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by Karl Hasselriis

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ

The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 23, 2022



*Please take this bulletin home with you. There is a pastoral letter and announcements on the last few pages that we hope you will review.*

Welcome and Announcements

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude “Prelude for Organ No. 17” in D major by C.H. Rinck

\*Call to Worship –

 (Please rise or remain seated if you wish and join us in this morning’s Call to Worship, speaking gently with masks remaining on.)

“The Spirit of God” is upon us.

All of God is upon us.

Every name by which God is known;

every song by which God is sung;

every heart in which God beats –

is upon us.

Be.

In that Spirit of God, be.

As we worship together.

Hymn “Community of Christ” NCH #314 vss. 2,3

Community of Christ, look past the church’s door

and see the refugee, the hungry, and the poor.

Take hands with the oppressed, the jobless in your street,

take towel and water, that you wash your neighbor’s feet.

Community of Christ, through whom the world must sound –

cry out for justice and for peace the whole world ‘round:

Disarm the powers that war and all that can destroy,

turn bombs to bread, and tears and anguish into joy.

Unison Prayer

 Please remain standing and join me in today’s Unison Prayer and the “Passing of the Peace,” which follows…

There are those among us, now and then,

who reflect the teachings we strive to follow.

“The Spirit of God” is upon them, we say

(in some variation of those words).

And the “Spirit of God” is upon us.

We inspire each other more with Love

 than brilliance; more with compassion

 than status; more with presence

 than accomplishments…

And, always, in caring for one another,

as we, ourselves, wish to be cared for…

it is the way and the Light and God’s

 language of the heart. We practice

 here. Now.

\*Passing of the Peace

 May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with you

 **And also with you.**

 Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Please be seated and join in the singing of this morning’s first Hymn.

Hymn “Send Your Spirit to Set Us Free” (2X) Sing! Prayer and Praise #108

Send your Spirit to set us free,

send your Spirit to set us free.

Fill our hearts and minds;

loose the chains that bind.

Send your Spirit to set us free.

Joys and Concerns…

We take this time to share our Joys and Concern with one another. While we navigate this time of safe practices, we refrain from passing a microphone. Please wait for Ray who will repeat your Joys and Concerns for all to hear…

\*The Prayer of Jesus

Creator God who is in heaven

Hallowed be your name.

Your kindom come, your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kindom, the power,

and the glory forever, Amen.

First Reading Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

When the seventh month came all the Israelites had settled in their various towns, all the people came together in the broad expanse before the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses which God had given to Israel.

On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the scribe brought out the Book of the Law before the assembled people, all – including children old enough to understand the reading. Ezra read the book aloud from early morning till noon while facing the broad expanse before the Water Gate, in the presence of all. All listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra, standing on the raised platform, opened the book in the presence of all the people. When he opened the book, all stood up.

When Ezra blessed the Most High, the great God, all the people raised their hands with the response, “Amen, Amen,”; then they bowed their heads and worshipped YHWH lying face down on the ground.

Reading from the Book of the Law, they interpreted it and gave it meaning so that the people understood it.

Then Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest and scribe, along with the Levites, instructed the people, saying to all of them, “This day is holy to the Most High, your God. Do not mourn, do not weep”—for the people all had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Nehemiah continued, “Go now and enjoy rich food and sweet wine, and be certain that you send a share to those who cannot provide for themselves, for this day is holy to YHWH. Let no one be sad, for YHWH’s joy is your strength.”

Musical Praise “Send Your Spirit to Set Us Free”

Send your Spirit to set us free,

send your Spirit to set us free.

Fill our hearts and minds;

loose the chains that bind.

Send your Spirit to set us free.

Gospel Reading Luke 4:14-21

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and his reputation spread through the region. He was teaching in the Galilean synagogues, and all were loud in their praise.

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. Entering the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was his habit, Jesus stood up to do the reading. When the Book of the prophet Isaiah was handed him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of God is upon me:

because the Most High has anointed me

to bring the Good News to those who are poor.

God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive,

recovery of sight to those who are non-sighted,

and release to those in prison-

to proclaim the year of our God’s favor.”

Rolling up the scroll, Jesus gave it to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, “Today in your hearing, this scripture passage is fulfilled.”

[All who were present spoke favorably of him; they marveled at the eloquence of the words on Jesus’ lips. They said, “Surely this isn’t Mary and Joseph’s son!”

