WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE
Lord Christ, the only Son of God J. S. Bach

WELCOME Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT Salvation is Created Pavel Grigorievich Chesnokov

Salvation is made in the midst of the earth, O God. Alleluia.

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.
* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come away from the haste and frantic busyness. This is a season for quiet waiting.

It is hard to still our souls when we are so busy.
It is hard to be patient with ourselves and others.

Receive God’s mercy and strengthen your hearts.

A Savior is coming; God’s love is near.

We want to hear and believe God’s promises.
We want to become patient loving seekers.

God presents us with a high and holy way.
Come before God now with praise and singing.

We sense the joy God offers to us.
Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Mighty One, we rejoice that you strengthen our weak hands and make firm our feeble knees.
You open our eyes and unstop our ears.
You meet our hungers with good things.
You disturb our false pride while helping us discover our true strength.
You topple us from our pretenses while lifting up the lowly to claim the inner power you alone can provide.

We have assembled to worship you.
Awaken the gladness that comes when we recognize your presence.
We long to know you in this hour. Amen.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING (Please be seated) The Hayden Family

“Let the desert and the wilderness exult! Let the Arabah rejoice and bloom like the crocus! Let it blossom profusely, let us rejoice and sing for joy! ... And through it will run a highway, a road called the Sacred Path.
The unclean may not travel by it, but it will be for God’s people alone; and no traveler—not even fools—will go astray. ...for those whom YHWH has ransomed will return. They will enter Zion shouting with joy, with everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them, and sorrow and lament will flee away.” (Isaiah 35:1-2, 8,10 The Inclusive Bible).

The prophet Isaiah tells us about the joy of ascending to God’s house.
The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else.
And then he tells us that the journey to get there is just as much a joy.

The Psalmist says “Happy are those whose help is the God of Israel, whose hope is in Yhwh, their God, who made heaven and earth ... who keeps faith ... who secures justice ... gives food ... sets the captives free ... opens eyes .... raises up ... watches over... upholds ... Yhwh will reign forever—your God, O Zion!—through all generations. Alleluia! (Psalm 146 The Inclusive Bible).
We light these candles, 
the candle of joyful hope, of proclaimed peace, 
and of deep and everlasting joy, 
as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step 
because we can see the destination, 
and it is pure joy.

We are ascending to God’s promise.

* HYMN #104  
O Lord, How Shall I Meet You  
VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you a-right?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,
to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

2 Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
in love, all loves exceeding, our lost and fallen race.

3 You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and good-will,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation we live for that great day
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.
* CALL TO CONFESSION

Helen Wetzler

To all whose lives seem like a desert wasteland, God invites: Come to the living waters.
To all who feel they are wrestling with lions, God offers refuge.
The Judge who is standing before us waits our confession with compassion and the promise of healing.
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession, followed by time for personal silent confession.

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Come into our emptiness, gracious God.
We feel empty because we have shut you out of our lives.
Break through our pretensions, Holy One.
We pretend to be powerful because we have not claimed the peace that is available deep within when you dwell with us.
Quiet our grumbling and complaining.
We are impatient because we have focused on things, not on you.
Enter our lives with the forgiveness you have promised to all who are truly sorry for their unfaithfulness.
Release us from our self-created prisons.

(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE ELEISON

John Merbecke

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God speaks to our fearful hearts:
Be strong.
Do not fear.
I will come to save you.
Sorrow and sighing will flee away.
Joy and gladness are yours.
“The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.”
Praise God!

Alleluia and Amen!

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.
Let us offer a sign of peace to one another.
* GLORIA #581  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen, Amen.

OFFERERTORY INVITATION
Please be seated.

God continues to lift up the lowly and to topple the mighty from their thrones.  
God judges us, not by worldly standards of greatness  
but according to the genuineness of our compassion  
and the extent of our faithfulness.  
Our offerings are one measure of our priorities.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY  
**Ding Dong! Merrily On High**  
16th century French tune

Ding dong, merrily on high! In heaven the bells are ringing; ding dong, verily the sky  
is riv’n with angel singing. Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!  
E’en so here below, let steeple bells be swungen, And io,io,io by priest and people sungen.  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!  
Pray ye dutifully prime your matin chime, ye ringers; may ye beautifully rhyme  
Your evetime song, ye singers. Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!

* DOXOLOGY #607  
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**  
**praise Christ, all people here below;**  
**praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER (Please be seated)  
Helen Wetzler

Let us pray:

Majestic God,  
thank you for inviting us to share the blessings you pour out on us.  
We want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus who gave sight to those who  
were blind and new insight to some who only pretended to see.  
Use our resources to heal attitudes as well as bodies,  
to bring wholeness, not just cures.  
Help us to address the inequities of the earth that leave so many  
without food or shelter or hope.  
Lead us into your realm in the midst of our daily living. Amen.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE  
**All Things Come of Thee**  
Herbert C. Peabody

All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen.
WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Come, Holy Spirit, giver of life;
breathe into us that we may hear a word of truth this day.
Draw us into communion,
enable us to love,
conspire to make us one with You
for the world You so deeply love. Amen.

