



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

Making Christ Known by our Love for All

The Holy Eucharist | Rite II
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026 | 10:30 a.m.

For a hearing assistance device, please ask an usher.

PRELUDE: *Now Thank We All Our God*

George F. Kaufman

THE WORD OF GOD

HYMN: *Earth and all stars*

Hymnal 412

OPENING ACCLAMATION

BCP 355

Celebrant says Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

The Celebrant continues.

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 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.

SONG OF PRAISE: *Benedictus es domino*

Hymnal S 236

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS 50:15-21

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God*

PSALM 103:8-13 *Benedic, anima mea*

Choir and Congregation

8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

9 He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.

13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.

A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

Please stand as you are able.

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 18:21-35

Remain standing.

Deacon or Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Deacon or Priest The Gospel of the Lord.
People *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

SERMON

The Rev. Emily Collette

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.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE ADAPTED FROM RITE I

*Please stand or kneel as you are able.**The Leader and People pray responsively*

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Almighty and everliving God, inspire your Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord, that all who confess your Name may live together in unity and godly love remembering especially our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; Commission on Spirituality; Daughters of the King; St. Matthew's, Madison; and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Give grace to all bishops and other ministers, especially Sean our Presiding Bishop, Richard our Bishop, Emily and Jack our priests, and Sarah Archbishop of Canterbury, that by their life and teaching they may set forth your Word and faithfully administer your holy Sacraments.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

To all your people give your heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present, that we may hear and receive your holy Word, truly serving you all the days of our life.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Rule the hearts of those in authority in this and every land, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works, that we may honor you with what we have been given, and be faithful stewards of your bounty.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Of your goodness, O Lord, comfort and heal those on our parish prayer list, especially Harold Quattlebaum, Elizabeth Tanner, Jackie Clark, Ron and Nancy Rowell, Dick Lounsbury, Cille Spader, Shane Wiley, Paula Stringfellow, Barbara Cochran, Donna Miller, Donna Thompson, those named on our family and friends prayer list, and all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all the blessings of this life especially for those celebrating birthdays anniversaries this week.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We bless your holy Name for all your servants departed this life especially Ezra Thrasher, beseeching you to grant them continual growth in your love and service.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Grant us grace so to follow the good examples of all your saints, that with them we may share in your heavenly kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, who brings good out of evil and turns even the wrath of your children towards your promised peace: Hear our prayers this day as we remember those of many nations and differing faiths whose lives were cut short by the fierce flames of anger and hatred on September 11, 2001. Hasten the time when the menace of war shall be removed. Cleanse both us and those perceived to be our enemies of all hatred and distrust. Pour out the spirit of peace on all the rulers of our world that we may be brought through strife to the lasting peace of the kingdom of your Son; Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

Grant these our prayers, O Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

The Deacon or Celebrant says

BCP 360

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

THIRD GRADE BIBLE PRESENTATIONS

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY: *Christ bath a garden*

Gerald Near



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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

BCP 361

Eucharistic 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 forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS

Hymnal S 128

Please stand or kneel as you are able.

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 to 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

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

Then may be sung or said

FRACTION ANTHEM

Hymnal S 161

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation

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.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION: *Hail, True Body*

W. A. Mozart

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

BCP 365

Celebrant and People

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.*

BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *Take up your cross, the Savior said*

Hymnal 675

THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The flowers were given to the Glory of God by the Dee Anne and Scott Poebler in loving memory of their brother, Paul Poebler.

If you wish to donate flowers for future Sundays in memory or honor of a loved one, sign up online or contact the office.

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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.

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

Family and Friends of this Parish: Audrey, Brian, Dave, Maggie, Dixon, Sandy, Mickey, Wes, Lynda, Scott, Linda, Nova, Gordon, Amy, Tony and Rachel, Rosalie, Will, Glenda, Billy, Terry, Terriann, Paula, Lance, Ralph, Ron, Virginia, Mary and Van

Celebrating Birthdays This Week: Clark Monachelli (9/14), Parker Monachelli (9/14), Barbara Cochran (9/15), Gabe Nelson (9/18), Phyllis Peppenhorst (9/19), John Wuska (9/19), and Vivvie Ryan (9/19)

Celebrating Anniversaries This Week: Melanie & Neville Crowson (9/14)

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

CLERGY

The Right Reverend
Richard T. Lawson, III
Bishop of Alabama

The Reverend
John "Jack" T. Alvey, Jr.,
Rector

The Reverend
Emily C. Collette,
Associate Rector

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) – Merry Michael Smith

STAFF

Sam Herman, Youth Minister

Martin Hoerner, Sexton

Kathy Lounsbury,
Senior Life Minister

Ashley Monachelli,
Director of Family Ministries

Yolanda Myers, Nursery

Paige Reese, Nursery

Olivia Hill Sheffield,
Parish Office Manager

Michael G. Sparks,
Organist & Choirmaster

Karyn Watts,
Finance & Database Officer



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