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Living large, but no longer in charge in New York

by Tom Gallagher

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Well, at least for the next two years he is still in charge, as the *New York Post* reports.

The controversial rector and CEO of Wall Street's Trinity Church has given his flock two years' notice that he is stepping down.

The Rev. James Cooper, who draws \$1.3 million in salary and perks, is disliked by many for his leadership priorities and is accused in a lawsuit of rigging a church election so he could pack its governing board with his cronies.

Church leaders say Cooper's drawn-out departure will give them time to find a suitable new leader to oversee the church and its \$1 billion in Manhattan real estate.

But some in his congregation say he isn't leaving soon enough.

"The Pope is leaving in two weeks. Why does the Rector need two years?" asked Jeremy Bates, who is disputing the outcome of last year's election in a lawsuit filed this week in Manhattan Supreme Court.

Cooper, 68, was unrepentant in the letter announcing his planned departure. He claimed that the church operates "with increased transparency." "I am proud of the work we have accomplished," Cooper wrote.

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