

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Witness at the Cross



The Soldiers

MARCH 8, 2026

4201 FAIRFAX DRIVE, SUITE 1, ARLINGTON, VA 22203

We Gather

Prelude Meditation on "He Never Said a Mumbalin' Word"

Welcome
(Scan the QR code for digital connection card)



*Song "Come Now to Worship the Lord"

***Come now to worship the Lord,
let us bow before Him.
Come now to hear God's word,
to praise Him and adore Him.
all who gather in this place have
come in faith to seek God's grace.
Come now to worship the Lord
and praise His holy name.***

*Call to Worship

Leader: From the crowds and the curious, to the faithful
who stayed,

People: We come to witness the cross.

Leader: From our comfortable distance, to the place where
love was displayed,

People: We come to witness the cross.

Leader: We come with questions and doubts, with hope and
with fear,

People: We come to witness the cross.

Leader: For at the cross, we find God drawing near.

**People: We come to witness the cross and the love that
meets us here.**

All: Let us worship God!

*Please stand in body or spirit.

*Song "He Never Said a Mumbalin' Word" UMH #291

Prayers of the People

Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

We Hear

Anthem "Were You There?" by Robert Lau

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination "Praise the Source of Faith and Learning"
TFWS #2004, v.1

Scripture Mark 15:16-25 (Common English Bible)

16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the courtyard of the palace known as the governor's headquarters, and they called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They dressed him up in a purple robe and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on him. 18 They saluted him, "Hey! King of the Jews!" 19 Again and again, they struck his head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt before him to honor him. 20 When they finished mocking him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

21 Simon, a man from Cyrene, Alexander and Rufus' father, was coming in from the countryside. They forced him to carry his cross.

22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means Skull Place. 23 They tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh, but

he didn't take it. 24 They crucified him. They divided up his clothes, drawing lots for them to determine who would take what. 25 It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.

Reader: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"The Soldiers"

We Respond

Sermon Reflection Questions

1. The soldiers were following orders when they crucified Jesus. When is it okay to follow rules, and when should you question them?
2. When have you found yourself "just going along" with something you knew wasn't right? What made it hard to speak up or step out of line?
3. The centurion saw Jesus die and declared, "Truly this man was God's Son." What would it take for us to become witnesses to the truth rather than just participants in the system?

*Please stand in body or spirit.

Prayer Station:

Select a stone. Hold it. Feel its weight. This stone represents something you've been "casting lots" over. This might be:

- Distracting yourself from some suffering in this world
- A system you benefit from without examining
- A pattern of staying silent (e.g. going along to get along)
- Letting convenience decide your choices

Hold the stone. Silently name what it represents. Now choose to:

Release: Set your stone at the foot of the cross to mark your choice to stop casting lots and start intentionally noticing.

Commit: Keep your stone. Keep it as a reminder to intentionally notice this week. Let its weight remind you not to cast lots and look away from what harm happening in this world.

Prayer

God, forgive me when I harm others without thinking. Give me wisdom and courage to know how to follow you. Amen.

Psalm 22 adapted by Greg Capaldini

Verse 2 (Ps 22: 6-11)

A worm I am, not human,
And scoffers laugh at me.

They say, "If God so loves you,
He'll take you from that tree!"

I know that you were with me
When I was yet unborn.

You've walked the journey with me,
Not leaving me forlorn.

Lord's Prayer

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. 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.

*Giving our gifts to God and passing the peace



To donate online please scan the QR code.

To give cash or check please put your donation in the basket in the front of the sanctuary next to the baptismal font.

Prayer of Dedication

We Go

Announcements

*Song "What Wondrous Love Is This" UMH #292

*Benediction

*Sung Benediction "Shalom to You" UMH #666

Postlude Meditation on "Wondrous Love"

*Please stand in body or spirit.

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Liturgist	Lane Timm
Reader of the Word	Tricia O'Hara
Choral Conductor	Greg Capaldini
Pianist	Greg Capaldini
Preacher	Rev. Sarah Harrison-McQueen

Assistive Listening Available

You can now connect your Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids directly to our sound system using the *ListenWIFI* app on your smartphone. Look for laminated signs at the sanctuary entrances for simple setup instructions. Need help? Just ask a greeter or staff member—we're happy to assist!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pi Day Celebration – March 15

Join us on Sunday, March 15, as we celebrate Pi Day (3.14)! During fellowship time after worship in the Fellowship Hall, we'll gather for conversation, community, and—of course—pie. If you'd like, you're welcome to bring a pie to share. Come enjoy fellowship, faith, and a slice of fun together!

An Invitation to a Virtual Bible Study from Carroll Cobb

The Rowdy, Motley Bible Study crew, led by Carroll Ellis Cobb, will begin our study of the book of Ezra on Tuesday, March 10. We meet via Zoom on Tuesdays and offer two separate sessions, so you can join whichever works best for you: one at 2:00 pm or another at 7:00 pm.

This study is open to everyone – young and not-so-young, single and married, experienced in the Bible or completely new to Bible Study – all from the comfort of your home.

If you are interested or have questions, please contact the church office at office@cumcballston.org or 703 527-8844.

We would love to have you join us!

Breaking Down Walls: A Racial Justice Webinar

The Virginia Conference United Methodist Men and United Women in Faith invite you to Breaking Down Walls, a webinar on Tuesday, March 17, from 7:00–8:30 PM on Zoom. This panel conversation will explore a Christian response to the dismantling of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and equip United Methodists to live out our mission of unity in diversity.

Scan the QR code for the full flyer and registration details.



Special Church Conference – Parsonage Project

Since last fall, the Parsonage Study Committee has been diligently evaluating options to repair or replace our parsonage. On February 22, the Leadership Board voted on their recommendation, allowing us to move to Phase Two of the project.

A special Church Conference will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, March 22, at 11:45 a.m. The congregation will elect a building committee to serve for Phase Two and approve funds for them to begin their work. All are welcome to attend; however, only members of Central UMC are eligible to vote.

*Please stand in body or spirit.