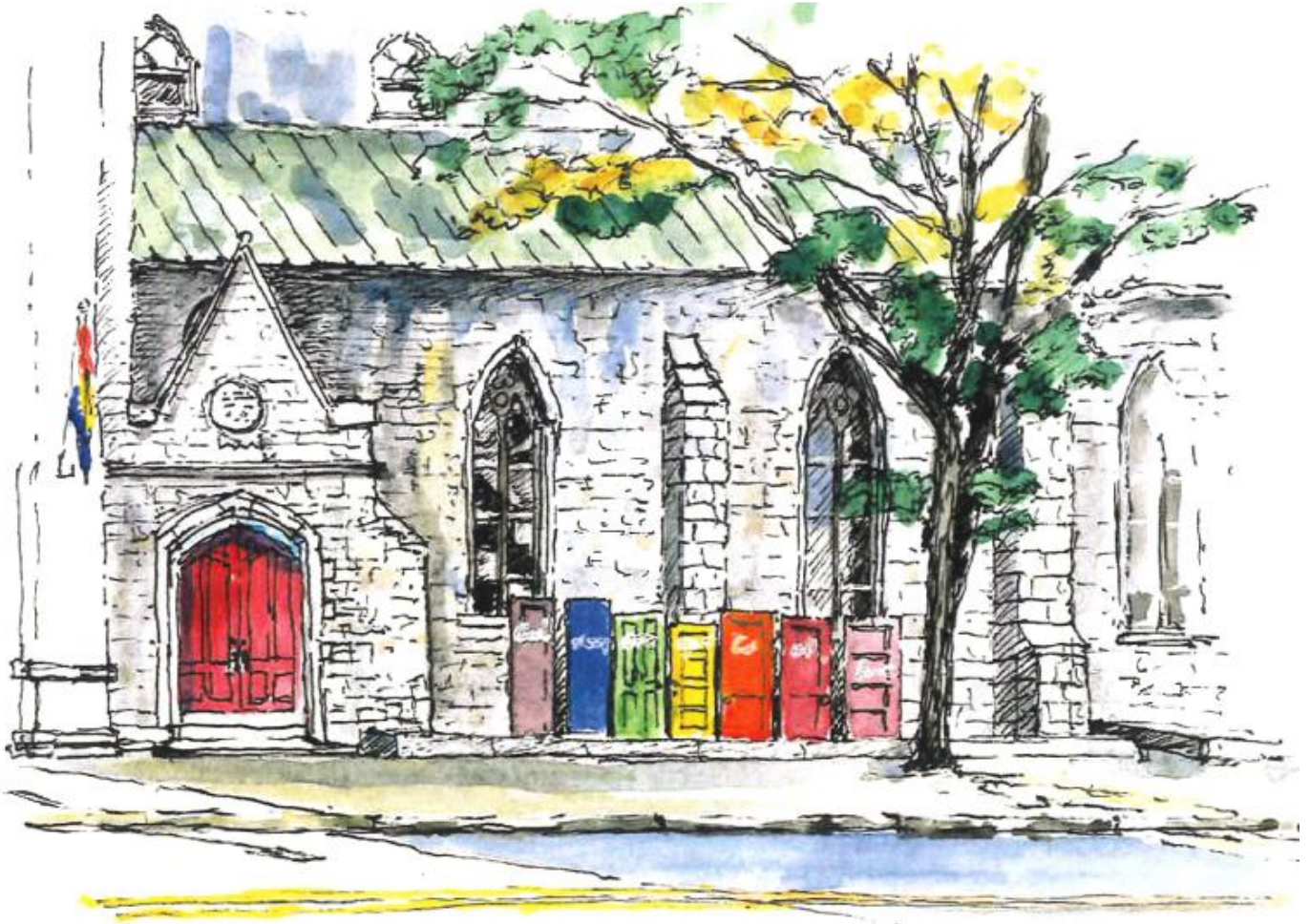




St. Paul's
Syracuse

The Downtown
Episcopal Church



"GOD'S DOORS ARE OPEN TO ALL. LOVE

W. ELKINS

DECEMBER 14, 2025
8:00 AM & 10:00 AM
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Understanding Episcopal Liturgy

#9. What is the reason our Gospel lesson comes from Matthew almost every week?

