

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.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

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

Worship Leader

Jeanne Fulks

*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

Grace is the gift that binds us to God.

It protects us, redeems us, restores us,
and makes us whole.

*Introit “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

UMH #269

*Call to Worship (responsive)

The goodness of God beckons,

calling us to goodness and grace.

The grace of God redeems,

saving us and making us whole.

The love of God welcomes,

inviting us to worship and praise.

*Opening Prayer (responsive)

God of goodness and grace,

gather us in your arms of love.

Gather us as people of your goodness and grace.

Gather us in worship and prayer,

that we may be strengthened

with faith and courage.

**Gather us as those who are eager to live
and to share your goodness and grace. Amen.**

*Hymn of Praise

“To God Be the Glory”

UMH #98

Lenten Journey from Light to Darkness

It's Sunday morning. Last week, with all its demands, is over. The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands, is not quite here. I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings—relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where you are in your journey this day—I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward. When it is fully present, then listen . . . for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: (unison)

Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. 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.

Epistle Lesson Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV) Rev. Candee Martin

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

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 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

UMH #526

The Message "Created for What?"

Rev. Candee Martin

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn of Response "Spirit of the Living God" (sing twice)

UMH #393

Special Music

The Choir

Offering

Offertory Prayer (responsive)

Rev. Candee Martin

Merciful God, you have richly blessed our lives
with love and bounty beyond measure.

**Bless these gifts we return to you now,
that they may bestow the same richness
of your love and grace in 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 (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

Gracious God, lift up our hearts this day,
for we long to see your salvation.

Lift us up from the pits of sin and sorrow,
that we may walk in the light
of your love and grace.

**Create us anew as reflections of your light
and as offerings of your grace.**

**For we yearn to bless everyone we meet,
even ourselves, in your name.**

In hope and gratitude, we pray. Amen.

*Words of Assurance

Rev. Candee Martin

In Christ Jesus, we are created to do good things.

By God's grace, we are able to be good people.

In God's goodness, we are created good.

In Christ's grace, we are saved by love,
that we may love and be loved.

SENDING FORTH

*Hymn of Celebration

“I Surrender All”

UMH #354

Extinguishing the Candles

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

*Benediction (responsive)

Rev. Candee Martin

Go forth in the light of God's grace.

Go forth with the love of Christ's mercy.

Go forth with the goodness of the Spirit's generosity.

Amen.

Postlude

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

Hearing Assistance Devices are available in the Narthex

Stewardship for week of March 3: \$3,495.00

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

*Lenten Journey from Light to Darkness, Jeanyne Slettom, Ph.D. and is made available through Process & Faith, a program of the Center for Process Studies. Used by permission.*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)

UMH: United Methodist Hymnal.

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Announcements/Missions

- **Suzanna Wesley Circle:** Will meet Monday, March 11th at 6:30 PM in the home of Nora A.
- **Office Closure:** Brenda will be off Tuesday, March 12th.
- **Lenten Service:** March 13, 2024; **Hospitality time 6pm:** Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church, 7801 Church Lane, Toano
757-566-0162 Rev. Candee Martin
Livestream Link:
<https://www.facebook.com/MtVernonUMCToanoVA>
Speaker – Rev. Zach Dey, Williamsburg Mennonite Church
- **Trustee Meeting:** Friday, March 22nd at 10AM.
- **Honor/Memory Donations:** Please submit your honor/memory donations no later than March 24th.
- **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.