

Grace Episcopal Church

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

GRADUATION SUNDAY



***The Fifth Sunday
of Easter***

***May 3, 2026
9:30 AM***

Holy Eucharist

Interpreting This Week's Prayer



GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

The Collect for the 5th Sunday in Easter: *Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dear God: The more aware of you I become, the more fully I experience life; and, the more hope I have for life to come. Help me gain a deeper awareness of you, and true fullness of life, by following Jesus' steps: by looking at the world with his eyes, loving people with his heart, and facing each day with his courage. In His Name I offer this prayer. Amen.

Prelude

Processional Hymn 518 Christ is made the sure foundation

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

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Acts 7:55-60

Stephen was one of the first deacons, appointed by the apostles to serve the poor in Acts 6. He is also the first martyr, a word that means “witness” and also refers to a person who dies for their faith, either by being murdered or by putting themselves in harm’s way (such as the Martyrs of Memphis, TN who were exposed to yellow fever while caring for the sick in a 19c epidemic). This passage serves two functions.

First, it introduces us to the real danger facing the Jerusalem Church following Jesus’ death (notice how Stephen’s final words are similar to Jesus’ own). Second, it introduces us to Saul, who will become a major figure in the apostles’ story from this point on!

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 *In te, Domine, speravi*

This psalm is about trust, plain and simple. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus’ final words come from verse 5 of this psalm. We repeat the same words in the Book of Common Prayer service of Compline (bedtime prayers) every night: “Into your hands, I commend my spirit ...”

1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;

let me never be put to shame; *

deliver me in your righteousness.

2 Incline your ear to me; *

make haste to deliver me.

3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,

for you are my crag and my stronghold; *

for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *

for you are my tower of strength.

5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *

for you have redeemed me,

O Lord, O God of truth.

15 My times are in your hand; *

rescue me from the hand of my enemies,

and from those who persecute me.

16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *

and in your loving-kindness save me

The Second Lesson

1 Peter 2:2-10

Peter continues to reassure Jewish Christians in these verses that they are still a chosen people and a royal priesthood. He also quotes Scripture to prove that Jesus' story fulfills God's promises to them.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner”,

and

“A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

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

Gospel Hymn 204

Now the green blade riseth
Please sing vss 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 14:1-14

In this Chapter, Jesus explains to his disciples that he is preparing to leave them, they can't go where he is going, but that they shouldn't be afraid – in fact, they should rejoice! Huh? This conversation happens on Holy Thursday. By Easter Sunday, when the disciples see the Risen Jesus, they'll understand his words ... kind of. They won't fully grasp this teaching of Jesus until fifty days later on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descends upon God's people in order to give them (us) the gift of his eternal living presence.

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

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 Sermon

Luci Vacik

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. We pray for Donald, our president; Kay, our governor; and for the mayors, city councils, and county commissions of the Shoals;

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

Ryan, Carole, Sam, MJ, Martin, 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
Joshua, Drake, Carter, Ethan, Jacobi, Kahleel, Henry, Jacob, Kadin, Dustin, Rebekah, Bryan, & William.

Hear us, Lord;
For your mercy is great.

We pray for those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries:
Kathy Burchfield, Kris & John Walls, Sherry & David Springer, Morgan Jett Robinson, & Dan Larsen.

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

This I Pray

Grace Choir

May your life-song sing of God's amazing grace
May your feet be firm and steady in this race
When the world reflects your image through a mirrored facade
May you always see your beauty through the perfect eyes of God

This I pray
That you'd have God's best
Be strong and blessed

When your arms are empty, may your heart be full
And the mountains that you face seem possible
When the ground is dry, I pray that you'd have rain
And when the music starts to vanish, you would sing on through your pain

And when God's voice is silent, you'd hold tighter to His hand
And trust He'll lead you safely on the journey He has planned
And if threadbare faith holds stillborn dreams, I pray the hurt would be redeemed
To hold on tightly to the Savior, grow in truth, and never waver

I pray your heart is warm when life can be so cold
And when scoffers mock your journey, you'd be bold
I pray for food on your table in times when it's lean
And that you'd share your meal with others so God's goodness can be seen

Doxology Hymn

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow
Praise him, all creatures here below
Alleluia
Praise him above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Alleluia

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 93, All. III

In Christ Alone

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 490

I want to walk as a child of the light

Dismissal

Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Servants Today - May 3

VOD Jerry Shea	Safety Troy Youngblood	Greeter Janet Klas	Usher David Springer	Reader Alice Maddox
Acolytes Eob Allan & George Youngblood	Chalice Fred Joly & Bob Allan	Server Bob Allan	Cross Fred Joly	

Altar Guild

May Woodie Christopher, Susan Balch, Julie Clement, Susan Kirkland, Ro Larsen, Jacque Stutts, & Karen Weason

Fellowship

Graduation Sunday

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for my family and children's birthdays in May.

-Nancy Borden

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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The Reverend Danielle Thompson, **Rector**

The Reverend Josh Vacik, **Deacon**

Parish Musician: Christa Eelue Byrd

Organist: Nancy Hughes Bolte

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, MAY 3

Worship: 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist

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

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

UPCOMING

Grace Notes Music Ministry: An all talents all instruments inclusive group to spread music throughout our larger community. Curious? Come to an open practice session on Thursday, May 7 at 4 PM. Or, chat with Mark Adkins (868-670-4382).

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

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.*

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

Grace Night in June: All-parish potluck on Sunday, June 7, at 5:30 PM. Bring a side, main, or dessert - whatever you prefer! The church will provide bread and drinks. Questions or want to help set up/take down? Contact Linda Joly or Laurie Gray!

HANDY FEST ... TIMES TWO!

Wednesday July 22: **Grace 2.0** (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

