



*Celebrating*  
THE BIRTH OF  
*Christ*

Hope Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
120 Wampanoag Trail  
East Providence, Rhode Island 02915  
Tel. (401) 434-2415 FAX (401) 434-2041  
E-mail: [hopechurchep@verizon.net](mailto:hopechurchep@verizon.net)  
  
[Facebook.com/HopeChurchRI](https://www.facebook.com/HopeChurchRI)  
  
Rev. Robert W. Nolan, Pastor  
Cell (401) 339-6134  
Email: [nolan062400@gmail.com](mailto:nolan062400@gmail.com)

# Hope Congregational UCC

## Order of Worship

12-24-2023 Christmas Eve, 6:30 PM

### A Service of Lessons & Carols / Baptism of Sebastian

- =*Stand*

**Gathering Music:** "O Holy  
Night" Austin & Music Team

### THE WAITING IS OVER - JESUS IS HERE

**Reader One:** This night, this night is a night to remember. A night when our waiting is over. A night when we were not forgotten or alone or abandoned. This night. This night is the night when here and there became one, when past and future combined in a breathless present. This is a night when we are no longer waiting, in ourselves, in this family, on the God who loved us enough to walk beside us.

**Reader Two:** We gather in the night to proclaim the light. We shrug off despair and embrace hope. We set aside conflict and choose peace. We push away despair by claiming joy. We overcome hate by rising into love. Because of this night we know, even in the shadows of our doubts, we know that we are loved. That's what arriving means.

**Reader One:** We light these candles, hoping to become the light, hoping to radiate light by how we live. We light these candles to create a space called home in this place, in our place, in inner places. We light these candles to declare that unto us a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. Welcomed home by angels singing and shepherds kneeling. Welcomed home by those like us who have worshipped for thousands of years. Welcomed home again tonight, right here, right now, in us.

**Reader Two:** The time has arrived. Our waiting has ended.

*Light the Christ Candle and all candles  
of the wreath.*

## **INVOCATION**

**O God of love, you have brought us  
together tonight and blessed us with  
your very self.**

**Open our eyes to the light of Christ  
which glows in the darkness of a  
world engulfed in apathy, pain and  
loss; a world separated from you.**

**Speak to us now that we may hear  
the good news of your salvation.  
Bring us into the wonder of your  
presence.**

**Fill us with that light and carry it out  
with us into our lives.**

**Amen.**

- ***“Once in Royal David’s City”  
No. 183 (vs.1&2)***

***LESSON I: GENESIS 3: 8-15***

***Deacon Lori Russell***

***(Extinguish one purple candle)***

**“Now is the Cool of the Day”**  
**Austin & Music Team**

*LESSON II: ISAIAH 35: 1-6*

*Deacon Cora Rose*

*(Extinguish pink candle)*

- **“O Little Town of Bethlehem”**  
**No.180 (vs.1&3)**

*LESSON III: ISAIAH 11: 1-9*

*Rev. Bob Nolan*

*(extinguish one purple candle)*

- **“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”**  
**No.154 (vs. 1&2)**

*LESSON IV: MICAH 5: 2-5*

*Deacon Lori Russell*

*(extinguish last purple candle)*

**“Then, Shall the Righteous” (by Felix Mendelsohn)**     **Austin & Music Team**

- **“Let There Be Peace on Earth”**  
**No.614**

*LESSON V: LUKE 1: 26-38*

*Deacon Cora Rose*

**ORDER FOR BAPTISM OF  
SEBASTIAN**

**INVITATION & WELCOME**

**PASTOR** Dear friends, as we come to this font of living water, let us recall the meaning of baptism. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

**All For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.**

**PASTOR** The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. Inasmuch as the promise of the gospel is not only to us but also to our children, baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and

the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**All This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.**

## **QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES**

### **CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT (ask congregation to stand)**

**PASTOR** Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the one(s) about to be baptized, as he/she/they live(s) and grow(s) in Christ?

**All We promise our love, support, and care.**

**PASTOR** Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

**PASTOR** Do you believe in God?

**All** I believe in God.

**PASTOR** Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**All** I believe in Jesus Christ.

**PASTOR** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**All** I believe in the Holy Spirit.

## **PRAYER OF BAPTISM**

**PASTOR** Christ be with you.

**All** And also with you.

## **ACT OF BAPTISM**

## **PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED**

**PASTOR** We give you thanks, O Holy One, mother and father of all the faithful for these your children and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of



your love. Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this new member/these new members of the body of Christ.

**ALL Give to the newly baptized: strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.**

- ***“Silent Night” (remain seated)  
No.186 (all vs.)***

*LESSON VI: LUKE 2: 1-7*

*Rev. Bob Nolan*

**GAUDETE: “The Heavens Are Telling” (by Franz Joseph Haydn)  
Austin & Music Team**

*LESSON VII: LUKE 2: 8-14*

*Deacon Lori Russell*

- ***“Joy to the World”  
No. 179 (vs.1&2)***

*LESSON VIII: MATTHEW 2: 1-11*

*Deacon Cora Rose*

*PRESENTATION OF GIFTS / FREE-  
WILL OFFERING*

- ***“The First Noel”***  
**No. 229 (vs.1&2)**

*LESSON IX: JOHN 1: 1-14*

*Rev. Bob Nolan*

- ***“Angels We Have Heard on  
High”*** **No. 188**

**Recessional Music: “It Feels Like  
Christmas” 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***

- **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!