

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church – Syracuse, NY
Vestry Meeting Minutes, September 9, 2025
DRAFT #3 FINAL
Brewster Room

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

Excused: Doug Mouncey, Treasurer & Sandi Yingling, Assistant Treasurer

Guest: Joseph von Souder

Fr. Philip called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm. After an opening prayer, he welcomed Joseph von Souder.

Approval of Minutes

In advance of the meeting, minutes from the August 12, 2025 Vestry meeting were distributed as Draft #3, with corrections from earlier drafts highlighted. With no further changes needed, Joe Russo entered a motion to accept Draft #3 as the final version of the minutes. Following a second by Ieva Doyle, the motion passed unanimously, with no one opposed or abstaining.

Rector’s Report

Fr. Philip began by contrasting the major roof repair project of 1995, when St. Paul’s had around 500 members, with the soon-to-be-completed, multi-faceted Open Doors construction projects at a time when St. Paul’s has a membership of around 100. In both instances, faith and grace are evident in abundance, and yet one cannot help but marvel and give thanks to God for what a smaller number of people has been able to accomplish!

Open Doors Construction Update. Fr. Philip commented that, with Doug Mouncey on vacation, he and Betsy Elkins are actively monitoring the progress of several major, concurrent projects, most notably: the completion of roof repairs; the re-set of the Hansen Dining Room; the completion of the toilet rooms; and the removal of the dumpster from the parking lot. Ideally, all these projects will be completed prior to September 27-28, the first weekend in a series of Syracuse Orchestra Casual Concerts to be held at St. Paul’s. Also critically time-sensitive is the installation of the Open Doors Donor Wall prior to the ribbon-cutting event on October 17.

In response to a question about the status of the water heater project approved at the August Vestry meeting, Fr. Philip confirmed that the new water heater serving the kitchen and three toilet rooms off the Sargent Foyer was installed. The one that will serve the toilet rooms near the church office is ready to be installed after the Open Doors project is completed.

Bicentennial Steering Committee Update. BSC Co-Chair Anita Wagner provided a brief update about Bicentennial goal-setting, based on the chart below.

GOAL	for the PAST	for the PRESENT	for the FUTURE
<i>Expressed as 1 word:</i>	Honoring	Celebrating	Future-facing
<i>Expressed as 2 words:</i>	Express gratitude	Build community	Inspire growth
<i>Expanded as:</i>	Honor the faith of those who have come before us	Celebrate the love	Share the joy with more people

- The need to establish goals was based on advice from the Bicentennial Committee at St. James’ Church in Skaneateles “to be clear on what you hope to accomplish. That way, you can assess ideas for events and projects in the context of your goals.”
- The inter-related “past, present, future” aspects of a bicentennial provide a framework for goals. Keeping the goals succinct makes them easier to remember.
- Rather than *measurable* goals, these are *aspirational* goals, representing how the people of St. Paul’s might feel after all the Bicentennial events, displays, service projects, and more have occurred. Jeanne Chu observed that these goals are also *inspirational*, pointing us to the future.
- Through work on SPC’s Bicentennial logo, theme, and goals, the BSC has come to realize what a unique opportunity our Bicentennial is for sharing the love of Christ and to get the word out about St. Paul’s.

In response to questions, Bicentennial Events Task Force Chair Joe Moorman spoke to the span of SPC’s Bicentennial year (May 2026 through Easter 2027). He also described two major events set for May 2026 – a large community event on May 16, and a congregational event on May 22 (the founding date of St. Paul’s Church). Fr. Philip explained that the BSC’s work has, thus far, been low-key, in deference to the Open Doors project. He noted that the BSC has been meeting monthly since February 2025, and all eight task forces are underway.

Rector’s Job Description. Fr. Philip deferred consideration of the revised Rector’s Job Description to the October Vestry meeting, to allow more time to discuss parking lot repaving options.

Parking Lot Repaving. The irregular surface of the church parking lot and the pooling of water create hazards for walking and parking. The parking lot is also substantially below the new entrance to the Sargent Foyer through the west wall of the building. Landscape Architect Terry

Horst has provided St. Paul's with four options for replacing and repairing the parking lot, summarized as follows:

- Option A: \$224,550 ~ Excavate the parking lot to 8 feet in depth. Backfill with gravel, compact the materials, and then pave. (*Estimated lifespan = 25 years*)
- Option B: \$136,155 ~ 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. (*Estimated lifespan = 15 years*)
- Option C: \$92,437 ~ Remove asphalt and 9 inches subgrade. Lay fabric to reduce movement between the layers. Install and compact 9 inches of ROC subbase, then pave. (*Estimated lifespan = no guarantee, since there is no compaction of the lower level.*)
- Option D: \$305,651 ~ This option includes all the steps described in Option A, and uses the parking lot as a stormwater basin to receive the water from the roof of the church.

