

ST. MARY'S MESSENGER

JUNE 2025

TEXAS HOUSE PASSES BILL REQUIRING TEN COMMANDMENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Texas lawmakers moved another step closer to requiring the Ten Commandments be displayed in all Texas public school classrooms after the state House passed [Senate Bill 10](#).

The measure passed in the House 82 to 46 and needs another vote before moving back to the Senate due to amendments...

[Continues in State News, Page 8.](#)

CALVIN ROBINSON RECEIVES A ONE- YEAR LICENSE

The Rev. Calvin Robinson, the provocative social-media figure, has been licensed as a minister for one year by Bishop Ray Sutton of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Sutton granted the license on May 5.

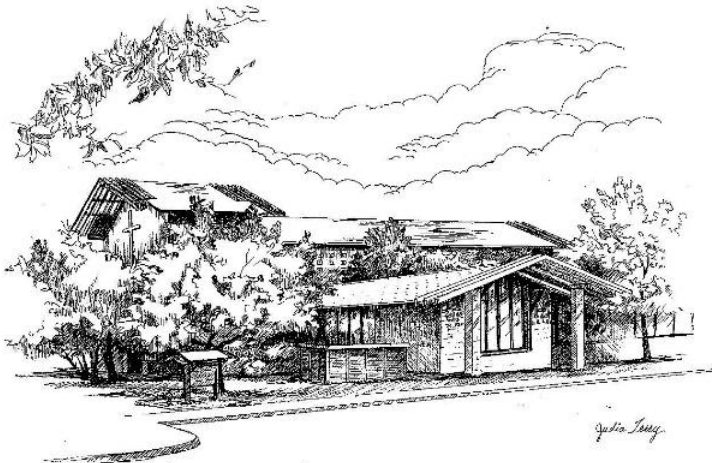
Robinson was removed from public ministry by the Anglican Catholic Church earlier this year after he did a parody of a salute by Elon Musk that opponents of both men compared to a Nazi salute...

[Continues in National News, Page 11.](#)

ARDF SUPPORTS MYANMAR RELIEF EFFORTS

In the wake of the powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck central Myanmar on March 28, 2025, the Church of the Province of Myanmar's Disaster Management Committee (DMC) is providing vital humanitarian assistance to affected communities. Through multi-purpose cash, health, water, and food assistance, the DMC has been able to provide critical support to 454 households. ARDF has partnered with the Province of Myanmar and provided over \$90,000 to help the DMC meet ongoing unmet humanitarian needs

[Continues in International News, Page 20.](#)



ATTENTION ALL CHURCH MEMBERS!

ALTAR FLOWERS

If anyone is interested in furnishing the altar flowers,
please call the church office at 432-267-8201
or email the Parish Secretary at baileys.stmarys@gmail.com.

SERVING SIGNUP

At this time, we are looking for people who are willing to volunteer to serve during the Sunday morning service. There are several positions available for anyone who would like to help.

The positions are:

- Chalice- Serves the cup of wine.
- Lector- Reads the lessons and the psalms, and the Gospel during Morning Prayer.
- Acolyte- Carries the cross and the Gospel, and guards the front.
- Ushers- Welcomes people and direct them as needed

If you are interested, please call the church office or email the Parish Secretary at baileys.stmarys@gmail.com.

The church would also like to thank everyone who does volunteer!

Quiz Question 1:

What is the meaning of Jehovah Shammah?

- A.** Jehova is there
- B.** Jehova is here
- C.** Jehova is near
- D.** Jehova is with us

Riddle answers will be on the last page.

JUNE CALENDAR

1st Seventh Sunday of Easter

8th Day of Pentecost

11th Saint Barnabas the Apostle

15th First Sunday after Pentecost

22nd Second Sunday after Pentecost

24th Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

29th Third Sunday after Pentecost

30th Saint Peter & Saint Paul

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday

10:30 AM- Morning Service

Coffee Hour- Following the service

Wednesday

10:30 AM- Bible Study/Coffee hour

5:30 PM- Evening Prayer

BIRTHDAY WISHES

4th John Moody

5th Lydia Simpson

6th Ben Rubio

23rd Bryan Beal

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

8th Bryan & Shirley Beal

Happy Birthday/Anniversary!!

BARNABAS THE APOSTLE- 11 JUNE NT

BY JAMES KIEFER

The following article has been taken from [James Kiefer's Christian Biographies](#). This article is to highlight the importance of Saint Barnabas the Apostle, who we commemorate on June 11. The picture of St. Barnabas is from [Aleteia](#).

"Joseph, a Levite, born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (son of encouragement), sold a field he owned, brought the money, and turned it over to the apostles." (Acts 4:36f). This is the first mention we have of Barnabas.

His new name fits what we know of his actions. When Saul (or Paul) came to

Jerusalem after his conversion, most of the Christians there wanted nothing to do with him. They had known him as a persecutor and an enemy of the Church. But Barnabas was willing to give him a second chance. He looked him up, spoke

with him, and brought him to see the other Christians, vouching for him. Later, Paul and Barnabas went on a missionary journey together, taking Mark with them. Part way, Mark turned back and went home. When Paul and Barnabas were about to set out on another such journey, Barnabas proposed to take Mark along, and Paul was against it, saying that Mark had shown himself undependable. Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance,

and so he and Mark went off on one journey, while Paul took Silas and went on another. Apparently Mark responded well to the trust given him by the "son of encouragement," since we find that Paul later speaks of him as a valuable assistant (2 Tim 4:11; see also Col 4:10 and Phil 24).

