



*Third Sunday of Advent
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 11, 2022
"Sunday for Joy"*



An excerpt from The Book of Joy (2016)
by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu
with Douglas Abrams

"We hope that God's world will become a better place, more hospitable to goodness, more hospitable to compassion, more hospitable to generosity, more hospitable to living together so we don't have what is happening now between Russia and the Ukraine, or what is happening with ISIS, or what is happening in Kenya or Syria. They make God weep."

The Archbishop turned to leave but then paused again as another journalist asked about the purpose of his trip:

"We are together just to enjoy our friendship and to talk about joy."

So, too, are we. Welcome.

Ring of the Bell

Prelude

"Wichtige Begebenheit"

by Robert Schumann

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Candle

We began Advent by lighting the first candle, the candle for Hope. We light it again today to remind us to trust in God.

Then we lit the second candle, the candle for Peace. The prophet Isaiah said, "Comfort, comfort my people" to a nation anxious about invasion and exile, as he foretold the coming of the Prince of Peace.

And today, we light the candle for Joy.

The prophet Isaiah also said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined."

As we light the candle of Joy, we remember the angel's words to the shepherds,

*"Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.
Yes, all people. May it be so."*

Please stand and join us in singing as the candles are lit

One Candle is Lit (Three Verses)

**Come surely, Sweet Jesus, as dawn follows night,
our hearts long to greet you, as roses the light.
Salvation, draw near us, our visions engage.
One candle is lit for the hope of the day.**

**Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
for a gift that compels us with justice to care.
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.**

**Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth,
join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.
One candle is lit for the joy of these days.**

Please remain standing and join in praying our Unison Prayer

Unison Prayer

**May all beings attain happiness.
May all beings be free from suffering
May all beings never be separated from Joy.
May all beings abide in equanimity, justice and love.**

Please be seated and join us in singing

Opening Hymn

“You Are Welcome Here”

Sing! Prayer and Praise #26 Verse 1

**You are welcome here, no matter who you are,
No matter where you are on life’s journey.
You are welcome here, no matter who you are,
Come and join with us, we’re united in the church of Christ.**

**Come now all people, join in the song, come be part of the family of God.
We are God’s people, and you belong, share in the joy of Christ
You are welcome here.**

**You are welcome here, no matter who you are,
No matter where you are on life’s journey.
You are welcome here, no matter who you are,
Come and join with us, we’re united in the church of Christ.**

First Reading Isaiah 35:1-10 Adapted

Wilderness and desert will sing joyously,
the badlands will celebrate and flower—
Like the crocus in spring, bursting into blossom,
a symphony of song and color.

God's resplendent glory, fully on display.
God awesome, God majestic.

Tell fearful souls,
"Courage! Take heart!
God is here, right here,
on God's way to put things right."

Springs of water will burst out in the wilderness,
streams flow in the desert.

Hot sands will become a cool oasis,
thirsty ground a splashing fountain.

There will be a highway
called the Holy Road.

No one rude or rebellious
is permitted on this road.

No lions on this road,
no dangerous wild animals—
Nothing and no one dangerous or threatening.

People will sing as they make their way home to Zion,
Welcomed home with gifts of joy and gladness.

Please remain seated

Chancel Choir

"Beautiful Savior"

by David Allen

Gospel Readings: Matthew 11: 2-14 (Adapted)

By now, John had been locked up in prison. “Are you truly the One?” John told his disciples to ask Jesus.

Jesus told John’s disciples, “Tell John what’s going on:

Unseen people are seeing,
Those who could not walk are walking,
Illnesses are being healed,
Those who could not hear now hear,
Those thought dead live,
The poor and oppressed are learning that God is on their side.”

When John’s disciples left to report to John, Jesus started talking to the crowd about him. “What did you expect when you went out to see him in the wild? A prophet? Then you were right. That’s right, John is a prophet! Probably the best prophet you’ll ever hear. He is the prophet that another prophet Malachi talked about when he wrote, ‘I’m sending my prophet ahead of you, to make the road smooth for you.’

“Let me tell you what’s going on here: No one in history is better than John the Baptist; but in the kingdom he prepared you for, the lowliest person is ahead of him. That’s how amazing the kingdom will be.

“For a long time now, people have tried to force themselves into God’s kingdom. But if you read the books of the Prophets and God’s Law closely, you will see all the books and laws finishing in the words and works of John, coming together in him, preparing the way for the Messiah.

“He is the one you have been expecting to announce the Messiah.”

Homily

Please stand and join us in singing

Hymn

“With Joy Draw Water”

New Century Hymnal #109

**With joy draw water from the spring; salvation's living well.
The Holy One is in your midst; glad praises sing and tell!**

**A shoot has sprung from Jesse's tree: of God the chosen One.
A branch of knowledge and of truth: a gift of love has come!**

**With love the poor will be received; the proud will turn aside;
And faithfulness will be a path, and righteousness the guide!**

**The wolf will lie down with the lamb; the calf and the lion play.
God's peace shall dwell within the land; a child shall show the way!**

**With joy draw water from the spring; salvation's living well.
The Holy One is in your midst; glad praises sing and tell!**

Please be seated

Joys and Concerns

Please respond, **"God, hear our prayers."**

The Prayer of Jesus – "The Lord's Prayer"

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 have trespassed against us.
Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil
for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Please rise and join us in passing the Peace of Christ

Passing of Christ's Peace

We know God is with us; we hold the greatest of commandments to love as a practice, a way of life. And, with the greeting of the one who promises

“peace” beyond all understanding, from our minds, our hearts and our souls
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 be seated.

Chancel Choir

"Let Us Hope When Hope Is Lost"

by David Beebe and Emma Lou Diemer

Please remain seated

Benediction

Please rise and join us in singing...

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.**

Please be seated

Ringing of the Bell

Postlude

“People Get Ready” by Curtis Mayfield



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!

James Higgins, Guest Music Director
Liturgist – Jenna Murphy
Media Team – Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad,
Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

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Today's Service is being simulcast on our church channel at
www.echimestv.org Tune in any time!

Peace. Shalom. Salaam. Shanti. For the ways of peace are many. "Namaste"