

**St. Paul’s Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes, January 13, 2026**  
**DRAFT #2 - FINAL**

<b>Attendees:</b>	The Rev. Philip Major – Rector	Barbara Bell (2025)
	Joe Moorman – Sr. Warden	Tim Cassavaw (2026)
	Ieva Doyle – Jr. Warden	Jeanne Chu (2026)
	Doug Mouncey – Treasurer	Willson Cummer (2027)
	Anita Wagner – Clerk	DJ Igelsrud (2026)
		Joe Russo (2027)
		Tim Simmons (2027)
		Matthieu van der Meer (2025)

**Excused:** Sandi Yingling – Assistant Treasurer

### **Call to Order and Compline**

With a quorum established, Fr. Philip Major called the meeting to order in the Brewster Room at 5:00 pm. At the conclusion of Compline, the meeting duly proceeded.

In opening remarks, Fr. Philip noted this was the final meeting of this Vestry, and he expressed gratitude to all for their commitment. He acknowledged the fine service of Barbara Bell, Matthieu van der Meer, and Joe Moorman, whose terms are expiring as of the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2026. He commended Joe Moorman and Ieva Doyle as having been a fantastic Senior-Junior Warden team.

### **Approval of Minutes of December 9<sup>th</sup> Vestry Meeting**

Minutes from the December 9, 2025 Vestry meeting were included as Draft #3 in the packet emailed in advance of the meeting. Joe Russo pointed out a redundancy in the Treasurer’s Report, which the Clerk removed, resulting in Draft #4. With no further changes needed, Joe Moorman entered a motion to accept Draft #4 as the final version. Following a second by Barbara Bell, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

### **Warden’s Report**

#### **Resolution 26.01.13.01 Vestry and Warden Job Descriptions**

Ieva Doyle explained that St. Paul’s Vestry and Warden job descriptions were last modified in 2022. Two changes, noted in *bold italics* below, are recommended – for the Vestry, to emphasize their role in welcoming new members and visitors, and for the Wardens, to emphasize their regular consultation with the rector.

RESOLVED: The following language shall be used in announcements regarding vestry elections and incorporated into St. Paul’s Policies and Procedures manual:

Members of the Vestry at St. Paul's should:

- \* Actively listen to the needs and ideas of our members.
- \* Take an active role in the activities of the parish.
- \* Attend Sunday worship on a regular basis.
- \* ***Reach out to new members and visitors and welcome them into the parish.***
- \* Support St. Paul's financially.
- \* Pray for the parish, its members and staff.
- \* Engage in the work of the vestry with creativity, collegiality and hope.
- \* Support our parish as St. Paul's moves into a new vision of being the church in the 21st century.

Wardens of St. Paul's should:

- \* Fulfill expectations for vestry members (as articulated above).
- \* ***Meet regularly and work closely with the rector to consider the immediate and long-term needs of St. Paul's.***
- \* Be prepared to fully engage their unique gifts of leadership with the understanding that no individual has within themselves all of the qualities necessary for leadership of the church.
- \* Have served as a member of the vestry in the year prior to their election as a warden.

In the ensuing discussion, Fr. Philip emphasized how important it is for new people to feel warmly welcomed by more people than just the rector. Joe Moorman commented that attendance at Sunday worship services is up, necessitating a greater need for more of us, not just Fr. Philip, to welcome those new to St. Paul's and to interact with St. Paul's members, especially in terms of any pastoral care concerns.

Barbara Bell entered the motion to approve Resolution 26.01.13.01, as explained. Following a second by Joe Russo, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

## **Rector's Report**

### **Working with other Congregations for Faith-based Non-violent Resistance**

Fr. Philip felt called to organize a community gathering on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 19, 2026) in response to the violence being done to individuals and families in America by federal agents, including the separation of children from their parents and shootings of unarmed Americans. He has received support from the leaders of Plymouth Congregational Church and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and he will be reaching out to other church leaders.

