

ST. MARY'S MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 2025

MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

One day Jesus was walking and saw a tax collector named Matthew sitting at a tax collection post, and said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew stood up and followed Him, and became one of His twelve apostles. Tax collectors in those days were social outcasts. Devout Jews avoided them because they were usually dishonest (the job carried no salary, and they were expected to make their profits by cheating the people from whom they collected taxes). Patriotic and nationalistic Jews hated them because they were agents of the Roman government, the conquerors, ...

[Continues in Calendar, Page 4.](#)

NEW JERSEY CHURCH DROPS EFFORT TO OPEN SHELTER FOR UNHOUSED PEOPLE

The leaders of Christ Episcopal Church in Toms River, New Jersey, will not fight the town's refusal to grant them a zoning variance to open a 17-bed overnight shelter on its campus.

The shelter proposal had called for updating the church's circa-1882 parish house while adding 949 square feet. Christ Church needed an exception to the church's zoning classification for the shelter. None of the town's zoning classifications allows such shelters without a variance, and the town rejected the variance request in June on a 5-2 vote...

[Continues in
National News,
Page 10.](#)

CONGOLESE ANGLICANS DEVASTATED BY THE COLLAPSE OF THEIR CATHEDRAL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

On the morning of Thursday, 14 August 2025, Saint John's Cathedral in Beni collapsed. The cathedral, located in the city and Diocese of Beni in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was still in the process of construction and reportedly subsided 'without any warning signs'.

Fortunately, no loss of life was suffered, but the damage to the cathedral was substantial and the loss of the symbol of hope it represented is a blow for the diocese and the province as a whole...

[Continues in International
News, Page 19.](#)



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.

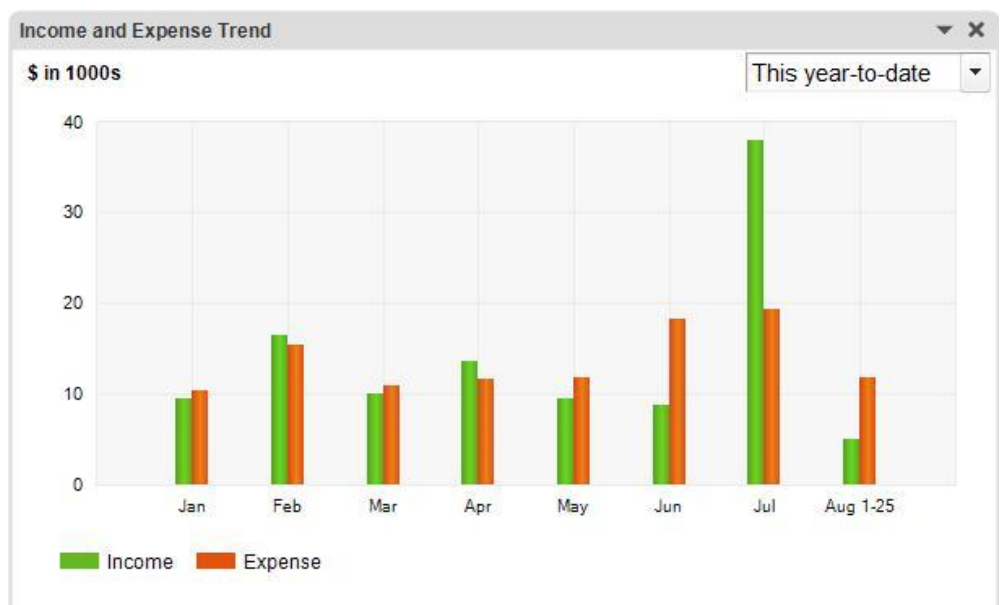
The positions are:

- 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!

INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

7th Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

14th Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

15th Holy Cross Day

21st Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

22nd St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

28th Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

29th St. Michael and All Angels



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday

9:30 AM- Christian Education

10:30 AM- Morning Service

Coffee Hour- Following the service

Wednesday

10:30 AM- Bible Study/Coffee hour

5:30 PM- Evening Prayer

Monday thru Thursday

8:30AM- Morning Prayer (In the chapel & on YouTube)

BIRTHDAY WISHES

1st Roy Worthy

2nd Tootsie Grantham

8th Lea Faulks

15th Charlie Lewis

18th Christine Des Rosiers

30th Emily McCann

Happy birthday!!

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

24th Ben & Jessica Rubio

30th Howard & Gloria Bain

Happy anniversary!!



MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST- 21 SEPTEMBER 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 Matthew, who we commemorate on September 22nd. Other religions commemorate Saint Matthew on September 21st. The text has been edited for reading purposes. The photo is from the [Episcopal Church](#) and depicts St. Matthew



[\[Continued from front page\]](#) and hated them with a double hatred if they were Jews, because they had gone over to the enemy, had betrayed their own people for money. Thus, throughout the Gospels, we find tax collectors (publicans) mentioned as a standard [sic.] type of sinful and despised outcast. Matthew brought many of his former associates to meet Jesus, and social outcasts in general were shown that the love of Jesus extended even to them.

