Grace Episcopal Church

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



The Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 8, 2026
9:30 AM

Holy Eucharist

GRACE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH + SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA

Interpreting This Week's Prayer

Collect of the Day: *O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dear God: Jesus came to show us who we really are and to do battle with every power in this world that lies to us. Jesus came to make life fuller and more miraculous than we had been led to believe it could be. Help us to be single-mindedly committed to your kingdom, your way of love, just like Jesus was. So that, when we see him face to face, we will open our arms, without hesitation, to his full embrace. Amen.

Prelude

Processional Hymn 9 Not here for high and holy things

Not here for high and holy things we render thanks to thee
But for the common things of earth, the purple pageantry
Of dawning and of dying days, the splendor of the sea

The royal robes of autumn moors, the golden gates of spring
The velvet of soft summer nights, the silver glistering
Of all the million million stars, the silent song they sing

Of faith and hope and love undimmed, undying still through death
The resurrection of the world, what time there comes the breath
Of dawn that rustles through the trees, and that clear voice that saith

Awake, awake to love and work! The lark is in the sky
The fields are wet with diamond dew, the worlds awake to cry
Their blessings on the Lord of life, as he goes meekly by

Come, let thy voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise
See how the giant sun soars up, great lord of years and days
So let the love of Jesus come and set thy soul ablaze

To give and give, and give again, what God hath given thee
To spend thyself nor count the cost; to serve right gloriously
The God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be

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 618 vs 1 & 3 Ye watchers and ye holy ones

Ye watchers and ye holy ones, bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones
Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!
Cry out, dominions, princedoms powers, virtues, archangels, angels' choirs
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Respond, ye souls in endless rest, ye patriarchs and prophets blest
Alleluia, alleluia!
Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong, all saints triumphant raise the song
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Collect of the Day

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Joshua, Son of Nun, has been Moses' right hand man since the Israelites' first days in the wilderness. After Moses passed away, Joshua led the people into Canaan, subduing those who opposed them and overseeing the distribution of lands between Jacob's descendants. Now, Joshua will soon join his ancestors. Before that time comes – after which, all of the elders who witnessed the Exodus from Egypt will be gone – he leads the Israelites in a ceremony of covenant renewal. What do you make of Joshua's initial refusal, in the final paragraph, to accept the people's pledge of commitment?

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

"Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

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

Psalm 78:1-7 ***Attendite, populе***

This psalm echoes the theme of covenant renewal found in today's Joshua reading. God's past faithfulness is affirmed by the present generation, who promises to teach it to their descendants.

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.
5 He gave his decrees to Jacob
and established a law for Israel, *
which he commanded them to teach their children;
6 That the generations to come might know,
and the children yet unborn; *
that they in their turn might tell it to their children;
7 So that they might put their trust in God, *
and not forget the deeds of God,
but keep his commandments

The Second Lesson **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

Paul addresses eschatological (end times) issues throughout his letters to the Thessalonians, leading us to believe that these congregations were curious – maybe even troubled – about what happens when we die. Paul begins this section by reassuring his friends that the deceased are safely with God. He then notes that Jesus' own resurrection guarantees the resurrection of those who cling to him. Paul reasons that, were Christ to return in the Thessalonians' lifetimes, those who had died previously would join God first; only then would those who are currently alive come to God. Paul wants his readers to know that their departed loved ones won't be left behind.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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 25:1-13

From Pentecost (early summer) through Christ the King Sunday (Nov 28 this year), we follow Jesus' ministry from the calling of his disciples all the way to the cross. Then, on the first Sunday of Advent (Nov 29), we start all over again as we anticipate his birth. Which means that around this time of the year, we have to pass through some pretty dark territory. Today's parable is set against the background of a happy wedding – but it ends on a very mixed note. What bothers you most about this parable? What do you think Jesus' overall message is? Is there a call to action here?

Jesus said, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

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 Sermon **The Reverend Danielle Thompson**

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. We pray for all who have been elected to serve our nation and local communities: grant them wisdom, integrity, and a heart for the common good;
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, Jessica, George, Charles, Eric, Larry, Alex, Bitty, Jack, Marcia, Jimmy, and Mary.

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:
Lisa Gardner, & Vicky Earl.

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 *I Will Rise*

There's a peace I've come to know
Though my heart and flesh may fail
There's an anchor for my soul
I can say it is well

Jesus has overcome
And the grave is overwhelmed
The victory is won
He is risen from the dead

I will rise when He calls my name
No more sorrow no more pain
I will rise on eagle's wings
Before my God fall on my knees
And rise I will rise

There's a day that's drawing near
When this darkness breaks to light
And the shadows disappear
And my faith shall be my eyes

And I hear the voice of many angels sing
Worthy is the Lamb
And I hear the cry of ev'ry longing heart
Worthy is the Lamb

Doxology Hymn 618 vs 4 O friends in gladness let us sing

O friends, in gladness let us sing, supernal anthems echoing
Alleluia, alleluia!
To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, 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.

