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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release on September 22, 2009

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D.A. DONOVAN: FORMER PASTOR OF STATEN ISLAND EPISCOPAL CHURCH PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING OVER \$84,000 FROM CONGREGATION

******Rev. William Blasingame Pleads Guilty to Felony Charge, Will Serve 5 Years Probation, Pay Restitution******

STATEN ISLAND, NY - Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. today announced Reverend William Blasingame (DOB: 10/27/1942) of Vanderbilt Avenue, the former pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, has entered a plea of guilty to the top charge against him, Grand Larceny in the 2nd Degree, a Class C felony, for stealing \$84,537.54 from his church. As part of the plea agreement, the defendant will be sentenced on November 18, 2009 to 5 years of probation and pay restitution to the church for the full amount of misappropriated funds. The sentence will be imposed by Judge Alan J. Meyer, who presided at today's guilty plea.

According to District Attorney Donovan, the defendant was arrested on April 3, 2009 following an investigation by the District Attorney's NYPD Detective Squad determined that the former pastor had stolen funds for his personal use from church accounts intended for the upkeep of the church grounds as well as a discretionary account to assist the poor and needy.

District Attorney Donovan stated, "In these types of cases, our top priority is to see that our victims are made financially whole and that the offender has incentive to not engage in criminal activity. As part of this top-count plea, the defendant has admitted his guilt, will make full restitution to the St. Paul's community, serve 5 years of probation and have a felony conviction on his record. I believe this plea serves the best interest of justice in allowing the congregation to maintain their beautiful facilities and continue to help the less fortunate among us."

The case against William Blasingame was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney David Frey, Head of the Computer and Technology Investigations Unit, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mario F. Mattei, Chief of the Investigations Bureau. The defendant was represented by James Hasson, Esq.

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