



A Communion Sunday for Hope

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 1, 2024

How far is it to Bethlehem?

*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

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude "The Christmas Song"
 by Robert Wells and Mel Tormé
 James Cesare, trumpet soloist

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Candle by Jessica and Rob O'Donnell

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. In a moment, we will light the first candle on our Advent wreath: the candle of Hope.

In the time before the birth of Jesus, the Israelites had little hope for the future of their nation or their people, except for the power of God that remained strong in their lives, even as it wavered from time-to-time. 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 begins our 2024 Advent journey as we anticipate the birth of Jesus, the one who is called the Light of the World and the Hope of the Nations.

As we light the candle of Hope, we give thanks for all who ceaselessly and courageously speak words of hope and encouragement and love for each of us and this world, in the name of the one called Jesus.

(The candle is lit...)

Please rise if you wish and join us in singing.

One Candle is Lit

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.

Please be seated.

A Voice Responds

*This fire atop a tower of wax,
symbolizes the ever-present Light of the World,
A light born to us long ago,
in a manger far away
and (now) as close
as the hearts that beat within us all.*

Please remain as you are and join us in singing...

Hymn "Comfort, Comfort O My People"
New Century Hymnal #101

"Comfort, comfort, O my people, tell of peace," thus says our God;
Comfort those whose hearts are shrouded, mourning under sorrow's load.
Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them:
Tell them that their wrongs I cover, and their warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is calling in the desert far and near,
Bidding us to grow forgiveness since the realm of God is here.
O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Right shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble, for Messiah's holy reign.
For God's glory evermore shall be known o'er all the world;
And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

Please rise if you wish and join in praying our Unison Prayer

Unison Prayer

Remind us, please, Gracious God,
how near you truly are.
Free us to be still in your presence, especially for this Advent, this
day, and this time.
A time in which we remember your love and ours –
 for all who know AIDS;
 and all who struggle with illness.
Inspire us – Loved One – with hope that fires our love and our
resolve;
Hope that brings warmth and comfort and change
 wherever it may be needed.
May hope help us remember—who and whose we are;
We seek the hope of “joyful awareness”
 that you are already with us, “Emmanuel”.

Assurance of God's Love and Pastoral Prayer

Please rise and join us in passing the Peace of Christ

Passing of the Peace

Filled with this joy of togetherness, we share the Peace of Jesus Christ; may it find its way into the hearts of all around the world... Friends, with this in our hearts...

May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with you!
And also with you!

Let us offer one another a sign of peace!

Chancel Choir "How Far Is It To Bethlehem?" from *Emmanuel*
by Dorothy Davidson

Please be seated.

Joys, Celebrations and Concerns

Friends, we now invite you to share your Joys, Celebrations and Concerns. Please wait for the microphone and respond with:

"God, hear our prayers."

The Prayer of Jesus – "The Lord's Prayer"

Creator God who is in heaven
Hallowed* be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16 (TIB)

"The days are surely coming," says YHWH, when I will bestow on Israel and Judah all the blessings I promised them.

In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous branch from the line of David, who will bring justice and integrity to the land.

In those days, Judah will be safe and Jerusalem will be secure. They will call the land, 'YHWH is our Justice.'

Message "For the Love of Paul" Rev. Rebecca West

Musical Praise "Come As You Are To The Table"
Words and Music by Dana Mendel

Holy Communion

The Invitation

God calls us to forgive, to build peace, and to share loving fellowship.

Everyone may come to the table of reconciliation – which means all persons – all ages, cultures, sexual identities, abilities, religions, and diversities – those who affirm their elemental worth, and those who are yet to do so.

Let us hear these words of Holy Communion,
and then we will share the bread and juice.

The Purpose

Long ago, God sought to commune with us, and by choosing to live with us embodied as Jesus, God experienced all the desires and temptations that we face in our daily living as human beings. Jesus, then, first showed us how to restrain those human desires and temptations; and in calling his disciples and followers, he revealed how to spread his way of love and peace in our wide and wonderful community here on Earth.

Presenting the Elements

To remind us of the union of body and spirit, Jesus took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it like we often break in our relationships with one another, and showed us the way to reconcile by asking us to share our bread with each other.

By sharing the broken bread, we participate in and become the body of Christ in the world.

In the same way, Jesus took the cup filled with the fruit of the vine, again gave thanks, and asked us to drink of the same spirit of lovingkindness and harmony that filled him.

By sharing the cup of blessing, we participate in and become the new life of Christ in the world. What we symbolize here in this holy space, we justify by our service when we go forth from this place.

Invitation

In the spirit of Christ, let us share our spiritual journey through the blessings of Holy Communion.

Partaking of the Bread and Juice

Today we will serve the bread and cup by intinction

Please come forward in the center aisles, break off piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat, and return to your seats by the side aisles

A server will bring the bread and cup to those who choose to stay in their pews.

Communion Hymns

"Let Us Break Bread Together" NCH #330

Let us break bread together on our knees;
Let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees;
Let us drink wine together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees;
Let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

"As We Gather at Your Table" NCH #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 died to save. (cont'd)

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 join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy God, hear our prayer. We thank you for inviting us to
this table where we have known the presence of Christ
and have received all of Christ's gifts.
Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another,
and let us show forth your praise in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Invitation to Give

We welcome your offerings at this time and invite you to place
your prayer and information cards in the plate as we sing our
Church Covenant.

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."

Benediction (*1 Thess 3:11-13 TIB*)

Rev. Rebecca West

*And now, may our loving Abba God and Jesus, our Savior,
direct our steps back to you.*

*May Christ increase to overflowing your love for one another
and for all people, even as our love does for you.*

*May Christ strengthen your hearts, making them blameless and holy
before our Abba God,
at the coming of our Savior Jesus with all the holy ones.*

Choral Blessing "Communion Prayer"
by Allen Pote

Ringling of the Bell

Postlude "Grateful"
by John Bucchino



Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ

For more than a century and a half, Sayville 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.

Thank you!

Rev. Becky West, Guest Preacher

Sean Cameron, Music Director

Liturgist – Bill Houghtalen

Ushers –Elise and Jimmy Cesare, Lorraine Martin

Media Team – Karin Conrad, Mark Conrad, Casey Cunningham,
Connie Kauffman, Kathy Leis and Hank Maust

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Heather Corcoran, Church Administrator

Gail Kieser, eChimes Editor

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"