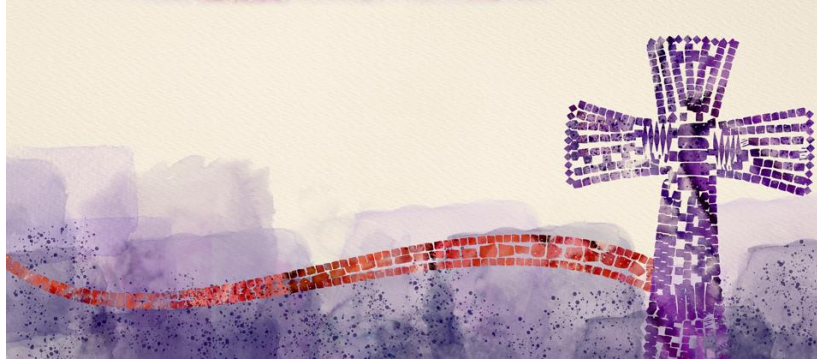




Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
The Third Sunday of Lent
March 3, 2024 - Communion Sunday



*Instructions for living a life:
Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.*
Mary Oliver, from "Sometimes"

Announcements

The Bell is Rung

Prelude "Londonderry Air (O, Danny Boy)" Traditional Irish tune
James Cesare, trumpet soloist

Call to Worship from the poem *Dirty Dinky* by Theodore Roethke

Suppose you walk out in a Storm,
With nothing on to keep you warm,
And then step barefoot on a Worm
— **Of course, it's Dirty Dinky.**

As I was crossing a hot hot Plain,
I saw a sight that caused me pain,
You asked me before, I'll tell you again:
— **It looked like Dirty Dinky.**

Last night you lay a-sleeping? No!
The room was thirty-five below;
The sheets and blankets turned to snow.
— **He'd got in: Dirty Dinky.**

You'd better watch the things you do.
You'd better watch the things you do.
You're part of him; he's part of you
— **You may be Dirty Dinky.**

Please rise in body or spirit and join us in singing our opening hymn.

Hymn “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” New Century Hymnal #23

There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
there’s a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty.
There’s no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God’s heaven;
There's no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s word;
And out lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

Please remain as you are and join in praying our Opening Unison Prayer

Opening Unison Prayer

Most Precious Holy God, here in the midst of our Lenten journey we stop to give you thanks. We ask that we become more aware of all the ways in which you walk with us on life's path. Make us see and feel more, and help us become more aware of others and their needs. May your Holy Spirit dwell richly upon us as we worship together. And we praise you, Holy One, that though we aren't in any way perfect, in you we are enough. Amen.

Please be seated.

Assurance of God's Love

Ours is a bright and amazing God, risen all around us in light and love, splendor and delight – especially during this Lenten season. God fills the universe with sparkling and a glittering presence; even in the midst of great challenges. Be assured that we are indeed loved, because God so loves the world – and needs us to send forth, as well.

Now, if you will please rise for the Passing of the Peace of Christ

Passing of the Peace

Friends, we are blessed as the life of peace in the world;
communities like ours sowing love, pardon, faith,
hope, light and joy,
even in the midst of trials and change.

We seek *the peace* that calls us to console, to understand.

We reach out to help others discovering a heart
where their treasure lies.

This is the Peace of Christ that Jesus promised is ours to share;
we are the beacons of its presence for all...

With that and so much more...

May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of this Peace.

Please be seated.

The Chancel Choir

"Come As You Are To The Table"

Words and Music by Dana Mengel

Joys, Celebrations and Concerns

Please respond with "God, hear our prayers."

Pastoral Prayer

Please rise in body or spirit

The Prayer of Jesus

(From the New Zealand Prayer Book)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
[Guardian] of us all,
Loving God, in whom *is* heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice
[may it] be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will [may it] be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
[may it] sustain our hope and come on earth.

[And so we pray]

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, 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.

Hymn

"Spirit of the Living God"

New Century Hymnal #283 ("We" Version)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.
Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.

Please be seated.

First Reading – Exodus 20:1-17

¹ Then God spoke all these words, and said, ² “I am YHWH who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ “Do not worship any gods except me!

⁴ “Do not make for yourselves any carved image or likeness of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, ⁵ and do not bow down to them or serve them! For I, YHWH, am a jealous God, and for the parents’ and guardians’ fault I punish the children, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of those who turn from me; ⁶ but I show kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love me and heed my commandments.

⁷ “Do not utter the Name of YHWH to misuse it, for YHWH will not acquit anyone who utters God’s Name to misuse it!

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy! ⁹ For six days you will labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath for YHWH. Do no work on that day, neither you nor your offspring, nor your workers, nor your animals, nor the foreigner who lives among you. ¹¹ For in the six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that they hold, but rested on the seventh day; this is why YHWH has blessed the Sabbath day and made it sacred.

¹² “Honor your mother and your father, so that you may have a long life in the land that Yhwh has given to you!

¹³ “No murdering! ¹⁴ No adultery! ¹⁵ No stealing!

¹⁶ “No giving false testimony against your neighbor!

¹⁷ “No desiring your neighbor’s house! No desiring your neighbor’s spouse, or worker, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor!”

Sermon

Rev. Noel Vanek

Part 1 – The Ten Commandments for Churches
in Transition Between Pastors

New Testament Reading 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸For the message of the cross is complete absurdity to those who are headed for ruin, but to us who are experiencing salvation, it is the power of God. ¹⁹ Scripture says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and thwart the learning of the learned." ²⁰ Where are the wise? Where are the scholars? Where are the philosophers of this age? Has not God turned the wisdom of this world into folly? ²¹ If it was God's wisdom that the world in its wisdom would not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message we preach.

²² For while the many call for miracles and others look for wisdom, ²³ here we are preaching a Messiah nailed to a cross. To some, this is an obstacle they cannot get over, and to others it is madness— ²⁴ but to those who have been called, whoever they may be, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Sermon

Part 2 – God's Foolishness Trumps All

Rev. Noel Vanek

Communion

Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Communion Hymns

"As We Gather at Your Table"

New Century Hymnal #332

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.

Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image in the world you live to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy bind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we joined with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy,

"Come, Gather in This Special Place" New Century Hymnal #335

Come gather in this special place; the table here is long and wide;
For all who heed communion's call, there's room for thousands side by side.

The grapes have yielded essence pure, a drink to quench the gravest thirst;
The cup is passed from hand to hand, and each will sense despair reversed.

The bread is freshly baked today, a fragrant feast of grain supplied;
And even crumbs that dust our palms will leave souls fully satisfied.

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving – **God, you feed us in so many ways, not only or even primarily at Christ's table. Thank you for your Divine sustenance. And thank you that as we have come together to share in bread and cup this morning, we've joined the body of Christ across the world. Even the hosts of heaven are a part of this celebration! Now send us forth as people filled by your Spirit, ready to share love and justice with all. Amen.**

The Chancel Choir "Communion Prayer" Words and Music by Allen Pote

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.

Choral Blessing "A Closing Prayer" Words and Music by Don Besig

Ringing of the Bell

Postlude "Over the Rainbow" Words by E. Y. Harburg, Music by Harold Arlen



A note on our Guest Preacher – Rev. Noel Vanek works part-time as a Ministry Associate with the New York Conference of the UCC, assisting churches in their search for a new pastor. Now retired, he served as Senior Minister of the Church in the Gardens in Forest Hills for 21 years, and the last nine years as the Pastor of the Community Church of the Pelhams. He lives in New York City with his wife Linda and their two rescue dogs. They have two grown daughters.



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. Noel Vanek, Guest Preacher

Roxy York, Liturgist

Music Director Sean Cameron and The Chancel Choir

James Cesare, Trumpet Soloist

Media Team – Casey Cunningham, Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad,

Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

And all of you!

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ

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Heather Corcoran, Church Administrator; Gail Kieser, eChimes Editor

Today's Service is simulcast www.echimestv.org Tune in any time!

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