



THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 15, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE *Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion* from "Messiah" G.F. Handel
Cicely Schonberg, *soprano*

WELCOME Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

MINUTE FOR MISSION Emily Collins-City of Cleveland

INTROIT *Call to Advent* J. Jerome Willams

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appears. Alleluia!

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand.
Ponder nothing earthly minded, for, with blessing in His hand. Alleluia!

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice, give thanks; call on God's name;
the Holy One is in our midst.

How good it is to come home to God's house!

How good it is to gather in Christ's presence!

Sing aloud! Exult with all your heart;
the Sovereign One has done glorious things.

We offer up our anxieties, seeking God's peace.

We face our plenty, eager to share.

Shout your praise! Express your joy!

The God of our salvation welcomes us.

God's love is renewing us in these moments.

God's strength is becoming our song!

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

God of our baptism,

renew in us today the gifts of your Holy Spirit and fire.

We have come together, eager for good news.

We are here for instructions,

ready to do the work you call us to do in the world.

Equip us in this time of worship

to draw deeply from the waters of salvation.

Fill us with your love that we may pass it on.

Recall us to truth and excellence and justice in all we say and do.

Amen.

* ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING

Lindsay, Philip & Evie Fritz

No matter what troubles overwhelm us today, Isaiah reminds us
that in all of our preparation and passionate pursuit of God's coming Kingdom,
we must not forget that God's salvation has come and is coming.

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3).

With joy you will remember that God's salvation is already present among us.

Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world,

we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another.

We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world,

and we will not stop rejoicing in God,

whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God's love might flow

through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.

We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment
to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors
that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share
in the glorious joy of God's salvation together.

(Light the rose candle and two blue candles.)

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.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Peggie Willett

Every tree that fails to bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire.
 We cannot flee from our unfaithfulness.
 But we can reclaim our baptism
 and seek once more to bear fruits that befit repentance.
 Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
 followed by time for silent personal confession.
 Thus, we pray together:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**What shall we do, O God?
We can never do enough to deserve your love.
We confess that we are not always truthful.
We have defaced the purity of your love for us.
We have embraced ugliness and oppression
rather than loveliness and grace.
We have distorted your cries for justice in order to benefit ourselves.
We have given less than our best to others and to you.
Forgive us, we pray.**

(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE ELEISON #91 *Come, Come Emmanuel* COME, COME EMMANUEL
**Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.**

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God has taken away the judgments against us.
The evil we have feared cannot triumph.
The enemies we have harbored in our own souls will no longer oppress us.
Disasters we have experienced are not the last word.
God restores us to the family, welcomes us with open arms,
and strengthens us for each day's challenges.
Praise God, give thanks, and let the world know of God's marvelous deeds.
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* GLORIA PATRI
**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.

Whether we face plenty or hunger, abundance or want,
we are in debt to God for all we have and all we are.

In these moments of thankfulness, we remember how God has blessed us.

We give with joy because we trust the God of our salvation.

The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *And the Glory of the Lord* from “Messiah” G.F. Handel

And the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

* DOXOLOGY #608 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessing Flow* PRAISE GOD

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

* OFFERTORY PRAYER Peggie Willett

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**We rejoice, O God of peace, in the privilege of giving without fear.
You come to us daily with blessings too numerous to count.
You are the Holy One whose presence relieves our anxieties,
feeds our hunger, and stirs our compassion.
Through our offerings, we express our gratitude.
As we give of ourselves,
we respond to your call to bear fruit
and to make your name known among the nations.
Thank you for accepting all we offer.
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 Word, you come into our midst
longing for communion with us,
becoming one of us.
Break our resistance to life with you,
show us the path toward just relations,
and bring us into your unimaginable peace;
in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

THE READINGS

Epistle

Philippians 4:4-7 (Inclusive Bible)

Rejoice in the Savior always! I say it again: Rejoice!
Let everyone see your forbearing spirit. Our Savior is near.
Dismiss all anxiety from your minds; present your needs to God through prayer
and petition, giving thanks for all circumstances.
Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding,
will stand guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

With God's help we are listening.