After handing out copies of the event poster and press release, Fr. Philip explained that the vigil is for people of all faith traditions or no particular faith tradition who support nonviolence – that is, “We follow Jesus' example in welcoming all people, and we follow the example of Martin Luther King, Jr. when we follow Jesus' instructions to love all people, even those who behave as if they are our enemies.” With this event, we strive to be voices of love in a time of fear.

Given the cold weather, the event will be 30 minutes in length. It will be held on Columbus Circle, with St. Paul's as a backup in the event of inclement weather. It will be led by clergy

from local Christian congregations, and will include prayers and readings from Holy Scripture and the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tim Cassavaw, Willson Cummer, and Joe Russo spoke in support of this initiative. The Church Universal does need to speak out. Churches in Syracuse need to speak out in the community in these times of fear. Love *is* the only way to stop the hate.

Joe Moorman reassured Fr. Philip that he was well within his charge as the steward of the spiritual health of St. Paul's parishioners for taking this step. By way of formalizing Vestry's support, Tim Cassavaw entered a motion to accept:

**Resolution 26.01.13.04 “Voices of Love in Times of Fear” Vigil**

RESOLVED: The Vestry endorses the actions taken by Fr. Philip to organize the “Voices of Love in Times of Fear” vigil, and will actively support his continued efforts and St. Paul's involvement, should future events be organized.

Following a second by Joe Russo, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Whether this type of event will be held again is yet to be determined. In response to a question about how Vestry members might help, Fr. Philip encouraged sending an email to [Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com](mailto:Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com) to be added to the mailing list through which event details will be distributed.

**Resolution 26.01.13.02 Proposal for Built-in Place Staging**

This is a carry-over topic from the Vestry meeting in December 2025. For background, refer to pages 6-7, Resolution 26.01.13.02 Proposal for Built-in Place Staging.

A Syracuse Orchestra concert was held at St. Paul's on the afternoon of Sunday, January 11, 2026, where the temporary staging was in place. At the conclusion of worship, Fr. Philip invited members of the Vestry to the front of the nave to view the installation of temporary staging. He described the vision to improve the stage area for all groups, not just the Orchestra, who wish to hold performances at St. Paul's.

Vestry members raised the following questions:

- Assuming the project moves forward, could the staging that the Orchestra provides be stored somewhere at St. Paul's, perhaps even beneath the new platform? This would minimize the effort to construct the staging for each concert and would curtail damage to the building and loss of heat as doors are propped open for extended periods of time.
- In negotiating terms with the Orchestra, could offering a discount on their leasing fees for a set period of time be explored, rather than reducing their leasing fee indefinitely?
- Since the Orchestra will be providing staging to fill out the platform for their concerts, can St. Paul's use the Orchestra's staging for its own events?
- Does the Orchestra have a firm in mind to do this work?

- Assuming this project is approved and an architect is engaged, their fees need to be factored into the project costs.
- As part of St. Paul's needs, does this project represent an opportunity to construct a forward communion railing?

To bring the discussion to closure, Fr. Philip explained that the Resolution represents the first of many steps – to assess the feasibility of the project. There was consensus to:

- add “item g” to the Plans section of Resolution 26.01.13.02, as follows: up to \$1,000 in professional consultation services

With this addition, Matthieu van der Meer entered a motion, as follows:

RESOLVED: The Vestry supports the leaders of St. Paul's in working with a building professional, such as an architect, to develop detailed plans for a stage that would remain in place.

After a second by Tim Cassavaw, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

### **Resolution 26.01.13.03 Rector's Job Description**

The Vestry reviewed the rector's job description (included on pages 7-8 of these minutes), observing that while the percentages add up to 100%, the number of hours has the potential of exceeding 40 hours per week. Fr. Philip allowed that that is sometimes the case, especially during holidays. He commented that he has been devoting more time to administrative matters, but he expects that to be reduced, once the Open Doors project is completed. In the absence of a lay leader to coordinate pastoral care, he has picked up that responsibility as well.

