

Dear Church Family,



These are unprecedented times. First and foremost, I want you to know that you are not alone. I know that we are isolated and confused and uncertain about the future, but you are not alone. I am with you. Joanna is with you. The staff, the Executive Team and your church family are with you. But, most importantly, God is with you.

As we mentioned in church (back when we had church) the Executive Team recently held a retreat wherein we envisioned what we saw for our group and our church over the next two years. I can say with certainty that we did not envision this! That being said, we met on Monday night (virtually, via a zoom call) as an Executive Team and we had more questions than answers. We had more thoughts than actions. But, you know what, I feel okay about that. I feel more than okay about the team that we have in place, about the community that we are a part of, and about that faith and mission that guide us in all of our decision making. Questions are good, and the answers will come in due time.



During our retreat, we made a covenant that we committed to follow for that meeting and all subsequent ones. As I reflected back on that covenant today, it seemed like a good way to move through this crisis as well. I would like to share it with you all.

We will:

- Be respectful listeners
- Embrace all ideas and *be brave* with questions AND answers
- Not force resolution
- Invite all to the conversation & commit to **hold space**
- Come prepared when asked and follow through
- Be open-minded & mindful of all opinions
- **Place value on relationship building**
- Be honest, even if it's hard
- Extend GRACE to ourselves and others
- ASK FOR HELP
- Make our decisions with **The Gospel** at the center

I ask that you join me in following this set of guidelines today and as we continue to navigate this pandemic. With this covenant in mind, I would like to share with you some of the actions that we, as a church, are taking during the upcoming weeks.

- Our office hours have been reduced to 9:00 am – 12:00 pm in order to check mail, check in with our custodian, and identify any building needs. Karen will continue to check voicemail and email from home hourly throughout the work day.
- An email will be sent on Saturday with a link to Sunday's church service and Faith Formation. As you are able, please watch with us on Sunday at 10:00 am. We will host coffee hour again via Facebook Live at 11:00 am. If you need assistance "attending" please let us know!
- We encourage you, if you are able, to continue to honor your pledges while we are conducting worship remotely. You can give online at <https://lcc-church.org/give/> or mail your pledges to the church office.
- All events through April are canceled/postponed at this time. If you are part of a committee or ministry, please look for communication from your leader or Executive Team liaison about virtual meetings.
- If you are interested in our Puzzle Exchange or if you need a copy of the Lent devotional, please contact Rachel!

Much of our church engagement is happening on Facebook! If you are not a member of our Facebook page, now is the time to join. <https://www.facebook.com/LakewoodCongregationalChurch/>

We have created a brief survey/questionnaire as a way to connect and make sure we are meeting your needs. Tell us how you are feeling, what you're worried about, what you need, or if you'd like a call or a prayer from Pastor Joanna.

<https://forms.gle/4rnx7HJxv7eCLN6X7>

Church, we've got you. Together, with the help of God, we will find a way through this time of crisis and we will be together again in body, as we remain in Spirit, before you know it. Please know that we are prayerfully working to make sure that we meet your needs and keep you connected. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Joanna or any member of the Executive Team or staff. We are with you!

Yours in Christ,

Liz Spahr  
Executive Team Chair  
Lakewood Congregational Church, United Church of Christ