Fr. Philip explained that these are landscape architect estimates, not contractor estimates. He noted that the cost of Option D places it out of bounds for us, plus it introduces a solution to a theoretical situation that is not the Vestry's concern at this time. While out-of-scope, Terry Horst had included it in Option D, so that we are aware it could be done along with the primary project.

Fr. Philip indicated that Bill Pitcher, Chair of the Building & Grounds Committee, recommends Option A. Based on the information provided, most of the Vestry preferred Option B. The reasoning was that, with the passage of approximately 45 years, one hopes settlement and compaction have occurred naturally.

For safety and liability reasons, Fr. Philip would like to press ahead to see if it is feasible to get this work done in 2025. To give everyone a chance to briefly express their thoughts, Fr. Philip called on each Vestry member in turn. Concerns fell into three broad categories:

Scheduling. Given that this is September, can this project be scheduled and accomplished in 2025? How long does each option take? Even if it's just two weeks of work, contractors may already be fully booked up until November, when most asphalt companies shut down for the winter. Plus, we do not know when the construction dumpster will be removed from the parking lot. Can we obtain the necessary permits from the City of Syracuse in time? For these reasons, should this project be deferred to next year? Perhaps a more realistic goal for completing this project is prior to the May 16, 2026 Bicentennial celebration date.

Financing. We had budgeted \$60,000 this year for parking lot improvements, of which approximately \$10,000 had been expended for core sampling by Kenney Geotechnical Engineering Services (\$3,750) and for replacement proposals, prepared by Landscape Architect Terry Horst (\$6,550). To proceed with any of the replacement options, we need far more than the \$50,000 remaining. We need guidance from the Finance Committee regarding the three options (A, B, C) under consideration, and potential financing.

Project Details. The rationale for the difference in excavation depth (Option A is 8 feet and Option B is 18 inches) needs to be explained. Will digging down 8 feet unearth asbestos left

over from the Eckel Theater demolition, which would delay the project? For this amount of money, we need to have the proposal explained clearly in layman's terms, with time to ask questions.

After everyone had commented, Fr. Philip called for a resolution to provide direction to the Building & Grounds Committee, working in concert with the Finance Committee. Tim Cassavaw put forth the following Resolution:

Resolution 25.09.09.01: Resolved, the Vestry directs Bill Pitcher, as Chair of the Building & Grounds Committee, to further investigate Option B, with the goal of meeting in-person with Landscape Architect Terry Horst to explain the project work and provide up to two contractor-authored cost proposals, at the Vestry meeting on October 14, 2025.

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

In the ensuing discussion, everyone voiced a willingness to attend a specially-called Vestry meeting, if the October 14th date is not possible. Further, the desire was expressed for a contractor to attend the meeting to answer questions.

Treasurer's Report

Fr. Philip asked for questions stemming from the Treasurer's Report, compiled August 27, just prior to Treasurer Doug Mouncey's vacation. With no questions or comments raised, the report was received as submitted.

Warden's Report

Long-term Work on Church Security. Senior Warden Joe Moorman indicated that the Executive Ministry Team (EMT) is developing proposals for stronger Sunday worship security, given growing concerns about active shooters entering places of worship. St. Paul's will soon have two main entrances where people can enter for worship – from Fayette Street and the parking lot. Joe has learned that the Sheriff's Office can provide personnel to lead an active shooter drill so that the congregation knows what to do, in the event of an active shooter incident. With the new security system, St. Paul's will have more camera coverage to monitor building access during the week.

Development of Naming Policy. The EMT has also taken up St. Paul's policy on naming areas within the church. During the consultation with Sacred Spaces as part of the Open Doors project, we learned that it is advisable to set a time limit (e.g., 25 years) and that the monetary donation should be quite a large amount. The purpose of restricting naming activities to exceptionally large gifts is to help prevent conflicts within the congregation regarding the individuals being honored.

Junior Warden Ieva Doyle advised that this will likely take some time to figure out. Several points were raised for the EMT to consider:

- Why is financial the only consideration? What about hours of service over a prolonged period?
- What is to be achieved by naming something?
- Our existing collection of ‘Naming Plaques’ is quite haphazard. We need a written policy that defines the size and material for any future plaques.

Open Doors Donor Wall Update. Joe Moorman reported that Catherine Gerard and Cathy Wolff recently visited Margie Hughto’s studio in Jamesville to see the work-in-progress. From photos projected, we saw samples of the name tiles and glazed tiles of varying sizes and subjects, modeled after what is in the sanctuary. In a word, the reaction expressed to these photos was “AWESOME!” Margie and her team are clearly committed to the project, and are intent on completing the installation in time for the Open Doors ribbon-cutting event.

Calendar and Compline

With no comments or clarifications needed on the calendar, the meeting concluded with Compline, ending at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita Wagner, Clerk of the Vestry