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.

JANUARY 2020

SUNDAY, January 5th
Worship for All Ages
Holy Communion,
Birthday & Hunger Sunday

ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd
ANNUAL MEETING OF LAKEWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Immediately following worship, we will gather in the social hall
Childcare is provided
2020, eh? The year of perfect vision.

You probably don’t know that I have had very poor vision for most of my life. I only wear contact lenses because glasses make me feel disoriented and dizzy. I take out my contacts immediately before going to bed and put them back in before anything else in the morning. Without them, most of what I can see is fuzzy outlines of objects. I can’t even decipher between my children when they walk in the room, and I’m not eligible for laser eye surgery.

Many of my childhood stories have to do with my poor eyesight (i.e., my bad elementary school grades because I couldn’t see the board, or the time my dad and I accidentally chose the same eyeglass frames and I was mortified but they were too expensive to exchange).

I don’t think about it much anymore, though it would certainly be nice to see when I wake up in the middle of the night.

All of that said, I’m still calling 2020 “The Year of Perfect Vision.”

Our church has been in a season of visioning for several years. Good vision promotes growth, and growth is a sign of life. Our growth indicates that our church is adding value and purpose to the lives of those who gather here, at least enough that they will take time out of their busy schedules to be a part of it.

Most mainline Protestant congregations follow a “congregational size theory” that comes from the Alban Institute. It includes four sizes: family, pastoral, programmatic, and corporate. LCC is in the midst of a shift from a Pastoral-sized to Programmatic-sized church. This shift requires attention to structure and organization, stewardship and staffing, and continual relationship-building and the weaving together of our community, while maintaining a mindfulness that our entire mission is to be responsive to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many church theorists would add that in addition to those four sizes, a particularly big shift takes place in a congregation when it hits 200 in its average worship attendance. Last month, we broke 200 on a Sunday for the first time (aside from Easter and Christmas) in many, many years.

Please hear me loud and clear when I say that bigger does not mean better. Our growth does not mean we are better than other churches or somehow more faithful to the Gospel. What it does mean is we need to be intentional about our VISION: organizational structure, stewardship of our assets, and short-term and long-term visioning so we can remain attentive and effective in our response to the Gospel.

The Alban Institute also says that when a church starts growing, it doesn’t usually just “stop.” So it’s essential in 2020 that we have the vision to look ahead and to organize ourselves in such a way that we can be effective in our service to God in the world and remain a community woven together in love, support, and care for one another. This means the staff at LCC, the Executive Team, and other lay leaders in our church need to be intentional and prudent, with eyes and hearts focused on walking in the way of Christ and occupying the overlap of the Venn Diagram between Heaven and Earth.

If you’re interested in joining us, our Executive Team and staff will be reading a book titled The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations by Alice Mann. I think it will help you to understand some of the shifts happening within our congregation, and how we can be supportive of one another at this particular season in the life of LCC.

I may have the imperfect vision of a human being, but I am focused on the perfect vision of the Gospel. My leadership is in response to that call, with grace upon grace for the times each one of us falls short. I am grateful for your trust, your generosity, and your love of God and this church. I hope you know few things in my life give me more joy than being the pastor of Lakewood Congregational Church.

Happy New Year!
Rev. Joanna D’Agostino
It seems more than fitting that some of the most beloved songs, sung every year in all languages worldwide, should be Christmas carols. A couple of years ago, I wrote a column about the story behind some of our beloved carols, and I thought it might be interesting to research a few more for you and let you know what I’ve learned.

*I Saw Three Ships*, which the choir sang on Christmas Eve, originated in 17th century England. If you think about it for a second, there is no water route into Bethlehem, with the closest body of water being the landlocked Dead Sea. So there are a few theories... the ships may have been the ones which brought the purported relics of the Magi to the Cathedral in Cologne, Germany, in the 12th century. It might have referred to the three ships on the coat of arms of King Wenceslaus. Or perhaps the ships were the camels the Magi rode, camels often being referred to as “ships of the desert.” Regardless, it’s a hearty carol which we love to sing.

*Good King Wenceslas* (Saint Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia) was apparently quite a guy - he braved a harsh Bohemian winter in order to bring alms to a peasant on St. Stephen’s Day. Why does he get such good press? Apparently, within decades of his death in the 10th century, four hagiographies (biographies of the lives of saints) were written about him. These writings helped develop the Middle Ages concept of “rex iustus,” the idea of monarchs ruling wisely, justly, and piously, though many would fail to live up to that standard. Later on, Pope Pius II would walk ten miles barefoot in the ice and snow as an act of thanksgiving and in homage to his predecessor.

