

# Lakewood Congregational Church

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

Sunday, July 25, 2021



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

## 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.

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## Prelude

Courtney

Getty and Townend, arr.

*Compassion Hymn*  
LCC Summer Pick-Up Choir

## Call to Worship

One: We join together as hungry eaters to be nourished by the food that you offer us.

**Many: God of sustenance, give us this day our daily bread.**

One: As you care for the wheat fields that turn into bread and the vineyards that labor to produce sweet wine, tend to our bodies by feeding us what we need for healthy growth.

**Many: God of abundance, give us this day our daily bread.**

One: The rich crops that you have prepared are now ready to be harvested by our hands and our hearts.

**Many: Holy Spirit, come! Give us this day our daily bread.**

## Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

Holy One, we come into your presence this morning with the busy schedules of summer activities crowding our lives. Our souls are hungry and yet we seem powerless to find nurture and feeding that will sustain us. Open our ears, our eyes, and our hearts this day to hear your words of hope and healing for us. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

## Opening Hymn

# 419

*All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*

## Reception of New Members

Matt Winters

Liz & Bryce Rizzo

Paula Deal

Michael Greenland

Eric & Heather Tuck-Macalla

José Gonzalez

## Invitation

## Questions for the New Members

## Affirmation of Faith

One: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God. Do you believe in God?

**Many: I believe in God.**

One: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**Many: I believe in Jesus Christ.**

One: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**Many: I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

## Expression of Welcome

One: Let us, the members of Lakewood Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

**Many: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

## We Welcome You

Words and Music by Ben Malkevitch



## **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)**

God of wonders, who enabled Jesus to feed the multitudes,  
bless these gifts and use them to fill empty stomachs and empty  
hearts. May our offerings be multiplied to abundantly nourish all  
the people. Amen.

## **The Reading of God's Word**

Patti Komperda

John 6:1-14

6 After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee,  
also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A large crowd kept following  
him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.  
3 Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his  
disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was  
near. 5 When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming  
towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread  
for these people to eat?' 6 He said this to test him, for he  
himself knew what he was going to do. 7 Philip answered him,  
'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of  
them to get a little.' 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon  
Peter's brother, said to him, 9 'There is a boy here who has five  
barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many  
people?' 10 Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there  
was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about  
five thousand in all. 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he  
had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were  
seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 When they  
were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments  
left over, so that nothing may be lost.' 13 So they gathered  
them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left  
by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. 14 When  
the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say,  
'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

## **Reflection**

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

I grew up in a Peanut Butter Sandwich family. In fact, I'm  
raising one now. I've probably eaten 10,000 Peanut Butter  
Sandwiches in my life. No really-- I did this calculation. I'm 34

years old... 34 x 365 is 12410. I didn't eat sandwiches for my first year of life and I probably skipped a few days here and there, and I lived in France for two summers where peanut butter is like some kind of rare, expensive delicacy, so I just rounded down to the nearest 10,000... I'm gonna guess 10,000 peanut butter sandwiches in my lifetime.

A. So if you're part of a Peanut Butter Sandwich family, you'll probably have memories of exactly what I'm about to describe. It's when you go to grab the Peanut Butter Jar and it's empty. And you're so disappointed and now you have to figure out what to eat instead. But someone-- your mom or your dad or a caregiver and, well, now that I'm the mom I'm the someone-- someone swoops in and they take the butter knife or the rubber spatula and they say, "this jar of peanut butter is not empty!" and they scrape the sides and the bottom and they find enough peanut butter for 10 more sandwiches. Somebody tell me I'm not alone.

B. Listen, I know eventually Peanut Butter Jars are genuinely empty, but I swear as a child, at least with my mom, they were bottomless. There was always more to scrape from the sides.

II. If you remember last week, we read from the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus said to the Disciples, "let's go away to a deserted place and rest for a while," but the crowds went ahead of them on the boat. I mentioned that our Lectionary text from Mark skipped a major part of the passage-- here I go again with my sandwich metaphors-- I said that our Lectionary text was the bread to Mark's telling of the Feeding of the Five Thousand sandwich... We read Mark 6:30-34, and then skipped ahead to 53-56. I assume the Lectionary writers pulled the meat out for a week so that we could focus on the fringe elements that we might not think about as much.

A. So this week then, rather than reading the meat of Mark's sandwich, we skip over to John. I don't

know why and I'm not sure it matters. It's a little more detailed.

III. The Feeding of the Five Thousand is so important that it's in all four of the Gospels. This is the peak of Jesus' ministry, when he can't go anywhere without people following him, surrounding him, seeking to touch just a hem of his garment to be healed. It's also a climax because it's when Jesus' ministry crosses the Sea of Galilee-- the journey from a known cultural context to something entirely different. I'm going to go into the weeds for just a minute, but I think this is interesting for History Folks.

A. In John's telling, he clarifies that the Sea of Galilee is also called the Sea of Tiberias. Who calls it that? The Roman Empire. John wants to be sure we know this story takes place within an imperial context, so he reminds us that the Romans call it something different. First-Century Palestine is occupied territory... and that occupation is oppressing anyone who is not rich and powerful. What we're seeing here is not just a journeying of the Disciples, but Jesus is knowingly and intentionally bringing his ministry into occupied territory-- into a power struggle; into a place where it will not be well-received when people call him the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, the King of the Jews, the Son of God, "the Prophet who is to come into the world." John says, "Also called the Sea of Tiberias" because he wants to be sure we know there's a struggle over who owns this region. What John wants to be sure we know is that these crowds are not only seeking liberation from physical pain and ailments; they are also seeking a release from imperial bondage... from a culture and society that is actively pushing them to the margins at the very same time that Jesus is proclaiming liberation for the marginalized. This tension is very important.

IV. Okay so what happens here is Jesus and the Disciples are trying to rest a while, and the crowd starts coming towards them. They are a hungry crowd, and the Disciples look at each other and they say there is no way that we are going to be able to feed this hungry crowd with what little food we have to share. "Our Peanut Butter jar is empty." A crowd this big would take 6 months worth of wages to feed, and it's not just about the money it's also about the logistics of finding the food and preparing the food and bringing it to this place. And right now there's just this tiny amount of bread and fish that that little boy over there has, but clearly it's not enough.

A. And Jesus says, "make the people sit down." The Disciples are like, "this is just not going to work, but whatever, the grass is nice." I like this part, "there was a great deal of grass, so they sat down." So they make the people sit down, and Jesus takes the bread and he gives thanks for it and he passes it to each person sitting on the luscious grass and they eat and they are full and there is enough. There is so much enough that there is even some left over.

B. And Jesus says, "make the people sit down." The Disciples are like, "this is just not going to work, but whatever, the grass is nice." So they make the people sit down, and Jesus takes the jar of Peanut Butter and a spatula and he gives thanks and he just starts scraping the sides and he makes 5000 peanut butter sandwiches and they eat and they are full and there is enough.

V. Christian communities, from the beginning of time, have been participating in various types of food ministry. In the tradition of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the essential human need for nourishment of *the body* is a tangible but symbolic reminder to fulfill the essential human need for nourishment of *the soul*.

A. What happens when we recognize somebody's hunger is that we recognize their humanity. When

we look at a person-- regardless of who they are and how well we know them-- and we recognize that they are hungry, what we are really recognizing is that they are human. Humans need to eat-- you and me and every human. And when we recognize that basic essential commonality, we are drawn that much more towards the direction of loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

B. And then what happens is something magnificent-- when we are able to recognize somebody's essential human need for food, we are able to recognize somebody's essential human need for connection, compassion, and grace.

