St. Paul's Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY
Vestry Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2026 – Brewster Room
DRAFT #2

Attendees:	The Rev. Philip Major – Rector	Tim Cassavaw (2026)
	Ieva Doyle – Senior Warden	Jeanne Chu (2026)
	Joe Russo – Junior Warden	Willson Cummer (2027)
	*Doug Mouncey – Treasurer	Catherine Gerard (2028)
	*Anita Wagner – Clerk	DJ Igelsrud (2026)
	*Sandi Yingling – Assistant Treasurer	Isiah Lavender (2027)
		Amy Mangram (2028)
	**Non-voting*	Tim Simmons (2027)
		Joseph von Souder (2028)

Call to Order

With full attendance and quorum established, Fr. Philip Major called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes

After determining no corrections were needed to the draft minutes of the June 16, 2026 meeting, Fr. Philip called for a motion to accept Draft #2 as final. The motion was put forth by Tim Cassavaw and seconded by DJ Igelsrud. The motion passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Rector's Report

Stage/Communion Rail: Updated Costs. At the February 17, 2026 meeting, Vestry approved a resolution for the construction of the Stage/Communion Rail project, at a cost of $33,500. Costs would be covered by a grant from the Syracuse Symphony Foundation ($20,000), an anticipated grant from the Nan Dorr Fund ($5,000), and funding from St. Paul's ($8,500).

At the June 16, 2026 meeting, wardens Ieva Doyle and Joe Russo advised Vestry of the need for up to $6,000 in additional funds to cover the cost to procure the communion rail custom woodwork and to comply with St. Paul's request for dustless sanding. This raised the project cost to $39,500, with St. Paul's portion now at $14,500.

Then, on June 29, 2026 the contractor (Colin McInnis) contacted Fr. Philip to explain he was now conferring with a local millwork company (Creekside Woodworks), rather than a firm in Oregon, to create the custom components of the communion rail. Working with a local firm eliminated the need for cross-country shipping. The downside, though, is that Creekside's costs are higher than the estimate provided by the Oregon firm on which Colin had based his proposal.

The newly revised and final estimate for this project is $52,400. Because of his efforts to locate a local millwork company, Colin has not signed the contract with St. Paul's, which had been based on the $39,500 quote.

From a funding perspective, Fr. Philip expressed confidence that the difference could be raised by soliciting an increase in funding from the Syracuse Symphony Foundation and by inviting individual contributions from St. Paul's members and friends, known to be Symphony supporters. Based on only a few one-on-one conversations with parishioners known for their Orchestra support, Fr. Philip revealed that $7,500 had already been committed to help close the gap. As a result of additional fundraising, a likely cost-sharing formula would be Syracuse Symphony Foundation ($25,000) + Nan Dorr Fund ($5,000) + St. Paul's ($12,400 cost) + individual contributions ($10,000) = $52,400.

A lengthy discussion ensued, covering such concerns as:

- As currently written, the contract covers two projects – the stage and the communion rail. Because Colin McInnis has not yet signed the contract, is this an opportunity to revise the contract as "part 1, part 2" with different delivery dates?
- The Orchestra needs the stage by mid-October for their first Casual Concert at St. Paul's. Colin McInnis can very likely meet the stage deadline, but Creekside might not be able to meet that same deadline for the custom woodwork, staining, and installation of the communion rail. Can Colin and Creekside commit to a later date for the communion rail installation at a time that works best for St. Paul's?
- Colin McInnis is a one-person firm. That is risky, if he is injured and unable to work. We have no Plan B or Plan C.
- There simply cannot be another cost increase. Based on our experience in the Open Doors project, it seems that "something unforeseen" always comes up.

Willson Cummer put forth a motion to set aside the first contract, to break it into two distinct projects, and to seek a second bid, so as to compare the alternate bid with Colin's. Isiah Lavender seconded the motion. The ensuing discussion centered on the very high likelihood of this approach extending the project out at least a year. Fr. Philip called for a vote on the motion, resulting in 3 in favor, 7 opposed, and 2 abstained. The motion did not pass.

In the discussion which followed, it was acknowledged that Vestry had approved this project primarily to have a more inclusive way of celebrating the Eucharist. Despite being frustrated with cost increases, we are now focused on mitigating the risks of how to get the project done.

