

# FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Welcome to  
The Episcopal Church of The Ascension  
Vestavia Hills, AL  
Founded 1953

*Making Christ Known by our Love for All*

The Holy Eucharist | A Penitential Order | Rite II  
Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 15, 2026 | 10:30 a.m.

*For a hearing assistance device, please ask an usher.*

PRELUDE: *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah* Paul Manz

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah* Hymnal 690

OPENING ACCLAMATION BCP 351

*Celebrant* Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.  
*People* His mercy endures for ever.

THE DECALOGUE BCP 350

Hear the commandments of God to his people:  
I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.  
You shall have no other gods but me.  
*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not make for yourself any idol.  
*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Honor your father and your mother.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not commit murder.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not commit adultery.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not steal.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not be a false witness.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

*Amen. Lord have mercy.*

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8,9

## CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

BCP 352

*The Deacon or Celebrant then 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.

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

KYRIE: *from Mass of the Quiet Hour*

George Oldroyd

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Celebrant*        The Lord be with you.

*People*            *And also with you.*

*Celebrant*        Let us pray.

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; 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: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord.

*People*            *Thanks be to God.*

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; \*  
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul \*  
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I shall fear no evil; \*  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; \*  
you have anointed my head with oil,  
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, \*  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

## THE SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

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

*Please stand as you are able.*

SEQUENCE HYMN: *Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old*

Hymnal 567

THE GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

*Remain standing.*

*Celebrant*        The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
*People*            *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on

the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

*Celebrant*            The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People*                Praise be to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

The Reverend Jack Alvey

*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.*

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – *Form IV*

BCP 388

*Please stand or kneel as you are able.*

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. We pray for God's mission through the Church. In the Anglican cycle of prayer, we pray for The Anglican Church of Kenya and for Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray for Sean our Presiding Bishop, Glenda, our bishop, and Richard, our bishop-elect. In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; for all who plan and lead Christian Formation in the parishes; for Episcopal Retreat Houses and places of spiritual refreshment; and for St. Joseph on the Mountain, Mentone.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***Hear our prayer.***

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. We pray for God's peace to dwell in our homes, shape our hearts, guide our nation, and heal the world.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***Hear our prayer.***

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

***Hear our prayer.***

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us. We remember all those celebrating birthdays and celebrating anniversaries this week.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. We pray for those in our parish family for whom intercessions have been requested, especially for Jean Marie Banks, Jill Sidwell, Ruth Snow, the Crowson family, Ron Holt, 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, and for the friends and family of this parish.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

## THE PEACE

BCP 360

*Celebrant*      The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*People*          And also with you.

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY: *Cantique de Jean Racine*

Gabriel Fauré



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](http://www.ascensionepiscopal.org).

DOXOLOGY: *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

Hymnal 380, vs. 3

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

BCP 361

Prayer A

*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 him 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:

*Celebrant and People*

SANCTUS

Hymnal S 125

*The people kneel or stand.*

*Then the Celebrant continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

*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 he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

*The Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament,

and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: 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,

*People and Celebrant*

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

*A period of silence is kept.*

## 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?— Will you go where you don't  
know And nev - er be the same?— Will you let my love be shown, Will you let my name be  
known, Will you let my life be grown In you and you in me?

## PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

BCP 337

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so

to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

## INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*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

BCP 365

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.*

## A SOLEMN PRAYER

Look down in mercy, Lord, on your people who kneel before you; and grant that those whom you have nourished by your Word and Sacraments may bring forth fruit worthy of repentance; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *The glory of these forty days*

Hymnal 143

## THE DISMISSAL

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

## 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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## ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

*Family and Friends of this Parish:* Linda, Bill, Barbara, Lyn, Will, Greg and Pam, Glenda, Lori, Rick, Ginger, Jane, Wes and his family, Mimi, Billy, Terry, Terriann, Paula, Bill, Doug, Lance, Ralph, Ron, Virginia, Mary and Van.

*Celebrating Birthdays This Week:* Marie Graves, Carter Posey, Chip Dews, Glenn Banks, Luke Lagrone, Ella Sinor, Haller Smith, Donna Thompson, Wesley Mansour, Joseph George

*Celebrating Anniversaries This Week:*

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

*Scan to see announcements on website*



## **CLERGY**

The Right Reverend Glenda S. Curry, Bishop of Alabama  
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) – Justice Allen & Tim Burke



Episcopal Church of the Ascension  
1912 Canyon Road, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216  
205-822-3480 | [ascensionepiscopal.org](http://ascensionepiscopal.org) | [admin@ascensionepiscopal.org](mailto:admin@ascensionepiscopal.org)