

# *Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church*

*Where All the People are Ministers of Christ*

***Our vision is to seek to live and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to nurture persons of all ages and circumstances for faithful discipleship, and to transform faith into service to others.***



## *Reverend Candee Martin*

7801 Church Lane, Toano, Virginia 23168

Adult Sunday School begins at 9:15am.

**Welcome to our worship service!** Mt. Vernon has been worshipping our Lord and serving the Greater Williamsburg Community since 1887. If we can be of any assistance to you, please let us know.

# First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023 “Behind Every Great Church 10:15am  
There is Prayer”

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Worship Leader

Suzanne Latimer

\*Please stand as you are able. Please read in Unison in **Bold**.

## THE PEOPLE GATHER

Prelude & Meditation

Organist, Jeanne Fulks

Lighting the Candles

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Words

Advent is a time of hopeful waiting,  
a time to open our hearts to God’s presence,  
a time to pay attention to God’s call.

God’s love breaks in over and over again.

Be awake, for God is near.

Advent Candlelighting Hymn

Advent Song (Light the Advent Candle) (v. 1) TFWS#2090

Lighting of the First Advent Candle -- Hope (responsive)

In the days of exile and uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah cried out: O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. (Isaiah 64:1-3)

In the midst of our own encounters with uncertainty and upheaval and our longing for deliverance, Jesus calls to us, “Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come.” (Mark 13:35)

**We wait as people surprised again and again by God who shakes us out of our complacency and wakes us up to the work of the kin'dom all around us.**

We light this candle as a sign of our shocking hope. May we stay awake to God's activity in the world as we wait in expectation that even now God is with us, working to restore us to the fullness of life with God and one another. **Amen.**

*[Light the first candle of the Advent wreath.]*

Hymn of Reflection    Emmanuel, Emmanuel    UMH #204

\*Call to Worship (responsive)

You alone, O Lord, are God.

**Come down, O Lord!**

You have done wonderful things in the past.

**Come down, O Lord!**

We need you here with us now.

**Come down, O Lord!**

We wait for you.

**We wait with hope.**

\*Opening Prayer (unison)

**Draw us near, O God, even as we draw near to you.**

**Open our hearts and our minds to your presence, and wake us up from the deep sleep and inattention holding us back. Prepare us to receive your love, even as we prepare our lives to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth. In joyful hope, we pray. Amen.**

\*Hymn of Praise    "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

UMH #196

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD**

Prayer for Illumination (unison)

Rev. Candee Martin

**We thank you, O God of sacred stories, for the witness of holy scripture. Through it, you nurture our imaginations, touch our feelings, increase our awareness, and challenge our assumptions. Bless, we pray, our hearing of your word this day. Speak to each of us; speak to all of us; and grant that by the power of your Spirit, we may be hearers and doers of your word. Amen.**

First Gospel Lesson

Luke 21:25-36 (NRSVue)

Rev. Candee Martin

<sup>25</sup>“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”  
<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. <sup>34</sup>“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Second Gospel Lesson John 1:1-5, 14 (CEB)

Rev. Candee Martin

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The Word was with God in the

beginning. <sup>3</sup>Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word, nothing came into being. What came into being <sup>4</sup>through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Prayers of the People

Rev. Candee Martin

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Candee Martin

Hymn of Meditation "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

UMH #626 (v.1)

The Message "The Christmas Story Isn't Finished!"

Rev. Candee Martin

## **RESPONSE TO THE WORD**

Hymn of Response "I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light

UMH #206

Offering

Offertory Prayer (unison)

**Gracious God, as we bring our gifts to you, we bring much more than earthly treasure; we bring our very lives. Transform us through our giving, that we may grow ever closer to you. Help us share your peace and love with others as joyously and generously as you have shared your gifts with us. In your holy name, we pray in anticipation and in hope. Amen.**

\*Doxology: “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH #95

**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, Amen.**

\*Affirmation of Faith for Advent (unison) Candee Martin

**I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Christ and the incarnation of God’s love in human flesh.**

**I believe there are gifts more important than the ones under the Christmas tree, such as the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the industry with which we set about reshaping the world in our time.**

**I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices, from hearts made warm by the wonder of the season.**

**I believe in the angels’ message that we should not be afraid — that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties and insecurities.**

**I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of appropriating Christmas — that if I wait in silence I will experience the presence of the One born in the stable, for he lives today as surely as he lived then.**

**I believe in going away from Christmas as the wise men went — “another way.” I want to be different when these days are past — more centered, more thoughtful, more caring.**

**And I believe God will help me. Amen.**

\*An Advent Prayer of Hope (responsive)

Rev. Candee Martin

Creator God, your promise of hope comes to us, wrapped in anticipation and expectation. Though the sun may be darkened, though the moon may cease to give forth its light, though the stars may fall from heaven, we will continue to

thank you that a new day is dawning – a day when we will see the Son of Man coming with power and glory.

