

**St. Paul’s Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes, November 11, 2025**  
**DRAFT #3 ~ FINAL**  
**Brewster Room**

<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)
	Sandi Yingling – Assistant Treasurer	DJ Igelsrud (2026)
	Anita Wagner – Clerk	Joe Russo (2027)
		Tim Simmons (2027)
		Matthieu van der Meer (2025)

**Call to Order and Compline**

Fr. Philip called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. He recommended that agenda item #2 (official photo of 2025 Vestry) be deferred to later in the meeting in anticipation of 100% attendance. He then led us in Compline. At the conclusion of Compline, with a quorum having been established, the meeting duly proceeded at 5:10 pm.

**Approval of Minutes of October 14<sup>th</sup> Vestry Meeting**

In the packet emailed in advance of the meeting, minutes from the October 14, 2025 Vestry meeting were included as Draft #3. With no further changes needed, Joe Russo entered a motion to accept Draft #3 as the final version. Following a second by DJ Igelsrud, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

**Approval of Report of Resolution 25.10.26**

Also included in the emailed meeting packet was a *Report of Resolution 25.10.26*, written by the Vestry Clerk, regarding an urgent financial matter raised on October 24, 2025 by David Ridings, Finance Committee Chair, and Doug Mouncey, Treasurer. The matter required a vote by Vestry in between regularly scheduled Vestry meetings.

The *Report* (attached) explained the matter and summarized the discussions, which occurred via email over the course of October 24-27, 2025. The motion under consideration was as follows:

**Vestry RESOLUTION: 25.10.26**  
**RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE THE INVESTMENT POLICY FOR**  
**ST PAUL’S KEY ACCOUNT (0149280)**

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION**

Be it resolved that Fr. Philip Major, as the legal representative of the parish, and Douglas Mouncey, Treasurer, as the Authority Officer are authorized to sign the

KEYBANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION “Investment Policy Statement” for Account 0149280, with such Policy providing a BALANCED OBJECTIVE beginning October 27, 2025.

The *Report* also included the tally of the vote, announced by Fr. Philip in an email to the Vestry on October 27, 2025, as follows: “The motion passed with 9 votes in favor, with 2 votes against. There were 0 abstentions.”

“Accepting the *Report on Resolution 25.10.26*” was included on the November 11, 2025 Vestry meeting agenda, in accordance with Article V, Section 7 of the Bylaws of St. Paul’s Church Syracuse: *A report of the results of that vote showing a tally (number of yes, no, and abstention votes making up the total of votes) must then be accepted and entered into the Minutes of the next Vestry meeting for the creation of a record of said vote.*

Fr. Philip called for a motion to approve and accept the *Report of Resolution 25.10.26*. Joe Russo entered the motion, seconded by Ieva Doyle. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining. Appreciation was expressed for the Vestry Clerk’s efforts in preparing the Report.

## **Warden’s Report**

### **Resolution 25.11.11.01**

The aforementioned situation had caused several Vestry members to express deep concern about the use of email as the communication method for such an important financial matter outside of a regularly scheduled Vestry meeting. They asserted that holding an in-person or a Zoom meeting would have been preferred for reaching understanding of the issues.

As noted toward the end of the *Report of Resolution 25.10.26*, Fr. Philip had called for the preparation of a Resolution to address such situations. In the packet emailed in advance of the Vestry meeting, draft Resolution 25.11.11.01 was included, as follows:

#### **Resolution 25.11.11.01 Regarding Resolutions brought to the Vestry between normal, scheduled meetings.**

*Draft Resolution:* “Be it resolved that we make an addition to our Policies & Procedures document stating that in almost all situations it will be preferable for Vestry to consider an unscheduled resolution via a Zoom meeting, and conduct the vote on the resolution using the Zoom polling tools following a period of questions and answers, debate and discussion. An email vote should be used only if absolutely necessary.”

In the ensuing discussion, strong preference for in-person discussions was stated, particularly for financial matters. Discussion ensued about what constitutes an emergency; time lost while exploring participants’ availability for a Zoom meeting; and the risks of keeping a matter open until the next regularly scheduled Vestry meeting. Empathy was expressed for the Rector in weighing the factors in calling for a special meeting between normal, scheduled meetings.

To bring the discussion to a close, Joe Russo submitted a revised resolution as follows:

“Be it resolved that we make an addition to our Policies & Procedures document stating that it shall be preferable for Vestry to consider an unscheduled, emergency resolution via a Zoom meeting, during which a vote on the resolution shall be conducted using the Zoom polling tools following a period of questions and answers, debate and discussion. An email vote should be used only when urgent action is required and an in-person or Zoom meeting is not reasonably feasible.”

The Clerk read the revised resolution to the Vestry. With no further revisions proposed, Fr. Philip called for a motion. Joe Russo entered a motion to approve the revised resolution, seconded by Willson Cummer. The motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Senior Warden Joe Moorman then mentioned the email he had sent to the Vestry on November 5, regarding the endowment investment report prepared by Key Bank in May 2025. Joe referred the Vestry to pages 6 and 7 of the report to gain a better understanding of the Moderate Growth and Balanced investment models. Joe indicated that once Key Bank has completed the transition of the St. Paul’s endowment investments to the Balanced model, they will do a presentation via Zoom for the Finance Committee. Vestry members are welcome to sit in.

Joe then commended the Finance Committee on their efforts to prepare the 2026 budget.

## **Treasurer’s Report**

**Actual vs. Budget Report as of 11/3/25:** Referring to his email sent prior to the meeting, Treasurer Doug Mouncey commented that Plate & Pledge contributions are tracking well, due to one large contribution received earlier in 2025 than in prior years. He pointed out that Account 7500 (Other Personnel Expenses) is tracking higher than budget, due to the high legal services invoice previously discussed by the Vestry.