(Jesus numbered among his disciples persons of widely different backgrounds. They included not only Matthew, a former agent of the Roman government, but Simon the Zealot (not to be confused with Simon Peter). Josephus tells us that the Zealots were fanatical nationalists, determined to drive out the Romans by guerrilla tactics, ambushes,

assassinations, terrorist methods, or whatever worked. Their motto was, "No king but Messiah, no tax but the Temple, no friend but the Zealot." It is not clear that Simon was, or had been, a member of the group that Josephus describes, but it seems clear that he would have

regarded himself as at the opposite end of the political spectrum from Matthew.)

The name "Matthew" means "gift of the LORD." Mark and Luke, in the story of his calling, name him "Levi." Perhaps this was his original name, and he received a new name from Jesus when he became a disciple. (It has also been suggested that he was simply a member of the tribe of Levi.)

Of Matthew's life after Pentecost the Scriptures tell us nothing. Later accounts of his life vary, some reporting that he was martyred, others that he died a natural death. The Christian community since early times has commemorated him as a martyr.

Whether the Apostle Matthew is also the Evangelist Matthew -- that is, whether

the Apostle Matthew wrote the Gospel that bears his name -- is disputed. The Gospel itself does not say who wrote it, but the designation "according to Matthew" is very old.

In favor of his authorship it may be noted that (1) while Mark and Luke give the fourth pair of Apostles as "Matthew and Thomas," the Gospel of Matthew gives them as "Thomas and Matthew"; and (2) while Luke 5:29 explicitly states, and Mark 2:15 suggests, that Matthew gave a banquet for Jesus, Matthew 9:10 in describing the same banquet does not indicate who the host was. Both of these variations would be routine touches of modesty if Matthew was the author.

On the other hand, the gospel (1) does not have the manner of an eyewitness, and (2) is thought by many scholars to contain material borrowed from Mark, whereas one would not expect someone who had been an eyewitness to borrow from someone who had not. (**Note:** The view that Mark is an older Gospel than Matthew is widespread and not long ago many scholars regarded the matter as settled. However, there is respectable opinion holding that Matthew is the earliest Gospel after all.)

Perhaps the Gospel was written by some early Christian, not an apostle, whose name was Matthew, and about whom nothing else is known. Early Christian readers, hearing the Gospel ascribed to "Matthew," would naturally associate it with the Apostle of that name, and so

the ascribing of the work to the Apostle Matthew becomes common at an early date, by a perfectly natural misunderstanding.

Papias of Hierapolis, writing in the late first or early second century, says that Matthew compiled the sayings of Jesus in Hebrew. Now the material common to Matthew and Luke, but not to Mark, includes sayings of Jesus but almost no narrative. It has therefore been conjectured that there was once a document (usually called Q), now lost, that is basically a collection of speeches by Jesus, and that Matthew (the evangelist) and Luke, had access to it while Mark did not. It has been suggested that Matthew (the apostle) is the author of this document Q, which may well have been first written in Hebrew (or Aramaic).

The Scripture readings associated with the day bear the themes of Matthew as a Gospel-writer, Matthew as an Apostle, and Matthew as a sinner called by God's grace.

Prayer (contemporary language)

We thank thee, heavenly Father, for the witness of your apostle and evangelist Matthew to the Gospel of your Son our Savior; and we pray that, after his example, we may with ready wills and hearts obey the calling of our Lord to follow him; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

MORE THAN 800 NEW LAWS WENT INTO EFFECT IN TEXAS ON SEPT. 1. HERE ARE SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT ONES.

BY ALEX NGUYEN | AUGUST 28, 2025

The following article and photo have been taken from the [Texas Tribune](#). The photo is of the Texas Capital building in Austin.

[More than 800 new laws](#) are about to take effect in Texas, and they are set to bring sweeping changes to the state's education systems, water infrastructure and more.

Gov. [Greg Abbott](#) signed [1,155 bills](#) that came out of the regular legislative session, including over 200 laws that went into effect immediately such as the [school cellphone ban](#), the [abortion ban clarification](#), [property tax cut](#) and [increased oversight over the energy grid](#). Meanwhile, some won't activate until next year or until voters approve constitutional amendments in November, such as [stricter bail policies](#) and [a \\$3 billion dementia research fund](#). In addition, there are [140 bills](#) that the governor didn't take action on, including 34 that took effect immediately.

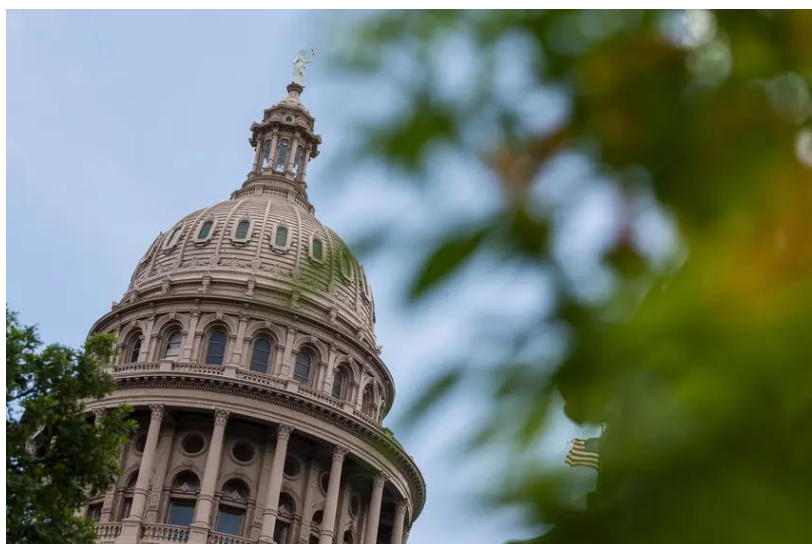
Most, however, will start on Sept. 1, the traditional date for laws passed during the regular session. Here are some notable measures that will soon take effect:

