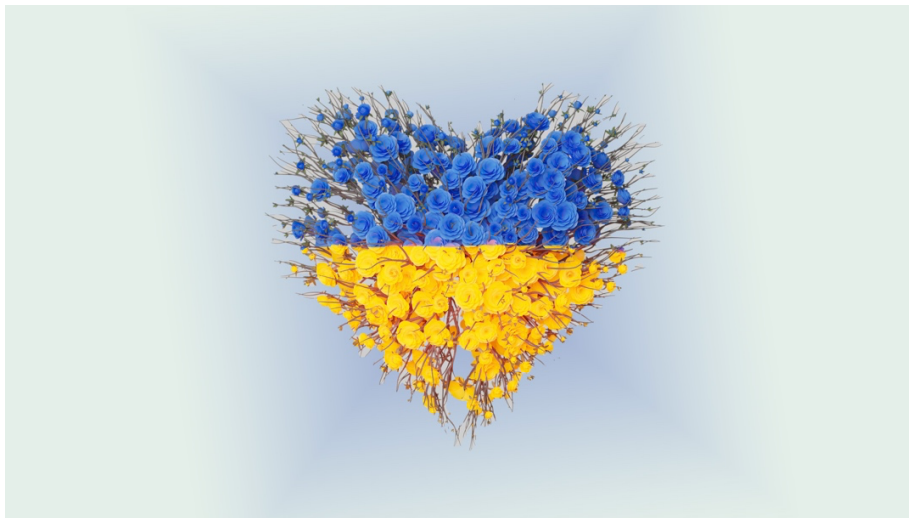




Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ  
The Third Sunday of Lent  
Sunday, March 20, 2022



"We Stand With Ukraine"

Announcements

Ring the Bell

Prelude "Mein Herzens - Jesu, meine Lust" by C.H. Rinck

\*Call to Worship

Adapted from Isaiah 55:1-9 of Today's Lectionary

"All you who are thirsty,  
come to the water!  
You who have no money,  
come, buy food and eat!  
Come, buy drink and milk,  
without money, without price!

Heed me, and you will eat well,  
you will delight in rich fare;  
bend your ear and come to me,  
listen that you may have abundant life..."

*Friends, come. All. And let us join the banquet of God's love  
in our worship and prayer and song.*

*(\*Please rise or be seated, as you wish, joining with us singing.)*

Hymn

“Draw the Circle Wide”  
Sing! Prayer and Praise #123 v 1

(Refrain)

Draw the circle wide.

Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song,

no one stands alone, standing side by side,

draw the circle wide.

God the still point of the circle,

‘round whom all creation turns;

nothing lost, but held forever

in God’s gracious arms. (Refrain)

*(\*Please be seated and join us in prayer.)*

Unison Prayer: Adapted from Psalm 63:1-8 – Today’s Lectionary

Dear God, you are our God.

We seek you.

Our souls thirst for you,

as in a dry and weary land.

We look toward you, as we know you,

beholding your power and presence and love.

We ask for your help and your guidance

as we bring our hearts to you.

And we bring your love to all.

*(\*Please rise or be seated, as you wish, joining with us in singing.)*

Hymn

“Draw the Circle Wide”  
Sing! Prayer and Praise #123 v.2

(Refrain)

Draw the circle wide.

Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song,

no one stands alone, standing side by side,

draw the circle wide.

Let our hearts touch far horizons,

so encompass great and small;

let our loving know no borders,

faithful to God’s call. (Refrain)

*(\*Please remain standing or seated, as you wish.)*

Passing of the Peace of Christ

In John 14:27, Jesus said, “Peace I leave you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Paul, in Philippians 4:7 adds, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

The peace we offer one another is an expression, a breath of the peace that Jesus spoke of to the world. Breathe, Pause, Take a breath, and from deep inside the beguiling whispering voice of God in your being, let us offer one another a sign of that peace... that peace.

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

And now, to one another...

*(Please be seated.)*

## Joys and Concerns...

We turn to our Joys and Concerns as we approach this table for our Communion Meal. With the world, we struggle to stir hope in ourselves, while in awe of the determination of the Ukrainian people. We pray to find ways to reverse the insanity that has gripped the invaders of their land and the one that leads the criminals of this war.

In the stillness of our hearts, in the words we express, in all the ways we pray let this be a time to share your petitions and joys in the ways you may...

