

Lakewood Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Sunday, August 20, 2023



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.

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

arr. Althouse

Shenandoah

LCC Summer Pick-up Choir

Ben Malkevitch, piano

Call to Worship

One: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

Many: It is like a summer rain which restores the parched earth.

One: It is like a cool breeze at the shore of a lake, at the top of a mountain or through a crowded city street.

Many: God meets us here.

One: We have gathered to worship the Maker of Our Days, the Restorer of Our Souls and the Breath of Our Lives.

Many: We give thanks for God's loving and guiding presence!

Opening Hymn

518

This Is a Day Of New Beginnings

Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

Maker of Our Days—you created each of us unique beings with differing strengths and weaknesses. Help us not only to use our strengths to assist others but also to allow others to use their strengths to meet our weaknesses.

Restorer of Our Souls—you have seen the parched places we have made in our lives, along with the devastation thrust upon us by the action or inaction of others. Meet us in the places of our deepest pain so that our masks of self-sufficiency might fall away and we might be drawn into right relationship with you and one another.

Breath of Our Lives—without you- we are but a mound of clay. Fill us with your presence, invigorate our worship, set us on fire so that others might be drawn into your light and nurtured by the warmth of your loving care. Amen

Blessing of the Backpacks - Rachel Burns

Litany for the School Year

One: God of fresh starts and new beginnings, we bring ourselves, our big feelings, and our backpacks to you.

Many: In our backpacks we carry new supplies and tools to learn and grow. In our hearts we carry big feelings and hopeful expectations.

One: Be with our students, teachers, and those college-bound bless their journey and its endless possibilities of what this new school year may bring.

Many: God our friend who's full of wonder, bless those who are entering new beginnings and fill their hearts with a deep sense of joy. Amen

A Time of Prayer

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

Offertory

Charles Stanford

Andante

Ben Malkevitch, organ

Doxology (in unison)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Holy God, you are our provider. We dedicate to your service our lives and these offerings from your blessing and our labor. Work in us and through us to extend your love and care, here and around the world. Amen

The Reading of God's Word

Ron Petrie

Genesis 45:1-15

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, 'Send everyone away from me.' So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father

still alive?’ But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come closer to me.’ And they came closer. He said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, “Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.” And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honoured in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.’ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Reflection

Rev. Catherine Lawrence

Closing Hymn

511

Strong, Gentle Children

Benediction

Postlude

Flor Peeters

Festive Voluntary
Ben Malkevitch, organ

Our Mission Statement proclaims our common goal.

*We strive to be a welcoming,
worshiping 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. Wherever you are on life’s
journey, we welcome you and all people of every sexual orientation,
age, ability, gender identity and expression, and ethnic, economic, and
racial background into the full life and ministry of our church. We
declare this in the everlasting grace of the Still-Speaking God.***

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
- 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