



*Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
September 10, 2023*

Enlarged Copies are Available on the Front Pew

OUR JOB IS TO LOVE OTHERS WITHOUT STOPPING
TO INQUIRE WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE WORTHY.
THAT IS NOT OUR BUSINESS AND, IN FACT, IT IS
NOBODY'S BUSINESS. WHAT WE ARE ASKED TO DO IS
TO LOVE, AND THIS LOVE ITSELF WILL RENDER
BOTH OURSELVES AND OUR NEIGHBORS WORTHY IF
ANYTHING CAN.

- THOMAS MERTON -

Welcome

Ring of the Bell

Prelude "First Gymnopédie" by Erik Satie

Please rise or remain seated and join us in our Call to Worship

Call to Worship

Divine Light,
Gracious God,
Radical Creator...

Guide our hearts to embrace in love, for it is true –
that in the warmth of such an embrace what we need
to welcome all who join us: here.

In this place where every soul through the ages,
[now and to come] – are, indeed
here with us, acknowledged, cherished, and loved.

Guide our hearts in this way, so we, too,
may be the guide you call us to be.
Amen.

Please remain as you are and join with us in singing our opening hymn:

Hymn “Enter My Heart” #39 Sing! Prayer and Praise Hymnal

Enter my heart, enter my heart, O Spirit of God’s pow’r and love.
May I proclaim your holy name. O Spirit, enter my heart.

Enter my heart, enter my heart, O Spirit of God’s pow’r and love.
In me increase your holy peace. O Spirit, enter my heart.

Enter my heart, enter my heart, O Spirit of God’s pow’r and love.
May I fulfill your holy will. O Spirit, enter my heart.

*Please remain standing or as you are and join us in this morning's
Unison Prayer.*

Unison Prayer

Eternal Compassionate God, remind us of your boundless grace.
Remind us that with you, there is only mercy and justice and love.

Assurance of God's Love

Friends, in every shadow and light;
in every wonderful nuance of our heart and soul;
in all of life's flow...
Always remember how God delights in us...
in all moments holding us always more nearly
and dearly than we know.
Remind us, too, that we are invited
to hold God
in return.

Passing of the Peace

May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with you!
And also with you!
Let us offer one another a sign of peace!

Friends, please be seated.

Anthem "Comfort Ye, My People" by John Carter

Please remain seated.

Joys, Concerns, and Celebrations

Friends, we now invite you to share your Joys, Celebrations and Concerns. Please wait for the microphone and respond with:
“God, hear our prayers.”

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

Please remain seated and join us in praying the Prayer of Jesus as you learned to pray.

Hymn “In the Bulb There is a Flower” #433 New Century Hymnal

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the snow and cold of winter there’s a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There’s a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
There’s a dawn for every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death a resurrection; at the last a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

First Reading Romans 13:8-14

⁸ Owe no debt to anyone—except the debt that binds us to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you have fulfilled the Law. ⁹ The commandments ...are all summed up in this one: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love never wrongs anyone—hence love is the fulfillment of the Law.

¹¹ Besides, you know the time in which we are living. It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep, for our salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith. ¹² The night is far spent; the day draws near. So let us cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us live honorably as in daylight, not in carousing, quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with Jesus the Christ, and make no [other] provisions for your desires of the night.

Anthem “Walk Along Beside Me, O My Lord” by Don Besig

In this excerpt, Matthew continues to recount the teachings of Jesus, for which Matthew was not personally present. Matthew would have been using the stories that circulated from the time of Jesus' ministry and after his death, including other gospels written well after Jesus had been executed.

Jesus' crucifixion occurred some 55 years or so before Matthew's gospel would have been written.

Lastly, Matthew's audience would have been Jewish Christians. His gospel has strong Jewish influences of his being a faithful Jew.

¹⁵ "If [a sibling of yours] should commit some wrong against you, go and point out the error, but keep it between the two of you. If [they] listen to you, you have won a loved one back; ¹⁶ if not, try again, but take one or two others with you, so that every case may stand on the word of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If your [sibling] refuses to listen to them, refer the matter to the church. If [they] ignore even the church, then treat that [sibling] as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

¹⁸ "The truth is, whatever you declare bound on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you declare loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ "Again I tell you, if two of you on earth join in agreement to pray for anything whatsoever, it will be granted you by my Abba God in heaven. ²⁰ Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst."

Homily

Our 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.

Benediction

Choral Blessing "A Closing Prayer" by Don Besig

The Bell is Rung

Postlude "Beautiful City" from *Godspell* by Stephen Schwartz



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

The Chancel Choir and Sean Cameron, Music Director

Liturgist – Karen Maust

Ushers – Diane Vaughan

Hospitality – Christine Hoff

Media Team – Karin Conrad, Kathy Leis, Mark Conrad, Connie Kauffman, Hank Maust
Laura Weyant, Building and Grounds

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Ray Bagnuolo, Pastor ray@sayvilleucc.org 631-827-8611 (Cell/Text)

Today's Service is being simulcast on our church channel at

www.echimestv.org Tune in any time!

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

Please visit our website for the latest announcements: www.sayvilleucc.org