THE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Psalm 146:5-10 (The Inclusive Bible)

Happy are those whose help is the God of Israel,
whose hope is in YHWH, their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea and all that is in it!
YHWH, you keep faith forever;
you secure justice for the oppressed;
you give food to the hungry.
You set the captives free;
you give sight to the blind.
You raise up those who were bowed down;
you love those who do justice;
you protect strangers;
you sustain orphans and the bereaved—
but thwart the way of the corrupt.
YHWH will reign forever—your God, O Zion!—
through all generations. Alleluia!
The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

The Linden Tree Carol arr. by Reginald Jacques

There stood in heav’n a linden tree; But, tho’ ’twas honey laden, All Angels cried,
’No bloom shall be like that of one fair Maiden.’
Sped Gabriel on wingèd feet, and pass’d through bolted portals In Nazareth,
a Maid to greet, Blest o’er all other mortals.
’Hail Mary!’ quod that Angel mild, ’Of woman-kind the fairest:
The Virgin ay shalt thou be styled, A babe although thou bearest.’
’So be it!’ God’s hand-maiden cried, ’According to thy telling,’
Whereon the Angel smartly hied up home-ward to his dwelling.
This tiding fill’d his mates with glee: ’Twas pass’d from one to other,
That ’twas Marie, and none but she, And God would call her Mother.
Mary said, 
“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, 
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior. 
For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, 
and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. 
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, 
and holy is your Name. 
Your mercy reaches from age to age who fear you. 
You have shown strength with your arm; 
you have scattered the proud in their conceit; 
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones 
and raised the lowly to high places. 
You have filled the hungry with good things, 
while you have sent the rich away empty. 
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, 
mindful of your mercy— 
the promise you made to our ancestors— 
to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

“Mary Who? – Theotokos”
1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the  
2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you  
3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a  
4 Though the nations rage from age to age, we re-

God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the  
work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the  
stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your  
member who holds us fast: God’s mercy must de-

wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
justice tears every tyrant from his throne.  
liv - er us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my  
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to  
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the  
This saving word that our forebears heard is the

weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every  
promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be
PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray...

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen
Savior of the Nations, Come

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND

1 Savior of the nations, come; virgin's son, make here your home. Marvel now, O
2 From God's heart the Savior speeds; back to God his pathway leads; out to vanquish
night with new-born light. Night cannot this
3 Now your manager, shining bright, halloows son, incarnate Word! To the holy
4 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
death's command, back to reign at God's right hand.
light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.
Trinity praise we sing eternally.

Though some hymns attributed to Ambrose are doubtful, this one seems rather surely to be by him. Luther's German version (commemorated in the tune name) dropped one syllable from each line of the Latin text, giving the hymn its characteristically declarative Lutheran form.

TEXT: Attr. Ambrose of Milan, 4th cent.; German para. Martin Luther, 1523; NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND
English trans. stanza 1, William Morton Reynolds, 1850, alt.
English trans. stanzas 2-4, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006
MUSIC: Erfurt Exultation, 1324; harm. Sethus Calvisius, 1594
English Trans. St. 2-4 © 2006 Augsburg Fortress
* BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

God has been present with us here today.
God also sends us out into the world.

The world we are about to enter is God’s world.
We can count on God to be with us every day.
God’s judgement is sure, but so is God’s love.
God lifts up the lowly and offers them strength.

Our eyes and ears have been opened to God’s truth.
We have good news for all who need to hear it.
Be patient with others and do not grumble.
Be patient with yourselves as you seek the Holy Way.

Like the prophets, we seek to speak in God’s name.
Like lowly servants, we are eager to help others.

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Seventfold Amen
Peter Lutkin

POSTLUDE

Praise Ye The Lord of Hosts from ‘Christmas Oratorio’
Camille Saint-Saens

“My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Psalm 73:26

In Our Prayers

We continue to keep in our prayers:
Carol Anthony, Cheryl Cairns, Jean English, Ruth Finley,
JoAnn Hood, Marianne Jones and Len Lybarger,
Jackie Acho, Alma Bako, Melvina Bishop, Shirley Daly, Donnie Gilbert,
George Hood, Bertha Nunn, Twilyn Teasley, Linda White, James White
Marlon Naylor and family as they mourn the death of Marlon’s sister Carol.
We pray for those struggling with illness, convalescing, homebound or in need.

Names are generally removed after four weeks unless there is a continuing need.
There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church

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Attn: Financial Office
91 Public Square
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Checks should be made payable to “Old Stone Church.” If you would like to designate your contribution to one of Old Stone’s mission projects, please make a note on the memo line.

All contributions are tax-deductible and will be appropriately acknowledged at year-end.

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**THE OLD STONE CHURCH**

Loving Christ, Serving City—Spiritually, Socially, Culturally—Since 1820
91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2058

**Phone:** 216-241-6145  **Fax:** 216-241-6149

**Website:** www.OldStoneChurch.org  **E-Mail:** info@OldStoneChurch.org

Music copied under ccli#1638695

**Senior Pastor:** Rev. Stephen C. Blonder Adams

**Director of Music and Musical Arts:** David C. Daugherty

**The Old Stone Singers**
Leah Jennings Brown, soprano  Ian Atwood, tenor
Cicely Schonberg, soprano  Frederick Peterbark, tenor
Val Sibila, soprano  Andrew J. Schoenhofer, tenor
Rayna Brooks, alto  R. Dominic Aragon, bass
McKenna Jones, alto  Joseph K. Breslau, bass
Emma Nossem, alto  Seth Hobi, bass

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Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

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Kara Bane
Willie Brown

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Beth Buchanan
Robert Hubert Jr.
Judy Macuga
Harriet Niles
Lee Ann Rader
Marty Vassel
John Young

Class of 2025
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Fred Heider
Len Lybarger
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