



THE OLD STONE CHURCH

DECEMBER 21, 2025
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

The Magnificat

Calvin Hampton

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

We who seek signs and put God to the test
are summoned once more to God's house.

**We want assurances in this fragile existence,
protection and rewards for our faithfulness.**

God does not bargain with us or play favorites,
but the gift of Emmanuel is available to all.

**It is often hard to know that God is with us,
or to see how this makes any difference.**

God's grace is real. We are called to be saints,
privileged to serve as apostles among all nations.

**How shall we handle God's expectations
or respond to the Sovereign One in our midst?**

Do not be afraid!

God's salvation comes to us as we are.

**Come, O come, Emmanuel,
that we may know the fulfillment you intend for us.**

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

**Amazing God,
we do not understand your ways,
but we are drawn to worship you.
Our world crashes in on us in ways that make us feel alone and afraid.
Come to us that we may discern right from wrong
and have the strength to choose what is good and true.
Equip us as we worship to make choices
and follow where you would lead us.
Amen.**

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Charlene Thornton and Mark Corey

O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.
We hear your angel Gabriel and witness the faith of Mary.
Fill us with your grace and light.
Mary was a young, strong, spiritual woman.
Even though her life was not easy, she heard God's voice and said yes.
Her song was a prayer that would uplift those who were downtrodden.
Her lyrics shattered the proud and called the world to change.
She would bear within her the promised child, Jesus, the Light of the World.
This Advent, we respond to God's beckoning to us as well.

**Revealing God, visit us and fill us with your Spirit.
Bring your good news to life within us.
Give us courage to carry your light into the injustices
and shadows of this world. 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.**

* HYMN #105

People, Look East

BESANÇON



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.



Peo - ple, look east:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Bird, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Natalie Ronayne

God must grow weary of our doubts and questions,
our unconscious reception of our Creator's good gifts,
our intolerance of sisters and brothers
whose experience and way of life are different from our own.
Let us open our hearts and minds
to reestablish contact with the One who gives us life.
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
followed by time for silent personal confession.
Thus, we pray:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O God, we have turned our backs on a simple life.
Our distractions are many and our appetites are voracious.
There is no end to our desire for things,
for entertainment, for new excitement.
We are self-centered and selfish.
Yet we expect you to respond to our every need
and grant us special favors.
Forgive us and restore in us a love
for you that helps us to see ourselves more clearly,
value the gift of life you entrust to us,
and appreciate the worth of our brothers and sisters.**
(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

There is good news!
God's grace comes to us in Jesus Christ.
We are forgiven.
We are restored to the community of faith.
We are made whole that we might do what God intends.
Let us give thanks, for God's mercy is sure,
and God's purposes can be trusted.
Thanks be to God.

* 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 #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.
In thanks for all God's gifts,
and in response to the tears of so many of God's children,
we now gather all that we have to share,
praying that these resources will accomplish much good among us
and far beyond our individual reach.
The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Annunciation Carol

John Rodgers

When Gabriel came to Mary, In robes of shimmering gold, Her mind was filled with wonder,
So great the news he told; "My heart in fear is throbbing, This thing it cannot be,
That God should stoop from Heaven, To be my son", said she.
But Gabriel spoke to comfort, Her fears and dread to lift,
"To thee in lonely dwelling shall come God's choicest gift,
Thy song shall rise to Heaven, Be still and unafraid - For humankind shall praise thy name!"

* DOXOLOGY #82 Verse 1

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

Natalie Ronayne

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**The amazing gift of One who fully embodied your intention
for humanity prompts us to make a grateful response.
In Christ we have known a love that will not let us go.
Through our offerings we would share this love
in our community and to the ends of the earth.
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

**As your Holy Spirit spoke to Joseph
the adoptive father of our Lord,
speak to us through your Word
that by hearing we too may receive faith
and be strengthened to do your will. Amen.**

THE READINGS

Tanach

Isaiah 7:10-16 (Inclusive Bible)

Once more YHWH spoke to Ahaz and said, “ask for a sign from YHWH your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!”

