



# THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

FEBRUARY 22, 2026  
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT  
**10AM Sanctuary Worship**

## WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

*Fairest Lord Jesus*

Herman Schroed

WELCOME

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT

*Create In Me*

John Purifoy

Create in me a clean heart, O God  
And renew a right spirit within me  
Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord  
And take not thy Holy Spirit from me  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation  
And renew a right spirit within me

\* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, people of God, to know again who you are,  
return to the One who gives you life.

**We come as children of God,  
longing for a closer walk with our Creator.**

The abundant grace of God  
is offered to all of us in Christ Jesus.

**We gather to receive that gift,  
to learn and remember how best to use it.**

We cannot live by bread alone;  
life is intended to be more than food.

**Our worship is the opening of ourselves  
to receive the gifts of the Spirit.**

Let nothing distract you from that intent;  
we have assembled that God may speak to us.

**We wait upon God, the Sovereign One,  
who knows us as we are and loves us.**

\* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

**The apostle Paul reminded members of the church at Rome  
that all human beings are sinners.**

**We all give our loyalty to goals and purposes  
that fall far short of the will of God.**

**We are all tempted, as was Jesus, to live by society's standards,  
to substitute material gain for spiritual integrity,  
to call attention to ourselves**

**rather than take our place within the body of Christ,  
to align ourselves with the power brokers of our day  
rather than recognize a Higher Power over all things.**

**Let us come to God,  
recognizing how unworthy we are  
to approach the One who embraces the universe,  
yet believing we are known and welcomed in this awesome Presence.  
Amen.**

\* HYMN #401

*Here in This Place  
(Verses 1,2 and 4)*

GATHER US IN



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing; now is the dark-ness  
2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who  
3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the  
4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,

van-ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings  
yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his - tory,  
bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,  
light years a - way: here in this place the new light is shin - ing;

brought here to you in the light of this day.  
called to be light to the whole hu - man race.  
call us a - new to be salt for the earth.  
now is the king - dom, and now is the day.

Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en; gath-er us in, the  
Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the  
Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion; give us to eat the  
Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er; gath-er us in and

blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en;  
proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly;  
bread that is you; nour - ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion  
make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,

we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.  
give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.  
lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

\* CALL TO CONFESSION

Valorie Hempstead

In our day, we cannot escape temptation,  
for it comes in so many forms, from so many sources.  
As Jesus was tempted, so are we.  
But we have yielded to temptation, and Jesus did not.  
Sometimes we do not even recognize the sins into which we have slipped.  
We seek to recall them now.  
Repent, and believe in the good news.  
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,  
followed by time for personal silent confession.  
Thus, we pray:

\* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of all time and space,  
we have joined our ancestors in seeking to live our own way.  
We have been tempted to play God  
with our own lives and those of others.  
We have confused freedom with self-indulgence.  
We have sought to make decisions that are not ours to make.  
We have put down others to gain status for ourselves  
or have accepted the hierarchies of this world  
as God-given when they are not.  
Forgive us, O God, and equip us for clear thinking,  
honest response, and loving service.  
In Jesus' name.**

*(moment of silent confession)*

\* KYRIE ELEISON

*Return to God*

*(Cantor)*

Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy;  
come seek the tender faithfulness of God.

*(Congregation)*

**Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy;  
come seek the tender faithfulness of God.**

\* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The abundance of God's grace is freely given to you this day.  
In Christ, we have known the reign of God's righteousness.  
God also lives in us.  
Receive this gift, with joy and thanksgiving,  
praising God for the new life that is yours.  
**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 #204

*Stay with Me*

STAY WITH ME

*(Cantor)*

Stay with me; remain here with me; watch and pray. Watch and pray.

*(Congregation)*

**Stay with me; remain here with me; watch and pray. Watch and pray.**

## OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.  
We dare to believe that the Power  
holding together the infinite reaches of time and space  
has entered into a covenant relationship with people on this tiny planet,  
that God gives us responsibility to be co-creators  
in the covenant community which is intended for all humanity.  
Our giving is dedicated to that end.  
The offering will now be received.

## OFFERING

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*In Manus Tuas*

John Sheppard

In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.  
Redemisti me Domine, Deus veritatis.

*Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.  
You have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.*

\* DOXOLOGY #215                      *What Wondrous Love Is This*                      WONDROUS LOVE  
**To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing.  
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I am, while millions join the theme,  
I will sing, I will sing; while millions join the theme, I will sing!**

### \* OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**Through our offerings, O God,  
we would supply bread to those who hunger  
and the bread of life to feed all who need spiritual nourishment.  
We who have received good news  
seek to live by it and to share the gospel with others.  
May our gifts and our lives proclaim your rule among all people,  
beginning in our midst and extending through all your world.  
Amen.**

### \* OFFERTORY RESPONSE

*We Give Thee But Thine Own*

J.S Bach

We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift may be.  
All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord from Thee. Amen.

# WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**O Lord, may the words of your mouth  
be our daily bread,  
and may the leading of your Spirit  
become our way;  
In Jesus' name.  
Amen.**

## THE READINGS

Psalm 32 (*Congregation sings the refrain*)

Lord, for - give the wrong I have done.

1. Blessed is he whose transgression is for - given, whose sin is re - mitted.  
2. To you I have acknowledged my sin; my guilt I did not hide.  
3. You are a hiding place for me; you keep me safe in dis - tress;  
4. Rejoice in the LORD; exult, you just!

1. Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no guile.  
2. I said, "I will confess my transgression to the LORD." And you have forgiven the guilt of my sin.  
3. you sur-round me with cries of de - liver - ance.  
4. Ring out your joy, all you up - right of heart!

Epistle

Romans 5:12-19 (Inclusive Bible)

Therefore, sin entered the world through the first humans, and through sin, death—and in this way death has spread through the whole human race, because all have sinned.

Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given, even though it's not called "sin" when there is no law. Even so, death reigned over all who lived from our first parents until Moses, even though their sin—unlike that of our first parents—was not a matter of breaking a law.

But the gift is not like the offense. For if by the offense of one couple all died, how much more did the grace of God—and the gracious gift of the One Jesus Christ—abound for all! The gift that came to us is not at all like what came through the ones who sinned. In the one case, the sentence followed upon one offense and brought condemnation; in the other, the free gift came after many offenses and brought complete acquittal. If death began its reign through one person because of an offense, so much more will those who receive the overflowing grace and the gift of justice live and reign through the One Jesus Christ.

To sum up, then: just as a single offense brought condemnation to all, a single righteous act brought all acquittal and life. Just as through one person's disobedience, all became sinners, so through one person's obedience, all will become just.

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

**With God's help we are listening.**

Gospel

Matthew 4:1-11 (Inclusive Bible)

Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry. Then the tempter approached and said, "If you are the Only Begotten, command these stones to turn into bread."

Jesus replied, "Scripture has it, 'We live not on bread alone but on every utterance that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Next the Devil took Jesus to the Holy City, set him on the parapet of the Temple and said, "If you are the Only Begotten, throw yourself down. Scripture has it, 'God will tell the angels to take care of you; with their hands they will support you that you may never stumble on a stone.'"

Jesus answered, "Scripture also says, 'Do not put God to the test.'"

The Devil then took Jesus up a very high mountain and displayed all the dominions of the world in their magnificence, promising, "All these I will give you if you fall down and worship me."

At this, Jesus said to the Devil, "Away with you, Satan! Scripture says, 'You will worship the Most High God; God alone will you adore.'"

At that the Devil left, and angels came and attended Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Matthew J. Skolnik

"Staying With God."

\* THE NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

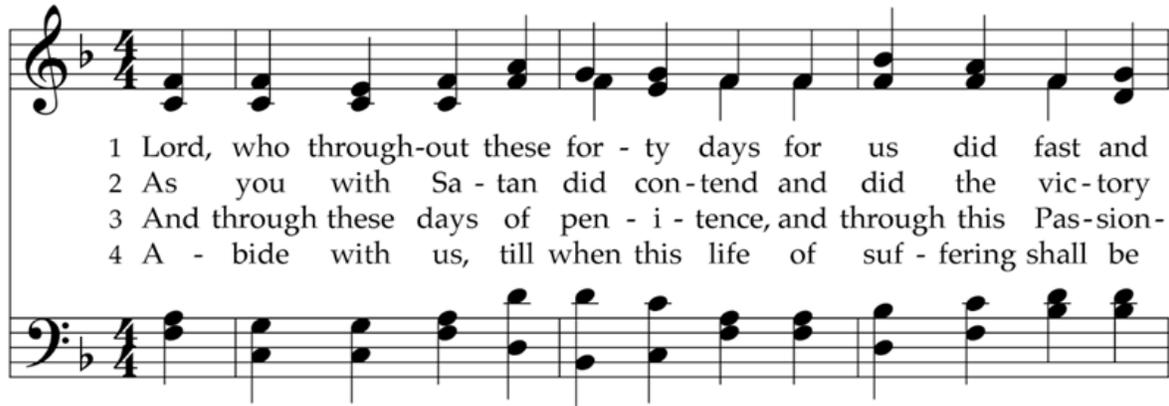
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son  
is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

