

**St. Paul’s Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes, December 9, 2025**  
**DRAFT #4 ~ 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)
	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**

With a quorum established, Fr. Philip Major called the meeting to order in the Brewster Room at 5:01 pm. At the conclusion of Compline, the meeting duly proceeded.

**Approval of Minutes of November 11<sup>th</sup> Vestry Meeting**

In the packet emailed in advance of the meeting, minutes from the November 11, 2025 Vestry meeting were included as Draft #3. With no further changes needed, Tim Cassavaw entered a motion to accept Draft #3 as the final version. Following a second by Barbara Bell, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

**Treasurer’s Report**

As background for the six resolutions listed for consideration, Fr. Philip mentioned that in reviewing the year, he had noticed that this Vestry had handled more resolutions than any other in his tenure. This increase was primarily due to extra work orders associated with completing the *Open Doors* construction project. He complimented the Vestry’s diligence and dedication throughout the year.

He then shared that on December 5, St. Paul’s had hosted the Preservation Association of Central New York’s annual awards ceremony with 60 in attendance. St. Paul’s received an award for our stewardship of the beautiful historic buildings under our care.

An especially joyful part of the evening was hearing reactions to the *Open Doors* project by people with strong interest in architecture and historic preservation. They were in awe of the project, saying that the efforts will be appreciated for years to come.

## **Resolution 25.12.09.01 Approval of the 2026 Budget**

For fiscal and calendar year 2026, the Finance Committee has proposed a balanced budget to the Vestry, totaling \$634,628.

Treasurer Doug Mouncey presented the budget's executive summary and associated spreadsheets. Fr. Philip assisted in explaining key points. Highlights of the income side of the budget include:

- The Pledge Contributions line item was raised to \$170,000, up over previous years.
- Starting in April, a new income source is anticipated – revenue from the third-floor apartment rentals, totaling \$19,350 by year-end. The projected \$19,350 is for the annual general parish operations after payment of apartment management fees, any other expenses, and the annual portion of the loan from the Key investments that had been taken for construction expenses. Tim Cassavaw and Doug have met representatives of Property Management Alliance. A meeting will be scheduled for early 2026 to confirm what rental fees could be charged, what management services we would want, and the cost of those services.
- Based on an analysis of local commercial parking lot fees, a 5% monthly increase was added to the parking lot rental income. However, there will be a decrease in the annual total, due to not being able to use the lot during the parking lot repair.
- The Finance Committee recommends that the Support from Key Investments be \$367,578 for 2026. This is 5.22% of the three-year Market Value average, as of 9/30/25, a decrease from 5.5% in 2025.

On the expense side, many of St. Paul's expenditures are fixed costs with little room for significant reduction. It was noted that:

- With the completion of the *Open Doors* construction project, there are increased custodial needs throughout the week, and a new part-time custodial position is proposed (confidential, until the current contractor is notified).
- The expense budget includes the cost of a new phone system.
- The parking lot repairs project is treated as a capital improvement expenditure; it is not part of the operating budget.

After Doug and Fr. Philip addressed several clarifying questions, Fr. Philip called for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, as follows:

RESOLVED: The Vestry approves the Budget for St. Paul's for 2026, with total expenditures and income of \$634,628, as discussed and amended at its December 9, 2025 meeting.

Joe Moorman entered the motion to approve the budget resolution, seconded by Willson Cummer. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Gratitude was expressed by all for the Finance Committee's exemplary work throughout the year and in preparing the budget. Fr. Philip added that we are blessed to have such a well-qualified and engaged Finance Committee, as well as a large endowment to help support our operations.

**Resolution 25.12.09.02 Housing Allowance for 2026 – Rector**

*(Clerk's Note: The wording of Resolution 25.12.09.02 and Resolution 25.12.09.03 is from a Diocesan template.)*

The following resolution was duly adopted by the vestry of St. Paul's Church at a regularly scheduled meeting held on December 9, 2025, a quorum being present:

Whereas, ministers who own their home do not pay federal income taxes on the amount of their compensation that their employing church designates in advance as a housing allowance, to the extent that the allowance represents compensation for ministerial services, is used to pay housing expenses, and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home; and Whereas, the Rev. Philip Major is compensated by St. Paul's Church exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel, and Whereas, St. Paul's Church does not provide the Rev. Philip Major with a parsonage; therefore, It is hereby

RESOLVED, that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Philip Major for calendar year 2026 be \$90,398, of which \$39,615 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the designation of \$39,615 as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2026 only.

The motion to approve the resolution was entered by Willson Cummer, seconded by Ieva Doyle. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

**Resolution 25.12.09.03 Supply Clergy Housing Allowance for 2026 – Rev. Perry Mouncey**

The following resolution was duly adopted by the vestry of St. Paul's Church at a regularly scheduled meeting held on December 9, 2025, a quorum being present:

Whereas, ministers who own their home do not pay federal income taxes on the amount of their compensation that their employing church designates in advance as a housing allowance, to the extent that the allowance represents compensation for ministerial services, is used to pay housing expenses, and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home; and Whereas, the Rev. Perry Mouncey is compensated, as a Supply Priest, by St. Paul's Church exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel, and Whereas, St. Paul's Church does not provide the Rev. Perry Mouncey with a parsonage; therefore, It is hereby

RESOLVED, that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Perry Mouncey, as a Supply Priest, for the period January 1 – December 31, 2026 be \$1,000.00 of which \$1,000.00 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the designation of \$1,000.00 as a housing allowance shall apply to the period January 1 – December 31, 2026 only.

Joe Russo entered the motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Matthieu van der Meer. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

**Resolution 25.12.09.04 Authorized Signatures for Safety Deposit Box #2886 at Key Bank**

St. Paul’s Church continues to have a Safety Deposit Box at Key Bank. It has been many years since someone entered the Box, as the individuals who had been authorized to enter the Box either have moved from Syracuse or died. At the October 2025 Finance Committee meeting, four individuals volunteered to be authorized by the Vestry as having access to the Box. Any two of them must be present when the Box is entered.

RESOLVED, the Vestry of St. Paul’s Church in Syracuse, Incorporated authorizes Tom Cantwell, Joe Moorman, Doug Mouncey and Sandi Yingling to enter Safety Deposit Box #2886 at Key Bank. Any two of the authorized individuals must be present whenever the Safety Deposit Box is entered.

The motion to approve the resolution was entered by Willson Cummer, seconded by Joe Moorman. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

**Resolution 25.12.09.05: Open Doors Collected Change Orders**

As Drulyk Construction completes the *Open Doors* project, various additional change orders, accumulated over the course of construction, are being brought forward for reimbursement. Most of these miscellaneous costs are less than \$1,000 each. The two largest costs are \$4,613.23 for purchase and installation of emergency exit signs with back up emergency lighting, and \$2,368 for the labor required to move the Drulyk crew offsite during the time when construction was halted, due to waiting for the new fire prevention system to be designed and approved.

RESOLVED, the Vestry approves the expenditure of no more than \$12,000 for the payment of at least 15 charges brought forward on December 9, 2025.

In discussion of the resolution, the following points were raised:

- Fr. Philip explained that because Drulyk is still gathering the information, the final number of projects and the associated costs were not available in time for the Vestry meeting. The wording of the resolution intentionally provides leeway for both factors.
- The City of Syracuse required the additional emergency exit signs. Drulyk’s cost was high because of the difficulty of accessing the spaces in which the signs were installed.
- Fr. Philip indicated we can anticipate at least one more collection of change orders, likely in January or February 2026, as Drulyk winds down their work.

The motion to approve the resolution was entered by Barbara Bell, seconded by Matthieu van der Meer. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Before moving on to the next resolution, Tim Cassavaw voiced his concern over the number of overages. He suggested that, at the end of the *Open Doors* project, we do an “autopsy” on the project to better understand why there were so many overages, taking us roughly 15-20% over budget. While it’s not unusual for construction projects to experience cost overruns, we would like to better understand why so many things were missed in the planning process. This seems an especially worthwhile exercise for the Vestry to undertake because in 2026, we will undergo another costly capital improvement project – the parking lot repairs.

### **Resolution 25.12.09.06 Electrical Service for 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor HVAC**

This resolution was conveyed to the Vestry by the Building and Grounds Committee. When an estimate for Heat Pump HVAC units for the third-floor apartments was provided to the Vestry, electrical service to power the units was not included. The panels have to be separate, one for each apartment.

RESOLVED, the Vestry approves the expenditure of \$2,180 for Patruno Electric to install one 30 amp and one 40 amp, 208 volt circuits for the two exterior HVAC heat pumps serving the third-floor apartments.