But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not put YHWH to the test!”

Then Isaiah said, “Listen, O House of David! Is it not enough for you to weary those around you, must you also weary my God? Therefore, the Holy One will give you a sign: This young woman will become pregnant and will give birth. You will name the child Immanu-El. This child will be living on curds and honey by the time it knows how to refuse evil and do good. But before that time—before the child knows how to refuse evil and do good—the land of the two rulers you dread will be laid to waste.”

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

With God's help we are listening.

This how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—'Salvation'—because he will save the people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and give birth, and the child will be named Immanuel"—a name that means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
"The Faith of Joseph"



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 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.

This 20th-century paraphrase is based on the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), commonly known by its opening Latin word, *Magnificat*. This song of praise offers clear reminders that God's purposes often lead to the reversal of human values, exalting the poor and dethroning the mighty.

TEXT: Miriam Therese Winter, 1979, rev. 1987

MUSIC: Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

Text © 1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters

Music Harm. © 1943, 1961, 1985 Church Pension Fund

MORNING SONG

CM

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Our busy world summons us back to the frantic rush;
there are so many things to do this week!

**In the excitement of Christmas programs and activities
we will not forget why we celebrate.**

The promise of Emmanuel is fulfilled:

God is with us all as we go our separate ways.

**We will see God in the expectant faces of children,
in harried parents and joyous grandparents.**

See God also in the lonely and bereaved,
in the homeless and jobless of this and many lands.

**Emmanuel can be real to these sufferers
if we embody the Christmas gift of love.**

Share generously as God has blessed you;
our faithfulness is measured by our caring.

**In joyful anticipation we offer ourselves to others
that God's salvation may find practical expression.**

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen

Roland M. Carter

POSTLUDE

Toccata on *Come, O Long-Expected Jesus* arr. Evan Collins

*"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, the Eisaman family

We pray for the repose of the soul of Adam Eisaman,
may his memory be a blessing.

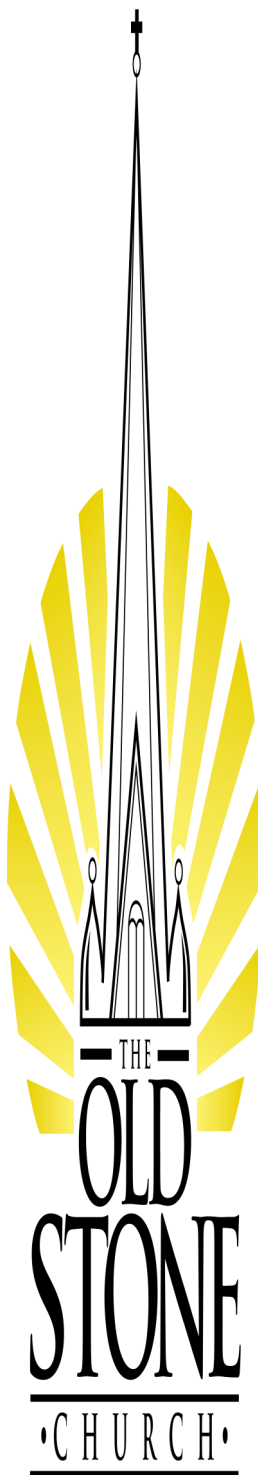
We pray for those struggling with illness, convalescing, homebound or in need.

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 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

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 with Communion/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

Sunday January 4 Epiphany

10:00AM Worship with Communion/Sanctuary

Tuesday January 6

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

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

Wednesday January 7

11AM-2PM Open Doors/Sanctuary

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

Sunday January 11 Baptism of the Lord

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

11:15AM MUW Committee Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:49 Online:267

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Text the keyword “oldstonecle” to 73256



Mail to:

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Attn: Financial Office
91 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113

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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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