

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE



September 12, 2021

**The Sixteenth Sunday after
Pentecost**

Our Mission Statement

*Helping Hands - Healing Hearts
Welcome All*

Our Vision Statement

*To be an engaging, passionate, spiritually healthy
community, open to all God's people*

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The Rev. Christopher Blake Thomas

September 9, 2021

“Always we begin again.”

-

St. Benedict

Dear Doubters of Great Faith,

Thankfully, by God’s great grace, we are constantly and consistently in the ever ongoing process of “beginning again.” With each new day, we're gifted fresh opportunity to meet God in that grace, to rise to new levels, no matter what prior days have held.

Being together is, I would venture to guess, one of THE most important aspects of the Christian identity. It is how our identity is shaped and formed and grown and strengthened. Being together is how we know we are a part of the body of Jesus Christ. Being together is how we celebrate and worship our glorious, merciful creator God. Being together is how we breathe Holy Spirit life into each other, and into the world.

I have heard the statistic quoted that in the current age, many Christians consider themselves “faithful” attenders if they are in church once every three to four weeks. I find myself wondering if that is the case, and if so, why? Is it because church doesn't present enough of a compelling story to bring one back, week after week? Is time in the modern age so completely finite that all folks can spare is an hour each month? Or are folks not finding a place for themselves at the table, within the family, their place in the body, where they feel needed, and necessary, and valued, and loved, and cherished?

I don’t know the answer, but it is certainly a question worth asking, particularly as “again, we begin again.”

With this upcoming Sunday, two additional services will start, for a full complement of weekly worship opportunities, to meet the different levels of comfort and taste. A class for newcomers (and the not so new!), “Basics of the Faith,” is in the offing, as well as a book study. We have a variety of mission and outreach opportunities. There are guilds that need your service (acolytes, ushers, altar guild, Eucharistic visitors, sound engineers, etc.).

To put it succinctly, you, my dear Doubters, ARE St. Thomas the Apostle. You are the Holy Spirit that enlivens this place and makes it the warm, compelling, Christ-centered, all-encompassing beacon that it is. It does not exist without you. We do not change lives without you. You are the hands and feet of Christ on this corner, in this place.

And, it’s time to begin again.

See you in church Sunday!

Fr. Christopher+

Did you know...



that the Plate Income from the 2nd Sunday of every month goes to the Rector’s Ministry Fund? This fund allows Fr. Christopher to spread the message of St. Thomas beyond the church campus, reaching into the community to help persons and organizations who are in need.



Mr. Allen M. Junek

Dear Co-conspirators in the Gospel,

If you attended any of our worship offerings last week, then you heard Father Christopher mention an upcoming “Basics of the Faith” or “Episcopal 101” class. Mark your calendars! Our first class will be **Wednesday, September 29th at 6:00pm** and will continue weekly until November 3rd.

Classes will meet **in-person in the South Room** and **there will be a virtual option** as well. All are welcome!

While the Episcopal Church recognizes that all baptized with water in the Name of the Triune God are full members of Christ’s one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, we also recognize the need to make this faith our own. After this period of six weeks, participants may choose to be confirmed, received, or reaffirm their baptismal vows:

- ◆ **Confirmation:** the sacramental rite by which baptized Christians make a mature, public affirmation of faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism (BCP 412).
- ◆ **Reception:** Baptized persons who have been confirmed in another church (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and others) may wish to be received into the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion.
- ◆ **Reaffirmation:** Those who have returned from a time of religious inactivity to an active practice of faith may publicly reaffirm the vows made at their baptism.

If you are unsure where you fall, please speak with either Fr. Christopher or myself; and of course, further discernment is always an option! Whether you’re new to the Anglican way of Christianity, or have been here for a while now, this is a great opportunity to either learn the ropes or explore your own faith. We will be exploring the Sacraments, the Church Year, The Book of Common Prayer, and more. If there is particular engagement around one aspect of our common life, we may use this to inform future offerings.

RSVPs are not required, but to help us get an idea of how many to expect, please email pam@thedoubter.org .

O God, you prepared your disciples for the coming of the Spirit through the teaching of your Son Jesus Christ: Make the hearts and minds of your servants ready to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that they may be filled with the strength of his presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 819)

Shield the joyous,
Allen



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

Pastoral word from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on 20th anniversary of Sept.

11

[Sept, 8, 2021]

As followers of Jesus, and with our siblings in other faith traditions, we place great value on the act of remembrance. As we reflect on the solemn anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, we remember many loved ones lost and first responders who put their lives at risk, modeling the sacrificial love of Jesus, who said: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

While 20 years have passed, I also want us to pause and remember the days that followed these tragic events. There was a moment in the aftermath when people came together. We were praying, grieving, and also working together. Because in that moment, however fleeting it was, we knew with immediacy and vulnerability that we need God, and we need each other.