[Senate Bill 1](#) lays out the state's new \$338 billion two-year spending plan, with over 70% of the budget being reserved for education and health and human services. Some notable parts include spending to maintain and provide property tax cuts, a new school voucher program, additional funding for

public schools, as well as investments in the state's energy, water and broadband infrastructure.

The plan also initially included a \$60 million measure that would have let Texas enter a federal summer lunch program for low-income kids, but [Abbott vetoed it](#) due to "significant uncertainty regarding federal matching rates for this and other similar programs."

[Senate Bill 2](#) will create one of the country's largest school voucher programs, allowing parents to pay for their children's accredited private school tuition or other education-related expenses with public tax dollars. In most cases, each child will receive just over \$10,000 per year, though students with disabilities could receive up to \$30,000 in additional funding. Wealthier families with



children already in private schools could also participate.

Texas can spend up to \$1 billion during its upcoming two-year budget cycle, though the program's cost could rise significantly afterwards.

The law's passage followed years of fighting between GOP lawmakers, who framed the issue as providing school choice to parents, and Democrats and rural Republicans who said vouchers would harm public schools. Abbott threw his weight behind the effort to elect more pro-voucher Republicans and succeeded last year. SB 2 takes effect on Sept. 1, but the voucher program itself isn't expected to launch until the 2026-27 school year.

[House Bill 2](#) will provide about \$8.5 billion in new money to public schools, as districts across the state tackle long-running challenges following years of stagnant funding. From this pot, more than \$4 billion will go toward raising educator's pay. The additional dollars will also be used for educator preparation, special education, safety requirements and early childhood learning. A significant part of the law activated immediately, while another big chunk will take effect on Sept. 1. Some will roll out in future years.

[Senate Bill 10](#) will require the visible display of the Ten Commandments on donated posters that are at least 16 by 20 inches in public school classrooms, which are attended by around 5.5 million students in Texas. While supporters said Christian teachings are important to understanding American history, critics said this law undermines the separation of church and state. Such laws have already faced legal

challenges in Texas and other states. They include [an Aug. 20 ruling](#) from U.S. District Judge Fred Biery, which temporarily blocks the measure from taking effect for nearly a dozen school districts including Austin, Houston and Plano.

"This issue is likely to get to the United States Supreme Court," Biery said prior to the case's opening statements in San Antonio. Texas is expected to appeal his ruling.

[Senate Bill 12](#) will extend the ban on diversity, equity and inclusion policies to K-12 schools. In particular, it will prohibit school districts from factoring race, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation into hiring decisions. It will also bar schools from offering instructions, programs and guidance that focus on sexual orientation or gender identity, including sponsoring student clubs such as Gender and Sexuality Alliance. The law's backers said the legislation gives parents more control over their children's education, while critics said it targets and censors marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ students. Some civil rights groups including the ACLU of Texas have launched a legal challenge against the law.

[Senate Bill 13](#) will give parents and school boards more power over what students can access in public school libraries. These boards can also delegate this oversight process if 50 parents in the same district sign a petition for the creation of a local school advisory council. Supporters said the law will protect students from inappropriate content and give parents more control over what their children consume, while critics said it will lead to increased censorship of

certain topics such as gender and race. Texas was already [among](#) the [top](#) states for book bans in recent years, according to - PEN America.

[Senate Bill 37](#) will give politically appointed regents more power over public universities, including by granting them more say over the hiring of administrators, as well as over some responsibilities that were traditionally held by faculty members. It will also create an office that can investigate universities for failures to comply with state laws, such as regarding DEI initiatives. The law's backers said it is needed to tackle what they consider to be liberal bias in universities and better align them with Texas' workforce demands. Critics, however, said the law will threaten academic freedom and undermine research.

[House Bill 33](#), authored by Republican state Rep. [Don McLaughlin](#) who was mayor during the Uvalde school shooting, will require law enforcement agencies across Texas to establish crisis response policies. Among several changes, the law will compel school districts and local law enforcement to meet annually in order to assess their emergency operations plans, resources and capabilities. It will mandate law enforcement agencies and emergency medical service providers to complete training programs on how to respond to active shooters at primary and secondary schools. And following an actual shooting, these responders will also have to file a report detailing and evaluating their actions within several months to facilitate faster public access to information.

[Senate Bill 7](#) will create a framework for funding water projects through the Texas Water Development Board and providing oversight over them, amid a broad effort to tackle the state's looming water crisis. Certain sections of the law would take effect in September 2027, if voters approve the constitutional amendment outlined by House Joint Resolution 7 in November. This ballot measure, if accepted, would allocate \$1 billion each year from the state's sales and use tax revenue to the Texas Water Fund between 2027 and 2047.

[Senate Bill 15](#), which received mixed support from both parties, will allow for certain single-family homes to be built on smaller lots. In particular, the law will ban big cities from requiring these homes to sit on more than 3,000 square feet of land, if they are being constructed in a new subdivision that is at least five acres in size. This is a drop from the 5,000 to 7,500 square feet of land that are commonly required in Texas' largest cities — except for Houston — according to [a Texas Tribune analysis](#). While some lawmakers were wary about interfering in local control over the issue, supporters said the change will allow cities to build more housing and keep costs down.

[Senate Bill 17](#) will ban governments, companies and individuals who legally reside in China, North Korea, Russia and Iran from owning land and properties in Texas. The governor also has the authority to add countries or entities to the list. The prohibition doesn't apply to U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The law's backers said this is about protecting resources and national security from hostile nations, while

critics said SB 17 is discriminatory and will lead to racial profiling.

[Senate Bill 33](#) will ban cities or counties from using their money to support residents seeking abortions outside Texas. The law followed Austin City Council's appropriation of \$400,000 last year to help such individuals, prompting [lawsuits](#) from Attorney General [Ken Paxton](#) and a former council member. San Antonio City Council also allocated \$500,000 for a reproductive justice fund in 2023, though it ended up not being used for abortion-related initiatives following a private lawsuit and much debate. It then approved \$100,000 in April for abortion-related travel, which was [temporarily blocked](#) after Paxton sued.

[House Bill 46](#) will expand the state's medical marijuana program to include patients with chronic pain, traumatic brain injury and Crohn's disease. Physicians will also be able to prescribe inhalation via vaporized and aerosol products, such as vapes. This expansion will take effect while the Texas

Legislature contemplates whether to regulate or ban hemp-derived THC products.

[House Bill 229](#) will define man and woman based on biological reproductive systems and apply that definition across the state code. Government entities collecting vital statistics information will also have to use it. The law's backers said this is needed to protect women's rights and align with executive orders declaring that there are only two sexes. Critics said the law erases trans people from state records in Texas, home to one of the country's largest trans communities.

[Senate Bill 835](#), titled "Trey's Law," will ban and void the use of nondisclosure agreements in sexual assault and human trafficking cases. The law's name honors Trey Carlock, who signed an NDA after being abused as a child by a camp counselor. He died by suicide in 2019. His sister, Elizabeth Carlock Phillips, testified in support of the legislation.

QUIZ QUESTION 1: (Quiz answers will be on the last page)

The prophet Isaiah describes one particular type of angel in Isaiah 6. They have six wings and Isaiah refers to them after he has an experience with one of them. What kind of angels are these?

- A. Cherubim
- B. Dominions
- C. Principalities
- D. Seraphim

NEW JERSEY CHURCH DROPS EFFORT TO OPEN SHELTER FOR UNHOUSED PEOPLE

BY MARY FRANCES SCHJONBERG | AUGUST 14, 2025

The following article and picture have been taken from the [Episcopal News Service](#). This article is a follow-up article from the August edition about Christ Episcopal Church in New Jersey. The photo is of the Church.

[Continued from front page]

The [Affordable Housing Alliance](#) and the [Toms River Housing and Homeless Coalition](#) have operated out of the parish house since 2023. The alliance



would have run the shelter with a grant from Ocean County, but that grant's availability ended on June 30 and was not renewed.

The Rev. Lisa Hoffman, Christ Church's rector, told the parish and shelter supporters in an Aug. 13 message that the parish lacks the money or staffing to run the shelter without that grant.

"Please know that this was not an easy decision or one made lightly," she said.

Hoffman added that the decision was made even more difficult because the church's attorney was confident that the church would have won if it appealed the zoning decision. "But after carefully

examining the situation, Bishop [Sally] French and I agree that it would be best for us not to pursue any further action at this time."

Hoffman acknowledged that some will be disappointed by the decision and others will be relieved.

Hoffman said the "sacred trust" given to

her when the church called her as rector means she must "protect and care for the people and property entrusted to me as your pastor."

"Bishop French and I agree that to make any other decision would not be in the best interest of the congregation at this time and could violate that sacred trust," she said.

French told Episcopal News Service Aug. 14 that she is “grateful to the leadership of Christ Church, the clergy and the lay leaders and people for their faithful efforts.”

The decision notwithstanding, French said she is disappointed that Christ Church’s “worthwhile efforts to expand services to the homeless and those in need in the community” were blocked. “We remain committed to the work of gospel justice, and we look forward to further opportunities to build connections and support the support the community, especially those suffering from homelessness.”

Hoffman noted that the church continues to face complaints from neighbors about the presence of people experiencing homelessness being on the campus. Some Toms River residents had [said](#) that a shelter on church property would further make the town a “magnet” for homeless people. Others said it would put neighborhood homes and the children who live in them at risk.