Hymn                    *"In Our Prayers"*  
Sing! Prayer and Praise #125

In our prayers, in our hearts  
in our prayers, in our hearts,  
God in your grace, hear our prayers,  
God in your grace, O God, hear our prayers.

*(\*Please join me in praying the Prayer of Jesus, using the words that comfort you most.)*

## Holy Communion: Come to the Table

Friends, we come to this table in prayer. We *abide* in this Communion we share in this break from the world and its power. We pause from our goings and comings and breathe in the presence of the Holy Spirit that surely filled Jesus in his life, especially that last night; the Spirit that fills us in our life, surely in this moment.

## Words of Institution and Sharing of The Meal

## Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Prayer of Jesus

Creator God who is in heaven  
Hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom 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 kingdom,  
the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymn                    “In Our Prayers”  
Sing! Prayer and Praise #125

In our prayers, in our hearts  
in our prayers, in our hearts,  
God in your grace, hear our prayers,  
God in your grace, O God, hear our prayers.

Reading    Ephesians 6:16-18        (Good News Translation)

<sup>16</sup> At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. <sup>17</sup> And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. <sup>18</sup> Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.

Congregational Voice    Peter Maust

“Henry Muhlenberg and the Sword of the Spirit Alone”

## Church Covenant

*(\*Friends, please rise or be seated, as you wish, joining with us singing our Church Covenant and remain as you are for the Benediction.)*

### “Church Covenant”

In response to God’s love, we covenant with each other...  
to be faithful to the demands 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 by Shannon Conrad

“Let us pray. God we thank you for all that you do in our lives, whether we are conscious of your grace or not. You do so much for us. You keep us safe. You watch over us. You ground us. You guide us through times of uncertainty, even if we are not certain it is You guiding us. We pray for those who are not aware of your Light shining in their lives. We pray for safety, comfort, and peace. Please bring peace to us here, and those abroad so that we may live according to your image.” Amen

*(Please be seated.)*

### Ring the Bell

Postlude  
Choir

"Sing a New Song"

The Chancel

by Michael Haydn

## “Henry Muhlenberg and the Sword of the Spirit Alone”

Peter Maust

Text: Ephesians 6:16-18 (Good News Translation)

<sup>16</sup> At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. <sup>17</sup> And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. <sup>18</sup> Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.

In 1742, about one hundred twenty years after the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth, and more than thirty years before the American Revolution, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg arrived from Germany to minister to Lutherans in the New World. Inserting himself into a dispute in one of the Pennsylvania churches, he got a rude lesson about his new home. He expected a degree of deference and respect, but was aghast when his intended flock resisted his guidance.<sup>1</sup> Despite his degrees and training, he was frustrated by the difference between representing a state-sponsored Church in Europe and ministering in the “free air” of America.<sup>2</sup> As Muhlenberg noted in his journal:

The deacons and elders are unable to do anything about it, for in religious and church matters, each has the right to do what he pleases. The government has nothing to do with it and will not concern itself with such matters. Everything depends on the will of the majority. A preacher must fight his way through with the sword of the Spirit alone and depend upon faith in the living god and His promises, if he wants to be a preacher and proclaim the truth [in America].<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lodge, "The Crisis," 201.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, "'Watchful against the Sects': Religious Renewal in Pennsylvania's German Congregations, 1720-1750," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 50, no. 4 (1983): 278, <http://www.jstor.org.ez.sjcnj.edu/stable/27772930>.

<sup>3</sup> *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1942, I, 67, cited in Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism," *Church History* 57, Supplement: Centennial Issue (1988): 79, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3165652>.



As members of a liberal-leaning denomination committed to religious freedom and also heirs to an ecumenical tradition that acknowledges there can be different paths to God, we might be thinking “that’s right Muhlenberg, people can choose where, and how, and with whom they worship, and that’s how it ought to be! We might be moved by the Spirit to come to God, persuaded by a preacher or join with our worship community, but it is our choice!”

Muhlenberg was being forced to confront his basic assumptions about the status of a religious institution in society and the relationship between church and state. A humble person, Muhlenberg doubted that he could guide his flock without the supports he had been trained to expect. Reflecting on his situation, he invoked Paul’s letter to the Ephesians and, while I am uncomfortable with the military metaphors that can be interpreted to encourage Christians to engage in spiritual warfare, his use of the phrase “the sword of the spirit,” the word of God, and, by extension, the power to motivate people voluntarily, seems an appropriate instrument to spread the message of the Prince of Peace.

