The Columns
LAKEWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (UCC)
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CHURCH
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mission Statement
We strive to be a welcoming, worshipping community of faith, helping people discover and deepen their relationship with God, growing as disciples of Christ, and reaching out in faith and loving service.

SUNDAY, February 3rd
Jeremiah 1:4-10
“A State of the Church Address”
Worship for All Ages
Holy Communion, Birthday & Hunger Sunday

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd
ANNUAL MEETING OF LAKEWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Immediately following worship, we will gather in the social hall for our youth fundraiser lunch and our meeting.
Childcare is provided.
As I Was Saying...

Hello and Welcome to February! January is a long month. It’s cold and dark and often feels like a bit of a let down after the holidays. February can be a long month too--even though it’s the shortest one. It’s “still” cold and “still” dark, and we’re getting tired of it!

February also brings us Valentine’s Day, and people love to hate Valentine’s Day. Maybe it reminds us of a romantic love we don’t have anymore, or we never had, or it reminds us of a spark that is fading, or just in general makes us feel particularly lonely. Whatever it is, I’ve noticed that people love to complain about how stupid the holiday is. But I’d like to reframe the day a little bit. One of the two greatest commandments is this: Love your neighbor as yourself (the other is like it-- love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind). Love your neighbor as yourself. But tell me, what good is it to love your neighbor as yourself if you don’t love yourself? I can’t tell you how many people I meet who don’t love themselves. How can you love your neighbor as yourself, if when you see yourself, you see failure, brokenness, or whatever form of “not enough.” How can you provide hospitality to your neighbor if you can’t even welcome yourself as you are? How can you practice forgiveness towards others if you’re holding a backpack full of grudges against yourself? What if, on Valentine’s Day, we think about loving ourselves a little better. After all, God made us in God’s image. Can you thank God for making you, “you”? You’re the best “you” any of us could have ever asked for, and we are just so glad you are a part of our church. Happy Valentine’s Day.

On another note--there’s lots of business stuff going on at the church right now. I’d really encourage you to pick up an annual meeting packet and read about all the many things that have happened this year in our “big transition” year at LCC. At our annual meeting after church on Sunday, February 3rd, we will also discuss the transitions that are ahead for this year--namely what we will do to live into our vision after Patti Komperda’s retirement from Director of Child and Family Ministries in June. I’m not going to share all of that information here in The February Columns, because the Executive Team will be presenting it at the annual meeting. If you are unable to attend the annual meeting, please contact me or the office, and we will send the slideshow presentation and a written summary to you anytime after the 3rd. I’m also happy to speak directly to you if you’d prefer! I am so excited and confident about the ways in which God is calling us into the future. The future for LCC is so bright, and God is so good.

Stay Warm! Love yourself! God made you beautiful!

Pastor Joanna
“Guide my feet while I run this race, for I don’t want to run this race in vain.”

About 15 years ago, I had the privilege of meeting a remarkable woman, Barbara Conrad. I was training as a pianist and vocal coach in the realm of operatic music and was taking part in a week-long summer intensive program hosted by Vassar College. Ms. Conrad certainly had expertise in that regard; she had sung mezzo-soprano roles at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and the Vienna State Opera. She had sung in Severance Hall, at the White House, and for Pope John Paul II. This would be a remarkable CV for most anyone of any heritage, but it was especially so given her uphill climb as a black woman in a historically white art form. In fact, she first came to national attention in 1957, when she was cast as Dido, Queen of Carthage in a UT-Austin production of *Dido and Aeneas*. Incensed by her playing opposite a Caucasian romantic lead, the State Legislature pressured school administration, and the role was taken away from her two weeks prior to opening night. Harry Belafonte heard about this and offered to pay Conrad’s way at any institution she chose. Conrad chose to stay at Austin, despite its shabby treatment of her, in order to complete her Bachelor’s and advocate for integration. Later on, she was championed and sponsored by Eleanor Roosevelt. UT now offers a scholarship in her name.

While Barbara Conrad was working with young opera singers in the masterclass I was playing for, she was not teaching us about how to sing Mozart, Puccini, or Wagner better; her area of focus was the African-American spiritual. In her elder years, she had become interested in the history of the spiritual and was an advocate for singing it artfully. There was much apprehension among my singer colleagues in the room; at most two of them were anything other than white. Though they had prepared the arrangements they were singing for her well and were talented, confident performers, each of them came onstage visibly filled with doubts, as did I. Coming from suburban privilege, what did we have to contribute to this beautiful, soulful genre of music, born of oppression and suffering, filled with collective trials and tribulations of a people, a people which was not us? Was this not a heinous act of cultural appropriation?

What ensued was a uniquely moving experience, as Ms. Conrad worked with each singer. In her words, she gently insinuated that it was not the color of anyone’s skin which made the singers’ initial performances anything less than authentic; rather, it was fear, insecurity, holding back. She correctly assessed that we were approaching the art form with kid gloves, taking refuge in the classical ideals of proper sound, fidelity to the page, and clear diction. What she coaxed out of everyone, myself included, was an openness, a bravery to express the deeper meaning of the music and words. She encouraged us to connect to what the text meant to us. Though we had not been brought across the Atlantic in shackles, as humans, we too knew of pain, fear, loss, and had unique things to say through singing and playing. The transformations I witnessed from each performer were shocking. The second time through, instead of polished performances, we started hearing raw, emotional readings of these venerable songs. Several times, tunes dissolved into tears, as the singers allowed themselves to feel challenging emotions. Frequently, the whole room was searching for tissues. It was a palpably cathartic experience for all of us, which I clearly still remember vividly.

The musician in me wants to point out that what Barbara Conrad helped the performers do that day with arrangements of spirituals is no different than what many artists do every day; they seek to find deeper truths, to go inside, behind, and through a page of notes or words, a canvas, a set of dance steps and say something unique and lasting with it to our fellow humans. What was different in this case was how the music and words brought us together and helped us connect to a people whose experience, past and present was, in so many ways radically different from our own. Now, while I can be idealistic, neither am I delusional, for I am well aware art cannot solve society’s problems. It cannot magically eradicate systemic racism, stop gun violence in its tracks, or reform our penal system. I do believe, however, and fondly hope that it can bring us closer, open doors and start dialogues, give us strength and faith to reach out, to make things better. Perhaps, our choir singing “Wade in the Water,” “All My Trials,” or “Praise His Holy Name” might be seen by some as disrespectful or appropriative. But I prefer to think, and I hope that Barbara Conrad (may she rest in peace...she passed away in 2017) would have my back on this, that in sharing this music with each other, we endeavor both to know ourselves and others better, and to make the world slightly more harmonious and less divided. For Jesus Christ asked us to do nothing less.

Thanks for reading, Ben
Children and Family Ministries

Patti Komperda

WORSHIP FOR ALL AGES

Our next Worship for All Ages, Hunger/Communion/February Birthday Sunday will be February 3, 2019.

In addition, our Annual Congregational Meeting, preceded by a Youth-hosted TACO Lunch (fundraiser), will occur after worship. We hope ALL members will be in attendance at the meeting, your voice counts!

Every Sunday, during worship, childcare is provided in our Nursery for the youngest members of our church family (infants-4 year olds), and Activity Bags for other children are located in the back of the Sanctuary, if needed.

2018-2019 Faith Formation for Children/Youth:

Our second semester FF Leaders have begun leading our young people along their Faith Journeys! We have explored Jesus as a toddler receiving gifts from the three Wise Men, to being Lost in the Temple, followed by his Baptism and beginning his call as rabbi-teacher.

In February, we will read stories about how following Jesus is following God’s way.

The children continue to make cards for our LCC Friends and Family, and decorated Valentines for our February 7th Community Meal guests.

ELIZA JENNINGS WORSHIP

Thank You to the dozen preteens/teens and Laura Rickard and David Diemert for helping with our Dr. MLK worship celebration at Eliza Jennings on January 13th.

Our next worship will be February 10th.

PLEASE meet in the Youth Room no later than 10:00am to organize and get on our way. Adult drivers are always needed, so stop by the Youth Room before worship and see if we have enough...or not!

