

# Old Stone Church - December 2021



God  
is still  
speaking,

## **WORDS FROM WANG** – “Are You Ready for an Advent-ure?”

The word *advent* comes from the Latin term, *adventus* meaning "arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something having great importance. Advent as a season is both a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ and includes the practices of repentance, meditation, and penance. Some call it a “mini Lent,” but without the fasting. Quite the opposite, as families and friends gather for feasts and merriment in what many have dubbed “the most wonderful time of the year.”

But wait...there’s more. The key word hear being “wait.” By now you know I have a bit of a pet peeve when it comes to beginning the celebrations. Namely, prematurely putting up the decorations and playing/singing Christmas songs, or going around saying “Merry Christmas.” Merriam-Webster defines the word *wait* as: *to stay in place in expectation of; to delay serving, as in a meal. It also means to remain stationary in readiness or expectation; to look forward to and hold back expectantly.* All of this is saying that celebrating the birth of Christ is not something intended to happen once the Halloween decorations are put away. Nor is it designed to be an extension of the Thanksgiving holiday (no thanks to the retail world’s invention of Black Friday).

In short, it took hundreds of years for the long-awaited Messiah to appear to those who longed for the event to occur. So the least we can do is to honor those forbears by “waiting” for the Christmas holiday to begin. Countless biblical writers in the Old Testament share the stories of those who sacrificed so much and who committed their faithful living to prepare for the new day that we associate with the birth of Christ. They waited for a very, very long time. *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.* (Jeremiah 33:14-15)

So you see, waiting is part of the plan and it only helps to provide spiritual growth and development as Christians. And waiting can truly enhance our understanding of God’s will for us - and should therefore be reflected in the ways that we prepare. So, do yourselves a favor. Don’t rush Christmas. Take the time necessary to prepare your bodies, your minds, and your spirits. It’s worth waiting for and yes, the long journey is all part of the tradition. Are you ready for the “Advent-ure”??

See ya’ in church.

*Pastor Bob*

## Worship Opportunities (December)

**December 5:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent

**Scripture:** Luke 3:1-6

**Sermon Theme:** *Some Things Are Worth Waiting For*

**Note:** The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



**December 12:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Scripture:** Luke 3:7-18

**Sermon Theme:** "Advent Greeting Cards"

**December 19:** The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Christmas Pageant:** *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*  
(presented by our children and youth)



**December 24:** Christmas Eve

4:00-6:00 – Christmas Eve Vigil (hosted by Steve & Karen Herdklotz)

7:30 - Candlelight Service

Lost in Jerusalem!

**December 26:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Christmas

**Scripture:** Luke 2:41-52

**Sermon Theme:** *Home Alone: Lost in Jerusalem*



**January 2:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Christmas

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-12

**Sermon Theme:** *Home By Another Way*

**Note:** The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



## Flames of the Spirit: *Rekindling the Flame*

Each month we continue to feature those items and events that can help represent our three-year “Flames of the Spirit” initiative. Each board, team, and committee of the church is being asked to support our 2021-22 mission of rebuilding community (*rekindling the flame*) as they discuss plans and programs for the coming year.

The Old Stone Church Presented:

### **A John Denver Christmas** **December 3 at 7:00 p.m.**

Bob Wang, who cut his guitar-playing-teeth on Denver’s music, presented a concert for Rockton area residents featuring many of the JD classics; all of which Denver performed on his Christmas albums and TV “specials.” Original songs like *Aspenglow*, *Christmas For Cowboys*, *A Baby Just Like You*, and the iconic Christmas carol sing-a-long. But to not disappoint, supported by a small combo, Bob also performed many other non-holiday classics like *Take Me Home Country Roads*, *Annie’s Song*, *Sunshine On My Shoulders*, and *Thank God I’m A Country Boy*.

The concert took place in the OSC sanctuary which was transformed into a country-like family room setting. Bob’s wife, Judy, was even on hand to provide us with some wonderful music, also! The concert was very well attended, and the raffle was a great success! Thank you to all who provided a hand in helping create this wonderful community experience. It was certainly an undertaking of love!



### **Confirmation Corner** – *December Schedule*

A good time was had by all on November 21<sup>st</sup> as we gathered for lunch in the old hotel in the grounds of *Midway Village* (thanks to Ken Thomson for making arrangements) followed by a special presentation by P.J. (one of the interpreters at Midway). Next we engaged in some tongue-twisting bible raps led by PBob and then broke into teams to meet the bible-look-up challenge merged with a poetic scavenger hunt taking us throughout the Victorian village. “Let’s do this again” were some of the parting words by our youth who enjoyed our time together in this gem of a museum that craftily preserves Rockford area history.

Our two December meetings take place at church on the following dates:

**December 5**                    **Faith Formation 4 @ 10:45 am**  
**December 19**                **Faith Formation 5 @ 10:45 am** (possibly including lunch together)

Mentors and youth should be meeting sometime this month to work on their next lessons together. We are still working on a possible Christmas caroling event TBD. The youth are also busy working with the Christian Ed board on this year’s Christmas Pageant which will be presented on 12.19.

## ***Blue Christmas: A Service of Wholeness and Healing***

Wednesday December 15 @ 10:30



Christmas can be a time for many when we are in need of that reassurance and comfort. Perhaps we are grieving over the loss of a loved one, struggling with illness, or have experienced the loss of a job. We wonder how we will get through the holidays.

*“Comfort, comfort my people, says our God” (Isaiah 40:1)*

There are many moments in our lives when we need comfort. There are tough times when we yearn for consolation. The suffering people who looked for the long-awaited Messiah were given a hope-filled image of God in the writings of Isaiah. It expresses the belief that no matter what happens to us, God will be there to comfort and support us.

Our Grief Group is hosting ***Blue Christmas: A Service of Wholeness and Healing*** in the Old Stone Church sanctuary on Wednesday December 15 at 10:30 a.m. and will last about 30 minutes. Any and all who are feeling a little “blue” during this holiday season are welcome to join us.

Immediately following the service there will be casual conversation along with fresh coffee and “something” sweet to enjoy. Any questions contact the church office at 815-624-6212.

## **November is a Month for Turkey!**

Another year, another successful Turkey Basket delivery! **Donn VanSchelven**, and his group of volunteers, successfully packed and delivered more than 100 turkey baskets again this Thanksgiving. Thank you to Donn, and all of his hard work, as well as the many volunteers and donors who make this possible every year!

In other Turkey news, the **Annual Veteran’s Day Turkey Dinner** was back in action this year! Led by a committee of 3, **Bonnie Estrada, Carol Henson, and Katherine Plessner**, the group organized the food and volunteers for a successful, yet new turkey dinner. All of the dinners this year were provided in a carryout style, and we were also able to successfully serve more than 100 dinners this year. It was definitely a bit of a new experience, but was successful, and fun was had by all. Thank you to all who helped with this year’s turkey dinner!



## Staff Gifts

This year has been a year of change, and even with the twists and turns that have been presented, the Old Stone Church Staff carries on to keep the church running at peak proficiency.

We are again asking that if you would like to contribute to the staff gifts this year, that you please put your donation in an envelope marked "staff gifts" and place it in with your weekly offering, or mail it to the church at 101 E Union Street P.O. Box 201 Rockton, IL 61072. Thank you all for your continued support.

*-Your Church Council*



## Reserve Your Christmas Poinsettia Today!

Christmas Poinsettias will be purchased again this year from Didier Greenhouse.

The \$10 plants will be delivered for Christmas Eve worship. If you would like to purchase, and dedicate a poinsettia this year, please put the money and completed form

in the offering with a notation for poinsettias, so we can get everything ready for the Christmas Eve service. If you have any questions, please speak with Lindsey.



## December Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Birthdays

1st- Harrison Thompson  
8th- Maggie Miller  
8th- Megan Steward  
10th- Fred Gleasman  
11th- Donna Balsley  
20th- Laura Slocum  
23rd- Sharon Funk  
25th- Mike Lancaster  
26th- Bonnie Ruper  
30th- Kathy Luety  
31st- Katy Butler

### Anniversaries

3rd- Steve & Diane  
Gleasman  
20th- George & Bonnie  
Ruper  
26th- Terry & Sandy Eck



*Happy Anniversary*



# December 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Pantry 9-11	3	4
5 communion	6	7 Council 7pm	8	9 Pantry 9-11	10	11
12	13	14	15 Blue Christmas 10:30am	16 Pantry 9-11	17	18 Youth Dress Rehearsal 9:30a
19 Youth Christmas Annual Mtg.	20	21	22	23 Pantry 9-11	24 Christmas eve 4-6 & 7:30 services	25 Merry Christmas!
26	27	28	29	30 Pantry Closed	31 New Year's Eve	

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**Old Stone Church Staff:**

**Pastor Bob Wang:** (262) 308-4180  
**Lindsey Lancaster:** Office Administrator  
**Bob Estrada:** Custodian

