreciated.

In lieu of our usual Wardens' Forum on campus, we would like to provide you with this important update on how Palmers and our Vestry are working to sustain our church, our staff, and our members. And, most importantly, how you can help.

SUSTAINING OUR MINISTRIES

Palmer's clergy and staff, along with lay leaders, are hard at work to continue connecting us and nurturing our faith. *The Palmer* weekly email, which is now published on Fridays, contains details about our current offerings and ways to be in touch during this time of physical separation. For a list of ongoing Zoom classes, Bible studies, and virtual gatherings, please [click HERE](#).

Another important factor that will help us emerge on the other side of this stay-at-home order with our capacity for ministry intact is the financial support we are receiving from the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Every congregation in this diocese has been pre-approved for an immediate 3-month diocesan assessment grant for the months of March, April, and May. Those monthly assessments are the contributions that we normally make toward diocesan ministries. This means that we will receive a reprieve from this expense during this time.

SUSTAINING THE CHURCH STAFF

Palmer's staff members, both those salaried full-time and part-time, are actively serving the church through their various roles and they are receiving their usual compensation. Our hope is that we can sustain these employees entirely through this period of quarantine and beyond. That is also the goal of our bishop.

To that end, Palmer's Vestry approved filing an application for a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan through the federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act for a portion of our payroll expenses. Many other churches are doing the same, and the Episcopal Diocese of Texas has encouraged us to do so. If used to continue paying employees and other eligible expenses, which is our plan, these loans can be forgiven. We have received confirmation that our PPP application was approved and we look forward to utilizing these funds to support continued payroll for our salaried church staff during this period of uncertainty.

Other familiar faces around Palmer's campus are independent contractors who work on an hourly basis. The services of a few of these individuals, such as nursery workers and one of the security guards who already worked on a very limited basis, have been placed on hold until we return to campus. The hours of others, like the custodial workers, other security guards, and our maintenance person, have been reduced to the times when the church is open on a limited basis for essential business and as needed for special assignments. Many of these independent contractors have also received emergency assistance through special gifts made possible through the generosity of several parishioners at Palmer.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

While the federal payroll loan and the diocesan assessment grant are helpful in sustaining our ministries and our staff during this time, we still need your help to continue the worship, work, and mission of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. The best way to do so is for our members and friends to continue making regular monetary gifts to the church or contributing toward their annual financial pledges to the best of our individual abilities given our current financial circumstances.

Here are ways to make those financial offerings to Palmer:

- [Click HERE to give online.](#) It is simple and the preferred way of giving at this time.
- Contact Jessica Evans in the church office at jevans@palmerchurch.org

More than ever, our mission remains the same, which is "to know and share the love of Jesus Christ." On behalf of all the members of our Vestry, clergy, and staff, we thank you for your support of our beloved church community at Palmer. We will continue to provide updates as the need arises.

In the peace of the risen Christ,
The Rev. Neil Alan Willard, Rector
Burdette Keeland, Senior Warden
Kristie Van Arsdel, Junior Warden

