

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

757-566-0162

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 in Lent

February 18, 2024 “Behind Every Great Church 10:15am
There is Prayer”

Worship Leader

Kathy Glindemann

*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

Temptations surround us every day.

Even Jesus felt its pull in the wilderness.

But when we keep our focus on God’s call in our lives,
we find the strength to move beyond its pull —

we find the resources to move toward goodness.

*Introit “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee” UMH #175

*Call to Worship (responsive)

Temptation surrounds us every day.

Happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven.

Opportunities to stray litter our path.

Happy are those whose sin is covered.

Though we stumble and fall, God’s mercy picks us up.

God’s grace brushes us off.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice,

God’s love meets us here.

*Opening Prayer (responsive)

Righteous God, we need your presence in our lives
if we are to resist temptation.

Send your angels to minister to us when
the tempter comes to call.

**Put not our hearts to the test,
but shelter us in your protective love.
For you are our God and we are your people. Amen.**

*Hymn of Praise “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

UMH #110

Lenten Journey from Light to Darkness

We have come together this morning for renewal—in worship and as a community of faith. We’ve greeted one another, laughed and hugged. But now the time of reflection and stillness is upon us. It is the first Sunday in Lent—the season for journeys of the heart. Close your eyes. Be still. Listen. We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus’ betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It’s an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: (unison)

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

Congregational Sung Response I Love to Tell the Story
[refrain only] UMH No. 156

**I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.**

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.

Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:9-15 (Common English Bible)

Rev. Candee Martin

Jesus is baptized and tempted

⁹About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. ¹¹And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

¹²At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness.

¹³He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

Jesus' message

¹⁴After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news, ¹⁵saying, "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!"

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

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.

Hymn of Meditation "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"

TFWS #2112

The Message "In Wilderness Times...God's Love Is Present"

Rev. Candee Martin

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn of Response "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

UMH #121

Special Music

The Choir

Offering

Offertory Prayer (responsive)

Rev. Candee Martin

Trustworthy and trusting God,

thank you for entrusting us with this good earth.

Thank you for sharing your gifts with us.

Help us live up to your trust,

even as we learn to place our trust in you.

Bless the gifts that we share,

that we may honor the generosity

you have shown us.

In trust and gratitude, we pray. 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 (Unison)

Apostles' Creed

UMH #881

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven
and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin
Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead,
and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he
ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to
judge the quick 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.**

*Prayer of Yearning (responsive)

Rev. Candee Martin

Merciful God, you know the worries

and the doubts that fill our lives.

Strengthen our faith and inspire our trust.

**Shower us with your mercy and grace,
that we may embrace the fullness of life and love,
through the power of your Holy Spirit
and the mercy of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.**

*Words of Assurance (responsive) Rev. Candee Martin

God is good.

All the time.

And all the time,

God is good.

Trust this truth and receive God's gifts
of mercy and love.

Amen.

SENDING FORTH

*Hymn of Celebration "Because He Lives" UMH #364

Extinguishing the Candles

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

*Benediction (responsive) Rev. Candee Martin

Go to be signs of hope for all the world to see:

rainbows in the clouds,

waters in the desert,

love in a world of hate.

Go to be signs of hope for all the world to know.

Amen.

Postlude

*** Please stand as you are able.**

Hearing Assistance Devices are available in the Narthex

Stewardship for week of February 11: \$995.00

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

757-566-0162

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*Centering Words, B.J. Beu, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020* (Abingdon Press, 2019)

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*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)

*Offertory Prayer, Prayer of Yearning, Words of Assurance, Benediction, Mary Scifres, *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2024* (Abingdon Press, 2023)

UMH: United Methodist Hymnal.

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Announcements/Missions

- **Office Closure:** The office will be closed Monday, February 19th in observance of Presidents' Day.
- **Lenten Service:** February 21, 2024: Olive Branch Christian Church 7643 Richmond Road, Williamsburg 757-566-8077 Rev. Richard Cline
Livestream Link:
<https://www.facebook.com/obccwilliamsburg>
Speaker – Rev. Alex Sheppard-Witt, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
- **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.