

Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, August 9, 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: Rachel, Harold, & Harmony (our Faith Formation Puppet Friends)

Harmony: Good morning!

Rachel: Or, good afternoon....

Harold: Or, good evening!

:)

Rachel: 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.

Harold: Holy Moly! Even me?!

Rachel: Yes, even you, Harold. You, too, Harmony. :)

Harmony: Jumpin Junebugs!

:)

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"

Rachel, Harmony, Harold: May the Peace of Christ be with you.

My friends, Harold and Harmony, are joining me today to welcome you because today's worship service is reflecting on the lessons of Compassion Camp, our church's virtual Vacation Bible School that took place last month.

Harmony: We had so much fun at Compassion Camp!

Harold: I think all the kids really liked it, too!

Rachel: It really was a great experience. Friends at home, we are so glad that you're here with us today. Let's worship!

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
 - Call the church office at (216) 221-9555 to discuss other options
- Let us Worship God.

Prelude: Compassion Camp songs

Come to the Table

Performed by Teegan Barlow, Suzie D'Agostino, Amos D'Agostino, and Evelyn D'Agostino

I Have Love to Share

Performed by Suzie D'Agostino, Amos D'Agostino, and Evelyn D'Agostino

Call to Worship, read by Tess and Abbey Parker

Join me in our call to worship, which is based on the lessons we learned in Compassion Camp. The responses will be written on the screen.

One: God gives us compassion

All: so that we can be brave enough to love.

One: God gives us compassion

All: so that we can be brave enough to listen.

One: God gives us compassion

All: so that we can be brave enough to tell the truth.

One: We can be brave because we are filled with God's love!

All: Let us worship God!

Invocation, read by Anna Hampton

Our Invocation comes from the Compassion Camp prayer for the week about bravery.

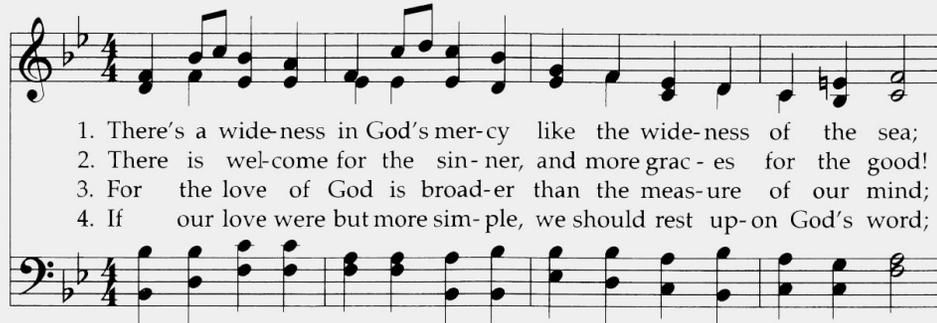
Dear Jesus, your compassion always looked like courage. Strengthen our hearts with your bravery as we risk, reach

out, and lift up our siblings near and far. Help us keep our eyes on you. Amen.

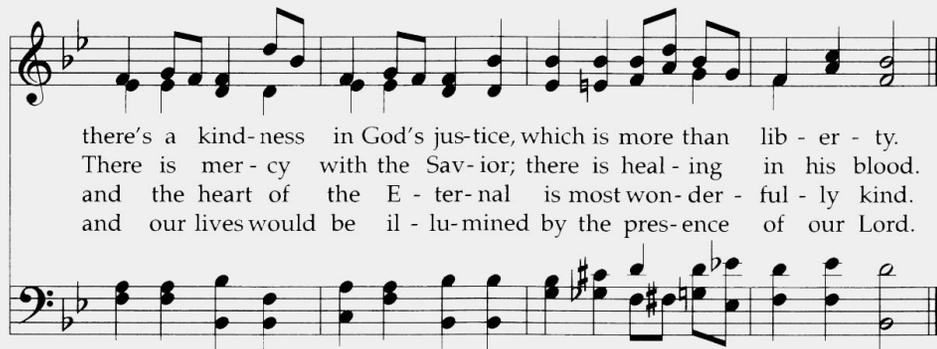
Hymn

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

Ben Malkevitch, baritone and organ



1. There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy like the wide-ness of the sea;
2. There is wel-come for the sin-ner, and more grac - es for the good!
3. For the love of God is broad-er than the meas-ure of our mind;
4. If our love were but more sim-ple, we should rest up-on God's word;



there's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice, which is more than lib - er - ty.
There is mer - cy with the Sav-ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
and the heart of the E - ter-nal is most won-der - ful - ly kind.
and our lives would be il - lu-mined by the pres-ence of our Lord.