**Prayer** (contemporary language)

Grant, O God, that we may follow the example of your faithful servant Barnabas, who, seeking not his own renown but the well-being of your Church, gave generously of his life and substance for the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

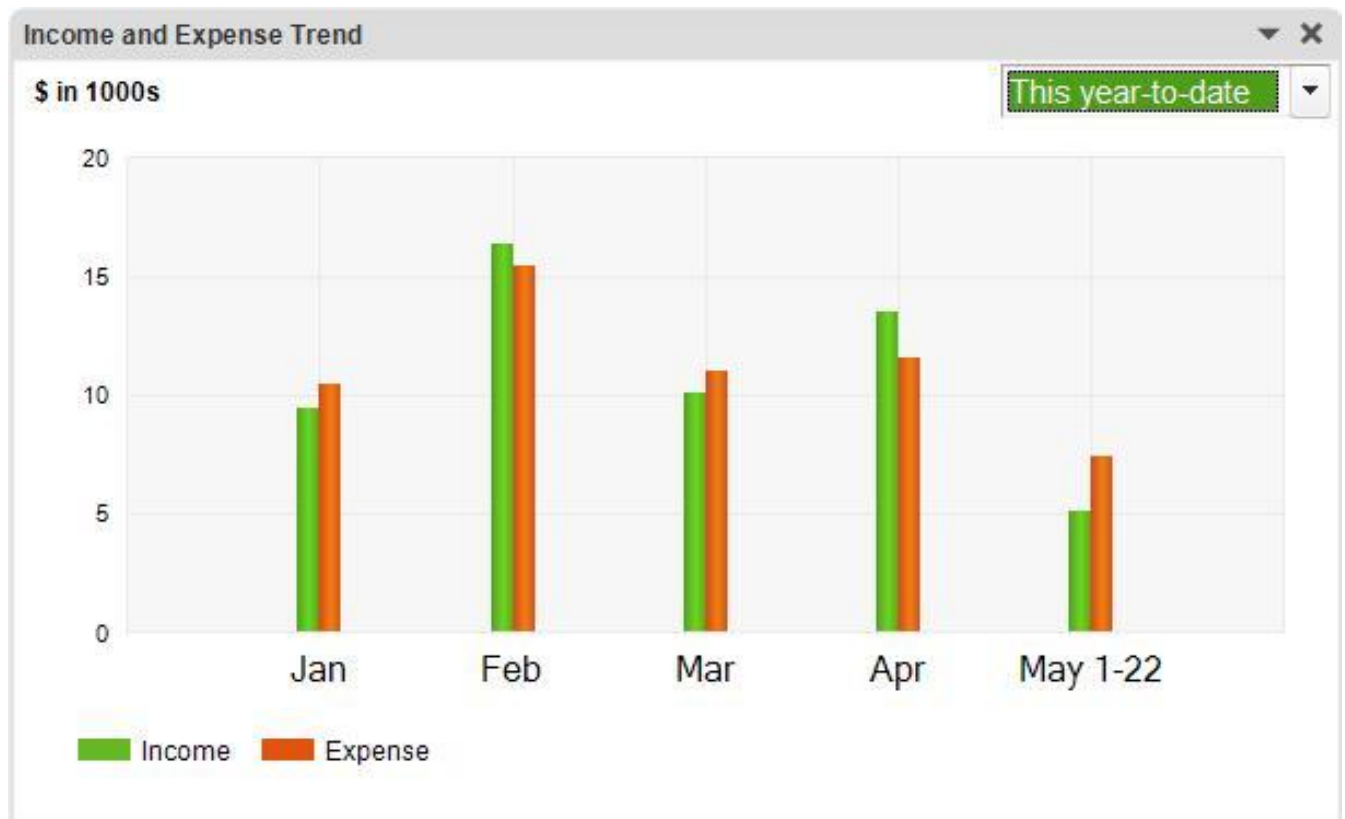
ST. MARY WELCOMES A NEW RECTOR

Starting this June, the Rev. Dr. Christopher Ben Simpson will be St. Mary's newest rector! Fr. Christopher recently moved to Big Spring with his wife, Kaysha, and their daughter, Lydia. The family moved from Lincoln, Illinois where Fr. Christopher was the rector of [Trintiy Episcopal Church](#). Prior to entering the priesthood, Fr. Christopher was a professor of theology and philosophy at Lincoln Christian University for fifteen years.

Fr. Christopher has also authored several scholarly books.

Fr. Christopher's first Sunday to celebrate Holy Eucharist will be on June 8th. There will be a reception held after church in the Parish Hall. We are very thankful and blessed to have Fr. Christopher with us. So please join us in welcoming Fr. Christopher and his family to St. Mary's.

INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT



ON SUNDAY JUNE 8TH, PLEASE WEAR RED IN HONOR OF PENTECOST.

THE STARS AT NIGHT ARE BIG AND BRIGHT DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BECKY TILTON OREM | MAY 15, 2025

This article has been taken from the [NW TX Diocese](#). Becky Tilton Orem is a reverend and deacon at St. Paul's on the Plains Church in Lubbock.

The Stars at Night Are Big and Bright Deep in the Heart of Texas The Stars at Night Are Big and Bright Deep in the Heart of Texas....or at least they are in some places. We, who live in the vast expanse of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, are lucky for many reasons and one is there are still places where you can stargaze without city lights obliterating the heavens. For millennia, human beings have gazed into the firmament and been awed by the thousands of stars, galaxies, nebulae, and other cosmic wonders visible to the naked eye. But in recent generations, much of humanity has become divorced from these marvels. Today, at least 80 percent of people living in the United States and Europe are so inundated with light pollution that they can't even see our own Milky Way, let alone our neighboring galaxies like Andromeda.

Light pollution not only blocks the view of the Milky Way for more than 80 percent of Americans, 99 percent now live under skies with at least some light-pollution impact. Even rural areas, far from major cities, are increasingly affected by small but brightly lit towns, industrial facilities, or other developments. To see truly dark skies, free from any detectable artificial light, one must travel sometimes great distances. Our own Big Bend area and

the Davis Mountains of Texas where the McDonald Observatory is located is one place where the stars are, indeed, big and bright.

According to the University of Texas at Austin's McDonald Observatory and their publication, *Star Date*, "Poor outdoor lighting blots out the universe, impacting science, wildlife, and human health." There are ways that outdoor lighting can illuminate the ground without masking the stars.

Beyond blocking humans views of the stars dark skies are important for the overall health of our ecosystem. Migratory birds are often killed in flight when they are confused and lured off-course flying into sky scrapers sending bright lights into the night sky. Bats, one of our best protection against mosquitoes, can starve to death because of light pollution as they won't fly and search for food when there is constant light. Even mammalian wildlife suffers because of light pollution. There are many predator species that are chiefly nocturnal that are dwindling in numbers because of artificial lighting confusing their circadian rhythms. All of these factors and more can upset the natural biological systems in our environment.

Humans evolved to the rhythms of the natural light/dark cycle of day and night. The proliferation of artificial light at night means most of us no longer experience truly dark nights. Many studies have shown that exposure to artificial light at night negatively affects human health, including increased risk for: Sleep Disorders, Depression, Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Cancer. Recent studies have even linked the lack of a light/dark cycle in human beings to the development of Alzheimer's.

As you can see, there are many reasons to advocate for dark skies. And many sources to help you do this. Not only can you advocate for lighting in your cities that shields the sky directing light to the ground where it is needed. There are ways that we can preserve dark skies in our own backyards. For example, we can direct our patio lighting to the ground in many aesthetically pleasing ways that does not affect the sky or your neighbors views of the sky.

The towns of Marfa, Alpine, and Fort Davis in the Big Bend area have all embraced The Dark Sky Initiative and have ordinances requiring businesses and homes to direct their lights to the ground and not into the night sky. For Alpine this is a source of pride. Even though Alpine is not within the McDonald Observatory area that requires dark sky lighting, as is required in Marfa and Fort Davis, having

lights that comply allows people to just look up anywhere they might be and see the awe inspiring night sky of the Alpine area.

West Texas is far from the only place taking steps to preserve the night sky. Flagstaff, Arizona, with a population of more than 100,000, was named the world's first International Dark Sky City in 2001. Even larger cities, Such as Pittsburgh and Los Angeles County, have taken steps to reduce pollution from city streetlights, citing improved energy efficiency, safer driving conditions, and reduced environmental impact.

Listed below are a few organizations and website you can access for more information about the Dark Skies Initiative: 1. darksky.org; 2. you can participate in the Globe at Night community science project and help measure light-pollution in your area through globeatnight.org; 3. McDonald Observatory's Dark Skies Initiative at give.utexas.edu (keywords: Dark Skies Initiative).

As our Eucharistic Prayer C states, At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth our island home....

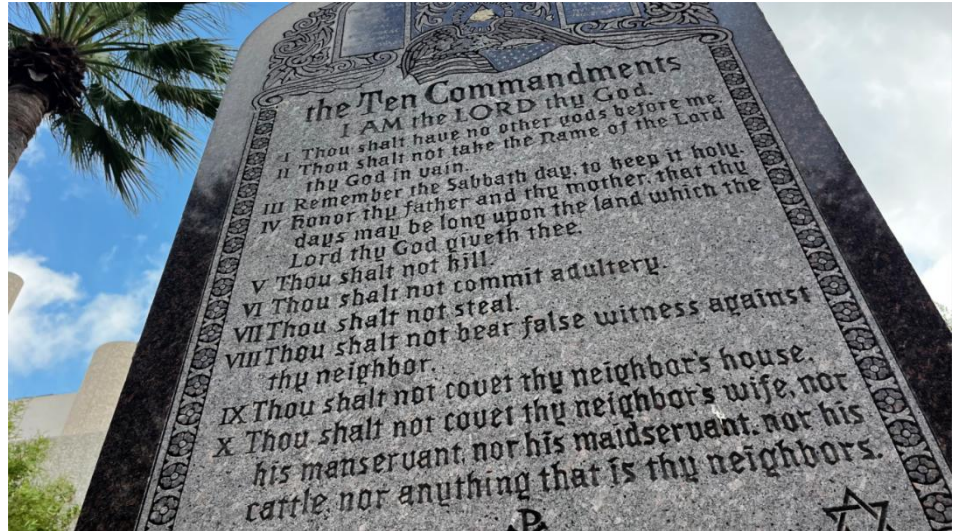
Let us go forth into the world and help save our dark skies!

