

LAKWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation
1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH



RALLY DAY!!
Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost
September 7, 2025 | 10:00 AM

Cover Image: Stock photo; reflecting our Sanctuary decorations for Rally Day, and the connection we share as a Church Family

Announcements and Welcome

Prelude

***Call to Worship**

We will divide between East and West for our Call to Worship today. For those of you in the center section, just choose a side and stick with it! For those of you at home, you can do both sides, or no sides, or split your living room in half.

One: God, whom we gather to worship,
East Side: *has blessed us through our wonderful church volunteers;*

West Side: **has comforted us through tender ministries of loving circles;**

East Side: *has challenged us through our fellowship and service;*

West Side: **has inspired us through choir, musicians, speakers, and preachers.**

East Side: *has led us through insightful church leadership*

All: **Come, let us worship God, in thanks and praise.**

***Hymn**

#687

In Christ There is No East or West

***Prayer of Invocation** (in unison)

With great joy we gather together today, O God; to see our church family and explore the possibilities in store for us. On Rally Sunday we ask that you draw us back in if we have drifted away: Draw us back to you, and draw us back to community. Calm the chaos in our lives. Encourage us to set goals, to find structure and to center our lives on you. May our year be filled with rooted and generative grace. Amen.

Anthem

Sarah Quartel

All the Way Home

LCC Chancel Choir

Text written and inspired by members of the Radcliffe Ladies' Choir as they reflected on their motto, "friendship through singing."

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 *God, Listen to Your Children Praying*

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)

With reverence and awe for your ways, we offer our gifts for the work of love and justice, the work of healing, restoring and setting free in your holy name, God of our hearts. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word

Luci Robbins

Philemon 1:1-21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you

in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Luke 14:25-33

Bridget Katzenberger

Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot

be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Reflection

Suzy Lefelhocz, LCC Member and Guest Preacher

*Closing Hymn

#453

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

*Benediction

Postlude

Our Guest Worship Leader, **Suzy Lefelhocz**, is a member of LCC, and sings in our Chancel Choir. She works as a hospital chaplain at Cleveland Clinic's Fairview campus. She is also a "Member In Discernment (MID)" with the UCC, and is anticipating that she will be Ordained at LCC later this Fall. Many, many thanks to Suzy for "stepping up" last minute while Pastor Joanna is home with Covid.

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.***