

## **Old Stone Church: Faith and Continuity**

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The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, usually called Old Stone Church, was organized 175 years ago and has been meeting continuously on Public Square since that time. In the beginning the members of the congregation lived and worked near the church. Today the congregation lives in the suburbs and most other church buildings are in the suburbs. The question of moving out of the city has been discussed by the Old Stone membership many times, but the decision has always been to stay on Public Square and serve the downtown community

The founders of the church were very interested in the government, economy, education and morality of the community. An unusual number of Cleveland mayors, city council members, state legislators and judges as well as leaders of the business and banking community were Old Stone members. In the late 19th century pastors of Old Stone preached the social gospel and the women of the congregation enthusiastically responded with social welfare work as the neighborhood became crowded with immigrant industrial workers.

In the early twentieth century the neighborhood changed as new public buildings replaced much of the old housing and skyscrapers replaced the small shops and saloons on the Square. Professional social workers replaced church women in welfare work. The pastorate and congregation of Old Stone sought alternative community services and continues to be supportive of many projects. The congregation cherishes its historical connection with the city of Cleveland and expects the church to continue as a beacon of Christianity on the Square.