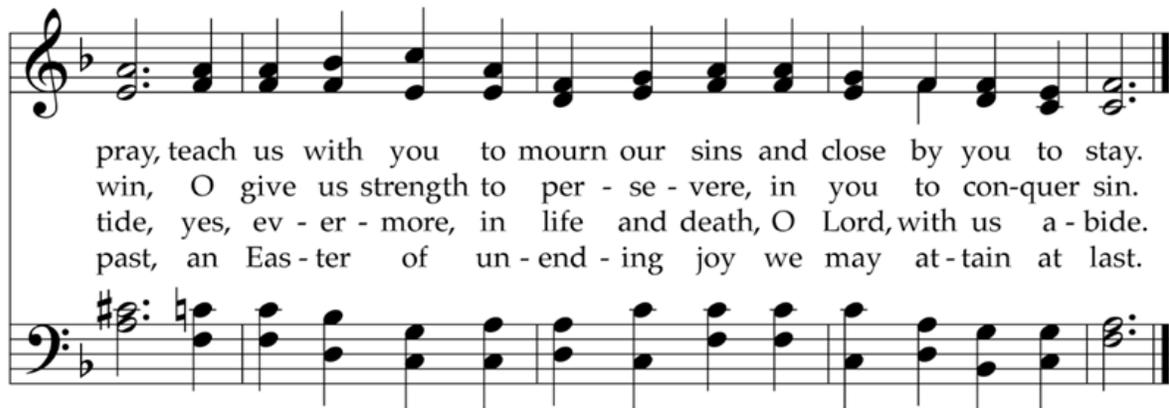
LIGHTING OF CANDLES, PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and  
2 As you with Sa - tan did con - tend and did the vic - tory  
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas - sion -  
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be



pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.  
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con - quer sin.  
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.  
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.



\* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Go forth, people of God, assured of God's grace,  
living in obedience to God's will and way.

**We will not live by bread alone,  
but by the word of God, as Christ lived it.**

The Christian way is not one of pride and superiority,  
but of loving service and sacrifice.

**We will not tempt the Sovereign One  
by seeking danger to prove God's care for us.**

God does not call us to a position of power  
or provide an easy way for those who are faithful.

**We will worship the One and Only God,  
revealed to us in Jesus Christ.**

We have met God in this service of worship.  
Let us walk with God in service to the world.

**We have received the blessing of God,  
to enrich and empower our loving and serving.**

\* CHORAL RESPONSE

*Polyphonic Amen*

Russell Wichmann

POSTLUDE

*You Are My Hiding Place*

arr. Mark Hayes

*“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:**

Bruce Arnoff, Todd St. Clair, George, Tralaina, Patricia Gerard, Dorland,  
Barbara Maloney, Regina George, Katherine McIntosh, Thelma Omsby, Kendalle Cobb,  
John Davis, Gail Harris, Fletcher Hattis, Addie Singleton, Carlos Fayne,  
Jack Moreland, Lynne Crawford, Sandy Colombo,  
Jayne Zborowsky, Charles Rabb, Tony and Annie Carlos, Courtney Knapp,  
Bruce Baunach, JoAnn Hood, Judy and Frank Macuga

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.

Today we welcome to the pulpit of The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, **Rev. Matthew J. Skolnik**. Matt serves as an ordained minister and presbytery executive with a pastoral heart for congregations and leaders navigating complexity, change, and uncertainty. Ordained in 2007, he has served as General Presbyter of Muskingum Valley Presbytery since January 2018, where his work has focused on strengthening leadership systems, cultivating trust, and helping churches receive the leadership they need and deserve. In January 2026 Matt was called as the part-time Transitional General Presbyter of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. Matt's ministry has been shaped by engagement with communities affected by political and geopolitical violence. He is married to a person who is displaced and is the parent of two older teenagers.