Pastoral Prayer

Sorry, there is no transcript of the Pastoral Prayer this week.

Lord's Prayer, read by Felix Fries

Please join me in 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Dedication Prayer

Not only with our lips, but with our lives and with our treasure we will proclaim that you are in our midst, Loving God. Take these gifts, and use them so all might know that your love, your life, your hope, your healing is near. Amen.

Scripture Reading, read by Rachel Burns, illustrated by Olivia Diemert, age 14

Mark 2:1-12

One day Jesus visited someone's home. Everyone heard he was there. They were so excited to see him because they'd heard he healed and helped people be a part of their communities again. A friend who was paralyzed had his friends take him to see Jesus.

When the group got there, it was so crowded. There was no way to get to Jesus through all the people. They had an idea! They climbed up onto the roof of the house and made a hole in the roof above where Jesus was. Then they lowered their friend into the room. When Jesus saw their faith, he was encouraged. He

told their friend: “I see you and love you. You are made whole for your community. Your sins are forgiven.”

Some temple leaders called scribes were watching Jesus. When they heard him say this to the friend who was paralyzed they were angry. They thought to themselves: Who does Jesus think he is? Only God can say these things!

Jesus could tell the scribes disagreed with him, so he said to them: “I know what you’re thinking right now. But what’s easier? To say, “I see you and love you” or, “Get up and walk”? I’ll show you that it’s possible to do both!

With compassion, Jesus turned to the friend who was paralyzed and said: “Get up, pick up your mat, and go home. You’re healed now!”

He stood up, amazed. He picked up his mat and went home with his friends. Everyone was so happy they praised God because they had never seen anything like this before.

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.

God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight. For you are our rock and our redeemer.

Today I want to reflect on what our children learned in Compassion Camp, and then reflect on our congregation’s commitment to our children. I’ll focus the most on Week two of Compassion Camp, which was about Bravery. Week two reflected on the scripture that we just shared with you. [That scripture illustration, by the way, was created entirely by one of our own youth-- Olivia Diemert, who is going into 9th grade this year and was confirmed at LCC last year. She illustrated it using computer design, and I am just so impressed with her work.]

So, Compassion camp was 5 weeks long, and focused on helping kids and families explore compassion for others, ourselves, and the world. Rachel did an incredible job leading these sessions for the kids in pre-recorded videos as well as on a weekly Zoom call with the kids.

Week one was about having compassion at the table: that when we gather at the table, whether it’s a dinner table, a communion table, or even a figurative table we share across a distance, like through Zoom, we see each other’s faces, we welcome one another, and it inspires compassion. They explored the Prodigal son, and that compassion happens when they see and welcome someone regardless of what they’ve done in the past.

Week two was about having compassion for our neighbor. It focused on bravery, and I'll come back to week two in a little bit.

Week three used the Greatest Commandment to teach about how compassion helps us love ourselves, and how when we pay attention to and honor ourselves, we experience how God sees and loves us and each person we meet. When we can learn to love ourselves, mind, body and spirit, we understand God's love for every person and we have more compassion for others.

Week four was about compassion along the way, being present with each other on the journey. They read the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah, and learned that compassion involves deep trust, an open mind, and a soft heart. They learned about being there for one another, and being flexible to offer support even when the road was full of twists and turns.

And week five, the final week, was about compassion with the world. The kids learned about the concept of the Jubilee year in Leviticus 25, about rest and sabbath, and about fresh starts and forgiveness.

So, now that our kids are fully-trained and ready to fill God's earth with compassion, I want to reflect a bit on our grown-up obligation to them. And... I'm still gonna come back to week two, about bravery, in a few minutes, so just hold on there. You see, these lessons that they learned these past few weeks are no different from what God calls me to preach every week here at LCC. They're solidly rooted in the Gospel, and they are rules for our lives as disciples-- love one another, be brave for one

another, love yourself as God made you, walk this road together, and love and care for this world.