**Resolution 25.11.11.02:** The wiring for St. Paul’s phone and internet services runs on the exterior of the Warren Street Parking Garage, which will be demolished as part of the new hotel development. The demolition could begin as soon as late November or December.

So that St. Paul’s does not experience service interruption, a short-term solution is to run cable from the YMCA, along the exterior of the Commonsplace Montgomery apartments and into St. Paul’s. Additional research needs to be done to determine long-term needs and a service provider.

Spectrum has provided documents for this short-term solution:

- Spectrum Business Services Agreement: This is a month-to-month agreement at a cost of \$299/month (currently \$280/month) and a one-time installation fee of \$100.
- Spectrum Business Agreement for Enterprise Services: The form provides details about the services to be provided and needs the Customer Point of Contact Information to be completed.

## **RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION**

Be it resolved that Fr. Philip Major, as the legal representative of the parish, be authorized to sign the Spectrum Business Services Agreement and Spectrum Business Services Agreement for Enterprise Services documents.

Fr. Philip called for a motion, approving Resolution 25.11.11.02 as written. Tim Cassavaw entered the motion, seconded by Barbara Bell. The motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

***Draft 2026 Budget:*** Doug showed the draft of the 2026 budget, still a work-in-progress as the Finance Committee refines income and expense assumptions and projections. Sandi Yingling's research into past budget outcomes has been very helpful in building the projections.

As of this meeting, a shortfall of approximately \$41,000 is anticipated. The shortfall was previously expected to be around \$60,000 but has been reduced due to our expectation to be able to rent the third-floor apartments as of April 1, rather than July 1.

**CONFIDENTIAL:** The 2026 budget includes the addition of a part-time employee to provide 18 hours/week of custodial services on a schedule to be negotiated. While this will cost approximately \$2,000 more than the current contracted service (5-6 hours per week, typically rendered on Wednesday evenings), we anticipate receiving far better service. This matter is confidential because the current service provider is not yet aware of this intended change.

Doug indicated that the Finance Committee will present their recommended 2026 budget at the December Vestry meeting. Concern was voiced about having the information in advance to review. Clarification was also sought about the expectations of the Vestry in their review and in being able to provide useful feedback.

In response, Tim Cassavaw advised that he tends to focus on "non-fixed" costs, since "fixed" costs tend to be about 60-70% of the budget and tend to be predictable and comparable from year-to-year. Fr. Philip and Doug then provided a brief overview of the draft budget, highlighting key items in the income and expense sections:

### *Income sources:*

- Approximately one third of income comes from pledges & plate, and two thirds from investments.
- Sanford Trust (managed by HSBC): St. Paul's is one of several organizations receiving a percentage of earnings.
- Rental income from parking lot spaces will be less in 2026, due to the anticipated repairs, lasting at least one month.

*Expenses:* Contracted services will be higher than in past years, due to the new Doyle alarm monitoring and security system and the anticipated higher costs of snow removal.

## Official Photo of 2025 Vestry

The group took a short break to move to the Sargent Foyer for a photo, taken by Sandi Yingling. They then returned to the Brewster Room to attend to the remaining agenda items.

## Rector's Report

- a. **Model 6: Congregational Sizes**: topic deferred due to time constraints
- b. **Parking Lot Litigation**: Fr. Philip reported that St. Paul's has received notice from the City of Syracuse that the 2 ½ parking spaces we've been using along the fence bordering Lemp Park are not ours – they belong to the City. Once the construction of the new hotel begins, we will no longer be able to use those spaces. After due consideration of expense, staff time, and ability to engage legal representation, Fr. Philip is recommending that we not pursue litigation for the right to continue to use these 2 ½ spaces. We will still be able to use the spaces alongside the Lafayette building.
- c. **Custodian Job Description**: The Executive Ministry Team has drafted a list of custodial tasks for a part-time employee, up to 18 hours per week. In reviewing the list, Fr. Philip sought input about additional tasks. The following suggestions were offered: check the mousetraps; more frequent cleaning of the toilet rooms due to the increased use of the building; assistance with room setup for events and funerals; sweep the Porch foyer and entrance areas; and pick up trash along exterior areas. In response to a question about how much cleaning would continue to be done by the Altar Guild, Fr. Philip indicated he would confer with the Altar Guild.
- d. **Setting a Vestry Meeting Time for the 2026 Vestry**: Work schedules make it difficult for some Vestry members to arrive on time for 5:00 pm meetings. Moreover, the second Tuesday of the month makes it difficult for the Finance Committee to issue the Treasurer's Report earlier, since they do not receive the data early enough in the month. After a brief discussion, the Vestry agreed that Vestry meetings would occur 5:30-7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of the month, starting with the February 2026 meeting.
- e. **Internet Service Provider: Resolution 25.11.11.02**: See the Treasurer's Report.
- f. **Donor Wall**: The Bicentennial Steering Committee recommended Friday, December 12 as the date to unveil the Open Doors Donor Wall at the parish potluck supper. Fr. Philip invited Vestry's feedback. While enthusiasm runs high for the reveal, several concerns about the December date were raised, ranging from allowing more time for completion of the installation and woodworking, to starting the new year with a really fun event. Assuming the timeframe works for all involved, the Vestry recommended "any time after January 4, perhaps the parish potluck on Friday, January 9."

## Calendar and Closing Prayer

In reviewing the calendar, Fr. Philip noted that the February 2026 Vestry meeting will be February 17, 2026, at 5:30 pm. He closed the meeting with prayer at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry