



Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 22, 2024

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

Welcome

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude "O Tannenbaum"
Traditional, Arranged by Vince Guaraldi

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Candle by Melissa and Willie Harris

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. In a moment, we will light the fourth candle on our Advent wreath: the candle of Love.

In the time before the birth of Jesus, the Israelites had little peace, hope, joy or love 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.

Still, they persevered and waited for the "One who would answer their cries of "Hosanna!": a messiah, an anointed leader, like David who would help them. They believed when that happened, all would be well – again.

Today we continue our 2024 Advent journey, anticipating the birth of Jesus, the one who is called the Light of the World and whose Love is an expression of all Creation...

As we light this candle of Love, we give thanks for all those we love – love is love. Always.

(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;
Verse 3 for Joy; Verse 4 for Love

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.

Come, wanderer where lion and lamb gently play,
where evil is banished and faith takes the day,
a babe in a manger to fool the world’s eyes.
One candle is lit for God’s loving surprise.

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.

Please remain as you are and join us in singing

Hymn "There's A Spirit of Love in This Place"

Sing! Prayer and Praise #33

There's a spirit of love in this place,
There's a spirit of love in this place,
You can't see it but it's there,
just as precious as the air.
There's a spirit of love in this place.

There's the presence of peace in this room,
There's the presence of peace in this room,
In God's tenderness is found
peace that passes human bounds.
There's the presence of peace in this room.

O alleluia, sing alleluia!
We bless your holy name.
O alleluia, sing alleluia!
There's a spirit of love in this place.

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

Unison Prayer

Eternal and Gracious God,

We gather in this sacred space with hearts lifted in anticipation and hope.

As we journey through this season of Advent, we remember the humble town of Bethlehem, from which your promise of peace and salvation arose. Just as you called Bethlehem to bring forth a shepherd for your people, you call us to bring your light into the world.

With hearts moved by Mary's song, we magnify your holy name.

We rejoice in the blessing of the Christ-child, coming to dwell among us. In Mary's joy and humility, we find inspiration to walk faithfully in your ways, sharing your love and grace with all we meet.

Grant us the courage to move with the spirit of Mary, singing songs of justice, mercy, and hope. May our lives reflect the greatness of your love as we embrace the lowly, lift up the brokenhearted, and proclaim the good news of your kingdom.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

Assurance of God's Love and Pastoral Prayer

Please rise if you wish 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 “Dear Little Child of Ours” from *Emmanuel*
by Dorothy Davidson Hauscke

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.

Hymn

“Mary, Woman of the Promise”

New Century Hymnal #123

Mary, woman of the promise;
vessel of your people’s dreams:
through your open, willing spirit
waters of God’s good news streamed.

Mary, song of holy wisdom,
sung before the world began:
Faithful to the Word within you,
as you bore God’s wondrous plan.

Mary, morning star of justice;
mirror of the Radiant Light:
In the shadows of life’s journey,
be a beacon for our sight.

Mary, model of compassion;
and wounded by your offspring pain:
When our hearts are torn by sorrow,
teach us how to love again.

Mary, woman of the gospel;
humble home for treasured seed:
Help us to be true disciples,
bearing fruit in word and deed.

First Reading: Micah 5:1-5a (TIB)

As for you, Bethlehem-in-Ephrathah, says YHWH, small as you are among Judah's clans, from you will come a ruler for me over Israel, one who will arise from the ancient of days out of David's lineage.

God will give them over to their enemies until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of the ruler's sisters and brothers will return to the Children of Israel.

The ruler will rise up to shepherd them in the strength of YHWH, by the name of YHWH, their God. They will live in security, for now the ruler's greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

They'll say, "This at last is the One who will be our peace! When Assyria invades our land and tramples our fortresses, we will raise up against the invaders seven – no, eight! – shepherds, leaders of the people.

They will shepherd Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword.

The Chancel Choir

"A Prayer for Light"

by Frances M. Owen and W. Glen Darst

Gospel Reading, Luke 1:39-55

Within a few days, Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice, she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb jumped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what God said to her would be accomplished!

Mary said, "My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.

For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward, all generations will call me blessed.

For you, Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your name.

Your mercy reached from age to age for those who fear you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their hubris and arrogance; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away, empty. You have come to the aid of Israel, your servant, mindful of your mercy – the promise you made to our ancestors – to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

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

Rev. Rebecca West

In the week ahead, may you live the holy "yes" of Mary.
Yes to God's presence.
Yes to God's mystery.
Yes to God's power.
Yes to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Here we are, servants of God.
Let it be with us according to the Holy word.
The time for fresh and new service begins.
Go forth in love.

Choral Blessing

"Go Now in Peace"

by Don Besig

Lyrics by Don Besig and Nancy Price

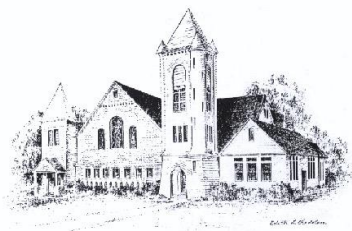
Ringing of the Bell

Postlude

"Christmas Time Is Here"

Words by Lee Mendelson

Music by Vince Guaraldi



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 – Karen Maust
Ushers – Judie Jayne, Linda Brookshire,
Roberta Smith and Sue Lanchantin

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"