



Grace Episcopal Church

871 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804

graceavl.com 828-254-1086

A Service in Celebration and Thanksgiving

for the life of

The Reverend William Glover “Bill” Edwards

June 1, 1933 - March 12, 2025

Saturday, March 29, 2025

2:00 p.m.

The Reverend William Glover “Bill” Edwards,
who received the gift of earthly life on June 1, 1933,
and who received the gift of a new life on March 12, 2025

PRELUDE *Solemn Prelude on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*

Gerald Near

At the tolling of the tower bell, the congregation is asked to stand.

OPENING HYMN *O Praise to thee, O King Divine*

477

Celebrant I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord.

Whoever has faith in me shall have life,
even though he die.

And everyone who has life,
and has committed himself to me in faith,
shall not die for ever.

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth.

After my awaking, he will raise me up;
and in my body I shall see God.

I myself shall see, and my eyes behold him
who is my friend and not a stranger.

For none of us has life in himself,
and none becomes his own master when he dies.

For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord,
and if we die, we die in the Lord.

So, then, whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's possession.

Happy from now on are those who die in the Lord!
So it is, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother, Bill. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: deal graciously with Bill's family in their grief. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Serenity Prayer (*read by all*)

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change
the courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time.
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as he did, the sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it.
Trusting that he will make all things right
if I surrender to his will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with him forever.

The people sit.

THE WORD OF GOD

FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES: ISAIAH 61:1-3

Chris Boone

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion--
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 121 (*Spoken*)

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?
2 My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.
3 He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

- 5 The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.
7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.
8 The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

FROM THE EPISTLES: ROMANS 8: 14-19, 34-35, 37-39

Neil Guffey

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ-- if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.

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?

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.

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

GOSPEL HYMN: *Good Christians all, rejoice and sing!*

verses 1-3 of 205

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

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

THE GOSPEL: JOHN 10:11-16

The Very Reverend Sarah Hurlbert

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away-- and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Jane Smith

All stand.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

BCP 496

In assurance of eternal life given at Baptism, let us proclaim our faith and say,

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Judy Morris

For our brother Bill, let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ who said, "I am Resurrection and I am Life."

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn for Bill, and dry the tears of those who weep. *Hear us, Lord.*

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow. *Hear us, Lord.*

You raised the dead to life; give to our brother eternal life. *Hear us, Lord.*

You promised paradise to the thief who repented; bring our brother to the joys of heaven. *Hear us, Lord.*

Our brother Bill was washed in Baptism and anointed with the Holy Spirit; give him fellowship with all your saints. *Hear us, Lord.*

He was nourished with your Body and Blood; grant him a place at the table in your heavenly kingdom. *Hear us, Lord.*

Comfort us in our sorrows at the death of our brother Bill; let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope.

Celebrant Father of all, we pray to you for Bill and for all those whom we love but see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May his soul and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Celebrant The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING: Eucharistic Prayer A

BCP 361

The people stand.

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.**

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

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:

Celebrant and People

**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.

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.

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

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

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The people remain standing.

All persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. If you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest as you kneel at the communion rail.

COMMUNION HYMNS

What wondrous love is this, O my soul

439

From Taizé:

Eat this bread

Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to him and never be hungry.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in him and you will not thirst.

Jesus Christ, bread of life, those who come to you will not hunger.

Jesus Christ, Risen Lord, those who trust in you will not thirst.

Bless the Lord

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

Ubi Caritas

Live in charity and steadfast love, live in charity; God will dwell with you.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP 498

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Almighty God, we thank you that in your great love you have fed us with the spiritual food and drink of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ, and have given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet. Grant that this Sacrament may be to us a comfort in affliction, and a pledge of our inheritance in that kingdom where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying, but the fullness of joy with all your saints; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

THE COMMENDATION

BCP 499

Celebrant Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,

People **where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

Celebrant You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created me, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

People **Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

The Celebrant then says

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Bill. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. *Amen.*

THE BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*

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THE DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, Alleluia.

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

POSTLUDE *God of Grace and God of Glory*

Wayne Wold

All are welcome to a Reception in the Parish Hall following the service.

Celebrant: The Reverend Tim McRee

Preaching: The Reverend Jane Smith

Presiding: The Reverend John Rice

Chalicians: Sally Withers, Cole Wilcox

Musicians: Cathy Adkins, Kyle Ritter,

and members of the Grace Church and Cathedral of All Souls choirs

Acolytes: Cheryl Deyton, Jenny Walker Davis, Anna Warren Jordan

Ushers: Elaine Potter, George Davis

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Bill Edwards by his family.

William Glover Edwards, age 91, died on March the 12, 2025, at The Elizabeth House in Flat Rock. He was born on June 1, 1933, in Tarboro, North Carolina to Solomon Edwards and Elizabeth Petteway. He served as Rector at Grace Episcopal Church on Merrimon Avenue in Asheville from 1968 until 2000. Bill Edwards is survived by his wife, Margaret Murphy Edwards; his daughter, Anna Edwards-Gaura and her husband Josh, of Horse Shoe, NC; his son, William Andrew Murphy Edwards, and his wife, Rachel, of Weaverville; and his five grandchildren, Emma Edwards, Elliot Gaura, Will Edwards, Jacob Gaura, and Amber Edwards.

Bill attended Davidson College and received his BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His Masters of Divinity was from the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, and his Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Direction was from the Graduate Theological Foundation. He served churches in Charlotte, Rutherfordton, Spruce Pine, and Asheville.

Father Edwards was elected and served as a Deputy from the Diocese of Western North Carolina to the Episcopal Church's General Conventions from 1969 until 1997. Following his retirement, he served on staff of the House of Deputies of the Convention until 2009. He served as chair of the Diocesan Commission on Ministry for 17 years, as well as Secretary of the Diocesan Convention. In the community, he was instrumental in founding the first Asheville Buncombe Mental Health Association and ABCCM. In retirement, he especially enjoyed serving in the choir of the Cathedral at All Souls and serving as a clinical Chaplain at Craggy Correctional Center.

Instead of flowers, gifts may be made to the music program at Grace Church or the Cathedral of All Souls.