We Gather in the Grace of God

Prelude: The Yearning
Craig Courtney

Welcome: Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

Introit: No Wind at the Window
COLUMCILLE

No wind at the window, no knock on the door; no light from the lampstand, no foot on the floor; no dream born of tiredness, no ghost raised by fear: just an angel and a woman and a voice in her ear.

"O Mary, O Mary, don't hide from my face. Be glad that you're favored and filled with God's grace. The time for redeeming the world has begun, and you are requested to mother God's Son."

* Those who are able are requested to stand
Please silence all electronic devices.
* CALL TO WORSHIP

God is in our midst; do not fear.
God rejoices to renew our lives in steadfast love.

God gathers us for this time of worship.
God claims us and promises us a home.
Trust in God who is our strength and life.
Give thanks to God, the source of our salvation.

We will sing praises and exalt God’s name.
With joyous shouts, we will tell of God’s glorious deeds.
Rejoice in God, whatever your circumstances.
Remember the good fortune God has shared with you.

We will not worry as we seek God’s peace.
We open our hearts and minds to God’s leading.

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Loving God,
we rejoice in this season of anticipation
as we remember your promises
and look forward to ways that you reveal yourself to us.
May your presence be real to us in this hour.
Strengthen us for victories over temptation,
for renewal of our love for you and one another,
for leadership and service in your church.
We give thanks that you have called us into community
and commissioned us to make a difference in the world.
Equip us here for the tasks you set before us.
Amen.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING *(Please be seated)*

Harriet Niles,
Eric Grattan, Jordan Ware

When God’s people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief,
Isaiah proclaimed,
The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he
has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the
year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who
mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of
ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a
faint spirit (Isaiah 64:1-3a).

We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief.
And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom
where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and
igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to
witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God’s people.

We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce
joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our
hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God’s Kin-dom on earth as it is in
heaven. Amen.

* Light the Rose candle and the two Blue candles of the Advent wreath.*

2 Hearing loop installed. Switch hearing aid to T-coil
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
2. Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
3. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
4. By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;

from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
dear desire of every nation, joy of every long-ing heart.
born to reign in us for-ev-er, now thy gracious king-dom bring.
y by thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.

With its opening “Come,” this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin adventus = “coming”). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1744
MUSIC: Witt’s Psalmody Sacra, 1715, alt.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

God’s winnowing fork separates faithful ones from the unfaithful,
honest ones from the dishonest,
gentle ones from those who vent their anger against the innocent.
God seeks to remove the chaff from our lives
that we might recognize our own true worth as God’s children.
Let us seek God’s healing.
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
followed by time for silent personal confession.
Thus, we pray:

Lindsay Fritz
* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All-knowing God,
we confess our worry and anxiety over unimportant matters.
We admit the fears that make us defensive instead of loving.
We acknowledge our resentment over losses we have sustained
and oppression we have suffered.
We recognize that we have been far more concerned for our own welfare
than for the building up of Christ’s body, the church.
In our congregation, we have focused on survival more than service.
We look for what we can gain more than for what we can give.
Re-establish your rule among us, we pray, and save us from ourselves.

(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE ELEISON

SINGAPURA

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

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God has good news of freedom for oppressed and captive people,
of comfort for the brokenhearted and mourning ones,
of hope for those who are devastated.
God offers salvation and welcomes us into a covenant relationship.
Surely our hearts will know joy, and our voices will ring with laughter.
God is faithful and will grant us peace.

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.
Today God’s voice is heard through the ministries we help to provide,
here in our church, and in outreach to all the world’s people.
We bear witness to the light that is coming into the world
through personal caring and corporate sharing.
May all our giving be generous.
The offering will now be received.
OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM  
*How Great Our Joy!*  
Craig Courtney

While by the sheep we watched at night, Glad tidings brought an angel bright.  
How great our joy.

There shall be born, so did he say, In Bethlehem a Child today. How great our joy.

There shall a Child lie in a stall, This Child who shall redeem us all.

