

Celebration of the Life of Martha Pierce  
January 6, 1938 – March 30, 2023



Saturday, July 29, 2023  
10:30 A.M.

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ  
Sayville, New York

The Bell is Rung

Prelude            “Amazing Grace”            Sean Cameron, Music Director

Opening Prayer            Rev. Ray Bagnuolo

I want this to be a place  
where we can touch and be touched  
by the utterly,  
the unmistakably sacred –  
the breath in all breathing,  
the light in all seeing,  
the fire in every righteous anger,  
the resonance in deep silence,  
the love which graces and ennobles all loves,  
the hospitality which bids a welcome  
to each of our returnings –  
and grieves a little  
at each of our leavings.

The unmistakably sacred  
which precedes all of our singing;  
the sighing which, when we are awake,  
calls us home to ourselves,  
where in our blood and bones  
the body of God dwells.

-- Joseph H. Gilmore

Hymn

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"      by Patsy Kline  
(A request by Martha)

I am weak but Thou art strong  
Jesus keep me from all wrong  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee

Just a closer walk with Thee  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea  
Daily walking close to Thee  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

When my feeble life is o'er  
Time for me will be no more  
Guide me gently, safely o'er  
To Thy kindom's shore, to Thy shore

Just a closer walk with Thee  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea  
Daily walking close to Thee  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

Gracious God, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and you are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O God, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? As I ascend to heaven, You are there. If I were to take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand leads me, and your right hand holds me fast.

There is no darkness in your love and presence. The night is as bright as the day to you, it is as light to you.

*This is the home to which I have journeyed.*

Hymn      "Nearer My God to You"      New Century Hymnal #606  
(A request of Martha's)

Nearer my God to you, nearer my God to you.

I'll bear the cross as Christ calls me to do,

and pray each day anew:

Nearer my God to you, nearer my God to you, nearer to you.

When I am wandering as Jacob did,

and in the deepest night the path is hid,

my dreams will bring me, too,

Nearer my God to you, nearer my God to you, nearer to you.

Let Jacob's ladder fill the sky above,

And angels carry down the faith and love

to keep this goal in view:

Nearer my God to you, nearer my God to you, nearer to you.

Then, walking from the night to morning air

by Bethel's stone, I'll know you heard my prayer,

and how my yearning grew:

Nearer my God to you, nearer my God to you, nearer to you.

Gospel Reading

John 14:1-6, 25-27

Read by Ralph "Hank" Maust

Jesus said to the disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In God's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I'm going."

Thomas said to him, Rabbi, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

Jesus continues...

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom I will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with 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.

Homily

Rev. Ray Bagnuolo, Pastor

Remembering Martha

With Voices of Family and Friends

Hymn        "There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place"        NCH 293

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,  
and I know that it's the Spirit of our God;  
there are sweet expressions on each face,  
and I know they feel the presence of our God.

(Refrain) Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,  
stay right here with us, filling us with your love,  
and for these blessings we lift our heart in praise.  
Without a doubt we will know that we have been revived  
when we leave this place.

There are blessings you cannot receive  
till you know that Spirit's fullness and believe;  
you're the one to profit when you say,  
"I am going to stay with Jesus all the way."

Pastoral Prayer    Rev. Ray Bagnuolo

Benediction        Singing of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm        by Bobbie McFerrin  
(Video presentation)

Postlude            "Song of the Soul"        Sean Cameron, Music Director



Martha's Family thanks you for joining us today.  
It is so good and comforting to be together.

The Family asks that any donations in Martha's name be made to  
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ.

Please join us following this morning's service in our Vestry  
for a light hospitality hour, along with a time for  
shared memories, conversations, and support of one another.

Today's service will be available online at [www.sayvilleucc.org](http://www.sayvilleucc.org)

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