



*Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
August 21, 2022*

LEADERS – Thank you!

OPENING SLIDE

Patricia: Welcome & Announcements

Good morning, Everyone, and welcome to Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ on this “beautiful” Sunday morning! We are pleased that you are with us, whether here in our sanctuary or with us online. My name is Patricia Mahar and it is my pleasure to serve as your liturgist this morning.

We open today with a few brief announcements, including thanks to Laura Weyant who cares for our campus and is responsible for the beautiful flowers you see all around our premises. Thank you Laura.

And, thanks to James Higgins for joining us again today as Guest Music Director. Sean continues his month-long tour in Asia as Musical Director for a traveling company of “A Chorus Line”.

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If you are watching online or looking for more information about us, please be sure to visit our website at www.sayvilleucc.com. Today’s bulletin is there, as well as much more information about our congregational life together.

SLIDE

Also, please sign up for our weekly newsletter “eChimes” which is timely for announcements, schedule changes, special events and more. You can sign up on the website or by visiting our eChimes.org page.

We are especially asking for your kindness between now and the beginning of school for any school supplies you are able to donate for the Greater Sayville Food Pantry. There is a great need this year – once again – to help young people start off “ready for school”. Bring your donations here on Sunday morning or drop them off at our office Monday through Thursday between 9 AM and 1 PM. Thank you.

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Please note these two very important gatherings on August 30th. On our website and in our eChimes is information on “Islip Goes Purple” – A Resource Fair for Free Narcan Training during this National Recovery Month.

Also there is an announcement about the 10th Annual Tree Lighting “On the Wings of Hope”, also on Tuesday, August 30th as part of “International Overdose Awareness Day”. Please plan on joining us in attendance on this day. And, plan to wear “Purple” on Sunday, August 29th!

SLIDE

And, to help us along a reminder that the

- The Boldface Headings in our bulletin are invitations for you to join in Prayer or Song
- The Italics for Rising and Being Seated are suggestions, should you wish to join in.

SLIDE

Lastly, you are invited to choose whether or not to wear you mask during worship and hospitality. We just ask that you continue to be safe here and elsewhere, as we move through this transition time from COVID.

Are there any other announcements?

So, breathe. Set aside any distractions as best you can and know how welcome you are in this place, from wherever it is you may come...

It is good to be together.

Ring of the Bell

Ring of the Bell

Prelude

Call to Worship Adapted from Luke 13;10-17 (Today's Lectionary)

One sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues. There was a woman there who for eighteen years had a sickness caused by a spirit. She was bent double, quite incapable of standing up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are free of your infirmity." He laid his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began thanking and praising God.

The head of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the congregation, "There are six days for working. Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath." Jesus said in reply, "You hypocrites! Which of you doesn't let your ox or your donkey out of the stall on the Sabbath to water it? This daughter of Sarah and Abraham has been in the bondage of a spirit for eighteen years. Shouldn't she have been released from her shackles on the Sabbath?" At these words, Jesus' opponents were humiliated; meanwhile, everyone else rejoiced at the marvels Jesus was accomplishing.

The lines that may divide others, divide not us here. Each day is the day that God has made and what better day to be together than on the Sabbath, here in prayer and praise and song and support for one another.

Please rise if you wish and join us in singing.

Hymn "This Is the Day" New Century Hymnal #84

(Please use your hymnal or follow on the projected slides.)

Please be seated.

Unison Prayer from Clement of Rome (d. c. 99 CE) (Adapted)

Clement was an early Bishop of Rome and fourth pope, Clement I.

Gracious God, we pray to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming down of the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

**That which we know not, reveal;
that which is wanting in us, fill up;
that which we know, confirm;
and keep us loving in your service to one another. Amen.**

Joys and Concerns Please respond, **“God, hear our prayers.”**

The Prayer of Jesus - The Lord’s Prayer; as you learned to pray this prayer.

Please rise as we share God’s Love with a sign of peace...

Passing of Christ’s Peace

In our prayers for one another; in remembering and praying the words Jesus taught his disciples to pray; may we know the assurance of being so loved by God, so loved that we *must* share this love with all. From these hearts of ours we say:

“May the peace of the Risen Christ be with you!” And also with you.

