



THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 14, 2025
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

When God Is a Child

Joan Collier Fogg

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

WELCOME

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT

View the Present through the Promise

Francis Jackson

View the present through the promise, Christ comes again
Trust despite the deepening darkness, Christ comes again
Lift the world above it's grieving through your watching and believing
In the hope past hope's conceiving: Christ comes again.

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice with great joy and singing,
for you shall see the glory of God.

**How shall we see the Sovereign One,
and where is joy to be found?**

God has promised to come to us,
with saving grace to meet our need.

**We are weighed down with limitations
and oppressed by many fears.**

God breaks into the deserts of our despair
with springs of water to quench our thirst.

**Grant us strength and patience
to await God's coming and receive the good news.**

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

**Open our eyes and unstop our ears
lest we miss your surprises, O God.
Heal our arthritic spirits,
which have been more disabling
than weak hands and feeble knees.
May we find in this hour of worship
good reason for everlasting joy and gladness.
Amen.**

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Bernard and Elie Medie

We light the third candle of Advent.
We look to John, the One you sent, to point us to your light.
The light will come into our world and enlighten everyone.
God sent John the Baptizer to prepare the people
for the coming of Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World.
John called for people to repent of their sins and to live faithfully.
He baptized with a cleansing water and proclaimed the new life that Christ,
the one who would follow him, would bring.
This Advent, we ask for God's mercy and a joyful new beginning.

**Merciful God, we give thanks that you send messengers like John
to call us to greater faith.
We ask that in these days we prepare for you in prayer
and acts of holy compassion.
Forgive us and lead us to your light. Amen.**

Cantor:

Shine on us, O God of justice; Guide our path through gloom of night;
Bear within us Wisdom's glory; Come to us, O Christ the Light.

Congregation:

**Shine on us, O God of justice; Guide our path through gloom of night;
Bear within us Wisdom's glory; Come to us, O Christ the Light.**

1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is
 2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to
 3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of

grow - ing thin. Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten
 drift a - way. Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness
 wis - dom's seed, come to bless with fire and fra - grance

to the stir - ring, faint with - in: seed of prom - ise, deep - ly
 shines the hope of com - ing day. Christ, the morn - ing star of
 hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need. In the lone - ly, in the

plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem! Like the soil be -
 splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim. Heav - en's em - ber
 strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view: child who comes to

neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
 fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
 grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Mary Musson

God calls us,
 grumblers and spiritual cripples, to examine ourselves.
 The world that, in our sinful state,
 seems like a barren desert may hold more beauty than we discern.
 And there is more within us than has yet been revealed.
 Let us together seek the stream of living water.
 Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
 followed by time for silent personal confession.
 Thus, we pray:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of the majestic and the mundane,
we are thirsty and have no cup,
for we have lived without faith.
Our sighs hide your still small voice,
and the larger vistas of your activity
are concealed from us by our obsession with proofs.
Pardon our feeble trust and forgive our low expectations.
We long to discern your presence in our daily encounters
and to be lifted up to your Holy Way.
Come, Everlasting One, to recreate us.**

(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE #90

WAIT FOR THE LORD

Cantor

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

Congregation

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The deserts will bloom,
and the eyes of the blind will be opened to see their beauty.
The rains will come,
and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped to hear their whispers.
The earth shall bring forth its precious fruits,
and we will have the strength to share in an abundant harvest.
God makes all things new, even us.

Thanks be to God.

* PASSING OF THE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us offer a sign of peace to one another.

* GLORIA #582

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.

God continues to lift up the lowly
and to topple the mighty from their thrones.

God judges us, not by worldly standards of greatness
but according to the genuineness of our compassion
and the extent of our faithfulness.

Our offerings are one measure of our priorities.

