

Grace Episcopal Church

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

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2026 9:30 AM

Holy Eucharist



*The Red Vineyard / Red Vineyard at Arles (Montmajour),
Painted by Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890)*

Interpreting This Week's Prayer



GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

Collect of the Day: *Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dear God: I know, deep in my heart, what matters most. I can look ahead, toward the end of my life, and identify which people and which efforts I hope to have given myself to. I can look back and see how your providence, O God, has led me to where I am today. And yet, in this very moment, I am anxious about so many things – some of them very trivial and some of them as serious as they can be. Ground me in trust, O Lord. And, give me your Holy Spirit to help me hold fast to faith, hope, and love, for they will endure. In Jesus' Name I offer this prayer. Amen.

Prelude

Processional Hymn 522 Glorious things of thee are spoken

Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God
He whose word cannot be broken formed thee for his own abode
On the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose
With salvation's walls surrounded, thou mayst smile at all thy foes

See! the streams of living waters, springing from eternal love
Well supply thy sons and daughters and all fear of want remove
Who can faint, when such a river ever will their thirst assuage
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver, never fails from age to age

Round each habitation hovering, see the cloud and fire appear
For a glory and a covering, showing that the Lord is near
Thus deriving from their banner, light by night, and shade by day
Safe they feed upon the manna which he gives them when they pray

Blest inhabitants of Zion, washed in the Redeemer's blood
Jesus, whom their souls rely on, makes them kings and priests to God
'Tis his love his people raises over self to reign as kings
And as priests, his solemn praises each for a thank-offering brings

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

Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Exodus 16:2-15

Could this story BE more relatable? God has done amazing things for the Israelites. He has delivered them from slavery; drowned Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea; and transformed putrid water into something they can safely drink. Now the people are hungry. They can't help that, and they have every right to be upset about it. But, rather than pray to God about their real problem, they turn against him, accuse Moses and Aaron of trying to starve them, and long for the good old days ... in Egypt? The place they just escaped? God shows patience and compassion, perhaps mindful of how much stress and hardship this group has recently endured.

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?" And Moses said, "When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord."

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat."

Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

Confitemini Domino

This psalm complements the prior reading because it revisits the wonderful things God did for the Israelites in the wilderness. Notice how it focuses on how good God is but leaves out how grumpy his people are!

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; *
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him, *
and speak of all his marvelous works.
- 3 Glory in his holy Name; *
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- 4 Search for the Lord and his strength; *
continually seek his face.
- 5 Remember the marvels he has done, *
his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O offspring of Abraham his servant, *
O children of Jacob his chosen.
- 37 He led out his people with silver and gold; *
in all their tribes there was not one that stumbled.
- 38 Egypt was glad of their going, *
because they were afraid of them.
- 39 He spread out a cloud for a covering *
and a fire to give light in the night season.
- 40 They asked, and quails appeared, *
and he satisfied them with bread from heaven.
- 41 He opened the rock, and water flowed, *
so the river ran in the dry places.
- 42 For God remembered his holy word *
and Abraham his servant.
- 43 So he led forth his people with gladness, *
his chosen with shouts of joy.
- 44 He gave his people the lands of the nations, *
and they took the fruit of others' toil,
- 45 That they might keep his statutes *
and observe his laws.
Hallelujah!

The Second Lesson

Philippians 1:21-30

After 15 weeks – count them, 15 – we have finished Paul’s letter to the Romans. Now, for four weeks, we are reading Philippians, which many people say is the happiest book in the entire Bible! Paul writes to the church in Philippi from prison, expressing the true joy he feels when he thinks about them, praising them for their faithfulness, and teaching them about Christ-like humility. In Philippians, Paul experiences peace and contentment even while he is suffering.

To me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well-- since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 20:1-16

The landowner gets right to the heart of the matter when his workers complain about his wage scale: “Am I unfair ... or are YOU jealous?” Now, instead of wages, think about grace. None of us deserve or can earn God’s favor. Those who follow the straight and narrow path and those who veer from it – even repeatedly! – receive the same forgiveness and love. As people of faith, can we make it our goal to celebrate every instance of God’s mercy, no matter who is receiving it? And, can we make it our goal to do God’s will not to earn a reward but because we love the life he has called us to in Jesus Christ?

Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

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

Elijah, Reagan, Penney, The Booth Family, Suzy, Betty, Dan, Ro, Heather, Gail, Jessica, George, Doug, Charles, Dennis, Eric, Larry, Alex, Bitty, Jack, and Marcia.

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, and William.

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We pray for those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries:
John Walls, Wren Rose Wyker, Whitney Gamble, Ashley Heaton, and Phillip
McCaig.

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

Honey in the Rock

Grace Choir

There's honey in the rock, water in the stone,
manna on the ground, no matter where I go;
I don't need to worry now that I know, everything I need, you've got.
There's honey in the rock.

Prayin' for a miracle, thirsty for the living well;
only you can satisfy.
Sweetness at the mercy seat; now I've tasted, it's not hard to see;
only you can satisfy.

Freedom where the Spirit is, bounty in the wilderness,
you will always satisfy.

There's honey in the rock, purpose in your plan,
power in the blood, healing in your hands;
started flowing when you said it is done.
Everything you did's enough.

I keep looking, I keep finding, You keep giving, keep providing;
I have all that I need. You are all that I need.
I keep praying, You keep moving, I keep praising, You keep proving;
I have all that I need. You are all that I need.

O how sweet it is to trust in Jesus.

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 341 For the bread which you have broken

For the bread which you have broken, for the wine which you have poured
For the words which you have spoken, now we give you thanks, O Lord

By this pledge, Lord, that you love us, by your gift of peace restored
By your call to heaven above us, hallow all our lives, O Lord

As our blessed ones adore you, seated at our Father's board
May the Church still waiting for you keep love's tie unbroken, Lord

In your service, Lord, defend us; in our hearts keep watch and ward
In the word to which you send us let your kingdom come, O Lord

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 527 Singing songs of expectation

Singing songs of expectation, onward goes the pilgrim band
Through the night of doubt and sorrow, marching to the promised land
Clear before us through the darkness gleams and burns the guiding light
Trusting God we march together stepping fearless through the night

One the light of God's own presence, o'er his ransomed people shed
Chasing far the gloom and terror, brightening all the path we tread
One the object of our journey, one the faith which never tires
One the earnest looking forward, one the hope our God inspires

One the strain the lips of thousands life as from the heart of one
One the conflict, one the peril, one the march in God begun
One the gladness of rejoicing on the far eternal shore
Where the one almighty Father reigns in love for evermore

Dismissal

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

Servants Today - September 20

VOD Annie Laurie Gray	SAFETY Goodloe Pride	GREETERS Rob, Barney, & Colby Martin	USHER Steve Cummings	READER Ron Kirkland
ACOLYTES Jem Davis & Morgan Robinson	CHALICE Dennis Cole & Patti Thorne	SERVER Dennis Cole	CROSS Joshua Davis	

ALTAR GUILD

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

FELLOWSHIP

Vicky & Chris Earl

The altar flowers are given today by Julie Clement
to the glory of God and in memory of John B. Clement, Jr.

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

Rev. Danielle Thompson: 931-636-4898 THOMDL8c@gmail.com
Rev. Josh Vacik: 256-740-1255 JVACIK@comcast.net

Grace Church Vestry 2026

Lisa Gardner	Chris Earl
Annie Laurie Gray	Kris Walls
Jerry Shea - Senior Warden	Troy Youngblood
Dennis Cole	
David McKinley - Junior Warden	
Janet Fort - Treasurer	
Darrell Todd - Clerk	

Grace Episcopal Church

103 Darby Avenue, PO Box 838
Sheffield, AL 35660

OFFICE: 256-383-2014

TEXT: 256-335-4546

EMAIL: GRACESHEFFIELDOFFICE@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE: GRACEEPISCOPALSHEFFIELD.DIOALA.ORG

The Reverend Danielle Thompson, Rector

The Reverend Josh Vacik, Deacon

PARISH MUSICIAN: CHRISTA BELUE BYRD

ORGANIST: NANCY HUGHES BOLTE

BOOKKEEPER: CAYLE 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)

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 Burekett, 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!

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.

September 26: Shoals Community Soup Kitchen

Our next opportunity to serve is this Saturday at First Presbyterian in Florence!

Let Dennis Cole know if you're interested in helping.

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!

Our church website is easily found using this QR code!

Please save a picture of the QR code so you can share it with others.