



The Episcopal Church of The Ascension Vestavia Hills, Alabama

Making Christ Known by our Love for All

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
February 1, 2026 | 10:30 am

Holy Eucharist | Rite II

For a hearing assistance device, please ask an usher.

PRELUDE: *Now thank we all our God*

G F. Kauffmann

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *Praise my soul, the King of heaven*

Hymnal 410

OPENING ACCLAMATION

BCP 355

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People *And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.*

COLLECT FOR PURITY

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.

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

THE FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

“O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
with calves a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

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

1 LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
 who may abide upon your holy hill?

2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
 who speaks the truth from his heart.

3 There is no guile upon his tongue;
 he does no evil to his friend; *
 he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.

4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
 but he honors those who fear the LORD.

5 He has sworn to do no wrong *
 and does not take back his word.

6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
 nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

7 Whoever does these things *
 shall never be overthrown.

THE SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
 and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

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

Please stand as you are able.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

Remain standing.

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

People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

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 – FORM III

BCP 387

The Leader and People pray responsively, standing or kneeling as you are able.

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest, especially Alexander B. McDowell, father of Robert McDowell, and Lisa Bridgeman, daughter-in-law of Pep & Phyllis Peppenhorst.
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
Silence

For those in our parish family for whom intercessions have been requested, especially Ruth Snow, Neville Crowson, Ron Holt, Glenn Banks II, Peggy West, 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 and for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week. In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; for Diocesan Convention; for Department of Mission and Outreach; for Parish Administrators; and for Parish Vestries. In the Anglican cycle of prayer, we pray for The Church of England and for Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray for God's peace to dwell in our homes, shape our hearts, guide our nation, and heal the world.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

CONFSSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION

BCP 360

The Deacon or Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

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

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

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 and Follow Me*

Robert S. Cohen



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.ascensionepiscopal.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

Prayer B

BCP 367

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.*

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS

Hymnal S 125

The people stand or kneel.

Then the Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

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, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for 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

Will you come and Follow Me

John Bell & Graham Maule

trad. arr. John Bell

Will you come and fol - low me If I but call your name?— Willyou go where you don't
know And nev - er be the same?— Willyou let my love be shown, Willyou let my name be
known, Will you let my life be grown In you and you in me?

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen. *Amen*

THE BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *Now thank we all our God*

Hymnal 397

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People *Thanks be to God.*

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

Family and Friends of this Parish: Kathy, Ginger, Stacey, Wade, Jane, Wes and his family, Mimi, Karen, Billy, Tami, Terry, Terriann, Paula, Bill, Doug, Charles, Lance, Ralph, Ron, Virginia, Mary and Van

Celebrating Birthdays This Week: Ally Baird, David McBrayer, Collins Dillon, Kathryn Bringman, Donna Miller, Jeff Cutshall, and Ella Clabaugh

Celebrating Anniversaries This Week: Jeannie & Joel Morton

Prayer requests will remain on prayer list for 2 weeks unless otherwise noted.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The altar flowers were given to the Glory of God.

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.

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weekly announcements

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Making Christ Known by our Love for All



Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany | February 1, 2026

Episcopal Place Birthday Party | TODAY

We're excited for our Groundhog Day-themed birthday party at Episcopal Place. It will take place today from 1–3 PM. Volunteers are asked to arrive by 12 PM to help with setup. Please contact Kelly Burke at kellybo09@me.com to volunteer.

Casual Eucharist | TONIGHT

Join us tonight at 5:00 p.m. in Ware Hall for a Casual Eucharist. Come as you are for an evening of worship and Holy Communion in a relaxed setting. Music will be led by Sam Herman and parish volunteers and will feature hymns and songs from *The Hymnal 1982*, *Alleluia III*, and other contemporary sources.

Pier 45 Gathering | February 7

(40's & 50's group) Pier 45 will gather for dinner on Saturday, February 7 at 6:00 PM. We'll be meeting at a restaurant (location TBD), so stay tuned for details!

Pier 23 Build-Your-Own Pizza Night | February 8

(20s/30s group) Join us on February 8th for a build-your-own pizza night at Ascension from 5:00-7:00 p.m. We'll provide the crust, cheese, and pizza sauce. Bring whatever you would like to drink and your favorite pizza topping to share with others. We'll also play games and have the Super Bowl on (for those who like sports, funny commercials, Bad Bunny, or all of the above). Contact Emily Collette, emily.collette@ascensionepiscopal.org or Andrew Ault, assault@crimson.ua.edu with any questions!