There are four Gospels, yet most weeks of the coming year our Gospel lesson will come from the Gospel of Matthew. That's because our scripture readings are not chosen by the priest, or by anyone else at St. Paul's. For centuries, leaders of Episcopal, Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches have arranged scripture readings in a systematic way, which is called a *Lectionary*. The idea behind a *Lectionary* is to systematically make our way through much of the Old and New Testaments in a three-year cycle.

If you attend Sunday worship each week, over the course of three years, you will hear most of the New Testament and almost half of the Old Testament. This three-year cycle is designated with three letters: A, B and C. The arrangement of Gospel lessons over the three years is easy to see. In Year A, most of our Gospel readings are from Matthew. In Year B, most of our Gospel readings are from Mark. In Year C, most of our Gospel readings are from Luke. Each year, we read portions of the Gospel of John in the weeks before and after Easter.

Year A began with the first Sunday of Advent, on November 30th, and will continue until the Sunday before Thanksgiving, next November. Beginning the first Sunday of Advent, at the end of November in 2026, we will begin Year B, and our Gospel readings will be from Mark.

If you have a question about something in our liturgy, I will be happy to answer it. Please ask in person, or send an email to me at revmajor@stpaulsyr.org.

Fr. Philip +



**HEARING LOOP
INSTALLED**

Switch Hearing Aid to T-Coil

ORDER OF SERVICE

*Our morning worship begins with the first note of the organ prelude
and your silent prayers. Please refrain from conversations during this time.*

ORGAN VOLUNTARY: *Pastorale*

H. Hugh Bancroft (1904-1988)

The people are invited to stand.

HYMN 640 • "Watchman, tell us of the night"

Aberystwyth

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Celebrant † Blessed are you, holy, and living One:
People **You come to your people and set them free.**

CANTICLE HYMN 56 • "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (v 5&6)

Veni, veni Emmanuel

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Please be seated.

LESSON • Isaiah 11:1-10

Lector A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!"

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
 and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
 then the lame shall leap like a deer,
 and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
 and streams in the desert;
 the burning sand shall become a pool,
 and the thirsty ground springs of water;
 the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
 the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
 A highway shall be there,
 and it shall be called the Holy Way;
 the unclean shall not travel on it,
 but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
 No lion shall be there,
 nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
 they shall not be found there,
 but the redeemed shall walk there.
 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
 and come to Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain joy and gladness,
 and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

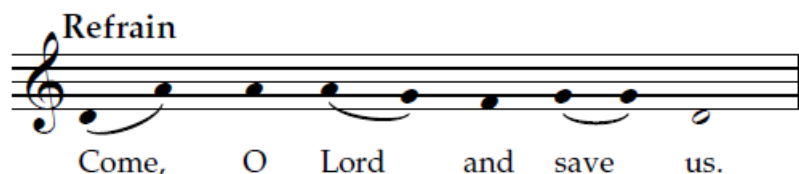
Lector
People

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
Thanks be to God.

THE RESPONSE –

Psalm 146: *Lauda, anima mea*

Mode 1



Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! whose hope is in the LORD their God; Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps his promise for ever; Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. **Refrain**

The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; the LORD cares for the stranger; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked. **Refrain**

The LORD shall reign for ever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah! **Refrain**

EPISTLE • James 5:7-10

Lector

A reading from the letter of James.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be

judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Lector
People

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
Thanks be to God.

The people are invited to stand.

GRADUAL HYMN 65 • "Prepare the way, O Zion"

Bereden väg för Herran

HOLY GOSPEL • Matthew 11:2-11

Celebrant
People
Celebrant

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Celebrant
People

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

The Rev. Philip Major

A brief silence follows the sermon.

The people are invited to stand.

NICENE CREED

The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo, translated here as "we believe." Credo is not simply belief in accurate propositions, but more deeply a sense of relationship or trust—an alternate translation might be "we give our heart," "we trust," "we rely upon." Developed in the fourth century as a means of unifying a divided church, the Nicene Creed has been used by Christians in

worship for almost two thousand years, and connects us to our ancient ancestors in the Communion of Saints. The Creed is used in worship not because it comprises a list of doctrinal statements one must affirm in order to be considered a Christian, but rather as a song of praise and confidence in the Holy Trinity: God in three persons who creates, redeems and sanctifies a holy people.

