

Grace Episcopal Church

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



The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

9:30 AM

Holy Eucharist

Interpreting This Week's Prayer



GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

Collect of the Day: *O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dear God: Where did I get the message, "Might makes right?" Where did I learn that patience and forgiveness are signs of being weak? I need as full a measure of your grace as you can offer, and as I can receive, to understand what true power really means; to live in a way that leads to your promised peace; and to experience the true joy of your presence and your peace. In Jesus' Name I offer this prayer. Amen.

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.

Processional Hymn 690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land
I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me now and evermore
Feed me now and evermore

Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield
Be thou still my strength and shield

When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee
I will ever give to thee

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, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 17:1-7

The story of Israel's need and God's provision continues. Last week, the people were hungry and God supplied manna and quail to feed them. This week, they are thirsty. The Israelites hurl the same accusations: you, Moses are trying to kill us and you, God have abandoned us. It's easy for us to be as frustrated with these grumpy people as Moses is when we read these stories. And yet, being thirsty in the wilderness – and seeing your children and livestock suffer because of it – is no joke. Israel's needs were serious. And, God took them seriously.

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

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

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 *Attendite, popule*

This psalm complements the first reading by retelling the story of Exodus, particularly in verses 15-16.

- 1 Hear my teaching, O my people; * incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; * I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.
- 3 That which we have heard and known, and what our forefathers have told us, *
we will not hide from their children.
- 4 We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds and the power
of the Lord, * and the wonderful works he has done.
- 12 He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, * in the land of Egypt, in
the field of Zoan.
- 13 He split open the sea and let them pass through; * he made the waters stand
up like walls.
- 14 He led them with a cloud by day, * and all the night through with a glow of fire.
- 15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness * and gave them drink as from the
great deep.
- 16 He brought streams out of the cliff, * and the waters gushed out like rivers.

The Second Lesson

Philippians 2:1-13

Verses 6-11, which are offset like poetry, are called Paul's "kenotic hymn" to Christ. Kenosis is a Greek word that means self-emptying. Many scholars think that these verses were actually sung in Christian worship during Paul's time.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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 21:23-32

The conversation and the parable about authority and obedience in these verses both sends a message and poses a question. Jesus' message is that authority cannot come from position or title alone – it has to be backed up by action. The question Jesus leaves the leaders – and us – with is, “Which son are you?” Are we truly doing God's will or are we resting on our position and title alone?

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

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

Ryan, Carole, Sam, MJ, Martin, 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

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:
Dave Klas, and Kathryn & Edward Balch.

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

Steal Away

Grace Choir

Steal away, steal away to Jesus
Steal away, steal away home
I ain't got long to stay here

My Lord's a comin'. He's comin' in the thunder
The trumpet sounds within my soul
I ain't got long to stay here

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 439 What wondrous love is this

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul
What wondrous love is this, O my soul
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul
To lay aside his crown for my soul

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing
While millions join the theme I will sing

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on
And when from death I'm free I'll sing and joyful be
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on
And through eternity I'll sing on

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 435

At the Name of Jesus

At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow
Every tongue confess him King of glory now
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word

Humbled for a season, to receive a Name
From the lips of sinners, unto whom he came
Faithfully he bore it spotless to the last
Brought it back victorious, when from death he passed

Bore it up triumphant, with its human light
Through all ranks of creatures, to the central height
To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast
Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest

Name him, Christians, name him, with love strong as death
Name with awe and wonder and with baited breath
He is God the Savior, he is Christ the Lord
Ever to be worshiped, tested, and adored

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
All that is not holy, all that is not true
Crown him as your Captain in temptation's hour
Let his will enfold you in its light and power

Christians, this Lord Jesus shall return again
With his Father's glory o'er the earth to reign
For all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow
And our hearts confess him King of glory now

Dismissal

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

Servants Today - September 27

VOD Annie Laurie Gray	SAFETY Rob Martin	GREETERS Mary Ann & Bob Allan	USHER Natalie Richardson	READER Doug Wright
ACOLYTES Bob Allan & Morgan Robinson	CHALICE Bob Allan & Fred Joly	SERVER Bob Allan	CROSS Fred Joly	

ALTAR GUILD

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

FELLOWSHIP

Patti Thorne

The altar flowers are given today by Susan and Ron Kirkland to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for this Grace Church family.

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 THOMDL80@gmail.com

Rev. Josh Vacik: 256-740-1255 JVICIK@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 Port - 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.DIOCALA.ORG

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)

GREAT EPISCOPAL PICNIC – SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM (ST. BART'S FLORENCE)

FALL IS HERE

Great Episcopal Picnic: St. Bart's at 10:30 AM on Sunday, October 4.

The new Bishop will be there! Grace brings desserts.

St. Bart's is at 1900 Darby Dr, Florence

There will not be a service at Grace at 9:30 AM! All Shoals Episcopalians will be at St. Bart's OR drinking mimosas at home.

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

Sign up here on by hand in the Parish Hall:



Fall facilitators: Josh Vacik, Chris Earl, Tony Riley, Hugh Smith,
Danielle Thompson, Dan Bolte, Jen Awwad

Deacon Josh preaches: Sunday, October 11 at 9:30 AM

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 at 4:30 PM

All Saints' at Grace and St. John's: 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist at Grace, followed by a traditional community service of Evening Prayer at 3:30 PM at Historic St. John's



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.