

Filmmakers release trailer for 'The Philadelphia Eleven,' hope to raise funds to finish film

by [Episcopal News Service Staff](#)

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(Video screengrab)

The producers of a documentary on the [11 women who broke down barriers](#) in the Episcopal Church to become its first female priests have released a trailer for the film, as they work to raise the remaining money needed to complete it in time for the 50th anniversary of the church milestone next year.

Hundreds signed up for an online sneak peak of *The Philadelphia Eleven* in June 2022, and the official trailer for the full-length documentary was first revealed March 10 in Jacksonville, Florida, at the annual conference of the Episcopal Parish Network. It now can be viewed on [Time Travel Productions's Vimeo channel](#).

In 1974, no canon specifically forbid women from becoming priests in the Episcopal Church, but diocesan standing committees and bishops to that point had almost uniformly rejected women's requests for ordination to the priesthood. Instead, [three](#)

[retired bishops agreed to ordain the 11 women](#) on July 29, 1974, without the approval of diocesan leadership.

Church leaders debated the validity of the women's ordinations for two years until the general convention approved a new section of the church's ordination canons in September 1976 saying its provisions "shall be equally applicable to men and women."

Director and producer Margo Guernsey along with co-producer Nikki Bramley interviewed the [six of the Philadelphia who are still living](#) for the documentary, as well as Betty Bone Schiess before she died in 2017, and Alison Cheek, who died in 2019.

Guernsey and Bramley launched a [new fundraising campaign](#) timed to Women's History Month. Much of the remaining fundraising is needed to cover the costs of licensing the archival footage that will appear in the final cut of the documentary.  
—Episcopal News Service