All

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:

by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,

and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Please remain standing.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Give thanks for the blessings we enjoy, our life here at St. Paul's, for the material things that allow us to live well, and for the company of relatives and friends we love.

We pray for the Holy Catholic Church, both the West and the East, as renewed efforts are made to overcome the split between Western Christianity and the Orthodox churches of Eastern Christianity. May the divisions of the past come to an end. Pray for Sean, our Presiding Bishop; DeDe, our bishop; Joseph and Ieva, our Wardens, and for Philip, our Rector.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

Good Lord, bless our nation and enlighten our leaders, especially in the national government, when they exercise their authority. We pray that nowhere do officials yield to the temptations of money, power, vengeance or vanity. Grant grace to our mayor, our governor, our Congressional representatives, our courts and our President.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Earth, our only home, for the great harvests we enjoy and the beauty of Central New York, its towns, farms and forests. Strive to protect Nature everywhere, and to deal with predicted climate changes that can make new parts of the world uninhabitable.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

We ask for the help of the God of Jacob who loves the righteous and frustrates the way of the wicked. Protect those bowed down by war and destruction, especially in Ukraine, where so many cities and towns are in ruins and so many have fled the country. Protect the lives of those taken prisoner and those who have been kidnapped.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

We remember those who suffer, who are in some kind of pain: from illness, loneliness, injustice, cruelty or hunger. Here at St. Paul's we pray for *n.* and for those you know of, saying their names aloud or in your heart.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

May God be merciful to all who have died. We pray especially for those people we have loved and are gone from our lives. Yet they still live in our hearts, for they were kind, and they loved us. We remember those for whom no one prays, in the hope that they, too, are among the saints. Today we remember *n.* and those you name aloud or in your heart.

The people add their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Stir up your power, O Lord: **And hear our prayer.**

The Celebrant adds a concluding prayer.

CONFESSION

The people are invited to sit / kneel.

Officiant Let us confess our sins to God.

All **God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

ABSOLUTION

Officiant † Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

All **Amen.**

The people are invited to stand

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

LITURGY OF THE TABLE

The bread and wine for communion and the offering plates are brought forward at the beginning of the offertory.

OFFERTORY

*At the Offertory, we return thanks for God's blessings in our lives and invite you to place your contribution in the offering plate in the main aisle or give by texting 73256 entering **stpaulsyr** (all lower case) and the amount you want to give.*



Celebrant All things come of Thee, O Lord.

People **And of thine own have we given thee.**

The People are invited to sit.

AN ANTHEM “People, look East”

Besançon Carol, arr. by Craig Phillips (b.1962)

People, look East. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the guest is on the way. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the

rose, is on the way. Birds, though ye long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are frozen, He for fledging time has chosen. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the bird is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth, Christ who brings new life to earth. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

The people are invited to stand

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, Eucharist Prayer B

Celebrant *People*
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Celebrant *People*
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Celebrant It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth . . . Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

8:00 **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

10:00 **Hymnal S-124**

David Hurd (b.1950)

Celebrant We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for

you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

All Therefore, according to his command, O Father

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

Celebrant And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Celebrant As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen..**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The breaking of the bread symbolizes the activity whereby God emptied Godself of divine power for purpose of reconciling Godself with us. We have no words to accurately describe this divine activity, thus a period of 10-15 seconds of silence is kept following the breaking of the bread and before the singing of the Fraction Anthem.

FRACTION

8:00

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore, let us keep the feast, Alleluia.**

10:00 Hymnal S-154

From *New Plainsong*; David Hurd (b.1950)

The people are invited to be seated.

You are invited to consume the consecrated bread immediately after you receive it. If you choose to receive the wine, drink directly from the cup. Gluten-free wafers are available. Please ask the communion minister. The sacrament of communion is complete if the bread or wine is received; it is not necessary to receive both.

During the distribution of communion, Prayers for Healing and Wholeness may be offered at the Peace Altar.