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 324 Let all mortal flesh

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand
Ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood
Lord of lords in human vesture, in the Body and the Blood
He will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food

Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way
As the Light of Light descendeth from the realms of endless day
That the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away

At his feet the six-winged seraph; cherubim with sleepless eye
Veil their faces to the Presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry
"Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

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 556 Rejoice, ye pure in heart

Rejoice, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing
Your glorious banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King
(Refrain:) Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing

With all the angel choirs, with all the saints of earth
Pour out the strains of joy and bliss, true rapture, noblest mirth
Refrain

Your clear hosannas raise, and alleluias loud
While answering echoes upward float, like wreaths of incense cloud
Refrain

Yes, on through life's long path, still chanting as ye go
From youth to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe
Refrain

Still lift your standard high, still march in firm array
As warriors through the darkness toil, till dawns the golden day
Refrain

At last the march shall end; the wearied ones shall rest
The pilgrims find their Father's house, Jerusalem the blest
Refrain

Then on, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks and sing
Your glorious banner wave on high the cross of Christ your King
Refrain

Dismissal

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

Servants Today - November 1

VOD
Jerry Shea

SAFETY
Rob Martin

GREETERS
Janet Klas

USHER
Steve Cummings

READER
Alice Maddox

ACOLYTES
Jem Davis
& TBD

CHALICE
Dennis Cole
& Patti Thorne

SERVER
Dennis Cole

CROSS
Joshua Davis

ALTAR GUILD
Mary Holland Black, Jan Bennett, Annie Laurie Gray, & Jessie Wilson

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Jim and Jackie Noles.

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 THOMDL8e@gmail.com

Rev. Josh Vacik: 256-740-1255 JVACIK@comcast.net

Grace Church Vestry 2026

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

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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)
HOPE & GRACE OPEN RECOVERY GROUP – MONDAY AT 6 PM
LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE – TUESDAY AT 11 AM
(CONTACT JAN BENNETT IF YOU ARE COMING FOR THE FIRST TIME!)
GRACE CHOIR REHEARSAL – WEDNESDAY AT 6 PM (NAVE)
GRACE GROUPS – WED AT 4 PM (GROUP 1) AND 6 PM (GROUPS 2 & 3) (PARISH HALL)
GRACE NOTES OPEN JAM SESSION – THURSDAY AT 3:45 PM (PARISH HALL)
CENTERING PRAYER – THURSDAY AT 5:15 PM (NAVE)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cursillo #241 Welcome Back: 6:00 PM on Tuesday, Nov 10 at Deacon Catherine's house: 314 Sherborne Court, Florence

Santa for a Senior: Grab a bag in the Parish Hall to fill with Christmas goodies for our local Seniors! Items to purchase are listed on the bags. Return your filled bag to the church by November 15!

Safeplace Volunteer Training: Grace is helping Safeplace rebuild its volunteer corps by hosting an area-wide training. Interested in learning how you can help women and children escaping domestic abuse? **Join us in the Parish Hall on Thursday, Nov 12 at 6 PM. Corrected date!**

Budget & Property PRE-MEETINGS: If you would like to discuss our 2027 parish budget and the status of our property in depth before the Annual Meeting, please attend one of these two pre-meetings: **Sun, Nov 15 at 11:15 AM** OR **Weds, Nov 18 at 12:00 PM**. Can't make it to either? Please contact Danielle to schedule a meeting with our money/property team.
The Annual Meeting is Sunday, November 29.

Thanksgiving Open House: Danielle and Josh host an open house on Thanksgiving Day every year from 1 PM - 7 PM. Come for the whole day or drop in whenever you like. If friends or family member who do not have holiday plans, please share this information with them – the more the merrier. 210 N Sequoia Blvd, Florence.

Advent Quiet Day: The Shoals Trinity Daughters of the King and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew would like to invite everyone to join us for a Quiet Morning of reflection and meditation grounded in the teachings of Julian of Norwich. Saturday, December 5, 9am-12pm at Trinity Episcopal Church (410 N Pine St, Florence). All are welcome!

Shelter Season is Coming! The Shoals Shelter winter season calendar has just been released! Grace will host five dates: 12/10, 1/7, 1/28, 2/18, and 3/11.

SCAN ME

Save our church website QR code!
Our church website is easily found using this QR code!
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