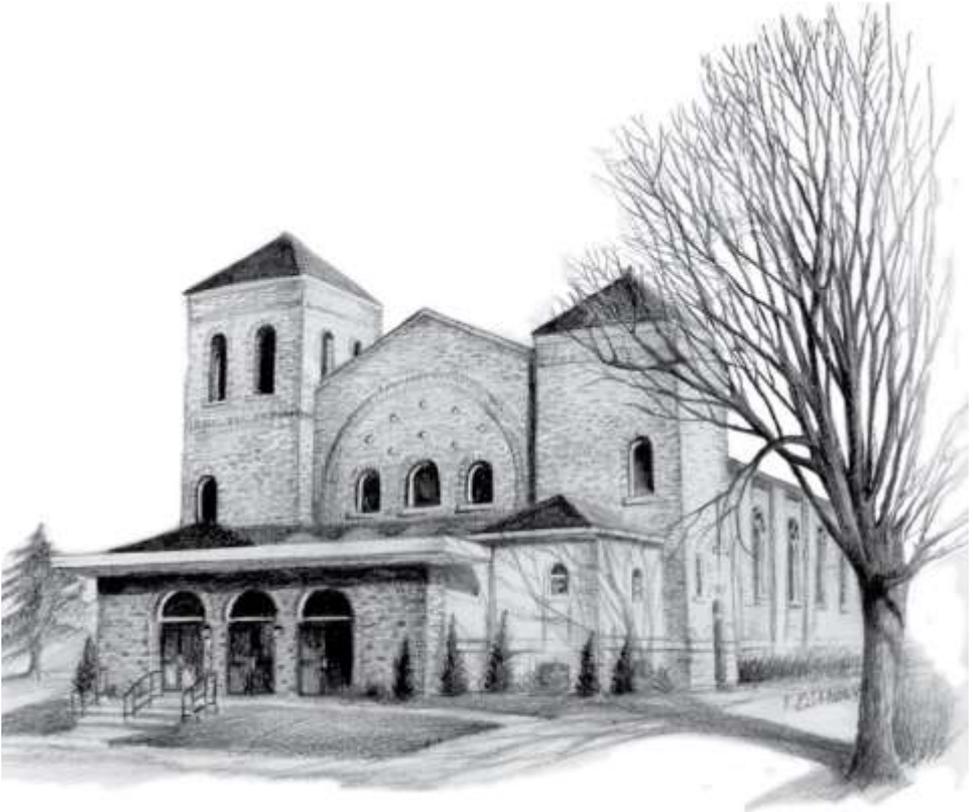




Houghton

WESLEYAN CHURCH

*Joyfully loving God,
wholeheartedly serving others*



WESLEY ODEN, *Senior Pastor*

JON COLE, *Youth Pastor*

DAVID HUIZENGA, *Discipleship and College Pastor*

CINDY ODEN, *Assistant Pastor*

PAUL SHEA, *Volunteer Assistant Pastor*

AMANDA COX, *Music and Worship Director*

EMILY SPATEHOLTS, *Children's Ministry Director*

Prelude: Fantasy on *WAREHAM* (S. Wright)

Welcome & Call to Worship

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

***He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.***

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

From everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children – with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. Praise the Lord!

Hymn of Praise 14: ***Great God, We Sing Thy Mighty Hand***

Words of Greeting and Peace

Children's Sermon: ***Safety 1st***

Songs of Adoration: ***Christ Our Hope in Life and Death; Living Hope***

Time of Prayer

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

Scripture Reading: Lamentations 3:1-32

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

Song: ***Speak, O Lord***

Sermon: ***The Love of God is Our Only Hope***

Pastor David Huizenga

Hymn 43: ***Great is Thy Faithfulness***

Benediction

Postlude: Prelude and Fugue in B-flat major, BWV 560 (J.S. Bach)

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. This morning we continue to celebrate the coming of Christ in human flesh even as we embark on a new year. It is because Christ is born that we approach the new year in a spirit of hope and anticipation for what God is going to do in all of the circumstances of life. In this hour of worship, may God fill us with the hope of Christ.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING we will gather for worship at 10:00 a.m. Pastor David Huizenga will preach about *Rest for the Soul* from Mark 2. The service will be streamed.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: We give thanks to God and to all who gave generously to our Christmas Eve offering. As of this time, we have received over \$16,620. If you have not given and would like to, please send your gift to the church or use the online giving option.