Friends, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Please remain standing as we sing....

Hymn “Let There be Light, O God of Hosts”

New Century Hymnal #589 v. 1, 3, 4

(Please use your hymnal or follow on the projected slides.)

Please be seated....

Remove from your midst all oppression, finger pointing, and malicious talk! If you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows will become like noon. YHWH will always guide you, giving relief in desert places.

God will give strength to your bones and you will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never run dry.

You will rebuild the ancient ruins and build upon age-old foundations. You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Ruined Neighborhoods.

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath and doing business on the holy day, if you call the Sabbath delightful and the day sacred to YHWH honorable, if you honor it by not pursuing your own ways, seeking your own pleasure, or speaking your own words,

then will you find your happiness in YHWH, and I will lead you triumphant over the heights of the land. I will feed you on the heritage of Leah and Rachel and Jacob, your ancestors!" The mouth of YHWH has spoken.

Provocation

Repair, Rebuild, Restore

Ray Bagnuolo

Provocation...

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Let me begin by saying,

I don't know what I don't know.

I believe in what I know only a tiny bit,
that is not to say that that "tiny bit" is insignificant. Far from it.

And in all things, I am informed by those and those conditions that have gone
before, along with those I personally know of first hand...

And the much more that I only know through second, third and distant – and often
manipulated – sources.

I do know that making sense of my personal, spiritual, and other more objective
sources requires me to carefully remain informed, curious and engaged with others
I know, trust, and of course love.

It is that last part:

Engaged with others I know trust and of course love that forms the core of
my life, in the families of which I am a part, the work I perform, community
and civic involvement, socialization, conversation, shared activities,
interests...

In the doors I open, the smiles I share, the losses, the gains, the poor I help to
feed find a home, the leaders who need to be reminded they are public
servants, not cottage kingdoms, the children I care for...

In other words, life. All of it and how I engage in it has a core – I pray for all –
of those who we know and who can be trusted; those who share their love in
the ways they can,

And in the ways we gather, such as here – and here, especially here – in the midst of all of humanity and its innate guidance system toward a God of one’s understanding, through different languages teachings and culture... we all – I pray – look up in some way...

And for those who have lost their way, we pray and keep our doors open and our kindness alive for them, as well.

Still

I question whether the fulness of this can be truly understood, not just in the generations of the lives we know or study – but in the creative force and energy of all creation. And if we come to know ourselves better in relation to our connection to God through God and one another, that cannot be as rich as we might wish, unless we take time to “know our place” in God’s world. God’s world. I can say that here.

Without, as one politician from a Southern State said just the other day at a rally, “Go forth and put on the armor of God.” It is, I think, the idea that God gives us armor that keeps us apart – or worse, subjugates others.

Even those things we need to consider to know who we are capable of being, how far we have come from the worst of times, where we are now, and where we hope to go.

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And prayer is the support for many in all this, not as an accessory, but as a connection to the presence of prayer (creation’s expression) all around us.

Last week, we talked about this “expression” all around us; the heart exercise that says

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“Everything is a prayer” even the equipment that was created from the expression within others, formed into devices that care for, save, transport and much more.

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Still, we wrestle with the question, many actually, one of them being, if “everything is a prayer” then why isn’t everything good, done, right, honest, true, caring, loving...

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And the answer, among many others is that we are not done and prayer in a broad sense is part of the sauce, we are still evolving as a spiritual race in a physical realm – in our bodies and the world around us. And it has been going on for a long time now, and has a ways to go...

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William McAskill’s book: “What We Owe the Future” is getting a lot of attention in placing “our time” into a broad perspective of all of humanity: past, present and what may yet to be coming. His thesis hinges on what he calls: “longtermism”, a view of our evolving role and present time in relation to what we will bring to the future longterm hope for our “speciaes”. I have just started to read this, but he frames some of what I have been talking about in terms of “our conscious time” in the universe as we know it.