Ascension Men's Prayer Breakfast | February 12

Join other men from the parish at 8:15 a.m. for breakfast, prayer, and fellowship at First Watch at the Vestavia City Center. You can RSVP in Realm or let Martin Hoerner (mhoerner@gmail.com) know if you plan to attend. Invite your friends or neighbors!

Rock Solid Bible Club | February 11

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension invites children in grades 3–5 to join us after school from 2:45 pm – 3:45 pm as we build a strong foundation of faith. This spring, we'll explore stories of Jesus that teach us to trust Him and love others. Questions? Contact Ashley Monachelli, Director of Family Ministries: ashley.monachelli@ascensionepiscopal.org

Shrove Tuesday Pancake & Jambalaya Supper | February 17

Join us on Shrove Tuesday for dinner! We'll have pancakes, bacon, and Jambalaya courtesy of Jeremy Downey from Bistro V! The fun begins at 5:00 pm and we plan to wind down at 7:00 pm. The suggested donation is \$5.00 per person, or \$20 per family. All proceeds benefit Ascension's EYC (youth) program. Payments can be made at the event with cash, check or Venmo.

Ash Wednesday | February 18

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the 40 days of Lent. Services on Wednesday, February 18th at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. will include the imposition of ashes and holy communion.

Lenten Supper Series

Join us for our Lenten Supper Series, with supper served at 5:30 p.m., followed by a speaker at 6:15 p.m. and concluding by 7:00 p.m. We look forward to hearing from a variety of voices throughout Lent: on **February 25**, Jenny Grant of Episcopal Relief & Development; **March 4**, Tracy Hipps of Christian Service Mission; **March 11**, Charles Scribner of Black Warrior Riverkeeper; and **March 18**, Kee Sloan speaks about Special Session.

Living Well through Lent | Sundays - February 22 - March 29

Each Sunday morning at 9:30 am during Lent, we will talk about “Cultivating Healing and Wholeness” in the Sunshine Room. The Living Compass daily readings and reflections will be our guide to discuss preparing for Easter in our Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind. You can also pick up a Living Compass booklet from the foyer to use at home during Lent. You’ll find daily readings, questions, Scripture, prayers, quotes, and contemplative practices to help you prepare for Easter. For more information, please reach out to Mary Beth Basu, marybethbasu@gmail.com.

Confirmation Sunday & Bishop's Visit | March 1

Please join us in welcoming our diocesan bishop, The Rt. Rev. Glenda Curry, as she makes her annual visit to Ascension. During her visit, Bishop Curry will preach, teach, and preside at both services and will be with us for Confirmation. A reception honoring our confirmands will follow the 10:30 a.m. service in Ware Hall

News & Notes

Giving Hope February

For the month of February, we will be collecting donations for The Abbey (our friends in Avondale). They are especially in need of everyday personal care items and easy, protein-rich foods, including toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, extra-large Ziploc bags, canned fish or other canned meats, beef jerky sticks, trail mix, and protein bars. Thank you for helping support our neighbors in need.

What's New in Faith Formation in 2026?

- **Rector's Bible Study – *A Who's Who of the Bible*** - Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. in the Sunshine Room.
- **Adult Faith Formation – *Seven Signs in John's Gospel*** - Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in Ware Hall.
- **Women's Bible Study** - Tuesdays at 12 p.m. in the Sunshine Room.

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.

Breakfast Teams

Join a Breakfast Team! We're looking for team members (men and women) to help cook breakfast on a rotating basis every 4 weeks before Sunday School. Team leaders are already in place—we just need you! If you're interested or have questions, email Christy at christy.smith@ascensionepiscopal.org.

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
Martin Hoerner, Sexton
Tiffany Jones, Nursery
Kathy Lounsbury, Senior Life Minister
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

Elizabeth Tanner, Sr. Warden (2026); Tim Burke (2027) and Ben Mims (2028), Jr. Wardens

Kelly Gould (2026); Caralyn McDaniel (2026); Melanie Lee (2026)
Shannon George (2027); Ryan Posey (2027); CJ Searcy (2027)
Justice Allen (2028); Brian Denton (2028); Merry Michael Smith (2028)

Len Skelton, Treasurer; Jeff Lees, Assistant Treasurer
Today's Vestry Person of the Day (VPOD) – Kelly Gould



Episcopal Church of the Ascension
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