Memories of that tender cooperation—of love for each other as neighbors—serve as guiding lights for the present. Amidst the ongoing pandemic and natural disasters that have taken so many lives and pushed first responders to their limits, and amidst a worldwide reckoning with the sin of racism, we are called to become the Beloved Community whose way of life is the way of Jesus and his way of love.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will deliver a blessing and sermon Sept. 11 and 12 as part of A Time and Space of Remembrance and Healing at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York, which served as a relief mission for recovery workers at Ground Zero for nearly a year after the buildings fell. Tune in online at trinitywallstreet.org/september-11.

Mission/Outreach

Fellow Doubters,

The Outreach Committee is excited to announce a new partnership with Cathedral of Hope in supporting their three programs that help to serve the food insecure and homeless population of Dallas. Our goal in partnering with other organizations is to support existing, robust programs that assist those in need in our community. In partnering with Cathedral of Hope, we hope to provide volunteer opportunities to our members as well as encourage interaction between St. Thomas and likeminded local organizations.

In addition to the three volunteer activities, we Doubters can also support the programs by donating items for the food pantry at CoH. The items to be collected would be canned or nonperishable food items (single serve packaging and protein foods are preferred) and travel sized toiletry items. Both food and toiletry items are distributed to visitors on a regular basis along with hot meals. We will collect the items at the services in the Narthex. We will have a basket or similar container to leave any donations you may have.

If you are interested in the new volunteer opportunities with Cathedral of Hope, please see the descriptions of the three food programs. To sign up or receive additional information, please contact Anita Haddy at the following link <https://cathedralofhope.com/anita-haddy> or call (214) 351-1901.

Breakfast at Cathedral of Hope (BACH) operates on Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 9 a.m., providing a hot, to-go breakfast for those living with food insecurity. Volunteers arrive at 7 a.m. to set up and they leave after everything is cleaned up. The number of volunteers is limited to those who have been scheduled to serve on a specific date since we are still operating on a to-go, take away basis. All those who participate in this ministry must have a current food handler's certificate on file, and Bill Martin can assist you in obtaining it. During this time of COVID 19, we are observing protocols of wearing face masks and social distancing.

iCare Lunch operates on Monday mornings from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., providing lunch to-go for those living with food insecurity. Volunteers arrive at 9:30 a.m. to set up and they leave after everything is cleaned up. The number of volunteers is limited to those who have been scheduled to serve on a specific date since we are still operating on a to-go, take away basis. All those who participate in this ministry must have a current food handler's certificate on file, and Bill Martin can assist you in obtaining it. During this time of COVID 19, we are observing protocols of wearing face masks and social distancing.

Taste of Hope – Volunteers gather to cook, package, and deliver hot meals to deliver to those experiencing food insecurity in Dallas. Prior to serving, participants in this program must obtain a food handler's certificate. During this time of COVID 19, we are observing protocols of wearing face masks and social distancing.

New Service Schedule beginning September 12th

Sunday Services	
8:00	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
9:00	Rite Two Eucharist/ZOOM
10:30	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
Wednesday Service	
Noon	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave



Dear Doubters of Great Faith,

We need additional people to assist with the Audio Visual equipment and livestreaming of the 10:30 service. This involves being at the church by 10 AM on the Sunday scheduled, getting the system turned on, distribution of microphones, and getting the livestream ready to go. Once we go live, you need to be at the monitor in the back of the church throughout the service in the event that there would be an issue. If this is something that you think you might be interested in, please contact Fred Ellis for more details. Fred may be reached at 214-704-3923 or fellis@sbcglobal.net.

An Opportunity to Serve Your Church

As we return to our Sanctuary, and resume a more familiar worship service, an opportunity exists to take a more active role in our services. I am the Interim Acolyte Guild Head. The Acolyte Guild provides the Crucifer, and 2 Torches to each of our in person services, and for special services, when needed. It is an all volunteer group. At this point, each Acolyte will ideally serve no more than 2 Sundays each month. If you have a desire to become an Acolyte, or would like to know more about serving as an Acolyte, please feel free to contact me at dauidahess@sbcglobal.net.



Consecrated Hosts are available at the church office for those participating virtually in Sunday services. Please email or call the office (pam@thedoubter.org or 214-352-0410, ext. 104) before coming to ensure there is someone here.

A new way to see church!



