



***Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ  
December 18, 2022***



For God so loved the world...  
from John 3:16



*So, too, are we. Welcome.*

## **Ringling of the Bell**

### **Prelude**

"Christmas Time Is Here"

Words by Lee Mendelson, Music by Vince Guaraldi

### **Call to Worship & Lighting of the Candle**

*We have begun each week during Advent by lighting a candle on the Advent*

*Wreath. Today, we begin by lighting the candles for Hope, Peace, Joy and the fourth candle, the candle for Love. Such love that reflects above all God's love for us and all of creation.*

*In a world of innate goodness that sometimes seems more a world of empires and despots – we light this candle to proclaim that love and its boundless compassion is more powerful than anything that might try to extinguish it.*

*The angel Gabriel reassured Mary that “nothing will be impossible with God.” The power of love is the power of this truth.*

*So, as we light the candle of Love, we remember that God so loves this world that God has placed Jesus in our midst. Yes. Emmanuel, “God is with us.”*

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

**One Candle is Lit (Four 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.**

**Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,  
Where wicked is banished and faith takes the day,  
A babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.  
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.**

**Please remain standing and join in praying our Unison Prayer**  
**Unison Prayer**

**Gracious God,**

**We come to you today to ask for your love to fill our hearts and guide our actions. Help us to love ourselves and others with kindness, compassion, and empathy. May we always seek to understand one another and work towards building strong and healthy relationships rooted in God's love for us.**

**Grant us the courage to forgive those who have hurt us and to seek reconciliation in our interactions with others, as you call us to do.**

**May we always strive to be instruments of your hope, peace, joy and love; bringing these powerful gifts to others in all the ways we can.**

**We ask, too, for your blessings on our loved ones, that they, too, may feel your presence in their lives. May we always be grateful for the love that surrounds us, as we strive to follow your call. Amen.**

**Please be seated and join us in singing**

**Hymn "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"**

**Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,  
for angels herald its dawning,  
Sing out your joy, for Jesus is born, behold!  
the Child of our longing.**

**Come as a baby weak and poor,  
to bring all hearts together,  
To open wide the heavenly door,  
and lives now inside us forever.**

**To us, to all in sorrow and fear,  
Emmanuel comes a singing,  
whose humble song is quiet and near,  
yet fills the earth with its ringing.**

**Music to heal the broken soul  
and hymns of loving kindness,  
the thunder of the anthems roll  
to shatter all hate and injustice.**

**Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,  
though cold the winter and cheerless,  
the rising sun shall crown you with light,  
be strong and loving and fearless;  
Love be our song and love our prayer, and love,  
our endless story,  
may God fill every day we share,  
and bring us at last into glory.**

**Please remain seated**

## **Gospel Reading:** Matthew 1:15-25

This is how the birth of Jesus came about.

When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the Angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus — 'Salvation' — because he will save the people from their sins."

All this happened to fulfill what God had said through the prophet:

"The virgin will be with child

and give birth,  
and the child will be named  
Immanuel”

—a name that means “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have relations with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

**Homily** *“It’s Time”*

**The Chancel Choir**

"Overcome by the Power of Love" by James Ahrend

*Please remain 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 singing and Passing the Peace of Christ*

**Hymn            “Little Bethlehem of Judah”**

**Little Bethlehem of Judah, what good news you bear!  
Out of you will come the Ancient One as heir.**

**Though your people suffer trouble, waiting for the child,  
Soon all strife and hatred shall be reconciled.**

**Long awaited comes the Shepherd  
who will rule the earth;  
God made low has come to serve in human birth.**

*Please remain standing...*

### **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*

**The Chancel Choir**

"Mary, Did You Know?"

*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*

## **Ring of the Bell**

## **Postlude**

"O Tannenbaum" Traditional



***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.