Sermon “Here and There”

“Church Covenant”

(Please stand or be seated for the singing of “Church Covenant” and please remain as you are for the Benediction to follow.)

 In response to God’s love, we covenant with each other…

 to be faithful to the demand and inspiration of the eternal spirit,

 revealed in the event of Jesus Christ;

 to accept and respect each other with love and concern

 in our worship and witness.;

 to reach out with the courage of our convictions

 in the cause of justice, liberation, and equality for all.

 In this, we covenant to keep the ultimate promise:

 “I care, I am with you.”

Benediction

Ringing of the Bell

Postlude "River in Judea" Music by Jack Feldman Words by Linda Marcus Arranged by John Leavitt

Pastoral Review and Request

January 23, 2022

Dear Members and Friends,

I want to ask your help. I want to ask you to help in preparing for what will be needed for the time before us. To look at where we are and where we will be heading into the weeks ahead. There is new *energy* heading our and your help in making sure we are ready as we can be - is so very important.

First, though, we need to look back and realize where we have been since March 16, 2020 –a year and ten months ago. We could never have imagined what was ahead or how challenging our personal lives and the ministry of this congregation would become. Our priority to stay safe and connected (somehow), to continue worship (in whatever ways we could), and to maintain all the programs from Bible Jam to Leadership meetings online (which we did), highlights just a bit the wave that crashed into us and that we were determined to survive.

Think of our ministries that are so important to this congregation and so challenging in the best of times: growing youth programs, staying active and a force in justice programs, expanding Christian Ed, inviting new members to join us, intentional community outreach and the comfort of just being present with one another – all these and more were nearly wiped out! We spent enormous amounts of time in providing worship and pastoral care, which left little time for anything else. We set priorities and did our best. You may remember teaching one another Zoom so we could see each other, hear each other, talk and be together. For months we had daily and weekly Zoom meetings, increased phone calls, did everything and anything so folks knew they were not forgotten, helping those who needed food, medicine, or a ride to a doctor. And we regularly reviewed our priorities and adjusted – we are moving in to just such a time, again.

You know how hard this all has been. You know. But I want to say it again: “This has been hard” and the impact is still being understood. We have persevered and have a way yet to go. And we are going to keep going…

I hope you recognize how this congregation has been a leader in our communities and Association during this time. After just five months into the pandemic, we began in person worship on August 30, 2020. With protocols and safety practices carefully observed and managed, we returned as soon as we could. We needed to. We needed to be together. Online. In-person. Together.

***Still, we had ups and downs***. Three times before the end of 2020, we suspended worship out of safety concerns, implementing the protocols of our Sanctuary Return Committee, calling and notifying people that someone in their close proximity had tested positive. And we kept going, even when *in-person Christmas* was suspended a few days before because of positivity tests. Within two days, everybody stepped up; came in and recorded the liturgy, created “choir pieces” online through Sean and the choir’s great care and commitment - and we had Christmas Worship. Online? Yes. We had Christmas worship. An incredible effort on top of already incredible efforts. What a blessing!

I hope you remember just how hard you and we have worked during these 22 months under the *oppressive* conditions of these times. Heather, Sean, Laura - all of them and you, your prayers and all the ways you were able to step up has to be celebrated not forgotten. Keeping the lights on, the grounds safe and lanscaped, managing the spaces for twelve-step groups especially struck hard as churches and venues closed around them. Caring for the pre-school, working with Sharing a Meal as they converted their servings to take-out and never closed during the pandemic, They never closed! Irish Step classes! So grateful to all..

And, you know, I am not sure how we did it, except that we always *believed* and *believed we could*.

Last year we stepped up even more. We were in in-person and online worship every Sunday in 2021, including our Lenten observations. We returned for Easter Sunrise on the Great South Bay (Thank you, Mike and Bill and Sayville ferry!), had our Bake Sale, have been blessed with the return of choir practice and eventually The Chancel Choir singing only the postlude so we could minimize the potential for air-borne transmission of the virus from singing. We hosted (you amazing committee!) The Victorian Tea; conducted a highly successful Pack and Play Fundraiser; organized and livestreamed a Foster Care Town Hall with Suffolk County DSS; expanded our Pride Celebration in June to different speakers each Sunday; enjoyed the return of our Christmas Concert, and Christmas – in our sanctuary – on Christmas Eve! And in those last two months of the year, we felt the extreme loss and celebrated the lives of Karl Hasselriis and Don Gray.

We are strong in God’s love and the Spirit that carries us.