We are now live-streaming our 10:30 AM service on Facebook Live. You do **NOT** need a Facebook account to watch the service. Simply click on the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheDoubter/live/>

You will then have 3 options, log in to your Facebook account, create an account, or click on the livestream that you want to watch. If you do not have a FB account, simply click on the livestream that you want to watch, and it will open.

We will go live approximately 5 minutes prior to the start of the service. We hope that you will worship with us in person. However, we are offering this as we continue to move forward in a post COVID-19 world.



Celebrating 136 years of Prayer, Service and Evangelism

All women members of the church can look into this LIFETIME COMMITMENT to this important service to the Parish and our Rector by going to the website - <http://www.doknational.org> - prayerfully consider joining. They may call and leave word on Nan Alexander's voicemail and I will be happy to be of help to anyone interested. This is not a guild but a commitment.

St. Thomas the Apostle in Person Service

DATE: Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

NOTE: The ZOOM service remains at 9:00 a.m.

IN-PERSON LOCATION: The Nave

During the months that the property was closed down due to COVID-19, the HVAC system throughout the entire property has been outfitted with advanced equipment for our safety. St. Thomas has installed air scrubbers on all of its HVAC units.

These air scrubber systems are many times more powerful than normal HVAC filtration systems at eliminating airborne pathogens. HVAC systems can capture dirt and dust from the air through their regular air filter inserts. Meanwhile, the scrubbers using UV light can get rid of much more minute living organisms such as bacteria and viruses, which further improves the air quality.

Parking is available in both the South and North Lots.

Masks are required for all in-person services.

Temperatures will be taken prior to entering the Nave. Individuals with temperatures of 100 degrees or higher will not be allowed to enter.

In case of the unanticipated need for contact tracing, attendees will need to sign a register in the Narthex before going into the Nave.

The entire service will be in a printed bulletin.

Music accompaniment will be provided by the organ.

There will be congregational singing.

During the exchange of the Peace, please be sensitive to those around you during this time. If you sense that someone might not be comfortable with hugging or even touching, respect that person's space.

Parish Schedule

Week of September 12th

12 Sunday	The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
8:00 am	Rite One Eucharist/Nave
9:00 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Zoom
10:30 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
11:30 am	Coffee and Social time/ IG
13 Monday	Office Closed
14 Tuesday	Holy Cross Day
6:00 pm	Mission/Outreach Group/SR
15 Wednesday	
Noon	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
7:00 pm	CoDA/ZOOM
16 Thursday	
17 Friday	
18 Saturday	
8:00 am	Step Up/SR
	Serving Altar Guild Members Dan Calhoun & Murray Followill
Key Code:	SR - South Room; NR - North Room; CG - Community Garden; PH - Parish Hall; CR - Office Conference Room; K - Kitchen; N - Nave; IG - Interior Garden

PRAYER LIST

Do you know someone who is in need of our prayers? Please email pam@thedoubter.org to add them to our Prayer List. Names will be kept on for the current month unless notified otherwise and those names are in *italics*.

Healing in the Lives of: Ben Gloria Ann Patricia Melba
Ginger Annie Sandy Merjen Jack Harold
Kelly David Rusty Tim George John Rodney Ronny
Linda Wynne Cody Boes Family JT Carlo Christoria
John S. Stephanie Annette Edward Dane & family Sara Gina
Malcolm Ronnie Darin Gary Don People of Houma, LA

In Thanksgiving For: This Parish

God's Grace for: Children of Belize Gary Don Tammy James
Alex

Guidance: Gwen

In Prison: Allen Orlando Steven Aaron Brandon Hank
GR Stephanie Frank

Serving in the Armed Forces: Alex Aaron Connor Joyce
Collin Tyler Jesse

Seeking Employment: Bryan Maurice Brook Robin Vicki
Trey Gabby Gabriel Gail Oliver Aarib

Rest of the Soul: J.R.

In the Diocese: Brotherhood of St. Andrew
Daughters of the King

Liturgical Assignments & Lectionary

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Counters: M. Legacy & L. Pearson

LEMs: Sub-Dcn: F. Ellis 2nd LEM: N/A Ext: C. Mullins

Lectors: 9:00 am Zoom Service

1st & Psalm: M. Legacy 2nd: M. Legacy

POP: A. Junek

10:30 In-Person Service

1st: J. DeuPree 2nd: V. Holleman

POP: A. Junek

Ushers & Greeters: T. Chaney, A. Montague, V. Holleman

Acolytes: Crucifer: J. Knight Torches: J. Brown & A. Galue

Sound: Fred Ellis

First Reading

Proverbs 1: 20-33

Responsive Reading

Wisdom 7:26-8:1

Second Reading

James 3: 1-12

Gospel

Mark 8:27-38

Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Allen M. Junek

Year B: Proper 18

The 15th Sunday after Pentecost

The Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, Dallas, TX

5 September 2021

In the name of our loving, liberating, and life-giving God: + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Do not rob the poor nor crush the afflicted for God pleads their cause and lays waste the lives of those who plunder them.”