The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

All Praise to Thee

Elaine Hagenberg

All praise to Thee, eternal God who clothed in garb of flesh and blood
Dost take a manger for Thy throne While worlds on worlds are Thine alone. Alleluia

Thou comest in the darksome night to make us children of the light
To make us in the realms divine Like Thine own angels, round Thee shine. Alleluia

A little child, Thou art our Guest that weary ones in Thee may rest;
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth That we may rise, to heaven from earth. Alleluia

* DOXOLOGY #82

HYFRYDOL

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

* OFFERTORY PRAYER

Mary Musson

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**Generous and patient God,
you have redeemed us and restored all our senses and abilities.
Because we can see and hear your good news
we would reach out to others,
that you may touch them through us.
We have tasted your refreshing waters
and smelled the freshness of new life in your presence.
So we bring our gifts and ourselves
to share in your transforming work among us and in all the world.
Amen.**

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Grant Us Lord

STUTTART

Grant us, Lord, the grace of giving with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living we may offer unto thee. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Lord God, in this dry and dusty place,
pour out the power of your Spirit
so that your Word may blossom in our lives;
through Jesus Christ, our way in the wilderness. Amen.**

THE READINGS

Tanach

Isaiah 35:1-10 (Inclusive Bible)

Let the desert and the wilderness exult! Let the Arabah rejoice and bloom like the crocus! Let it blossom profusely, let it rejoice and sing for joy! The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of YHWH, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees. Say to all those of faint heart: "Take courage! Do not be afraid! Look, YHWH is coming, vindication is coming, the recompense of God—God is coming to save you!"

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be unsealed. Then those who cannot walk will leap like deer and the tongues of those who cannot speak will sing for joy. Waters will break forth in the wilderness, and there will be streams in the desert.

The scorched earth will become a lake; the parched land, springs of water.

The lairs where jackals used to dwell will become thickets of reed and papyrus.

And through it will run a highway, a road called the Sacred Path. The unclean may not travel by it, but it will be for God's people alone; and no traveler—not even fools—will go astray. No lions will be there, nor will any fierce beast roam about it, but the redeemed will walk there—for those whom YHWH has ransomed will return.

They will enter Zion shouting for joy, with everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them, and sorrow and lament will flee away.

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

With God's help we are listening

Gospel

Luke 1:46b-55 (Inclusive Bible)

“Mary said: “My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior. For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.

Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who revere you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy—the promise you made to our ancestors—to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
“The Virgin Mary’s Vision”



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.**

Capo 3: (D) (G) (A) (D) (Bm)
F B \flat C F Dm




1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and
2 I come with Chris-tians far and near to find, as all are
3 As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion
4 The Spir - it of the ris - en Christ, un - seen, but ev - er
5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound by all that God has

(Asus) (Am) (G) (F#m) (D)
Csus Cm B \flat Am F



free, the life of Je - sus to re - call, in
fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in
ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and
near, is in such friend - ship bet - ter known, a -
done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the

(Em) (D/F#) (G) (A) (Am7) (D)
Gm F/A B \flat C Cm7 F



love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.
Christ's com-mu - nion bread, in Christ's com-mu - nion bread.
strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.
live a - mong us here, a - live a - mong us here.
love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This text affirms that Christian unity is not achievement but gift, one renewed each time we gather for the Lord's Supper. Each of us enters as an "I" and leaves as part of "we." The unadorned language of this text is well matched to the simple shape note tune that sets it here.

TEXT: Brian Wren, 1968; rev. 1993

MUSIC: American folk melody; arr. Austin C. Lovelace, 1977

Text © 1971, rev. 1995 Hope Publishing Company

Music Arr. © 1977 Hope Publishing Company

DOVE OF PEACE

8.6.8.6.6

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Leap and sing for joy! God's promises are true.
Our limitations are overcome in Christ.

**We join the chorus of praise and thanksgiving,
for gladness reigns in place of sorrow.**

We have been saved and equipped to serve.
God gives us strength to triumph over fear.

**Jesus Christ, the One sent from God,
has set free the possibilities within us.**

Meet the coming week with fresh awareness,
for the Sovereign One walks with you.

**The way of Christ has been prepared for us.
We will invite others to join us on God's paths.**

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen

Roland M. Carter

POSTLUDE

All Earth Is Waiting

Alberto Taulé

*“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:

Regina George, Katherine McIntosh, Thelma Omsby, Kendalle Cobb,
John Davis, Bart Alcorn, Gail Harris, Fletcher Hattis, Addie Singleton,
Jean Rundlett, Gail, Debbie Carrick, Sandy Colombo,
Barbara Yoost, Charles Rabb, Renita Jackson-Dix, Eileen Kelly, Tony and Annie Carlos,
Marlon Naylor, Courtney Knapp, Mark Corey, Bruce Baunach, JoAnn Hood,
Judy and Frank Macuga, the Erow family, the Adams family

We pray for the repose of the soul of Richard Erow,
may his 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.