Had Muhlenberg been a Congregationalist minister making his home in New England, he would have been more likely to have received the government backing he anticipated. Our church’s ancestors in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire enjoyed protection and tax revenues as state-sponsored churches. We may remember our grade school lessons that Pilgrims and Puritans came to America to “worship God in their own way,” however, for decades they tried to make certain that everyone in New England worshipped in the Puritan way. “Puritan” had, after all, been an epithet in England for these strict Calvinists who saw themselves as “too pure” for the corrupted Church of England. Their “my way or the highway” approach sent dissenters like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson into exile for questioning church orthodoxy or imposed even harsher penalties on Quakers like Mary Dyer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 75.

When we study the Puritans in my classes, at least one student will inevitably object to their hypocrisy, that they wanted religious freedom for themselves and not for others. The criticism is logical, but a bit unfair. At that time, most of the established Christian churches in Western Europe: Roman Catholics, Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia, Anglicans in England, and Reformed Calvinists in Scotland and Geneva, insisted that civil governments were obligated to impose religious uniformity within their jurisdictions. Dissenters who pressed for religious freedom were inevitably dismissed as “heretics!” “Schismatics!” and threats to the social and religious order.<sup>5</sup> To put it another way: religious liberty is a fairly recent innovation in the history of the Christian churches (and judging by public figures who relish the meme that the U.S. is a “Christian nation,” it is still not a universal consensus [whatever Thomas Jefferson and the First Amendment might say]).

Of the English colonies, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania flirted most closely with religious freedom. Especially in Pennsylvania this, in combination with fertile land and peaceful relations with the Native peoples attracted a diverse group of immigrants like the Germans Muhlenberg had come to tend. While the Church of England was the official church in New York and much of the South, these colonies usually practiced a “look-the-other-way” toleration acknowledging that, where diverse religious groups cohabited peacefully, the civil government would avoid disrupting society by attempting to force religious uniformity.<sup>6</sup>

Waves of immigrants contributed to a rapidly-increasing population which included many devout Christians, but there was a shortage of trained ministers. To meet people’s spiritual needs, “most ministers traveled hundreds of miles through the wilderness every year preaching ...”<sup>7</sup> But with so few of them, in many instances “schoolmasters and pious laypeople” led services in private homes until churches could be built.<sup>8</sup> For Muhlenberg’s Lutherans, two years before his arrival (in 1740) there was “only one clergyman for twenty-seven German Lutheran congregations.”<sup>9</sup> To deal with this situation, congregations frequently welcomed

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<sup>5</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 69.

<sup>6</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 76-7.

<sup>7</sup> Lodge, "The Crisis," 208.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, "'Watchful against the Sects': Religious Renewal in Pennsylvania's German Congregations, 1720-1750," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 50, no. 4 (1983): 273, 27, 275, <http://www.jstor.org.ez.sjcnj.edu/stable/27772930>. The quote is from 275.

<sup>9</sup> Lodge, "The Crisis," 199.

itinerants who preached in different churches every Sabbath. Some were charlatans, offered communion for cash, and imbued the population with a distrust of the clergy. One became especially notorious as he reportedly roamed the land busy “whoring, stealing, gluttonizing and swilling.” Another was suspiciously versatile, offering his skills as a dentist if they did not need a preacher.<sup>10</sup>

Muhlenberg found that his promised pulpit was occupied by an unlettered fellow who had no intention of giving way to Muhlenberg. Demonstrating his patience and persistence as well as his biblical knowledge, Muhlenberg engaged in a “preach off” and alternated sermons with his rival for over six weeks. The congregation, impressed with Muhlenberg, accepted him into his ministry.<sup>11</sup>

Score one for the sword of the Spirit.

Muhlenberg faced another challenge. He came to America at the same time that religious revivals, which became known as the Great Awakening, were remaking the Protestant churches. They brought a shift “from formal, outward, and established religion to personal, inward, and heartfelt religion.”<sup>12</sup>

The conditions for the Awakening had been developing for some time. American Christians exhibited an ongoing concern regarding the afterlife and desire for salvation.<sup>13</sup> However, many had become dissatisfied with the quality of the institutional churches. By the late 1600s, as one historian has written, “the churches were not reaching the masses of the people effectively or with power ...”<sup>14 15</sup> Church attendance was at a low ebb as congregants “voted with their feet,” choosing to stay home or leave the churches entirely. The audience for the revivalists was hungry for a more passionate and, they thought, more genuine mode of worship.

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<sup>10</sup> Bonomi, “Watchful against,” 276.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, “Watchful against the Sects: Religious Renewal in Pennsylvania's German Congregations, 1720-1750,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 50, no. 4 (1983): 278, <http://www.jstor.org.ez.sjcnj.edu/stable/27772930>.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in the New World*, quoted in Joseph S. Tiedemann, “Presbyterianism and the American Revolution in the Middle Colonies,” *Church History* 74, no. 2 (June 2005): 308, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27644552>.

<sup>13</sup> Lodge, “The Crisis,” 210.

<sup>14</sup> Mead, “From Coercion,” 80.

<sup>15</sup> Mead, “From Coercion,” 80.

The revivalists also navigated away from the doctrine of predestination, where God alone would determine through grace who would be converted and who would be saved.<sup>16</sup> Believing in predestination meant a preacher could not honestly reassure the listener that they were on a offer a reliable path toward salvation, since it pictured unworthy humans who might be touched by the Grace of God, but no effort of theirs could affect God's decision.<sup>17</sup> Grace was "an unearned benefit that you hoped [God] would extend to you."<sup>18</sup>

Revivalist preachers instead suggested that you could reach out to God, and that central to this was an emotional conversion experience where anyone could experience a "personal relationship with God." They could undergo, in a phrase used repeatedly by the most influential revivalist, a "New Birth."<sup>19</sup> The New Birth reassured the sinner that he or she was "on the path to salvation no matter what his denominational creed."<sup>20</sup>

Making religion a more deeply personal experience tended to downgrade the importance of a learned ministry and the refinements of doctrine. Revivalist converts and preachers often mocked and challenged the old guard ministers, men like Muhlenberg, frequently labeling them as "pharisees" – criticizing them as formalists who lacked the spiritually warm hearts of true Christians.<sup>21</sup> Revivalists were also very successful in drawing people away from the traditional churches, including Muhlenberg's Lutherans.<sup>22 23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Mahaffey, "Chapter III," 32.

<sup>17</sup> Mahaffey, "Chapter III," 33.

<sup>18</sup> Mahaffey, "Chapter III," 34.

<sup>19</sup> Mahaffey, "Chapter III," 37.

<sup>20</sup> Martin E. Lodge, "The Crisis of the Churches in the Middle Colonies, 1720-1750," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (April 1971): 219, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20090540>.

<sup>21</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 85.

<sup>22</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 81. Goodfriend, "The Social," 273.

<sup>23</sup> Martin E. Lodge, "The Crisis of the Churches in the Middle Colonies, 1720-1750," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (April 1971): 196, 197, 213, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20090540>.

Muhlenberg disliked the revivalists.<sup>24</sup> Despite his accommodations to conditions in America, he was still a traditionalist at heart, seeking “order and decency” and saw these as inextricable with true religion.<sup>25 26</sup> He believed in worship that revolved around structure and reason, rather than a surge of emotion. Traditional ministers and congregants worried that the revivalist preachers were ranters with little biblical learning, more likely to lead flocks astray than be good shepherds.<sup>27</sup>

Muhlenberg met these challenges as later became known as the “Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.” He traveled tirelessly to preach and organize new parishes. He acknowledged a greater role for the laity in church governance since church membership and financial support were voluntary and many of his constituents demanded that they have a hand in governing themselves.<sup>28 29 30</sup> He advocated for the parent church to send more trained ministers, emphasizing that they needed to be both patient and capable of self-denial.<sup>31</sup> They would need to serve, like Muhlenberg himself, as living examples, as careful and persistent teachers, ministering with a light touch and patient persuasion rather than directing through authority.<sup>32</sup> While Muhlenberg’s journals suggest that he never lost his desire to replicate the German state supported churches, he accommodated himself to the realities of American religious life.<sup>33</sup> For Muhlenberg and countless other pastors in America, they needed to learn to support themselves, as we do, with the sword of the spirit. Amen.

