

Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, December 12, 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.



Prelude

W.A. Mozart

“Alleluia” from *Exsultate jubilate*

Michael Komperda, clarinet

Ben Malkevitch, organ

Call to Worship

One: The joy of the season is upon us. The time is almost here.

Many: We have come to praise the Lord!

One: We are here to sing praises to God, the Holy One in whom we place our trust.

Many: God opens our eyes and lifts us up.

One: Let us praise God

Many: who reigns forever.

Opening Hymn

125

Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle: Joy

One: I will light three candles
to sparkle with joy.

For God lights constellations
light years far away,
and light years as near as breath.

Two: Light brings us joy:

ninety-five candles on a birthday cake,
the high circle of a Ferris wheel,
the smile of a pumpkin,

One: and strings of Christmas lights that say
all are welcome and celebrated here.

One/Two: We raise three candles,
and know we cannot do it by ourselves
for each of us have only two hands.

One: The hope, peace, and joy of Advent shine brightly,
for God is born in the ordinary, available, gentle, brave.

All: I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long. (Howard Thurman)

Mountains and val-leys will have to be made plain; o-pen new high-ways, new
high-ways for our God, Who is now com-ing clo-ser, so
come all and see, and o-pen the door-ways as wide as wide can be.

Anthem

John Ness Beck

Every Valley
LCC Chancel Choir

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.

Prayer Response *Spirit Divine, Hear Our Prayer* Wolaver

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)

We present to you, O God, our gifts. May they be used to make a difference in the lives of people where hope is scarce. May our gifts be a reminder, to those who receive them, of your love. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word Rev. Catherine Lawrence

Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him,

'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

A Joyful Brood of Vipers

Closing Hymn

136

Christians All, Your Lord Is Coming

Benediction

Postlude

Robert Hobby

Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

Ben Malkevitch, organ

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

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.*

LCC Events: December 12 - December 19

- ***Sunday, December 12, Worship, Faith Formation, Coffee Hour,***
 - 8:30am: Core Group, at LCC
 - 11:00am Building Tour, back of the Sanctuary
 - 11:00am Alternative Gift Market, Lobby
 - 11:15am: Next Generation Band
 - 2:00pm: Core Group, Zoom
- ***Monday, December 13, 7:00pm: AA***
- ***Tuesday, December 14, 6:30pm: Friends Circle Holiday Gathering, Parlor***
- ***Wednesday, December 15, 7:30pm Core Group (Pub Theology), Rush Inn***
- ***Thursday, December 16,***
 - 1:00pm: Core Group, at LCC
 - 6:45pm: Handbell rehearsal
 - 7:30pm: AA
 - 8:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal
- ***Sunday, December 19, Worship, Faith Formation, Coffee Hour***
 - 8:30am: Core Group, at LCC
 - 11:15am: Next Generation Band
 - 2:00pm: Core Group, Zoom