So says the Book of Proverbs, traditionally said to have been written by none other than Solomon, both son of David and king of Israel, and counted the wisest among men.

God pleads the cause of the poor.

God favors the poor.

The poor are precious to God.

Does God play favorites?

Isn't God supposed to be the God of everyone?

Isn't ours the God of all people?

From today's passage, Proverbs also acknowledges that, “The rich and the poor have this in common: God is the maker of them all.” So whether rich or poor, we are all children of God, all siblings, members of the one human family, and God loves each of us.

But, God also loves justice and equity. And humans, we know, are not always--or even often--just and equitable. How do we hold these two things in tension with one another: God's love of all people and God's love of equity?

In 1968 and 1979, in the towns of Medellin, Colombia and Puebla, Mexico, a group of Latin American bishops gathered in the wake of the Second Vatican Council to assess what implications the Council would have upon the Catholic people of Latin America.

Despite conservative and progressive factions among the bishops, neither party could deny the gross social and economic inequalities of the Latin American states. Eventually, they articulated something that has been effectively recognized and adopted by the global Church, namely, God's preferential option for the poor.

Now, God's preferential option for the poor does not mean that God does not love the rich--only that God particularly cares about the plight of the poor and bids the rich, in particular, to repent of wealth's corruption.

The Epistle of James, Brother of Our Lord, was indispensable to the Latin American project. Besides death and taxes, if anything is certain, it is the wealthy being a consistent object of critique in James' letter since the quest for wealth results in the fraying of social bonds and the exploitation of the poor.

Last week, James reminded us that, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows [the poorest of the poor] in their distress” (1:27); and by the same token,

Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

today he tells us that, “God [has] chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom” (2:5). And because it is probably intentionally omitted from the lectionary...just two chapters later, James offers the most scathing critique of the wealthy in perhaps all of scripture: “Come now, you rich people,” he writes, “weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire,” (5:1-3).

(Whew. The word of the Lord. One can see why this might make Episcopalians squirm. Someone should really tell Jeff, Elon, Mark, and Bill what God has to think of their bank accounts.)

Apparently, among the Christians James was writing to, there was the practice of keeping the poor in their place. You see, when the community gathered to proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the Eucharistic feast, the rich were given seats of honor and status, while the poor had to stand in the back, or worse, sit at their feet.

This propensity for favoring the rich over and above the poor has been repeated throughout our long, winding history.

In the Medieval Period, the poor played an important role in the economy of salvation. To give to the poor was to give to the Lord Christ, it was thought. Rapid urbanization, famine, and war, however, led to an increase of vagrants and “beggars” in the streets, and Christians soon began to distinguish between the worthy and the unworthy poor. Sound familiar?

By the sixteenth century, the reformers began to teach an ethic of hard work and self-reliance. Perhaps some of us have heard of the “Protestant work ethic,” which was an ethos of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. It wasn’t long before the poor were viewed as lazy and unworthy of people’s charity or government welfare. If the previous example didn’t sound familiar, I hope this one does.

Of course, the Plague didn’t help the plight of the poor as it ravaged their communities. The poor were feared, and thought to be agents of contagious disease and moral decay. And before long, some regions made it unlawful for someone to beg for coins. By the way, you heard of Austin’s Proposition B, right? Which, on May 1st of this year, made it a criminal offense for anyone to sit, lie down, or beg for money in public areas. There is nothing new under the sun, it would seem.

Speaking of our days, especially in these United States, we do not have a good track record when it comes to the poor. We have embraced a preferential option for the rich, against the poor.

In 2017, we cut taxes for those who have more.

In 2020 we cut food stamps for those who have less.

Now in Texas, in 2021, we place undue restrictions upon women--especially poor women--when it comes to their healthcare decisions.

Okay, before you think this preacher is grasping at straws, hear me out.

As of this past Wednesday, it is now illegal for a woman to terminate a pregnancy after about the sixth week--which is before many women are even aware they’re pregnant. There are no exceptions for assault, and the law deputizes private citizens to sue anyone who performs, receives, or aids these procedures. I say “these procedures” because I hope none of us are so misinformed to think that such procedures are going away--they’ll just go unground, becoming much less safe and sterile, just like before.

Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

I suppose we can all add “bounty hunter” to our resumes, since we are each one accusation away from a \$10,000 paycheck.

These new restrictions pose insurmountable obstacles especially for teens, undocumented women and women of color, and--you guessed it--the poor.

Hear me when I say that there is room at this Table for a diversity of thoughts and practices, and that’s one of the beautiful things about it--that God does not ask for, nor want, cookie-cutter Christian. What is not up for debate however, is the status of the poor around this Table, and this is something James in today’s second lesson seeks to drive home.

In a few moments, when we come to this altar and discern the Body of Christ, I invite you also to discern the poor in our midst and be not afraid to ask why they are poor in the first place. If by some mystery we are to believe Christ when he says, “This is my Body,” then how can we not also be compelled to believe women when they insist that, “These are our bodies,” too.

You see, for James, it did not matter how piously each person took Sacrament if they ignored the dispossessed and the disinherited in their midst.

“Listen my beloved siblings,” he says, “Has God not chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that God has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor.” Have we dishonored the poor? “Is it not the rich [the lawmakers?] who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court?” (James 2:5-6)

I wonder, how many of our sisters and daughters will be drug into court in the coming weeks and months?

And dear people of God, hear me when I say that it is not the women of Highland or University Park that will be the ones drug to court. They will not be the ones disproportionately affected by these laws. It will be the women of South Dallas--of Oak Cliff and Pleasant Grove.

Yet even still, due to Wednesday’s events, are not all women in this state poorer? Has not the world become just a little (or a lot) less safe for our daughters? Our granddaughters?

And so, I adjure you this day is to be angry.

Let the fires of justice be kindled within you, and do not let the enormity of the task absolve you of the will and prerogative to make it right.

Take not your eyes from that country, that country in which equity is fact and where each of us--indeed all of us--will be so filled with goodness that we gleam like mirrors in the light of the Sun. Despite the ways of men, for that is what it is, may we be so foolish to not only hope for such a land, but to believe in the promise--his promise--that such a place hastens quickly.

For as the psalmist has written and moments ago each of us sung, “The scepter of the wicked shall not hold sway over the land allotted to the just.”

Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

I leave you this morning with the words of Fr. Jon Sobrino, Salvadorian Jesuit priest and one of those Latin American liberation theologians that we spoke of earlier. He writes, "On the day of judgement, the peoples of the Third World will judge the peoples of the First World." Put another way, the women of South Dallas--the women of Texas--will judge the legislators down in Austin. Fr. Sobrino continues, "To put this in theological language: The Son of Man, still present today in the poor, will preside on the last day through the poor."

And so, may we rightly discern the poor in our midst, and pray they forgive us. Only then will we have the gladsome experience of living in communion with God, the God of the poor. May it be so.



As we gather again in person for worship, if you would like to sponsor the **Altar Flowers**, **Mary Candle** or **Sacrament Lamp**, please contact pam@thedoubter.org.

We now have a weekly service in the Nave on Sundays at 10:30 followed by a social gathering in the Parish Hall. We need folks to step up and take on some responsibility for making it happen. If you can help with:

- Coming a little early and help with setting up the service;
- Providing a snack; or
- Staying a little longer and helping put items away

please let Pam know at pam@thedoubter.org. Together we can put social in the Social Time.



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



4th Stephen Toon



6th Henry Ayres



9th Steven Lee



10th Charles Mullins



12th Pam Liles



16th Paul McCright



22nd Emmett Sanchez-Brown



23rd Kenneth Goodwin



26th Fred Owen



29th Andy McCarthy

Parish Office hours are 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM

Tuesdays through Fridays

214-352-0410

Emergency contact: Rev 'd Christopher Blake Thomas 214-352-0410 ext 6

(Please leave message with name, call back number, and brief explanation of urgency. Fr. Christopher will receive an urgent message to call back as soon as possible.)

The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop

The Right Rev. G. Wayne Smith, Bishop of Oversight (Missouri Diocese)

The Right Rev. George R. Sumner, Bishop of Dallas

The Right Rev. Michael Smith, Assistant Bishop of Dallas

The Rev. Christopher Blake Thomas, Rector

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The Rev. Stephen J. Waller, Rector Emeritus

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Dr. Stephen V. Sprinkle, Theologian-in-Residence

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Mr. Allen M. Junek, Seminarian-in-Residence

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Mr Lee Corbin, Organist-Choirmaster

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Mr. David Aston, Assistant Organist

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Ms. Pam Liles, Parish Administrator

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Ms. Paula McCormack, Comptroller

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The Episcopal Church of St Thomas the Apostle

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Chancellor

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