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED for the holiday on January 2.

KIDS MIN - A new month, a new year, and a new series start this Sunday in Kids Connect. Join us for "Measure Up": "When I'm older!" "When I'm taller!" Every kid is excited to grow up — even if it's just to finally ride that big kid roller coaster they've had their eye on. This five-week series is about another kid who grew up — Jesus! Through stories from Jesus' early life and ministry, kids will learn five important truths to help them continue growing: God guides us to safety, we can love God with our actions, we can follow Jesus, God makes us ready at the right time, and God's words help us make wise choices.

- January memory verse: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
— Matthew 6:33 (NIV)
- This week, kids hear about Jesus and his family's escape to Egypt when they were in danger. **THE BIG IDEA:** God guides us to safety. **THE BIBLE:** Matthew 2:13–23; Isaiah 63:7–9
- Reminder: No in-person Kids Connect this week (January 1st). There will be nursery and children's church

PERSECUTED CHURCH – What will 2023 bring? 2022 saw an increase of 20 million over 2021 to 360 million Christians experiencing high levels of persecution and discrimination worldwide. An estimated 5,900 believers were killed for their faith. Our prayers continue for Christians facing all types of opposition. Jesus promised persecution, but also he promised the overcoming power, presence and joy of His Spirit. (John 15:20; 16:33). We pray.

MISSION MOMENT – 2023 transitions! Since 1990 Ben and Christine Hegeman have served with SIM in northern Benin at a Baatanou language Bible school equipping hundreds of pastors with intense Biblical and practical tools. In classes and broader nation-wide seminars a major focus has been encouraging believers to face the growing impact of Islam with bold and loving witness for Christ. They leave behind a treasure of published materials, and continue global training with the Lilius Trotter Center for those reaching Muslims. We welcome them here and pray for their transition to our world.

DATES IN JANUARY:

- January 4 Valley PreSchool begins second semester
- January 5 (7pm) Celebrate Recovery resumes meeting
- January 11 (9:30-10:45am) Women's Bible Study resumes
- January 14 (8am) Men's Breakfast
- January 17 (7am) Youth Breakfast
- January 18 (7-8pm) Sharing the Journey: Hear Banding Groups' Stories
- January 21 (9:30-11am) Kids Club
- January 25 Food Drive-through (reservations begin Jan. 17)
- January 27 (5:50-6:30pm) Stone Soup Fundraiser for Valley PreSchool
- January 27-29 Youth Retreat at PennYork (reservations by Jan. 15)

See the January *Highlights* newsletter for more information.

STEWARDSHIP

Budget Needed: \$481,531.20 / **Budget Received:** \$439,930.14

PRAYER CONCERNS: for Audrey Pocock's sister Norva whose husband died December 23 and for all who are grieving; for people with health concerns: Jeff LaLonde (Andrea Tanner's father), David Ortlip, Vesta Mullen, Terry Ayers, Scarlett Gildemeister, Kim Pegula, Mim Case, Grace Taylor, Karen Gaerte, Bill Getty, Don Yeddo (Paul Rowley's step-father), Andy Mikolajczyk (Mary Lingenfelter's brother), Sith Sanasith (Souly's brother), Denise Zambrano, Cameron Green, Vangie Grant, Lenore Paige, Gary Heil (Janet Stegen's brother), Dan and Sarah Gurley, Chelsea Ellis, Keith Rugg (Kathy Moore's father), Mark Mayhle (Doug's brother), Jeshu, Kurtis and Eliyah Perry, Reuben Samuels, Emily Crikelair; for all dealing with tragedies and disasters including the recent storms; for refugees throughout the world; for protection, wisdom and peace in Ukraine; for a Chinese pastor who has been detained by the police since last December; for all churches in WNY.