*The Twelve Days of Christmas* is definitely considered a bit more secular, what with its lords a-leaping and swans a-swimming. But there is some speculation, possibly spurious (but it makes a good story), that the song was meant to help remember some basic catechism - tenets of the faith if you will. The partridge represents one God, the two turtle doves, the Old and New Testament; the three French hens, the Trinity; the four calling birds, the Gospel; the five golden rings, the five books of the Pentateuch, and so forth. If you’re curious to read more about the provenance of this song and the controversy surrounding various things, check out this article: [https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/twelve-days-christmas](https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/twelve-days-christmas)

Before you know it, February will be here, along with our royalty-themed Talent Show and Silent Auction on Saturday, February 9, as well as Music Sunday on the 24th. This year’s programming will feature a Festival of Psalms, so you can bet I’ll be writing more about that next month. In the meantime, Happy New Year and make a joyful noise!

Thanks for reading, Ben
Church Family,

My first December at LCC was such a joy! From the Advent Potluck to musical auditions to Eliza Jennings Worship to the Light Up Lakewood Parade, the Christmas Pageant and Dinner, Christmas Eve and more, it’s been a holiday to remember!

In Faith Formation, our children and youth counted down toward Christmas with an Advent litany and activities this week to celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love that God gives us through Jesus. Our Christmas Pageant reminded us that everyone is welcome at Jesus’ manger and also in our church, whether they are in a place of darkness or light. God’s love is for each of us!

We are kicking off the new year by jumping right into rehearsals for the youth musical and getting ready for the Homeless Awareness Sleep Out which will be January 18th.

This month, in Faith Formation, we will continue to light the Christ candle each week. Our litany says:

\[ \begin{align*}
  &\text{We light this candle} \\
  &\text{And watch it glow.} \\
  &\text{God’s love is with us} \\
  &\text{Wherever we go.}
\end{align*} \]

Together, we will learn from Jesus and his followers that we are loved by God and called by God to follow Jesus and share God’s love with others. I hope you will join us!

Many blessings,
Rachel Burns

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Homeless Awareness Sleep Out (HASO)

Since 2006, the youth of LCC have participated in the Homeless Awareness Sleep Out. They construct outdoor “homes” made out of tarps and cardboard boxes and literally sleep out on the front steps of LCC overnight, all night.

Every year in mid-January, in the snow, sleet, rain, and/or zero degree temperatures, they collect money to donate back to those who are in need. Over $53,000 has been raised since the program first began.

Our Homeless Awareness Sleep Out (HASO) will be January 18th beginning at 4:30pm and will continue through worship on the 19th. All 6th-12th graders are encouraged to participate. Our 6th-8th graders will need to have a parent chaperone for the event. All participants are expected to attend our HASO information meeting with a parent on January 12th from 11:15-12:15pm. A pizza lunch will be provided.

Questions prior to the event, contact:
Kristen Humphreys or Liz Maugans

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Stay Up To Date
Stay up to date with all of our happenings for children, youth, and families!

To be added to our email list, be sure you have turned in your Faith Formation registration forms. The forms are available on the church website. Forms

Additionally, you may be added to the email list by emailing your request to Rachel.
Rachel@lcc-church.org
Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

Youth Planning Team: Monday, January 6, 7pm-8pm
All youth and adults who would like to help plan for our Youth Ministry should attend our next meeting. We will be planning for the rest of the school year and discussing fund raising. All are welcome!

Seussical Dates
The cast of the LCC Musical, Seussical, is excited to begin rehearsing this month! For information and updates about our musical, keep an eye on the CYF bulletin board.
Rehearsals will be held on Sunday afternoons beginning Sunday, January 5.
Parent Information Meeting: Sunday, January 5, 12pm, in the Parlor
Performances:
Friday, April 3rd (7pm), Saturday, April 4th (7pm) and Sunday, April 5th (2pm)
Please contact Music Director, Noah Hamrick with any questions. noah@lcc-church.org

Sunday, January 5, 11:15am-12pm, Youth Room
All 8th-12th graders and their parents are invited to come to our Mission Trip Info. Meeting. Pizza will be provided and you can expect to hear about our mission trip which will be the week of July 19th, 2020.
Registration for the Mission Trip will begin on January 5th as well.

ELIZA JENNINGS WORSHIP-Our next worship will be: Sunday, January 12th
All 6th-12th graders are encouraged to help lead worship at Eliza Jennings Assisted Living. Transportation is provided. This is a fun way to spend time with your friends while giving back to others.
Parents, if you would like to help out by driving for this event, please contact Rachel. All youth not riding with their parent will need to turn in a Faith Formation Registration and Medical/Liability Release prior to the event (Forms and at www.lcc-church.org).

