

Grace Episcopal Church

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



*The Sixteenth Sunday
after Pentecost*

September 13, 2026

9:30 AM

Holy Eucharist

Interpreting This Week's Prayer

Collect of the Day: *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 for ever. Amen.*

This prayer needs no interpretation—its meaning is clear and true. But, it may interest you to know that it originally comes from a “sacramentary” (worship manual) written near Paris in about 750 AD. Our need for God’s grace spans millennia!



GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

Prelude

Processional Hymn 516 Come down, O Love divine

Come down, O Love divine, seek thou this soul of mine
And visit it with thine own ardor glowing
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming
And let thy glorious light shine ever on my sight
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming

And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long
Shall far outpass the power of human telling
For none can guess its grace, till Love create a place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling

THE WORD OF GOD

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

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 376 vs 1 & 2 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, praising thee, their sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise
Field and forest, vale and mountain, blooming meadow, flashing sea
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee

Collect of the Day

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 for ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Exodus 14:19-31

Try to read these verses without imagining Charlton Heston and that technicolor wall of water! For Christians, the Red Sea is about more than Hollywood. This story prefigures our deliverance from bondage in sin to freedom in Christ through the waters of new life. We read this passage of Scripture on the night before Easter (when some churches have a vigil service) and this story is mentioned in the prayer of thanksgiving over water at every Baptism.

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

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

Psalm 114 *In exitu Israel*

Judah was the southern part of Palestine and Israel was the northern part.

However, those divisions were established long after the Hebrew people's deliverance through the Red Sea. Nature is depicted as harmless, even fearful, in these verses.

1 Hallelujah!

When Israel came out of Egypt, *
the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,

2 Judah became God's sanctuary *
and Israel his dominion.

3 The sea beheld it and fled; *
Jordan turned and went back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, *
and the little hills like young sheep.

5 What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? *
O Jordan, that you turned back?

6 You mountains, that you skipped like rams? *
you little hills like young sheep?

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, *
at the presence of the God of Jacob,

8 Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water *
and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

The Second Lesson

Romans 14:1-12

This beautiful passage of scripture restates a common Pauline theme: diversity in lifestyle and practice is totally okay in a community of faith. Just don't hold your preferences over one another's heads, make them the measure of salvation, elevate them to the status of core beliefs, or use them to deny access to others. But also, for goodness sake, don't go out of your way to scandalize one another just because you can! "For freedom Christ has set you free," (Galatians 5:1), not for offense! Be merciful, be patient, be humble, be respectful, and above all, keep your eyes on the cross. For more, see 1 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 10.

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.

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

Gospel Hymn 488

Be thou my vision

Please sing vss 1 & 2 before the Gospel.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
All else be nought to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be
Thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee

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

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Matthew 18:21-35

Some rabbis taught that you should offer forgiveness three times – after that, cut the person off! Peter suggests seven, thinking that this number (which symbolizes wholeness) must represent the kind of extraordinary forgiveness for which Jesus would advocate. Peter’s learning, but he’s not quite there yet! Jesus responds, “Seventy-seven,” or in other words, “Throw out your scorecards!” Forgiveness is not a quantifiable resource, it’s a Christian practice and way of life. So much more could be said here, but one thing ought to be noted: forgiveness does not necessarily entail allowing someone to play the same role they once did in your life.

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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel Hymn 488

Be thou my vision

Please sing vs 3 after the Gospel.

High King of heaven, when victory is won
May I reach heaven’s joys, bright heaven’s Sun
Heart of my heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all

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; Richard, our Bishop; 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

Everett, David, Lily, Michael, Bennie, Robin, Betty, Dan, Ro, Heather, Gail, Jessica, George, Doug, Charles, Dennis, Eric, Larry, Alex, and Bitty.

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, and William.

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We pray for those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries:
Eddie Daniel, Ro & Dan Larsen, Betty McCutchen, and Dan Bolte.

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

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Confession of Sins

The Deacon 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 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

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

Blest be the God of Love

Grace Choir

Blest be the God of love
Who gave me eyes, and light, and power this day
Both to be busy and to play
But much more blest be God above

My God, thou art all love
Not one poor minute 'scapes thy breast
But brings a favor from above
And in this love, I rest

Doxology Hymn

Old 100th

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. Amen

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.

