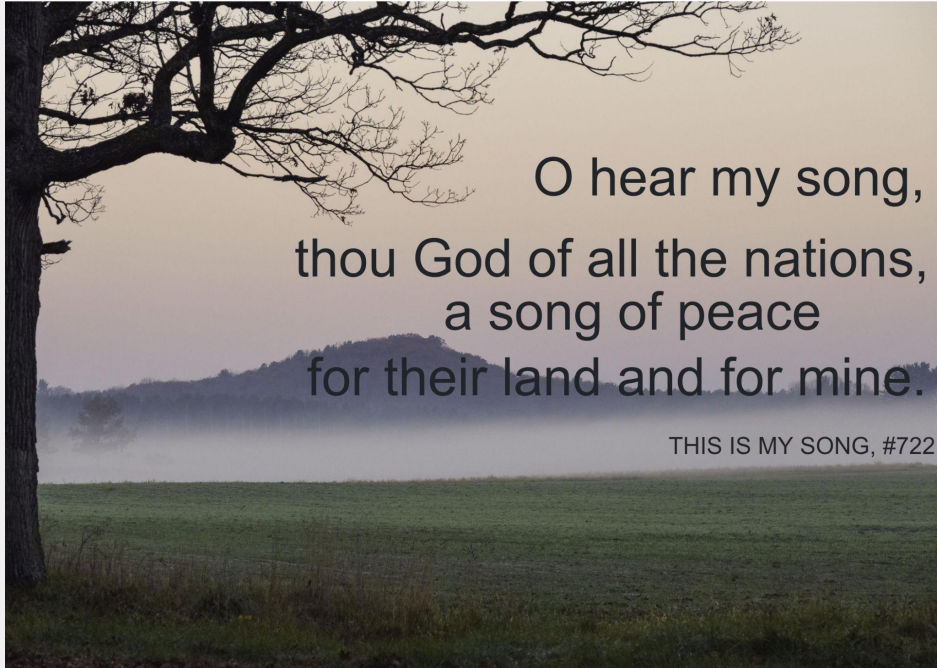


Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, July 4, 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

J.S. Bach

Sarabande and Loure from French Suite no. 5 in G
Nicole DiPaolo, piano

Opening Litany for Independence Day

One:

*As we remember the birth of our nation,
and the gifts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,
let us offer our thanks and prayers to God,
the giver of all good gifts.*

For the women and men who braved the long journey by sea
to come to this new world,

We thank you, God.

For the tribes and nations who inhabited this land
for generation upon generation,

We thank you, God.

For patriots who dreamed of, and fought for, a free nation,

We thank you, God.

For the men and women who laid the foundation of our
democracy,

and who pledged liberty and justice for all,

We thank you, God.

For those who built this country brick by brick,
road by road, and town by town,

We thank you, God.

For the soldiers who have fought for our country,
for all who paid for our freedom by their service,
and those who paid by their sacrifice,

We thank you, Lord.

For the innovators and artists, poets and teachers,
farmers and factory workers;
for all who labor and provide for the common good,

We thank you, God.

For this land, with its peaks and valleys,
coasts and deserts, fields and meadows,

We thank you, God.

For our own community, for those who came before us in this
place,

and for our neighbors near and far,

We thank you, God.

Lord, we pray for The United States,
that we might be a nation which defends and promotes
liberty and freedom, truth and justice.

We pray to you, God.

That we might always be a nation where all are free to worship
and pray,

We pray to you, God.

That we might be a beacon of freedom
to all those who live under the shadow of terror and
hopelessness,

We pray to you, God.

That those who are elected to govern and lead
would be guided by you,
and be ever aware of the trust that has been given them,

We pray to you, God.

That we would be a people who repent from our sins,
and who always return to you and to your grace,

We pray to you, God.

*Gracious God, King of all nations,
bless and defend us and our land;
prosper the work of our hands,
and increase in us your grace and compassion,
and our offerings of thanks to you,
our rock and our salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

***(Written by the Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey; used with
Permission)***

*This Is My Song***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.

Special Music

Oh, The Things You Can Think
 Cat In the Hat - Audrey Warren
 Jojo - Cora Barcelona
 Ensemble

It's Possible
 Jojo - Cora Barcelona
 Cat In the Hat - Audrey Warren
 Ensemble

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)

Holy One, hear the message we are speaking through these
 our gifts and aid us in spreading that message of hope and
 love to those whose voices have been silenced. May they
 strengthen our congregation so that we may continue to
 listen to those in need. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Darren Toms

Mark 6:1-13

¹He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples
 followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the
 synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They
 said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that
 has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by
 his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother
 of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters
 here with us?' And they took offence at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to
 them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home
 town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵And
 he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his
 hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was
 amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the
 twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them
 authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take
 nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no
 money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two
 tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay
 there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome
 you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the

dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.’¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent.¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D’Agostino

Stay Until You Leave

This morning I’m going to keep my message pretty short, because it’s a gorgeous day outside, it’s the Fourth of July, it’s stuffy in here... and I don’t want to rush through Communion, because it feels particularly meaningful to participate in the sacrament together again.

