



Hope Church
Wampanoag Trail
East Providence - Rhode Island

**Hope Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
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Hope Congregational UCC

Order of Worship 12-24-2023, 10:30 AM

4th Sunday of Advent

- = Please Stand as you are able

*Gathering Music: "Ave Maria" by J.S. Bach
Charles Gounod Austin Burns, soloist*

Welcome & Announcements

Deacon Lori Russell

- **CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 89)**

One: We will sing of your steadfast love, O God;
Forever, with our mouths we proclaim your
faithfulness.

**Many: We declare your love, unending,
unfailing
We will sing. We will sing.**

One: Our never-ceasing songs shall show
The mercies of God for the ages to know.

**Many: We declare your love, eternal,
enduring
We will sing. We will sing.**

One: Our song forever shall record
the tender mercies of the LORD;

All: We declare your love, immortal,
sustaining
We will sing. We will sing.

• **Opening Hymn: “Come Light of Light into My Heart”**

SING TOGETHER:

- Bring in both parts one by one.
- When the melodies are well established try singing as a round as indicated.

The musical score is written in 12/8 time and consists of two parts. Part 1 is divided into five sections labeled A, B, C, D, and E. Part 2 follows. The lyrics are: 'Come light of lights in - to my heart. Come wis - dom of spi - rit in - to my heart. Come wis - dom of spi - rit in - to my heart. Come'. The score includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and repeat signs.

Words: tr. from a Celtic chant of the Céile Dé order.
Music: Ruth Cunningham, © 2006 by Ruth Cunningham. Used by permission.

- May be sung with as few as two round groups on each part.

**LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF LOVE - Waiting
for Love**

Reader One: Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to the king and said, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (Isaiah 7:11 NRSV). But when the king refused, God would not be stopped. “Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14 NRSV)

Reader Two: God wants us to know, even when we aren't sure ourselves. God wants us to experience God's presence, even when we think we can manage life on our own. God sends us signs of God's presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

Reader One: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'" When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus (Matthew 1:23-25 NRSV).

Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep everlasting joy, and today of presence that

speaks of love, as a sign that no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone.

(We light the first 1st two Purple candles, the Pink candle and 3rd Purple Candle on the Advent wreath)

**PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION &
RECONCILIATION Deacon Lori Russell**

One: Womb of Creation, we often get caught up
in what we do not have –
The love we lack,
The loving back, even, that seem to
escape us.
Forgive us for the times we forgot to love
you.
Hold us in love when we fail to see you in
The blessings of ages past.

**Many: Help us connect our love and our
gratitude.
Remind us to love unconditionally, one
by one by one, for you are there in
them all.**

Assurance of God's Grace (Inspired by 2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16)

One: Let us pray:
God with us—
The one who take us from the tent to the throne—
The one who prepares places for us
And promises rest from our enemies—
we open our hearts and souls to the beauty of your kin-dom.
We seek to hear the precious news once again
that we might be continually renewed,
transformed, and awed by your abundant love, everlasting peace, miraculous hope, and quenchless joy.

**Many: May our praise and prayers be pleasing to you.
May our lives reflect the beauty you have birthed in us. Amen.**

- **Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the **Spirit, One;***

*as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen. Amen.*

A Time for All Ages / Story Moment

PASSING THE PEACE

One: God calls us to create a community which
welcomes all:
To care and love unconditionally,
To free us and create a welcome for all.
May the Peace of Christ be with you!

Many: And also with you!

One: Let share that welcome with each other,
that Love!

Scripture: Luke 1: 26-38 (NRSVUE)

Deacon Lori Russell

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings,

favored one! The Lord is with you.”^[a] ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”^[b] ³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me

according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Sermon/Reflection: “Unconditional Love”
Rev. Bob

- *Hymn: “Mary, Did You Know?” No. 192*

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Prayer Requests & Pastoral Prayer

Lord’s Prayer: (recited) (using “debts” and “debtors”)

Prayer Response: Let the Church Say Amen
All

*Let the church say amen, Let the church say
amen,
Altogether, let the church say amen.*

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Special Music “A Hallelujah Christmas”
Austin & Music Team

Offering Hymn: “Give Thanks”

*Give Thanks, with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One.*

*Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his
Son.*

*And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"
Let the poor say, "I am rich,"
Because of what the Lord has done for us.
Give thanks!*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

Generous God, we give thanks for all the beautiful resources you have given to us. Let these gifts bring glory and honor to you and beauty and peace to your creation. Amen.

- ***Closing Hymn: "Angels from the Realms of Glory" No. 189***

Benediction

Benediction Response (sung): "God Be with You"

*God be with you,
God be with you,
God be with you 'till we meet again.*

*O---God be with you,
God be with you,
God be with you 'till we meet again.*

***Recessional Music: “Some Children See Him” by Wihla Hutson / Alfred Burt
Austin & Music Team***

POINSETTIAS

The Poinsettias which have graced our sanctuary this holiday have been dedicated to the glory of God and given in loving memory of:

Blanche Fowkes, by Carol Aguiar

William & Dorothy White, by Carol Aguiar

Glen Jordan, by Gloria Cady

Adeline Redman, by Gloria Cady

Ray Goulet by Jean Goulet

“Our Grampy” by Morgan and Luke Ferrari

Family Loved Ones, by Sylvia and Ted Janes

Family and Friends of the Laughlin Family, by Cora Rose

Uncle Charlie, Uncle Chet and cousins Kendrew, Colleen and Milt, by Andrew & Chris Foster

Our parents, Leon & Edna Wilcox, and our brother and his wife, Arthur & Gloria Wilcox by Ginny Martins & family & Carol Salisbury & family

Our Dad, Richard L. Patt, by Kerri Salisbury & Stacy Coutu

A donation toward decorations was made in loving memory of Departed Loved Ones, by Rick Bushnell and Paula Perkins.

Additional donations toward decorations were made by:

Henry and Sarah Tonole, Andrew and Chris Foster, Jean Goulet, Janet and David Ferrari

Calendar & Announcements

- ***Stewardship Reminder: Please memorialize your commitment to our faith community. Your participation & donations enable us to spread Jesus' message of love to all!!!***

- **The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund “Grace upon Grace.” John 1:16**
 - The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.
 - United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. We have special envelopes available for your offering, which will be collected during Advent and ending on Christmas Eve, Dec 24. Thank you!
- **Tonight – A Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols at...**

- **Riverside Church – 5:00 PM**
- **Hope Church – 6:30 PM**
- Rev. Bob will be traveling on vacation this week.
- The office will be closed on December 26th and January 2nd.
- If you wish to visit, contact Rev. Bob directly by phone, (401) 339-6134 or email, nolan062400@gmail.com to arrange your visit in the weeks to come.
- The “**Get Crafty**” group will resume meeting at Hope Church on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM in January. All our welcome.
 - *Prayer squares, a pocket-sized version of a prayer shawls is available to take with you and for someone you might know!*
- **Cobweb Community thrift shop @ Riverside Church Cobweb Shop**
Wednesday-Thursdays 9-12 & Second Saturdays of the month 9:00 AM-12:00 PM.
- **Lighthouse Community food rescue mission @ Riverside Church** Wednesdays 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM, Thursdays 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM, Fridays 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

- **Advent Book Read** – We will be reading the book, ***Holy Moments*** by Matthew Kelly. See Rev. Bob for a copy. We will resume meeting in January.