

Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, June 27, 2021



An Order of Worship to be followed in your home,
along with our Livestream Service at 10:00am

Welcome and Announcements

If you are new among us, welcome. Please know we are glad you're here; you're welcome in our remote community and you're welcome in our physical community when the time is right.

At Lakewood Congregational Church, we strive to be people of extravagant welcome. Whether you are young or old, gay or straight, single or partnered, happy or sad, confused or inspired, street smart or college-educated, whether you can't pay your bills or you have more than enough to share—no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here in this place, to worship a loving God who welcomes us all. As I stand in this sanctuary I join my heart with you and I pray that you might feel the refuge of this space.

May the Peace of Christ be with you. Let us worship God.

Prelude

Natalie Sleeth

Sing a New Song to the Lord
LCC Summer Pick-Up Choir;
Ben Malkevitch, piano

Call to Worship

One: Sing Praises to God, all you faithful ones

Many: God hears us in our fear and our sorrow

One: Where there was no way

Many: God leads us in a new way

One: Where there was no mercy

Many: God surprises us with fresh mercy

One: Where there was weeping

Many: God invites us to step into a new dance.

Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

O Faithful God, You yearn to be so close to us that we can know you in every breath, in every hope, in every relationship. You long for us to trust in your power to bring to life new possibilities where there has been no hope. Meet us here today and teach us to recognize the ways of life and hope into which you are leading us. So may our desires become your desires, our work become your work, and our community the place where you are sought and found. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the time of farewell with friends who are leaving.

Prayer: O God, we give thanks for remembered times when we, together, have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with these people in worship, in learning, in service. We pray that Judy and Richard will be aware of your Spirit's guidance as they move to a new and unknown place, in the name of Jesus the Savior.

Hymn

504

Heal Me, Hands of Jesus

A Time of Prayer

The Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (in unison)

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

A Time of Sharing

Call to Offering

Doxology (in unison)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Generous God, take our gifts this day and use them so that we may be part of your great work in this world. Through our giving, bring a brighter day of justice and love, not just in our community but in the world beyond these walls. Strengthen our church so that we grow together each day into a powerful voice for healing and peace. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Judy Foote

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.' So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to

her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.'

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

More About Trust

- A weird thing happened to me last week when I got up here, because I really had an idea of how I wanted to reflect on the meaning of Pride month, or Pride Sunday, or just the overall concept of LGBTQ Pride for an Open and Affirming Church. Just before I came in, I had re-read this prayer-- this call to worship that originated out of the Unitarian Universalist Church, and I felt almost overcome by it. I couldn't remember who wrote it, but now I know. It was written by the Rev. Hannah Roberts Villnave, a Unitarian Minister in Wyoming.
 - So you know how in our opening welcome I say all of the... whether you're this or that, this or that, this or that, pieces. Well, one of them is "whether you're confused or inspired." and to be honest when I came in here last Sunday I was confused and not inspired. Or... maybe inspired to go back to my desk and write, and discern, and pray, but not inspired to publicly convey a message. I was struggling with the painful history of Christianity in relationship to the Gay Rights Movement, and the way the name of Christ has been used as a weapon against God's beloved children. As a pastor, I carry way too many personal stories about devastating pain caused by churches and families and

workplaces and loved ones. And yet I was delighting to be in a church that put up rainbow banners... to be in a church that celebrates and affirms, and lives in the processing and the questioning, and knows that we are loved by God and by one another within our fullness.

- And then of course I picked up this book, and it was just... the weight of it all.

People sometimes ask:

Is Pride a protest

Or a party?

And the answer is

Of course

Yes.

And why not?

Why not

Rejoice as we resist

Dance as we demand change

Celebrate as we create community that delights in

All of who we are?

So bring all of that

With you this morning.

Bring your policy demands

Bring your glitter

Bring your supreme court

broken heart

Bring your rainbow socks

Bring the emptiness you feel

For our siblings gone too soon.

Bring your Gloria Estefan remix

Bring your tender hope for change

Bring your most garish eyeshadow

Bring your spirit, tattered and battered

By a world that seems insistent on

Choosing fear and hate.

Gather up all these things

And bring them here

To a place where we don't

Have to shoulder these burdens

Or celebrate these joys

Alone.

Come, let us worship

Together.

- II. Here's what I want you to know: we are never done searching and exploring our faith, and also that the messages I offer on Sunday mornings are opportunities for discernment and wrestling for all of us.
- III. Lately, Trust has been a common theme when thinking about discipleship...a common theme in our church...in our community...in our society. We are in a season of trusting each other. The fact is, the world we're walking into is entirely different from anything we've known before. This pandemic has forced us into a new era, and as we all walk into the unknown, into the uncertain, we're going to have to trust one another and to BE trustworthy, that this new era will hold at its core the commandment to love one another.
- I want to talk about the trust that is happening here, between the Hemorrhaging woman and Jesus...the trust this woman places in Jesus ability to heal her.

- First I want to point out this essential point towards the end of the passage: That Jesus calls her “daughter.”
- This unnamed and unknown woman had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. According to Jewish culture and custom at that time, when a woman was bleeding she was considered unclean. She was not to be touched. It didn’t matter whether her bleeding was because of menstruation or a miscarriage or postpartum recovery, or another reason, she was not to be touched. This woman couldn’t stop bleeding for 12 years. We don’t have an explanation as to why, we just know that’s the case. So for 12 years, rather than offering her love, support, and care...rather than seeking answers or a remedy...rather than providing for her basic needs...according to the custom at the time, she would have been sent out-- both metaphorically and literally-- to the margins. She would have been living on the outskirts of town, fending for herself, perhaps occasionally receiving the pity of someone in the community. If she had any money at all, she would have already spent it on physicians and potential remedies, and she wouldn’t have had a way to regain any wealth. She was not suitable for marriage or for motherhood. It’s likely that any family she already had considered her too much of a burden, or too unclean, or bad luck. This was a time when a woman’s value and worth was completely tied up in marriage or motherhood or the care of her father, but she didn’t have that. After 12 years, it seems likely that she had no relationships-- not with women, not with doctors,

- not with children, not with parents, not with anyone in her community anymore.
- And so in an act of desperation, and an act of deep trust in Jesus’ ability to heal, even though she was supposed to be over there, on the outside... she snuck into this crowd. She reached out to touch just the hem of Jesus’ garment. She pressed herself into the crowd-- a crowd in which she was considered unclean; a crowd which-- had they known who she was-- would have been disgusted to know that she was among them. And she slipped closer and closer to Jesus until she could touch just the tiniest tip of his garment, and she felt the power come into her and he felt the power go out of him and he looked for her.
- She was scared and had fallen to her knees. She knew what the community would think when they found out she was there. But she also trusted the love and compassion of Jesus. So from her knees, surrounded by the crowd, she said, “it was me”
- and he called her “daughter.”
- I don’t think it’s possible to overstate how powerful that word was at that moment. “Daughter.” For the first time in 12 years, she was called into a relationship. “You are ‘daughter’ to me,” Jesus said. Which is to say, “You are beloved. You are connected. You belong.”
- This is why Pride is a party. Because it is a claiming of identity, a celebration that who we are is beautiful and wonderful and worthy of celebration. And this is why we continue to protest and engage and remain active in the policies that threaten to

- revoke identity. Because identity was for too long denied and we must refuse to return.
- This Gospel story aligns beautifully with the weight of *And the Band Played On*. Because it reminds us that what we really yearn for is acknowledgement, that we matter, that we're connected, that we are worthy of wholeness and liberation and healing.
 - Meanwhile there is another daughter. Jairus's daughter. You see today's gospel is a sandwich story. That is-- one story starts. Another story interrupts. Then the first story ends. The hemorrhaging woman is the peanut butter and jelly to the story of Jairus' daughter.
 - And so Jairus-- he has a name, of course, because he's a man so he gets a name. Jairus does have a pretty high place in society. He's one of the leaders of the synagogue. He's a pretty big deal. And he has a daughter who is 12 years old.
 - Of course, this daughter is 12 years old.... She has been alive for as long as the woman had been hemorrhaging. There are so many literary contrasts here. Aside from the 12 years thing, there's also this way in which Jesus goes inside the little girl's house, in private, and invites just a very few people inside to witness the healing just after he has healed someone in the midst of a large crowd. Public healing followed by private healing. Unintentional healing followed by intentional healing. The healing of a marginalized adult woman followed by the healing of a child with societal status. Jairus and the woman both fall to their knees-- but one before the healing and one after. Hope and certainty ("If I but touch his

- clothes") followed by despair and hopelessness ("Why even try? Your daughter is dead.")
- And in the midst of the literary contrasts, there is this strong, powerful literary thread that unites-- each of these stories involve people in crisis, and the deep vulnerability that comes from desperation, and the trust that Jesus will provide the healing and the sense of belonging that they yearn for. Both of these stories involve daughters. They involve the way in which Jesus notices, cares for, and responds to the most vulnerable. But I love this. I love that they acknowledge Jesus seeing the identity of these women who would have been otherwise overlooked or written off.

- Trust [Ad Libbed]

Recap end of Protest or Party prayer:
 Gather up all these things
 And bring them here
 To a place where we don't
 Have to shoulder these burdens
 Or celebrate these joys
 Alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Benediction

Ben Malkevitch

Till We Meet Again
 LCC Summer Pick-Up Choir

*Till we meet again, know God's strength.
 Till we meet again, feel God's grace.
 Let our love enfold you,
 let our hearts be with you,
 till we meet again, till we meet again.*

Postlude

Felix Mendelssohn

Allegro

Ben Malkevitch, piano

LCC EVENTS: June 27-July 4

- Sunday, June 27, 10:00am: Worship with Outdoor Coffee Hour
- Sunday, June 27, 3:00pm: We Make the Road by Walking Group (final meeting at Jan Young's)
- Sunday, June 29, 6:30pm: 'Smorettime with God (front porch, All Ages event)
- Thursday, July 1, 4:00pm/5:30pm: Community Meal Volunteers/Guests
- Friday, July 2, 12:00-2:00pm: Seussical Rehearsal
- Saturday, July 3, 12:00-8:00pm: Seussical Rehearsal
- Sunday, July 4, 10:00am: Worship, no 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, 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

Our Mission Statement proclaims our common goal.

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.

In keeping with the spirit of our Mission Statement,

Lakewood Congregational Church,

United Church of Christ,

is an Open and Affirming congregation.

We welcome people of all sexual orientation, ages, differing abilities, and ethnic, economic, and racial backgrounds into

the full life and ministry of our church.

We declare this in the name of the Still Speaking God,

whose Son, Jesus Christ, welcomed

all people into God's circle of grace.

