



"A Child is Born"



*Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
December 24, 2024
7:00 PM Service*

A Voice Speaks

*The silence of the night is broken by the cry
of a baby meeting the world for the first time.
Is there a sound in all the earth more awesome,
More lovely, more full of wonder
than the sound of a child's first complaint
about being banished from the Garden,
the place of dreaming innocence?*

The Ringing of the Bell

Prelude

"What Child is This?"

James Cesare, trumpet soloist

Prelude (cont.)

"Mary, Did You Know?"

Words and Music by Mark Lowry and
Buddy Greene, Arranged by Jack Schrader

The First Lesson

In the beginning...

In the beginning – everything began! And before everything began, there was God. God was – before everything. The Holy Spirit and Christ and God – before everything were there.

And God sent Christ into the world through – Jesus in a very special way. And, since then everything is changed and changing.

Everything.

The Light of Jesus is always with us, around us, in us!

Choral Anthem

“One Candle”

Words by Any Beck and Brian Fisher

Music by Andy Beck

Second Lesson* **A Voice Calls Out...*

Listen to the call of John the Baptist’s voice in your heart:
“I am the voice shouting in the desert:
Prepare the road for the One to come;
make the path clear for this One to travel!
Every valley will be filled up and leveled out,
the hills and the mountains will be graded for easy passage!
Let nothing be in the way! No winding roads, no rough paths.
Make the path open, welcoming, affirming
for everyone to see the One, who comes with love for all.
The One who reveals Emmanuel, “God with us” God...
for a world then and now – sorely in need of this One!”

A Voice Speaks

It is as though the distance
between the near and the vast
was telescoped into quintessential knowing:
that there is a human perspective
within which space and time,
us and God,
the near and vast,
are one.

Choral Anthem

“Lo, How A Rose / The Rose”

Arranged by Craig Hella Johnson

Third Lesson

An Angel...

A Messenger of God, the Archangel Gabriel, appeared suddenly to a young woman named Mary. Mary was engaged to Joseph, a man whose family dated back to the time of David, a famous and important ruler of Judea.

The appearance of Gabriel startled Mary, as it would anyone! The angel’s words were even more startling: “God is with you, Mary, and you are the most fortunate of all women!”

Mary was frightened and wondered what this all meant. The Archangel continued, “God has chosen you, Mary, to be the mother of a child, a son, whom you will name Jesus.”

“This simply is not possible,” said a trembling Mary.

Gabriel gently replied, “Mary, everything is possible with God.” And with these words and Gabriel’s loving voice – calmness overtook Mary in ways she could not understand. She bowed her head and replied from deeply within her heart, “I will follow God’s will; I place my life in God’s care.”

And when she looked up – no one was there.

The angel—had gone.

And God, as before, was with her.

Congregational Response "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus"
New Century Hymnal #122, vs. 1,2,1

Come, O long-expected Jesus,
born to set all people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
grant us your true liberty.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope to all the earth impart;
dear desire of every nation,
enter every longing heart.

Come, O long-expected Jesus,
born to set all people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
grant us your true liberty.

A Voice Speaks

Let's go farther down into that night.
An unlikely story about God sneaking into history,
to where we least expect the sacred.

 This time,
 as the first child
 of a woman and a man,
 on their way to marriage.
 Young, marginalized,
 prisoners of their own time:
 exiles in their own land,
 captives of political and religious
 and social confabulations...

Fourth Lesson

The Night of Jesus's Birth...

The Emperor Augustus had decreed, as emperors and dictators do, that all the world should be registered so taxes and control over the marginalized could be secured. Augustus required that everyone travel to the towns where their families were from to complete the census.

Obeying the law of the emperor, Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem, because that is where his descendants had originally settled. How far was it to Bethlehem? From Nazareth it was a long and hard trip - about 120 miles, and they traveled by donkey and on foot with others who were on the same journey.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and expecting a child. While they were in Bethlehem, Mary's time arrived, and she gave birth to Jesus. It was there, in Bethlehem, that the child Jesus was born, wrapped in cloth and placed in a manger because there was no room at the inn, with all those traveling to complete the emperor's order.

Choral Anthem

"Baby Jesu, At Your Birth"

Words and Music by James Ahrend

A Voice Speaks

No wonder their lives
were interrupted by dreams, angels,
and of all things,
by shepherds.

Fifth Lesson Angels Appear to the Shepherds

While all this was happening, some distance away, other angels, other messengers of God, suddenly appeared before a group of terrified shepherds, frightened by the star that shined so brightly to the East.

“Do not be afraid; Listen! We bring you good news of great joy for everyone! To you, this nation and all the world – on this day in the city of David a child is born. A child of God; the one you have been waiting for!

Then the angels told them how they would be able to find the infant Jesus, and the shepherds hurried in the way they were told to go.

Solo “O Holy Night”

Words by John S. Dwight

Music by Adolphe Adam

Sixth Lesson

The Wise Travelers...

News of the birth of the child, the appearance of messengers and the strange star spread quickly. Travelers from everywhere were talking all about it.

Word of the birth of Jesus, *a newborn ruler*, even got to King Herod - the cruel and jealous ruler of the time.

At one point, the Wise Travelers passed through Herod's court, asking for directions to find this child. They had been following the star and wondered if anyone knew where it led.

At the same time, King Herod had called together his high priests and the scribes and asked them what they thought was going on. "Could this be the Messiah?" he asked.

The high priests and scribes told Herod that according to scriptures and the prophets, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem - in the direction of the star. "Yes," they said. This very well could be.

