

* CALL TO WORSHIP

The day of God is coming; lift up your voices.
Cry out with the strength God provides.

We await God's coming day with anticipation.

We seek the peace and patience God provides.

Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.

Speak tenderly to my suffering people.

We will prepare the way for the one who is coming.

We look forward to baptism in the Spirit.

God will feed us like a shepherd.

God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.

God's hand is upon us in blessing;

We are welcomed by God's steadfast love.

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Righteous and holy God,

your glory is revealed to us day by day

as valleys of despair are lifted up

and mountainous problems are leveled.

In your presence, we see more than our immediate situation.

We catch a glimpse of your eternal purposes.

So come among us now and speak your word of peace.

Feed us with your truth,

and equip us to welcome Christ's coming.

Amen.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING

Tiffany and Bram Chisholm

(Please be seated)

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)

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.

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

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.

Light two blue candles of the Advent wreath.



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Don Urban

God is patient with us, not wanting any to perish.
 Yet we have turned away from holiness and godliness.
 We have chosen to fit into society rather than give leadership for a new day.
 Let the church confess its failures.
 Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
 followed by time for silent personal confession.
 Thus, we pray:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of glory,
we confess that we have not recognized you in our midst
nor listened for your voice.
Our faith is fragile,
and our iniquity goes unrecognized amid our massive self-concern.
We have lived as if we have no need to account
for the life we have been given.
Our church is focused more on our own survival
than on its mission in the world.
We come to you today with sincere repentance for our neglect.
We have failed to prepare the way for Christ's entry
into our everyday environment.
Pardon and change us, we pray.
(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE ELEISON

SINGAPURA

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God speaks tenderly to us
and assures us that our debt has been paid, our sins forgiven,
our paths made straight.
God's glory is waiting to burst into the midst of all who accept the good news.
Surely our salvation is at hand.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
Enjoy the baptism of the Holy Spirit!
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 #583

Glory to God

GLORIA (Taizé)

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!
Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.
One way we prepare for Christ's appearance
is to support the church's mission in our community and beyond.
Our church's programs share good news,
our outreach provides comfort and practical help,
and our goals are nothing less than newness of life for all God's children.
May our gifts reflect God's generosity.
The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *And He Shall Purify* (Chorus) from "Messiah" G.F. Handel

And He shall purify the sons of Levi,
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

* 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 Don Urban

Let us join our voices in prayer:

While we are waiting and preparing for Christ to appear,
we are seeking, O God, to act as faithful followers.
May our offerings extend the promise of salvation to people
whose lives are broken by neglect, abuse, bad choices, and sinful ways.
May these gifts offer hope to all whose suffering and loss
seem too heavy to bear.
May our church be a listening, caring presence for all its members,
and through us for all those we meet in our work and leisure.
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

**Mighty God, send your Holy Spirit to speak peace,
that the good news of this age may be proclaimed
through your word, which stands forever.
Amen.**

THE READINGS

Epistle

2 Peter 3:8-15a (NRSVUE)

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be destroyed with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be dissolved.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and destroyed and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him.

The Holy Spirit has a word for each of us today.

With God's help we are listening.

Gospel

Mark 1:1-8 (NRSVUE)

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way,

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

make his paths straight,’ ”

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

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

“Waiting in Hope”



* THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,

and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand
of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES, 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

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -
 2 Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; make
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our
 4 Stretch forth your hand; our health re - store, and

nounc - es that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 straight the way for God with - in, and let us all our
 ref - uge and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 make us rise to fall no more. O let your face up -

for he brings glad ti - dings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.

This hymn shows how once-unconnected parts can work together. The text about John the Baptist was written in Latin in the 18th century and translated into English in the 19th century. Similarly, the 17th-century melody was adapted to its present form in the 19th century.

* BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

Announce the good news of Jesus Christ;

Prepare the way for Christ's witness to be heard.

Christ brings hope for true peace to all people.

God is patiently waiting for us to claim this gift.

Lead lives of holiness and godliness;

Enjoy treasures of heaven and earth that God offers.

God's Word brings us both comfort and challenge.

We are accepted by God and commissioned for duty.

You will be fed and blessed on life's way.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit will empower you.

We turn our hearts and our minds toward God.

We rejoice that we can be servants in Christ's name.

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen

John Rutter

POSTLUDE

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Friedrich Zachau

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

Psalms 73:26



We continue to keep in our prayers:

Joyce Sabe, Edie Horvat, Caroline Poirier, Nova and Tony Kordalski, Marlene Henne, Laurie Thomson, Frank Macuga, Susan Ball, Bernie Bischel, Shirley Daly, Karen Nestor, JoAnn Hood, Louis Handler, Jenni Plants, Faith Battan, the family of Jean Cooke

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.

Blue Christmas Service

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.

Thursday December 21, 2023 at 6:00pm in the Chapel




Celebrate the arrival of the newborn Messiah at OLD STONE CHURCH

December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve
Worship at 5PM and 7PM

December 25, 2023 Christmas Day
Worship with Communion 10AM

December 31, 2023 Epiphany
Worship 10AM

December 31, 2023 New Year's Eve
Worship 6PM



@ Old Stone Church

Sunday December 10 Advent II

9:00AM Bible Study/Hybrid/ Cuyahoga Room

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:15AM Mission & Urban Wellness Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Sunday December 17 Advent III

9:00AM Bible Study/Hybrid/ Cuyahoga Room

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

Tuesday December 19

6:30PM Session Meeting/ZOOM

Thursday December 21

6:30PM Blue Christmas Service/Chapel

7:00PM FPS Directors Meeting/Conference Room

Sunday December 24 Advent IV

9:00AM Bible Study/Hybrid/ Cuyahoga Room

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary



Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:76 Online:198

There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church

<p>Online Giving: oldstonechurch.org/giving/</p>	<p>Mobile Giving: Text the keyword “oldstonecle” to 73256</p>
<p>Mail to: Old Stone Church Attn: Financial Office 91 Public Square Cleveland, OH 44113</p>	<p>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.</p>

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

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

Parish Associate: Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

Minister of Music: David L. Dettloff

The Old Stone Singers

Leah Jennings Brown, *soprano*

Ian Atwood, *tenor*

Cicely Schonberg, *soprano*

Stephen Brown, *tenor*

Val Sibila, *soprano*

Frederick Peterbark, *tenor*

Rayna Brooks, *alto*

R. Dominic Aragon, *bass*

Margaret Raupp, *alto*

Christopher Clark, *bass*

Elizabeth Rickel, *alto*

Albert Donze, *bass*

Church Elders:

Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

Class of 2023

Beth Buchanan
 Robert Hubert Jr.

Judy Macuga

Harriet Niles

Marty Vassel

John Young

Class of 2024

Michelle Baron
 Janie Chambers

Fred Heider

Bernard Medie

Bob Reid

Class of 2025

Willie Brown
 Dave Finley

Church Deacons:

Class of 2023

Melissa Maffia
 Pete Maffia
 Alyssa Niepokny
 Michael Rolan
 Penni Rolan

Class of 2024

Scott Bailey
 Bernie Bischel
 Carol Hoagland
 Amy Wheeler
 John Wheeler

Class of 2025

Elie Medie
 Mark Pichler

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Your entry constitutes your consent to such photography, filming, livestreaming, and/or recording and to any use, in any media for The Old Stone Church/First Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio. Thank you.