

Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



Epiphany Sunday

Holy Communion & 2024 Star Words

January 7, 2024 | 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.

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

arr. John Carter

When Morning Gilds the Skies

Judy Fesko, piano

Call to Worship

One: We gather in the Light that was before, is now, and ever will be.

Many: We seek the Light's ancient wisdom.

One: We gather in the Light that is God's continuing gift.

Many: We live into the Light's new wisdom.

One: We gather in the Light that is our own, emerging anew each day.

Many: We seek to share this wisdom, nurtured in the Light from Bethlehem's cradle.

Opening Hymn

#105

O Morning Star

Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

God of Light and Love, in this very moment the star still beckons. Gather us and let the star call us to new ways of healing and hope, restoration and renewal, as we discover again Christ's call to discipleship. Amen.

Anthem

Dale Grotenhuis

What Star Is This?

LCC Chancel Choir

A Time of Prayer

Invitation to 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

Into My Heart

A Time of Sharing

Call to Offering

Offertory

Felix Mendelssohn

Adagio

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)

Loving God, may these gifts reveal to us and to others the Light that is Jesus. And may this Light lead us on into new and challenging ways of living and serving, in your name. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Beth Abbott

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

Overwhelmed with Joy

Service of Holy Communion

Anyone who wishes to partake in this sacrament is welcome to do so, no matter who you are or where you are on your faith journey. If you wish to not partake, it's not a requirement. Communion will be shared by intinction this month, which means you're invited to come forward to the altar to partake in the sacrament. If you're unable or uncomfortable coming forward, please remain seated and signal to an usher, so we can come to you.

Invitation to Communion

- One: Come to your new journey to be sustained by the food and drink of this holy table.
- Many: **We come following the stars of guidance.**
- One: Come in spite of all the detours of your life.
- Many: **We know God shows us every year, every day an oasis of safety and rest when we are escaping from dangers all around us, and the 'home by another way' which may be a new staying place or a new adventure.**
- One: Come, for there is always a table waiting.
- Many: **We come to share what strengthens us and receive the gifts of others.**

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God, as you serve us in sacrament, shine before us a star, and teach us to be cooks and servers for the hungry in the world, those who are seeking freedom, those who just need a gift, we go forth to share your kindness, your wisdom, your open heart and resting place. Amen.

Closing Hymn

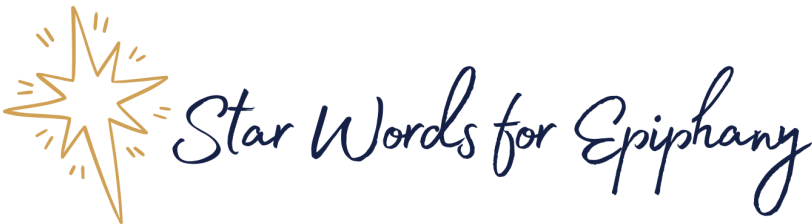
#171

God's Love Made Visible!

Benediction

Postlude

Our guest musician and choir director is Judy Fesko



Here are a few words you might consider:

Joy	Affirm	Wilderness	Hope	Return	Dreamer
Rest	Connection	Voice	Room	Revelation	Resist
Bless	Comfort	Awe	Hospitality	Beloved	Imagine
Restore	Journey	Wonder	Ritual	Silence	Seek
Vision	Clarity	Stability	Leadership	Change	Be
Generosity	Confidence	Freedom	Discernment	Tenderness	Enthusiasm
Patience	Friendship	Release	Intention	Forgiveness	Appreciation
Story	Creativity	Renew	Pursue	Laughter	Justice
Awareness	Welcome	Community	Power	Empathy	Weave
Reflect	Begin	Integrity	Authentic	Time	Adopt
Health	Abundance	Passion	Build	Education	Fearless
Invite	Home	Nurture	Language	Sabbath	Wisdom
Courage	Center	Examine	Focus	Tell	Grow
Speak	Embrace	Radiate	Explore	Risk	Tradition
Remember	Warmth	Align	Include	Believe	Mercy
Cherish	Choice	Overflow	Inspire	Marvel	Motivate
Heal	Listen	Learn	Play		

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.*