

Banning United Methodist Church
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025

GATHERING

SPECIAL MUSIC AND FELLOWSHIP

Cathy Mauge

WELCOMING FRIENDS AND NEWCOMERS

Kathy Bainter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathy Bainter

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Kyungsu Park

WORSHIP OF GOD

PRELUDE

Cathy Mauge

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Jack and Penny Holstad

Love Candle

First Reader: Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary's womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

All: With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of Love instead of responding in fear to the world's judgment.

Second Reader: We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

†CALL TO WORSHIP

Kathy Bainter

L: In the midst of darkness, God brings a new light.

P: Thanks be to the God of light.

L: In the midst of confusion and fear, God brings hope and peace.

P: Thanks be to the God of peace.

L: In the midst of strife and stress, God comforts and soothes us.

All: Let us praise God who truly loves us and brings us new life. AMEN.

†OPENING HYMN

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"

UMH #240

†OPENING PRAYER

Kathy Bainter

O God, in this time of worship, may we be open to Your promises, Your love, and Your transformation. May we vision and dream. May we be surprised. May we receive the life You give us. May we encounter Emmanuel—God with us. And may we never be the same. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Kathy Bainter

Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

GOSPEL READING

Rev. Kyungsu Park

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Word of God for the people of God.

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

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

vs. 1, 3, 5

UMH #234

SERMON

"How to Bungle a Birth"

Rev. Kyungsu Park

PRAYERS

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

Kathy Bainter

OFFERTORY

Cathy Mauge

†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 heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Kathy Bainter

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, You are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Joseph, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that Your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined. Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. May they help carry Christ into a world still longing for peace, hungry for love, and needing redemption. We pray in the Name of the one Who is Emmanuel—God with us. Amen. (Matthew 1:18-25)

SENDING FORTH**CLOSING HYMN**

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

UMH #218

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

†BENEDICTION

Rev. Kyungsu Park

CARRYING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST OUT INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

Cathy Mauge