Mayor Daniel Rodrick’s threat in April to [acquire the church’s 11 acres](#) and five other lots for park land, either through purchase or by eminent domain, also figured into the church’s decision not to appeal the zoning board denial, Hoffman said. Some people have questioned whether it’s in Christ Church’s best interest to continue to

pursue the shelter. “They also see the county working toward a solution with the opening of their cooling/warming center,” she said.

Since then, Rodrick has regrouped on his land-seizure effort. He [told ENS in July](#) that he wants to gauge public support for his plan through a “statistically significant” poll of some 300-500 respondents, financed with his campaign funds. There’s since been no word on the status of the poll.

Hoffman is glad the church’s shelter proposal “brought forth a much larger and louder conversation” about how to help unhoused people in Toms River and Ocean County.” She noted that many churches and organizations, as well as the county, have united to work for a solution. “Christ Church will continue to find ways to support those and hopefully work with other nonprofits to finally bring to fruition solutions to help those in need of housing,” she said. Christ Church will continue to support the Affordable Housing Alliance’s work.

Hoffman recalled Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians when he wrote about partnering with God for the spread of ministry. “Paul planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase,” Hoffman said. “Perhaps Christ Church was called to be Paul. Apollos is now watering the seed and God will send forth the fruit. Only time will tell.”

EPISCOPAL CHURCH REMOVES PRIEST WHO FOUNDED CHRISTIAN PSYCHEDELIC SOCIETY

BY KATHRYN POST | AUGUST 20, 2025

The following article and photos have been taken from the [Religious News Service](#). The first photo is of the Rev. Joe Welker. The second photo is of former priest, Hunt Priest.

In 2016, a priest in the Episcopal Church had what he described as a profound, “very Christian” encounter with psychedelics in a study on religious professionals and psilocybin. Five years later, Hunt Priest said his experience inspired him to pivot from being a parish priest to founding the nonprofit [Ligare](#), a Christian psychedelic organization.

But on Aug. 5, after 20 years in the priesthood, Priest was removed from ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church, largely due to concerns that he was using pastoral authority to endorse psychedelics, most of which are illegal under federal law. Bishop Frank Logue of the Diocese of Georgia concluded after a 13-month process that Priest committed “conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy” and “conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.”

Priest’s removal suggests debates involving Christianity and psychedelics, long reserved for academic circles and grassroots or underground groups, are surfacing in institutional church settings. Experts say the situation raises important questions about



the risks, benefits and theological legitimacy of framing psychedelic use in spiritual terms.

Ligare, founded in 2021, was designed to convene Christians and spiritual leaders looking to learn about and process psychedelic experiences. In September of that year, the Rev. Joe Welker, then a Harvard Divinity School student with [his own history](#) of psychedelic experimentation, enthusiastically joined Ligare as an intern. Six months later, he resigned.

Welker’s concerns in his resignation letter centered on Ligare not being upfront about potential negative outcomes from psychedelic use. He worried that framing psychedelics as a spiritual experience could lead to spiritual harm if a person had a bad trip.

"I felt there was a really reckless disregard for public safety and for considering the risks of psychedelic usage," Welker told RNS.

He also raised concerns about Ligare putting on a legal psychedelic retreat in the Netherlands without proper training.

"None of us in Ligare had any kind of medical or clinical background," Welker told RNS.

Priest said Ligare had five trained facilitators for 13 people at the retreat and hasn't held other retreats since.

Welker continued to share his critiques on [Substack](#), including about the clergy psilocybin study by Johns Hopkins University and New York University that had kickstarted Priest's interest in religion and psychedelics.

"It was done to try to influence religious attitudes to accept psychedelics by giving clergy drugs which make you really open to suggestion," Welker told RNS. "I came to believe that Priest was a victim, and the other folks were a victim of a really unethical study."

Matthew Johnson, a researcher on the study, has raised concerns about it, saying researchers had biased the outcome by framing the trial in spiritual terms and involving funders and psychedelic legalization advocates in the study itself. An audit by the Johns Hopkins Medicine Institutional Review Board noted that two of the study's funders had been involved in the trial. These conflicts of interest, per the audit, "were not appropriately disclosed nor managed." The review board's reservations were included in the study's findings.

When the study's findings were [finally released](#) in May, they indicated that 96% of the 24 participants retroactively rated one of their psilocybin experiences among the top five most spiritually significant of their lives.

Priest has vehemently rejected Welker's characterization of his experience, saying the trial was "the most edifying and supportive and respectful process I've ever been through." Several trial participants told RNS that while the trial was imperfect, it is "offensive" and "patronizing" for Welker to speak for them and imply they were brainwashed into promoting a pro-psychedelic agenda.

In May 2024, Priest's lawyer issued a [cease-and-desist letter](#) in response to Welker's posts.

Welker [saw the letter](#), which incorrectly claimed Welker had been terminated from Ligare, as defamatory and he filed a complaint with the Episcopal Church. That complaint launched a Title IV process, the denomination's procedure for responding to clergy misconduct allegations.