TEXAS HOUSE PASSES BILL REQUIRING TEN COMMANDMENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

BY TONY JARAMILLO | MAY 26, 2025

The following article and picture have been taken from [KRIS 6 NEWS](#). The picture is of a statue of the Ten Commandments.

[Continued from front page] "My thoughts are yes, I think that's a great idea. We've lost a lot of trust in our school system and those 10 commandments are a great start," said Laine Boyd, who supports the bill.



Senate Bill 10 would require every public school classroom in the state to display the Ten Commandments in a 16 inch by 20 inch high frame, using King James Bible language.

"I'm a proud Christian who opposes mandating Christianity in our Texas public schools. But, there's nothing Christian about mandating Christian ideology in our Texas public schools," said Conor Rice, who opposes the legislation.

If the bill becomes law, schools would be required to implement the displays by September 1, 2025.

Supporters argue the Ten Commandments are foundational to American education and moral values, while opponents worry the bill violates

the separation of church and state and excludes non-Christian students.

"My family, we don't have a problem with it being posted, because that's something we strive for, you know. But then we don't want to step on anybody else's toes. Maybe their set of religious rules don't per se follow that," said Trish Clayton, who describes herself as neutral on the issue.

According to the bill, schools could purchase the displays with district funds but are not required to do so. However, districts must accept private donations that meet the requirements.

If passed by the Senate, the bill will then go to Governor Greg Abbott for his signature.

TEXAS LT. GOV. DAN PATRICK TO LEAD TRUMP'S COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

BY KATHARINE WILSON | MAY 1, 2025

This article and photo have been taken from the [Texas Tribune](#). The photo is of President Donald Trump and Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick speaking during a National Day of Prayer.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has been tapped to chair President Donald Trump's new commission on religious liberty, which was announced during the National Day of Prayer celebration at the White House on Thursday.

"You are restoring the hopes and the prayers of millions upon millions of believers of all faiths," said Patrick, referencing Trump, during a speech at the event.

The commission, according to Trump's [executive order](#), will make a report about threats to religious liberty and strategies to increase awareness of religious pluralism in the country.

This commission is a part of Trump's push to "bring back religion," to the United States. Trump on Thursday touted his pardons of anti-abortion

protesters, the reinstatement of military members who were discharged due to vaccine mandates, creation of a Department of Justice task force to eradicate "anti-Christian bias," and executive order against anti-semitism.

Ben Carson, the Housing and Urban Development Secretary in the first Trump administration, will serve as the commission's vice-chair.

Other [commission members](#) include television host Dr. Phil McGraw, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, various religious leaders, and Kelly Shackelford, the CEO of First Liberty, a Plano-based conservative legal organization.



Commission members will serve at least until July 4, 2026.

Patrick approached Trump with the idea for the commission, Trump said during his speech in the Rose Garden.

Patrick, who was in Washington on Thursday for the announcement, said during his speech that the United States was “birthed by prayer,” and founded on the “Judeo-Christian ethic,” that people can worship without government interference. Patrick accused the Biden administration of having attacked people of faith.

“We have a magnificent inheritance of religious liberty and every believer

today, no matter your faith, has a claim to that inheritance,” Patrick said.

Patrick has long promoted policies to [infuse religion into public life](#), most recently prioritizing legislation that would require the Ten Commandments to be posted in public school classrooms and allow time for prayer in public schools. Patrick has referred to the United States as “a Christian nation” and echoed many of his political allies in arguing that there “is no separation of church and state. It was not in the Constitution.”

“We were a nation founded upon not the words of our founders, but the words of God because he wrote the Constitution,” Patrick [said in 2022](#).

Quiz Question 2:

What was the first miracle performed by Christ?

- A. Healing of the blind man
- B. Feeding of the five thousand
- C. Water turned to wine
- D. Jesus waking on water

Quiz Question 3:

Who partook of a meal prepared by an angel, and was sustained forty days and nights while in the mountain?

- A. Manoah
- B. Joseph
- C. Elijah
- D. Moses

CALVIN ROBINSON RECEIVES A ONE-YEAR LICENSE

BY GRETA GAFFIN | MAY 14, 2025

The following article and picture come from [the Living Church](#). The picture shows Bishop Ray Sutton (left) and Rev. Calvin Robinson (right). The following day another article about Robinson and Sutton was posted.

[Continued from front page] Robinson's parish, St. Paul's Anglican Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, voted to leave the Anglican Catholic Church on May 4.

Robinson is eager to celebrate the sacraments again. "It's been a long over-three-months," he said in a public video. "There's been plenty of attacks, but this is how the enemy works." He apologized for his previous behavior.

His license was revoked by Archbishop Mark Haverland of the Anglican Catholic Church in January, but Robinson did not leave the ACC until May. Robinson said he was removed from the Anglican Catholic Church because of "snobby elitism."

