

Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024 | 7:00 PM

Prelude

Welcome and Framing

Call to Worship

One: Gather the people. Prepare a holy meeting.

Many: Today, we acknowledge the fragility and preciousness of life.

One: Gather the people. Return to God with our whole selves—mind, body, and spirit.

Many: We rend our hearts not our clothes. We open ourselves to the pain of the world with compassion and grace in the way of Jesus.

One: Gather the people. Seek the Holy One gathered with us.

Many: We offer a sacrifice of praise. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, we are here to worship!

Opening Hymn

#515

Give Me a Clean Heart

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (in unison)

(inspired by Psalm 51)

Holy One, have mercy upon us, according to your faithful love. Create in us a heart for love, justice, and righteousness. Replace any guilt or shame with the hope of new life teeming with mercy and grace. Send your Spirit to be our companion in the choices we make and the ways that we relate to one another. Let hypocrisy be offensive to us, and honesty, humility, and truth become irresistible in our being. You have turned our dust into something marvelous. Let us honor you by living our days in faith, in connection, and in covenant with you and human siblings. Renew us, O God, we pray. Amen

Words of Grace (inspired by Psalm 51)

Children of God, the faithful and loving embrace of Creator knows our hidden places and wants our truth. Our Comforter knows our struggles and sadness and restores joy and celebration in our lives. The One who comes to us creates the newness of life in us. The God who delivers saves us from the injustice, hopelessness, and violence of the world by renewing our spirit, expanding our voice, and receiving our broken spirits as the canvas of a new creation.

Scripture

Rev. Catherine Lawrence

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

(Common English Bible)

We beg you on behalf of Christ, “Be reconciled to God!” God caused the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God.

Since we work together with him, we are also begging you not to receive the grace of God in vain. He says, I listened to you at the right time, and I helped you on the day of salvation. Look, now is the right time! Look, now is the day of salvation!

We don’t give anyone any reason to be offended about anything so that our ministry won’t be criticized. Instead, we commend ourselves as ministers of God in every way. We did this with our great endurance through problems, disasters, and stressful situations. We went through beatings, imprisonments, and riots. We experienced hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger. We displayed purity, knowledge, patience, and generosity. We served with the Holy Spirit, genuine love, telling the truth, and God’s power. We carried the weapons of righteousness in our right hand and our left hand. We were treated with honor and dishonor and with verbal abuse and good evaluation. We were seen as both fake and real, as unknown and well known, as dying—and look, we are alive!

We were seen as punished but not killed, as going through pain but always happy, as poor but making many rich, and as having nothing but owning everything.

Ash Wednesday Reflection

Rev. Joanna D’Agostino

An Acceptable Time

Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

(You are invited to come forward to receive ashes on your hand or on your forehead. If you are unable to come forward and still wish to receive ashes, please signal to a greeter, and they will be brought to you in your seat)

Scripture Response

Isaiah 58:11-12

God will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Closing Hymn

#595

Be Thou My Vision

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.*