

*What doth the LORD thy
God require of thee, but
to fear the LORD thy God, to
walk in all his ways, and to
love him, and to serve the
LORD thy God with all thy
heart and with all thy soul.*

DEUTERONOMY 10:12



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

(Serving the Tuskegee Community since 1912)

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NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 26, 2026

(Proper 12)

MORNING PRAYER – RITE 11

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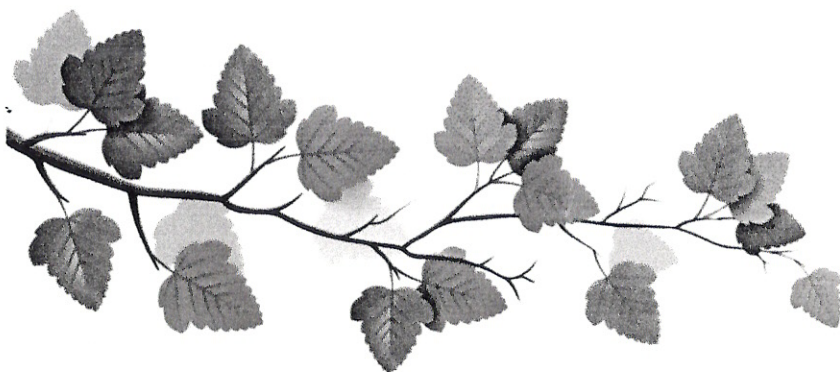
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ANNOUNCEMENTS: See inside bulletin

Closing Hymn

Dismissal



FELLOWSHIP HOUR

The Christian Gathering continues after this service with fellowship and refreshments in the undercroft.

PLEASE JOIN US!!!!

August 2 - A Parishioner



9 PENTECOST

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 12



Revised Common Lectionary
TRACK TWO

Sunday, July 26, 2026

COLLECT

Traditional

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy, that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O GOD, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12

AT GIBEON THE LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so

numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

Refrain

When your word goes forth it gives light.

Psalms 119:129-136 from the Book of Common Prayer

- | | |
|---|--|
| 129 Your decrees are wonderful; * therefore I obey them with all my heart. | 133 Steady my footsteps in your word; * let no iniquity have dominion over me. |
| 130 When your word goes forth it gives light; * it gives understanding to the simple. | 134 Rescue me from those who oppress me, * and I will keep your commandments. |
| 131 I open my mouth and pant; * I long for your commandments. | 135 Let your countenance shine upon your servant * and teach me your statutes. |
| 132 Turn to me in mercy, * as you always do to those who love your Name. | 136 My eyes shed streams of tears, * because people do not keep your law. |

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

THE SPIRIT HELPS us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

ANOTHER PARABLE Jesus put before the crowds: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday, July 27, 2026

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

Wednesday, July 29, 2026

Thursday, July 30, 2026

Friday, July 31, 2026

Saturday, August 1, 2026

Sunday, August 2, 2026

11 a.m.

- Holy Eucharist in person, ZOOM

**NOTE: Please pardon the inconvenience last Sunday.
Due to technical difficulties resulting from storms in the area, the
Zoom connection was not available .**

NEWS FROM AROUND THE EPISCOPAL & ANGLICAN DIOCESES

Saturday, August 15, 2026, Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of the Alabama Pilgrimage, 1 S. Washington St., Hayneville, AL

Friday, September 11, 2026, at 5 pm and September 12, 2026, at 4 pm, Clergy and Lay Leader of Color Retreat, Camp McDowell. Registration is available on-line at dioala.org

See www.anglicannews.org for the latest Anglican Communion News

T.U. EVENTS (www.tuskegee.edu)

'Tuskegee Rising,' 22nd TNAA (Tuskegee National Alumni Association) Convention, July 30-August 2, 2026, Memphis, TN. Registration available online.

COMMUNITY EVENTS (Auburn, Montgomery, Tuskegee)

Harriott II Riverboat Cruises, Montgomery: Friday Night Dinner Cruise, Saturday Getaway Cruise and Sunday Evening Blues Cruise, recurring weekly on specified nights from June 6, 2026, until November 28, 2026.

****Special Election, Macon County, Tuesday, August 11, 2026**

2026 Football Schedule – Tuskegee U:

August 30 - Red Tails Classic, T.U. vs U. of West AL, Montgomery

October 3 – T.U. vs Morehouse, Montgomery

November 7 – Homecoming, T.U. vs Miles, HOME

November 26 – Turkey Day Game, T.U. vs Alabama State, Montgomery

2026 Football Schedule – Auburn U.

September 12 – Auburn vs Southern Mississippi, HOME

September 19 – Auburn vs Florida, HOME

September 26 – Homecoming, Auburn vs. Vanderbilt, HOME

October 24 – Auburn vs LSU, HOME

November 7 – Auburn vs Arkansas, HOME

PRAYER LIST

CHRISTINA ANDERSON
CAROLYN BLAND*
STEPHANIE BOSWELL

MARIAN GARMON*

MARIO LIGHTFOOTE*
RONNIE LIGON

CRAIG POWELL

THOMAS BRAYE*
JAMES BRAYE
REBECCA LYN CARTER
CURT CARTER, SR*

JULIUS MYHAND, JR.
CLEMENT SCOTT
DAVID NGAWA**
MARTHA OSGERBY
ANNA C. OWENS
TUNESHA SMITH
ANGELICA P. SNOWDEN

CHARLES M. CRANK, II
PRESTON CRAYTON

LUCENIA DUNN*
SHANNON DIXON
TEDDY DOWDY*

YOLANDA P. SEAWRIGHT
DARRYL SEAWRIGHT
BRENDA D. ROBINSON*

ANITRA FULLER
ROBERT FRAZIER

LISA TECZAR
CHARLES THOMPSON**
LLOYD WILLIAMS*
E. DRAKE WHITELAW

DIANE KENNEY*

MARGARET 'KATIE' JONES
THERON JONES

*Local Parishioners
** Shut-In Parishioners

THE DIOCESAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

We pray for our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; Ministries to Young Adults in Alabama; and Jubilee Ministry and all Jubilee Centers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!!

- **ARMED FORCES:** Please pray for our service men and women stationed in the U.S. and overseas, especially, Elijah Barber, DeRitha Marbory B. Green (retiring), Sam and Margaret Gunn Bunton, and Shavon Marbory Hogan.
- **PRAYERS:** Continue to pray for those on the Prayer List, friends, family and all humankind afflicted by disease, war and famine. Pray for peace!
- **REMINDER:** Please continue to furnish our Food Basket with non-perishable food items (located on the ground floor of the Education Building).
- **NEW:** The link for the Sunday ZOOM Companion Service can be reached by dialing: 1-312-626-6799, Meeting ID: 882 671 9532, Passcode 008810 or click on your email invite. Mark your calendar for the next Holy Eucharist Service – in person on *Sunday, August 2, 2026 at 11 am.*
- **NEW:** Congratulations to our T.U. graduate student, Vestine Abera who has been accepted into the T.U. PhD Program this Fall, Integrative Biosciences. She is also expecting her 2nd child this fall, another boy. **CONGRATULATIONS!**
- **NEW:** Michael 'Mike' Robinson transitioned from his earthly life on Saturday, July 4, 2026. A Memorial Service is scheduled for August 15, 2026, at 1 pm, at St. Andrew's. Please keep Brenda D. Robinson and the Robinson Family in your prayers.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY!!

August 1 – James & June Samuel

1 - Carolyn Bland

2 – William E. Gunn

7 - Titus Smith

22 - Deborah Richie

22 – George & Tiffane Bulls

26 - Lewis & Carolyn Bland

26 - E. Drake Whitelaw



Pentecost 9 (A) – Proper 12

[RCL]: Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45b, Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Love the Questions

Today's reading from the Epistle to the Romans includes some of the most familiar and comforting words from Paul the Apostle, messenger, teacher and preacher: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul had spread the message of Christ throughout Asia Minor and would pass through Rome on his way to evangelize in Spain. Paul's letter was written to the Christians in Rome in advance of his visit to them. The Christian community in Rome was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and there was likely some division along those lines. While this letter is directed to the concerns and needs of his audience, Paul also focuses his teaching on truths about the church as a whole: the gospel of salvation is for everyone. His primary theme in these pages is justification, or how to be in right relationship with God.

Today's readings are rich with some of the most comforting words in the Scriptures. For instance, we read that we do not know how to pray as we ought. (And most of us agree with that statement—with a sigh of regret or longing, perhaps.) But Paul goes on to reassure us: The Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. God searches our hearts. And nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This all is poetry, music for the soul.

After assuring his readers that God knows what is in our hearts, even when we don't have the words to pray, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions: If God is for us, who is against us? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? He follows with a list of assurances: Neither death, nor life, nor

angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can come between us and God's complete, perfect, all-knowing love.

It might be useful, and rich, and enlightening, to list our own fears of what might separate us from the love of God. What are your own challenges to your relationship with God? Perhaps addiction, or depression, anger (you can be specific here!). Greed, worship of the idols of money and material success? Over-confidence, pride, hubris?

Paul asks us to live by faith. God cannot love you less, nor more. Live like God loves you.

Today's readings are also rich with challenges. In the Gospel According to Matthew, Jesus challenges us to imagine the Kingdom of Heaven. He creates a series of similes: the kingdom is like a mustard seed, like yeast, like hidden treasure, like a pearl of great value, like a net full of fish.

Again, it might be a meaningful activity to make our own comparisons. What do you understand the kingdom of heaven to be like?

What if the kingdom of heaven is a place of surprises? Where we learn to stretch beyond our comfort zone? Where we discover that uncomfortable is good?

Going back to our reading from Genesis, we read that Jacob is surprised to find Leah in his bed, rather than Rachel. From that surprise, six sons were born. Jacob had to stretch beyond his comfort zone, into God's plan, and those sons are important in biblical history as the leaders of six of the twelve tribes of Israel. Or we could consider Jesus's mother, Mary, who was likely quite surprised to hear from the angel that she was to bear a child, though an unwed woman. In the end, she bore the savior of the world. Unexpected, uncomfortable surprises that led to the kingdom of heaven.

Live like you inhabit the kingdom of heaven, because the kingdom of heaven is all around us. Today's reading invites us to see the mustard seed as a metaphor for our own actions. One tiny, good deed, act of mercy, moment of faith, will grow huge in many dimensions. While we are thinking creatively with Scripture, we might also try listing mustard seed moments. When did a small seed you planted grow into a shelter for countless living things?

The important message between these passages—one that Jesus teaches us, that Paul reminds us—is that God is always within and around us. The Holy Spirit prays within us, even when we forget to pray. The kingdom of heaven is within and around us, even when we are in doubt or fear. This is the promise of our faith. So let us not lose hope—which is the future tense of faith. May we meet our fears and uncomfortable moments, embrace the surprises. May we learn to trust ourselves and others, as we trust our God.

Let us close today with some words about embracing the surprise of life from the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who spent a lifetime searching for a meaningful basis for living—a project one *might* characterize as a search for the kingdom of heaven. He published a poetry collection exploring his search, entitled *The Book of Hours*. While Rilke struggled with finding language to define and

describe God, how poetic, how beautiful, how faithful is the suggestion of this collection's subtitle: *Love Letters to God*.

Rilke famously wrote in his *Letters to a Young Poet*: "learn to love the questions themselves." Maybe the poet is right. Maybe the kingdom of heaven is a place where we learn to love the questions, a place where we surrender to the life the Holy Spirit is praying into being within us.

Let us listen to the words of one of Rilke's love poems to God (*Book of Hours*, I 59):

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.

Amen.

Susan Butterworth is a church musician and ministerial associate at St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, MA. She is a writer, singer, and equestrian. She has taught English at Salem State University, and is retired from the Episcopal chaplaincy at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), where she led Taizé prayer for many years.



Sermons that Work and Bible Studies that Work are a joint offering of Forward Movement and The Office of Communication at The Episcopal Church.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/bible-study/>