DJ Igelsrud entered a motion to accept the rector's job description, seconded by Willson Cummer. The motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

### **Open Doors, Third-Floor Apartments, Parking Lot, etc.**

These projects are all still in progress. Key points were:

- Until the Open Doors project is complete, we are withholding further payment to the contractors and architect.
- Andrew Lunetta of ATHFG is seeking \$2M funding from local sources to replace the \$8M HUD grant funding cancelled by the Trump administration. This means adjustments to the floor plans will result, such as not proceeding with a shared kitchen.
- It recently came to light that dishwashers were not included in the kitchen design of the third-floor apartments. That omission is being remedied. Contractors will be on-site starting in the week of January 25. Drulyk has been informed.
- No update was available about the parking lot project.
- Installation of the Open Doors Donor Wall is still anticipated in January.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Before reviewing the 12/31/2025 Actual vs. Budget results distributed in advance of the meeting, Treasurer Doug Mouncey announced:

- After serving many years on the Finance Committee, David Ridings has stepped down as Chair. Joe Moorman is the new Finance Committee Chair, and Willson Cummer will serve as a committee member.
- Cathy Wolff, with assistance from Betsy Elkins, submitted the final report for the National Fund for Sacred Places grant for the Open Doors project. This may facilitate payment of the balance of the grant (\$125K).
- The Finance Committee has decided to continue the Balanced Objective approach for the endowment funds, as adopted by the Vestry in the fall, but with anticipated greater annual income.

While Doug highlighted several key areas of the report, he explained three aspects in detail:

- Pledge & Plate income exceeded expectations by nearly \$16K – actual \$175,900 vs. budget \$160,000. (We paused to praise God for this generosity!)
- Deferring the parking lot project to 2026 helped the expense side of the budget.
- How vital the anticipated rental income of the third-floor apartments is, so that less support needs to be drawn from the endowment funds.

Doug also commented that since January 1, we received several large invoices, including \$6,080 for December snow removal and \$22+K for the boiler burners.

## **Calendar and Closing Prayer**

The next Vestry meeting is Tuesday, February 17 at 6 pm, after the Shrove Tuesday worship service at 5 pm and pancake supper.

On the calendar, Fr. Philip corrected the date of the Winter Clean-up Day as February 8, not February 1.

With no further corrections or additions, Fr. Philip closed the meeting with prayer at 6:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry

Draft Resolution 26.01.13.02 Proposal for Plans for Built-in place Staging

**Brought to the Vestry by the Rector**

**Background:** In 2012 St. Paul's removed pews in the front of the nave to make space for performances of *Symphoria*, the cooperatively structured orchestra being formed following the bankruptcy of the Syracuse Symphony. Since that time *The Syracuse Orchestra* and many other music organizations have held many performances at St. Paul's.

St. Paul's commitment to serving as a venue for non-profit arts organizations is strong. We view these organizations as community partners because they support the revitalization of downtown Syracuse and engage members of our community in creative, inspiring activities. The strength of our relationships with these performing arts groups was one of reasons St. Paul's was able to receive more than \$800,000 in grants from state and national sources.

This resolution aims to lessen the impact of the significant downside of hosting performing arts groups: temporary staging used for these performances. The staging brought into the building for performances creates several challenges for St. Paul's:

1. Staging that is in place on Sunday mornings:
  - a. creates hazards for those leading worship due to gaps in the staging, lack of a railing, and temporary hardware.
  - b. makes it difficult for the congregation to circulate in the front of the nave for communion and other parts of the liturgy.
  - c. prevents the choir from processing.
  - c. is not attractive.
2. Anytime staging is brought into the building:
  - a. there is a risk of damage to the building. Church staff discovers damage to the doors, floor and fine woodwork several times each year.
  - b. there is significant heat loss as doors are propped open for extended periods of time.
  - c. there is an impact on the staff.

**About this proposal:** If constructed, the proposed stage would eliminate the need for temporary staging for most performing groups. It would provide 60% of the staging needed by the Syracuse Orchestra. Additional staging needed for the Orchestra would be erected following Sunday morning worship for Sunday afternoon concerts.

