

The First Sunday of Christmas



Holy Eucharist, Rite II

December 28, 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 worshippers.

Please return to the basket as you depart.

Prelude

The Liturgy of the Word

Processional Hymn

Angels, from the realms of glory

Hymnal 93

Opening Acclamation

BCP p. 355

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.

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.**

Gloria

(The following is sung, all standing)

(found in the back of your hymnal)

H-804

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect of the Day

BCP p. 357

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lesson: Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

(The people sit.)

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,

and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

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

The Gradual: Psalm 147 (*Spoken in unison*)

¹Hallelujah!

How good it is to sing praises to our God! *
how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

²The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem; *
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

³He heals the brokenhearted *
and binds up their wounds.

⁴He counts the number of the stars *
and calls them all by their names.

⁵Great is our LORD and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to his wisdom.

⁶The LORD lifts up the lowly, *
but casts the wicked to the ground.

⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; *
make music to our God upon the harp.

⁸He covers the heavens with clouds *
and prepares rain for the earth;

⁹He makes grass to grow upon the mountains *
and green plants to serve mankind.

¹⁰He provides food for flocks and herds *
and for the young ravens when they cry.

¹¹He is not impressed by the might of a horse; *
he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;

¹²But the LORD has pleasure in those who fear him, *
in those who await his gracious favor.

¹³Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; *
praise your God, O Zion;

¹⁴For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; *
he has blessed your children within you.

¹⁵He has established peace on your borders; *
he satisfies you with the finest wheat.

¹⁶He sends out his command to the earth, *
and his word runs very swiftly.

¹⁷He gives snow like wool; *
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

¹⁸He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; *
who can stand against his cold?

¹⁹*He sends forth his word and melts them; *
he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.*
²⁰*He declares his word to Jacob, *
his statutes and his judgments to Israel.*
²¹*He has not done so to any other nation; *
to them he has not revealed his judgments.*
Hallelujah!

The Epistle: Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

(The people sit.)

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed.

²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

^{4:4}But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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

Sequence Hymn

O little town of Bethlehem

Hymnal 79

The Holy Gospel: John 1:1-18

(All stand.)

People The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

People The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Rev. Robin Mathews

*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

(Stand or kneel)

Form III

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

In the Anglican cycle of prayer, we pray for The Anglican Church of Canada, and in the Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for St. John's Cartoogechaye, Franklin, St. John's, Asheville, St. John's, Marion, and St. John's, Sylva. Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for Sarah, Archbishop-elect of Canterbury, Sean, our Presiding Bishop, Jose, our Bishop, Father Jonathan, the staff of St. Alban's, and all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for the leaders of our country, our state, and our city, and we pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

We pray for those who are sick, especially those on our parish prayer list, and we pray that you will have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest.

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

And now let us pray for our own needs and those of others,

Silence is kept.

The People may add their own petitions, either silently or aloud.

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

Doxology

(People stand as the offering is presented)

Hymn 380, verse 3

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer D *(Stand or kneel)*

BCP p. 372



Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we say,

Celebrant and People

(found in the back of your hymnal) H-800

***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.

The Celebrant continues

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he 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."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People

***We praise you, we bless you,
we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.***

The Celebrant continues

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with Blessed Alban and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and 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 Hymn

What child is this, who, laid to rest

Hymnal 115

Post-Communion Prayer

BCP p. 365

Let us pray.

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.

The Blessing

Recessional Hymn

Joy to the world! the Lord is come

Hymnal 100

Dismissal

BCP p. 366

Alleluia, Alleluia, let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Postlude

***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!***

Flower Dedications

Given in thanksgiving for Doug, Lauren, St. Alban's Adult Choir, Oxford Ringers, Genesis Bells, and Cantorkids from Tammy Shook. Thank you for your ministry!

Given in thanksgiving for St. Alban's Family and Fr. Stepp from Marshall and Rosemary Fisher.

Given in memory of our grandparents from Madeline Privette and Tyler Stark.

Given in thanksgiving for our amazing choir from Chris Oram.

Given in thanksgiving for my St. Alban's family from Chris Oram.

Given in memory of Wayne Oram from Chris Oram.

Given in memory of Beth's sister, Amie Ridley, from The Rev. Jonathan and Beth Stepp.

Given in thanksgiving for wonderful grandchildren from Tim and Rose Archer.

Given in memory of Michael Mensinga from Jeanine Kowalski-Johnson.

Given in thanksgiving for the staff, leadership, and parishioners of St. Alban's from Cami Roberts.

Given in memory of Michele Brands Dyer from Pett and Dick Brands.

Given in thanksgiving for Cami Roberts for her dedication and service to St. Alban's from Cynthia Haas.

Given in memory of Chris Haas, who was loved by many in the St. Alban's family, from Cynthia Haas.

Given in memory of loved ones from John and Marianne Strafer.

Given in memory of Lillian Meyers, Floyd Caywood, Buddy and Juanita Thomas from Judy and Bud Caywood.

Given in memory of Patti Forbes from Stephen Forbes.

Given in thanksgiving for Suzanne Garrett for sharing her gifts with our St. Alban's family from Morri Brantley.

Given in thanksgiving for Cami Roberts for her many years of service to St. Alban's and especially for her love of our children from Richard and Morri Brantley.

Given in thanksgiving for St. Alban's staff from Bruce and Carol Smith.

Given in thanksgiving for Caroline, Olivia, Anna, and P.J. from Bob and Mary Klinger.

Given in thanksgiving for Valerie Zentner from Jean Forbes.

Given in memory of Rick Hahn and Kay Hahn from Jan Houck.

Given in thanksgiving for Jan Houck from Jay Tate.

Given in memory of Richard Jenkins from Jay Tate.

Given in thanksgiving for Graham, Jack, Ferrell, and Sierra from Becky Ferrell.

Given in memory of Forrest Ferrell from Becky Ferrell.

Given in thanksgiving for my children and grandchildren from Jane Earl.

Given in memory of Elissa Harrell from Jane Earl.

Given in thanksgiving for our children and grandchildren from Florence and Jeff Mackie.

Given in memory of Mack D. Huffman from Sarah Huffman.

Given in memory of my parents, Dwight and Margaret Lowther, from Pat Rice.

Given in memory of Allan and Virginia Webb from Gina Claypoole.

Given in memory of Lydia Mary Claypoole from Bill Claypoole.

Given in memory of Jonathan Mott from Don and Kathy Mott.

Given in thanksgiving for Hugh, Jacqui, Ian, Katie, and Keely Cox from John and Eileen Leach.

Given in thanksgiving for Emily Lord, Claire Wessels, and Daniel Minch by their mother, Ellen.

Given in memory of J.B. Wessels by Ellen Minch.

Given in memory of our fathers, Tom Neely and Eddie Alala, from Meghan Neely and Eddie Alala.

Given in memory of Holiday and Blanche Smith from Betsy Valentini.

Given in thanksgiving for Jane Earl, for her service and ministry to St. Alban's, from her children and grandchildren.

Given in memory of John Earl from Randy, Sarah Jane, and Randall Harrell.

Given in thanksgiving for Jane Earl from Randy, Sarah Jane, and Randall Harrell.

Given in memory of Elissa Earl Harrell from Randy, Sarah Jane, and Randall Harrell.

Given in memory of Randy Harrell Sr. from Randy, Sarah Jane, and Randall Harrell.

Given in thanksgiving for our children and grandchildren from Reg and Claudia Moore.

Given in thanksgiving for the wedding of John and Carla Moore from Reg and Claudia Moore.

Given in memory of Reginald and Carolyn Moore from Reg and Claudia Moore.

Given in thanksgiving for Suzanne Garrett from Ingrid Peake.

Music Dedications

Given in thanksgiving for Doug, Lauren, St. Alban's Adult Choir, Oxford Ringers, Genesis Bells, and Cantorkids from Tammy Shook. Thank you for your ministry!

Given in thanksgiving for Tammy Shook and Doug Brady, and beautiful voices of the Choir from Marshall and Rosemary Fisher.

Given in thanksgiving for my children and grandchildren from Chris Oram.

Given in thanksgiving for the Stepp family from Chris Oram.

Given in thanksgiving for Hazel Hicks from Karen Young.

Given in thanksgiving for Barbara Eckard from Libby and Gene Teague.

Given in memory of Gene Teague, Sr., Lucille Johnson, and Benny Johnson from Libby and Gene Teague.

Given in thanksgiving for Betty Bowman Kirby from Gina and Kempton Smith.

Given in memory of Foy Dillard Kirby, James Norfleet Smith, and Marjorie Stenhouse Smith from Gina and Kempton Smith.

Given in memory of my parents, Lawrence and Mary Pace from Melissa Bolick.

Given in thanksgiving for my wife, Melissa, from Charles Bolick.

Given in memory of my parents, Everette and Geanie Bolick, from Charles Bolick.

Given in thanksgiving for Doug Brady and his talent from Rebecca Simpson.

Given in memory of Luona Isley from Rebecca Simpson.

Given in thanksgiving for the children and youth of St. Alban's from Cami Roberts.

Given in thanksgiving for families and friends from Pett and Dick Brands.

Given in thanksgiving of the Heist, Harris, and Caywood families from Judy and Bud Caywood.

Given in memory of Richard F. Wright from Nancy B. Wright.

Given in memory of Patti Forbes from Stephen Forbes.

Given in thanksgiving for the choir, handbells, and Tammy Shook from Anne Williams.

Given in memory of Beth Love Lowry from Mark and Tina Morgan.

Given in thanksgiving for the Sara Ferebee order of the Daughters of the King from Morri Brantley.

Given in thanksgiving for Charlie, Kelly, and Oliver from Richard and Morri Brantley.

Given in memory of our parents and loved ones who are deeply missed from Richard and Morri Brantley.

Given in thanksgiving for St. Alban's choir and bells from Bruce and Carol Smith.

Given in memory of John Keith Earl and David Mason Sementilli from Bob and Mary Klinger.

Given in memory of Charles Hager, Brenda, and Laurie from Jean Forbes.

Given in memory of George and Rachel Hahn from Jan Houck.

Given in thanksgiving for St. Alban's choir from Jay Tate.

Given in memory of Helen and Jim Tate from Jay Tate.

Given in thanksgiving for Tammy, Doug, and Lauren from Becky Ferrell.

Given in memory of John Earl from Jane Earl.

Given in thanksgiving for Tammy Shook from Pat Rice.

Given in thanksgiving for the choir and Tammy from Amy Campbell.

Given in memory of Zachary Marbanian from Gina Claypoole.

Given in memory of Evelyn Lee Claypoole from Bill Claypoole.

Given in memory of Joan Nichols and Virginia Trever from Don and Kathy Mott.

Given in memory of Shannon Neely from Meghan Neely.

Given in thanksgiving for our mothers, Janie Neely and Jean Alala, from Meghan Neely and Eddie Alala.

Given in memory of our grandparents from Meghan Neely and Eddie Alala.

Given in thanksgiving for St. Alban's choir from Betsy Valentini.

Given in memory of John Earl from John and Jane Earl's children and grandchildren.

Given in thanksgiving for Tammy and the choir from Ingrid Peake.

Given in memory of Jack and Sis Spottswood from Reg and Claudia Moore.