



**The Episcopal Church of The Ascension
Vestavia Hills, Alabama**

Making Christ Known by our Love for All

**The Second Sunday of Advent
December 7, 2025 | 10:30 am**

Holy Eucharist | Rite II

For a hearing assistance device, please ask an usher.

PRELUDE: *Savior of the Nations, Come* BWV 599

J. S. Bach

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *Prepare the way, O Zion*

Hymnal 65

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Enriching Our Worship

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People You come to your people and set them free. Amen.

COLLECT FOR PURITY

BCP 355

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Children ages 3k to 3rd grade are invited to follow the cross to Children's Chapel. They will return at the Peace.

GLORIA

Hymnal S 204

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People *And also with you.*
Celebrant Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

THE FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People *Thanks be to God.*

- 1 Give the King your justice, O God, *
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
- 2 That he may rule your people righteously *
and the poor with justice;
- 3 That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, *
and the little hills bring righteousness.
- 4 He shall defend the needy among the people; *
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.
- 5 He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, *
from one generation to another.
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, *
like showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; *
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- 18 Blessed be the Lord GOD, the God of Israel, *
who alone does wondrous deeds!
- 19 And blessed be his glorious Name for ever! *
and may all the earth be filled with his glory.
Amen. Amen.

THE SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name";

and again he says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people";

and again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him";

and again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able.

SEQUENCE HYMN: *Comfort, comfort ye my people*

Hymnal 67

THE GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

Remain standing.

Deacon or Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Deacon or Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

The Reverend Jack Alvey

THE NICENE CREED

BCP 358

Please stand as you are able.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under

Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. *Amen.*

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Enriching Our Worship

Please stand or kneel as you are able.

As we keep awake for the coming of the Lord, let us offer prayers to God who prepares a light for our path.

For the peace of the world, and for our unity in Christ.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For Sean our Presiding Bishop, for Glenda and Brian our bishops, for Jack and Emily our priests, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the Church throughout the world and the faithful in every place. In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, for our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; for Diocesan Department of Liturgy and Music; and for Seminarians graduating in December. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, for The Church of Bangladesh, and for Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury-designate.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the leaders of this city, state, country and for all who hold authority in the nations of the world.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For justice, peace, and freedom among peoples of the earth. For peace in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For travelers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, for those serving in the military or other areas of national service, and for those in prison.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For those on our parish prayer list including Jennifer Cook, Ron Holt, Kat Barrow, Eileen Dawson, Glenn Banks II, Peggy West, Sue Busbin, Jean Smith, Ron and Nancy Rowell, Dick Lounsbury, Cille Spader, Shane Wiley, Paula Stringfellow, Barbara Cochran, Ben Chastain, Donna Miller, and Donna Thompson. For the family and friends of this parish for whom prayers have been requested.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For all the blessings of this life. For those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the dying and for those who have died, especially Betsy Busler, friend of Nancy Caltrider.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our sisters and brothers worldwide following the Risen Christ let us stand in solidarity.
Come, O Lord, and save us.

Joining our voices with the Blessed Virgin Mary and with all the saints and angels of God, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.
To you, O Lord our God.

The Celebrant concludes

Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

CONFESSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION

Enriching Our Worship

Please kneel as you are able.

Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept

God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. *Amen.*

The Bishop, when present, or the Priest, stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

Please stand as you are able.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY: *Come, Lord Jesus, Come*

Laura Vines



Thank you for your generosity! To find out more about how to further support our commitment to make Christ known by our love for all, visit our website at www.ascensioneepiscopal.org.

DOXOLOGY: *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

Hymnal 380, vs. 3

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Form II

Enriching Our Worship

Please stand as you are able.

The Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People *We lift them to the Lord.*

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

SANCTUS

Hymnal S 125

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Please stand or kneel as you are able

Then the Celebrant continues

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it, and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with Mary and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. *AMEN*.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

FRACTION ANTHEM

Fraction Anthem: Whoever Comes To Me

Arlen Clarke

Antiphon: *Cantor, then all*

Who - ev - er comes to me shall not hun - ger,

And who ev - er be - lies in me shall nev - er thirst;

Cantor: Send out your light and your truth that they may lead me to your holy hill;

Antiphon

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

All baptized persons are invited to receive Holy Communion, though no one will be refused the Sacrament. Anyone may also receive a blessing by crossing their arms over their chest. Communion will be offered in both kinds with bread and wine. Those taking bread alone receive the full Sacrament. To receive wine, drink from the common cup or intinct (dip the bread). Parents may intinct for young children.