This gift of God we’ll cherish well, That ever joy our hearts shall fill.

Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!

* 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  
Lindsay Fritz

Let us join our voices in prayer:

In our unworthiness, O God,  
may we yet bring worthy gifts to honor the Messiah.

May the brokenhearted be led to enriching new celebrations.

May the lowly among us come to know their true worth  
as persons chosen by you to do great things.

By your mercy, may the hungry be fed not only with bread  
but also with opportunities to feed others.

We give ourselves as your servants,  
for no gift is complete without personal commitment.

Thank you, God, for expecting great things of us.  
Our spirits rejoice in the coming of our Savior.

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

Holy One,
giver of life and light,
as your word is read and proclaimed,
ilumine our hearts and minds,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit,
our lives may reflect God’s glory.
Amen.

THE READINGS

Prophets Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSVUE)

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For I, the LORD, love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my whole being shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

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

**With God’s help we are listening.**

**Gospel**

Luke 1:46b-55 (NRSVUE)

And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**
"Womb for All"

* 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 My soul gives glory to my God; my heart pours out its praise.
2 My God has done great things for me: yes, God lifted up my holy is God’s name.
3 From age to age to all who fear, such mercy love imparts, dispensing justice.
4 Love casts the mighty from their thrones, pro- motes the insecure, leaves hungry spirit.
5 Praise God, whose loving covenant sustains those in distress, remembering past lowliness in many marvelous ways.

This 20th-century paraphrase is based on the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), commonly known by its opening Latin word, Magnificat. This song of praise offers clear reminders that God’s purposes often lead to the reversal of human values, exalting the poor and dethroning the mighty.

TEXT: Miriam Therese Winter, 1979, rev. 1987
MUSIC: Wyeth’s Repository of Sacred Music, 1813; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940
Text © 1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters
Music Harm. © 1943, 1961, 1985 Church Pension Fund
* BENEDICTION AND BLESSING
  Rejoice always and pray without ceasing.
  Give thanks to God, whatever your circumstances.
  
  God has done great things for us.
  We rejoice that we are part of God’s family.
  Listen for the word of the prophets.
  Be open to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit.
  
  The Spirit of God has come to us.
  We have a mission to accomplish for God.
  God is faithful and will stand by you.
  You are valued in God’s covenant community.
  
  We are filled with joy as we go out to serve.
  We are thankful for the good news we carry.

* CHORAL RESPONSE
  Amen
  John Rutter

POSTLUDE
  Come O Long-Expected Jesus
  Mark Sedio

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

Psalm 73:26

We continue to keep in our prayers:
Andrew Buchanan, Joyce Sabe, Caroline Poirier, Nova and Tony Kordalski,
Marlene Henne, Laurie Thomson, Frank Macuga, Susan Ball, Shirley Daly,
Karen Nestor, JoAnn Hood, Louis Handler, Jenni Plants, Faith Battan, David,
Herbert Glover and family, 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 17 Advent III
9:00AM Bible Study/Gallery
10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

Tuesday December 19
6:30PM Stated Session Meeting/ZOOM

Thursday December 21
6:00PM Blue Christmas Service/Chapel
7:00PM FPS Directors Meeting/Conference Room

Sunday December 24 Advent IV
9:00AM Bible Study/Gallery
10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:75 Online:176
There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church

Online Giving:
oldstonechurch.org/giving/

Mobile Giving:
Text the keyword “oldstonecle” to 73256

Mail to:
Old Stone Church
Attn: Financial Office
91 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113

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.

THE OLD STONE CHURCH
Loving Christ, Serving City—Spiritually, Socially, Culturally—Since 1820
91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2058
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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
Cicely Schonberg, soprano
Val Sibila, soprano
Rayna Brooks, alto
Margaret Raupp, alto
Elizabeth Rickel, alto
Ian Atwood, tenor
Stephen Brown, tenor
Frederick Peterbark, tenor
R. Dominic Aragon, bass
Christopher Clark, bass
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 Rolen
Penni Rolen

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.