Music and Faith Formation:

As you know, Music for our children has been integrated into our Faith Formation programming...we want our children to know that there are many ways we can praise the Lord and ask for help and guidance—through reading, art, dance, acting, and music. Noah Hamrick, our Children’s/Youth Music Director, will continue working with our young people to develop their music skills and love for music this year!

We were blessed with all kinds of music in December and look forward to more throughout the year.

The children and Youth begin working on their annual Youth Musical, “You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown”, to be presented April 13th and 14th (Palm Sunday weekend).

Doug Bailey and Ben Malkevitch are the Artistic and Music Directors for this year’s production—Thank You both...ahead of time!
Children and Family Ministries

Middle and High School Youth Groups:
Ed Gemerchek (Director of Y-Haven) and Sean (actor/resident) spoke to the Youth after worship on January 13th about homelessness and addiction. This preceded their 15th annual Homeless Awareness Sleep-Out. Special Thanks to all the 22 youth and the 5 Parent organizers- Kristen/Brad Humphreys, Liz Maugans/John G. Bando, and Greg Wereb- Brrrrr...it WAS COLD! Over $6,000 has been donated so far, all of which gets donated back to facilities/organizations supporting the homeless.

The Youth will be serving a TACO LUNCH before the LCC Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 3rd
Order 1, 2, 3, or even 4 tacos! Si!
All proceeds benefit the Youth Mission Trip in July 2019.

Helping others find life in water...
This church year, the Children’s Offering each Sunday will be donated to the United Church of Christ Mozambique (UCCM), a UCC organization that helps bring clean water to areas of Mozambique through the construction of cisterns for communities in need of clean/safe drinking water. The LCC Outreach Team has committed to making this happen for these communities through our support.

(When you use these envelopes, please be sure to put your child’s name on the back so that we can add this contribution to your Family’s Pledge for the year. Also, this gives your child a chance to feel good about giving, when he/she puts the envelope in the Miracle Jar each Sunday.)

Since joining back with our children after the holiday break, we have been busy learning as usual. We welcomed our January 3 year old class with open arms. They are enjoying meeting new friends and navigating around a whole room full of new toys!

We will also host Arts Inspired Learning in January. They will show us some wonderful dance moves and get our kids moving. It’s so good for them during these winter months!

We continue to collect food for the hungry. The kids are always eager to add to our donation box. We are so happy to join with LCC on this helpful outreach, especially at this time of year.

Haynes also will offer vision screening in early February for all of students in conjunction with the Cleveland Sight Center.

We are so excited to see all of the upgrades being done to our well-loved building. We thank everyone who has been a part of this endeavor, especially John and Joanna.

Alison Yonkers, Director, 216-256-1578
Our confirmation class is moving right along. We met for the first time with all of our sponsors in late January, and spent some time talking about why each confirmation student chose their mentor, and then allowing their mentor to talk about why they call LCC “home.” Common themes had to do with feeling welcome and loved, being allowed to question and evolve on our faith journey, being ‘ourselves’ here, and being a part of a church with strong children and youth programming. I loved hearing everyone’s stories and am delighted to see the ways that we grow together in the coming months in confirmation.

Our confirmand-sponsor partnerships are: Brandon Erway with Shawn Warren, Olivia Diemert with Julie Warren, Cameron Wereb with Sarah Banyasz, Sofia Boyd with Emma Barcelona, Edie Barcelona with Kelly Amen, Evelyn Richards with Jay Tamilio, Rosie Cronin with Greg Wereb, Parker Toms with Sue Tamilio, Frankie Basile with Carrie Hill, Sean Taylor with Tom Leatherman, and Keller Sbertoli with Bill Fraunfelder (not pictured).

Please keep us all in your prayers as we navigate this beautiful journey.

Pastor Joanna
COMMUNITY MEAL
THURSDAY, February 7th

Join us for the LCC Community Meal!

As always, we will start set-up and food preparation about 4:00pm. We'll then plate the food and be ready for service at 6:00pm. We will be celebrating Valentine’s Day and expecting higher numbers as people recover from the government shutdown/furloughs.

We will need people to help put up tables and chairs, set tables, make coffee, tea, lemonade and food. During dinner, we will need a few folks in the kitchen to assist with refilling dishes for second helpings and afterwards we will need assistance with clean-up of the social hall and kitchen.