That was enough for Herod.

Making believe that he wanted to celebrate the birth of this amazing child, Herod called in the Wise Travelers. asking them to seek out this child and tell them where he was, so that he, too, might go and worship him.

They agreed, following the star until it stopped over the place where the child was - and there they found Jesus. Upon finding the baby Jesus, they were overcome with joy, embracing the family and presenting them with the gifts they had brought. They were in awe and amazement the whole time.

Choral Anthem

“Quiet Night, Wondrous Sight”

Don Besig & Nancy Price, Music by Don Besig

Seventh Lesson

O What a Night...

The shepherds and the Wise Travelers joined with others that night. It was a glorious evening! They shared their stories and everyone knew, somehow they knew, that this – what they had just seen and been part of – would change everything. Everything.

The Wise Travelers began their journey home. But not by way of Herod. They had been forewarned in a dream of the Herod’s intentions to destroy his perceived challengers, so they traveled home by a different route. Herod was left out-manuevered and furious.

And there were other concerns for the safety of the young family.

An angel told Joseph not to go back to Nazareth, because King Herod would surely find them there. Instead, the angel told Joseph to take his family to Egypt where they would be safe. They were to wait there until the angel returned, telling them it was all clear to return to Nazareth.

And so it was that Joseph and Mary and Jesus and their young family stayed in Egypt until Herod had died and the angel told them it was time to return home.

Congregational Response

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

New Century Hymnal #131, v 1-4

Solo

“Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion!”

from Messiah by George Frideric Handel
Jeannine McKenna, soloist

Passing of 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!

Candle Lighting

Congregational Response

“Joy to the World!”

NCH #132, vs. 1, 2

Joy to the World! Je-sus is come:
let earth its praises bring;
let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing
and heaven and nature sing
and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

Congregational Response "The First Nowell"
#139 New Century Hymnal, v. 1,2

The first Nowell, the angel did say,
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay.
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold wither's morning that was so deep.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born in a manger, Emmanuel.

They looked above and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continues both day and night.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born in a manger, Emmanuel.

Congregational Response "Silent Night, Holy Night"
New Century Hymnal # 134, Verses 1,2,3,1

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent Night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face bring the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord at thy birth, Jesus Lord at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

A Voice Speaks

The silence of the night is broken by the cry
of a baby meeting the world for the first time.
Is there a sound in all the earth more awesome,
More lovely, more full of wonder
than the sound of a child's first complaint
about being banished from the Garden,
the place of dreaming innocence?

Often, we might have thought that that first cry
might be as close as we ever get
to hearing the voice of God.

In the cry,
God articulates, with unmistakable clarity,
God's commitment to human life
and to a human future.
In the cry, God affirms the future for all of us
and promises the past a home
In human memory.

Christmas *is* the story without equal
of God's magnificent obsession with us –
our earth –
and with our destiny. One and all.

Church Bell Rings

Baby Jesus is brought to the Creche

* "A Voice Speaks" built upon the gifts of writing
by friend and mentor Joseph H. Gilmore

Go in Peace. Merry Christmas!



2024 CHANCEL POINSETTIAS

DONATED BY:

Tom and Kay Wolf

Karen E. Gunkel-Lewis

Jerry Avolio and Gini McLaughlin

Pat Mahar

Karen and Hank Maust

Sue Lanchantin

Kathy and Peter Leis

Connie and Roger Kauffman

Heather and Mariana Dominguez

Jenna Murphy

Mike and Judie Jayne

James and Elise Cesare

Debby Langstaff

Hilda Baeza

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Kathy and Peter Leis

Carl and Tina MacGowan

Bob and Gail Acker

Jean and Jeff Newcombe

Connie and Roger Kauffman

Mike and Judie Jayne

Karen and Hank Maust

Pat Mahar

Karen E. Gunkel-Lewis

Jenna Murphy

DONATED BY:

Jerry and Susan Ryan

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Our dear Riley and Loved Ones

My brother Kurt Gunkel

Mac and Shirley McLaughlin; Jerry and Betty Avolio

All dear family and friends

Robert & Martha Pierce and Rev. John A. Geter, Jr.

Paul Lanchantin and Paul Jr.

Shirley and James McMann; Mike and Herminie Bavosa

Phil and Loved Ones

Ron Robinson

Loved Ones

Special Friends

The Cesare and Wysong Families

Fred Langstaff

Loved Ones

IN HONOR OF:

Abigail and Olivia Linsner

The MacGowan and Polokowski Families

Our wonderful grandchildren – Kayla, Amanda,
Rex, Ruby, Gavin and Addi

Our grandchildren – Chris Jr, Gabby, Liam, Matthew, Lulu,
Abbey & J.J.

Katie, Elise and Jimmy

Our Family

All the faithful and hardworking members of
Sayville Congregational UCC


All Veterans

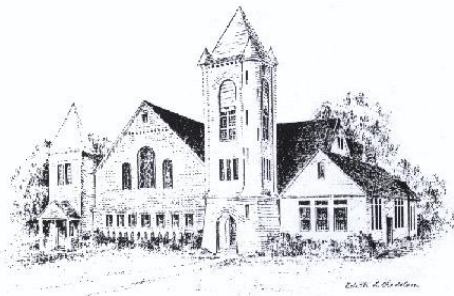
My grandson Beren Minogue

Mom

SPECIAL INTENTIONS:

In Celebration of Families – Ryan and Chiappino
And Church





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
James Cesare, trumpet soloist
Jeannine McKenna, soloist

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"