Gospel

Luke 3:7-18 (Inclusive Bible)

John said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "You pack of snakes! Who warned you to escape the wrath to come? Produce good fruit as a sign of your repentance. And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Sarah and Abraham as our mother and father,' for I tell you that God can raise children for Sarah and Abraham from these very stones. The ax is already laid at the root of the tree; every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and tossed into the fire."

When the people asked him, "What should we do?" John replied, "Let the one with two coats share with the one who has none. Let those who have food do the same." Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to John, "Teacher, what are we to do?" John answered them, "Exact nothing over or above your fixed amount." Soldiers likewise asked, "What about us?" John told them, "Don't bully anyone. Don't accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were full of anticipation, wondering in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all by saying, “I am baptizing you in water, but someone is coming who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie! This One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. A winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the granary, but the chaff will be burnt in unquenchable fire.”

Using exhortations like this, John proclaimed the Good News to the people.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

“Forgiven, Cleansed, Renewed, Rejoice! - Again”



THE APOSTLE'S 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 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.
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



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

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

The whole universe is God's dwelling place.
Find your home with God wherever you go.

**Surely God is our salvation;
we will trust and not be afraid.**

Rejoice, for Christ has come and is coming,
whose presence brings peace to our hearts and minds.

**We can do all things in Christ, who strengthens us.
We have much to share with the world.**

God, who has blessed you, commissions you for service.
Shout and sing for joy; praise God in all you do.

**God has renewed and refreshed us this day.
God's strength will be our song wherever we go.**

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen

John Rutter

POSTLUDE

Chorale Partita "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."
Psalm 73:26*



We continue to keep in our prayers:

Susan Spevak, Trenton Adams, Ruth Finley, Billy Augustus, JoAnn Hood,
Joyce Ann Balestra, Donna Sue Buchanan, Francis Sequeira, Clayton Rohrer,
Shirley Daly, Barbara Haynes, Hannah Reid, Kimberly Williams, Amy Wheeler,
Shelley Wheeler, Madison, Olivia Costa, Timothy Truitt, Darlene,
Tom Kirkbrick, Cathy Clegg, Linda 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.



Please join us for Communion following the service this morning in the Chapel.

Wednesdays at 12:15 PM please join us in the Sanctuary for a Mid-Week Communion Service.

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.

Saturday, December 21, 2024 at 6:00pm in the Chapel



Celebrate the arrival of the newborn Messiah at THE OLD STONE CHURCH

**December 24, 2024 Christmas Eve
Worship with Communion at 5PM and 7PM**

**December 25, 2024 Christmas Day
Worship with Communion 10AM**

**December 29, 2024 First Sunday of Christmas
Worship 10AM**

**December 31, 2024 New Year's Eve
Chapel/Worship 6PM**

**January 5, 2025 Epiphany
Worship with Communion 10AM**



Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:85Online:277

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

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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*

Ian Atwood, *tenor*

Stephen Brown, *tenor*

Samuel Jungman, *tenor*

Rayna Brooks, *alto*

Reese Henrick, *alto*

Elizabeth Rickel, *alto*

R. Dominic Aragon, *bass*

Christopher Clark, *bass*

Albert Donze, *bass*

Church Elders:

Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

Class of 2024

Michelle Baron

Janie Chambers

Fred Heider

Bernard Medie

Bob Reid

Class of 2025

Dorothy Baunach

Willie Brown

David Eifert

Dave Finley

Robert Hubert Jr.

Class of 2026

Beth Buchanan

Judy Macuga

Melissa Maffia

Harriet Niles

Marty Vassel

Church Deacons:

Class of 2024

Anand Bandari

Bernie Bischel

Amy Wheeler

John Wheeler

Class of 2025

Valorie Hempstead

Eileen Kelly

Elie Medie

Mark Pichler

Class of 2026

Mark Corey

Forrest Diehl

Pam Daly

Ruth Finley

Alyssa Niepokny

Charlene Thornton

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