In April 2025, after an investigation conducted by an outside lawyer, a four-person reference panel of the Diocese of Georgia recommended the bishop seek an agreement for discipline with Priest. In that report, which Priest shared with RNS, the panel cited three examples of "conduct unbecoming a clergy member." They claimed Priest began speaking publicly about the "safe" use of psychedelics, rather than their "legal" use; that he allowed a cease-and-desist letter to be sent "without being sure the information presented was true"; and that Priest's role with Ligare did not involve sacramental ministries of the

priesthood, such as celebrating the Eucharist or presiding over other rites.

"This leads the Reference Panel to the conclusion that his priesthood is solely a way to lend credence to the work of Ligare," the report said. Logue later concluded the reference panel had also found evidence of misrepresentation, resulting in a second offense of "conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation," according to the Rev. Canon Loren Lasch, canon to the Ordinary and chief of staff for the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia.

On Aug. 5, Priest submitted to the terms of that agreement, which deposed him from ordained ministry.

Welker [posted the news](#) on his Substack three days later.

The following week, in a letter to some 2,500 recipients on the Ligare email list, Hunt said he had "resigned" his ordination, emphasizing he had been offered the choice to resign from Ligare or resign his ordination, and noting he could later apply to be reinstated. "Had the investigating committee or the bishop determined that I was harming individuals or communities, or if I was somehow operating outside Christian orthodoxy, I would have been removed, not given a choice," [he wrote](#).



However, per denominational [bylaws](#), an Episcopal priest cannot resign during a Title IV process, and deposition is the most serious disciplinary action that can be taken against a clergy member. Priest, like any deposed clergyperson, can apply to be restored to ministry, but the process outlined in the bylaws is rigorous and rarely executed. In an email to RNS, Lasch clarified that prior to Priest's being deposed, Logue offered him a path to return to active ministry. (Priest was restricted from ministry

during the Title IV process.) That path would have required Priest to stop his work with Ligare, and "there would have been additional stipulations," she said.

In interviews with RNS, Priest reiterated that he and Ligare do not promote the illegal use of psychedelics. He said Ligare is "neutral" on using

them and added that he tends to use the words "safe" and "legal" interchangeably. Priest said the Title IV outcome highlights why Ligare's educational efforts around psychedelics and religion are necessary.

"I understand that on these big, hot-button issues in the culture, when you're out front on them, there can be a cost to that," said Priest. "And I'm willing to bear it, because I do continue to believe this is a very important cultural conversation."

Welker, who is now a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) serving a congregation in Vermont, [sees](#) the outcome of the Title IV process as a consequence of the Hopkins/NYU research trial, though the Diocese of Georgia did not cite the trial in its decision.

"This hype has, I do believe, contributed to Priest and others just having their guard down. We're dealing with a risky medical intervention," said Welker. "People do get hurt. It may not be the majority, but they regularly have prolonged harm, and when it happens, it's sometimes quite catastrophic."

For others in the Christian psychedelic space, Priest's removal from ordination is less a referendum on the clergy psychedelic study, and more of a gauge for measuring the institutional church's current comfort with psychedelics. Like many Christian denominations, the Episcopal Church doesn't have a churchwide policy on psychedelics, but so far that hasn't stifled conversation on the topic. In the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon, psychedelics are part of an ongoing conversation among clergy.

Eastern Oregon's bishop, the Rt. Rev. Patrick Bell, said in a statement he appreciated other Episcopal leaders' caution regarding "the use of psychedelics for healing purposes" but has "come to a place of openness to the potential of their use," noting he lives in a state where psilocybin is legal under certain conditions. [Earlier this year](#) another mainline denomination, the United Church of Christ, was poised to consider a [resolution](#) advocating for psychedelic decriminalization before it was delayed on technical grounds.

According to scholar Bryan McCarthy, a friend of Priest who studies the religiosity of psychedelic medicine, Priest's removal from ordination is prompting Christians to have necessary discussions about psychedelics.

"It's the conversation I always thought should be happening. Should we? Shouldn't we? Is it good? Is it bad? How to do these things, if we do them?" said McCarthy. But while essential, McCarthy noted that, at least in this case, these debates have real consequences.

QUIZ QUESTION 2:

September 17 is the day of a twelfth-century abbess famed for her written accounts of her mystical visions. In addition to this "Scivias," she wrote learned commentaries on a variety of holy texts while composing hymns and poetry on the side. Who was this scholarly and prolific woman?

- A. St. Walburga
- B. Blessed Hildegard von Bingen
- C. St. Etheldreda
- D. St. Mechthilde von Magdeburg

VJ DAY 80: 'MY PRAYERS WERE THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME GOING'

BY AMELIA BRADDICK | AUGUST 15, 2025

The following article and photo have been taken from the [Church Times](#). The photo is of the King attending the Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.

THE 80th anniversary of VJ — Victory over [Japan](#) — Day was commemorated at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, on Friday. Veterans, many of them centenarians, were joined by the [King](#), the Queen, and the [Prime Minister](#).

The band of the Royal Marines, playing *Captain General*, marched in formation before sergeants descended the steps of the [memorial](#) to set up a drumhead altar with Royal British Legion and Union flags.

The King and Queen were greeted with the National Anthem, and placed wreaths and flowers, as did Sir Keir Starmer. A wreath was also laid at the Burma Railway memorial, in memory of prisoners-of-war, and created from a 30-metre length of the railway track that they were forced to construct.

