

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 13, 2020

10:00 STREAMING SERVICE

Prelude: *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (arr. Noel Rawsthorne)

Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Jordan Family

Opening Prayer

Hymn of Praise 117: ***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing***

Words of Greeting and Peace

Children's Sermon: Lexi Martino and Heidi Sardina

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 60:1-9

Songs of Adoration: ***Christ is Come; Come and Worship; What Child is This?***

Time of Prayer

Please feel free sit, stand, or kneel as we bow in humility before our loving heavenly Father.

Ministry Moment: Christmas Eve Offering

New Testament Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord. ***All: Thanks be to God!***

Hymn of Preparation 138: ***In the Bleak Midwinter***

Sermon: **But What Will People Think?**

Pastor Wes Oden

Song: ***Emmanuel (Once in Royal David's City)***

Benediction

Organist: Judy Congdon

Scripture Readers: Daryl Stevenson & Houghton Academy Students

Music Ministry Team:

Joanna Bates, vocals; Andrew Silbert, guitar & vocals; Amanda Cox, piano & vocals;

Bekah Brennan, keyboard & vocals; Alison Young Reusser, cajón

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. On this third Sunday of Advent we find ourselves in the middle of December—looking back and looking forward, pondering what has taken place and wondering what is yet to come. As we prepare for the celebration of Christ's coming, let's ask for open hearts and minds to Christ who is the Living Word.

TONIGHT AT 6:30 we will be rebroadcasting the 2018 Hymn Sing [on Facebook](#) and here: <https://youtu.be/Xcd2xv5BHlo>

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!

THURSDAY EVENING AT 6:30 Judy Congdon will present an hour of Advent and Christmas organ music. The event may be accessed through the regular streaming channels.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We invite you to join us for streaming worship at 10:00 and outdoor worship at 11:15. Pastor Wes will preach about Caesar's demand for a census and (Luke 2:1-20) and our response: *But Doesn't That Say Something about Us?*

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, 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@hwchurh.org or call Patty (567-2264) with your information by December 17th. Thank you.

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.

CHRISTMAS EVE GREETING: For the streaming 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.

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 will sing carols, read scripture, hear a homily and light candles. You might see some live animals 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.

STEWARDSHIP Budget Needed: \$425,654.46 / Budget Received: \$386,642.54

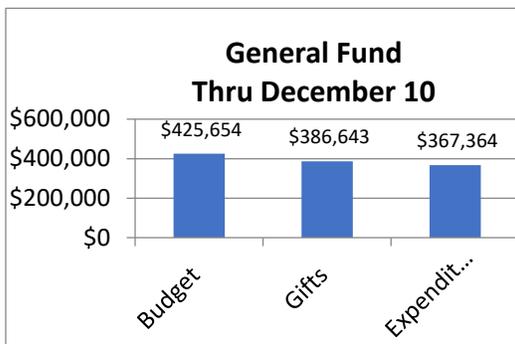
MISSION MOMENT - We pray for Ben and Christine Hegeman this week as they wrap up an intense and productive three months of teaching and discipleship ministry in northern Benin where they’ve worked for decades. Many greetings, consultations, road and air travel and Covid 19 logistics await.

PERSECUTED CHURCH - Christmas preps are a bit strange for us this year, but a report comes from Sukma District, India two weeks ago of Christians making their Advent festival plans being assaulted in the night by a mob of 50 villagers, burning Bibles and damaging property, opposing “threats to local religion.” We pray for Christians worldwide this season.

PRAYER CONCERNS: for all who are grieving; for people with health concerns: Nate Esh, Calvin Schierer, Sarah Gurley, Grace Taylor, Wendy Ott, Chelsea Ellis, Keith Rugg (Kathy Moore’s father), Karen Szymanski, Cindy Lastoria, Leonard Watson, Mark Mayhle (Doug’s brother), Jeshu, Kurtis and Elijah Perry, Reuben Samuels, Emily Hood (A.C. Taylor’s cousin), Bill Getty, Nancy Cole, Eileen Spear, Evelyn Heil, Dan Gurley, Phil Main, Emily Crikelair, Mike Raybuck, Eila Shea, Izabela Daugherty (Dave and Karen’s daughter-in-law), Peter Lingenfelter; for all effected by the coronavirus—grieving, ill, healthcare professionals, the workforce at risk and leaders; for the injured and grieving from tragedies and disasters; for refugees; for peace amid threats of war; for the leaders of our government and for our response to the recent elections; for the logistics and safety of faculty, staff and students at all of our area public schools as well as Houghton College and Houghton Academy; for the Houghton Rehabilitation and Nursing Center; for the Genesis Bible Church (Pastor Marc Chamberlain).

For more information about church activities, visit our website: www.hwchurch.org.

STEWARDSHIP *A Life of Generosity*



As the old song goes, "there's no place like home for the holidays." This year, those heartfelt lyrics have added significance. When the days grow shorter, the weather gets colder and we cope with increasing local COVID cases, we all find ourselves going into hibernation mode, retreating into our homes where it’s warm and safe. What will the Christmas celebrations be like this year? Will we be able to gather with friends and family? One thing for sure is that Christmas 2020 will be different from any we’ve experienced before.

Even in the midst of so many unknowns, we eagerly anticipate celebrating the birth of Jesus – God’s greatest gift to us. While we cocoon in our homes at the same time we must remember we’re created by God for relationships with others and to be involved in helping others.

This is a season of much giving and receiving. Our giving to God’s work through the church is one way we ex-press our gratitude. Additionally, giving sparks joy and thanksgiving in us knowing that our gifts have helped others experience God’s love.

May your generous support of Houghton Wesleyan Church bring you joy and be as much a blessing to you as it is to others.

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” 2 Cor. 9:15