WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

A Nativity Suite
Wilbur Held

WELCOME

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT

Creator of the Stars of Night
CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

Creator of the stars of night, your people’s everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, we pray you, hear us when we call.
When this old world drew on toward night, you came, but not in splendor bright,
Not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blameless mother mild.
To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally. Amen.

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.
* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come away from times of weariness.
Dare to accept the energy God offers you.

**Restore our energy, O Source of all power.**
**Let your goodness flow through us.**

Come away from all your insignificant distractions.
Dare to let God show you a larger picture.

**Help us to examine the flow of our lives.**
**Reveal to us what is really important.**

Come away from the scorn of enemies.
Dare to laugh with those who have laughed at you.

**Lead us to think of others in new ways.**
**Let us find grace and peace in Emmanuel.**

* INVOCATION PRAYER

**Shepherding God, whose signs are everywhere,**
restore us in your light that we may discern what you are about.
Shine upon this assembly to give life to our tired routines.
Fill our longing hearts with quiet confidence.
Awaken the child in us to experience your revelation.
By your presence with us,
depth the prayers we utter, and turn our fears to eager anticipation.
**Touch us to lend strength and confidence**
as we reach out to one another for help and healing. Amen.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING *(Please be seated)*

The Niepokny, Scaggs, and Bane Family

“Ask for a sign from YHWH your God;
let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!”
(Isaiah 7:11 The Inclusive Bible).
But when the king refused, God would not be stopped.
“Therefore, The Holy One will give you a sign: This young woman will become pregnant and will give birth. You will name the child Immanu-El.”
(Isaiah 7:14 The Inclusive Bible).

God wants us to know, even when we aren’t sure ourselves.
God wants us to experience God’s presence,
even when we think we can handle life on our own.
God sends us signs of God’s presence with us;
all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

“The virgin will be with child and give birth,
and the child will be named Immanuel’ —a name that means “God is with us.”
When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed,
and they went ahead with the marriage.
He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son,
and they named him Jesus.”
(Matthew 1:23-25 The Inclusive Bible).
We light these candles, 
the candle of joyful hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep everlasting joy, 
and today of presence that speaks of love, 
as a sign that no matter our circumstances, we know we are not alone.

* HYMN #88  
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Vss. 1,3,6, & 7)  
VENI EMMANUEL

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile all things mightily: to us the path of knowledge tribes on Sinai’s height in ancient times didst give the Satan’s tyranny; from depths of hell thy people

come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily: to us the path of knowledge tribes on Sinai’s height in ancient times didst give the Satan’s tyranny; from depths of hell thy people

come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy people show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice! law in cloud and majesty and awe. save and give them victory over the grave.

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
* CALL TO CONFESSION

Anand Bandari

How often we have chosen evil and refused what is good!
The result of our choices is not what we intend.
Listen, God is waiting to share pardon
with all who have erected barriers to shut out God’s love.
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
followed by time for personal silent confession.

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, you have called us to be apostles of your grace,
but we have been judgmental instead of gracious.
We condemn in others what is also, all too often, in us.
We refuse to listen to others' pain or to understand the source of their tears.
We avoid those who are angry or scornful or embittered.
It is easier to dismiss the feelings of others than to offer true empathy.
We would rather reject than encounter them.
Yet you come to us, Immanuel, and we want to repent.
You reach out to us, and our hearts melt.
We want to embrace this new life.

(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’s promises are fulfilled.
We awaken from the nightmare of our neglect to a vision of what may yet be.
We arise from our preoccupation with immediate problems
to catch the larger vision and purpose God sets before us.
Jesus is coming to save us from our sins.
Immanuel is God with us.

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

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.
OFFERTORY INVITATION
Please be seated.
In thanks for all God’s gifts,
and in response to the tears of so many of God’s children,
we now gather all that we have to share,
praying that these resources will accomplish much good among us
and far beyond our individual reach.

OFFERING
OFFERTORY  
_There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth_  
Felix Mendelssohn
There shall a Star from Jacob come forth, and a Sceptre from Israel rise up,
And dash in pieces princes and nations. How brightly beams the morning star!
With sudden radiance from afar, with light and comfort glowing!
Thy Word, Jesus, inly feeds us, rightly leads us, Life bestowing.
Praise, oh praise love o’er flowing!

* DOXOLOGY #607  
_OLD HUNDREDTH_
_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)  
Anand Bandari
Let us pray:
Loving God,
we would not weary you with empty words or with routine tips of obligation.
You have granted us life with such abundant possibilities
that we can never do enough to express our gratitude.
You have honored us by calling us saints and apostles.
Therefore we offer ourselves and our abundance in the confidence
that you continue to provide for us in whatever circumstances we face.
Use us as minsters of your grace. 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 Isaiah 7:10-16 (The Inclusive Bible)
Once more YHWH spoke to Ahaz, and said, “Ask for a sign from YHWH your God; let it be deep as the netherworld or high as the sky.” But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! And I will not put YHWH to the test!” Then Isaiah said, “Listen, O house of David! It is not enough for you to weary those around you, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Holy One will give you a sign: This young woman will become pregnant and will give birth. You will name the child Immanu-El. This child will be living on curds and honey by the time it knows how to refuse the evil and do good. But before that time— before the child knows how to refuse evil and do good—the land of the two rulers you dread will be laid waste.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM Gabriel’s Message Stephen Paulus
The angel Gabriel from heaven came, His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail!" said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary, Most highly favour'd lady." Gloria!
"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be, All generations laud and honor thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold. Most highly favour'd lady." Gloria!
Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify His Holy name." Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria!
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born, In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say, Most highly favour’d lady, Gloria!
Blessed Mother, gentle Mary, Gloria!