"I received a license from the denomination, the jurisdiction which the

church has entered. This is temporary episcopal oversight, so they've got time to think about where they want to be long term," he said. "I was called to St. Paul's and Grand Rapids, but I was not called to the Anglican Catholic Church. Now we operate as a church plant."

He added: "The church happens to now be in communion with 85 million Anglicans around the world, which is a blessing, and I happen to be re-licensed now in the church I began my ministry in."

The Reformed Episcopal Church is in communion with the Free Church of England, in which Robinson was ordained as a deacon. Robinson's presbyteral ordination came from the Nordic Catholic Church, which is part of the Union of Scranton and is not in

communion with the ACNA.

The Nordic Catholic Church had ordained him to the diaconate again, as it does not accept the Free Church of England's orders as valid.



Robinson did not name the Reformed Episcopal Church in his video, or Bishop Sutton. Robinson is no stranger to the REC. He was a guest speaker at the Anglican Way Institute's conference hosted by Holy Communion Church, Dallas, the cathedral of the REC, in 2023, when he was still a deacon of the Free Church of England.

In a public statement, Archbishop Steve Wood distanced the ACNA from Robinson.

"I am concerned to have the Anglican Church of North America affiliated with a leader whose public comments and persona consistently fail to exhibit the love and grace of Jesus Christ," Wood said. "I have concerns about Rev. Robinson's ability to uphold the full commitments of our Anglican tradition, and his ability to model the Christ-like virtues of peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, and love. I know all of our permanent licensed clergy abide by [these] in the daily exercise of their priestly duties. I do not personally believe the Rev. Robinson is a good representative of the Anglican Church in North America."

Wood's statement added: "Bishop Sutton agreed to provide personal oversight of the Church during this interim season and has emphasized that Rev. Robinson has not been admitted as a member of the REC or the ACNA."

"What I can tell you is that Calvin was originally ordained by the REC in

England," Bishop Sutton told TLC. "The parish where he has been the rector is now independent. It is a traditional 1928 BCP congregation. The church is not far from an REC parish in my diocese. As they have gotten to know my priest and our congregation, they have asked for my temporary pastoral care and oversight. They are not members of the REC in this arrangement. I have licensed their rector, Calvin, to continue to serve a parish that wants him to continue to be their pastor.

"With a licensure arrangement by a bishop of a priest in another jurisdiction, he is not a member of the REC. It is permission for him to serve Word and Sacrament in a congregation under my temporary care, yet not in my jurisdiction. This arrangement, where neither the parish nor priest are members of the REC, does not necessarily involve full agreement with the REC/ACNA on all matters theological and ecclesiastical, nor endorsement of Fr. Calvin's social and political views.

"In the event that Calvin would decide to return to the REC, our canons require a clergyman from a jurisdiction not communion with us to be examined to determine his full compliance with our standards. Until such time, on an interim basis I have extended whatever pastoral care and direction to a church and a clergyman in need that I might be able to provide with the Lord's help."

“Robinson has stated that on May 5 he resigned from the ACC, and then received a license from the REC, a jurisdiction which is not in communion with the ACC,” Sarah Wagner Wassen, an independent canon lawyer in the ACC, told TLC. “Therefore, Robinson has automatically excommunicated himself from the ACC and is therefore deposed from ministry in the ACC.”

The Reformed Episcopal Church was founded in 1873 by George David Cummins, assistant bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky, due in large part to his concern over the increased influence of Anglo-Catholicism within the Episcopal Church.

The REC says in its canons that “Nothing calculated to teach that in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the elements of the bread and wine are changed into the natural Flesh and Blood of Christ, shall ever be allowed in

the worship or teaching of this Church. Nor shall any practice that teaches or promotes doctrines or practices specifically prohibited by the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion be permitted in this Church.”

Robinson is an Anglo-Catholic. “I celebrated a Traditional Latin Mass in preparation for tomorrow, when I celebrate my first public Mass in over three months,” Robinson wrote on X.com on May 10. He invited the public to attend St. Paul’s on May 17. “It will be a traditional English Mass—the Tridentine, but in English,” he said.

The REC and its four dioceses helped found the ACNA in 2009. Ray Sutton became bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Mid-America in 1999, and he took over leadership of the REC in 2016.

St. Paul’s Anglican Church did not respond to a request for comment.

The next day, another [article](#) was post that contained the following email from Sutton to Robinson:

“After much prayer and counsel from fellow bishops, who have not required me to revoke licensure, I have decided that I must withdraw it effective this day. My secretary (copied) is currently out of town. She will provide the documents in the next few days that states removal of licensure. Thank you for your kind and obedient service in the short time you’ve been under my licensure. I wish you every best in the service of our Lord.”

The article this email was from can be read on the next page.

BISHOP SUTTON WITHDRAWS CALVIN ROBINSON'S LICENSE

BY DOUGLAS LEBLANC | MAY 15, 2025

The following article has been taken from the [Living Church](#). This is the article that was posted the next day.

Bishop Ray Sutton has withdrawn a license he granted to the Rev. Calvin Robinson only ten days earlier. Robinson posted a notice of Sutton's decision on his Facebook page. Sutton's decision came one day after Archbishop Steve Wood of the Anglican Church in North America issued a letter questioning the wisdom of Sutton's granting the license.