CONFIRMATION EVENTS
In addition to Faith Formation and the Homeless Awareness Sleep Out, our Ketchup Confirmation students should plan to attend our visit to St. James Catholic Church on 1/25 at 4:30pm and confirmation class with Rev. Joanna on 1/26 at 11:15am in the church library (feel free to grab snacks from coffee hour before you come to class).
What a terrific start to our school year and boy did it go fast! I can't believe the holidays are over and that we have finally reached 2020. I'm not sure I ever thought I would get to this year!

I have our classes nearly full for the upcoming fall already. I do have some spots for 3 year olds. Please spread the word. I love showing off our school to perspective families so if you know anyone in need of the best preschool in the area, send them my way!

Thank you for the support you have continued to offer to our families and teachers. I am excited for continued success in 2020!

Alison Yonkers, Director
Haynes Nursery School

The Haynes Nursery School Board will meet Monday, January 14, 2019 from 6:30pm-8:30pm, in the Parlor.

LCC PRAYER CHAIN
Prayer Request Cards can be found on the table in the back of the Sanctuary or you can call the church office if you, or someone you love, is in need of prayer. If you would like to become a link on our LCC Prayer Chain along with Chiquita Matthews, Ellen Tudron, Kathy MacDougall, Robert Wenz, Vicki Smigelski, Muriel Campbell, Nancy Gibbs, Alicia Fortenbaugh, Marinika Beaver, Patti Dobro, Karen Lee, Pastor Joanna, and Patti Komperda. Let Patti K know and we will gladly add you to our email!
COMMUNITY MEAL
THURSDAY, January 2nd

Join us January 2nd for the LCC Community Meal!

As always, we will start set-up and food preparation around 4:00pm. We'll then plate the food and be ready for service at 5:45pm. For the holiday we are having a sing-a-long with musicians! We hope to have you join us for the meal and holiday fun.

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 January schedule is posted below.

TRINITY COMMUNITY MEALS : JANUARY 2020:
- Monday, January 5, at 6:00pm
- Saturday, January 18, 12:00pm (meal)

Volunteers are needed for two shifts for each meal

TRINITY PANTRY: Our pantry distribution is Saturday, January 25, 10:00am-12:00pm and volunteers are welcome between 9:00am-9:30am to help with the bagging of goods.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
LCC donated 16 bags of food in December to Lakewood Community Services Center!
The first Sunday of the month is our food collection day.
Items can be dropped off in the baskets lining the West Clifton Hallway

MARTHA’S TABLE

Martha’s Table 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).
A Ministry to Serve/In and Around LCC

Prayer Shawls have been made for centuries as an embracing symbol of inclusion for times of illness, loneliness, grieving or other need for comfort. Following the completion of a shawl, they will be ready for a recipient when needed. This ministry is open to women and men who know how to knit or want to brush up on their skills. A simple pattern will be provided and you will need to bring size 17 circular needles and 1 ball Caron “chunky cakes” yarn, which can be purchased at Michael’s. Prayer Shawl Ministry is a time for fellowship, prayer and conversation.

Our first meeting will be Tuesday, January 14, 7:30pm at the home of Debi Kasper, 1116 Montclair Circle, Westlake

UNDIE SUNDAYS

As part of our outreach focus on homelessness during the month of January, we will once again collect new socks and underwear to donate to Family Promise, the organization that provides emergency shelter to homeless families. There will be laundry hampers in the Sanctuary and the West Clifton hallway for your donations. We will be collecting children’s socks and underwear in all sizes and women’s socks and underwear in sizes large, extra-large and 2XL. Something as simple as clean socks and underwear provides a small bit of dignity for families in crisis. We appreciate your help!

Please contact Vicki Smigelski at vsmigelski@kksg.com or at 216-789-5020.

LCC MEMBER NEWS:

◊ Congratulations to Parker Toms. She was awarded the Lakewood Music Booster’s “High Note” award for leadership in band. Parker is the section leader for flutes.

◊ Condolences to K. Callentine and her family on the passing of her brother, John Cryer. Services were held in Iowa in December.

◊ Kate Lunsford has moved to the Cincinnati area to be closer to her family.

◊ Congratulations to Bridget and Shannon Katzenberger, and Elizabeth Schuldt for their performances in The Beck Center’s recent production of Once Upon a Decade.

◊ Congratulations to Edie Barcelona, Cate Hackett, Ariana Marich and Meg Winters for their performances in The Beck Center’s Joy, Peace, Love, DANCE!

Be sure to send your news to the office at lccstaff@lcc-church.org by the last Monday of the month. We love to celebrate and support our members.

