

# Lakewood Congregational Church

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

Sunday, July 5, 2020

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



## 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"

## 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, OH 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](http://www.lcc-church.org)
- Call the church office at (216) 221-9555 to discuss other options

Let us Worship God.

## Prelude

*The Call* by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Noah Hamrick, bass; Ben Malkevitch, piano

## Call to Worship

(Matthew 11:16-19)

Leader: Jesus says Come to me—Everyone!

Leader: When I play a joyful tune

People: **We'll dance!**

Leader: When I sing a lament

People: **We'll weep!**

Leader: When I chant for justice

People: **We'll sing along!**

## Invocation

Come to us, Holy One, and immerse us in the beauty of life with you!

Come to us, Holy One, and enliven our community with the intensity of your love.

Come to us, Holy One, and embolden our community with the urgency of your justice in the name of the One who calls us to play and to work in community, Jesus, our beloved. Amen.

## Hymn

*The Gift of Love*

Noah Hamrick, bass; Ben Malkevitch, piano

1. Though I may speak with brav - est fire,  
2. Though I may give all I pos - sess,  
3. Come, Spir - it, come, our hearts con - trol,

and have the gift to all in - spire,  
and striv - ing so my love pro - fess,  
our spir - its long to be made whole.

and have not love, my words are vain,  
but not be given by love with - in,  
Let in - ward love guide ev - ery deed;

as sound - ing brass, and hope - less gain.  
the prof - it soon turns strange - ly thin.  
by this we wor - ship, and are freed.

## **Invitation to the Offering**

The treasure of God's glory is Jesus, shining in our hearts.  
We hold this treasure in the earthen vessels of our lives.  
Let us share freely of the gifts we have been given,  
that the glory of God may be known in the works of community,  
justice and peace.

## **Dedication Prayer**

Take and receive these gifts dear God, bless and multiply them  
that they may show the world your glory, shining through our  
lives.

## **Scripture Reading**

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

[Jesus said:] "But to what will I compare this generation? It is  
like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one  
another,

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He  
has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and  
they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of  
tax-collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is indicated by her  
deeds."

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and  
earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and  
the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father,  
for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed  
over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the

Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone  
to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy  
burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and  
learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will  
find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is  
light."

## **Message**

\*\*\*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 a 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.

It is a heavy time. Everything we do feels very heavy. Our news  
cycle is exhausting, divisive, and abundant. We're constantly  
making decisions about safety and boundaries for ourselves and  
for those around us and it's so hard to know what the right  
decisions are. We're confronted with the realities of injustice  
and working to heal some 401 year old wounds. Today we have  
this scripture passage in which Jesus says, "come to me, all you  
who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give  
you rest."

I want to reflect with you about sharing the weight of the world  
as we walk alongside Jesus so that it will be lighter... and I really  
want to walk you through, in a sense, a guided meditation to  
help you arrive at a place of sharing with Christ whatever  
burdens you are carrying today.

So I have my husband Maic here with me to help me play a song throughout this meditation that is meaningful to me. And this is gonna be a little more interactive, because I'm going to ask you to name in your heart or aloud some of the things that you need to put down. So now wherever you are, I want you to kind of establish it as a sacred space. Take a deep breath and say, "this is Holy Ground." This... porch, this living room, this patio, this dining room table, this bed... this is Holy Ground right now. I also want you to pause now and grab your communion elements if you haven't already while Maic sings.

All who are wear-y all who are bur-dened down,  
come to me, come to me, come to me and I will give you rest.  
My yoke is eas-y my bur-den feels so light,  
come to me, come to me, come to me and I will give you rest.

Also I want to be really clear that the call here is not to set our burdens down in the sense that we give up on them and won't have to worry about them ever again. This is not a scripture passage about denial. Because we can't just entirely rid our lives of the things that are hard. It's instead, sharing these burdens with Jesus, and knowing that because we are not carrying them alone, the yoke is easy and the burden is light, and also that because we carry them with Jesus, we are guided

on our way to know the right path. We're surrounding our heavy burdens with the Holy Spirit, rooting them in the work of God, so that as we weather the struggles life has put in front of us, we are sharing the burden with the One who knows the way through it.

If you are carrying the yoke of illness, you do not have to carry that yoke alone. If you or someone you love is in treatment for cancer, in the hospital, carrying chronic pain, awaiting test results, living with a compromised immune system, give it to God and walk alongside Jesus who will make that burden light.

If you are carrying the yoke of loss or grief, you do not have to carry that yoke alone. If your grief is brand new or decades old... if your grief is anticipatory or fear about the potential for loss... if your grief is the death of a beloved one or the loss of an opportunity or the diminishment of your beloved one's mind through dementia, give the burden to God and walk alongside Jesus trusting in his strength to carry it with you.

### *Sing one verse*

If you carry the yoke of caregiving-- it is just so heavy to care for those babies and help them to get through this time with emotional wellness. It is heavy to make sure our children's basic needs are met, let alone maintaining an attitude that will not cause them to live in anxiety. It is heavy to care for our aging parents and our aging spouses and support them through the fear and confusion of an isolating time. You do not have to carry that yoke alone.