Gospel Matthew 1:18-25 (The Inclusive Bible)
This is how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus’ mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly. This was Joseph’s intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, “Joseph, heir to the House of David, don’t be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—‘Salvation’—because he will save the people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:
“The virgin will be with child and give birth,
and the child will be named Immanuel”
a name that means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
“What about Joseph?”
1. To a maid engaged to Joseph, The angel Gabriel came.
2. "For you are highly favored By God, the Lord of all,
3. But Mary was most troubled To hear the angel's word.
4. "Fear not, for God is with you, And you shall bear a child.
5. "How shall this be?" said Mary, "I am not yet a wife.
6. As Mary heard the angel, She wondered at his words.

"Fear not," the angel told her, "I come to bring good news.
Who even now is with you. You are on earth most blest,
What was the angel saying? It troubled her to hear,
His name shall be called Jesus, God's offspring from on high.
The angel answered quickly "The power of the Most High
"Behold, I am your hand-maid," She said unto her God.

Good news I come to tell you. Good news, I say, good news.
You are most blest, most blessed, God chose you, you are blest!
To hear the angel's message, It troubled her to hear.
And He shall reign forever, Forever reign on high.
Will come upon you shortly; Your child will be God's child.
"So be it, I am ready According to your Word."

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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

* HYMN #129

Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

ES IST EIN’ ROS’
* BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

The word of the prophet is finding fulfillment.
Immanuel is arriving; God is with us.

   Outcasts have become a holy family.
   Rejected ones carry the promise of salvation.

God widens the circle of acceptance to include us.
God welcomes us to the obedience of faith.

   Some laugh at our beliefs and taunt us.
   Sometimes we are scorned for trusting.

Surely God’s face shines on us to strengthen us.
Gifts of grace and peace are ours to receive.

   God helps us turn away from doing evil.
   God equips us to choose what is good.

* CHORAL RESPONSE

   Sevenfold Amen

Peter Lutkin

ORGAN POSTLUDE

   Angels We Have Heard on High

arr. by Diane Bish
A message from the Community Engagement Committee

A docent will be available at the conclusion of Sunday service to answer questions of all who are interested in the history of Old Stone, architecture of the church, mission of Old Stone, process of applying for membership at OSC, or details of Presbyterianism.

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

Psalm 73:26

Blue Christmas Service

We’re pleased to announce the addition of a special service this season for those for whom holidays present a particular challenge.

Please join us in this time of prayer and reflection, and to light a candle for grief, addiction, illness, family dynamics, personal struggles, or whatever you may be carrying in your heart.

Tuesday, Dec. 20th at 6:00pm in the Chapel

We continue to keep in our prayers:
Carol Anthony, Bob Heath, Cheryl Cairns, Jean English, Ruth Finley, JoAnn Hood, Marianne Jones and Len Lybarger, Jackie Acho, Alma Bako, Latoya Barron, Melvina Bishop, Marie Evans, George Hood, Clarence Niles, Bertha Nunn, Twilyn Teasley, Linda White, James White

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
Celebrate the arrival of the newborn Messiah at
Old Stone Church

December 24, 2022 Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service at 7 PM and 9 PM

December 25, 2022 Christmas Day
Lessons and Carols with Communion 10 AM

Dec 20, 2022—Jan 3, 2023

Tue Dec 20, 2022 10:00am - 11:30am Staff Meeting
6:00pm - 7:00pm Blue Christmas
7:00pm - 9:00pm Session/Hybrid
Thu Dec 22, 2022 10:00am - 11:00am Habitat for Humanity - Home dedication
7:00pm - 9:00pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat Dec 24, 2022 1:00pm - 4:00pm Browns/Saints
7:00pm - 8:00pm Christmas Eve Service
9:00pm - 10:00pm Christmas Eve Service
Sun Dec 25, 2022 10:00am - 11:00am Christmas Day/Lessons and Carols/Communion
Mon Dec 26, 2022 Christmas Holiday/Building and Offices Closed
Tue Dec 27, 2022 Christmas Holiday/Building and Offices Closed
Sat Dec 31, 2022 New Years Eve
Sun Jan 1, 2023 10:00am - 11:00am Worship/Christmas I
Mon Jan 2, 2023 New Years/Building and Offices Closed
Tue Jan 3, 2023 New Years/Building and Offices Closed
There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church.

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

THE OLD STONE CHURCH
_Loving Christ, Serving City—Spiritually, Socially, Culturally—Since 1820_
91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2058

_Telephone:_ 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_

_Church Elders:_
_Clerk of Session:_ Beth Buchanan

 Österreich 2023
Dorothy Baunach  Beth Buchanan  Janie Chambers
Kara Bane  Robert Hubert Jr.  Fred Heider
Willie Brown  Judy Macuga  Len Lybarger

_Exchange 2024_
Mary Mikula  Bernard Medie
Harriet Niles  Bob Reid
Lee Ann Rader  Marty Vassel
Marty Vassel  John Young

_Church Deacons:_

_Exchange 2023_
Ian Atwood  Scott Bailey
Jessica Atwood  Bernie Bischof
Elizabeth Harris  Carol Hoagland

_Exchange 2024_
Melissa Maffia  Amy Wheeler
Pete Maffia  John Wheeler
Mary Mikula  Penni Rolen
Michael Rolen  Alyssa Niepokny

_Exchange 2025_
Scott Bailey  Penny Rolen
Bernie Bischof  Alyssa Niepokny
Carol Hoagland  John Wheeler