

Banning United Methodist Church
Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025

GATHERING

SPECIAL MUSIC AND FELLOWSHIP	Cathy Mauge
WELCOMING FRIENDS AND NEWCOMERS	Marilyn Casey
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Marilyn Casey
PASSING OF THE PEACE	Rev. Kyungsu Park

WORSHIP OF GOD

PRELUDE	Cathy Mauge
LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES	
LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH	Eve Rusk & Kay Hobert
Joy Candle	
First Reader: In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to make the world right again, we cling to the truth that God has saved, God is saving, and God will save. So today, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who calls us to live in the joy of the truth of God's salvation.	
All: We choose to believe that the day is coming when "the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).	
Second Reader: We light this candle of joy as a sign of the Truth that sets us free to live in joy as we wait and work for the day when all creation will flourish together.	

†CALL TO WORSHIP	Marilyn Casey
L: Today there is <i>good news</i> for us to behold!	
P: Those who feared that they were worth little to God have found blessing in God's sight.	
L: For in the mercy and love of God, the blind shall see, the lame shall walk without pain, those who could not hear shall be blessed with hearing, and there shall be peace.	
P: God's mercy and love is poured out for our parched souls.	
L: Behold! The Lord's compassion is with God's people.	
ALL: Believe in the power of God in all things. AMEN.	

†OPENING HYMN	"O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" vs. 1-5	UMH #57
†OPENING PRAYER		Marilyn Casey

O Lord, You know the deserts and the parched places in our lives. We seek Your healing power. Lead us on this Advent journey to the place of new birth and to the place of our redemption; for we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

OLD TESTAMENT READING	Marilyn Casey
Isaiah 35:1-10	
The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.	

GOSPEL READING

Rev. Kyungsu Park

Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.**SERMON HYMN**

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

UMH #218

SERMON

"Homecoming"

Rev. Kyungsu Park

PRAYERS

Marilyn Casey

CHILDREN IN PRAYER

(After each slide: In Your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer)

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Kyungsu Park

THE 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; 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.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Marilyn Casey

OFFERTORY

Cathy Mauge

†**DOXOLOGY**

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

†**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Marilyn Casey

Gracious God of deep joy, even when storms rage and doubts rise, You call us to see with kingdom eyes—to look for healing, hope, and signs of Your grace breaking in. In this Advent season of expectation and weariness, we bring these gifts as expressions of joy, rooted not in ease but in trust. May our giving bear witness to Your *good news*: that the blind still see, the lame still walk, and the poor still receive care. Use these offerings and us as signs of Your coming reign, lights in the storm, and carriers of joy. In the Name of Jesus, our hope and our Redeemer. Amen.

SENDING FORTH**CLOSING HYMN**

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

UMH #196

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING†**BENEDICTION**

Rev. Kyungsu Park

CARRYING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

Cathy Mauge