The license, which Sutton granted May 4, did not make Robinson a priest of the Reformed Episcopal Church or of the Anglican Church in North America, but Wood objected to the association.

"I am concerned to have the Anglican Church of North America affiliated with a leader whose public comments and persona consistently fail to exhibit the love and grace of Jesus Christ," Wood wrote. "I have concerns about Rev. Robinson's ability to uphold the full commitments of our Anglican tradition, and his ability to model the Christ-like virtues of peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, and love."

Robinson accepted Sutton's withdrawal of his license without protest.

"It is done. Bp Ray Sutton is a good man. One of the best Anglican bishops I know," said a brief note added to a screenshot of Sutton's note to Robinson. "If even he cannot find a place for me, even temporarily, perhaps God is sending me a message."

Robinson's page on X.com is now inactive, but he remains active on [Facebook](#), [Substack](#), and [TikTok](#).

Robinson is a former host on [GB News](#) in the United Kingdom, and he now presents [Fox & Father](#), a show on YouTube. His partner on the show is actor and conservative political activist Laurence Fox, who ran for a seat in Parliament in 2023 but placed fourth. He also ran for mayor of London in 2021.

Robinson's congregation, [St. Paul's Anglican Church](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, voted to leave the Anglican Catholic Church on May 4. It has not posted a response to Bishop Sutton's decision.

QUAKER AND EPISCOPAL CLERGY AMONG PEACE ACTIVISTS WHO DISRUPTED SECRETARY MARCO RUBIO OVER GAZA GENOCIDE

BY MELISSA GARRIGA | MAY 20, 2025

The following article and photos have been taken from the [Anglican Ink](#).

This morning, during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the FY26 State Department Budget, three elderly peace activists disrupted Secretary of State Marco Rubio over his failure to act on the ongoing genocide in Gaza.



Gaza. STOP THE GENOCIDE!! NO MORE WEAPONS TO ISRAEL!!

Among them were 79-year-old Episcopal Reverend David Funkhouser, 75-year-old Quaker grandmother Jean Warrington, and 74-year-old Puerto Rico resident and peace activist Kathy Gannett. All three were arrested and removed from the hearing.

“There is no military solution to the crisis in Israel-Palestine,” said Warrington. “Stop arms sales! Only diplomacy can bring hostages home and achieve peace.”

Rev. Funkhouser added, “You have had an audience with his holiness, Pope Leo. I challenge you to honor Pope Leo’s deep compassion for the people of

Their action followed Israel’s deadly escalation in Gaza over the weekend. In “Operation Gideon’s Chariots,” more than 140 Palestinians—mostly women and children—were killed in indiscriminate airstrikes. Hospitals are under siege, aid is severely restricted, and civilians are being forced into so-called “safe zones” that are then bombed, proving Israel’s campaign of forced displacement and mass killing. A UN Report released this week warns that 14,000 babies in Gaza could die within the next 48 hours without sufficient aid.

Rather than using his role to stop this violence, Secretary Rubio is enabling it while punishing those calling for peace.

PENNSYLVANIA ANIMAL MINISTRY SUPPORTS 'ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL'

BY SHIREEN KORKZAN | MAY 13, 2025

The following article, video, and pictures have been taken from the [Episcopal News Service](#). The video is of Bp. Daniel Gutierrez talking about the animal ministry.



the ministry after observing people and their pets interact in public.

“It got me thinking, what if a person passes away, or a veteran or enlisted person in the Armed Services gets deployed, what happens to the animal? What about the elderly who need help?”

For Episcopalians in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, caring for creation includes animal welfare because [“the Lord God made them all.”](#)

That’s why, since 2023, the diocese’s [Animal Ministry](#) has been connecting owners to pets through adoption and foster events, providing access to free and low-cost vaccines and pet food and much more.

Pennsylvania Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez told Episcopal News Service in a phone interview that he was inspired to launch

Gutiérrez said. “We have a responsibility to be caretakers – stewards of God’s creation – whether it’s animals, the land or the sky ... everything.”

Several Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Pennsylvania host animal blessing events, usually on or around St. Francis of Assisi’s feast day, Oct. 4, which is also known as World Animal Day. Photo: Jennifer Tucker

Several parishes have answered the diocese’s call to care for animals. The Free Church of St. John hosted a free animal vaccine event in Philadelphia. St.

Alban's Episcopal Church in Roxborough offers [blessings](#) for veterans' pets and pets belonging to residents in a nearby retirement community. St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia has established a [pet food pantry](#) and provides free animal vaccines.

In Whitemarsh, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church's animal ministry offers short- and long-term fostering assistance, pet supplies and vaccines. The church has hosted five dog adoption events for local animal organizations, and 45 dogs have been adopted so far. St. Thomas' has also hosted a cat adoption event. The occasional social "Yappy Hours" events have broadened local foster networks.

The diocese is in the early stages of building a network of churches that will train volunteer parishioners as fosters and provide 24/7 support to fosters by providing expense assistance and other resources.