The motion to approve the resolution was entered by Ieva Doyle, seconded by DJ Igelsrud. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

### **Warden’s Report**

Junior Warden Ieva Doyle, speaking in her role as Chair of the Nominations Committee, expressed gratitude to the Nominating Committee (Tom Cantwell, Willson Cummer, Marion Greenhalgh, DJ Igelsrud). They have brought forward the following slate of candidates for congregational vote at the 2025 Annual Meeting on January 25, 2026:

- Joseph von Souder, Amy Mangram, and Catherine Gerard are nominated to fill the three Vestry positions in the Class of 2028, replacing the Class of 2025 – Barbara Bell, Matthieu van der Meer, and Harry Lambright, who had resigned in May 2025.
- Joe Russo is nominated to serve as Junior Warden, replacing Ieva Doyle who will become Senior Warden, replacing Joe Moorman who fulfills his term in January 2026.

*(Clerk’s Note: Following the Annual Meeting, the Nominations Committee will recommend a nominee for the Vestry to appoint to fulfill the remaining two years in Joe Russo’s three-year term on the Vestry.)*

## **Rector's Report**

### **Staging Proposal from Syracuse Orchestra**

For its Casual Concert series held at St. Paul's, the Syracuse Orchestra rents, installs, and removes a temporary stage, consisting of 26 sections, at a cost of \$3,000 per concert. To reduce costs, the Syracuse Orchestra has made a proposal to the Orchestra Foundation to purchase staging for use at St. Paul's.

Jon Garland, Director of Operations for the Syracuse Orchestra, has met with Fr. Philip to discuss this proposal, as well as the Orchestra's intention to revert to scheduling the Casual Concert series only on Sunday afternoons. In this meeting, Fr. Philip described the impact of the temporary staging on the Sunday worship services – i.e., serving communion is more difficult, sound quality is affected, and the choir cannot process in the 10:00 am service. Fr. Philip counter-proposed a project whereby St. Paul's would construct permanent staging to improve accessibility to the chancel area. As envisioned, this renovation would equate to approximately two-thirds of the staging the Orchestra would need. Consequently, only a small amount of orchestral staging would need to be installed, ideally after the 10:00 am Sunday worship service has concluded.

Fr. Philip explained that the level of the current rental platform is 20 inches high; the permanent staging in the St. Paul's renovation would be 12 inches high and at equal level to the second step in the chancel area. The new platform would come out about 12 feet into the large open area on the main floor and would incorporate ramps. It would be crafted in cherry hardwood to match existing woodwork. Vestry members raised several concerns, including:

- The need to see an architectural rendering to better understand how this new platform would look. There would be a cost for such a rendering.
- The placement of the harpsicord and concert piano.
- The implied ongoing relationship between St. Paul's Church and the Syracuse Orchestra. Will the Orchestra commit to continuing to use space at St. Paul's? St. Paul's is one of the Orchestra's favorite places to perform, due to the acoustics, ambiance, and attendance. Hosting the Orchestra's Casual Concerts is an integral part of our engagement with the Syracuse community.

In the interest of time, Fr. Philip suggested tabling further discussion of this matter until the Vestry's January meeting.

### **Jim Potts' Leave Time Request**

Organist and Choir Master Jim Potts requested two extra weeks off after Christmas, which Fr. Philip, as his de facto supervisor, has granted. Substitute organists will be engaged for the January 4 and January 11, 2026 worship services.

### **8 a.m. Congregation Worship Schedule**

In mid-November, Fr. Philip met with the regular attendees of the 8:00 worship service to discuss having a single 10:00 am worship service from January 4 through March 8, 2026. While they highly value the 8:00 am worship experience and the relationships they have established, they were supportive of having a single worship service for much of the winter season. The two worship services schedule will resume on March 15, 2026.

### **Calendar and Closing Prayer**

Fr. Philip reminded us of Vestry's decision, effective with the newly formed Vestry in February 2026, to change the Vestry's regular meeting date to the third Tuesday of the month and the start time to 5:30 pm. Referring to the calendar, he noted that due to scheduling conflicts, the new start time will not take effect until the April 21<sup>st</sup> Vestry meeting. On February 17, the Vestry will meet at 6:00 pm, and there is no Vestry meeting in March, due to the off-site retreat on March 21.

With no further items on the agenda, Fr. Philip closed the meeting with prayer at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry