

Old Stone Church - December 2022



God
is still
speaking,

WORDS FROM WANG – *Patience Truly is A Virtue*

By now, many of you are aware of at least one or two of my personal pet peeves. And one of the biggest peeves is fast-forwarding from Halloween to Christmas without as much as a thought or glimpse of the season of preparation; the “come thou long expected Jesus” period of watching and waiting. Advent.

As a person called by God to uphold some of the long-standing traditions of our faith, it is my job to remind you of the practice (even discipline) of *living in the waiting* as Christians have done for centuries. It’s called the season of Advent for a reason. So, as hard as it is to WAIT, there is a good liturgical reason to hold off singing the beloved Christmas carols until the appropriate time; specifically at the start of the Christmas season,

The word “advent” derives from the Latin “adventus”, meaning “coming.” During its earliest observances, Advent (not unlike Lent) was 40 days of repentance, fasting and prayer as new believers prepared for their baptisms. Later Christians began tying Advent not just to Christ’s incarnation, but to an anticipated second coming of Christ. Advent became a period for renewing the anticipation and longing for Jesus’ return.

Today, Advent is a period of preparation for both “advents” or arrivals--of Jesus. Lester Ruth, a professor at Duke Divinity School and a historian of Christian worship, offered this distinction for Advent: “The simplest way I have to distinguish between Advent and Christmas is that advent uses the word “come” as a longing petition, expressed in anticipation. Whereas Christmas is a commemorative reflection on how the Lord “has come” in Christ's birth and thus the trigger for a new redemptive order has begun.”

As cliché as it sounds, good things DO come to those who wait - patiently.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians wrote. *“I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* Ephesians 4:1-3

Let us pray, "God of hope, I look to you with an open heart and yearning spirit. During this Advent season, I will keep alert and awake, listening for your word and keeping to your precepts. My hope is in you." Amen.

May this holiday season bring you a sense of peace as you enjoy the process and anticipate the outcome. See ya’ in church.

Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities (December)

SIGNAL

December 4: The 2nd Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-10

Sermon Theme: *A Signal to the People*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served

2020 VISION

December 11: The 3rd Sunday in Advent

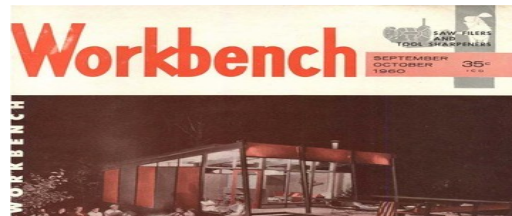
Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10

Sermon Theme: *2020 Vision*

December 18: The 4th Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon theme: *Tales From the Workbench*



December 24: Christmas Eve

4:00pm – Old Stone Church

7:00pm – 1st Congregational Church (Pecatonica)

Note: These two worship offerings will be nearly identical in content so you can choose either one. And with no Sunday morning service (the 25th) at either church, we trust all will opt to “ring in Christmas” at the Christmas Eve service that suits their schedules best.

December 25: Christmas Day

There will be no in-person worship service today. Please enjoy time with your family and friends. Pastor Bob will be posting a special pre-recorded Christmas message on the church website and FB page.

January 1: The 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46

Sermon Theme: *The Jesus in You*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served

Christ IN YOU



Crooked River Calendar of Events

December 10 - John Denver Christmas Concert (Pec)

The 2nd annual John Denver Christmas concert will take place in the sanctuary of 1st Congregational Church, Pecatonica at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 10th. There will be a freewill offering as well as a possible raffle. Profits from this event will go directly to the good people of *Hoo Haven*; one of our first community partners to collaborate with the Crooked River Ministries. Refreshments will be served during the intermission. See the flier included in this issue.



Celebrate Winter Solstice – Tuesday, December 20th @ 6:00 p.m.

The term “solstice” comes from the Latin words *sol* (Sun) and *sistere* (to stand still) because, during the solstice, the angle between the Sun’s rays and the plane of the Earth’s equator appears to stand still. For a few days before and after the solstice, the Sun’s path across the sky appears to freeze. This is all thanks to Earth’s tilted axis, which makes it so that one half of Earth is pointed away from the Sun and the other half is pointed towards it at the time of the solstice. The winter solstice, marks what many cultures believe to be a “rebirth” of the Sun as the hours of daylight gradually increase.

Certain pagan festivals around the winter solstice originally included rituals like the burning of a yule log which, like many other seasonal rituals, was eventually tied to the Christmas holiday. Even the inclusion of evergreen boughs, wreathes, and trees have their roots in winter solstice festivals.

This year, the winter solstice will occur December 21, 2022, at 4:48 P.M. EST and marks the start of astronomical winter in the Northern Hemisphere. However, the OSC Green Team is planning a winter solstice observance event on the evening prior, Tuesday the 20th.

Green team members, Mari Weikel and Ken Thomson have offered to host our event at their home which sports an awesome outdoor fire-pit located on their “peninsula.” The evening will consist of warm fellowship, story telling, poetry reading, singing, a campfire, and refreshments like hot cider, seasonal appetizers, and sweet treats. Participants are welcome to offer any of the above.

We do ask attendees consider bringing a seasonal appetizer or dessert to share (you can google suggestions for winter solstice observances. The internet offers much on the topic). If the weather is bearable we do plan on being outside for a portion of the evening so guests should come prepared for cold weather. However, their hearth and home will be open regardless.

If you are interested in joining the party please, R.S.V.P. to Ken at kensru@charter.net or call/text him at 815 -601-9380. Their home is located at 13744 Eunice, one house north of Rockton Rd. The first house on the left.

Crooked River Ministries Present:
Back Home Again

A holiday concert celebrating the music of
John Denver; featuring vocalist and guitarist, Bob Wang, and
friends.



Saturday December 10 @ 7:00 p.m.
1st Congregational Church of Pecatonica
633 Reed St. Pecatonica, IL

The concert is free to the public
A free-will offering will be taken with proceeds going to *Hoo Haven*
Light refreshments will be served during the intermission

Questions call 815-624-6212 or email
pastorboboscrockton@gmail.com

Crooked River Ministries is a collaboration between 1st Congregational UCC
(Pecatonica) and The Old Stone Church UCC (Rockton).

Blue Christmas: A Service of Wholeness and Healing
Wednesday December 7, 2022 @ 10:30

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



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.

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 7 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 4, **Bonnie Estrada, Carol Henson,**



Katherine Plessner, and Lindsey Lancaster, the group organized the food and volunteers for another successful turkey dinner. This year’s dinner was carry-out only, as it was last year, but continued to be a tradition held by many in the community. The dinner was successful, and fun was had by all. Thank you to all who helped with this year’s turkey dinner!

Staff Gifts

Throughout the year, the Staff of the Old Stone Church works tirelessly to make the church run smoothly and efficiently. We are lucky to have the wonderful people we have on staff here at OSC!

So, 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 \$12 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
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



— A Community Christmas “Luau” Sing-Along —

FEATURING

Students from Rockton’s very own:

STUDIO 3

And The Choirs of:

THE OLD STONE CHURCH & VERITAS CHRISTI HYBRID ACADEMY

...and some special guests including an appearance by SANTA!

COOKIE ALERT! Immediately following there will be a
CHRISTMAS COOKIE RECEPTION,
a CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK
and of course, our **ANNUAL LIMBO CONTEST!**



OLD STONE CHURCH
of Rockton, Illinois

**So wear your best beachwear and/or Hawaiian Shirt. (no swimsuits please)*

Sunday, December 11, 2022 @ 5 p.m.

Merry Christmas!



December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Pantry 9-11	2	3
4 Communion	5	6 Worship Team 7p	7 Grief Group (Blue Christmas) 10:30	8 Pantry 9-11	9	10
11	12	13 Council 7p	14	15 Pantry 9-11	16	17
18	19	20	21 Grief Group 10:30	22 Pantry 9-11	23	24 X-mas Eve 4pm
25 Christmas No Service	26	27	28	29 Pantry 9-11	30	31

Old Stone Church
 101 E. Union St
 Rockton, IL 61072
 (815) 624-6212
 Email: oldstonechurch@oldstonechurch.net
Oldstonechurch.net



Old Stone Church Staff:

Pastor Bob Wang: (262) 945-8475
Lindsey Lancaster: Office Administrator
Bob Estrada: Custodian