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<sup>24</sup> Gardiner H. Shattuck, "Muhlenberg, Henry Melchior," in *Encyclopedia of American Religious History*, 4th ed., ed. Jr. Gardiner h., et al. (New York, NY, USA: Facts On File, 2018),

[https://ez.sjcnj.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/fofr/muhlenberg\\_henry\\_melchior/0](https://ez.sjcnj.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/fofr/muhlenberg_henry_melchior/0).

<sup>25</sup> Trygve R. Skarsten, review of *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg: The Roots of 250 Years of Organized Lutheranism in North America*, ed. John W. Kleiner, *Church History* 68, no. 4 (1999): 1042,

<https://ez.sjcnj.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/henry-melchior-muhlenberg-roots-250-years/docview/217502689/se-2?accountid=28722>.

<sup>26</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 80.

<sup>27</sup> Mead, "From Coercion," 81.

<sup>28</sup> Bente, *American Lutheranism*, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Bente, *American Lutheranism*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Bente, *American Lutheranism*, 65.

<sup>31</sup> F. Bente. *American Lutheranism*. St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House. HeinOnline, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.religion/amluth0001&i=70>, 60.

<sup>32</sup> Bonomi, "Watchful against," 281.

<sup>33</sup> Lodge, "The Crisis," 208-9.

## **Update: Worship Guidelines; Lent and Easter Schedule**

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Dear Friends,

*We are moving forward. Considering our own situation and in adherence to current CDC, State, and County guidelines, our leadership is pleased to announce these changes to our time together in worship.*

*Yes, this week marks two years...*

### **Wearing of Masks**

Choose to wear a mask or not, based on your personal preference and informed by your personal level of risk to yourself and others. If you are sick, please stay home and watch us [online](#), until you feel better. Also, if you need anything while you are sick and at home, please let us know.

### **Offering Plates**

We will continue to have offering plates at the entrances to the sanctuary. Offering plates will not be passed through the pews. Thank you for leaving your gifts in the plates as you enter or leave.

### **Joys and Concerns**

During the time of Joys and Concerns, we will continue to circulate to hear your prayers and repeat them for those gathered. You will also have the option of using the microphone and announcing your own joys and concerns. Either way, please try to submit your prayers and celebrations in writing, as well. It helps us to keep our prayer list up-to-date.

### **Pew-seating**

We will leave the ribbons on the end of selected pews for now; however, they will be lifted by ushers if we need space for additional seating.

**Holy Communion** You will be invited to come forward and receive the elements from our Communion servers. We will have "pre-packaged" elements, as well. If you wish to remain in your seat, there will be a time where we will bring the elements of Communion to you. All are invited to the table, always!

**Passing of the Peace** For now, we will continue to share "Passing of the Peace" as we have been.

### **Hospitality**

We are planning to return to hospitality following worship on Sunday, April 3rd. Yes, Roberta!

### **Children's Education**

We are planning to return to Children's Education soon. If you are interested in assisting, we would love to hear from you.

### **Holy Week**

Palm Sunday - April 10: Distribution of palms at worship.

Maundy Thursday - April 14 - Maundy Thursday Service at 7:30 PM, followed by a light repast.

Good Friday - April 15 - Sanctuary is open from Noon to 3 PM for prayer and meditation.

Easter Sunrise Service - Board the ship at Sayville Ferry, 41 River Road at 5:45 AM. Free Parking.

(Laura Heaney's World Famous) Polish Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall following the Sunrise cruise.

Easter Sunday Service - 10 AM

Cunningham's Easter Egg Hunt following worship on the front lawn!



## ***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.

Today's Worship Leadership  
Congregational Voice – Peter Maust  
Liturgist – Patricia Mahar  
Music Director – Sean Cameron  
Ushers – Elise and Jimmy Cesare  
Media Team – Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad,  
Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ  
131 Middle Road, Sayville, NY 11782-3101  
631-589-1519; churchadmin@sayvilleucc.org

[www.sayvilleucc.org](http://www.sayvilleucc.org); [www.facebook.com/sayvilleucc](http://www.facebook.com/sayvilleucc)  
Heather Corcoran, Church Administrator; eChimes Editor  
Ray Bagnuolo, Pastor [ray@sayvilleucc.org](mailto: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"*