[Fostering animals](#) frees up space in the shelters, meaning fewer animals are euthanized. It also reduces the animals' stress and increases the likelihood of adoption. About 6.5 million dogs and

cats nationwide [entered shelters](#) in 2023, often because their previous owners abused them.

"Domesticated animals are inherently dependent on us," Gutiérrez said. "It's hard for me to grasp ... anyone who would intentionally injure a child or an animal. It just doesn't speak to who we are as God's beloved."



A group of girls and dogs who are part of the pet ministry.

Jennifer Tucker, the diocese's canon for communications, serves on a Philadelphia pet shelter's board and is training to become a chaplain for veterinarians. She also helps run the Diocese of Pennsylvania's [Animal Ministry](#), including the [ministry](#) at her home parish, St. Thomas'.

"The power of being around animals and the love they bring, it's a gift that I can't even put into words," Tucker told ENS. "There are so many studies about how loneliness is a problem, and having pets helps reduce that because they give

us love and acceptance, sometimes exercise, a lot of wonderful [benefits](#).”

Tucker co-leads St. Thomas' animal ministry with Anne Anspach. They met while volunteering at the Montgomery County Animal Shelter in Abington.

“I'm not sure if animals love you unconditionally, but, for example, I've seen dogs who've been severely mistreated and starved – skin and bones – yet they'll still trust people to help turn their lives around,” Anspach told ENS.

As of 2024, 66% of U.S. households include a pet, and 97% of pet owners consider pets a part of the family, according to data compiled by the [American Pet Products Association](#) and [Pew Research Center](#). Because pets are important to many people, a certified animal chaplain at St. Thomas', Donna Mosebach, is available to serve families through all stages of their pets' lives for free, from blessing a new pet to leading memorial services for deceased pets.

Tucker said she chose to become a chaplain for veterinarians because [suicide rates are high](#) among veterinarians due to burnout, compassion fatigue and access to euthanasia drugs. Ending an animal's life can take a psychological toll on veterinarians, who also must console owners who are grieving the loss of their pet, a family member.

“Veterinarians are supporting the animals [and their owners], and they need to be supported, too,” Tucker said.

Pennsylvania Daniel Gutiérrez with a dog. In 2023, he called on Episcopal churches in the diocese to launch animal ministries to help care for pets and their owners. Photo: Courtesy of Jennifer Tucker

Tucker also has worked with the diocese's [Clare Project](#) – named after St. Clare of Assisi, a companion of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals – which assists unhoused people and their pets in Philadelphia's [Kensington](#) neighborhood, a “ground zero” of the United States' opioid crisis. An estimated 12% of people who are homeless have pets, which provide emotional support and reduce loneliness. Homeless shelters usually lack pet-friendly accommodations and often must [decline services](#) to pet owners, according to the ASPCA.

St. Thomas' also encourages volunteers to provide daylong or hours-long respite for shelter animals and bring them to the church, where dog walking is welcome on its 42-acre campus. Sharing pictures on social media and tagging the church is especially welcome. St. Thomas' provides resources for pet owners and foster parents to receive low-cost or free food, medical supplies and veterinary treatment, including spay and neuter services.

To help encourage dog fostering and bonding, St. Thomas' is building a "canine cottage" on campus where volunteers can bring dogs to play and rest indoors and outdoors. When built, the facility will serve as the animal ministry's headquarters.

Many Episcopal churches nationwide offer a blessing-of-the-animals worship



Bp. Daniel Gutierrez with a dog.

service on or around St. Francis' feast day, Oct. 4, which is also known as World Animal Day. At these services, everyone is welcome to bring their pets for a special blessing.

In October, St. Thomas' will have a traditional blessing-of-the-animals worship service, but with a twist: An animal fair will also take place. Veterinarians and dog trainers will offer advice for pet owners and answer questions. Family-friendly activities will include making cat toys and an agility display from a dog training club.

"Every animal has their own personality, and they're so attuned to the world. ... They live for the moment – something we humans have forgotten. Animals, especially domesticated animals, long for us when we're away, or when their owner passes away and they must move from family to family," Gutiérrez said. "The church is based on the people and things that God has given us, and that includes animals."

Quiz Question 4:

Who was the first Christian convert in Europe?

- A. Lydia
- B. Phoebe
- C. Priscilla
- D. Salome

ARDF SUPPORTS MYANMAR RELIEF EFFORTS

MAY 28, 2025

The following article and photos have been taken from the [Anglican Church in North America](#). The first photo shows some of the damage done by the earthquake.



[Continued from front page]

Key Response Highlights

Since the earthquake, the DMC has been able to provide nearly 400 households with food, cooking oil and basic medical commodities. Beyond food and medicine, shelter supplies were identified by DMC and the local population as one of the largest unmet needs right now. To address this, DMC has started a cash-for-shelter program aimed at assisting the most vulnerable people with material procurement.

Finally, water and sanitation is a growing issue, as the earthquake

damaged or destroyed most existing infrastructure. The lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities has increased the risk for an [sic.] cholera outbreak. To meet this need, DMC has installed four water purification systems and dug a new well



The supplies given to people affected by the earthquake.

to ensure safe and clean water is available to communities.

