

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.

Epiphany Sunday

January 7, 2024 “Behind Every Great Church 10:15am
There is Prayer”

Worship Leader

Suzanne Latimer

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

THE PEOPLE GATHER

Prelude & Meditation

Organist, Carol Kendall

Lighting the Candles

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Words

In the darkest night,
a star shines.

Follow this star,
for it will lead to overwhelming joy.

Introit

“Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus”

UMH #349

*Call to Worship (responsive)

Arise, shine! Your light has come!

Glory to God in the highest.

Darkness covers the earth,

but God’s glory shines brightly.

Lift up your eyes. Look around.

The light of God’s love shines radiantly.

Arise, shine! Your light has come!

Our hearts thrill and rejoice!

*Opening Prayer (responsive)

God of light and love, shine upon our lives,

as we welcome the mystery of your love.

Guide us toward your true gift,

for our hearts long

to encounter the holy.
**Quiet our expectations,
that we might be surprised
by the unexpected.**

Open our eyes,
that we might find you
in unanticipated places.

**Shine your light upon us,
that we might see you clearly,
and recognize your face
in all people. Amen.**

*Hymn of Praise “Sing We Now of Christmas” UMH #237

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination (unison) Rev. James O'Quinn
**We thank you, O God of sacred stories, for the witness
of holy scripture. Through it, you nurture our
imagination, 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.**

Gospel Lesson Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSVue)

Rev. James O'Quinn

The Visit of the Magi

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in
Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem,
²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the
Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come
to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was
frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴and calling together
all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of
them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In
Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the
prophet:

⁶‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People

Rev. James O'Quinn

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. James O'Quinn

Hymn of Meditation “We Three Kings” UMH #254 (vs. 1,2)

The Message

“Life’s Journey: Unexpected and Surprising Paths”

Rev. James O'Quinn

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn of Response “We Three Kings” UMH #254 (vs. 3,4,5)

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Giver of every good gift,
source of all goodness and light,
we open the treasure chests of our hearts before
you.

We offer you gifts of gold, to care for those in need.

**We offer you gifts of love,
to serve a suspicious world.**

**Bless our gifts and our lives,
and use them to love
and heal the world. 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 Epiphany

**We believe in God, the creator of all things, the giver of
life and breath.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
born Emmanuel, God with us,
baptized and revealed
the most beloved Son of God;
he sought to heal humanity
by taking our brokenness upon himself,
suffering for us, dying for us
and being raised from the dead
for our sake and
for the sake of all the world.
We believe that he will come again.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
continually poured out refreshing our lives,
leading us into a new day,
ever-birthing the church,
the body of Christ in the world.**

**This Spirit is our soul companion
and counselor of truth
reminding us of the gift of faith,
the ever presence of God
and the promise of eternal life.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Hymn of Response

“The First Noel”

UMH #245

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 Confession

Ever patient God, we are a people who live in thick darkness.

**We stumble around,
bombarded by news
of war and poverty,
famine and genocide.**

We easily lose our bearings.

The maelstrom of life can overwhelm
and paralyze us
when we need to be at our best.

Help us be people who shine
the light of your righteousness,
peace and joy into the dark places
of our lives and our world.

**Unlock the mystery and glory
of the babe born in Bethlehem.
Guide us with your star of wonder
and turn our aimless wanderings
into journeys of purpose. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

As certain as the dawn follows the night,
so is the promise of God's forgiveness and love.

Arise and shine.

Follow the star,
that the light born in Bethlehem
may transform our world
from darkness into light.

The Great Thanksgiving for Epiphany

[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 "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

UMH #251

Extinguishing the Candles

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

*Benediction

Rev. James O'Quinn

As you follow the star on your journey,
don't look for the holy
in places of power and prestige.
Instead, pay attention to the ordinary,
the quiet places.
There, may you be overcome with joy,
and share your gifts with creation. **Amen.**

Postlude

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

Stewardship for week of December 31: \$4,005.00

*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, Opening Prayer, Offertory Prayer, Benediction, Mary Petrina Boyd, *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)

*Affirmation of Faith for Epiphany, [The Rev. Dr. Amanda Burr is a United Methodist elder appointed to United Methodist Church of Palm Springs, California.]

*Invitation to Holy Communion, A Service of Word and Table III, Responses, United Methodist Hymnal, Copyright 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House

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*Prayer After Receiving, June Boutwell, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2012* (2011, Abingdon Press)
UMH: United Methodist Hymnal.

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Announcements/Missions

- **Susanna Wesley Circle:** Please drop off your backpack items at Mt. Vernon or at Kay's home by Wednesday, January 10th, in order to get them to the school on time.
- **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!
- **Bridge Group:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.- 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall.