



*Third Sunday of Advent
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 17, 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

“One Candle is Lit” Verse 1 for Hope; Verse 2 for Peace; Verse 3 for Joy

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 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 "Noel! Noel!" Words and Music by James Ahrend

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

Unison Prayer Adapted from Honey from the Rock

We hold that Joy is inherent in the source
of all that is.

When we return to that source we unify
the inner and the outer worlds
reminding all that...

“Joy comes in the morning” –
(and)
all day long!

There are such moments of unification
in our lives. It is, as if, we stand holding
this world in one hand
and the upper worlds
in the other.

And simply by being in-between the two
for even one second,

They are one. The soul is one.

The worlds are One.

And Hope and Peace and Joy and Love
and Christ are one, with us, Emmanuel.

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 "Joys Are Flowing Like a River" New Century Hymnal #284 v. 1,2, 3

Joys are flowing like a river, since the Comforter has come;
Christ abides with us forever, makes the trusting heart a home.
Blessed quietness, holy quietness, what assurance in my soul.
On the stormy sea, Jesus speaks to me, and the billows cease to roll.

Bringing life and health and gladness all around, this heavenly Guest
Banished unbelief and sadness, changed out weariness to rest.
Blessed quietness, holy quietness, what assurance in my soul.
On the stormy sea, Jesus speaks to me, and the billows cease to roll.

Like the rain that falls from heaven, like the sunlight from the sky,
So the Spirit too is given, coming on us from on high.
Blessed quietness, holy quietness, what assurance in my soul.
On the stormy sea, Jesus speaks to me, and the billows cease to roll.

Please be seated.

Joys and Concerns

Please respond, "God, hear our prayers."

Pastoral Prayer

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.

The Spirit of Exalted YHWH is upon me,
for YHWH has anointed me:

God has sent me to bring good news to those who are poor;
to heal broken hearts;
to proclaim release to those held captive
and liberation to those in prison;
to announce a year of favor from YHWH,
and the day of God's vindication.
To comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who grieve in Zion –
to give them a wreath of flowers instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of tears,
a cloak of praise instead of despair.

“For I”, says YHWH, “love justice;
I hate robbery and sin.
So I will faithfully compensate you,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.”

[As for me, Isaiah].

I will joyfully exult in YHWH, who is the joy of my soul!
YHWH who has clothed me with a robe of deliverance
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice...

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and a garden brings its seeds to blossom,
so Exalted YHWH makes justice sprout,
and praise spring up before all nations.

The Chancel Choir

"Promises" and "No Room for Mary" from *Emmanuel*

by Dorothy Davidson Hauscke

Gospel Reading from the Book of John 1:1-10

The Inclusive Bible

In the Beginning
there was the Word;
the Word was in God's presence,
and the Word was God.
The Word was present to God
from the beginning.
Through the Word
all things came into being,
and apart from the Word
nothing came into being
that has come into being.
In the Word was life,
and that life was humanity's light—
a Light that shines in the darkness,
a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

Then came one named John, sent as an envoy from God, who came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through his testimony everyone might believe. He himself wasn't the Light; he only came to testify about the Light—the true Light that illumines all humankind.

The Word was coming into the world—
was in the world –
and though the world
was made through the Word,
the world didn't recognize it.

Homily

Hymn "Dance into Joy" #205 Sing! Prayer and Praise

Refrain:

So dance into joy with hands upraised.
Greet each new day as the holiest of days;
and to your God sing great songs of praise!
To your God sing praise!

Share from your path, some strand of light.
Bring all the shades, both dark and light.
Weaving together makes us all one.
Stories of Hope have just begun. (Refrain)

Reds from your passion and from your fear.
Rainbows shine through every tear.
Tender green shoots that bloom every Spring,
growing in love with each song we sing. (Refrain)

Through the deep blues, now are revealed
old hidden wounds soon to be healed.
On bold purples of dawn serene,
float the mysteries yet unseen.

Weave now each one this web of light
surrounding our world, both day and night,
with healing love and inner peace.
Joining together, joy will increase.

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 "Go Now In Peace" by Nancy Price and Doug Besig

Ringing of the Bell

Postlude "Caroling, Caroling" by Alfred Burt



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

Jenna Murphy, Liturgist

The Chancel Choir & All of You, including:

Diane Vaughan and Michael Hoff, Ushers

Media Team – Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad,

Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

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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"