

LOVE



I WILL DECLARE
THAT YOUR **LOVE**
STANDS FIRM FOREVER,
THAT YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED
YOUR FAITHFULNESS
IN HEAVEN ITSELF.

PSALM 89:2

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 24, 2023

10:00 A.M.

How Great Our Joy; Good Christians All Rejoice

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Love

Readers: Kristen Sanasith, Andrea Boon, Jon Cole

Welcome & Announcements

Children's Song: *Sing, O Heavens*

All children are invited to come to the front of the sanctuary to sing.

Time of Prayer

Response: *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne* (refrain)

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-21

The First Noel

Offering will be received during this song.

Greeting One Another

Sermon: *Jesus Comes to Disrupt Our Peace*

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Benediction

Acolyte: Grayson Cox

Reader: Anna Huizenga

Musicians:

Alison Young-Ruesser (guitar & vocals), Grace Jordan (vocals),
Evie Cox (vocals), Betsy Webb (keyboard), Dianna Clem (flute),
David Clem (viola), David Huizenga (piano)

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. We have now arrived at the Fourth Sunday of Advent and the anticipation of Christ's birth is mounting. As Mary and Joseph make final preparations for their child, so we are called to make final preparations, too. In worship today, release your heart and mind to the movement of God's Spirit—to the whisper of His voice, to the miracles of His presence, to the love of His Son.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: Tonight we host two Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 and 6:00. Both services will include the Lighting of the Christ Candle, Congregational Candle lighting, the reading of the Christmas story and music. The 6:00 service will be streamed.

ADVENT CANDLE: Each Sunday during Advent this year, our readers belong to a shared group or role in church or community life. This morning each of the readers is a chaperone joining our youth for the *Follow* Conference, December 28-31 in Cincinnati, OH. Thank you Kristen, Andrea and Jon!

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING we will gather for worship at 10:00 a.m. Dr. Terry Paige will preach.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: It's a privilege as a church to make a special gift this Christmas to Eastern Europe Global Partner disciple-making efforts. Donations can be made at tonight's Christmas Eve service or designated any time via the church's giving options online, at the church office or regular offerings. "Thanks" in advance.

HOLIDAY SERVICES

Sunday, December 24

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

4:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

6:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 31 10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Sunday, January 7 10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Sunday, January 14

8:30 a.m. – Worship Service

9:45 a.m. – Kids Connect, Youth Sunday School, Adult Discipleship

11:00 a.m. – Worship Service

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED for the holidays on Christmas Day, Tuesday and Wednesday and on New Year's Day.

STEWARDSHIP

Budget Needed: \$484,801.99 / **Budget Received:** \$445,554.90

Reminder: gifts for calendar year 2023 need to be delivered to the church office by the 31st, mailed with a postmark date of December 31st or earlier, or need to be made online by December 31st at 2:00 p.m. with a gift date of December 31 or earlier.

HWC KIDS:

- Kids Connect: This week, kids hear how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. BIG IDEA: Jesus is why we celebrate! BIBLE: Luke 2:1–20; Psalm 89:1–4
- December Memory Verse: "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world." — John 1:9 (NIV)
- No Children's Church on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve; we invite families to worship together. Nursery will be available during both morning services.

MISSION MOMENT—We praise God for the past year of God's faithfulness and fruitfulness for our missionary family and their local fellow believers and workers. May Christ bless each one from WNY to "Down Under" and in between. May their families be blessed, their needs met, and their joy be full this Christmas. (Read *Missionary Mailbag* monthly for updates – available in foyers and via email on request.)

PERSECUTED CHURCH – While Christians everywhere celebrate this Season, there are an estimated 360 million believers worldwide who suffer high levels of persecution or discrimination. We consider their millions of children who live under the trauma of isolation, misunderstanding, fear and sometimes separation from family. We pray that Christ would bring joy and hope to all His children.

PRAYER CONCERNS: 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, Scarlet 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 Elijah 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 all area churches.