

Ash Wednesday



Holy Eucharist II

February 18, 2026

6:00 p.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.

The Word of God

(the people stand.)

Celebrant Bless the Lord, who forgives all our sins.

People ***His mercy endures forever.***

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12 *(The people sit.)*

¹Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

²Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³"Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;

you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm: Psalm 103:8-14 (*Spoken in unison as the People remain seated.*)

⁸***The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.***

⁹***He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.***

¹⁰***He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.***

¹¹***For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;***

¹²***as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.***

¹³***As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.***

¹⁴***For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.***

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,
“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

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

Sequence Hymn (*Stand*) *Eternal Lord of love, behold your Church* Hymnal 149

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (*Remain standing.*)

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

Jesus said, ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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

The Sermon

The Rev. Jonathan Stepp

Invitation to the Observance of a Holy Lent

BCP p. 264

All stand as the Celebrant invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord’s passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling as able.

The ushers will direct the people to come forward to receive the imposition of ashes.

Imposition of Ashes

BCP p. 265

The ashes are imposed with the following words

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Psalm 51 (Spoken in unison after all have returned to their seats)

BCP p. 266

¹*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.*

²*Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.*

³*For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.*

⁴*Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.*

⁵*And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.*

⁶*Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.*

⁷*For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.*

⁸*Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.*

⁹*Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.*

¹⁰*Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.*

¹¹*Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.*

¹²*Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.*

¹³*Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.*

¹⁴*I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.*

¹⁵*Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.*

¹⁶*Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.*

¹⁷*Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.*

¹⁸*The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Litany of Penitence

BCP p. 267

The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling as able.

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

The Celebrant continues

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
We confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

The Celebrant, stands and, facing the people, says

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

The Peace

(All stand.)

BCP p. 269

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

The Holy Communion

Offertory Anthem

All Things of Dust Return to Dust

John Ferguson

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer A

(Please stand)

BCP p. 361

The people remain standing. The Celebrant, faces them and sings

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.

Here a Proper Preface is sung

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-129

***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 people stand or kneel. 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.**

The Lord's Prayer

BCP p. 363

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

S-164

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:

give us your peace, give us your peace.

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 follow 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

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

Hymnal 559

The Post-Communion Prayer

BCP p. 365

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

***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.***

Solemn Prayer over the People

Celebrant: Bow down before the Lord.

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their
sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Recessional Hymn

Lord, who throughout these forty days

Hymnal 142

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Announcements

An Invitation to the Observance of a Holy Lent

During Lent, there will be opportunities for learning, reflection, and spiritual growth throughout the season. As you think about new spiritual practices or disciplines you might embrace as part of your Lenten practice, consider the following options:

Our mid-week **Lenten program** will take place on the **Tuesday** evenings of March 3, 10, 17, and 24. These evenings will include:

- A said service of **Evening Prayer** in the church at 5:30 p.m.
- A **simple supper** at 6:00 p.m.
- A **study of the book of Romans** from 6:30 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. St. Paul had more influence over the early course of Christianity than anyone other than Jesus himself - and Paul's letter to the Romans was the most influential of his writings. In the subsequent 2,000 years this book of the Bible has continued to exert a powerful influence over Christian thought, spirituality, and theology, but has not always been well understood. What was St. Paul really trying to say and how might understanding his perspective on Christianity help us live our lives today?

On the Sunday mornings of March 1, 8, 15, and 22, at 9:00 a.m., our **Adult Forum will be a New Member and Confirmation Class**. If you are new to St. Alban's and/or you have never been confirmed in the Episcopal Church, this class will help you better understand our parish, have a deeper knowledge of the Episcopal Church, and decide whether you want to participate in the sacramental rite of confirmation. (A youth confirmation class will take place after Easter.)

Would you like to officially be a member of St. Alban's? Membership is mostly about showing up and participating, but if you would like to be officially enrolled as a member of this Parish please contact Fr. Jonathan. If you have church membership elsewhere, we will do the paperwork to transfer your membership here, and if you are not currently a member of another church then we will need you to give us the date and place of your baptism. If you have not been baptized, we would be happy to make that happen.

St. Alban's will be providing the luncheon meal at **The Corner Table** tomorrow, **Thursday, February 19th**. The Men's Group prepares the meal. *Servers* are needed to set up for and serve the meals from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you are available and would like to be part of this ministry, please see Reg Moore after church or call him at 828-381-3636. Parishioners who signed up during January's Ministry Fair will be contacted to see if they are available.

A **Collage Workshop** led by Kathy Peters will meet on **Sunday, February 22** from **2:30 to 5:30** at the Big Table. All church women are invited and encouraged to discover this creative spiritual practice. You don't have to be an artist and are encouraged to come to see where the Spirit will lead you. For more information, contact Carol Smith 828-234-3456.

Floral Ministry Training begins in the Floral Sacristy in the Barn on **Saturday, March 7th** from **1 p.m. – 4 p.m.** There will be two additional training sessions on March 14 and 21 as we prepare for Easter. Anyone interested in joining this ongoing ministry should contact Gina Claypoole: 828-405-4317.

The Shawl Ministry will meet in the Commons Room on **Monday, March 9 at 2:30 p.m.** Everyone is welcome! If you have shawls to bless, but are unable to come to the meeting, please drop the shawls off at the office before that date, so we can prepare them for the blessing.

It's time to sign up and donate for **RISE AGAINST HUNGER**, which takes place on **Saturday, March 28th, 10 a.m. – Noon** at St. Alban's! This is an outreach opportunity for ALL AGES! It's a great way for a family to spend a Saturday morning together! See The Alban Times to register and donate! For more information, contact Jeff Mackie: jeffmackie47@gmail.com.

We invite you to visit the *Prayer Box* below the wooden crosses in the left side of the Nave to share your prayer concerns--we are honored to lift them in prayer. All prayer requests are held in confidence and prayed for weekly.

Second Harvest Food Bank supplies all of our "*Feeding Ministries*" with canned and dry goods at greatly reduced cost to help feed those in need in our community, including Hickory Soup Kitchen, GHCCM, and The Corner Table. Because of the increased need for food, your John Earl Outreach Roundtable is collecting cans through the fall and winter, and in thanksgiving for all of our many blessings! Specifically needs are: canned fish or meat, peanut butter, canned low sodium soups and stews, canned or dry Beans, canned fruits in juice, canned low sodium vegetables.

Anyone who does not have a permanent name tag, please contact Kim in the office at 828.324.1351 or theooffice@stalbansparish.org.

Ministers of the Service

Celebrant: The Rev. Jonathan Stepp
Linda Faulk - Guest Organist
Barbara Carter - Chalicist
Mary Michele Millholen – Chalicist
Randy Truitt - Lector
Maverick and Griffin Worley – Acolytes
Bill Stokes and Sandy Carter – Ushers

Vestry Members

Bill Perrin - Senior Warden
Charlie Brantley - Junior Warden
Judy Caywood
Daniel Minch
Claudia Moore
Patrick Richart
Bucky Robbins
Kay Sigmon
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 Dzieszinski - 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