

St. Paul's Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY
Vestry Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2026
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)
		Tim Simmons (2027)
		Joseph von Souder (2028)
	<i>*Non-voting</i>	

Call to Order

With a full complement in attendance and a quorum established, Fr. Philip Major called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm in the Brewster Room.

Approval of Minutes

After determining no corrections were needed to the draft minutes of the February 17, 2026 meeting, Fr. Philip called for a motion to accept Draft #3 as final. The motion was put forth by Ieva Doyle, seconded by Joe Russo. The motion passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Rector's Report

Vestry Page added to Church Website. Fr. Philip noted that in advance of the meeting, the draft minutes of the February 17th meeting, along with other documents pertaining to the April 21st meeting, were available on a newly-created 'Vestry Page' on the church website. This page is accessed by a password generally known within the St. Paul's community. Everyone indicated they had had no difficulty accessing this new section to review the meeting materials.

This procedural change had been suggested by our newest Vestry members during their orientation. The intention is to make Vestry information more transparent and accessible to church members. This area is not intended to be an archive; its focus is on current information. Fr. Philip has written an article about the Vestry information page for the May *Courier*, stressing that the Vestry believes that the church is stronger and healthier when members have more information about the work of the church. Words of appreciation were expressed for Judy McAdoo-Pelton and Fr. Philip's efforts to implement this new area on the website.

Summer Worship Schedule. Fr. Philip sought input from the Vestry regarding whether the time of the summer worship service should remain at 10:00 am or change to 9:30 am. Pros and cons

were discussed, with no consensus reached. By way of responsibility, this is a decision made by the Rector. Fr. Philip will take the Vestry's comments under advisement and render his decision soon.

Security Issue: Fayette Street Door. Fr. Philip explained that twice recently the big red doors on Fayette Street were left unlocked or ajar because someone had left the building when no one was there to lock the doors behind them. This puts the church at great risk. He has written an article for the *May Courier*, asking people to exit St. Paul's through the big red doors *only if* they are unlocked and someone, such as Derek Lane, our security person, is present. The article advises that if the big red doors are locked, people should instead exit via the parking lot door or through the Montgomery lobby door. The terms of the agreement with third parties who use the building are being changed to stipulate that they need to hire a person from St. Paul's to assure that doors are not left open during and after their event.

Custodian Hiring Process. The process has been fruitful. References are being checked, and information will be submitted for background checks this week. In response to a question, Fr. Philip explained that there will be a time of overlap and transition with the present cleaning service.

Easter Vigil. Holding the annual Easter Vigil is a lot of work for everyone involved. Attendance this year was light – only 23 in the Nave and about 25 in the Chancel area (i.e., officiants, choir, organist, and readers), prompting those involved to question the future of this service. It was noted that there were 37 online connections. (It's unknown how many watched the service virtually – a connection might have had one, two or more people viewing.) We know some members do not attend in person because of the incense and length of the service. It was noted that the Easter worship service the next morning drew 100 people. Fr. Philip asked that each Vestry member send him an email, offering an opinion about the viability of continuing to hold the Easter Vigil.

Bicentennial Update. Anita Wagner, Co-Chair of the Bicentennial Steering Committee, described the upcoming May 16th and May 22nd events, which kick off our year-long celebration. Ieva Doyle distributed flyers about the May 16th event, encouraging people to share them with friends or to post them on bulletin boards at places they frequent. Anita praised the efforts of many who have been involved in the planning. The *May Courier* is chock-full of bicentennial information.

Third Floor Apartments. Due to the recent discovery of hazardous materials in the second-floor landing area near the elevator and stairway to the third floor, the target date for renting the third-floor apartments has been moved to August 1. ATHFG is taking the lead in remedying this situation as part of the demolition of the second floor. A question was raised about where their dumpster might be positioned. Fr. Philip answered that our agreement with ATHFG includes the stipulation that no part of the church parking lot will be used for construction equipment or dumpsters during the construction of the second-floor apartments. ATHFG will likely put a dumpster along Montgomery Street. Concern was raised for taking precautions so that the small garden honoring Nan Dorr is not disturbed.

Parking Lot. In terms of status, Landscape Architect Terry Horst is coordinating with potential bidders on our behalf, on the basis of Option B described in her September 2025 report.

Clerk's Note: Fr. Philip reminded the Vestry of *Resolution 25.10.14.01: The Vestry requests the chair of the Building & Grounds Committee to seek estimates from at least three (3) contractors for repaving the parking lot and related construction activities in accordance with the specifications outlined under 'Option B' in the report submitted by Terry Horst dated September 4, 2025.* The motion to move ahead with this resolution had passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Option B: Excavate the parking lot to 18 inches in depth. Compact the remaining subsurface material. Lay fabric to reduce movement between the layers. Install and compact 14 inches of ROC subbase, then pave.	\$136,155
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One bid has been received thus far; others are in progress. Ideally, the project will take place in July. Willson Cummer voiced concern about how involved Terry will be in comparing the bids, since none of us has experience in this area. The Vestry will need to approve the contract, with the May 19th Vestry meeting likely devoted to this matter. The idea of holding a meeting earlier in the month, via ZOOM, was put forward.

A question was raised about the status of the Marriott hotel project. The only information we have is that the potential start of construction has been deferred until 2027 at the earliest.

Resolution 26.04.21.03: Repairs to Sacristy Hallway. This matter was brought to the Vestry by the Wardens and the Building and Grounds Committee. Although the Sacristy Hallway roof was replaced during the Open Doors renovations, damage to the exterior walls from leaks in the previous roof were not repaired as part of Open Doors. The most serious damage can be seen on the outside of the masonry block wall, where the 'parge coat' (waterproof cement coating) has disintegrated. To remedy this, the north exterior wall needs to be waterproofed, and broken drywall inside the hallway needs to be replaced. Without these repairs, it's possible additional moisture could seep into the Hallway. Bill Pitcher, chair of Building and Grounds, has obtained a bid for these repairs.

