



The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York
The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe

January 31, 2020

Clergy and Parish Wardens
The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

Dear friends in Christ:

As you are aware, the Diocese of Central New York has been pursuing a disciplinary process under Title IV of our church canons, following an investigation of financial wrongdoing on the part of Joell Szachara, a former rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in New Hartford. On January 27, 2020, that process was concluded by the signing of an Accord between me, as the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese, and Joell Szachara.

Under the terms of the Accord, I have deposed Ms. Szachara; she is no longer a priest in The Episcopal Church. In addition, the Accord holds Ms. Szachara responsible to "reimburse St. Stephen's Episcopal Church for all sums she has misappropriated from the church..." that amount being "no less than \$150,000.00." In keeping with the church's disciplinary process, a copy of the Accord will be sent to all bishops and standing committees of The Episcopal Church.

As you are also aware, in October our diocesan chancellors and the vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in New Hartford turned over all materials relevant to Ms. Szachara's theft to law enforcement officials, and we will continue to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in this matter.

While the signing of this Accord ends the church's disciplinary process, it does not end our shared story as the body of Christ—God's story of accountability, redemption, and restoration. I ask your continued prayers for the people of St. Stephen's Church, for Joell Szachara and her family, and for all who have felt the impact of this grave wrongdoing and betrayal of trust. Together, we have endured pain and disappointment, yet God is at work in our midst, calling us forward in integrity, faith, and hope. I remain grateful for and inspired by the people of St.

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Stephen's Church, the wisdom and witness of the diocesan leaders who have continued to walk alongside them, and the presence and loving support of this precious diocesan community. Above all, I am grateful to God and for the never-failing love of Christ.

And so, dear friends, let us continue to pray, determined to "live lives worthy of our calling" (Ephesians 4:1). Let us continue to trust in God's grace that sustains us through all the "changes and chances of this life." We will not be deterred from our focus on sharing the love of Jesus.

With blessings of peace for the journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DeDe Duncan-Probe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "P".

The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe
Bishop of Central New York

DDP/mks

CC Members of the Standing Committee & Diocesan Board, Jonathan Fellows, Esq., Martha Berry, Esq., the Rev. Canon Carrie Schofield-Broadbent, Meredith Kadet Sanderson, Kathleen McDaniel