AT COMMUNION: *Hail, True Body*

Edward Elgar

Let us pray.

Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. *Amen*

THE BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding*

Hymnal 59

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us bless the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

Family and Friends of this Parish: Donny, Norma, Jane, Wes and his family, Mimi, Karen, Misty, Neil, Billy, Jerry, Frances, Tami, Paul, Terry, Terriann, Kay, Paula, Bill, Byron, Doug, Charles, Kathy, Lance, Ralph, Ron, Virginia, Mary and Van

Celebrating Birthdays This Week: Christy Smith, Emerson Rothschild, Betsy Campbell, Gia Searcy, Glenn Banks, Kevin Houston, Loring Joes III, and Tucker Brennan

Celebrating Anniversaries This Week:

ALTAR GREENERY

*The altar greenery was given to the Glory of God by Elizabeth Tanner in loving memory of Tony Tanner.
Sign up online or in Sign Up Central to sponsor flowers in memory or honor of a loved one.*

CHILDREN'S BLESSING BAGS

The blue cloth bags in the Narthex contain quiet ways for young children to engage with the stories of our faith. Please feel free to borrow a bag and a book for your children during the service.

*One License account number 734391-A
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UPCOMING EVENTS

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY PAGEANT

Sunday, December 21 | 10:30 am

CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE

Nursery available for all services
Holy Eucharist, Rite II | 3 pm Family Service
Music of Christmas | 5:30 pm Choral Prelude
Holy Eucharist, Rite II | 6 pm Traditional Service

weekly announcements

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
Making Christ Known by our Love for All



Second Sunday of Advent | December 7, 2025

Advent Wellness Group | TODAY, December 14 & 21

This Advent, explore “Practicing Generosity with all your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind” through Living Compass. Pick up a devotional booklet for personal use, and/or join a small group on Sundays at 4:30–5:30 p.m. for discussion and reflection. We will meet in the McDowell Suite. Contact Mary Beth Basu at marybethbasu@gmail.com for details.

Bake Sale | TODAY

Donate your favorite holiday treats—casseroles, soups, candies, or baked goods! Proceeds support the scholarship fund. Contact Jeannie Duke (jdjl2xs@gmail.com) or Mary Marshall Jones.

Annual Meeting | TODAY

Join us in the Nave at 9:30 a.m. for our Annual Meeting as we review the past year, look ahead, and elect new Vestry members (Class of 2028) and Diocesan Convention delegates. All parish members are encouraged to attend!

Pier 60+ Sweets & Treats Party | December 9

Join us Tuesday, December 9 from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. in the Terrell Foyer for hot chocolate, sweets, and fellowship. Wear your holiday colors! *Pier 60+ is designed for those ages 60 and older.*

Pier 34 Tacky Christmas Gathering | December 12

Hire a babysitter or have family watch the kids and join Pier 34 (our 30s/40s group) for their annual Tacky Christmas Gathering! Wear your best ugly Christmas sweater and come enjoy food, fun, and fellowship at The Local on Friday, December 12 from 6–8 PM. Please RSVP in Realm. If you have any questions, contact Kelly Gould at gouldkellyj@gmail.com.

Pier 60+ Holiday Party | December 13

Join us Saturday, December 13 at 6 p.m. at the home of Martha & Bill Oyston, co-hosted by the Bucks. Bring your favorite appetizer and BYOB; sliced ham will be provided. Sign up on Realm or let the Oystons or Bucks know you plan to attend. *Pier 60+ is designed for those ages 60 and older.*

Advent Lessons and Carols | December 14

Join the Ascension and St. John's Choirs at 5:00 p.m. for a beautiful service of Advent Lessons and Carols as we prepare for the coming of our Savior. A reception with light refreshments will follow in the Terrill Foyer. Invite your friends and neighbors!

Ascension Women's My Favorite Things Party | December 16

Back by popular demand! Join us on Tuesday, December 16th from 5:30–7:00 p.m. for a My Favorite Things Party. Please bring a new, wrapped version of one of your favorite things that costs between \$20–30. We'll take turns opening items, and everyone will get to take home someone else's favorite thing (think White Elephant, but with gifts you'll be happy to take home). Bring a snack to share, your preferred beverage, and a friend! All are welcome. Questions? Contact Emily Collette at emily.collette@ascensionepiscopal.org

Ascension Men's Gathering | December 17

Mark your calendars! The Ascension Men's Gathering will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 17 at 5:30 PM at Fairway Social (114 13th Street South Birmingham, AL 35233) Come enjoy good conversation, community, and a great mid-week break. Questions? RSVP in Realm or by emailing Martin Hoerner at mhoerner@gmail.com.