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.

@ First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Sunday December 14 Advent III

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

11:30AM Special Called Congregational Meeting/Sanctuary

Tuesday December 16

12:15PM Old Stone Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

6:30PM Stated Session Meeting/ZOOM

7:00PM Commentary on the Gospel of John/ZOOM

Wednesday December 17

11AM-2PM Open Doors/Sanctuary

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

Thursday December 18

7:00PM FPS Directors Meeting/Conference Room

Sunday December 21 Advent IV

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:15AM MUW Committee Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

11:30AM Christmas Eve Run Through/Sanctuary

11:30AM Deacons Meeting/Conference Room

11:30AM Greening of the Sanctuary/Sanctuary

1:00PM Browns/Bills/Huntington Bank Field

6:00PM Blue Christmas Service/Chapel

Tuesday December 23

12:15PM Old Stone Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

7:00PM Commentary on the Gospel of John/ZOOM

Wednesday December 24 Christmas Eve

5:00PM Christmas Eve Service/Sanctuary

7:00PM Christmas Eve Service/Sanctuary

Thursday December 25 Christmas Day

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

Friday December 26 Christmas Holiday

Building and Offices Closed

Sunday December 28 First Sunday of Christmas

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

Tuesday December 30

12:15PM Old Stone Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

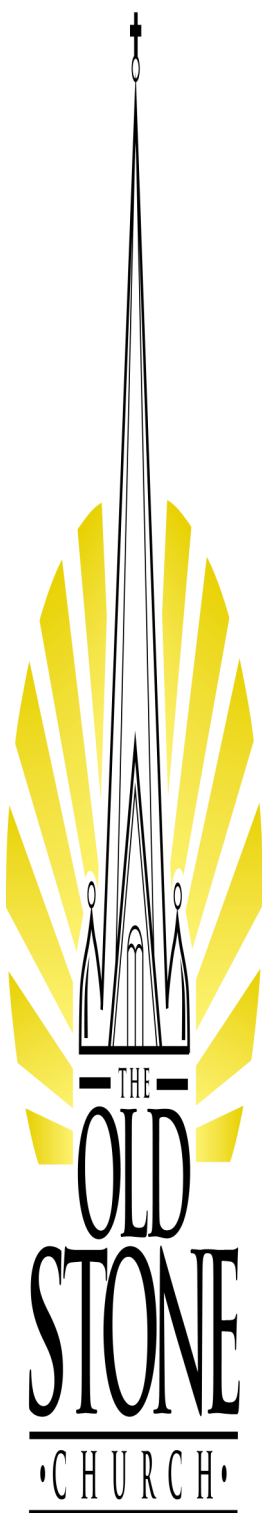
7:00PM Commentary on the Gospel of John/ZOOM

Wednesday December 31

6:00PM New Years Eve Service/Chapel

Thursday January 1 New Years Day/Building and Offices Closed

Friday January 2 New Years Holiday/Building and Offices Closed



Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:77 Online:224

There are many ways to support The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Online Giving:

oldstonechurch.org/giving/

Mobile Giving:

Text the keyword “oldstonecle” to 73256

Mail to:

The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland
Attn: Financial Office
91 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113

Scan the QR Code with your phone.



Checks should be made payable to “The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland”

All contributions are tax-deductible and will be appropriately acknowledged at year-end.

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Senior Pastor: Rev. Stephen C. Blonder Adams

Parish Associate: Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

Minister of Music: Evan M. Collins

The Old Stone Singers

Leah Jennings Brown, *soprano*

Kaya Sparks, *soprano*

Val Sibila, *soprano*

Ian Atwood, *tenor*

Stephen Brown, *tenor*

Noah Whitaker, *tenor*

Rayna Brooks, *alto*

Reese Henrick, *alto*

Morgan Potts, *alto*

R. Dominic Aragon, *bass*

Christopher Clark, *bass*

Albert Donze, *bass*

Church Elders:

Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

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

Class of 2027

Michelle Baron

Bernard Medie

Bob Reid

Church Deacons:

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

Class of 2027

Anand Bandari

Eric Grattan

Sunny Kunche

Amy Wheeler

John Wheeler

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