



113 West Central Ave | Van Wert, OH 45891 | 419-238-0631 | vanwertfirst.net



Renewed in Mercy

MARCH 15TH 2026

Fourth Sunday in Lent | MISSION SUNDAY

10:30AM

Whatever your circumstances and no matter where you have been, you matter to God and to us. *You belong here!* We pray your experience in our Worship today will be one that blesses you and uplifts your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Love Boldly, **Serve** Joyfully, and **Lead** Courageously

ORDER *of* WORSHIP

Psalm 23: 6
(NRSV)

*“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.”*

PLEASE FILL OUT THE ATTENDANCE PAD AND PASS IT TO YOUR NEIGHBOR
+ THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE RISE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Susan Burchfield

PRELUDE *Pastorale on Resignation* | arr. Dennis Johnson

+ CALL TO WORSHIP Susan Burchfield

Leader: Beloved, the journey of grace takes us to still waters, the valley of the shadow of death, even to tables surrounded by our enemies.

People: We gather to worship God, our Shepherd, who guides us on the journey.

Leader: The journey of grace points us toward the Light so that we may bear the fruit of the Light in all that we do.

People: We gather to be formed by grace so that our lives may bear the fruit of all that is good and right and true.

Leader: The journey of grace calls us to pay attention, to discern what is pleasing to God.

People: We gather to listen to the Spirit, who empowers us to go from this place to work together to do what is pleasing to God.

Leader: Come, let us worship God who provides, inspires, and empowers us on the journey of grace.

People: Come, let us worship God as we journey in grace together! Amen.

+ OPENING PRAYER Susan Burchfield

Loving Shepherd, you know our names; you care for us. When we face darkness and death, journey alongside us. When we hunger for your love, fill us with your presence. When we are fearful, feed us at your table. May we dwell in the house of goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Amen.

HYMN #136 v. 1, 2 *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want* | UMH

HYMN #138 v. 1, 2 *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* | UMH

You can find more info on Church events on the Bulletin board in the Kitchenette off Krout.

TIME OF GREETING

CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN Chris Gordon

Children are dismissed to AWE – Preschool thru 5th Grade

MISSION MOMENT *“No Child Without a Bed”* Teresa Shaffer

CHORAL ANTHEM Chancel Choir & Weston Thompson, Saxophone

The Lord is My Shepherd | by John Rutter

+ SCRIPTURE

PSALM 23

SERIES

MESSAGE



..... Pastor Christian

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

..... Susan Burchfield

O Lord, you are our shepherd, and yet we want. We lie down when we could act, we stir the pot when we could offer peace, we wander tempting paths instead of following you. We seek courage and comfort in earthly things rather than in you. We hate our enemies and refuse to break bread with them; we see scarcity even when you offer us abundance. We pray for forgiveness, for your goodness and mercy, so that we might dwell in You, in your grace, forever. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

..... Pastor Christian

HYMN #400

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing | UMH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
THE LORD'S PRAYER

..... Pastor Christian

OFFERTORY

Ah, Holy Jesus | arr. Janet Linker



+ DOXOLOGY #94

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow | UMH

+ SPOKEN BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Chorale and Fughetta on A Mighty Fortress is Our God
arr. Sharon Rogers

You are invited to be seated and enjoy the Postlude or leave quietly in peace.

Thank you for worshipping with us, and for your continued generosity and support.

Place offerings in the wooden plates coming through the Pews, during the Offering song.

LEADERS OF TODAY'S WORSHIP

ANNOUNCER
SUSAN BURCHFIELD
CHILDREN'S CHAT
CHRIS GORDON
ACOLYTES
CECI STAAS
WILLOW SNYDER

VIDEOGRAPHER
DAVE THOMPSON
PROJECTIONIST
ELORA HOGAN
SOUND ENGINEER
KENT SMELSER

USHERS
NEIL SHAFFER
DAVE LICHTLE, ASST.
SCREEN CREATORS
MARY ANN FALK
JEREMY LAUKHUF
MELODY TAYLOR

PASTOR
CHRISTIAN TAYLOR
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
SCOTT TURNER
WORSHIP LEADER
JEREMY LAUKHUF

Journeying in Grace

PSALM 23

ICE-BREAKERS

- 1** **Psalm 23** talks about God leading us beside “still waters.” What is one place or activity in your life where you feel the most peaceful or restored?
- 2** *“The Lord is my shepherd.”* When you hear the word “shepherd,” what qualities or images come to mind that help you understand God’s care for us?

SERMON BASED

- 1** **Psalm 23** describes a journey that includes still waters, dark valleys, and a table prepared by God. Where in your life do you currently see yourself on that journey—at the still waters, in the valley, or at the table—and how have you experienced God as your Shepherd there?
- 2** In Elijah’s story, God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the gentle whisper. What practices help you slow down enough to hear God’s “still small voice” in your life today?

BEYOND THE TEXT

- 1** The sermon suggests that God leads us through valleys together, not alone. In a culture that values independence and self-sufficiency, how might we be overlooking the needs of others walking through dark valleys around us?
- 2** **Psalm 23** says God prepares a table even in the presence of enemies. What would it look like for Christians today to embody that kind of grace—showing generosity, reconciliation, or hospitality toward people our society often treats as adversaries or outsiders?