Taking all of this into consideration, Fr. Philip outlined a resolution (26.07.21.05) as follows:

Resolved, St. Paul's Vestry authorizes Fr. Philip to revise the original contract with Colin McInnis for construction of the stage and communion rail, taking into consideration the following guidelines:

1. Construction for the stage would commence first; the communion rail portion of the project would very likely be later. Consequently, Vestry needs to better understand

Creekside's availability, including when the rail could be completed and when payments are needed.

2. The contract is based on St. Paul's ability to raise the funds for the project as quoted ($52,400).
3. Further, St. Paul's asks Fr. Philip to obtain backup for construction of the stage portion of the contract, should Colin McInnis not be available to complete it on time.
4. St. Paul's will not approve any further funding.

Fr. Philip called for a motion on the resolution, entered by Jeanne Chu and seconded by Tim Simmons. With no further discussion raised, the resolution was approved, with 9 in favor, 2 opposed, and 1 abstaining.

Before proceeding with the remaining agenda items, Fr. Philip paused the meeting to acknowledge Doug Mouncey's birthday, thanking him for more than 50 years of service to St. Paul's. After a hearty round of applause, the meeting continued, with promise of a celebratory homemade fruit pie in Doug's honor after adjournment.

Open Doors Capital Campaign update. Fr. Philip and Catherine Gerard reported that Margie Hughto has offered to design a second mural for St. Paul's Church, using leftover tiles from the Open Doors donor wall project, as well as several new designs. This new mural would be installed in the Montgomery Street entrance for the enjoyment of the tenants residing in the renovated spaces. Recently, Fr. Philip, Catherine, and Marion Greenhalgh met with Margie and learned that she intends this installation as her gift to St. Paul's. Gratitude was expressed by all for Margie's generosity, craftsmanship, and friendship. Consensus among church leadership is that it would be appropriate for St. Paul's to provide an honorarium to the installer.

Because the Open Doors project costs exceeded the amount raised by the initial capital campaign, Fr. Philip explained that Margie's second mural affords an opportunity to encourage newer St. Paul's members to donate to the Open Doors project. (*Clerk's note:* Per the Finance Committee July 13, 2026 meeting minutes, the shortfall is now estimated at approximately $100,000.) An article about this new campaign, directed at newer members, will appear in *The Courier*.

Parking Lot Construction. Fr. Philip reported that work on the parking lot project will likely begin in mid-August and last a minimum of 4 weeks.

A Tiny Home for Good. Fr. Philip relayed the good news that the City's Planning Commission approved the 2^{nd} floor Parish House construction project with great enthusiasm.

Treasurer's Report

Due to the length of the meeting, Treasurer Doug Mouncey referred Vestry to the Finance Committee's July 13^{th} meeting minutes on the Vestry information webpage as his update on church finances. Doug reported that on July 15, Peter Lotto of Trinity Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, conducted the annual in-house audit of St. Paul's financial records, resulting in only a few minor recommendations.

Doug then led Vestry through four resolutions, all of an administrative nature requiring Vestry approval.

Resolution 26.07.21.01: 3rd Floor Apartments Expenses, Repayment of Funds to Endowment. At a prior Vestry meeting, it was proposed that 50% of the annual net revenue from the 3rd floor rental apartments should be allocated to the annual budget and 50% as repayment to the Endowment. At its meeting on July 13, 2026, the Finance Committee reviewed three possible options for the distribution of the net revenues from the apartments (the payback period, amount of lost earnings on the balance and amount of support to the budget). Each option would be impacted by the final cost of the project (the amount to be repaid), actual annual expenses and fluctuating interest rates. Periodic rent increases were also considered.

- *Option 1:* 50% to Endowment and 50% to annual budget: 14-year payback, Loss of Earnings on Balance $139,817 and cumulative budget support $331,920
- *Option 2:* 75% to Endowment and 25% to annual budget: 10-year payback, Loss of Earnings on Balance $102,493 and cumulative budget support $109,800
- *Option 3:* 100% to Endowment and 0% to annual budget: 8-year payback, Loss of Earnings on Balance $82,905 and cumulative budget support 0

Advantages of Option 3 (100% to Endowment) include: the returned funds would be earning interest and allowing the Endowment to grow; withdrawals (for annual operations and time-specific projects would receive a higher level of review); a possibility of favorable tax advantages; and the Liability will be removed from the Balance Sheet quicker. Regardless of which option is selected, a separate checking account will be established for the Apartments.