C. Do you see how powerful this is? When the Disciples made the people sit down, what they did is they created a gathered community. There on the grass was not just 5000 human beings in need of full bellies, it was 5000 people-- broken people, lost people, confused people, grieving people, hopeful people, feeling people-- in search of healing and liberation. And here they were together, waiting together, to eat.

D. I don't know how the miracle happened. There are interpretations of this scripture that say that what really happened is when that boy was willing to share his bread and fish, people started sharing with one another what they had been keeping to themselves. There are interpretations that say that Jesus had the capacity to perform an actual, inexplicable miracle. But you see, I don't believe that how it happened is what matters. What matters is that there in that space, on the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias, there was enough. People didn't think there would be enough, and then there was enough. That's the miracle. That's the story.

VI. Our Christian faith calls us to the hope that someday, someday, every belly will be full. Every baby born into this world will be fat and healthy. Our Christian faith

also calls us to the hope that someday every person will know that they are liberated by God's promise of love and belonging... that there won't be fights over whether it's the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias, but just a common liberative promise that it's God's Sea, flowing to nourish God's creation. The feeding of bodies becomes only a gateway to the feeding of souls, to the feeding of creation, to the magnification of connection, of healing, of compassion, of grace, of peace.

VII. So this story... this is not about enough food. It's about God's promise that when we trust in the love of God and the support of community, there will always be enough for everyone-- enough food, enough time, enough money, enough love, enough housing, enough childcare, enough resources, enough physical therapy, enough support, enough trust, not just for the rich and popular and powerful, but for the sick and tired, for the poor and marginalized, for the old and lonely, for the young and broken, for the depleted and the overwhelmed. There will always be enough.

VIII. Today's passage reminds us to walk through the world allowing our hearts to call us to abundance even when our minds call us to scarcity. Today's passage reminds us that when we're faced with tough and risky decisions about our lives, or a feeling of empty loneliness, or a fear that we may not make it another day... when we're not sure we'll be able to travel on the road ahead... God's promise is that there will be enough of what we need along the way.

A. When you're not sure you have what you need, imagine yourself gathered at the Feeding of the 5000, and you overhear:

1. "Make the people sit down."
2. So you sit down on the grass-- there's a lot of it remember-- and you breathe the deep breaths of community. You listen to the chitter chatter around you of other struggling humans, and you breathe and you

touch the grass, and you wonder if you'll get what you need, but you breathe in and out more and you touch the grass more and someone passes you a basket. It's a basket filled with enough: enough time, enough compassion, enough healing, enough money, enough peace, enough love, enough bread. It's a Peanut Butter Jar that's never really empty; that has 10 more sandwiches in it at least.

IX. There is enough. Thanks be to God, there is enough. Amen.

### Closing Hymn

*[see insert]*

*All Are Welcome*

## All Are Welcome



1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly live.
2. Let us build a house where pro - phets speak, and words are strong and true.
3. Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and stone.



A \_\_\_ place where saints and chil - dren tell how hearts learn to for - give.  
Where all God's chil - dren dare to seek to \_\_\_ dream God's reign a - new.  
To \_\_\_ heal and strength-en, serve, and teach, and live the Word they've known.



Built of hopes and dreams and vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace,  
Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace;  
Here the out - cast and the stran - ger bears the im - age of God's face.



Here the love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,  
Here as one we claim the faith of Je - sus;  
Let us bring an end to fear and dan - ger:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place. \_\_\_

Text and Music (TWO OAKS) by Marty Haugen; © 1994, GIA Publications, Inc.

## 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, and 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

### LCC EVENTS: July 25- August 1

- Sunday, July 25, 8:45am: Summer Pick Up Choir
- Sunday, July 25, 10:00am: Worship with Coffee Hour
- Sunday, July 25, 4-5pm: Playtime at the Park for kids and families @Wagar Park (Madison Ave, Lakewood)

## Benediction

## Postlude

Benedetto Marcello

*Allegro from Sonata no. 5*

Ben Malkevitch, organ

***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.*

