

# Banning United Methodist Church

Second Sunday in Advent

December 10, 2023

† Congregation rises in body or spirit

**Congregational response in bold**

## GATHERING MUSIC

Cathy Mauge

## CENTERING WORDS

Marilyn Casey

*Shepherding God, thank You for feeding Your flock with love, gathering us lambs in Your arms and carrying us close to Your heart.*

## PRELUDE

## WELCOMING FRIENDS and NEWCOMERS

## WELCOME and PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor Doug

## MINISTRY MOMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marilyn Casey

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Jack & Penny Holstad

### Peace Candle

**Reader 1:** In days when God's people longed for peace, Isaiah declared, "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1).

**Reader 2:** We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace.

**Congregation: We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community, equity, and flourishing for all.**

**Reader 1:** We light these candles as signs of God's shocking hope and just peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all people can gather together to worship and glorify God. Amen.

## †CALL TO WORSHIP

Marilyn Casey

L: Long ago, a voice cried out in the wilderness

**P: Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight the pathways.**

L: Something new was about to happen.

**P: God would visit God's people in a new way!**

L: Lord, open our hearts to receive this *good news!*

**P: Prepare us to be people of great faith and compassion as we look forward to this wondrous event You have proclaimed to us. AMEN.**

## †OPENING HYMN

"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"

UMH #64

## OPENING PRAYER

Marilyn Casey

**As the voice cried out in the wilderness, God, You enter our lives and call to us to be open to hearing the cries of people who feel lost and alienated, who feel that no one cares or ever will care about them. We have been given that opportunity to reach out through the ministries and mission of our church bringing hope and peace to all. Get us ready to become pathways of peace and life-transforming love in Your Name. It is in the spirit of Jesus' Name that we pray. AMEN.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Marilyn Casey

Isaiah 40:1-11 NRSV

1Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 2Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. 3A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 6A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 7The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 8The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

9Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

## GOSPEL READING

Pastor Doug

Mark 1:1-8 NRSV

1The beginning of the *good news* of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; 3the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## SUNDAY ENSEMBLE

### SERMON

"Difficulties of the Heart"

Pastor Doug

### PRAYERS OF THE PASTOR and PEOPLE

Children in Prayer

(After all slides: In Your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer**)

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

### 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.**

### GIVING BACK TO GOD (TITHES AND GIFTS)

Marilyn Casey

### OFFERTORY

†**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

**Lord, we bring these gifts to you, thankful for all the ways you have healed and enriched our lives. May these gifts be used in service to others in Jesus' Name. AMEN.**

**†CLOSING HYMN**

“A Charge to Keep I Have”

UMH #413

**†BENEDICTION**

Pastor Doug

**POSTLUDE**