If you carry the yoke of unemployment or underemployment or the concern of losing employment, you do not have to carry that yoke alone. First of all, reach out to your church for some assistance from our Coronavirus Relief Fund, which was given out of love for you. But second of all, give that burden to God and trust that God will provide.

If you bear the yoke of hunger or know someone who does, join us at this communion table. Seek support from your community. Give your trust to Jesus who will ensure you have something to eat.

#### *Sing one verse*

If you bear the yoke of oppression or marginalization, especially if you are the one who is feeling the weight of that oppression, know that Jesus has made a spot for you at this table and that you are welcome and embraced in God's circle of grace regardless of gender and sexual orientation, age, differing abilities, and ethnic, economic, and racial background. Your life matters. It matters to the Body of Christ and it matters to God.

If you bear the yoke of the prophet, the justice-seeker, the one who is working hard to bring about a just world for all where no person feels oppressed or marginalized, know that you walk that road alongside the Risen Christ, the one who spoke truth to power and did not let opposition consume him.

If you bear the yoke of violence... if you or someone you love faces domestic violence or has survived it... if you or someone you love lives with Post Traumatic Stress as a result of lived

violence. If you or someone you love has a compulsion towards violence that isn't congruent with your true heart... turn towards Jesus who knows how to turn the other cheek while standing firm in love and belonging.

If you bear the yoke of anger, if you are one who allows anger to consume you or you are the recipient of someone else's anger, give that burden to God and trust that God will grant you grace in return.

#### *Sing one verse*

If you bear the yoke of depression or anxiety, addiction or mental illness in all its many forms, know that you are not alone. Remove the stigma from it and share that burden with God and with the ones you love. You are not asked or expected to carry that weight alone. Put it down.

We have so many other burdens we carry, specifically related to the pandemic we find ourselves in. The burdens of uncertainty and constantly changing rules... the burdens of potential for contracting the virus or passing it onto others... the burdens of mental illness related to isolation... the burdens of unsettled relationships related to physical distance. Jesus carries these burdens alongside us. We are the Body of Christ navigating these burdens together. Share the yoke.

There's no magic potion. We can't rid ourselves entirely of the obstacles of life, but we certainly can lighten them. So we bring these burdens, the ones we've shared and the ones we haven't yet, to this table.

*Sing one verse*

## **Service of Holy Communion**

### ***Invitation (single voice or responsive)***

Come to a table not defined by wood or stone  
but by what rests upon it.

Jesus said, Come unto me because any burden is heavy  
to the one who is under it.

Come unto me with the burden  
of a crowded life or a lonely one.

Come unto me, with a child's burden  
of frustration or hunger,  
of abuse or embarrassment.

Come unto me with a burden  
of grief —

for the death of a beloved person  
or a companion animal,  
for an ability you have no longer,  
or a relationship  
needing reconciliation.

Come unto me with the burden  
of a disappointment,  
even one

that doesn't seem significant enough,  
or a fear deeper than words.

Come unto me, unto Christ  
with any burden —

for here is rest for the weary,  
lightening of suffering,

gentleness,  
and guidelines for becoming gentle.  
Here is a yoke of responsibility  
that can be lifted  
because of a small piece of bread  
and a sip of the cup of hope.

### ***Prayer of Consecration***

Leader: Jesus noticed that often people ignore both the  
celebration of those who are dancing with joy, and the sorrow  
of those who are weeping in pain or loss when those feelings are  
not their own. We come to this table rejoicing with those who  
laugh and sharing the tears of the grieving. We are God's  
children in wonder and loss, dispersed and gathered at the same  
time.

In your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly  
upon these elements which we set aside today to be a  
sacrament. We ask God's blessing on them and on us and on all  
those who are in our prayers this morning.

**Unison:**

**God of the open hand and the gentle yoke, we await your gift  
and your service. Send your Spirit of life and love, of power  
and blessing upon your children in every "house of worship,"  
so that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love and  
this Cup poured out to give hope to all. Risen Christ, live in  
us, that we may live in you. Breathe in us, that we may  
breathe in you. Amen.**

### ***Words of Remembering***

### ***Sharing of the Elements***

Leader: Let us at many tables receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

**Unison: We come unto Christ in the Bread we share.**

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

**Unison: We come unto Christ in the Cup we share.**

### ***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

Leader: In thanksgiving for this meal of grace and in the holy dispersion of virtual worship, we claim the risen Christ's love and gentle yoke are found in all houses of worship. Let us pray ...

**O Holy One, we have come unto you with our weariness and we have let go of all in our lives that is heavy. We thank you for the rest and strength of this communion so now we can lift up all that is light and gentle, humble and easy, and learn from you how to change the world. Amen**

### **Benediction**

Go forth in peace to live into Jesus' most joyful command:

Come to me!

And may we follow him into a rest that bears fruit

in justice, love and peace

for each of us, and all of us.

### **Postlude**

*Fairest Lord Jesus*, arr. Larry Sue

Joann Riordan and Jan Young, handbells