

Lakewood Congregational Church,

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, June 7, 2020

An Order of Worship to be followed in your home,
along with our worship video or on your own
Preferably at 10:00 a.m.



Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to worship on this Sunday. We are glad you're worshipping with us today. Please know that no matter who you are and where you are in life's journey you are welcome and embraced among us to worship a loving God who welcomes us all.

When you begin your in-home worship service, pause to center yourself and then hold your palms towards the computer screen or to your heart and imagine the energy of connection. Think of many of the people you love at Lakewood Congregational Church and the Body of Christ throughout the world, and feel the ways in which our hearts are connected to yours.

Say, "May the Peace of Christ be with you."

- Please join us on Facebook at Lakewood Congregational Church at **11:00 on Sunday morning** for Facebook Live Coffee Hour.

Offering and Contribution Collection

Please consider fulfilling your pledges during this time. Financial gifts are always welcome, and our church feels the call to respond to the needs around us as they arise. Financial stability allows us to do so more effectively. So, let us give generously of our time, talent, treasure to further the work of God in our community. You can do so in the following ways:

- Writing and mailing a check to Lakewood Congregational Church, 1375 W. Clifton Blvd. Lakewood, Ohio 44107
- Texting STEWARD to 44-321
- Sending a gift through your bank's online bill pay
- By using the donate button on the church's website www.lcc-church.org
- Call the church office at (216) 221-9555 to discuss other options

Let us worship God.

Prelude

Kaleidoscope by Ben Malkevitch
Ben Malkevitch, piano

Hymn *Ours the Journey*

Sung by LCC's Virtual Choir: Naomi Columna, Gwen Delaney, Kay Galloway, Meghan Galloway, Tim Hampton, Ben Liu, Noah Hamrick, Robert Wenz; Ben Malkevitch, organ

Unison

1. In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,
2. Through the flood of starv-ing peo-ples, war-ring fac-tions and de-spair,
3. Though we reach the high-est heav-ens, hold-ing worlds at our com-mand,
4. Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with-draw in pain,

who will lead the pil-grim peo-ples wan-der-ing their sep-'rate ways?
who will lift the ol-ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?
we are yet a des-ert peo-ple search-ing for the prom-ised land.
may your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir-it res-ur-rect the church a-gain.

Refrain

God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar, lead-ing where the ea-gles soar,

we your peo-ple, ours the jour-ney now and ev-er-more.

Call To Worship: Jan Young

God, whose imagination saw all that is good, beautiful, and loving, continues to see us as beloved children in the divine family.

The Word which called forth the stars in every universe, speaks to us of giving ourselves through the baptismal life.

The Spirit, which moved over creation, breathing life into all things, fills us with peace and patience, with hope and healing to share.

Invocation: Vicki Smigelski

Holy Mother you have birthed us into life,

Holy Father you have nurtured us along our way,

In you we live and move and have our being.

To you we bring our offering of praise and thanksgiving.

We open ourselves to your presence in this time of worship.

Fill us with resolve and purpose, to be your community

And to expand our boundaries until all of creation is renewed

And all people are welcomed and blessed.

This we ask through the risen and ascended Christ

Who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

One God, now and forever.

Celebration of Our Graduates:

Bloom: Original Music by Mariana Stockman

Paula Atfield
Matthew March
Bély Stockman

Maggie Kemp
Lindsay Roberts

Ella Atfield
Skye Crone
Isaac Humphreys
Kallie Mitchell
Mariana Stockman

Sarah Clark
Audrey Gray
Laura Kressler
Peyton Roderick

Scripture Reading: Lauren Smigelski

Matthew 28:16-20

The Commissioning of the Disciples

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Reflection: Julie Warren

*** We've included this transcript, word-for-word, for the benefit of people who do not have audio access on their computer. Please keep in mind that it is written in the way it's spoken, so the grammar/sentence structure may feel a bit awkward to read. Even so, this feels like the best way to communicate to as many people as possible.

Several weeks ago, I was in need of a glimmer of hope. Rather than sitting around waiting for it to fall in my lap, I thought of ways I could be proactive in finding hope. But how? WHERE would I find it? And then it came to me quite literally in the middle of the night after one of the significant rainstorms we had last month. The rainbow. That's where I could find it. In the ultimate symbol of God's covenant to us that we are going to be okay after the storm. And so, as I often do in times of struggle, I turned to my church family and asked the staff if we could have a worship service dedicated to this theme of hope. And in particular...finding it in rainbows. The more I thought of it, the more excited I got. We could include pictures from congregants who achieved the perfect photographical snag when they caught a shot of a rainbow. And, we could gather our LCC family together virtually to sing one of MY

greatest comfort songs, The Rainbow Connection. A song about better times ahead, unconditional love and keeping us all connected? It was all coming together.

I proposed that we could shine a light on some of the positive things that have come as a result of us "staying home." Like the impact on our global environment. You've read about the virus bi-products: How people in northern India are reacting with awe at the sight of the Himalayan mountains for the first time in decades because it is now visible from more than 100 miles away due to the reduction in air pollution caused by the country's coronavirus lockdown. A hole in the ozone layer closed. We are spending more time with our families. WE have slowed down.

Of course, to convey the rainbow message, it would be easy to mention one of the most popular Biblical stories that has God sending a rainbow to show Noah and his people that they could go forth without fear of calamitous drowning.

We could share that rainbows are a symbol of hope in many cultures. They appear as perfect arcs, often during a rainstorm when the sun shines onto water droplets, shattering its white light into an array of brilliant colors. Water, our life-giving source, must be present in order to witness a rainbow. So, in other words, without a storm, there is no rainbow.

If ever there was a cinematic analogy that included rainbows, it's the Wizard of Oz. It could be the perfect pop culture reference because, of course, Dorothy reminds us as we practice quarantining, "there's no place like home."

As I worked alongside with a very willing staff on our hope-filled theme, Joanna understandably determined that she needed some rest and time to heal which is why you are seeing my face today instead of hers. I am grateful that I have been allowed to share my reflections.

And then, just as the message of hope with all the aforementioned examples seemed to write itself...lightning struck, and another storm raged through our communities.

I worried and I stewed. Hope was going to be a pretty hard sell after the events of the past week. How was I going to talk about hope when so many people I know are hurt and angry and divisive? But now IS the time, more than ever, to talk about an arc, a circle, a “bridge” that appears to us in the sky after a storm in MANY colors.

Perhaps the lightning that has struck will be the spark we need to start to change. The sun NEEDS to shine brightly on acceptance over fear, on justice over injustice, on love over hate.

A rainbow promises better times to come. It is Pride. It is Diversity. It is Justice. It is Hope. It says to us, just as Jesus stated to the eleven disciples in today’s scripture, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Don’t give up hope, my friends. The rainbow IS coming. And someday we’ll find it. The lovers, the dreamers, and me. Thanks be to God for Her everlasting promise. Amen.

Special Music:

Rainbow Connection by Paul Williams and Kenneth Ascher
Sung by the: Barcelona, Blasko, Burns, Diemert, Einhouse, Hamrick, Katzenberger, Komperda, Leatherman, Rickard/Dailey, Riordan, Sauder, Schuldt, Spahr, Suttell, Taylor, Warren, and Wereb families

Celebration of Holy Communion:

Rev. George Graham

(Pause to invite those who have not already prepared elements quickly to do so. Assure them that even a cracker can become a sacrament, even a cup of water or a remembrance of God’s redeeming love. Communion does not need elements. We can “taste and see that God is good,” Psalm 34:8, even if we do not partake.)

Invitation

God meets us here at the table—this table, the table where you are, this chair, the chair where you are sitting.

God did not intend for us to take Communion this way, isolated from each other.

But God meets us here, just as God provided manna to the people in the wilderness and just as Christ met the disciples when they were isolated in their room following the Resurrection.

God meets us here, but what God intends, after we no longer need to physically distance ourselves from each other

in order to keep ourselves and everyone, especially the most vulnerable, safe,

Is for us to gather again as ecclesia, as church, as community.

