

Grace Episcopal Church

Grace is a Christ-centered Community devoted to Servant Ministry and Spiritual Growth.

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026 9:30 AM

Holy Eucharist



Earliest known image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Early 3rd c., Syrian house church.

Interpreting This Week's Prayer

The Collect for the 4th Sunday in Easter: *O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dear God: You have given us Jesus, your Son, so that we can know up close what your provision and care for us is like. Give me grace to hear his lifegiving voice calling out to me among the lifetaking voices that compete for my attention every day. Give me grace to follow him to pastures that will never go bare and streams that will never run dry. In His Name I offer this prayer. Amen.



GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

THE WORD OF GOD

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ is risen.

People *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

The Celebrant and People say

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.

Song of Praise Hymn 494 Crown Him with many crowns (vss 1 & 3)

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee
And hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save
His glories now we sing who died, and rose on high
Who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die

Collect of the Day

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Acts 2:42-47

These verses depict the early Christian "koinonia community." Koinonia is a Greek word that means shared life and deep fellowship as opposed to casual social relationships. The ways that these Christians cared for one another were signs of the Holy Spirit's presence among them; those signs made other people want to be part of their group, too.

Those who had been baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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

Psalm 23 *Dominus regit me*

This is perhaps the most famous and beloved psalm attributed to David, who must have contemplated God's role in his life from a young age as he tended his father's sheep. It is the first passage of Scripture many Christians learn; and, it is one of the last passages of Scripture read over us at our burials.

- 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 Lesson

1 Peter 2:19-25

The motivation behind Peter's letter is evident in these verses: people who follow Jesus in Asia Minor are being persecuted and their suffering is, understandably, tempting them to put their faith elsewhere. Peter reminds them that their contemporaries are treating them the same way Jesus was treated by his; and that God ("the shepherd and guardian" of their souls) will stand with them, just as he did his Son.

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

“He committed no sin,
 and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

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

Gospel Hymn 204

Now the green blade riseth

Please sing vs 1 & 2 before the Gospel.

Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain
Love lives again, that with the dead has been
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green

In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain
Thinking that never he would wake again
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

John 10:1-10

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, a day when many Christian traditions (notably Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican) focus on God's role as our Shepherd and how Jesus, as God, embodies that role for us, too. The Good Shepherd was the first major Christian icon, before the cross became our primary symbol. Images of a figure with a lamb slung over his shoulders have been found on the walls of ancient house churches and altars.

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel Hymn 204

Now the green blade riseth

Please sing vs 3 after the Gospel.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain
He that for three days in the grave had lain
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green

The Nicene Creed

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

The Leader and People pray responsively.

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;
For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;
For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Glenda, our Bishop; Richard, our Bishop-Elect; Danielle, our Priest; Josh, our Deacon; and for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.
Silence

The People may add their own petitions.

We pray for those on our intercessory prayer list, saying together
Elijah, Reagan, Penney, The Booth Family, Suzy, Bennie, Robin, Wayne, Ron, Tommy B, LaVera, Peter, Doug, Mark, Courtney, Bruce, Frances, Etelka, Jerry, June, David, Betty, Dan, Ro, Heather, Gail, Deborah, & Jessica.

We pray for all whose work puts them in harm's way and for those on active duty in the military, saying together
Taylor, Johnathan, Ben, Conner, John Gage, Nathan, Henry, Jacob, Kadin, Dustin, Rebekah, Bryan, & William.

Hear us, Lord;
For your mercy is great.

We pray for those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries:
Barbara Sherrill, Cornelia Heflin, & Kelley & Mike Williams.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.
Silence

We will exalt you, O God our King;
And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.
Silence

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;
Who put their trust in you.

Concluding Collect

Lord Jesus Christ you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Celebrant says to the People

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Offertory

Offertory Anthem

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

Kyle Trapp, baritone

My Shepherd will supply my need, Jehovah is his Name
In pastures fresh he makes me feed beside the living stream
He brings my wandering spirit back when I forsake his ways
And leads me, for his mercy's sake, in paths of truth and grace

When I walk through the shades of death, thy presence is my stay
One word of thy supporting breath drives all my fears away
Thy hand, in sight of all my foes, doth still my table spread
My cup with blessings overflows, thy oil anoints my head

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days
Oh, may thy house be mine abode and all my work be praise
There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come
No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home

Doxology Hymn

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

Instructions for receiving Communion are found at the end of this prayer.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer A

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.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

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 S-125

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

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

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.

