

LAKWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



Tenth Sunday After Pentecost Blessing of the Backpacks

August 17, 2025 | 10:00 AM

Cover Photo taken by Pastor Joanna while camping in Syracuse, IN
Liturgy Adapted from UCC Worship Ways and Illustrated Ministry.

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

Johann Pachelbel

Pachelbel Canon

Handbell Quartet

Michael Komperda, Susan Walker, Robert Wenz, Jan Young

*Call to Worship

One: In a world uprooted at every turn, come, beloved of God, for replanting.

Many: **Our hope and weariness are mixed together, yet we come, trusting ancient promises.**

One: The Holy One, who led the people out of Egypt, yearns to lead us, too.

Many: **God will not rest until all are rerooted, restored, and renewed for rejoicing.**

One: Let us be joined in God's song of justice, bearing beauty into the life of the world.

Many: **May our lives be formed for faithfulness by the One who is always faithful.**

*Hymn

#25

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

*Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

Creator God, Embodiment of Love, we focus on your goodness this morning. We dwell in your presence with joy and gratitude. Encircle us with inspiration to embrace unconditional love, so that we might reflect that same love into the world around us. May your Spirit lead us in new directions to love you and one another in new ways. Amen.

Blessing of the Backpacks

Rachel Burns

We celebrate the beginning of the school year and ask for God's blessing upon students, educators, and other school staff of all ages. Anyone preparing for the start of a new school year is welcome to come forward to receive a back-to-school blessing.

Anthem

Charles Maggs, arr.

Bist du bei mir
Handbell Quartet

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.

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)

In a spirit of appreciation, we dedicate the gifts of time, talent and treasure to you, O God. Through our contributions, we seek to grow in our relationship with you and our neighbor. Give us courage to use these gifts for the building up of your Kingdom. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Michael Greenland

Hebrews 11:29–12:2

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Reflection

Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

By Faith We Persevere

***Closing Hymn**

#642

How Long O God, How Long?

***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.*