



The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Hickory, NC

September 13, 2026—10:30 a.m. | Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
+ The Holy Eucharist, Rite II +

Prelude

Opening Sentence

Celebrant: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Hymn #411 "O bless the Lord, my soul"

ST. THOMAS (WILLIAMS)

Opening Acclamation

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

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

Celebrant: 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.**

Hymn of Praise #421 "All glory be to God on high"

ALLEIN GOTT IN DER HÖH

1 All glo - ry be to God on high, and peace on earth from
2 O Lamb of God, Lord Je - sus Christ, whom God the Fa - ther
3 You on - ly are the Ho - ly One, who came for our sal -

hea - ven, and God's good will un - fail - ing - ly be
gave us, who for the world was sac - ri - ficed up -
va - tion, and on - ly you are God's true Son, who

to all peo - ple giv - en. We bless, we wor - ship you, we raise for
on the cross to save us; and, as you sit at God's right hand and
was be - fore cre - a - tion. You on - ly, Christ, as Lord we own and,

your great glo - ry thanks and praise, O God, Al - might - y Fa - ther,
we for judg - ment there must stand, have mer - cy, Lord, up - on us.
with the Spi - rit, you a - lone share in the Fa - ther's glo - ry.

Words: Nikolaus Decius (1490?-1541); tr. F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984), rev.; para. of *Gloria in excelsis*. Copyright © The Church Pension Fund. Music: *Allein Gott in der Höh*, melody att. Nikolaus Decius (1490?-1541); harm. Hieronymus Praetorius (1560?-1629).

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading

Genesis 50:15-21

Lector: A reading from the book of Genesis.

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:1-7

BENEDIC, ANIMA MEA

*The people sing the verses in **bold type**. The choir sings the verses in regular type.*



1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and forget not all his benefits.

3 He forgives all your sins *
and heals all your infirmities;

4 He redeems your life from the grave *
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;

5 He satisfies you with good things, *
and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

6 The LORD executes righteousness *
and judgment for all who are oppressed.

† 7 He made his ways known to Moses *
and his works to the children of Israel.

The Second Reading

Romans 14:1-12

Lector: A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn #674 "Forgive our sins as we forgive" (sts. 1-2)

DETROIT

The Gospel

Matthew 18:21-35

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

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Lector: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Rev. Garry Edwards

The Nicene Creed

BCP 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.

Prayers of the People *Form IV*

BCP 388

Leader: Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We commend to your mercy all who have died, especially John Mills, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom. *Silence*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

Confession of Sin

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. *Silence is kept*

Celebrant & 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.

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

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord. Announcements may then be shared.

+ THE HOLY EUCHARIST +

Offertory Sentence

Voluntary at the Offering

With a Voice of Singing

MARTIN SHAW

Doxology, #11, stanza 4

MORNING HYMN

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Great Thanksgiving

BCP 361

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

The Celebrant adds the Proper Preface.

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 “Holy, holy, holy Lord”

S-125

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

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,

**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

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



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.

Communion of the People

All are welcome to receive a blessing if you prefer not to receive communion. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Consecrated bread and wine are then distributed to all who desire. While at the altar, a priest will give you a wafer of bread. Wine is available in two ways:

Common Cup—*Drink from the large chalice (it will come first).*

Intinction—*Dip the bread into the wine in the small chalice (it will come last). Do not allow your fingers to touch the wine.*

In One Kind—*You may choose to receive the bread only, which is equal to receiving the bread and the wine.*

Hymns During Communion

#593 “Lord, make us servants of your peace”

DICKINSON COLLEGE

#577 “God is love, and where true love is”

UBI CARITAS (MURRAY)

Post Communion Prayer

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.

Blessing

Hymn #334 “Praise the Lord, rise up rejoicing”

ALLES IST AN GOTTES SEGEN

Dismissal

Postlude

If you would like to dedicate the Altar Flowers in memory or honor of someone or an event, please email office@ascensionhickory.org. The donation amount is discretionary; the suggested amount is \$50.

WORSHIP ROSTER

Sunday, September 13

Crucifer/First Server/Chalice: Quintin Knight
OT Reading/Chalice: Elizabeth Arditti
Prayers of the People: Jeff Arditti
NT Reader: Elizabeth Arditti
Ushers: Kathryn & James Carter
Children's Chapel: Lana Ray, Dawn Chapman
Breakfast: Gloria, Dee, & Suzanne
Counters: Todd Zagaroli, Paul Fogleman
Vestry Contact: Kristin Dettelbach

Sunday, September 20

Crucifer/First Server/Chalice: Suzanne Trollan
OT Reading/Chalice: Michael Deckard
Prayers of the People: Stephen Williamson
NT Reader: John Ross
Ushers: Sue Shoffner, Suzanne Fogleman
Children's Chapel: Kathryn Carter, Erin Schuermeyer
Breakfast: *Volunteer Needed*
Counters: Vince Trollan, Nancy Linker

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Please pray for** Debbie Burch, Sharon Everhart, Jared McVey, Angela Dellinger, Ann Lowery, George Gross, Porter Taylor, Jean Atkin, Jordan Robbins, Mary Snooks, Sara Ruth Halperin, The Sigmon Family, Jean Bolton, Martha Clark, Bobby Regenbogen, and Alice Turner. *We pray in thanksgiving for the life of John Mills.*
- **Sunday Breakfasts Return September 13th** We're excited to return to this important time of fellowship and connection. Breakfast will begin after the 8:00AM service finishes (usually around 8:45 AM) and will go until 9:45 AM. Donations are appreciated to help cover the cost. This drop-in-style breakfast is structured so that you can come to either worship service. Our breakfast is prepared by volunteers each week. If you're interested in volunteering to prepare a breakfast, please email Heather at heather@ascensionhickory.org or sign up on the sheet outside the office.
- **Ascension ECW Meeting—September 14** Please join us on Monday, September 14, at 12:00 or 7:00 PM for our next ECW meeting. Our outreach for the month is coming together and collecting school supplies to support local students. All are welcome to attend.
- **Parish Potluck Dinner—Wednesday, September 16**—Our next parish potluck dinner will be held on Wednesday, September 16, followed by a presentation of the results from the Holy Cow Survey. Last

names beginning A-N please bring a main dish and last names beginning O-Z please bring a dessert. This is just a guide, so please feel free to bring whatever dish is your specialty. We look forward to an evening of fellowship!

- **Adult Formation Classes Return—September 20** Ascension's Daughters of the King will embark on a formation series, delving into the lives of four remarkable women saints. Each week, a different saint's life and contributions will be unveiled. Our journey begins with the life of Saint Therese of Lisieux. In the subsequent weeks, we will explore the lives of Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Catherine of Siena, and Saint Hildegard of Bingen.
- **Sanctuary Floor Refinishing starting—September 21** The sanctuary floors will be refinished beginning Monday, September 21. To help prepare for the work, we need volunteers to stay after church on Sunday, September 20 to help clear everything from the narthex and sanctuary. Your help is greatly appreciated!
- **Ascension Daughters of the King** Please join the Ascension Daughters of the King as they discuss the women in Genesis. Women speak more in Genesis than any other book in the Old and New Testaments. We will use Lindsay Hardin Freeman's Bible Women All Their Words and Why They Matter as a guide. The words of Sarah and Hagar will be the focus on Wednesday, September 23rd at 4:15. The group will meet the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.
- **Servant Saturday – Garden & Grounds Spruce-Up!** Join us Saturday, September 26, as we care for and beautify the Ascension grounds. Coffee and donuts at 8:30 AM.; work begins at 9:00 AM. We'll wrap up around 11:30 AM with Dawg Pound hot dogs! Tasks include weeding, mulching, trimming, and more. Bring gloves and yard tools if you have them. Bottled water provided. Come lend a hand and enjoy fellowship with your parish family!
- **Worship Location Change—September 27** Due to the refinishing of the sanctuary floors, our worship services will be held in the chapel for the 8:00 AM service and in the Parish Hall for the 10:30 AM service.
- **Annual Fall Parish Picnic—October 4** Please mark your calendars for the upcoming Annual Fall Parish Picnic on Sunday, October 4! More information to follow.
- **Thursday Morning Book Study** Father Garry will continue the series on Bob Marley with a two-week discussion exploring his music and its connections to faith and spirituality. We will meet at 10:00 AM in the Large Conference Room.
- **Ascension Cares** is a group of parishioners who make greeting cards at the Tuesday Arts & Crafts gathering. These cards are then sent to individuals within the parish and are also available for purchase. The card display is located in the parish hall near the church office. The proceeds from cards purchased goes to Ascension's Bereavement fund to help pay for reception supplies. Please consider supporting this ministry.
- **Have a pastoral care concern?** Contact Father Garry by email at garry@ascensionhickory.org or by cell phone at 646-232-6916.



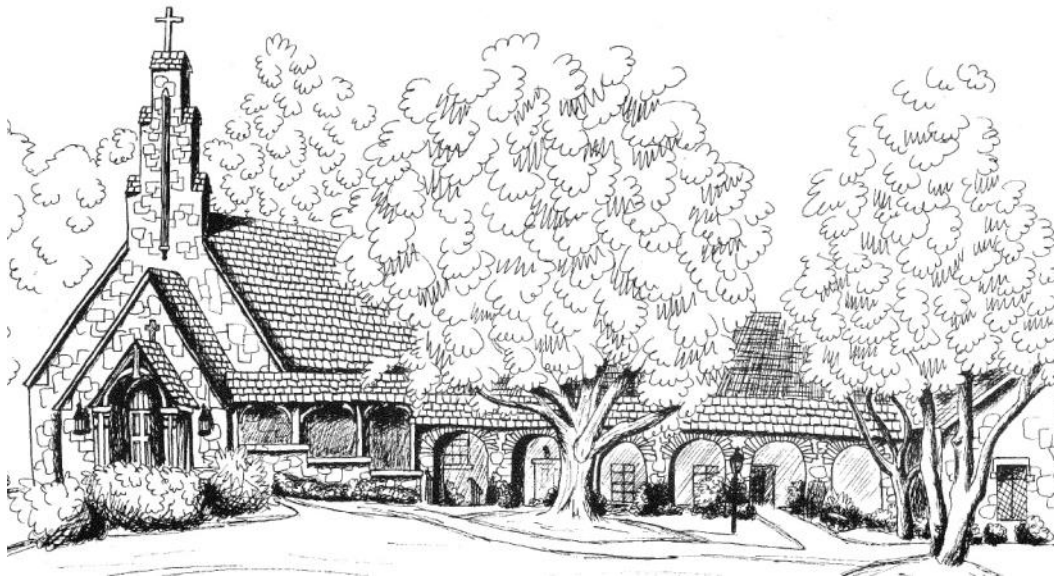
Domenico Fetti — *The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant* (c. 1618–1622)

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

726 1st Avenue NW, Hickory, North Carolina 28601

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Presiding Bishop.....	The Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe
Bishop	The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin
Interim Rector.....	The Rev. Garry Edwards
Interim Director of Music.....	John Gordon Ross
Interim Keyboardist/Accompanist.....	Tamara Morgan
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator	Quintin Knight
Parish Administrator.....	Heather Stone
Bookkeeper.....	Diane Vezmar



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