



THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 22, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

Mary Did You Know?

Mark Lowry, Buddy Greene
Rayna Brook, *mezzo-soprano*

WELCOME

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT

An Advent Prayer

Allen Pote

Come holy Jesus, come to free us from our sin.

Come holy Jesus and make us pure within.

Inspire each heart with illumined surprise, enkindle a flame anew.

Increase our faith and strengthen our lives, show us the joy of living life in you.

Come holy Jesus, come to free us from our sin.

Come holy Jesus and make us pure within. Amen.

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Before the majesty of God, we gather to worship;
in quiet expectation, we come to hear God's promises.

This is where we belong; here we are warmly greeted.

Surely God will feed our deepest hunger.

Before God's strength and power, we bow down;
in hesitant anticipation, we listen for God's judgment.

This is our home, where our lives are redirected.

Surely God will show us new ways to live.

Before the mercy of God, we lift our hearts;
in humble imagination, we welcome a new visitation.

This day God is present with us; we feel it.

Surely God is preparing for us a time of joy.

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

Let your face shine on us, mighty God.

Break through the obstacles that keep us from seeing your way.

**Melt down the barriers that keep us from knowing
the embrace of your love.**

**Remove from us the low self-esteem
that keeps us from valuing the overwhelming gift of life
that you entrust to us.**

Speak to us here in life-changing accents.

Amen.

* ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING

Sunny Kunche

When the people were looking for deliverance, the prophet Micah declared,
"As for you, Bethlehem in Ephrathah," says YHWH...
"from you will come a ruler for me over Israel,
one whose goings out are from times long past, from ancient days." (Micah 5:1).
But what if Micah is also talking to us, proclaiming,
"But you, O Old Stone Church-First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland,
from you shall come forth for me..." What?
What might God be calling forth from us?

**God invites us to receive the promise of God's salvation
and the sustenance of God's mercy and grace,
enabling us to live the promise as God-bearers to the world.
As Christ was born in Bethlehem, so too we answer God's invitation
to have Christ born among us today and every day.**

We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment
to live as people of God's promise, a promise of salvation
and flourishing for all people that springs forth from God's love for all creation.

Light three blue and one rose candle.

1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God; my
 2 My God has done great things for me: yes,
 3 From age to age to all who fear, such
 4 Love casts the might - y from their thrones, pro -
 5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup -

heart pours out its praise. God lift - ed up my
 ho - ly is God's name. All peo - ple will de -
 mer - cy love im - parts, dis - pens - ing jus - tice
 motes the in - se - cure, leaves hun - gry spir - its
 ports those in dis - tress, re - mem - ber - ing past

low - li - ness in man - y mar - vel - ous ways.
 clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.
 far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.
 sat - is - fied; the rich seem sud - den - ly poor.
 prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Alyssa Niepokny

We do not like to think that God might be angry with us.
 Yet, we know the emptiness of our prayers,
 the greed of our consumption, the limits of our compassion.
 God understands more profoundly than we
 our failure to become the people we are intended to be.
 In silent reflection, be open to the wisdom and forgiveness of the Creator.
 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

**Merciful God, when we sense who you are, we are ashamed.
How do you tolerate our pettiness?
The abundance you have given us
has made us proud more than thankful.
We act as if our accomplishments were all our own doing.
We seldom acknowledge your generosity or let you rule our lives.
We go through the forms of worship,
but we try to keep you at a safe distance.
We fill our lives with status producing activity
that blocks out your call and limits our response.
O God, we need to change.
Will you help us?**

(moment of silent confession)

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

Congregation repeatedly sings refrain

*Cantor sings, "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy,"
above congregation.*

Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Em -

man - u - el. man - u - el.

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Those who allow themselves to know God are already in touch with God's mercy.
It is newly experienced every day.
It is available to the least of us and the greatest.
All whose spirits hunger for God discover how richly they have been fed.
God has been doing great things for us.
Let us commit the bodies God has given us to doing God's will.
May our spirits rejoice as we magnify our God together.

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.

**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.
In this season, we remember the greatest offering of all time,
God's gift of salvation In Jesus Christ.
The only appropriate response is our giving of ourselves.
What we place on the altar today symbolizes the depth of our commitment.
May we show how thankful we are.
The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Lo, How a Rose

Deborah Governor

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.
Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind, with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior when half spent was the night.
This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere. True man, yet very God;
From sin and death He saves us, and lightens ev'ry load.

* 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

Alyssa Niepokny

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**Thank you, God, for your mercy and protection,
for feeding us physically and spiritually,
for caring for us like a shepherd.
We present our offerings as an act of gratitude.
What we can never repay we pause to appreciate.
In the name of generosity we cannot match,
we seek to be generous toward others.
May these offerings do far more than support our church.
We dedicate ourselves and these gifts to honor Christ
through ministry in the world.
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

**O Mighty One, who scatters the proud
and fills the hungry,
by your Holy Spirit let your word leap in us
and bring our yearning
the joy that comes with
new beginnings and renewed lives.
Amen.**

THE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture

Micah 5:2-5a (NRSVUE)

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth,
and he shall be the one of peace.

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

With God's help we are listening.

Gospel

Luke 1:39-55 (NRSVUE)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said,

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

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

“My Soul Magnifies the Lord - Namaste”



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

On behalf of the session,
I present Cierra Jackson and Bradley Oglesby,
who have been received into the membership of this congregation
by reaffirmation of faith.

Harriet Niles

In baptism you were claimed by God,
marked as Christ's own forever,
and joined to his body by the Holy Spirit.
You come to us then, not as strangers,
but as friends in Christ and members of the household of God.
We rejoice that you now desire to join with this congregation
in the worship and mission of the church.

Pastor Stephen

Hear these words from scripture:
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
**one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.**

As members of the body of Christ, let us reaffirm the faith
into which we were baptized:

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.**

Cierra and Brad, we have professed our faith as one body.
Will you be a faithful member of this congregation,
share in its worship and mission
through your prayers and gifts,
your study and service,
and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

I will, with God's help.

Holy God,
thank you for calling us to be your people
and joining us to Christ's body, the church.
We praise you for leading Cierra and Brad to this congregation.
Empower us by your Spirit,
that we might love one another as Christ loved us,
honoring him in all that we say and do,
giving our lives in service to others,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Cierra and Brad remember your baptism and be thankful,
and know that the Holy Spirit is at work within you.

Thanks be to God.

Welcome to this ministry that we share in Jesus Christ.

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 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.

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Depart from this place to do God's will.

Carry your discipleship and service into the world.

Our spirits rejoice in God's saving grace.

Our lives have been equipped to meet the world.

Greet strangers as you have been greeted here.

Feed them as you have been fed by a living God.

We want to welcome neighbors into God's family.

Our estrangement has been overcome.

God's mercy continues from generation to generation.

You are accepted and loved and sent forth.

In gratitude and joy we accept our commission.

Our spirits rejoice to share good news.

* 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:

Trenton Adams, Ruth Finley, Billy Augustus, JoAnn Hood, Donna Sue Buchanan,
Amy Wheeler, Shelley Wheeler, Madison,
Timothy Truitt, Darlene, Tom Kirkbrick, Cathy Clegg, Linda White

We pray for the repose of the soul of Jean English,
may her memory be a blessing.

We pray for the repose of the soul of Shirley Daly,
may her memory be a blessing.

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.

There are many ways to support The Old Stone Church

| | |
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| <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

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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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