AT THE COMMUNION • "Joseph dearest, Joseph mine"

German, 15th century

COMMUNION HYMN • 336 “Come with us, O blessed Jesus”

Werde munter

The People are invited to stand.

Officiant Let us pray.

All **God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

BLESSING

HYMN 76 • “On Jordan’s bank the Baptists cry”

Winchester New

DISMISSAL

People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE • *Fanfare*

William Mathias (1934-1992)

*Any music reprinted in the leaflet and streamed is under ©OneLicense A-72637
Prayers of the People were written by St. Paul’s prayer leaders.*

Please Keep These People in Your Prayers:

Destany W., Anne D., and Stephanie B.

We remember those who have died in recent days.

The greens on the altar are given to the glory of God, and by Lawrence Root in memory of his Parents Louise K. Root & Earl C. Root; and by the Williamson Flower Fund in memory of LaUna & Edward Williamson, Edith E. & W.C.R. Williamson given by Gary Sr., Donna, Gary Jr. and Verescak.

Our thanks today for the...

Altar Guild: Ruth Brown & Ellyn Hass

Lay Reader: Barbara Bell / Margaret Sherwin

Ushers: Joe Russo / Ieva & Jim Doyle

Flowers: Flower Guild

Announcements

* (Most of) our Bicentennial Gear has arrived! Payment in the form of cash, or a personal check, is due when you pick up your merchandise, in the Brewster Room following worship.

* Christmas flowers will be delivered this week to members who are unable to attend St. Paul's in person. If you are making a delivery, please pick up your plants in the Hansen Dining Room today following worship.

* Christmas Altar Flower Memorials are due on Monday, December 15th. Please see the December *Courier* for more information.

* Annual Reports are due on Tuesday, December 16th. Please send the final version of your report to Judy in *Word* or another commonly used format at offices@stpaulsyr.org.

* Wednesday, December 17th we will deliver Christmas plants to our neighbors at the YMCA Senior Apartments. Please contact Debbie Bogan if you are able to help.

* Please join us following 10 a.m. worship next Sunday, December 21st for the Greening of the Nave! It's fun and the church looks beautiful when we are finished!



The Christmas Season at St. Paul's Syracuse

We Hope You Will Join Us

**Wednesday, December 24th 4:00 p.m.
Family Christmas Service**

**Wednesday, December 24th 9:00 p.m.
Christmas Choral Service**

**Thursday, December 25th 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Day Service**



Officers

Senior Warden: Joe Moorman
Junior Warden: Ieva Doyle
Treasurer: Doug Mouncey
Assistant Treasurer: Sandi Yingling
Clerk of the Vestry: Anita Wagner

2025

Vestry & Team Leaders

2025: Matthieu van der Meer, Harry Lambright, Barbara Bell
2026: Jeanne Chu, Tim Cassavaw, DJ Igelsrud
2027: Willson Cummer, Joe Russo, Tim Simmons
Finance Committee Chairperson: David Ridings
Children's Ministry Leader: Jeanne Avery
Worship Ministry Team Convener: Laurie Sanderson
Formation Ministry Team Convener: Jeanne Avery
Mission & Service Team Convener: Betsy Elkins
Community Fellowship Min. Convener: Elizabeth Belden-Handler
Buildings & Grounds Chair: Bill Pitcher
Office Volunteers: Liz Handler, Kira Dirghalli, Betsy Elkins, Sandi Yingling

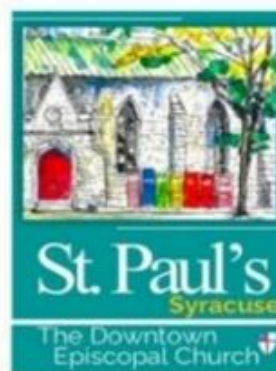
Staff

The Right Reverend Dr. DeDe Duncan Probe, Bishop of Central New York
The Reverend Philip Major, Rector of St. Paul's
James L. Potts, Organist and Choirmaster
Judy McAdoo-Pelton, Operations Manager
Doug Mouncey, Parish Assistant (Volunteer)
Mark King, Technology Assistant
Derek Lane, Security



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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