

# Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH

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## Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2023 · 5:00 PM

### 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.

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### Prelude

Sam Pottle

*Keep Christmas with You All Through the Year*

Edie Barcelona, piano

### Christmas Proclamation

#### Advent Candle Lighting

Parlanti-Klein Family

- A: How does a weary world hold onto hope, practice peace, spread joy, or know love? How does a weary world combat cruelty? How does a weary world shine a light into our bleakest night?
- B: We do all these things with God's help. For tonight, a child is born in Bethlehem. Tonight, Christ draws near. Tonight, we light the Christ Candle. Tonight, we are not alone.
- A: God is near. Love has drawn close. Rejoice! For God loves this weary world. Amen.

### \* Carol

# 148

*O Come, All Ye Faithful (verse 1,2,4)*

## \* Call to Worship

One: There is room for you here. If you're weary and worn, or hopeful and patient.

**Many: If you're tired and lost, or wrapped up in hope.**

One: If you're new to this place, or have been here before.

**Many: Come in, come in. There is room for you here.**

One: The angels are singing,

**Many: "Be not afraid."**

One: The angels are singing,

**Many: "Good news and great joy!"**

One: So come in, come in!

**Many: There is room for us here.**

## First Reading

Avery Spahr

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Long before Jesus came, the people of Israel were suffering in slavery and they wondered if they would ever get back to their homeland. They dreamed of someone who could save them. The Prophet Isaiah spoke these hopeful words, which set the scene for us tonight.

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

## Special Music

Janet McMahan-Wilson and Ted Wilson

*Sing a Song of Christmas*

Pre-K thru 5th Grade Faith Formation Children

Julie Warren, Piano

## Second Reading

Edie Barcelona

Micah 5:2-5a

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
though you are the least significant of Judah's forces,  
one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.  
His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.  
Therefore, he will give them up  
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.  
The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.  
He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
They will dwell secure,  
because he will surely become great throughout the earth;  
he will become one of peace.

## Carol

# 144

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* (2 vs.)

## Third Reading

Teegan Barlow

Luke 1:26-38

One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee with a message for a maid named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."

Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So, your child will be called the holy Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. Nothing is impossible for God!"

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her.

## Invitation to Offering

### Offertory Music

Max Reger

*The Virgin's Slumber Song*

Evelyn Richards, Soprano

### Prayer of Dedication

**Gracious God, bless these gifts, that we might use them to be a blessing to others. On this Holy Night, care for us as you cared for Mary, that we might serve you as she did, bearing God's grace into the world. Amen.**

### Fourth Reading

David Burns

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to

Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### Carol

# 162

*What Child is This? (2 vs.)*

### Fifth Reading

Grant Richards

Luke 2:8-20

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

### \* Carol

# 150

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (2 vs.)*

## **Christmas Eve Message**

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

*We Make Room*

## **Sixth Reading**

Evelyn D'Agostino

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was present from the beginning with God. Through the Word all things came into being and apart from the Word none of this would be here. The Word was filled with life and light. The life was the light of all people: a light that transforms shadows and can never be overcome.

## **Special Music**

Mark Lowry and Buddy Green

*Mary Did You Know?*

David Burns, vocals; Olivia Diemert, guitar and vocals;  
Xander Hoffman, djembe; Bridget Katzenberger, cello;  
Shannon Katzenberger, vocals; Avery Spahr, keyboard

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Tiny and vulnerable, cute and wise, by the labor of a mother and the grace of God, Jesus came into the world. The movement he began continues to this day, and we are part of it: a movement of light that transforms shadows and can never be overcome.

Together, our small candles symbolize the bright flame of Christ's light in the world. May we be both witnesses and bearers of this light tonight and every night after.

## **The Service of Candlelight**

*It is our long-standing tradition to take the light from the Christ candle and spread it to the candles we each hold while we sing Silent Night. If you are at home tonight, we ask you to find a candle in your house to*

*light and hold with us. By God's Grace, the light we share in our sanctuary connects with the light you share at home.*

*When it comes time to extinguish your candles at the end of our hymn, please don't blow out your candle. Instead, use the small glass communion cup you will find in your pew as a snuffer.*

## **\* Carol**

# 145

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

Chris Burns, guitar

Verse 1 in German sung by

Shannon Katzenberger and Judy Fesko, vocals  
Congregation (3 vs.)

## **\* Benediction**

## **\* Carol**

# 143

*Joy to the World*

## **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.*