"The Last Post" was sounded; there was a Red Arrows fly-past; and then two minutes' silence was kept before the ceremony continued.

Owen Filer, 105, who had mainly served in Bombay, recited from memory the Kohima Epitaph: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."

Ruby Turner [sang](#) "I'll Be Seeing You", a song recorded by Bing Crosby in 1944; and Celia Imrie read an account of VJ Day, giving thanks for all those who had served and lost their lives in the Far East.

Three veterans, Trevor Taylor (Royal Air Force), John Shay (Royal Navy), and Richard Pelzer (British Army), spoke of their memories.

Mr Taylor had contracted clinical malaria, and had been flown in a one-seater plane, with room for a stretcher



on the back, to a mobile field hospital. "They cleaned me up to get me ready again for going back," he said.

The kamikaze pilots had been the main threat to our warships, Mr Shay recalled: "You just rode your luck while you could. And that's what we did."

"Fear was put at one side," Mr Pelzer said.

"When the war in Europe was finished, people were so overjoyed after six years of war that they took for granted that everything was hunky-dory — and it wasn't of course, especially for us out there," Mr Shay continued.

"The war in the Far East was, I think, the forgotten war. We were starved of everything," Mr Pelzer said. He read out a poem that he had composed.

Nitin Ganatra read out the recollections of Colonel Mohammad Ghani Rashdi, 104, who had served in the Indian Army: "My prayers were the only thing that kept me going. I used to pray every day to leave. Everyone did. We all prayed to a different God, but we all prayed for the same thing: freedom."

Barbara Sowerby and Olga Henderson, who had been civilians held by the Japanese, spoke about their experience in an internment camp. Archive footage from wartime Burma was played, and Thomas Jones (British Army), Joseph Hammond (Royal West African Frontier Force), and Bernard Francis Madden

(British Army) recounted their experiences.

Captain Yavar Abbas, who had served in the 11th Sikh Regiment of the [Indian](#) Army, apologised for "going off-script" before he thanked the King for attending the service and wished him well for his cancer treatment, something that he, too, had endured. The King and Queen looked visibly touched by this remark. Mr Abbas then read an extract from his diary, while Jasdeep Singh Degun played *Raag Ahiri*.

A tribute was paid to the Commonwealth soldiers who had served in the Pacific War: "the most diverse fighting force in history". Sir Ben Okri read from "Burma, 1945 Sacrifice": "To fight the white man's war, they did not know they were fighting to save the whole wide world."

Robert Lindsay read the recollections of the Chindits in the Burmese jungle, featuring accounts of the soldiers Sid Machin and Charlie Richards. John Harlow, another veteran, shed tears when a tribute was read out on his behalf by Anton Lesser.

The skirl of bagpipes was heard, as well as the singing of the National Children's Choir of Great Britain. During a violin piece, dancers took to the stage while others moved among them, carrying long sticks with white paper birds that fluttered in the air.

Another veteran, George Durrant, said that coming generations must remember the veterans' sacrifices, "so that they can strive for a more peaceful tomorrow".

As the ceremony drew to a close, there was a fly-past by a Lancaster, flanked by a Hurricane and Spitfire. The King and Queen met veterans and their families before leaving.

Across the UK, other services marked the anniversary. Cathedrals were among those places where the two-minute silence was observed at noon.

For a service of thanksgiving and remembrance in [Norwich Cathedral](#), a parade moved through the Cathedral

Close, and a Dakota aircraft flew past. The cathedral Precentor, Canon Aidan Platten, who had overseen the planning of the service, said that it had been a "real privilege".

Before the service, he had explained: "We will remember those who lost their lives in service of our nation and in the cause of peace. We will remember and hear the words of those who suffered the horrors of imprisonment, and in these dangerous and uncertain days, we will commit ourselves to strive for peace."

The Rt Revd Peter Eagles, a former Archdeacon for the Army, preached the sermon.

QUIZ QUESTION 3:

St. Matthew, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is honored on September 21. Though he had been a tax collector before becoming a Christian, he is remembered not for his accounting skills but for his literary achievements. Which work is he traditionally credited with writing?

- A.** An account of the life and teachings of Jesus
- B.** The Lord's Prayer
- C.** A confession of his own sins
- D.** An account of a terrifying vision of the Apocalypse

CONGOLESE ANGLICANS DEVASTATED BY THE COLLAPSE OF THEIR CATHEDRAL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

The following article and photos were taken from the [Anglican Communion News Service](#). The first photo is of members of the church in front of the wreckage. The second photo is of the Beni Cathedral under construction.



was due to be completed in 2007. It was not until 2017, ten years later, that work began on raising the walls. In 2019, after my consecration and enthronement as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Beni, I personally became involved in this project.'

[Continued from front page] The Rt Revd Cyrille Kambale Tavuirima, Bishop of Beni in the Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo, told Anglican Communion News about the process of building the cathedral to date, as well as the devastation this event has caused the local Anglican community.