Doug, speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee, put forward Resolution 26.07.21.01:

Resolution: Resolved, the Vestry of St. Paul's adopts the recommendation from the Finance Committee that 100% of the net revenue from the 3rd Floor Apartments be used to repay the Endowment until the expenses of this project are paid in full.

Fr. Philip called for a motion to proceed with Resolution 26.07.21.01. The motion was entered by Joseph von Souder and seconded by Amy Mangram. With no further discussion, the resolution passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Resolution 26.07.21.02: Parking Lot Repairs Expense. In recent months, the Finance Committee has reviewed concerns about the cash flow needs for operations in the next 3-5 years: insufficient revenue from pledges and earned revenue; an increased reliance on the Endowment Fund which reduces future income and growth; and additional funds to repay the Diocesan Loan for the Open Doors project. As a result, the Finance Committee has concluded it would not be feasible to anticipate an ability to repay an additional loan for the Parking Lot project.

Doug, speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee, put forward Resolution 26.07.21.02:

Resolution: Resolved, that the Vestry of St. Paul's adopts the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the Parking Lot repairs be paid for by funds from the Endowment and that such funds are not considered a loan to be repaid.

Fr. Philip called for a motion to move forward with Resolution 26.07.21.02, which was entered by Joe Russo and seconded by Ieva Doyle. In response to question about how much net income is raised from parking space rentals, Doug replied that it nets between $13K-14K annually. In light of what other parking lots are charging annually, Tim Cassavaw suggested that we consider raising our rates after the church parking lot repairs are completed. With no further discussion, the resolution passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Resolution 26.07.21.03: 3rd Floor Apartments New Checking Account. Speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee, Doug explained the need to establish a separate checking account to better track the income and expenses of the 3rd floor apartments. He then entered the following resolution:

Resolution: Resolved that the Vestry of St. Paul's adopts the recommendation from the Finance Committee that a separate checking account be established at Key Bank for the 3rd Floor Apartments' activities and that the current authorized signers for the other parish checking accounts be authorized for this account as well (Betsy Barker, Tom Cantwell, Betsy Elkins, Amy Mangram).

Fr. Philip called for a motion to move forward with Resolution 26.07.21.03, which was entered by Tim Cassavaw and seconded by Jeanne Chu. With no further discussion, the resolution passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Resolution 26.07.21.04: Investments (Endowment) at Key, Authorized Signers. To enhance internal controls for making transactions to and from the investment account at Key Bank, withdrawals should be authorized by two persons. When a withdrawal request is made, Key's standard operating procedure is to verify the request, by phone, with two individuals, followed by an email acknowledgement.

Since there may be times when both individuals are not available, the Finance Committee is recommending that three persons will be authorized so that any two of the three can complete the transaction.

Speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee, Doug put forward Resolution 26.07.21.04:

Resolution: Resolved that the Vestry of St. Paul's adopts the recommendation that Doug Mouncey, Joe Moorman, and Sandi Yingling are the authorized individuals to withdraw funds from the Investment (Endowment) account at Key Bank and any two of those three are required for requested withdrawals.

Fr. Philip called for a motion to move forward with Resolution 26.07.21.04, which was entered by Willson Cummer and seconded by Isiah Lavender. With no further discussion, the resolution passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Warden's Report

Junior Warden Joe Russo chairs the Future Directions Task Force, which is part of the Bicentennial Steering Committee (BSC). Since April 2026, Future Directions Task Force members have been engaging with St. Paul's members in fruitful, informative one-on-one interviews. By year-end, analysis of the data gathered will be underway to help identify priorities for the years ahead.

What better way to close out St. Paul's bicentennial year in May 2027 than with a focus on the future? And what better day to do so than Pentecost Sunday (May 16, 2027)! While not yet definite, the format currently under consideration is an after-worship luncheon and presentation, with childcare provided.

Calendar, Compline and Adjournment

Following Fr. Philip's brief reminder to peruse the meetings and events listed at the end of the agenda, Joe Russo led Compline. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry