



# SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Ashfield, Massachusetts

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 15, 2026

## Welcome to Saint John's!

Our mission at St. John's Church in Ashfield is to grow, through worship, in God's gospel of hospitality and wholeness, and to faithfully live that word in our fellowship, families, communities, and the world. May all who enter here be received as Christ.

## A Land Acknowledgement

We worship and share God's mission on the unceded land of the Nipmuc, Pocumtuc, and Wabanaki peoples. We are mindful that our blessing came at the price of their sorrow and we pledge to grow in our awareness of racial injustice with God's help.

## Invitation to Holy Communion

This is God's table. All are welcome to receive Holy Communion. To eat, present your hands to be given bread. To drink, take a sip as the cup is held to your lips. To receive a blessing, instead of bread, cross your arms on your chest.

## Acknowledgements

- The Book of Common Prayer, 1979
- The Holy Bible, The New Revised Standard Version
- Eucharistic Prayer B, Expansive
- Venite App
- The Book of Occasional Services 2022

An \* indicates that we invite you to stand as you are able

***Bold*** text is said by the assembly

Prelude

Rachel Gibson

\***Gathering Hymn** #490

*I want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

*Celebrant* Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;

*People* **His mercy endures for ever.**

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.

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*The Collect of the Day*

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*The First Reading*

*1 Samuel 16:1-13*

A Reading from the First Book of Samuel.

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the LORD." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd; \*

I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**He makes me lie down in green pastures \***

**and leads me beside still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>He revives my soul \*

and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; \***

**for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; \*

you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, \***

**and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.**

*The Second Reading*

*Ephesians 5:8-14*

A Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians.

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*Sequence Hymn #538**

*God of Mercy, God of Grace*

*The Gospel*

*John 9:1-41*

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

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone

like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

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

*The Sermon*  
*Shared silence*

*Rev. Mark Hatch*

*The Nicene Creed*

*EOW p. 53*

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:  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.

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,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who 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.

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

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 all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
**That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

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.**

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.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.  
*Silence*

*Cycles of Prayer*

We pray for all those in our cycles of prayer: In the Anglican cycle we pray for The Anglican Church of Kenya. In our Diocesan cycle we pray for St. Luke's, Worcester; Chancellor of our Diocese, Donald Allison; CREDO; Covenant Relationship With the RC Dioceses of Springfield & Worcester. In our towns' cycle we pray for our schools, preschools, and all who work and learn in them. Among our members and friends, we pray for The Rev. Linda L. Grenz, Delbert C. Glover; The Rev. Addison & Jody Hall; Raven Harris, Thomas Kreek; Liam Harte, Emily Todd, Tommy, Jamie. We pray for those who serve in the armed forces, including Sean M. Skalski. And among our ministries we pray for our Prayer Team. **Amen.**

*The people say the Lenten prayer for the Ashfield Churches Together Community – March 15*

**Dear God, may your light continue to guide us into an openness we could not have imagined, renew our discipline to make each of these days precious in your sight, and may your spirit bring us peace. Amen.**

*Presider concludes with a collect*

Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Confession of Sin*

*The Deacon or Celebrant says*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

**God of all mercy,  
we confess that we have sinned against you,  
Opposing your will in our lives.  
We have denied your goodness in each other,  
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.  
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
the evil we have done,  
and the evil done on our behalf.  
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us  
through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
that we may abide in your love  
and see only your will. Amen.**

*The Bishop, when present, or the Priest, stands and says*

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 Christ be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Wardens' Welcome & Anointing for Healing*

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

*Ephesians 5:2*

Offertory Anthem: St. John's Madrigal Singers

*Blessed Jesus, at thy word (Liebster Jesu)*

*Celebrant* God 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 our thanks and praise.**

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

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

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** S-129

*Powell*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For in these last days you sent Jesus to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In Christ, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In Christ, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.*

On the night before he died for us, our Savior 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 Jesus 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, according to his command, O Father,  
**We remember Christ's death,**  
**We proclaim Christ's resurrection,**  
**We await Christ's coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Savior of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom we are acceptable to you, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with *[John and]* all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, 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** S-158

*Willan*

**ALL: In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory.**

CONGREGANTS ONLINE: Since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come.

**ALL: Amen.**

*Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation*

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Communion Anthem LEVAS #151

*One Bread One Body*

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.**

*Seasonal Blessing*

*Prayers over the People*

Bow down before the Lord.

Look down in mercy, Lord, on your people who kneel before you; and grant that those whom you have nourished by your Word and Sacraments may bring forth fruit worthy of repentance; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**\*Recessional Hymn #493**

*O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing (verses 1-3)*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Rachel Gibson

*Please stay for coffee and conversation!*

## EVENTS

March 15: The Rev. Mark Hatch is our supply priest

March 17: Hilltown Churches Food Pantry

March 19: Lenten Compline Service – Online – Dine at 6:30pm, Service at 7pm

March 22: The Rev. David DeSmith is our supply priest

March 26: Lenten Compline Service – Online – Dine at 6:30pm, Service at 7pm

March 28: Celebrate the Life of Rev. Michael Corrigan at Grace Church, Amherst 10am

March 29: Palm Sunday - The Rev. Mark Hatch is our supply priest

March 29: Loose plate offering is dedicated to the Vicar's Discretionary Fund in Memory of Russell Williams

March 31: Hilltown Churches Food Pantry

April 2: Maundy Thursday 6pm - The Rev. David DeSmith is our supply priest

April 3: Good Friday 6pm - The Rev. Mark Hatch is our supply priest

April 4: Easter Vigil Saturday 7pm - The Rev. Mark Hatch is our supply priest

April 5: Easter Sunday - The Rev. David DeSmith is our supply priest

April 11: Climate Action - Ring the Bells at St. John's 11am

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Thank you for your generous support!



## CONTACT US

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**Email:** stjohnsashfield@gmail.com | **On the web:** stjohnsashfield.org |

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### *Lay Leaders & Clergy*

**Co-Senior Wardens:** Sue Craft, 628-0289  
and Susan Todd, 628-3998

**Junior Warden:** Maddy Roberts

**Treasurer:** Raven Harris

**Assistant Treasurer:** Jody Skinger Hall

**Clerk:** Darlene Monds

**Vestry:** Lynnette Leidy Sievert, Jane  
Wagener, Andrew Wickline

**Licensed Preachers:** Raven Harris, Andrew  
Wickline

**Lay Eucharistic Visitors:** Sue Craft, Andrew  
Wickline, Kristen Wickline, Jane Wagener

**Licensed Worship Leaders:** Andrew  
Wickline, Kristen Wickline, Sue Craft,  
Maddy Roberts

### *Staff*

**Director, Madrigal Singers:** Julie Meservey

**Parish Administrator:** Lis Henry **email:**  
stjohnsashfield@gmail.com

**Financial Administrator:** Amy Murray

**Sexton:** John Wickline

### *Ministries*

**Pastoral Care Team:** Sue Craft

**Digital Ministry:** Ted and Kara Toothaker,  
Andy Wickline, Jane Kaufman

**Buildings & Grounds Team:** Maddy  
Roberts

**Green Team:** Kristen Wickline

**Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Kristen Wickline

**LOVE in a Backpack:** Jenny Burke

**Bicentennial Celebrations:** Addison Hall

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Thank you!