Fr. Philip called for a motion on Resolution 26.04.21.03: Resolved, the Vestry of St. Paul's approves the expenditure of \$5,457.25 for repairs to the exterior and interior of the Sacristy Hallway. The motion was entered by Willson Cummer, seconded by Amy Mangram. In response to questions, Fr. Philip explained that the repair will be done by an individual recommended by Bill Pitcher, and that a comparable bid by Drulyk was \$9,000. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Vestry Mailboxes. For decades, Vestry members have had mailboxes in the hallway near the Rector's office. The use of these mailboxes has declined in recent years, raising the question of whether they are necessary. The consensus was that these no longer need to be maintained. Going forward, only the Rector and Wardens will have mailboxes.

Treasurer's Report

Resolution 26.04.21.01: Haiti Education Mission. Georgette Schmidt, HEM Chairperson, is preparing an application to be submitted to the Diocese of Central New York Global Mission Committee, requesting a grant of \$3,500. The purpose of the grant is for the construction of two latrine/toilets that are used by students and adults in the village of Paulette, Haiti, and during mobile medical clinics. Per the Diocesan guidelines, HEM has raised the \$3,500 to serve as a match for the request. The Diocesan Global Mission Committee has supported HEM with grants in 2024 and 2025. There is no cost to the St. Paul's budget.

Fr. Philip called for a motion on Resolution 26.04.21.01: Resolved, the Vestry of St. Paul's authorizes Georgette Schmidt to submit a grant application to the Diocesan Global Mission Committee, requesting \$3,500 for the construction of two latrine/toilets in Haiti. The motion was entered by Ieva Doyle, seconded by Willson Cummer. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Speaking for all, Catherine Gerard expressed appreciation to Georgette and those who serve on HEM for their dedication and love for the people of Haiti.

Resolution 26.04.21.02: Management of the 3rd Floor Apartments by Property Management Alliance (PMA). St. Paul's does not have the necessary levels of staff resources to oversee the management of the two apartments on the third floor of the Parish House. Treasurer Doug Mouncey and Vestry member Tim Cassavaw, who had an extensive career in the real estate industry, have recommended that St. Paul's hire PMA to "manage, operate, control, rent, and lease the property known as 310 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202."

Tim highlighted several of the terms in the PMA agreement, including duration, fees, and responsibilities of both parties. A question was raised about the expected monthly rental income, to which Doug replied, "\$5,000 between the two units." Doug went on to explain that this income will be used to pay back what had been borrowed from endowment funds.

Fr. Philip called for a motion on Resolution 26.04.21.02: Resolved, the Vestry of St. Paul's authorized Fr. Philip Major to sign the Management Agreement with Property Management Alliance. The motion was entered by Joe Russo, seconded by Isiah Lavender. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously with 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Financial Overview (January 1 through April 6, 2026). Treasurer Doug Mouncey expressed concerns about the expense side of church operations. Gas utility expenses are already 78.6% of the annual budget for that item. Contracted services (which include snow removal) are already at 61.47% of the annual budget for that item. Contracted services will have increased expenses once the security and fire alarm monitoring begins. On the upside, Doug projects some amount of savings in this year's budget due to the delay in hiring a part-time custodian to replace the contracted cleaning service.

Doug explained that the Finance Committee will be addressing cashflow issues that will begin in 2027. Most of the Open Doors campaign funds will have been received by the end of 2026, and

we will need cash to continue repaying the loan to the Diocesan Foundation and to pay for repairs to the parking lot.

The Finance Committee's annual investment review meeting with Key Bank is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13 at 2:30 pm. Vestry members are welcome to attend. Doug indicated that we need to conduct an internal audit by September 1, as required by the Diocese. He is looking for someone to be trained to head this up.

In response to a question about what other major repairs might be in our future, Fr. Philip indicated he was not aware of any. He commented that the continuing fine debris falling into the Nave above the baptismal font and peace altar indicates there is an issue with water penetration, which is likely due to failures in the flashing, not in the roof itself. Repairs to these two areas would be a moderate expense, likely within the scope of our annual church budget.

Isiah Lavender asked whether St. Paul's had investigated whether it is eligible to participate in National Grid's Community Solar program to receive credits on electricity bills. He will send information to Doug.

Quick Review of Model #6

At the March 21st Vestry retreat, Fr. Philip had presented The College for Congregational Development's model of church characteristics, based on membership size (Model #6). Because this was the first full business meeting attended by our newest Vestry members, Fr. Philip wanted to briefly revisit this model to illustrate how its characteristics are evident at St. Paul's.

On the basis of 75-200 members, St. Paul's would be considered a "middle sized" church. However, we exhibit characteristics of a "large church" (150-400 members) through our organizational structure and roles. That is, we have an elected board (the Vestry) which sets policy, but has subgroups (committees, task forces, etc.) to which it can delegate work.

Warden's Report

Junior Warden Joe Russo explained that throughout the St. Paul's property, there are numerous examples of rooms, hallways, and objects named in honor of people who once served or were affiliated with the church in various ways. What we don't have is a policy for memorials and donations to guide the naming, purpose, and duration. Joe is heading up a task force to draft a policy, and he is looking for volunteers to assist. Without hesitation, three Vestry members agreed to serve: Joseph von Souder, Amy Mangram, and Jeanne Chu.

Calendar, Compline and Adjournment

Fr. Philip briefly reviewed the calendar, noting that he will be on vacation for the entire month of June. In his absence, the Wardens will convene the June Vestry meeting.

At the conclusion of Compline, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry