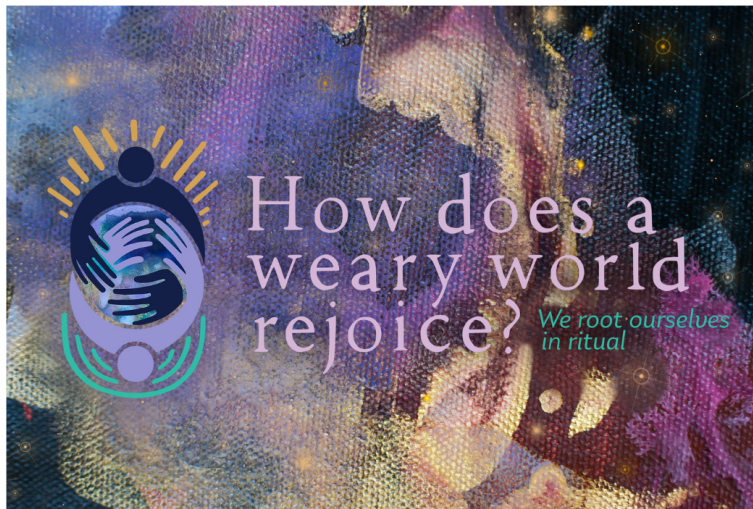


Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023 · 10:00 AM

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

arr. Christine D. Anderson
and Anna Laura Page

Still, Still, Still

Robert Paraska, bells

Judy Fesko, piano

* Call to Worship

One: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

Many: Every month we break bread.

One: Every week we gather for worship.

Many: Every day we count our blessings.

One: Every minute God is near.

Many: Yes, every minute God is near.

One: These are the rituals of our faith.

Many: Let us worship Holy God.

* Opening Hymn

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Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

* Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

Gracious God, When our world turns upside down or when the road ahead is unclear, we return to ritual. We come to the sanctuary. We make music. We greet one another as family. And we listen to your Word. Today, meet us here. Meet us in these rituals that anchor us and speak a word of hope. We are listening. We are drawing near. We are seeking you. Amen.

Special Music

In the Bleak Midwinter
Charlotte Petrie, vocals

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

A Time of Sharing

Call to Offering

Offertory

arr. Linda R. Lamb

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Robert Paraska, bells

* 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, bless our offerings this day. Make us mindful and strategic in the way we use our resources in the year ahead, that each dollar will be used to your glory. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Ryan Geiger

Luke 2:21-38

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according

to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

for my eyes have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Reflection

Rev Joanna D'Agostino

We Root Ourselves in Ritual

* Closing Hymn

#168

Down to Earth

* Benediction

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