We generally finish up by 7:15pm or so - we welcome you for any amount of time you can join us!

If you are unable to make our community dinner but are interested in serving, Trinity is in need of help for their community meals. Their February schedule is posted below.

Thank you, Cynthia Sbertoli, cksbertoli@outlook.com

TRINITY COMMUNITY MEALS : FEBRUARY 2019:

Monday, February 4, at 6:00 pm
Sunday, February 10, at 4:00 pm
Saturday, February 16, 12:00 pm

Volunteers are needed for two shifts for each meal. The first shift helps with meal prep and setting up for the meal. The second shirt helps with serving the meal and cleaning-up afterwards.

TRINITY PANTRY: Our pantry distribution is Saturday, February 23, 10:00 am-12:00 pm and volunteers are welcome between 9:00 am-9:30 am to help with the bagging of goods.

To volunteer, sign-up at this link or with Pastor Sara at tlcolkw@gmail.com

Trinity is also looking for a lead cook for the third Saturday meal. If at all interested, please contact Pastor Sara.
A Ministry to Serve

COMMUNITY CORNER

Have you recently volunteered? Are you part of an event that needs volunteers or fundraising? Please contact Laura Hampton at lblesseh@bw.edu to have your information included in future additions of The Columns or the weekly bulletin.

The Adult Faith Formation Team

The Adult Faith Formation Team, in keeping with the Mission Statement of our church, hopes you will take the initiative to venture out, learn more, and come back ready to discuss with your church family the questions/thoughts/worries/suggestions you have to the all-pervasive problem of the many injustices imposed upon marginalized people-young and old- not only in the U.S., but around our world.

This year, we will extend our Sacred Conversation to include two additional groups of marginalized people as we explore Gender Identity and Prison Reform. The dates of these programs will be posted on the Adult Faith Formation bulletin board in the West Clifton hallway.

Ellen Reihm (NAMI) presented excellent information about Mental Illness on January 9th.

Mark your calendars now for our 2019 Ash Wednesday Potluck SOUP dinner/Station Walk beginning at 6:00 pm, on Wednesday, March 6th in the Social Hall. We will have dinner, then move from station to station throughout the building until we receive ashes in the Sanctuary around 7:15 pm. This is a MULTI-generational gathering; we hope all age groups will come and begin our Lenten Journey together. This year’s theme:

Unburden Your Spirit...

MARTHA’S TABLE

Martha’s Table is an “INreach” Team at LCC (Nurture and Growth) needs HELP*... Many of you are familiar with Martha, the woman from the Bible who was all about serving Jesus and others great meals at her home! (Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-44, 12:2). Our own Martha’s Table began a few years ago and has served our LCC family members many meals to help nourish the body, the mind, and the soul when life has become difficult to manage.

Jennifer Schwelik and Lisa Smith head up the Team of chefs/bakers/deliverers;

*If you are interested in being a part of this behind-the-scenes Team, email or call Jennifer or Lisa (see Church Directory.)

And, if you are in need of a meal due to an illness, death, new baby, or some other reason that prevents you from cooking a dinner, call the church office (216-221-9555).
In and Around LCC

Adventures in Reading
CALLING ALL READERS!
Come to Adventures in Reading (LCC book club)
the 2nd Tuesday of each month.
Tuesday, February 12th
12:30 p.m.
Westlake Porter Library
27333 Center Ridge Rd.

Book: Educated (copyright 2018) by Tara Westover.

Looking ahead to February:
Our K Callentine will lead the review and discussion of Educated (copyright 2018) by Tara Westover. Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born in rural Idaho to radical survivalist Mormon parents, she is the youngest of seven children. The family followed a self-sufficient lifestyle that was skeptical of public education, doctors and hospitals, and the federal government. In the summer, she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father’s junkyard. Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough to be admitted to Brigham Young University. Her quest for knowledge transformed her; she earned a masters and doctorate degree from Cambridge and was a visiting fellow at Harvard. Educated is a memoir of self-invention. It documents a story of family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties.