All men of the church are invited to LCC Men’s Group meeting on Monday, January 13 at 7pm, to watch the College Football National Championship game on the movie room big screen TV at hosted by Richard Foote. Park in any empty space around the building, or turn right to find the overflow lot to the west in front of Storage Zone (ignore tow signs, which are for abandoned cars only). Bring your favorite beverage, and any other food you want, and we’ll order pizza. (p.s. save-the-date for Monday, April 6, when we’ll meet again to watch the NCAA Basketball Championship game ).
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, January 14th
12:30 p.m.
Westlake Porter Library
27333 Center Ridge Rd.

Date: January 14
Book: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a semi-autobiographical 1943 novel written by Betty Smith. Claire Stair will lead the review and discussion. The story focuses on an impoverished but aspirational adolescent girl (Francie Nolan) and her family living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York City, during the first two decades of the 20th century.

The novel is split into five “books”, each covering a different period in the characters’ lives. The book was an immense success and was also released in an Armed Services Edition, the size of a paperback, to fit in a uniform pocket. The book addresses different issues - poverty, alcoholism, lying, etc.- its main theme is the need for tenacity: the determination to rise above difficult circumstances - just as the tree growing in Brooklyn (the Tree of Heaven) survives and grows out of the cement.

Please sign up on the West Clifton bulletin board or call/email Kathy MacDougall.


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LCC Homeless Awareness Sleep Out
Saturday, January 18th

It has become a cornerstone ministry for our youth. Last year’s sleep out raised over $4,000. Beneficiaries were Y-Haven, Family Promise of Greater Cleveland and the Cleveland Hands-On (aka The Homeless Stand-Down).

We accept cash, checks (made out to LCC with subject line HASO) and online donations.

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SECOND SATURDAY—
JANUARY 11TH

Women in our church family are invited to join us for Second Saturday on Saturday, January 11th, at 9:00am in the Parlor.

We meet for an hour of conversation, reflection, and prayer. Take some time to connect with women of all ages at LCC.
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<td>OFFICE CLOSED</td>
<td>5:45 pm LCC Community Meal</td>
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<td>Worship for All Ages Birthday/Hunger Communion Sunday</td>
<td>6 pm Community Meal—Trinity Social Hall</td>
<td>7:15 pm Book Study—Parlor</td>
<td>6:30 pm Tai Chi—Parlor</td>
<td>6:45 pm Handbells</td>
<td>7:30 pm: AA</td>
<td>9:00 am: Second Saturday—Parlor</td>
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<td>10:00 am Worship for All Ages—Sanctuary</td>
<td>11:00 am Fellowship Hour—Parlor</td>
<td>11:15 am Parent Meeting—Mission Trip</td>
<td>12:00 pm Youth Musical /Parent Meeting Rehearsal—S. Hall</td>
<td>6:30 pm Tai Chi—Parlor</td>
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<td>10:00 am Worship—Sanctuary</td>
<td>10:00 am Eliza Jennings</td>
<td>10:15 am Faith Formation</td>
<td>11:00 am Fellowship Hour—Parlor</td>
<td>11:15 am HASO Planning Meeting—Youth Room</td>
<td>12:00 pm Youth Musical Rehearsal</td>
<td>12 pm—2 pm Haynes Lunch Bunch—Classroom</td>
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<td>12:30 pm Adventures in Reading—Westlake Porter Library</td>
<td>7:00 pm: Trinity Council Meeting—Parlor</td>
<td>6:30 pm Tai Chi—Parlor</td>
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<td>10:00 am Worship—with HASO: Sanctuary MLK, JR DAY</td>
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<td>10:15 am Faith Formation</td>
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<td>12:00 pm Youth Musical Rehearsal—Social Hall</td>
<td>10 am-12 pm Trinity Pantry—downstairs</td>
<td>10 am Worship</td>
<td>6:30 pm Tai Chi—Parlor</td>
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STAFF:
Senior Minister
Joanna D'Agostino
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Childcare
Jacqueline Reasor

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haynesnurseryschool@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE TEAM:
Chair: Greg Wereb
Vice-Chair: Liz Spahr
Moderator: Michael Komperda
Treasurer: Steve Hotchkiss
Nurture and Growth Ministries:
Sue Tamilio
Welcoming Ministries:
Scott Suttell
Outreach Ministries:
Laura Blesse-Hampton
Diaconate: Vicki Smigelski

SUNDAY WORSHIP:
NURSERY: Sunday, 9:50 am
WORSHIP: Sunday, 10:00 am
FAITH FORMATION: 10:15 am

(Circle these days on your calendars:

Thursday, January 2: LCC Community Meal: 4pm-7:15pm
Sunday, January 5: Parent Meetings: Mission Trip (11:15a) & Musical (12:00p)
Sunday, January: HASO Planning Meeting: 11:15a
Saturday, January 18: HASO Sleep Out
Sunday, February 2: LCC Annual Meeting: 11:00am

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E-MAIL: lccstaff@lcc-church.org