Since the primary purpose of the stage is to provide staging for the orchestra, St. Paul's would ask the Syracuse Orchestra to take on half of the cost of construction. Their leasing fees would be reduced accordingly.

**Resolution:** Resolved, the Vestry supports the leaders of St. Paul's in working with a building professional, such as an architect, to develop detailed plans for a stage that would remain in place.

Plans will incorporate the following:

- a. a stage area of approximately 12' x 36' directly adjacent to the chancel area.
- b. a stage height at the level of the second chancel step (11-12" above the height of the existing floor).
- c. a short railing or other raised edge at the perimeter of the stage area.
- d. steps or a ramp within the primary footprint of the stage.
- e. hardwood flooring as the primary surface.
- f. finished construction to match the chancel.
- g. up to \$1,000 in professional consultation services**

St. Paul's Episcopal Church ~ Syracuse, New York

Job Description: Rector ~ January 2026

I. Preamble: The Rector of St. Paul serves the members of St. Paul's Church. The Rector's chief responsibility is to equip and empower members in their baptismal ministries. This job description is attached to the Letter of Agreement between St. Paul's Vestry and the Rector and functions within the authority of that document and the canons of the Episcopal Church.

II. Worship (30%, or 12-15 hours/week)

- A. Serve as officiant for worship services, including Sunday Eucharist, funerals, and worship services for specific celebrations in the liturgical year.
- B. Prepare and preach sermons.
- C. Plan and prepare for each liturgy with members of the staff and the congregation, including the music director, operations manager, altar guild, office volunteers, building manager, and the worship ministry team.
- D. Work with the Worship Ministry Team to enhance communication and coordination between all teams involved in worship leadership.

III. Pastoral Care (20%, or 8-10 hours/week)

- A. Lead pastoral care meetings. Equip the members of St. Paul's in their baptismal ministries as pastoral caregivers.
- B. Serve as pastoral caregiver for members in situations of urgent need.
- C. Support members in their spiritual journeys. Welcome and integrate new members to St. Paul's.
- D. Maintain the weekly Prayer List used during the liturgy.

IV. Administration (30%, or 12-15 hours/week)

- A. Equip and empower members of St. Paul's to serve as leaders of the church.
- B. Facilitate and prepare agendas for the Annual Meeting, meetings of the vestry, executive ministry team, meetings of the personnel committee, and the annual vestry retreat.
- C. Guide the parish in ensuring that Safe Church practices are being followed, and that Safe Church training is provided to leaders as required by Diocesan policy.

- D. Lead the staff in supporting the ministries of St. Paul's and its members. Engage members of St. Paul's staff in annual performance reviews.
- E. Communicate with individuals and teams through informal conversations, formal meetings, and electronic communications.
- F. Serve as lead communicator for St. Paul's in a variety of venues, including through the church newsletter.
- G. Ensure that all people are treated with safety and respect in parish activities, and in accordance with local, state and national laws, the canons of the Episcopal Church, and the mandates of the Gospel of Christ.
- H. Work with the Personnel Committee in the hiring and termination of employment of staff members as authorized by the canons of the Episcopal Church.
- I. Oversee use of all parish buildings.
- J. Lead the Annual Stewardship Campaign
- K. Support the work of committees and ministry teams as an ex-officio member as needed.

V. Christian Formation (8%, or 3-4 hours/week)

- A. Lead Monday Bible Study and other Adult Formation events.
- B. Support the Formation Ministry Team and the Godly Play Team in their leadership of formation events.

VI. Community, Mission & Service (6%, or 2-3 hours/week)

- A. Support the members of St. Paul's in their ministries of service in the community and within St. Paul's.
- B. Participate in religious and non-religious community activities as a representative of St. Paul's Church.
- C. Support the members of St. Paul's in their community fellowship activities.

VII. The Diocese of Central New York (6%, or 2-3 hours/week)

- A. Participate in the work of the Diocese, including through Diocesan Convention and Safe Church trainings.
- B. Meet with the clergy and bishop of the Diocese in diocesan, deanery and individual meetings.