

Lakewood Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



Third Sunday of Lent

March 3, 2024 | 10:00 AM

Image: Who Do You Say That I Am? by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 16:13-20 Digital painting

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship *Inspired by Psalm 19* Rev. Catherine Lawrence

One: If you ask the sky who God is,

Many: the sky will tell you of God's reach.

One: If you ask the day who God is,

Many: the sun will tell you of God's warmth.

One: If you ask the night who God is,

Many: the moon will tell you of God's comfort.

One: "The heavens are telling the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1).

Are you listening?

Many: We are listening! We will sing of God's glory.

One: Let us worship Holy God.

Opening Hymn

#618

How Firm a Foundation

Prayer for Forgiveness (responsive) Rev. Catherine Lawrence

Holy God, Some days, we are quick to declare your goodness. Like Peter, we see you in our midst and we are confident in our faith. Other days, we are distracted and uncertain, desperate for answers. Forgive us for losing sight of you. Some days we are quick to trust your blessings—trusting that we are called, that we can make a difference. Other days, our praise falls silent and doubt creeps in. Forgive us for losing sight of ourselves. We know that fear and doubt are part of the journey of faith. But for the days when we are far from you and far from ourselves, we ask for your tender grace. Pull us closer toward you. Remind us of the mountaintop moments of our faith. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Rev. Catherine Lawrence

Friends, Whether you speak to God in a whisper or with clear conviction, with questions or with answers, with hope in your heart or with doubt in your throat— God will always listen with love and mercy. So rest in this good news: regardless of how loudly you live your faith—you belong to God. You are loved. You are claimed. You are forgiven. Speak that good news with confidence. Amen.

Anthem

Allen Pote

I Will Sing And Not Be Silent
LCC Chancel Choir

Time for Lenten Reflection

Through the season of Lent, we will set aside a few moments during worship to reflect on one of our daily devotional prompts with someone sitting near us.

This week's prompt:

When in your life have you felt closest to God?

What are some of the "mountaintop" moments in your faith?

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

O God, Hear My Prayer

A Time of Sharing Offertory

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)

O God, whose richness is found at the table of extravagant love for neighbor, we entrust these gifts to your care that they may abound in your steadfast love for all persons. Use them for the building of your beloved community here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Evey Lardi

Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

Praise the Mount

Service of Holy Communion

Today we will receive Communion at the front of the sanctuary by intinction, coming forward by row. You may select a piece of bread and dip it in juice, or choose a pre-packaged cup. If you are unable to come forward but would like to receive Communion, please signal to the ushers and they will come to you.

Invitation to Communion

One: No matter where we go, or whom we meet, we remember that we are always welcome here. Whether we are full of faith or running on empty, whether we come with eager footsteps or more tentatively, we are always welcome to feast on God's grace.

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Words of Remembering

One: Today we remember...

... Christ is the bread of life:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.

Prayer of Consecration

One: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may unite us with the living Christ, so we may be one in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Elements

This week, we take communion by the ancient practice of intinction.

You are welcome to come forward, receive a piece of the bread, dip it in the cup, and return to your seat. This is the feast of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

Communion Music

Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)

Jesus Christ, bread of life, as you have met us at this table, send us out into the world to meet you in our neighbors, that we might share your grace and spread your love. Surprise us with your presence, and fill us with your courage, that we might resist what is destructive and learn to follow you alone. All this we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn

#494

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Chris Burns & David Burns, guitar

Benediction

Postlude

Matt Dickerson

Praise Processional

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.*