But what God further intends, is not even just to gather within the sanctuary of the church for which we all long, but as we heard in the gospel lesson this morning, to go out and proclaim the good news to all.

We make room at our tables and in our hearts and in our lives this morning for Christ, who meets us here and who reminds us to always make room for others. There is always room at the table for everyone.

Christ meets us here and gives us the bread of life and the cup of blessing,
God feeds us so that might feed others.
God blesses us
so that we might help offer blessings others need—healing,
freedom, justice.

We remember especially this day essential workers who must go out—health care workers and first responders.

We remember those who may not go out—those who are young and old and in between who live in congregate care, whether nursing homes, assisted living, residential treatment, correctional facilities, or immigration detention.

We remember those whose going out and even whose staying home brings risk, especially people of color and people who stand with them to demand change.

Over my right shoulder is a painting by local artist Michaelangelo Lovelace called “We the People.” The painting hangs in our dining room, where I am now. I feel like the people in the painting watch over my family’s shoulder as we eat here and ask, Is there room for us at the table? In the back of the scene, there is someone holding a sign with a quote by Martin Luther King, Jr.: “We as a people will get to the promised land.”

They are watching us, along with the great cloud of witnesses who has gone before us and surrounds us. They are watching us to see if we follow the way of Christ and make room.

So this day we leave room in our hearts for them
until that day when we all can be together at one table,
until that day when we finally get to the promised land.

Until that day when we are all able to feast together, God feeds us where we are, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. We have bread and cup and heart. Our community is dispersed in distance but we are one in Christ. In your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a

sacrament. Let us ask God’s blessing upon them and upon us and upon those who are in our prayers this morning.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

God be with you.

Many: And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts

Many: We lift them up to God.

Give thanks to God, Blessed Trinity

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Praise to you, Loving Creator.

Thank you for the gift of life,
the beauty of creation
and your steadfast loving kindness.

Praise to you, Merciful Redeemer.

Thank you for sharing our human existence,
from birth through death to everlasting life
you show us the way,
bringing healing and hope to those most in need.

Praise to you, Grace-filled Sustainer.

Thank you for the vision to see beyond the immediate,
a calm in the midst of storm,
the strength to build an ever expanding community
and the courage to bring about any change necessary within our
lives
and within our world for justice and peace.

Words of Remembrance

We remember the many times that God provided for the people who were dispersed, whether manna to the people in the wilderness, loaves and fish for people hungry for Jesus’ teaching, or these words sent to the church at Corinth: For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on that night took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is

my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Prayer of Consecration

Holy God, may your Spirit descend upon these gifts of grain and fruit that we might be fed by the presence of the living Christ.

Pour out your Spirit upon us

so that we--taken, blessed, broken and given--

might help others know the blessings

of living in community and communion with you and one another.

Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours Almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

Unison: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

Unison: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace, rejoicing that God meets us where we are. We claim the risen Christ's love is not limited by buildings made with human hands, nor contained in human ceremonies, and celebrating the God's love carries us into the unknown, to listen and follow, to find our place at the table and to make room for others, to lead and be led, to feed and be fed, to work together to bring about a world of peace and justice.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses (debts) as we forgive our trespass (debtors), and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

Benediction: Rev. George Graham

God calls us from this time of worship, separate but together,
Dispersed but united,

to share the hope of abundant life in the presence of hardship,
relationship that transcends the barriers of isolation,
and to work for a world of peace and justice.

Go in Peace in the Name of God who creates, redeems us, and sustains us.

Amen.

Benediction: Anna & Laura Hampton

Thank you, God, for the renewing strength of the Holy Spirit.

May the Spirit sustain us as we go forward this week. Guide us Dear God to be a witness for Justice and Love especially in these times. May the Holy Spirit fuel us with courage and comfort. Go in Peace in the Name God who created us, who redeemed us, and sustains us.

Postlude

Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Arlen and Harburg,
as performed by Israel Kamakawiwo' ole
Anna Hampton and Audrey Warren, voice and ukulele
Photos from members of the LCC community