For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Land of Rest

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

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 674 Forgive our sins as we forgive

“Forgive our sins as we forgive” you taught us Lord to pray
But you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say

How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let old bitterness depart

In blazing light your cross reveals the truth we dimly knew
How small the debts men owe to us, how great our debt to you

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls, and bid resentment cease
Then, reconciled to God and man, our lives will spread your peace

Postcommunion Prayer

The Celebrant and People continue

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 334 Praise the Lord, rise up rejoicing

Praise the Lord, rise up rejoicing
Worship, thanks, devotion voicing; glory be to God on high
Christ, your cross and passion sharing
By this Eucharist declaring yours the final victory

Scattered flock, one shepherd sharing
Lost and lonely, one voice hearing, ears attentive to your word
By your Blood new life receiving
In your Body, firm believing, we are yours, and you the Lord.

Sins forgiven, wrongs forgiving
We go forth alert and living in your Spirit, strong and free
Partners in your new creation
Seeking peace in every nation, may we faithful followers be

Dismissal

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

Servants Today - September 13

VOD Annie Laurie Gray	Safety Graham Fox	Greeter Jackie & Jim Noles	Usher Fred Joly	Reader Bill Dodds
Acolytes Lisa Gardner & Morgan Robinson	Chalice Kelsey Williams & Lisa Gardner	Server Dennis Cole	Cross Dennis Cole	

Altar Guild

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

Fellowship

Potluck Snack Sunday

The altar flowers are given today by May Woodie Christopher to the glory of God, and in celebration of May Beth Youngblood's birthday.

**Danielle, our priest, and Josh, our deacon, would love to hear from you!
Please do not hesitate to contact either or both of them!**

Danielle Thompson:	931-636-4898	THOMDL80@gmail.com
Josh Vacik:	256-740-1255	JVACIK@comcast.net

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

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The Reverend Danielle Thompson, **Rector**

The Reverend Josh Vacik, **Deacon**

Parish Musician: Christa Belue Byrd

Organist: Nancy Hughes Bolte

Bookkeeper: Gayle Ozbirn

Parish Administrator: Lane Hardison Ennis

THIS WEEK AT GRACE:

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY – MONDAY AT 8 AM (PARISH HALL)

LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE – TUESDAY AT 11 AM (PARISH HALL) – NEW TIME

GRACE CHOIR REHEARSAL – WEDNESDAY AT 6 PM (NAVE)

GRACE NOTES OPEN JAM SESSION – THURSDAY AT 3:45 PM (PARISH HALL)

CENTERING PRAYER – THURSDAY AT 5:15 PM (NAVE)

CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP – SATURDAY AT 9:00 AM (PARISH HALL)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHOALS SHELTER SUMMER COOL-DOWN DAYS

We are hosting 10-15 guest from Shoals Shelter from 12p - 4p in the Parish Hall on Thursday, Sept 24: Pam Davis, Pam Burkett, and Dianne Andrews will provide lunch
Pam Davis: (256)394-2231

*Thank you to all who served
Next stop: winter shelter season, beginning Nov, 2026!*

SEPTEMBER IS HERE!

Sign up now for an **"Introduction to Centering Prayer"** workshop, which will be hosted at Grace on Saturday, Sept 19, from 9 AM - 12 PM
Led by Beverly Brassell and Bryson Waldo of Contemplative Outreach Birmingham. Questions? Contact Mark Adkins
Call the office, contact Mark by text or email,
or sign up online using the QR code.



September 13: Bring a Snack to Share Fellowship!
Bring a simple homemade or pre-packaged snack to share at 10:45 AM.

September 20: Grace Night
Easy breezy community meal at 5:30 PM. Bring what you like to eat or what's easy for you to make or buy.

OCTOBER IS COMING!

Great Episcopal Picnic: St. Bart's at 10:30 AM on Sunday, October 4.
The new Bishop will be there! Grace brings desserts

Fall Grace Groups Begin: Wednesdays, October 7 - December 16

Cursillo 241: Ninon and Richard Parker will be pilgrims October 8 - 11!

Community Pet Blessing and Grace Night: 4 PM Pet Blessing, followed by an outdoor meal



Save our church website QR code!
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