

December 8, 2020

Dear Houghton Church Friends,

Now two weeks into Advent, we are moving closer to Christmas. Even though the Advent season is different this year, we still providing as many opportunities as possible for you to engage with God and with each other. Here is some information and opportunities for involvement.

**Thursday:** This Thursday, December 10, 6:30 p.m., we will stream a collage of Christmas carols submitted by people from our congregation. You may access the stream through the regular channels, [the website](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **Sunday Worship**

- **Streaming Worship Service 10:00 a.m.**
- **Outdoor Live Service 11:15 a.m.** We plan to be in the church parking lot again this week. Please join us if you are able.
- This Sunday is the Third Sunday of Advent. We will light the Advent candle and sing some of the carols. The sermon focuses on the people's response to Joseph's dilemma about Mary (Matthew 1:18-25) and the underlying question, *But What Will People Think?*
- The bulletin, which includes the worship order, financial information, prayer concerns and events in the life of our church, is available each week [on the church website](#) or by contacting the church office.
- **Streaming Carol Sing 6:30 p.m.** We are unable to gather for the annual singing of our favorite Christmas carols so we are reposting the 2018 Carol Sing events on [Youtube](#) and [Facebook](#).

**Youth Group:** This week, Dec 13, is the last Youth Group of the semester! Junior High students 3-4pm and Senior High students 5-6pm. Merry Christmas!

**Christmas Eve Streaming Service:** Due to the continuing rise of Covid-19 cases in our area, we will not be gathering for Christmas Eve Services in the building this year. We are putting together a service that we will stream on Christmas Eve. We are working on making this service as much like being there as possible. For the preservice, we are creating a collage of greetings to and from each other. We would love for you to make a very brief video of your family unit standing around your tree or a nativity or whatever you desire and just say something like: "Merry Christmas from the Odens." If you have family from out of town who might normally come to the Christmas Eve Service, invite them to send in a video that might say something like: "Merry Christmas from the Odens in Raleigh, NC." Please record in horizontal format. Send your 5-7 second video to [AmandaCox@hwchurch.org](mailto:AmandaCox@hwchurch.org).

**Christmas Eve Outdoor Service:** In addition to the full streamed service, we are going to gather outdoors at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve for an abbreviated (30 minutes or less) service. We sing carols, read scripture, hear a homily and light candles. We are planning some other elements as well.

**Christmas Eve Offering:** Every year our church receives a generous offering at Christmas for mission outreach. This year's project is for Houghton Academy's international student boarding program which has suffered Covid 19 setbacks. Our gift towards new Scholarships for Missionary Kids/Third Culture Kids and exchange partnerships with international Christian schools is a first step in jump starting this outreach. You may give online through the church web site, by mail or by dropping off a gift at the church office.

**Poinsettias:** The church welcomes your Christmas poinsettias to help beautify the sanctuary for Christmas. We have ordered a number of poinsettias for \$12.00 each or you may bring your own to drop off at the Church office by December 18th. If you would like to purchase one or more poinsettias, you may use the [online giving](#) option online giving option, mail a check to the church (indicate poinsettias), or drop off payment at the church office. If you wish to purchase or donate a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, please email Patty at [pattystalker@hwchurch.org](mailto:pattystalker@hwchurch.org) or call Patty (567-2264) with your information by December 17th. Thank you.

### Freezer Meals

- The Lay Shepherd leaders and Lay Shepherd groups continue to reach out to help their neighborhoods and area when someone has a baby, is ill or has surgery. This is a tremendous ministry but during these extra busy and often stress filled days, it can be difficult to help others as we desire. Because of this, we are inviting you to make a freezer meal or two when you have time, to have on hand in the church freezer. In this way, when a need arises meals are readily available. It could be a meal of soup or a casserole for one person or two people or for a family. If you would be able to help us stock up on meals for people in times of need or if you have any questions, please contact Cindy Oden (567-2024/[cindyoden@hwchurch.org](mailto:cindyoden@hwchurch.org)). Meals may be dropped off at the church office during office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Please include what your freezer meal is and instructions on baking or warming it. Thank you!
- Thank you all for the many ways you are serving and helping one another! We so appreciate each one of you and all that you do.

### Church Finances

- Here are the giving totals for our fiscal year (June – May) to date  
**Budget Needed:** \$425,654.46 / **Budget Received:** \$386,642.54
- God continues to bless us through your generosity. The weekly bulletin contains up to date financial information. For financial gifts, we encourage you to use [online giving](#) to mail your check to the church (P.O. Box 127, Houghton, NY 14744).
- If you would like to see any church financial information, contact the church office.

### Streaming Information

- Send your comments, ideas or words of gratitude about the streaming to [streaming@hwchurch.org](mailto:streaming@hwchurch.org).
- If you need assistance with streaming on the website or Facebook, contact Patty Stalker (585-610-6883).
- If you need assistance with streaming on a device (Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, etc.), contact Nathan Danner (585-567-4314).

### Resources

- Even though we are not together, our pastors and church family are here for you. On the [COVID-19 section](#) of the church website, you will see three buttons: [Get Help](#), [Give Help](#) and [Let's Talk](#). This is an easy way to let us know how we might engage with you. Do not hesitate to use those, to call the church, or to call one of the pastors if any of those buttons reflect what you would like to communicate with us.
- If you use YouTube, subscribe to our [Houghton Wesleyan Church YouTube Channel](#).

If you have questions, concerns or needs, do not hesitate to contact us (585-567-2264, [office@hwchurch.org](mailto:office@hwchurch.org), or any of us individually). If you have needs in the coming weeks, please let us know.

You continue to be in our prayers. We pray God's grace and comfort upon you.

Blessings,  
Pastor Wes