

# THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 31, 2023 NEW YEARS EVE

6:00рм Chapel Worship

## \* CALL TO WORSHIP

Tonight we keep watch.

Tonight we say goodbye to the old year and look hopefully into the new year.

Though the darkness is deep, the Light of the World guides our way.

Even though we don't really know what is to come, we know that God is with us.

Quietly, reverently, open your hearts to God.

Praise be to God,

Who was and is and is to be. Amen.

#### WELCOME

## \* OPENING PRAYER

Lord of the opening way, we bring to you this night our past,

with all that has happened in our lives,

our hopes and our dreams,

our successes and our failures,

our gains and our losses.

We bring to you our present,

lives filled with exhaustion, wonder, fear, concern.

We come to you with hearts open to receive your word for us, for the future.

We want to be a part of your new heaven and earth,

to serve you by serving others.

Speak to us, heal us, teach us, lead us,

for we ask these things in Jesus' Name.

Amen.

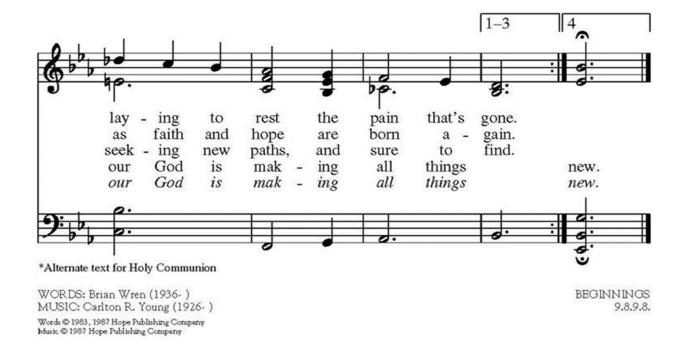
## \* HYMN

# This Is a Day of New Beginnings

**BEGINGINGS** 







## \* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, you have asked us to feed and give drink to those who hunger, to clothe those who are naked, to welcome the stranger, to visit those who are sick and imprisoned.

When we look back on the year we might be able to say we did some of those things.

We remember the enthusiasm with which we started out this waning year, ready to go to work and witness to your love.

But you know how things got in our way.

We allowed ourselves to be swallowed up by worries and fear.

We placed comfort of self before service to others.

We took the "easy way out" whenever we could.

And you wept for us.

Now we are on the brink of a new year.

We cannot change what we did not do,

but we can make a covenant with you to be your witness

in our words, thoughts and deeds to your people so that when you say,

"Have you given food and drink to those who hunger and thirst,

have you clothed the naked, welcomed the stranger, visited the sick and imprisoned?"

We can respond with a joyful

"Yes! Lord, we have done these things with joy and love!"

Forgive us what we have not done.

Inspire us to do what you would have us do.

In Jesus' Name, we pray.

#### \* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God is making all things new.

The past is over and. It taught us many lessons.

But God is the God of the future, new opportunities.

new hopes, new dreams, renewed vision.

God dwells with us to be our God.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

## \* PASTORAL PRAYER

Lord, our God, how incredible and magnificent is your name in all the earth.

Your voice spoke the word of light and the light was given.

Your heart shouted hope and love and creation was born.

Your tears cried torrents for your errant people,

and your prophets boldly stepped forward to proclaim your presence.

Your Love streamed down and Jesus the Christ came to us,

to heal, teach, guide, and bring us to you.

Your Power hovered over us, like a mighty flame, inspiring us to your witnesses.

How magnificent and wonderful you are, O Lord.

Now the old is passing away and a new heaven and earth are being born.

Lord, we want to be ready to serve you in your new heaven and new earth.

We need to let go of the disappointments and fears,

and open our hearts to receive you love and blessings for us.

This is a time of new beginnings.

The past we cannot change.

We can reflect on all that has happened and move on into new relationship with you. Let the light of your love shine on us,

that we may feel and know your powerful presence with us.

Let the light of your love shine in us,

that we may be encouraged to use our gifts and talents to serve others.

Let the light of your love shine through us,

that others may come to know you. In this time of new beginnings, new hopes arise. Give us courage to reach out for the dreams and hopes;

give us confidence that we can accomplish much for you.

Amen.

# WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

## **ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11**

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:

- a time to be born and a time to die;
- a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- a time to kill and a time to heal;
- a time to break down and a time to build up;
- a time to weep and a time to laugh;
- a time to mourn and a time to dance;
- a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together;
- a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
- a time to seek and a time to lose;
- a time to keep and a time to throw away;
- a time to tear and a time to sew;
- a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
- a time to love and a time to hate;
- a time for war and a time for peace.

What gain have the workers from their toil?

I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.

God has made everything suitable for its time;

moreover, God has put a sense of past and future into their minds,

yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

## PSALM 8

O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants

you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,

to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars that you have established;

what are humans that you are mindful of them,

mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;

you have put all things under their feet,

all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,

whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## \* HYMN

# Ring Out, Wild Bells

# **GANFALON ROYAL**



Words: Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1809-1892

Music: Percy Carter Buck, 1871-1947, © Oxford University Press

GONFALON ROYAL L.M.

## LITANY

It is dark. We cannot see very far.

Do not fear. God alone can see what lies ahead.

We have suffered much, loved much, lost much.

Do not fear. God knows your hearts and fears.

We have dreamed and watched as dreams have floated away, unfulfilled.

Do not fear. God is with you.

Do not let fear and darkness overcome you.

God has given the Light for your path.

The silence sometimes overwhelms us. The past still shouts loudly at us.