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

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Facing the People, the Celebrant says the following Invitation:

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

The Communion

Please come to the altar rail to receive Communion. You may kneel or stand. Receive a wafer from the Priest by holding out your hands. To receive the wine, please dip the wafer in the chalice or drink from the chalice. If you do not wish to receive Communion, cross your arms over your chest and the Priest will offer you a Blessing.

Communion Hymn #171, All III *The Servant Song*

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow, 'til we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony
Born of all we've known together, of Christ's love and agony

Postcommunion Prayer

The Celebrant and People continue

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Easter Blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Recessional Hymn 646 The King of Love my shepherd is

Dismissal

Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Servants Today – April 26

VOD
Dennis Cole

Safety
Goodie Pride

Greeter
Rob, Barney,
& Colby Martin

Usher
Amy Daniel

Reader
Lisa Gardner

Acolytes
Kris Walls
& Jam Davis

Chalice
Patti Thorne
& John Walls

Server
John Walls

Cross
Joshua Davis

Altar Guild

Mary Cecelia Youngblood, Jodi McDaniel, Beth Scott, & Debbie Thompson

Fellowship

Jane & Dennis Cole

The altar flowers are given to the the glory of God, and in celebration of the birthdays of my April Sisters.

-Barbara Sherrill

Rev. Danielle would love to hear from you! Please do not hesitate to contact her!

931-636-4898

THOMDL80@gmail.com

Grace Church Vestry 2026

Lisa Gardner
Annie Laurie Gray
Jerry Shea – Senior Warden

Chris Earl
Kris Walls
Troy Youngblood

Dennis Cole
David McKinley – Junior Warden
Janet Port – Treasurer
Darrell Todd – Clerk

Grace Episcopal Church

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Rector: The Reverend Danielle Thompson

Deacon: Josh Vacik

Parish Musician: Christa Belue Byrd

Organist: Nancy Hughes Balte

Bookkeeper: Gayle Ozbirn

Parish Administrator: Lane Hardison Ennis



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you

You didn't have to be here today. No matter who you are, where you come from, or whether you've ever walked through our red doors before, your presence blesses us.

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Worship: 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Connect: Stay for Fellowship in our Parish Hall after the service

Serve: Vestry meeting at 11 AM

Keep in touch: Fill out a contact information card or send a text to Danielle

UPCOMING

Shoals Shelter Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: Monday, April 27 at First Pres, Florence.
RSVP to Kait Richardson (director@shoalsshelter.org) or let Danielle know you are coming.

Grace Notes Music Ministry: An all-talents-all-instruments-inclusive group to spread music throughout our larger community. Curious? Come to an organizing meeting at Grace on 4/29 at 5 PM. Or, chat with Mark Adkins (863-670-4382).

Graduation Sunday: Sunday, May 3 at 9:30 AM at Grace.
Luci Vacik preaches! Our 2026 high school grads are Luci (Florence) and Gabriel Awwad (Deshler).

Drinks with the Davises: Drinks and snacks at Danielle & Josh's house: 210 N Sequoia Blvd, Florence.
4 PM to 5:30 PM on the last three Sundays in May. Not sure when to come? Here's an alphabetical suggestion:

May 17: Last names A - G (Adkins - Gray)

May 24: Last names H - R (Hovater - Riley)

May 31: Last names S - Z (Savage - Youngblood)

- Can't make it on your suggested date? Come to any one of these evenings that works best. You don't even have to change your last name.
- Feel free to bring a visitor or friend.
- Is this Spring too busy to add an extra event to your calendar? No worries at all – we will see you in church!
- *The purpose of these gatherings is solely for fellowship and to learn about what's up this summer at Grace.*

Shoals Chamber Singers Spring Concert: Thursday, May 14 at 7:00 PM at Grace. Free!

Annual Yard Sale for Outreach: Saturday June 6 at Grace. Donation in gathering will begin Sunday, May 31.

Choral Evensong at Historic St. John's: Anglican prayer and song in our favorite historical setting. Date TBD!

Summer 2026: Look for upcoming details about Christ-centered Community, Servant Ministry, and Spiritual Growth opportunities in June, July, and August.

HANDY FEST _ TIMES TWO!

Wednesday July 22: **Grace 20** (formerly A Taste of Grace), 6:00 pm in the church
Sunday July 26: **Unending Praise** 5th Anniversary Concert, 6:00 pm in the church

REGULAR OFFICE HOURS

Mon: 10 - 3

Tues: 10 - 3

Weds: 10 - 5

Most Thursdays: 10 - 1

