



# THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 24, 2023  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
10AM Sanctuary Worship

## WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE	<i>Welcome To Our World</i>	Chris Rice
	Ian Atwood, <i>tenor</i>	
WELCOME		Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
INTROIT	<i>No Wind at the Window</i>	COLUMCILLE

"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."

No payment was promised, no promises made; no wedding was dated, no blueprint displayed. Yet Mary, consenting to what none could guess, replied with conviction, "Tell God I say, Yes."

\* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come apart to this place of rest and renewal;  
Let your spirits rejoice in the presence of God.

**We will sing of God's steadfast love for all people.**

**We will proclaim God's faithfulness to all generations.**

God looks with favor on the humble and lowly.

God's covenant does not focus on rank or position.

**God strengthens those who are weak.**

**The proud are scattered in the thoughts of their hearts.**

Blessed are those who walk in God's light.

Blessed are all who say 'yes' to God's call.

**Let the heavens proclaim the wonders of God.**

**Let all the earth rejoice in Christ's coming.**

\* INVOCATION PRAYER

**We bring our spiritual hungers to this place, O God, hoping to be fed.**

**We bring our weariness, expecting to find rest for our souls.**

**We bring our dullness,**

**asking that we might be alerted to those things that you consider important.**

**We come because we want the scattered fragments of our lives to come together in a meaningful wholeness.**

**You have promised to be with us.**

**Reveal yourself to us here, we pray in the name of One who came to share our common lot. Amen.**

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING (*Please be seated*) Lindsay, Philip & Evie Fritz

When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth,

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name (Luke 1:46-49).

We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, "How can this be? I am only..." Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

**We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.**

We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

*Light the four outer candles of the Advent wreath.*



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels  
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -  
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the  
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is  
 el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and  
 world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and  
 win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by  
 near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the  
 free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break  
 light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens  
 bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der  
 forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be  
 love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heaven - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
 of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.  
 raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
 ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

\* CALL TO CONFESSION

The promises of God are meant for all to enjoy.  
Yet we have broken covenant  
and declared our independence from the Giver of Life.  
Then, when we are brought down from the thrones of our pretension,  
we wonder why.  
Let us confess the sin that separates us from God's promises.  
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,  
followed by time for silent personal confession.  
Thus, we pray:

\* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, in whom all things are possible,  
we confess that we have doubted what we cannot explain.  
We have sought strength and enjoyment apart from you.  
We have taken pride in ownership  
more than giving praise through stewardship.  
We have neglected to thank you, either in good times or  
when you have supported us during days of uncertainty.  
We have resisted the newness you offer.  
Forgive us, we pray, for installing ourselves as reigning deities.  
Lead us, rather in paths of trust and obedience.  
*(moment of silent confession)*

\* KYRIE ELEISON

SINGAPURA

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

\* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God does not turn away from steadfast love, even when we are unfaithful.  
The Rock of our salvation keeps covenant with us despite our iniquity.  
God's mercy is for all who humbly seek it.  
God fills the hungry with good things, but the rich are sent away empty.  
If we have chosen to receive forgiveness and to move away for self-absorption,  
we will understand God's pardon and live joyously within it.

**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.

God gives us responsibilities in the church and the world to carry good news,  
to build and not destroy, to feed the hungry and house the homeless,  
to be faithful in all things.

Our offerings are one sign of faithfulness and obedience.

The offering will now be received.

## OFFERING

### OFFERTORY 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 favored 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 favored 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 favored 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 favored lady, Gloria!

\* 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

Let us join our voices in prayer:

Our best we give to you, loving God,  
for you have given your best to us in the mystery of incarnation.  
May our offerings proclaim Jesus in ways that will be received with joy.  
Send your Word to the world in this season through our caring service.  
May we share it with one another in ways that help us all to grow.  
We are your servants.  
The gifts we dedicate are already yours.  
Thank you for all the ways you have provided for us.  
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

Astonishing God, send your Holy Spirit upon us  
as we wait the coming of your Son.  
Fill us with good things that we may conceive your reign on earth  
and glorify you according to your Word;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

## THE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture                      2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (NRSVUE)

Now when the king was settled in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind, for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel, and I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place and be disturbed no more, and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel, and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever."

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

**With God's help we are listening.**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

#### PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Denise Clark-Jones

"And Mary's Little Child Shall Lead Us."



\* 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 Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king.  
 2 Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
 late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of the vir-gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the in-car - nate de - i - ty,  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with the an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el.  
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

\* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Inspired by God's presence, spread Advent good news.

Strengthened by the gospel, go out to serve.

**Our spirits rejoice in the Savior's coming.**

**Our lives are blessed by a merciful God.**

God has granted a beautiful earth for our home.

God appoints us as care-givers of the land and its people.

**We are a covenant people, shaped by love.**

**Wherever God sends us, we will go.**

God's steadfast love will go with you every day.

You will know the strength of God's mighty hand.

**We will work with God to lift up the lowly.**

**We will share good things with those who are hungry.**

\* CHORAL RESPONSE

*Amen*

John Rutter

POSTLUDE

*A Stable Lamp is Lighted*

Wilbur Held

*"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, Marylou Eisaman, Becky Jadlocki, Jackie Cole, Dean,  
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

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, 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 24 Advent IV**

**10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary**

**Sunday December 24 Christmas Eve**

**5:00PM Worship/Sanctuary**

**7:00PM Worship/Sanctuary**

**Monday December 25 Christmas Day**

**10:00AM Worship with Communion/Sanctuary**

**Tuesday December 26 Building and Offices Closed**

**Sunday December 31 Epiphany**

**10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary**

**Sunday December 31 New Year's Eve**

**6:00PM Worship/Chapel**

**Last Sunday Attendance**

**In-Person:89 Online:161**

There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church

Online Giving: <a href="http://oldstonechurch.org/giving/">oldstonechurch.org/giving/</a>	Mobile Giving: Text the keyword “ <b>oldstonecle</b> ” 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*

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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.