Do not fear. God is with you.

Give your hearts and spirits to the Lord!

Lord, we give our hearts and spirit to you this night.

Let go of your fears. Place your trust in the Lord.

Lord, we give our fears to you. Heal us, Lord.

## BRINGING IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE

The darkness is banished. The Light of God's love is with us. Come, receive the light!

(You are invited to come forward and light a candle and place it in the bowl.)

Look at the Light. How beautiful it is to us, gathered in this darkness.

Behold, says the Lord, I create a new heaven and a new earth;

for the old has vanished away.

In this new earth we are called to ministries of love and service.

Let these lights remind you that even one small candle in the darkness sheds light on someone's path.

And where many candles are gathered,

much light is given, much can be done.

Praise be to God, who is the Light and gives us the Light of Hope.

Amen.

## A PRAYER FOR LIFE

Source of all life, we pray for life. Bless us, once more, with a year of life so that we may be privileged to complete the year we have just begun.

Despite the burdens and the heartbreaks, the pains and perils, we want to live; we ask to be inscribed in the Book of Life.

But even as we pray that years may be added to our lives, we ask, too, that true life may be added to our years.

May the new year be for us a time for enhancing the quality of our lives, enriching their content, deepening their meaning.

Help us to keep our minds alive.

May we be open to new ideas, entertain challenging doubts, re-examine long-held opinions, nurture a lively curiosity, and strive to add to our store of knowledge.

Help us to keep our hearts alive.
May we develop greater compassion,
be receptive to new friendships,
sustain a buoyant enthusiasm,
grow more sensitive to the beauty which surrounds us.

Help us to keep our souls alive.

May we be more responsive to the needs of others, less vulnerable to consuming greed, more attentive to the craving for fellowship, and more devoted to truth.

Help us to keep our spirits alive. May we face the future with confidence, knowing that every age has its unique joys and satisfactions, each period in our lives a glory of its own.

Help us to keep our faith alive. May we be sustained by the knowledge that You have planted within us life eternal and have given us the power to live beyond our years.

> Whether our years be few or many, help us to link our lives to the life of our people and to our eternal faith.



# The Ceaseless Flow of Endless Time

**MCKEE** 



⊕ Words: John Andrew Storey, 1935–1997

Music: African American spiritual, c. 1750-1875, adapt. and harmony by

Harry T. Burleigh, 1866-1949

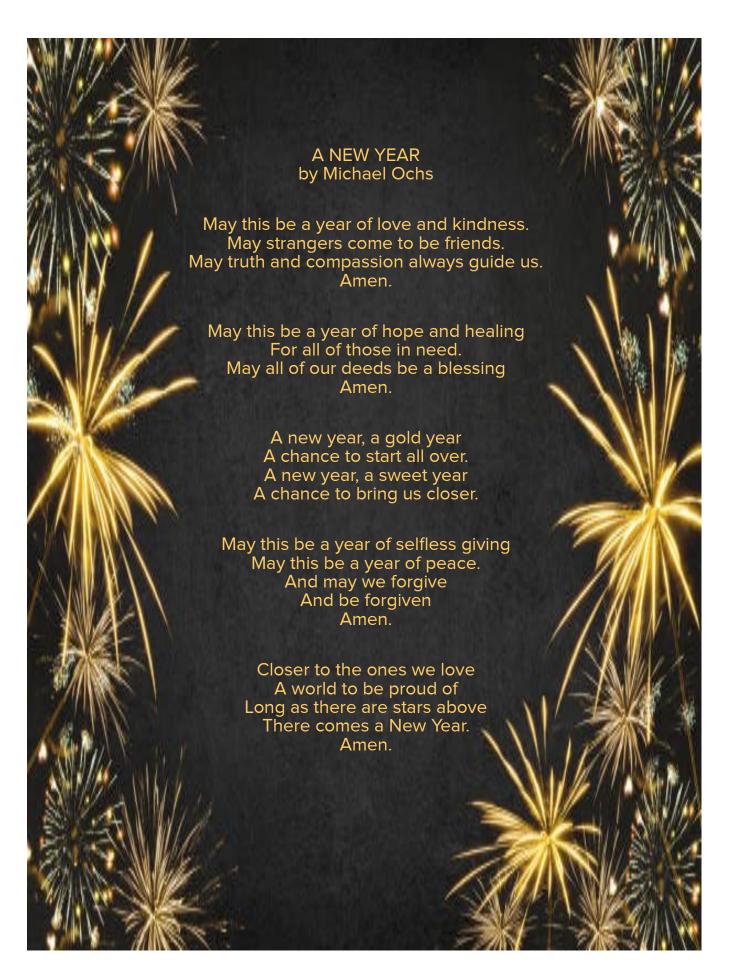
MCKEE C.M.

## **BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

Go from this place; not into darkness, although it might be night! Go into the Light of God's eternal, inspiring Love. Go to be those who bring peace, love, hope and joy. And God will always be with you.

Amen.





## 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

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

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 lan Atwood, *tenor* Stephen Brown, *tenor* Frederick Peterbark, *tenor* 

Rayna Brooks, *alto* Margaret Raupp, *alto* Elizabeth Rickel, *alto*  R. Dominic Aragon, bass Christopher Clark, bass Albert Donze, bass

## **Church Elders:**

Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Beth Buchanan	Michelle Baron
Robert Hubert Jr.	Janie Chambers
Judy Macuga	Fred Heider
Harriet Niles	Bernard Medie
Marty Vassel	Bob Reid
John Young	

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

