

Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023 · 10:00 AM

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

Handel

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion

From the Messiah

Edie Barcelona

Advent Candle Lighting: Love

The Hamrick Family

Reader A: How does a weary world practice love?

Reader B: *By sending cards, and picking up the phone. By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others. By learning people's stories, and finding common ground. By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.*

Reader A: There are a million ways to practice love. So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge. With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

Response

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;

O Sun of justice now draw near

*Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.*

*Refrain: Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Call to Worship

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

Opening Hymn

#142

People Look East

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.

Prayer Response

Redeemer, Come

Tom Fettke

A Time of Sharing

Call to Offering

Offertory

setting by John Carter

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Judy Fesko

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 love, thank you for the ways you break into our weary world with a joy that reaches far beyond anything the world can offer. We ask your blessing upon these gifts that they may help us to share your love with the world. Bless each of us, that we may be vessels of your joy-filled light in our weary world. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Michael Greenland

Luke 1:67-80

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty saviour for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,

and has remembered his holy covenant,

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

to give knowledge of salvation to his people

by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

Reflection

Rev Joanna D'Agostino

We Sing Stories of Hope

Closing Hymn

#139

All Earth Is Waiting

Benediction

Family of faith,
as you leave this place,
you go into a weary world—
so speak tenderly.
Do the good that is yours to do.
Choose connection.
Hold onto hope.
And remember
that Christ took on flesh for you.
You are God's beloved.
So go rejoicing.
The world needs it.
Amen.

Postlude

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

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