

Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, December 5, 2021



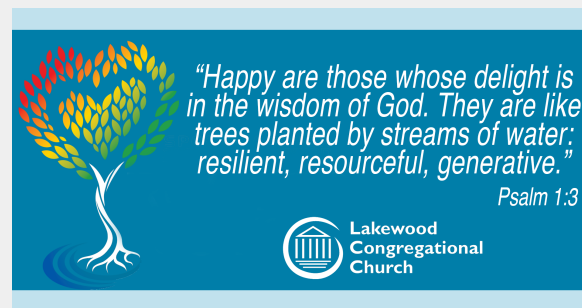
An Order of Worship to be followed in your home,
along with our Livestream Service at 10:00 am

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

arr. David Kechley

The Holly and the Ivy

Greater Cleveland Flute Society

Bryan Kennard, Linda Miller,

Cathy Spicer, George Sterbenz, Bonnie Svetlik

Call to Worship

One: Days shorten and nights lengthen, but a light is drawing near.

Many: **We wait on God's light together**

One: Chaos surrounds us, but we are called along pathways of peace

Many: **We wait on God's peace together**

One: In this season of friends and family, we dearly miss the faces that are absent this year

Many: **We wait on God's comfort together**

One: In whatever valleys and mountains we face, we are promised that God will level the way

Many: **We wait on God's presence together**

Opening Hymn

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

126

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle: Peace

Elena Larssen, Mark Pettis, and Thomas

One: I light two candles this week to illuminate peace.


For as God lights both gentle dawn and a slash of lightning strike, we affirm all the ways we seek peace -

kind persuasion with eye contact, and a justice march with big signs, a silent vigil of prayer and fasting, and the gift of food, toys, or dignity for the most vulnerable, our quiet visits to a therapist or recovery group, and loud demands to dismantle oppressive systems.

Two: We light two candles, so we will listen and respond to the ancient cries for Peace on Earth.

One: The hope and peace of Advent are available to each of us.

**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)**



Thus says the proph-et to those of Is-ra-el, "A vir-gin moth-er will bear Em-man-u-el": One whose name is "God with us," our Sav-ior shall be, through whom hope will blos-som once more with-in our hearts.

Anthem

Larry Shackley

Peace Is Our Prayer
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

Mendelssohn

Almighty Jesus, Hear Our Prayer

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 hopeful waiting, we give thanks for all of the ways you
reveal yourself to us. Help us to clear away the many
distractions of this season and offer our whole lives as gifts to
you. May these offerings magnify your compassion and justice
in the world. May these gifts amplify the promise of peace.
Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Michael Greenland

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when
Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of
Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and
Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high
priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to

John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the
region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the
words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

Change of Heart

Communion Hymn

132

When God Is a Child

Service of Holy Communion

Include welcoming and clear instructions for communion here.

Invitation to Communion

[The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom.

Angelic messengers delivered news:

a priest lost his speech; a young woman found her voice.

In this season of Advent, the scriptures revive old stories

and bring new understandings.

In the face of critics and skeptics,

our faith cries out, resilient,

like a baby from a manger bed.

From that Bethlehem beginning,

Jesus, baptized in the Jordan, spent his life serving others

that all might know the compassionate attention of a loving God.

Today, Jesus serves us yet again,
as we gather at this Table he prepares for us.]

Words of Remembering

[We remember that Jesus was always
about more chairs -
for the “friendly beasts”
a cow whose manger fed him,
the birds that never fall unloved,
and the comforting animals
of his forty wilderness days.

Jesus was always about more chairs,
for the poor, lonely, grieving, hungry,
the most vulnerable and rejected,
and even those deep in deserved regret.

And we remember that Jesus
sat in the chairs of anyone who welcomed him.
He came to tables and asked for food,
not to see the guest list.
He knew how multiply barley loaves
but, also, how to grill fish.

In this sacrament on Advent’s day of Peace,
we remember that the starlit Child,
protected by angels
grew up to offer bread and cup
to a betrayer, a denier, a doubter,
several sleepers, many who fled
because at the cross there were no angels.

We remember that Jesus is in the Bread and Cup
for those of us who know its blessing well,

and yet is still pulling out folding chairs
so that more, ... even all can come, sit, rest, eat.]

Prayer of Consecration

[Emmanuel, God with us,
in the hopes and fears of all our years,
we come for comfort, for peace of mind and peace on earth. In
this meal nourish our souls, feed our minds, quench our deepest
longings and forgive our transgressions, that we may glorify you
every day of our lives. Amen.]

Sharing of the Elements

[The Holy Child of Bethlehem descends to us, and is born in us
this Advent. Let us share the bread of life and drink deeply of
God’s abiding presence.]

Communion Music

arr. by Tracey Craig McKibben

Veni, Veni, Emmanuel

Greater Cleveland Flute Society

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

Peace-giver, Blessor of tables shared and some tables turned
over, we go forth from our places at this most welcoming
meal prepared to embody Advent hospitality. We, like Jesus,
are about “more chairs.” We are servers for the worldwide
banquet of grace. Amen.

Closing Hymn

677

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Benediction

Postlude

arr. David Kechley

Deck the Halls

Greater Cleveland Flute Society

Bryan Kennard, Linda Miller, Cathy Spicer, George Sterbenz,
Bonnie Svetlik

Our worship liturgy is adapted from United Church of Christ
Worship Ways and Maren Tirabassi's blog *Gifts in Open Hands*.

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: December 5 - December 12

- Sunday, December 5, Worship for All Ages, Coffee Hour and Birthday Sunday
 - 8:30am: Core Group, at LCC
 - 11:15am: Next Generation Band
 - 2:00pm: Core Group, Zoom
- Monday, December 6, 7:00pm: AA
- Wednesday, December 8, 12:30pm: Adventures in Reading, LCC Parlor

- 7:00pm: Men's Group, Holiday Gathering, Kasper's house
- 7:30pm Core Group (Pub Theology), Bottlehouse Brewery
- Thursday, December 9,
 - 1:00pm: Core Group, at LCC
 - 6:45pm: Handbell rehearsal
 - 7:30pm: AA
 - 8:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Friday, December 10, Haynes Lunch Bunch
- Saturday, December 11, Second Saturday, Parlor
- 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

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.*