Pier 23 Christmas Cookie Swap | December 21

Join us on December 21st from 5:30-7:00 p.m. for a Christmas cookie swap hosted by Callahan Thompson (RSVP to Emily Collette, emily.collette@ascensionepiscopal.org for the address). Bake one to two dozen cookies to share with your friends, and bring home cookies made by other Pier 23 (20s/30s group) members! Dinner will be provided.

EYC Christmas Party | December 21

Cozy and Crazy Christmas! Join us December 21 from 5:30–7:15 p.m. at Ascension for festive fun, a hot cocoa bar, cookie decorating, games, and a Dirty Santa gift exchange (max \$10). Wear your favorite Christmas PJs, ugly sweater, or holiday socks! *EYC is for those in 6th - 12th grades.*

Christmas Eve Services | December 24

Join us on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the joy of Christ's birth. Our Family Service with Eucharist begins at 3 p.m., perfect for worshipping together with children. At 5:30 p.m., enjoy the Music of Christmas, a beautiful prelude of carols and instrumental pieces. Then at 6 p.m., we gather for a Traditional Service with Eucharist, filled with candlelight, scripture, and song. *Nursery available at both services!*

Parish Retreat | January 3-4

Join your parish family for fellowship, meals, and our Saturday night Three Kings Party potluck! The retreat begins at 11 a.m. Saturday and ends after Sunday worship, with an optional Friday night stay. Lodging: \$140/room per night; meals: \$15/adult or child 5+, \$1 ages 1–4, free for infants. **Register in Realm by Dec. 31.** Contact Rev. Jack Alvey for financial assistance: jack.alvey@ascensionepiscopal.org.

MLK Day of Service | January 19

Ascension invites you to participate in a day of community service and engagement on January 19th, MLK Day. We will meet at Ascension at 9:00 a.m. for a quick breakfast and prayer service, then head to various volunteer locations in the Birmingham area until noon. Please register to attend by Monday, January 12th. Contact Emily (emily.collette@ascensionepiscopal.org) for more information.

Episcopal Church 101 | Begins January 11 - February 22

Beginning in January, join us Sundays at 9:15 a.m. to learn about the Episcopal Church and what it means to follow Jesus in our tradition. Required for those seeking confirmation or reception, and open to all who want to learn more. The bishop will visit on March 1 for confirmation. Email jack.alvey@ascensionepiscopal.org to enroll or with questions.

News & Notes

Christmas Pageant Costume Crew

A dedicated group of women are busy sewing new costumes for this year's Christmas Pageant—and they'd love your help! Join us on Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to noon in Ware Hall. There are opportunities to cut, sew, or iron.

The Abbey Volunteers

Help pack lunches Wednesdays or distribute Thursdays in Avondale. Sign up in Sign-Up Central or contact rossparker@att.net.

First Light Volunteers

Serve a meal to women and children at First Light Shelter. Sign up in Sign-Up Central or contact caralynmcdaniel@gmail.com.

Scan to see announcements on website



CLERGY

The Right Reverend Glenda S. Curry, Bishop of Alabama
The Right Reverend Brian N. Prior, Assisting Bishop
The Reverend John “Jack” T. Alvey, Jr., Rector
The Reverend Emily C. Collette, Associate Rector

STAFF

Holly DuBois, Bookkeeper
Sam Herman, Youth Minister
Tiffany Jones, Nursery
Ashley Monachelli, Director of Family Ministries
Paige Reese, Nursery
Christy Smith, Parish Life Coordinator
Michael G. Sparks, Organist & Choirmaster
Sarah Stevens, Communications Director
Karyn Watts, Parish Administrative Assistant

ASCENSION EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

Rebecca Posey, Director
Kelly Gould, Assistant Director

VESTRY

Jim Busbin, Sr. Warden (2025); Ann Nelson, Jr. Warden (2026);
Martin Hoerner: Finance Chair (2025)

Andrew Ault (2025); Ben Mims (2025)
Kelly Gould (2026); Caralyn McDaniel (2026); Elizabeth Tanner (2026)
Tim Burke (2027); Shannon George (2027); Ryan Posey (2027); CJ Searcy (2027)

Len Skelton, Treasurer; Jeff Lees, Assistant Treasurer; Brian Denton, Clerk
Today’s Vestry Person of the Day (VPOD) – Ryan Posey



Episcopal Church of the Ascension
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