**@The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland**

**Sunday February 22 Lent I**

- 10:00AM** Worship/Sanctuary
- 11:30AM** Communion/Chapel
- 11:30AM** Hand Bell Practice/Gallery

**Tuesday February 24**

- 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 February 25**

- 12:15PM** Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

**Sunday March 1/Lent II**

- 10:00AM** Worship with Communion/Sanctuary
- 11:30AM** Hand Bell Practice/Gallery

**Tuesday March 3**

- 12:15PM** Old Stone Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room
- 7:00PM** Commentary on the Gospel of John/ZOOM

**Wednesday March 4**

- 12:15PM** Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary
- 6:00PM** Welcome and Fellowship Committee Meeting/ZOOM

**Sunday March 8/Lent III/Daylight Savings Time Begins**

- 10:00AM** Worship/Sanctuary
- 11:30AM** Communion/Chapel
- 4:00PM** Celebrity Chef/April Thompson/Memorial Hall

**Tuesday March 10**

- 12:15PM** Old Stone Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room
- 7:00PM** Commentary on the Gospel of John/ZOOM

**Wednesday March 11**

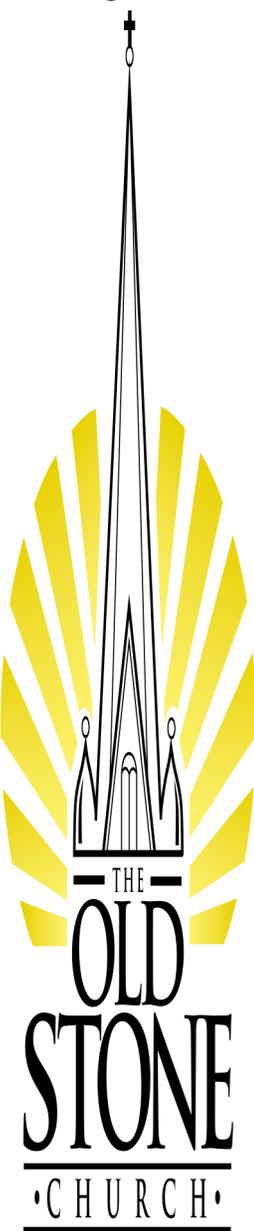
- 12:15PM** Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

**Thursday March 12**

- 2:00PM** Worship Committee Meeting/ZOOM

**Sunday March 15/Lent IV**

- 10:00AM** Worship/Sanctuary
- 11:30AM** Communion/Chapel
- 12:00PM** Elders & Deacons Retreat/Gallery/Chapel



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

**Last Sunday Attendance** In-Person:83 Online:266

There are many ways to support The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland  
Online Giving: [oldstonechurch.org/giving/](http://oldstonechurch.org/giving/)

Mobile Giving:  
Text the keyword "oldstonecle" to 73256



Mail to:  
The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland  
Attn: Financial Office  
1380 Ontario Street  
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.

### THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

LOVING CHRIST, SERVING CITY—SPIRITUALLY, SOCIALLY, CULTURALLY—SINCE 1820  
91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2058

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Website: [www.OldStoneChurch.org](http://www.OldStoneChurch.org) E-Mail: [info@OldStoneChurch.org](mailto:info@OldStoneChurch.org)

Music copied under ccli#1638695  
onelicense#A-742406

**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*

Stephen Brown, *tenor*

Christian Bush, *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 2026

Beth Buchanan

Judy Macuga

Melissa Maffia

Harriet Niles

Marty Vassel

#### Class of 2027

Michelle Baron

Bernard Medie

Bob Reid

#### Class of 2028

Dave Finley

Don Urban

### Church Deacons:

#### 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

#### Class of 2028

Valorie Hempstead

JoAnn Hood

Elie Medie

Brad Oglesby

Mark Pichler

Lori Montero

### Church Trustees:

#### Class of 2027

Dave Eifert

#### Class of 2027

Bruce Kranicz

#### Class of 2027

Mike Musson

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Your entry constitutes your consent to such photography, filming, livestreaming, and/or recording and to any use, in any media for The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland. Thank you.