

**Banning United Methodist Church**  
**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**  
**DECEMBER 24, 2024**  
**12:00 noon**

*We thank God for your presence at this Christmas Eve worship service, and wish to express our appreciation to those serving this day. We are graced by your servanthood, and particularly note the musical talents of Cathy Mauge and Myrle Petty. Myrle will serve to lead us in singing Christmas carols. We are blessed that God has assembled all of us here, as we celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world through scripture, hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and Christian fellowship.*

**GATHERING**

**SPECIAL MUSIC AND FELLOWSHIP**

Cathy Mauge

**WELCOMING FRIENDS AND NEWCOMERS**

Mona Villegas

On this blessed day, we thank God for your presence at this Christmas Eve service. We are graced by your servanthood and attendance, and invite you to sign the attendance book and pass it to the middle aisle. If this is your first time visiting and would like to introduce yourself, please raise your hand and an usher will bring a microphone to you.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mona Villegas

**CELEBRATION NOTES**

Dan Mabey

Christmas Eve offers an opportunity for exhortation, scriptural reflection, affirmation, and singing of hymns and carols. Mona Villegas will lead us in a series of responsive readings, followed by singing of hymns and carols led by Meryl Petty and Cathy Mauge. Our Special Christmas offerings for this day may be placed in the wicker basket sitting on a lectern in the Narthex.

**WORSHIP OF GOD**

**PRELUDE**

Centering ourselves for worship as the altar candles representing the light of Christ are lit

Cathy Mauge  
Penny Holstad

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

Rey & Carmen Terrazas

*Light the four outer candles of the Advent wreath.*

**Reader:** Today, we gather to remember with the prophet Isaiah: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be His authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and His kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this  
(Isaiah 9:6-7).

**All: We gather to once again bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.**

**Reader:** We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

*Light the center candle of the Advent wreath.*

**Reader:** Radiant God of holy interruptions, in the stillness of night and the chaos of our days, You slip into our world with glory wrapped in swaddling cloth. Like the shepherds, we come breathless, humbled, and hoping—to offer what we have. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and trust. May they help announce Your peace on earth, not with trumpets and headlines, but with justice, compassion, and shared burdens. Let the offering we place here be the beginning of the offering we make with our lives in response to the child who changes everything. In Jesus' name, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen. (Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

## CALL TO WORSHIP

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Mona Villegas

L: Christ is born; give Him glory!

**P: Christ has come down from heaven; receive Him! Christ is now on earth; exalt Him!**

L: O you earth, sing to the Lord!

**P: O you nations, praise Him in joy, for He has been glorified!**

### OPENING PRAYER

Dan Mabey

O God our Father, You have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome Him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**OPENING HYMN** “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (v 1,3)

UMH #234

**ALL: We have waited for a long time for Your hope, Your joy, Your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God.**

**HYMN** “Joy to the World” (v. 1,2,3)

UMH#246

**ALL: Even now, in our gathering here, we await You. In our hearts, we still hope that Your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to You.**

**HYMN** “Oh Little Town of Bethlehem” (v. 1,2)

UMH# 230

**ALL: Yet You did not come into this world in a show of power and glory.**

**You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold.**

**A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals.**

**A host of angels – away from the populated areas, singing to migrant workers.**

**HYMN** “Away in a Manger” (v. 1,3)

UMH# 217

**ALL: A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.**

**HYMN** “Angels We Have Heard on High” (V. 1,2)

UMH# 238

**ALL: Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of Your presence still in this world.**

**Open our eyes, that we might behold Your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.**

**HYMN** “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” (V. 1,3)

UMH# 240

**ALL: God with us, kindle Your spark within us, that together we may shine forth Your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen.**

### LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The Ushers will come forward and light their candles from candle lit at the Altar and held by the Celebrant. The Ushers will go down the center aisle. Please dip your unlit candle toward the lit candle of the person next to you. Once all of the candles have been lit, the lights will be dimmed and we will sing our Closing Hymn.

**CLOSING HYMN** “Silent Night, Holy Night”

UMH #239

## DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

### BENEDICTION

Extinguishing of the Altar and Advent candles, and taking the Light of Christ into the world!