And we are still not back…but nothing over these months has been done without care or love. Like you, I long for the return to one-hour worship, full choir participation, Passing the Peace; looking into your eyes as we share the Communion meal. I can’t wait for Hospitality, Children’s return, maybe even Confirmation Classes and so much more.

So, there’s a snapshot of where we have been, much of which you already know because you have been a part of it. And still…

*It is easy to wonder in times like these. To wonder where “this” is, or wonder why this is so, or how come we are doing it this way? Rather than wonder – please, engage me and our leadership in conversation. Let’s talk. The art of discourse needs a little practice everywhere you look. Let’s start here.*

From everything I see, in 2022 things are going to change very quickly. As this recent variant recedes and we emerge into spring and outdoors, freed up by better treatment and prevention – I believe we will “be back” in earnest. The energy is even more pent up than last year, when we had a brief taste of what it could be like to de-mask (before Omicrom descended on the world.)

We have accomplished much during this time. Without any pride or hubris, we are a model for returning to worship – and have been from the first wave that struck in 2020. There are churches and communities of faith who have yet to open, or opened briefly, only to close again. Thank you for the support and challenges you have brought us in keeping *this community of faith* safe and strong and together, living into the Gospel in the ways we never thought we’d need to learm.

***Please speak your piece.*** Your voice is really important, always has been, and continues to be. Send me your thoughts. Call and make an appointment. Talk with others and “take notes” so we have your ideas to build upon. Please. If there’s something you’ve been thinking about saying, something you think needs to be changed, something you really like – write it down. Let me know. Let someone know. Congregational life means that we all have a voice and are willing to be part of this church in all the ways we can, from membership to liturgist to being in worship (in person or online). Most importantly, though, it means that we care for each other without ceasing.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these things. In different times, we would be having this conversation at congregational luncheons or hospitality. I really look forward to hearing from you. Even more – seeing you! Stay in touch! Keep the faith!

With love,

Ray

***Announcements*** – 1/23/22

1. Bible Jam resumes on Tuesday, January 25th at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. For this week, we will have the morning session in person in the Vestry and online. Please join us. Find the online link at www.sayvilleucc.org.
2. Aging Well: A Conversation about the Benefit of Years! Join Jane Ann Groom and me for a conversation about Aging on Wednesday, January 26th at 11:00 AM. We are exploring whether this is a group that might be helpful. Please join us. You input is welcome and besides, always nice to visit with Jane Ann. Online: Follow Zoom link from www.sayvilleucc.org
3. Ushers and Liturgists are needed. Please see Sue Lanchantin to sign up. Your help would be very much appreciated.
4. Are you interested in learning how to help prepare worship, including bulletins, selecting music, creating PowerPoints, Media and bringing the message? Do you have an interest in Christian Ed? Please let Ray know if you have interest in any of these areas.
5. Are you interested in considering membership in Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ? It’s good to have a church home and a voice in the decisions that are made that guide this ministry in our community and the many ways we serve. We would welcome telling you more! Just give Ray a call.
6. Please plan to join us on Sunday, January 30, 2022 when we welcome Barbara Salva as a new member! Welcome, Barbara.
7. The Chancel Choir – you can join! Want to sing with this amazing choir under the exceptional leadership and direction of Sean Cameron? Let Sean or any of the choir members know!
8. Please stay in touch. If you have some needs or concerns, please let us know. Ray is always available for pastoral care, as well. We are here for you in all the ways we are able.

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***Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ***

For more than a century and a half, Sayville's Congregational Church has served families on the South Shore of Long Island and has been a voice for the progressive Protestant tradition. A member of the United Church of Christ since it was established in 1957, today we continue to celebrate God's love, to advocate and act for the oppressed, and to welcome all those on their spiritual journey, from wherever they may come. Thank you for joining us. Please contact us at any time for more information about our congregation or with any questions you may have for us. Merry Christmas.

Today’s Worship Leadership

Liturgist – Karen Maust

Music Director – Sean Cameron

Ushers – Roberta Smith and Hilda Baeza

Media Team – Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad,

Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

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Heather Corcoran, Church Administrator; eChimes Editor

Ray Bagnuolo, Pastor ray@sayvilleucc.org 631-827-8611 (Cell/Text)

Today’s Service is being simulcast on our church channel at

[www.echimestv.org](http://www.echimestv.org) Tune in any time!

*Thank you for being with us today.*

*Peace. Shalom. Salaam. For the ways of peace are many.*

*“Namaste”*