Looking ahead to March: Our book for discussion will be The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper (copyright 2016) by Phaedra Patrick

Reminder: Don’t forget to sign up on the West Clifton bulletin board or email/call Kathy MacDougall (216-228-1975).

SECOND SATURDAY—
FEBRUARY 9TH

Women in our church family are invited to join us for Second Saturday on Saturday, February 9th at 9:00am in the Parlor.

We meet for an hour of conversation, reflection, and prayer. Take some time to connect and get to know other women as we navigate our journeys as women of faith.

FRIEND’S CIRCLE

The group formerly known as “Boomer Gals” is now welcoming all ladies of LCC, regardless of age, to enjoy the company of other LCC women as we meet bi-monthly to catch-up, do service projects, movie-watch, eat, and more!!!!! We look forward to celebrating Chinese New Year at Pearl of the Orient (Detroit Road, Rocky River) at 6:30 pm on February 4th.

Please RSVP to Debi Kasper at (440) 554-8798 or at debakasper@gmail.com by February 1st.
Feb. 3 Marian Kenney
Feb. 5 Mark Hogan
Feb. 6 Bonnie Harbaugh
           Sandie King
           Martha Skillen
Feb. 10 Justin Hiller
Feb. 11 Peggi Mizen
Feb. 15 Amelia Diemert
Feb. 17 George Alkire
Feb. 18 Amy Kemp
           Peter Kuhn
Feb. 20 Jack Wills
           Lily Wills
Feb. 21 Judy Foote
           Laura Sangree
Feb. 23 Sally Alkire
Feb. 24 Christopher Leo
Feb. 25 Matthew March
Feb. 26 Paige Smigelski
Feb. 28 Tom Leatherman

A Haynes Nursery School February Fundraiser especially for YOU! Please support our 50+ year old Nursery School, begun by member, Marjorie Haynes, in 1966 by “buying” a little bit of love for a Past/Present/or Future Student or Staff Member. Check out the “Show a Little Love” bulletin board by the church office. Envelopes will be available during worship on Sunday and through the church office. See Patti K for questions.
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<td>12 pm Youth Musical Rehearsal — Social Hall</td>
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<td>7 pm Executive Team Meeting — Parlor</td>
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<td>7 pm Trinity Council Meeting-Library</td>
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<td>10 am-12 pm Trinity Pantry — downstairs</td>
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STAFF:
Senior Minister
Joanna D’Agostino
revjoanna@lcc-church.org

Director of Music
Ben Malkevitch
ben@lcc-church.org

Director of Children & Family Ministries
Patti Komperda
pjkompe@yahoo.com

Director of Children & Youth Music
Noah Hamrick
noah@lcc-church.org

Youth Ministry Leaders
Sarah & Mike Banyasz

Office Manager
Karen Lee
karen@lcc-church.org

Financial Manager
Patti Dobro
pattidobro@lcc-church.org

Pastor Emeritus (in memoriam)
Lyman G. Farrar

Childcare
Jacqueline Reasor

Building and Property
Liz Spahr

HAYNES NURSERY SCHOOL
Alison Yonkers, Director
haynesnurseryschool@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE TEAM:
Chair: Greg Wereb
Vice-Chair: Liz Spahr
Moderator: Michael Komperda
Treasurer: David Mechenbier
Nurture and Growth Ministries:
Judy Foote
Welcoming Ministries:
Scott Suttell
Outreach Ministries: Christy Gray
Diaconate: Vicki Smigelski

SUNDAY WORSHIP:
NURSERY: Sunday, 9:50 a.m.
WORSHIP: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.
FAITH FORMATION: 10:15 a.m.
(Children start in worship and are excused to attend classes at Faith Formation time)

PHONE: 216-221-9555
FAX: 216-221-9088
WEBSITE: www.lcc-church.org
E-MAIL: lccstaff@lcc-church.org

CIRCLE THESE DAYS ON YOUR CALENDARS:
- Sunday, February 3: LCC Annual Meeting: 11:00am
- Sunday, February 10: Visit to the Islamic Center of Cleveland
- Wednesday, March 6: Ash Wednesday Potluck/Station Walk
- Saturday, March 9: LCC Annual Talent Show: World Travel: 6:00pm—tickets on sale after worship on Sundays!