Our obligation is to put these lessons on display for them. Our children are watching us.

- They watch us to see what it looks like to welcome someone to the table, to be brave, to love ourselves, to walk the road together, and to grant opportunities for a fresh start.
- They are watching us today to see what it looks like to have compassion in the midst of a pandemic.
- They are watching us today to see how we manage our fear and our self-doubt and our covenant to protect the vulnerable.
- They are listening to the way we talk about ourselves and one another.
- They are watching us to see how we connect and how we innovate, and how we put love of neighbor above self-interest.

And beloved, I am not convinced that grown-ups are doing a great job right now. I am not convinced that we are giving them a good example to follow. In fact when I see the greed and injustice in our society I am deeply concerned about what our children are watching, and we must remain committed to building a community that enacts, practices, and models compassion.

I actually-- okay this is cheating a little bit, but I actually want to read some excerpts from what I wrote for this month's

Columns newsletter, because I think they apply so well and I want to reconnect them here. I wrote:

“When I really need hope, I look to my children. They are resilient, adaptive, creative, and compassionate. ... They frequently refer to the virus as “temporary.”

It’s not all perfect, of course. Sometimes the sadness overcomes them ... My oldest coined the phrase in our home, “This feels like a very long temporary.”

I’m keenly mindful of the emotional and mental health of children during this time, so in hope, I keep returning to the phrase, “It takes a village to raise a child” and I recognize that we have everything we need to support, affirm, and lift up our babies as they navigate the emotional toll of this pandemic. It took a village to raise a child in 1905 and it takes a village to raise a child in 2020.

It’s not just kids though, right? Adults have the same set of emotions; we just display and control them differently. ... So I return to the phrase and I’ll adapt it for all of us: “It takes a village to raise a grown-up.” I trust LCC to be the village that will listen to the needs of this Body of Christ, and to walk together in faithful discipleship so that we will grow together in spirit and community. This village raised grown-ups in 1905 and it is raising grown-ups in 2020.”

This is the challenge in front of us: these lessons that our children learned are lessons that we grown-ups need to learn too. We have to learn them, we have to practice them, and we

have to put them on display so that our children can see what it looks like to enact compassion in the world. How can we be the village that is raising one another, 2 years old or 92 years old, to act firmly in the work of compassion, to walk steadily on the path of discipleship, to seek justice, kindness, and humility at every turn?

So, regarding bravery. Week two. I said I’d get here. I just don’t know anything that our children need to see from grown-ups right now more than courage. They need to see the ways in which we will “risk, reach out, and lift up our siblings near and far.”

The scripture reading that Olivia illustrated, which we discussed in week two, was about the friends who brought their friend who was paralyzed on a mat to Jesus so that Jesus would heal him. When it was too crowded, they climbed up on the roof and made a hole, and lowered him in. Jesus was encouraged by their faith and healed him, even though the scribes and temple leaders criticized Jesus for this act of compassion. Jesus disregarded their criticism, and continued to heal the paralyzed man.

On Zoom, Rachel asked our kids, “who was brave in this story?” And they discussed the bravery of the friends, of the paralyzed man, and of Jesus himself, all who took risks and faced criticism in pursuit of compassion. Together, the kids wrote a comic strip about bravery, which involved a kid who was brave and spoke up to another kid who was being mean. In the comic strip, they all worked together to make better choices out of compassion,

emphasizing that when no one has the courage to speak up, bad things keep happening.

How is our village raising brave children, and how is our village raising brave grown-ups? This time calls for an unwavering bravery-- the courage to seize this moment to weave a new garment for all of God's creation-- the courage to weave a garment that is deeply soaked in compassion, one that shows an unending love for God's people, and one that does not let fear overcome us.

It's clear to me that our children are ready to weave this garment. Grown-ups, are you?

Amen.

Benediction

Beloved, it takes a village to raise a child and it takes a village to raise a grownup. So turn with compassion towards each other, seeking joy in community so that you can reflect that compassion out into the world. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Mother of us all.

Postlude

Photo slideshow of Compassion Camp VBS memories, with piano accompaniment from Ben Malkevitch