


HOPE



HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE
WE MIGHT BECOME HEIRS
HAVING THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

TITUS 3:7



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 3,, 2023

11:00 A.M.

Prelude: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* arr. T.F.H. Candlyn

Choral Anthem: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* arr. John Ferguson

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Hope
Aubree Niles, Arija Grant, Delaney Grant

Welcome & Announcements

Celebration of Ministry: Christmas Eve Offering

Children's Sermon: *Lights*

Blessed Be Your Name; O Come Let Us Adore Him (His Name Shall Be)

Offering will be received during the second song.

Confession & Time of Prayer

Father, in this season of Advent, when we grasp for power and things, remind us that Christ came in the weakness and humility of a child. So, Lord, when we allow darkness to overcome the light, forgive us. When we reduce Christmas to things, have mercy on us. When hardness of heart keeps us from seeing and believing in Your Son, let your grace fill us. Forgive our doubt and renew our hope in Christ alone, that we may watch and wait and once more rejoice to hear the glad story of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has come and who is coming. Amen.

Response: ***Angels We Have Heard on High*** (refrain)

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:22-35

Greeting One Another

Sermon: *Jesus Comes to Disrupt Our Relationships*

Hymn #115: ***Joy to the World***

Benediction

Postlude: *Angels' Canon* arr. Michael Larsen

Acolyte: Amelia Esh

Reader: Bill Calkins

Musicians:

Bridget Walton, Kayleigh Verspoor, Robin Pawling (vocals),
Ryan Kullander (guitar), Jan Schilke (keyboard), Gabe Huizenga (cajón),

Handbell Duet

Sara Massey (guest choral conductor) and Alex Hill

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. The season of Advent is a time of expectancy and preparation. Advent is a time for Christians to prepare—body, mind and spirit—to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child and to anticipate the coming of Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords. As we prepare, let us open ourselves to the truths of God’s word and to the leading of the Holy Spirit to make Christ the center of all that we are and do.

ADVENT CANDLE: Each Sunday during Advent this year, our readers will belong to a shared group or role in church or community life. This morning each of the readers is a resident of Houghton University’s “1st New” floor of Gillette Hall. Thank you Aubree, Arija and Delaney!

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING is the Second Sunday of Advent. We invite you to join us for worship at 8:30 and 11:00. The 11:00 service will be streamed. Pastor Wes will preach about John the Baptist’s question of Jesus in Luke 7: *Jesus Comes to Disrupt Our Ideas of the Kingdom.*

HWC Kids: Kids Connect December series - "Christmas Vacation" - Grab your sandals, sunblock, and swim gear because it’s time for a Christmas Vacation! We’ll be making sand angels and roasting chestnuts around an open bonfire on our tropical getaway. You’ve never experienced Christmas like this! In this five-week series, we’ll focus on the birth of Jesus and the way God had been planning things from the very beginning. We’ll see how God sent Jesus for a reason, learn to trust God’s timing, understand why God gives us what’s best, and see how Jesus is why we celebrate because Jesus is God’s gift to the world.

- December Memory Verse: “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” — John 1:9 (NIV)
- Kids Connect: This week, kids hear how the Word became flesh through Jesus. BIG IDEA: God sent Jesus for a reason. BIBLE: John 1:1–17; Psalm 80:1–7
- URGENT need! We have a few members of our awesome Kids Connect team travelling next semester or adding babies to their family (YAYY!) leaving us with a couple of openings for the Spring semester - 3rd grade teacher and assistant and 3/4-year-old assistant. Would you prayerfully consider joining in the Sunday, faith-filled fun? Call Emily with questions or interest at Email kidsmin@hwchurch.org

CAROL SING Please join us for the Christmas Carol Sing and Cookie Reception on Sunday, December 17th, at 4:00 p.m. We invite you to bring your instruments. Please bring a plate of cookies to share (leave them in the church kitchen) before joining voices in celebrating our annual Carol Sign in the sanctuary.

POINSETTIAS: The Church welcomes your Christmas Poinsettias for the sanctuary for Christmas. We have purchased several poinsettias which you may purchase for \$14 each or you may bring your own to drop off at the church office by December 15th. 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 a poinsettia in memory or I honor of a loved one, please call Patty at 567-2264 or email (pattystalker@hwchurch.org) with your information by December 11th.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: Eastern Europe Outreach: We have the exciting opportunity to join our Global Partner friends in Czech Republic and a nearby nation as they launch new ways to reach the unreached with the Good News. Let us prayerfully consider our response.

YOUTH

- Prayer Breakfasts on December 6 and 13
- Progressive Dinner December 10 beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- Would you like to be a *SuperCool Home Host* for the Progressive Dinner?
- If you want to know more about that, just give me (Pastor Jon) a call or text or email or snapchat or FB message

STEWARDSHIP

Budget Needed: \$434,650.06 / **Budget Received:** \$399,421.16

MISSION MOMENT—We pray this week for Kevin and Cindy Austin, former Assistant Pastor here and much loved University staff members. They are completing their on-field years in the Czech Republic this month, but will be continuing connections there and in the States with mobilizing new recruits. Currently they have packing and closure responsibilities along with some medical concerns.

PERSECUTED CHURCH – We pray for all Christians Israel, Palestine and surrounding areas. They are facing the same physical and emotional crises as others but with the added burdens of being a misunderstood and sometimes persecuted minority and wanting to faithfully live out Christ to their neighbors.

PRAYER CONCERNS: for Kathy Moore and her family at the death of her father and for all who are grieving; for people with health concerns: Kyle Boon, Linda Roth, Paul Roth, Matthew Pierson (Kim Prins-Moeller's brother-in-law), James Bates, Vesta Mullen, Terry Ayers, Scarlett Gildemeister, Kim Pegula, Grace Taylor, Karen Gaerte, Andy Mikolajczyk (Mary Lingenfelter's brother), Denise Zambrano, Cameron Green, Vangie Grant, Lenore Paige, Dan and Sarah Gurley, Chelsea Ellis, 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 and in Israel, Gaza and the entire Middle East; for a Chinese pastor who has been detained by the police for more than a year; for New Hope Assembly of God Church (Pastor Erv Russell).

Dedicating Children to God

Pondering Jesus' dedication at the Temple, we are reminded of the importance of dedicating our children to God. Here at Houghton Wesleyan Church, we cherish the opportunity to walk beside parents as they take the important step of dedication and/or infant baptism.

Who? Parents or guardians willing and interested in dedicating their children to the Lord's direction, care, and service. This act is a witness of their own commitment of faith in God and their assurance that the grace of God is even now at work in the lives of their young children.

What? Dedication or baptism of young children is a three-fold covenant between -

- God: to be the ultimate guide, protector, and Savior of the children He has entrusted to our care
- Parents/Family: to immerse their children in the teachings and community of Christ.
- The Church: to protect, pray for, and instruct children in their faith alongside their families.

When? Whenever a family is interested.

Where? The family stands at the altar, in front of the congregation, so all can serve as witnesses and supporters of this decision, agreeing to their part in the dedication.

Why? The dedication/baptism of children is an affirmation of the importance of children to God and it is a declaration that our children are in no better place than the care and leading of God.

Mark 10:13-16:

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

If you are interested in having your child/children dedicated or have questions about dedication/baptism, please contact Pastor Wes at wesoden@hwchurch.org.