For example, have you ever wondered how many people have lived from the beginning of human life on the planet? I have. And McAskill’s research suggests that from the first “human” life on earth 300,000 years ago

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100,000,000,000 humans have lived on earth. One Hundred Billion (or about 13 times the population of earth today). And here we are, 100 Billion lives later.

He traces life with an interesting approach:

Suppose you were the first person born. After you died, you were reincarnated to become the second person, and on and on and on.

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Suppose all life was lived through you so that you had the “big picture” of everything life.

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Here’s some of what he says we could quantify with this approach:

Everyday realities would take up most of our life:

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Eating, working, socializing

CLICK

Laughing, worrying, praying

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Our emerging civilization would be spent with:

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10% of our time as hunter gatherers
60% as agriculturists

CLICK

20% of our time raising children
20% farming
2% in religious rituals

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CLICK

1% of your life would be afflicted with malaria or smallpox

CLICK

You would spend 1.5 Billion years having sex
And 250 Million Years giving birth

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CLICK

150 Years in Space and one week walking on the moon

CLICK

99.5% of our lives would still be ahead

If we survived as most mammalian species have done about a million years.\

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“If you knew you were going to live all these future lives, what would you hope to do in the present? How much CO² would you want to emit into the atmosphere? How much would you want us to invest in research and education? How careful would you want us to be with new technologies that could destroy or permanently detail your future? How much attention would you want us to give to the impact of today’s actions on the long term?”

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“I present this thought experiment because morality, in central part, is about putting ourselves in others’ shoes and treating their interests as we do our own. When we do this at the full scale of human history, the future – where almost everyone lives and where almost all potential for joy and misery lies – comes to the fore.”

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With a bit of study, we can find these kinds of constructs in the sacred texts of most world religions in one way or the other from the Bhagavad Gita to the Bible.

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Think of God telling Isaac in Genesis 26:4

I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them this land, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.

CLICK

Or Jesus in Matthew 24:36 about when the world would end...

“But about the day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not me – only my Abba God.”

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Even our readings today from Luke to Trito Isaiah (the last chapters of Isaiah written in three parts over hundreds of years) – the references to prior generations and the continuation of Creation and God’s expression, is center stage. And surrounding it from all the rituals of every worship system, to the 650 estimated prayers in the Bible, to the approximately 25 times Jesus is recorded as praying (surely not all his praying was recorded, just as all his meals were never recorded); to Paul’s “pray without ceasing...

It does appear that through it all then – and now – prayer is an important part of the sauce...not as we become perfected...but as we evolve. It appears to bring life and light and hope to what otherwise would not prosper and grow.

And there is this:

In our call to worship Jesus pushes back against prayer and healing on the Sabbath. We know that the high priests held prayer and healing sessions almost on an office schedule, receiving payment for the services. The Sabbath was their day off. Their day of rest from their hard week’s work. And, for many I am sure it was.

But those who tries to stop Jesus, to stop the creative force of God and love and healing that knows no boundaries when it is needed – in there is a warning, a warning about those who restrict and tie faithful practices to a prescribed schedule. And by extension, to those who would take away God given rights and being in the expression from which we all arrived here, as all others have.

Beware of those hypocrites and return, stay close to your core and your lives of justice, mercy and humility.

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As McAskill says, “morality, in central part, is about putting ourselves in others’ shoes and treating their interests as our own.”

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Or as Jesus said in the Great Commandment: “Love your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. And love one another as Yourselves”.

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And to echo Paul once again... Pray without ceasing

As Jesus did.

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And as I say, “It’s in the sauce...”

CLICK

Pass it forward in Prayer

Please rise if you wish and join us in singing our closing hymn:

Hymn “Pass the Love” Sing! Prayer and Praise #208
(Please use your hymnal or follow on the projected slides.)

Benediction

Church Covenant
(Please use your hymnal back cover or follow on the projected slides.)

Ringing of the Bell

Postlude



Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ

For more nearly 175 years, 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, celebrate God's love, however you may know God, by our continuing to advocate for the oppressed, while welcoming all on their spiritual journey, from wherever they may come. Thank you for being with us today. Please contact us at any time for more information about our congregation and questions you may have.

Thank you!

Heather – Please update this section