



*Second Sunday of Advent
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 10, 2023*

*Whose laughter invites us, whose earth upholds us,
whose stars we wish upon,
whose symphony for birdsong awakens, oh awakens, us,
candle to a blinding sun.*

from "By a Mighty and Shining Grace"
by *Joseph H. Gilmore*

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude “Prepare Ye” from *Godspell*
by Stephen Schwartz

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Candle

Today is the Second Sunday of Advent. In a moment, we will light the second candle on our Advent wreath: the candle of Peace.

In the time before the birth of Jesus, the Israelites had little peace or hope for the future of their nation or their people, except for the power of God that remained strong in their lives, even as they wavered from time-to-time. Even so, they awaited the “One who would come; a messiah, an anointed leader, like David. They believed when that happened, all would be well – again.”

Today we continue our 2023 Advent journey, anticipating the birth of Jesus, the one who is called the Light of the World and whose Peace exceeds all earthly understanding for all peoples and nations.

As we light the candle of Peace, we give thanks for all who ceaselessly and courageously work for Peace and embody its grace and power, love and hope for each of us and this world, all in the name of the one called Jesus.

(The candles are lit...)

Please rise if you wish and join us in singing.

“One Candle is Lit” Verse 1 for Hope; Verse 2 for Peace

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.

Please be seated.

A Voice Responds

*These fires atop towers of wax,
symbolize the ever-present Light of the World,
the One we await, born to us long ago,
in a manger far away and (now) as close
as the hearts here and afar
that beat together, within us all.*

Chancel Choir

“Give Us Peace”

by Vaclav Nelhybel

Please remain seated and join together in praying our Unison Prayer.

Unison Prayer Adapted from Joseph H. Gilmore

O Thou in whom nations are united...
beneath edgy borders.
treaties which define friends and enemies,
the marching songs of a thousand armies,
and languages of wondrous difference,
each with a word for hope and peace,
each with a word for love and joy:

Write some new agenda for a world
healed into our hearts this day.
For even as we draw lines of wire and blood
across the face of the earth; as we write treaties,
each more comprehensive than the last;
while trumpets and drums excite the worst in us;
and while we argue with each other
in the foreign tongues of belligerence, ownership and power –
the universe itself speaks with the vocabulary of *shalom*.

The wind blows across *every* border.
The sun warms *every* upturned face,
the stars beguile *every* opened eye.
The earth opens its arms to all of its children,
providing a feeding place, a growing place, a loving place,
and, at last, a resting place.

O Thou ancient Holy One:
In thy wisdom, the universe unfolds
in the direction of wholeness, shalom and beauty.
Make this fragile planet and us,
thy wayward children,
a part of that journey to peace, we pray. Amen.

Please rise if you wish.

Passing of Christ's Peace

We know God is with us; we hold the greatest of commandments to love and embrace peace 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 remains as you are and join us in singing

Hymn "Deep Peace" #201 Sing! Prayer and Praise Hymnal

Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you.
Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you.

Love, love, strong love, my love I give to you.
Love, love, strong love, my love I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Love, love, strong love, my love I give to you.

Joy, joy, great joy, my joy I give to you.
Joy, joy, great joy, my joy I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Not as the world gives, I give to you.
Joy, joy, great joy, my joy I give to you.

Please be seated.

Joys and Concerns

Please respond, "God, hear our prayers."

Assurance of God's Love

The Prayer of Jesus – From the New Zealand Book of Prayer

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Creator God of us all, Loving God, in who is all about us:
The blessings of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come upon us.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Please remain seated.

First Reading Isaiah 40:3-8

³ A voice cries out,
“Clear a path through the wilderness for YHWH!
Make a straight road through the desert for our God!

⁴ Let every valley be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low;
let every cliff become a plain,
and the ridges become a valley!

⁵ Then the glory of YHWH will be revealed, and all humankind will see it.”
The mouth of YHWH has spoken!

⁶ A voice commands, “Cry out!”
and I answer, “What will I say?” —
“All flesh is grass
and its beauty is like the wildflowers:

⁷ the grass withers
and the flower wilts
when the breath of YHWH blows on them.
How the people are like grass!

⁸ Grass withers, and flowers wilt,
but the promise of our God will stand forever.”

The Chancel Choir

“Spin the World” from *Emmanuel*

by Dorothy Davidson Hauscke

Gospel Reading from the Book of Mark 1:1-8

¹ Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, Beloved of God:

² as it was written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I send my messenger before you to prepare your way,

³ a herald’s voice in the desert, crying,

‘Make ready the way of our God.

Clear a straight path.’”

⁴ And so John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. ⁶ John was clothed in camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate nothing but grasshoppers and wild honey. ⁷ In the course of his preaching, John said, “One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. ⁸ I have baptized you in water, but the One to come will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

Homily

Rev. Barbara Toll (She/Her/Hers)

Associate Conference Minister

New York Conference United Church of Christ

Hymn Come, O Long Expected Jesus #22 New Century Hymnal v. 1, 3

Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set the people free.
From our fears and wrongs release us, grant us your true liberty.

Born to all people to deliver, born a child you came to reign.
Born to rule on earth forever, come, be known to us again.

Benediction

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.

Choral Blessing “A Closing Prayer” by Doug Besig

Ringling of the Bell

Postlude “Christmastime is Here” by Vince Guaraldi



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!

Rev. Barbara Toll Rev. Barbara Toll (She/Her/Hers)
Associate Conference Minister
New York Conference United Church of Christ

Mike Jayne, Liturgist; Sean Cameron, Music Director
The Chancel Choir & All of You, including:
Diane Vaughan and Michael Hoff, Ushers
Christine Hoff, Hospitality Set Up
The Mausts, Hospitality Host
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Today's Service is simulcast www.echimestv.org Tune in any time!

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