**As we await that day with great hope, may we use our spiritual gifts to your glory. Reveal to us our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be strengthened and blameless in your sight. You are faithful, Lord; may it be so for us who have gathered in your name. Amen.**

Special Music

David Sharp

## **A SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE II**

Invitation to Holy Communion

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Prayer of Yearning (responsive)

We thank you, O God, for bearers of hope and peace in all times and all places: for those who govern, when they set things right for the poor, meek and needy; for anointed prophets who speak and act in your spirit— in wisdom, understanding and equity.

**And thank you for reminders, gentle or urgent, that we, too, should be agents of harmony, reconciliation, peace, justice and righteousness. Make us advocates of your vision for the world. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, “The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” This sure vision is ours. Let us embrace God’s promise. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving for Advent

[Responses, UMH p. 15-16]

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

**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, forever. Amen.**

Breaking the Bread

Giving the Bread and Cup

Prayer After Receiving (unison)

**We give thanks, O Gracious God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## **SENDING FORTH**

\*Hymn of Celebration "People, Look East" UMH #202

Extinguishing the Candles

Christ's light leads us into the world to serve.

\*Commission and Blessing (responsive)

Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection—

For the light of God's love is discernible everywhere.

**We will let ourselves be surprised by wonder,  
And set aside time to offer quiet thanks.**

The good news of Advent is this: Christ is coming. Christ is always coming.



**We will welcome Christ into our hearts. We will let ourselves be guided by his ministry. We will go forth from this place in hope.**

Postlude

**\* Please stand as you are able.  
Hearing Assistance Devices are available in the Narthex**

**Stewardship for week of November 26: \$1,500.00**

*We sincerely hope you have felt the presence of the Lord in our Worship Service this morning.*

*We appreciate your attendance and support.*

*Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church  
7801 Church Lane  
Toano, VA 23168*

### **Copyright Notice**

\*Centering Words, Call to Worship, Mary Petrina Boyd, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020* (Abingdon Press, 2019)

\*Advent Candlelighting Liturgy; Dr. Lisa Hancock, Director of Worship Arts Ministries, served as an organist and music minister in United Methodist congregations in the Northwest Texas and North Texas Annual Conferences, as well as the New Day Amani/Upendo house churches in Dallas. After receiving her Master of Sacred Music and Master of Theological Studies from Perkins School of Theology, Lisa earned her PhD in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University wherein she researched and wrote on the doctrine of Christ, disability, and atonement.

\*Opening Prayer, Offertory, Mary Scifres, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2022* (Abingdon Press, 2021)

\*Prayer of Illumination, Ann B. Day, *Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship*, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, (United Church Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1990, The Pilgrim Press)

\*An Affirmation of Faith for Advent, John R. Killinger, *Lost in Wonder, Love, & Praise (Prayers for Christian Worship)*, (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2001)

\*An Advent Prayer of Hope, J. Wayne Pratt, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2014* (Abingdon Press, 2013)

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## Announcements/Missions

- **Honor & Memory:** If you would like to make a donation in honor/memory of someone, please fill out the request in the attachment to the bulletin or contact the church office. The cost is \$5.00 and forms must be returned no later than December 17<sup>th</sup>. Make checks payable to Mt. Vernon UMC. (Checks may be dropped off at the church office or dropped in the offering plate.) A couple of Poinsettias will be purchased for the sanctuary.
- **Finance Meeting:** Will be held Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 2PM.
- **Administrative Council Meeting:** Will be held Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:30PM.
- **Fellowship Time:** The 3rd Sunday of every month there will be a Fellowship Time after the Sunday Service.
- **Cereal...Cereal...Cereal:** We will concentrate on collecting ONLY cereal donations to St. Olaf's & PGO Food Pantries, so please consider picking up an extra box or two of cereal each week and deposit it in the basket in the narthex. It's a need that we can help to fulfill. Thanks!
- **The Cemetery Association:** Those who would be so moved can contribute to the fund for the "Cemetery Fence Replacement." The Cemetery association is a 501-(C)3 fund.
- **Bridge Group:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.- 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall.