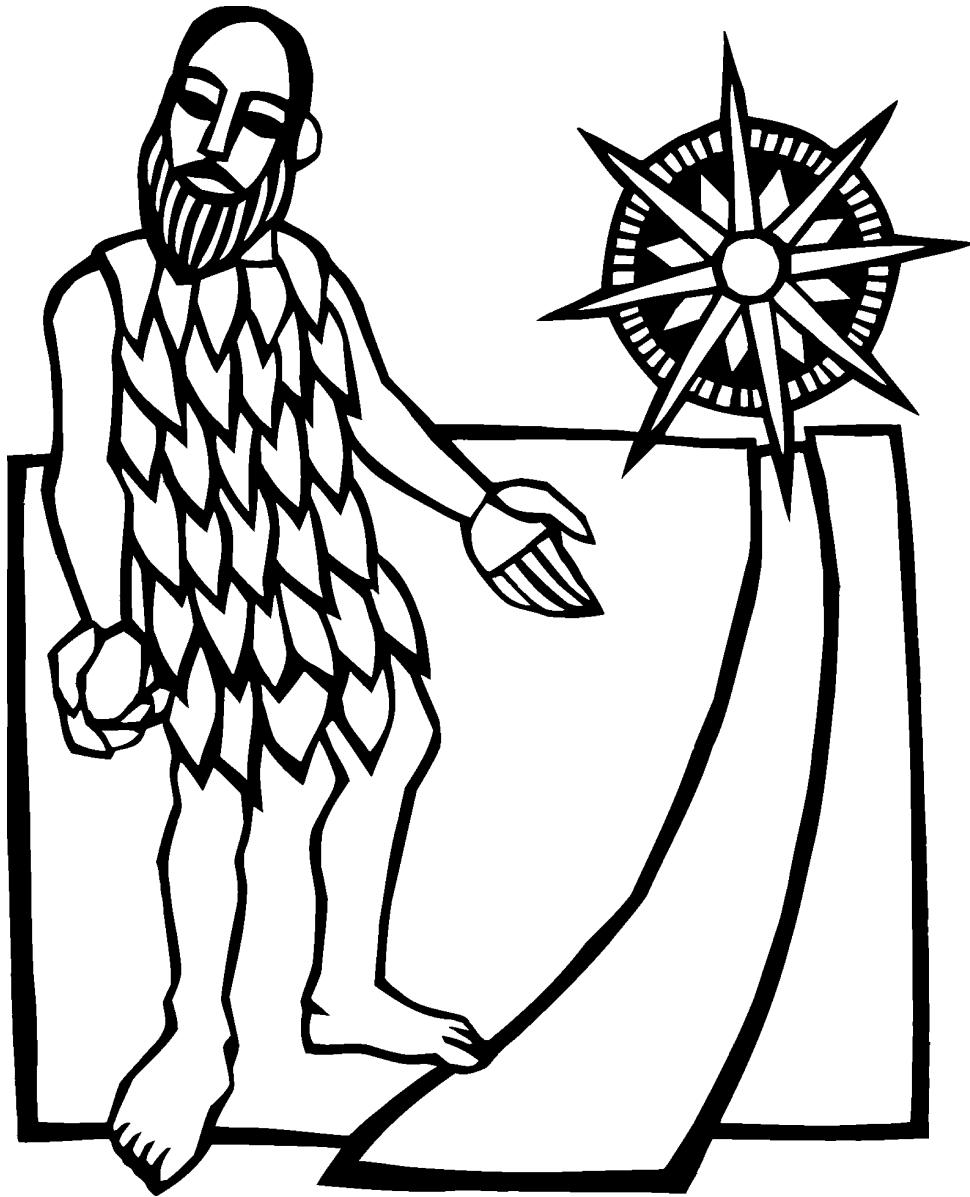


The Third Sunday of Advent



Holy Eucharist II

December 14, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Saint Alban's Episcopal Church Welcomes You

130 39th Ave. Pl. NW, Hickory, NC 28601

(828) 324-1351

Welcome to St. Alban's. We are grateful for your presence.

Cloth pew bags are available for our younger worshipers.

Please return to the basket as you depart.

The Liturgy of the Word

Processional Hymn

Hark! the glad sound! the Savior comes

Hymnal 72

Opening Acclamation

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

BCP p. 355

Collect for Purity

(Celebrant says)

BCP p. 355

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.**

Trisagion

S102

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.**Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.****Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.**

The Collect of the Day

BCP p. 357

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lesson: Isaiah 35:1-10

(The people sit.)

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
6 then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
7 the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

9 No lion shall be there,
 nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
 but the redeemed shall walk there.
10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
 and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

The Gradual: Psalm 146:4-9 *(Sung in unison)*

⁴Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, *
 whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁵Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *
 who keeps his promise forever;

⁶Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *
 and food to those who hunger.

⁷The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; *
 the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

⁸The LORD loves the righteous; the LORD cares for the stranger; *
 he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

⁹The LORD shall reign forever, *
 your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

The Epistle: James 5:7-10*(The people sit.)*

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.*People* **Thanks be to God.****Sequence Hymn***On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry*

Hymnal 76

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11*(All stand.)*

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

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.****The Sermon**

The Rev. Jonathan Stepp

The Nicene Creed*(All stand.)*

BCP p. 358

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 Form I (*People stand or kneel*)

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world and for the welfare of the holy Church of God; in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, for Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil; in the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, for St. Thomas, Burnsville; and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For Sarah, Archbishop-elect of Canterbury, Sean, our Presiding Bishop, Jose, our Bishop, Father Jonathan, the staff of St. Alban's, and for all bishops, priests, deacons, and other ministers, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the leaders of our nation, state, and city. For the leaders of all nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air or through outer space, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, especially those on our parish prayer list, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of Blessed Alban and of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

To thee, O Lord our God.

Silence

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

Confession of Sin

BCP p. 359

Celebrant 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.

Absolution

BCP. 360

Celebrant 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

(All stand)

BCP p. 360

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People ***And also with you.***

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Holy Communion

Anthem

O Come Emmanuel

Peter Olejar

Doxology

(People stand as the offering is presented)

Hymn 380, verse 3

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer A *(Stand or kneel)*

BCP p. 369

The musical notation consists of three staves of music. The first staff shows the Celebrant singing 'The Lord be with you. And also with you.' The second staff shows the People singing 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff shows the Celebrant singing 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' The fourth staff shows the People singing '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.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

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:

Celebrant and People

S-130

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

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.



The Lord's Prayer

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

People and Celebrant

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your Name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem

BCP p. 364

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the people.

Gluten free waters are available upon request at the altar rail.

Two chalices are offered at the altar rail. The first one is offered to those who prefer to drink from the cup.

The second chalice follows for those who prefer to intinct (dip) the wafer in the wine before consuming.

Please hold the wafer in your open palm to indicate your preference to the server.

Communion Anthems	<i>The King is Coming</i> <i>O Come Emmanuel</i> Genesis Bells	arr. Mitchell arr. Wagner
Communion Hymns	<i>Blest be the King</i>	Hymnal 74
Post-Communion Prayer		BCP p. 365
Let us pray.		
<p><i>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.</i></p>		
The Blessing		
Post-Communion Hymn	<i>Watchman, tell us of the night</i>	Hymnal 640
Dismissal		BCP p. 366
	Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.	
<i>People</i>	<i>Thanks be to God.</i>	
Postlude	<i>To God We Render Thanks And Praise</i>	J.S. Bach

***Join us in the Commons Room immediately following the service for refreshments!
All are welcome to participate and check out the kiosk for more ways to Walk in Love!***

Ministers of the Service

Tammy Shook - Chalicist
Jeff Mackie – Chalicist
Bud Caywood - Lector
Scarlett and Isla Krenzel – Acolytes
Aubrey and Adean Stocks – Acolytes
Piper Amann - Acolyte
Bill Stokes – Usher
Sandy Carter - Usher
Gary Mansi – Sound/Streaming
Annette Hoskins – Sound/Streaming

Vestry Members

Judy Caywood - Senior Warden
Bill Perrin - Junior Warden
Charlie Brantley
Jane Earl
Susan Hook
Claudia Moore
Ingrid Peake
Bucky Robbins
Bruce Smith
Chris Oram - Vestry Clerk
Ellen Robbins – Treasurer

Those Who Serve You

The Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe - Presiding Bishop & Primate of The Episcopal Church
The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin - Bishop, Diocese of Western NC
The Rev. Jonathan Stepp - Priest-in-Charge
 Doug Brady - Organist
Janet Dziesinski - Financial Administrator
Cami Roberts - Director of Family Formation
Tammy Shook - Director of Parish Music and Handbells
Lauren Timmons - Associate Director of Parish Music and CantorKids Director
 Kim Wagner – Parish Administrator