The history of Saint John's Cathedral in Beni

Bishop Cyrille stated that 'the project to build this church dates back to around 2006, an initiative of the Kasabinyole parish. That year, the foundations were laid, and the project

Bishop Cyrille recalled how the conflict and unrest in the region, which has been sustained for more than a decade, disrupted the construction plans considerably. 'The war ... has caused considerable damage to the lives of our people, including massacres, the burning of villages, looting of property and the mass displacement of the population.

'After that, around 2019, we were hit by the Ebola epidemic, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed down activities for almost two years. All this caused delays in the construction process of this building. In February

2025, we completed the roof of the cathedral.'

Speaking of the emotional impact of the disaster after so long a journey leading to the construction of this place of worship, Bishop Cyrille said, 'After twenty years of hard work to build this temple, to see it collapse in the blink of an eye, imagine how our hearts are affected.'

The collapse and future of Saint John's Cathedral

Bishop Cyrille shared that 'Since July, we have been experiencing a rainy season accompanied by strong winds' and these events 'are believed to be the cause of this disaster.

'After the collapse of this cathedral, the faithful are truly traumatised... seeing the efforts and resources invested in this construction, which took almost 19 years, reduced to nothing.'

Regarding the future plans to rebuild or relocate the project, Bishop Cyrille responded, 'We are considering

rebuilding a new cathedral. Due to a lack of financial resources, we are reaching out to all people of good faith to ask for their help... We truly need your support of all kinds to enable us to rebuild and thus begin a new journey.'

Bishop Cyrille requested prayers for the diocese and the nation, saying, 'We need the prayers of our Anglican brothers and sisters, as we will be going through a difficult period due to the tragedy of the collapse of our cathedral. Please also pray for the restoration of peace in our country in general, particularly in the territory of Beni.'



QUIZ QUESTION 4:

Which of these books in the Bible records the most angelic activity?

- A.** Revelation
- B.** Luke
- C.** Daniel
- D.** Ezekiel

QUIZ ANSWERS:

The following quiz questions have been taken from Fun Trivia Quizzes [Angels in the Bible](#), [September Saints](#).

Question 1: The prophet Isaiah describes one particular type of angel in Isaiah 6. They have six wings and Isaiah refers to them after he has an experience with one of them. What kind of angels are these?

Answer: D. Seraphim

The sixth chapter of Isaiah in the King James Version of the Bible says this, in verses 1-2 and 6-7: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly... Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

Seraph or saraph is the singular form of the plural word, seraphim. The name means fiery, burning, or glowing. The two sets of wings that cover their feet may be seen as a sign of respect in the presence of the Almighty God; the two wings that cover their eyes may be thought to represent humility; while the two wings that are used in flying may have been used for sustaining them in their positions about the throne of Yahweh.

Question 2: September 17 is the day of a twelfth-century abbess famed for her written accounts of her mystical visions. In addition to this "Scivias," she wrote learned commentaries on a variety of holy texts while composing hymns and poetry on the side. Who was this scholarly and prolific woman?

Answer: B. Blessed Hildegard von Bingen

Blessed Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) was a Benedictine nun and abbess whose reach extended far beyond the walls of her convent. Her great work describing her visions, "Scivias," takes its title from a Latin phrase meaning "know the ways of the Lord," and this she was confident she could do.

In her study, she wrote on everything from everything from the Gospels to natural history; in her letters, she never hesitated to scold powerful people when they fell short of her ideals. In one

famous episode, she faced off against an archbishop over a question of charity toward the dead: a local had died while excommunicated from the Church, and she had nevertheless buried the body in the hallowed ground of her convent cemetery.

When her archbishop objected, she told him he could exhume the body himself -- and by the time he arrived, she had made sure that the new grave looked like any other.

Question 3: St. Matthew, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is honored on September 21. Though he had been a tax collector before becoming a Christian, he is remembered not for his accounting skills but for his literary achievements. Which work is he traditionally credited with writing?

Answer: A. An account of the life and teachings of Jesus

The work in question is the Gospel according to Matthew, the first of four accounts of Jesus's life in the canonical New Testament. The word "Gospel" signifies the "good news" inside, and, for their role in sharing that good news, St. Matthew and the three other Gospel writers are often known as the Evangelists.

Not much is known about St. Matthew's life. According to the Gospel that carries his name, he was "sitting at the tax booth" when Jesus, passing by, said, "Follow Me." And St. Matthew followed, though many used his devotion to criticize Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13). Then, as now, tax collectors were not popular folk.

Question 4: Which of these books in the Bible records the most angelic activity?

Answer: A. Revelation

Almost every chapter in the book of Revelation records angelic activity. We see them very active in the affairs of heaven and earth. There are angels who seem to be perpetually worshiping God and myriads of angels joining with the saints who are in heaven in worship. We also see them carrying messages and warnings to people on earth. They can also affect the weather and they are usually enormous in size and have great power. They attend to the prayers of the saints and the proclamation of the gospel, and implement God's judgements. The holy angels of God are engaged in warfare with satanic forces. One of the accounts says, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years..." (Revelation 20:1-2, New King James Version).

In the end, Revelation says the devil will be thrown in the burning lake of fire forever, along with all whose names are not found in the Book of Life.

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Reaching out in Christ's love to our community and all God's creation
through faith, worship, and service.