Persistent Challenges

The months since the earthquake have been incredibly difficult. People affected by the earthquake often must sleep outside of their damaged homes, as anticipated aftershocks may potentially destroy already damaged structures. The lack of any proper temporary shelters



The water purification systems that were installed.

during a hot and rainy season has increased the risk of illness in communities. Most concerning, damage to roads and the violence of war has made it difficult for life-saving support to get to the people who need it the most.

Quiz Question 5:

How many cities were given to the Levites for their use?

- A. 56
- B. 48
- C. 34
- D. 99

Next Steps

The earthquake in Myanmar was the largest earthquake in Asia since 2015 and has killed over 3600 people. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated that the increasingly violent and destructive civil war in Myanmar and the earthquake has left over 19.9 million people, the equivalent to the entire state of New York, to need

humanitarian assistance. The Anglican Relief and Development Fund, partnered with the Province of Myanmar, is dedicated to continuing in its mission to reach the most vulnerable people affected by disasters. If you'd like to learn more about ARDF and its mission to generously reflect the Love of Jesus Christ

throughout the world, please visit their website below and consider partnering with ARDF to support those afflicted by the earthquake in Myanmar.

SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT SEIZES CRISTOSAL ACTIVIST

BY EMILIE SMITH | MAY 23, 2025

The following article and photo come from the [Living Church](#). The picture is of Ruth Eleanora Lopez.

In the dark outside her home, half in the shelter of a police vehicle, Ms. Ruth Eleanora López quickly changed from her night clothes into a pair of pants and a shirt. She knew it would be cold in jail. Almost at midnight on May 18, police had come for her, and there would be no getting away.



López, a renowned Salvadoran human rights lawyer, is the head of [Cristosal's](#) Anti-Corruption and Justice Unit. Cristosal has emerged as one of the most prominent critics of President Nayib Bukele's increasingly authoritarian rule in El Salvador.

Cristosal was founded in 2000 by two good friends: the Anglican Bishop of El Salvador, Martin Barahona, and the Very Rev. Richard Bower, former dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in Syracuse, N.Y.

In the years after El Salvador's devastating civil war, the organization focused on helping churches in both the Global North and South align their efforts toward a shared mission of social justice. In the past 25 years, American Episcopalians from numerous dioceses, both individuals and church groups, have visited El Salvador and have become solid supporters of Cristosal.

Cristosal describes its work as rooted in the Anglican Communion's commitment to justice and the inherent dignity of every human being. The organization's mission is to defend human rights and promote democratic governance and the rule of law across Central America.

Elected in 2019 and re-elected in 2024, President Nayib Bukele remains widely popular—largely due to his crackdown on gangs that plagued El Salvador for nearly two decades. Since the start of his security campaign, more than 80,000 people have been detained, many without formal charges or access to legal counsel, and often with little or no contact with family. Rights groups have documented reports of inhumane conditions, including torture. According to Cristosal, 261 adults and children had died in state custody by July 2024.

Alongside suspected gang members, thousands of innocent men and women

have also been swept up in the mass detentions. Cristosal has emerged as a vocal advocate—at times one of the only voices speaking on behalf of those who have disappeared into El Salvador's opaque prison system.

Cristosal and López have filed 15 formal complaints and reports of corruption against the Bukele administration. These include allegations of large-scale embezzlement of international aid intended for COVID-19 relief, as well as reports of water contamination in surrounding communities during the construction of CECOT, the Terrorism Confinement Center. Originally built to detain gang members, the massive prison has also drawn criticism for holding Venezuelan migrants (accused by the Trump administration of being gang members) deported from the United States.

Cristosal and López have been in the forefront of defending community and civil organizations, and have severely criticized the erosion of democracy in El Salvador. López has been a relentless critic of government abuses; earlier this year, the BBC identified her as one of the 100 most influential women in the world in 2024.

López, who has not yet been located by her family or colleagues, is said to be facing charges of embezzlement. Her colleagues and supporters say those are patently false accusations.

Cristosal, whose offices were visited by the police on April 28, calls the detention of López a “dangerous escalation” in the attack on civil liberties. The government actions send a clear message: challenge us at your peril. Cristosal and López's family have good reasons for concern: last year, former government official Alejandro Muyshodt died in custody, six months after he was arbitrarily arrested. He had accused the Bukele regime of corruption and links to drug trafficking.

By May 22, 100 global and local supporting organizations had signed a petition demanding López's release, and an end to the persecution and criminalization of human-rights defenders and organizations. Members of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee expressed concern about her detention.

Cristosal said: “We affirm our commitment to continue working for truth, justice, and the defense of human rights despite the attempts to intimidate us.”

QUIZ ANSWERS:

The following questions come from [Word by Word](#).

Question 1: What is the meaning of *Jehovah Shammah*?

Verse: [Ezekiel 48:35](#)

Answer: A. Jehova is there

Question 2: What was the first miracle performed by Christ?

Verse: [John 2:1-11](#)

Answer: C. Water turned to wine

Question 3: Who partook of a meal prepared by an angel, and was sustained forty days and nights while in the mountain?

Verse: [1 Kgs 19:8-9](#)

Answer: C. Elijah

Question 4: Who was the first Christian convert in Europe?

Verse: [Acts 16:14](#)

Answer: A. Lydia

Question 5: How many cities were given to the Levites for their use?

Verse: [Josh 21:11](#)

Answer: B. 48

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