This Gospel story is a pretty surprising one, in which Jesus is cast out by his hometown. This is the toned-down version of the story. In Luke’s telling of it, they try to throw Jesus off a cliff. So basically, Jesus and the Disciples arrive back in Nazareth after they had begun to develop a following, healing, calming storms, performing miracles, and teaching throughout Galilee. He had become a hero to many communities and this is his first time returning to his hometown. So, at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel passage, Jesus is in the synagogue he grew up in, and he’s teaching just like any other Rabbi. Things are going well for a minute-- “What is this wisdom that has been given to him? Wow! What great deeds of power!”

But then there’s an interruption. Someone within the crowd... I feel like they’re kind of like the town gossip... they say, “Umm... guys... this guy isn’t anything special. This is the carpenter. Son of Mary. Remember?”

Immediately, everyone’s feelings about him shift. They’re not inspired anymore. Now they’re accusatory, resentful,

judgemental. There’s a contextual patriarchal thing that just happened here, actually. “Son of Mary” rather than “Son of Joseph” or “Son of Joseph and Mary” is a reminder of the taboo that we speak of so often in Advent: that Jesus was conceived by an unwed mother. There’s so much baggage and stigma here... they can’t see through it. And as the gossip waves through the Synagogue and the body language and aura in the space shift, Jesus knows... I cannot be effective here. So he left.

He goes on to teach his disciples: I’m going to need you to start spreading this Word in other communities and other households, so go on and go, two by two. Don’t bring too much with you. Accept the hospitality of others. And if they’re not hearing you, or not letting you in, don’t force it. Just go on to the next place. “Shake the dust off your feet.”

It’s a message we all need sometimes: “Shake the dust off and move on.” Because we cannot be all things to all people, and sometimes the disconnect in our thinking is just too great, or there’s too much baggage in the way, and we’re just not ready to hear something or articulate something in the right way. So we shake the dust off and move on. We don’t have to dwell in a place where we’re not being heard or let in.

Anyway, I love this line from Jesus in Mark’s Gospel today: “Stay there until you leave.” Wow, that is some very empowering advice. No specifics, no clarifications, no set talking points or curriculum to follow. Stay until you leave.

What I hear in that phrase is Jesus trusting his Disciples to know what is the next right thing, one day at a time, one moment at a time. Trust your gut-- you’ll know when it’s time to go. Jesus trusts, too, God’s ability to work through the Disciples in whatever amount of time they spend. Stay until you leave; I

trust that you will do the best you can with what you have, in the time you have. God will do the rest. It's really quite empowering.

I believe this Gospel passage is in here-- both in Mark and in Luke-- to help us see that Jesus didn't get it right every time. The true story is not entirely made up of Instagram photos and the Norman Rockwell paintings. The true story is not entirely made up of healings and miracles. The true story is that we win some and we lose some, and there's a whole lot in between.

Last week when I announced about the Seussical set being up here for the next couple of weeks, I shared the quote from Madeleine L'Engle: "There is nothing so secular that it cannot also be sacred."

The truth that's happening here in this Gospel, I believe, is that Jesus' hometown has a specific idea of who can teach about God and how. When they realize who Jesus is-- that he is not their cultural image of a perfect human being-- they miss out on the Sacred because they're not willing to hear God's voice in an unexpected way, outside of the status quo. They close their ears as soon as they realize that he's not their perfect understanding of what Sacred should look like. And we know, knowing the impact of Jesus on so many other towns and communities, that in closing their ears and their hearts they missed out on so very, very much.

I have to wonder how often we miss out on the Sacred because it isn't fitting into our idea of what Sacred is supposed to look like. I wonder if we miss the face and the voice of God because of our preconceived notions about people or places or activities or communities. If there is nothing so secular that it cannot also be sacred, are there places where your heart has been closed to see the sacred gifts God is offering to you?

One last thing I love about this passage before we move to communion: When Jesus realized he wasn't going to be heard in that town, he decided to move on. He stayed until he left. But I love this little parenthetical statement that we almost read over... "on the way out he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them."

Because if it is true that we cannot be all things to all people, and sometimes the disconnect in our thinking is just too great, or there's too much baggage in the way, and we're just not ready to hear something or articulate something in the right way... that doesn't prevent God from sneaking in to plant a few seeds along the way. The town may have driven him out, but by the Glory of God, seeds were planted. The healing happened. The Spirit moved through.

Communion

The Story Remembered

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion will be shared in the pews. All are welcome to participate

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Spirit of Christ, you have blessed our hands and our hearts. May this bread give us courage to speak in faith and act in love in your precious world, and may this cup deeply renew our covenant with all life. Wrap your hopeful presence around all whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing, and let us live your compassion in the days to come. Amen

Communion Music

Sonata in Eb, K. 282, Mvt. 1 (Adagio)
Nicole DiPaolo, piano

Benediction

Postlude

J.S. Bach

Allemande from French Suite no. 5 in G
Nicole DiPaolo, piano



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
- Call the church office at (216) 221-9555 to discuss other options

LCC EVENTS: June 27-July4

- Sunday, July 4, 10:00am: Worship, no Coffee Hour
- Monday, July 5, OFFICE CLOSED
- Monday, July 5 - Wednesday, July 7, Seussical Tech Rehearsal
- Thursday, July 8, 7:00pm: Seussical Performance
- Friday, July 9, 7:00pm: Seussical Performance
- Sunday, July 11, 8:45am: Summer Pick Up Choir
- Sunday, July 11, 10:00am: Worship with Coffee Hour
- Sunday, July 11, 2:00pm: Seussical Performance

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.