

# Stone Church of the Brethren

December 31, 2023, First Sunday After Christmas

How Does a Weary World Rejoice?  
We Root Ourselves in Ritual

*"Rituals provide comfort because they remind us we're not alone.  
Billions of people have done this before as part of the timeless  
passages of life. Rituals also comfort because they concretize spiritual  
experiences." - David Brooks*

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Gesu Bambino* Pietro Yon

\*CALL TO WORSHIP\*\*

One: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

**All: Every Love Feast we break bread.**

One: Every week we gather for worship.

**All: Every day we count our blessings.**

One: Every minute God is near.

**All: Yes, every minute God is near.**

One: These are the rituals of our faith.

**All: Let us worship in joy and hope!**

\*SONG *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*<sup>^</sup> 210

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION\*\*

SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

SONG *Away in a Manger*<sup>^^</sup> 194

SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 11:1-3, 6-9

SONG *What Child is This*<sup>^</sup> 215

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:1-7

SONG *Love Came Down at Christmas*<sup>^^</sup> 208

\*RESPONSIVE SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2: 8-16

One: Nearby shepherds were living in the fields,  
guarding their sheep at night.  
The Lord's angel stood before them,  
the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.  
The angel said,

**All: "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—  
wonderful, joyous news for all people.  
Your savior is born today in David's city.  
He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you:  
you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly  
and lying in a manger."**

One: Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces  
was with the angel praising God. They said,

**All: "Glory to God in heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors."**

One: When the angels returned to heaven,  
the shepherds said to each other,  
"Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened.  
Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us."  
They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph,  
and the baby lying in the manger.

\*SONG *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*<sup>^</sup> 201

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:21-38

\*SONG *First Noel* ^ 199 vs 1,2,4

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REFLECTION\*\* by Rev. Cecelia D. Armstrong

WORSHIP LEADERS

Brooke and David Meadows

SONG *Infant Lowly*^^ 206

MUSICIANS

Kathy Myers, Organ and Piano  
Jill Keeney, French Horn  
Catherine Weld, Alto Saxophone  
Aaron Keeney, Euphonium  
Marty Keeney, Trumpet  
Nora Roth and Nina Meadows, Flutes

POEM\*\* *Muscle Memory* by Sarah Are Speed

\*SONG *Go Tell It on the Mountain*^^ African-American  
Spiritual

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens, there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! Above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *O How Joyfully* Sicilian Mariner's  
Hymn

Let us know you were here!

Scan the code to fill out the

Attendance Form:



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Congregational Meeting**

*Held hybrid on Sunday, January 7, 2023 at 9 AM.*

*This event will take place in the Fellowship Hall and online.*

Stone Church is an amazing place - a thriving, healthy church, filled with vitality and energy - and a long history of financial stability. However, we are not currently on a trajectory to maintain that financial stability. Thanks to good stewardship of our resources in the past, we are OK for now, but we need to plan for the ongoing sustainability of the church by having open conversations about our priorities and strategies for the future. Please plan on participating in these important discussions on January 7.

Further information will be sent out before the meeting. Coffee, snacks, and childcare will be provided.

*\*Please Rise, as Able, in Body or Spirit*

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