



Grace Episcopal Church

871 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804

A Service in Celebration and Thanksgiving

for the life of

Edward Exner “Ed” Denison

Saturday, May 16, 2026

1:00 p.m.

*Ed Denison,
who received the gift of earthly life on July 31, 1928,
and who received the gift of a new life on March 26, 2026*

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

Presider 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.

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother, Ed. 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 Ed'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.**

Opening Hymn: *God is love: let heaven adore him*
The people sit.

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THE WORD OF GOD

The First Lesson: Lamentations 3:22-26,31-33

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

For the Lord will not reject forever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 23 (*Read responsively by whole verse, led by priest*)

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely 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 Lesson: 1 John 3:1-2

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

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

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

The Gospel: John 10:11-16

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."

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Family Reflections

John Denison

Craig Denison

The Homily

The Reverend Gary Coffey

The people stand.

BCP 496

The Apostles' Creed

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

For our brother Ed, 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 Ed, 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 Ed 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 Ed; let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope.

Presider Father of all, we pray to you for Ed 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

Presider The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn: *As the Deer*

Andrew DeMatos, saxophone

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer A

BCP 361

The people stand.

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord; who rose victorious from the dead, and comforts us with the blessed hope of everlasting life. For to your faithful people, O Lord, life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens.

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:

Presider 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:

Presider 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

Presider Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

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

Communion Hymn: *Taste and see* (Songs of Grace) 59

Post Communion Prayer BCP 498

Presider Let us pray.

People **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

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

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

Presider 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 Presider then says

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Ed. 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

Closing Hymn: *Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord*

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The Dismissal

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

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



Presider: The Reverend Robert Hartmans

Preacher: The Reverend Gary Coffey

Organist: Daniel Gainey

Crucifer: James Cannon Reader: Kim Hayes

Ushers: Katherine & Todd Kaderabek





Edward Exner Denison

Edward Exner Denison, 97, of Asheville, North Carolina, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on March 26, 2026. A man of profound intellect and a lifelong learner, Edward was known to his peers as the “Professor of Bottle Polymer” and was a

dedicated servant to his community and country.

Early Life and Education

Edward was born on July 31, 1928, in Asheville to Bascom and Louise Denison. He attended Davidson University, where he earned a degree in business. Following a brief period in the insurance industry, he and his brother operated Denison Motors, which carried Packard and Studebaker automobiles.

Military Service and Engineering

Driven by a desire to further his education, Edward returned to college at North Carolina State University, where he obtained a degree in Mechanical Engineering. During this era of his life, he also served his country with distinction as a Captain in the Army Reserve.

Professional Innovation

In 1963, Edward accepted a position with Eastman Chemical Company in Kingsport, Tennessee. His primary career focus was the development of PET bottle polymer for the soft drink industry, a role in which he helped the company become a global provider of the material. He retired from Eastman in May 1986, at which time he and his wife returned home to Asheville.

Family and Personal Passions

Edward married Patricia Sawyer on November 28, 1953. Together they raised four sons—three born in Asheville and their fourth in Kingsport. His life was defined by a variety of interests:

- **Music:** His primary love, outside of Patricia, was playing his collection of saxophones. He enjoyed working on his saxes and playing the old tunes up through his 94th birthday.
- **Mechanical Skill:** He loved the outdoors and working on automotive engines, always maintaining a project as he was never one to sit idle.
- **Scouting:** Edward was deeply involved in Scouting from his sons' early days in Cub Scouts until they reached the rank of Eagle Scout. He served as the Scout Master of Troop 50 at First Presbyterian Church for many years.

Survivors and Precedents

Edward was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Patricia Sawyer Denison; his brother, David Nathan Denison; his grandson, Matthew Sawyer Denison; and his great-granddaughter, Coral Denison.

He is survived by his sons and their spouses:

- Mark Richards Denison (Shelia) of Shawnee, OK.
- Paul Westervelt Denison (SuEllen) of Wilmington, NC.
- Craig Sawyer Denison of Kingsport, TN.
- John Stuart Denison (Ashley) of Mills River, NC.

He also leaves behind seven grandchildren—Jonathan, Stephen, Sarah, Elizabeth, Amy, Meg, and Adam—and five great-grandchildren—Lyric, Lincoln, Noah, Foster, and Fuller.

