

## 2021 Commencement to be Held in Person

ELISE KOEBL ('22)

It has been a little over a year since Covid scared the world and was thrown into a pandemic. Houghton College students were sent home a little over half-way into their spring semester, and the class of 2020 saw their graduation ceremony performed online through a virtual stream on Youtube. With so many changes to daily life and starting to see the world regain some normalcy, many have been wondering what this year's graduation will look like compared to last year.

Michelle Miller has good news to share for the class of 2021. Houghton College is planning to hold commencement on May 8th in person this year with a modified in-person event. Seniors will get to walk around the quad led by the bagpipers like they did four years ago.



2017 graduates filing to attend their Commencement ceremony.

COURTESY OF AMY TETTA

"Specifically, graduates will be located in the CFA to watch the ceremony until they are ready to walk across the stage in Wesley Chapel to receive their diploma. Each senior is invited to bring two guests to campus to view the cere-

mony via live stream at various locations around campus and then join their graduates for an outdoor reception." There is also going to be a baccalaureate service that will be for seniors only, no guests are allowed as there is no

guest seating.

Due to current Covid guidelines, Miller expressed difficulty with preparations for commencement. "Planning has been challenging to say the least due to the ever-changing COVID guidance from New

York State. We have considered nearly every possible option on campus, with the exception of the ski hill, for hosting the events in-person for graduates and all of their guests. While the creative juices were flowing for the past few months on behalf of our 243 graduates, we are ultimately constrained by NYS guidance which is in place for the safety of everyone. This year's weekend is a step forward from last year's full virtual events, but not as "normal" as the 2019 in-person, traditional events that we've enjoyed for so many years.

Both Commencement and the Baccalaureate will be viewable to the public via an online stream. While it is not completely back to normal as most would hope, it is very welcome that the seniors can march on the quad like they did several years ago. ★

## Houghton Archery Club Coming Fall 2021

ANNA CATHERMAN ('24)

Students will have an exciting new extracurricular activity to join in the fall semester when the recently formed Archery Club begins meeting. Just approved by Houghton College, the Archery Club is designed to allow students to come together to practice their skills on-campus, as well as in surrounding areas.

Archery Club aims to cater to all levels of archers, from beginners to pros. So far, around 25 students have expressed interest in joining the club, including 11 students who already own their own bows and want to practice. Most of these students are hunters, although a few have competed.



Houghton will welcome a new archery club next fall.

COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Freshman Kameron Hillman ('24), the club's founder, was already an expert archer when she came to Houghton. She competed in the Junior Olympic Association in high school and is a certified level one USA Archery instructor. She hasn't practiced in months due to lockdowns in the spring and summer. She decided

she wanted to change that. With three years left on campus, she reasons it will be a great investment for current and future students to benefit from.

"I talked to some students here, and they were like 'Oh, I'm a junior here, and I really wish we had an archery club when I first came here, because it really

would have benefited my archery skills. It would've been a fun club to join and participate in and get to know other archers on campus.'" Hillman explained.

Cassie Caval ('23), the club's treasurer, is new to archery. Her boyfriend introduced it to her, and they have been taking trips off

campus to shoot on nearby state forest lands. She said it will be nice to have a place to practice on-campus, as well as a group to practice with. "It's such a relational thing and also a very competitive thing...it's definitely something that's not an individual thing. It's very much about the people you're doing it with. So I'm super glad we get to do a club and incorporate a lot more people into our passion."

The response to the new Archery Club has been positive both on and off campus. Belmont Archery in Friendship, just a 20-minute drive from Houghton, has offered to lend a helping hand. According to Scott Neville, the shop's owner, Belmont has an indoor range which some Houghton students have already

See **ARCHERY** page #2

# JOIN THE STAR TEAM!

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Working for the STAR can be a great way to get experience in writing or publishing, or to engage with the public discourse here at Houghton. Positions for **photo/media editor** and section editors for **news, columns, opinions** and **features** are all now open, and anyone interested is invited to apply!

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We here at the STAR are interested in hearing what other student want from the paper, so that we can better do our job as a publication by students, for students! Fill out this short survey to help us know how we can do that best!

(Please note a Houghton College Google account will be needed to open the form, but no addresses will be collected)

<https://forms.gle/7dhiKz7DYRTs8WfNA>



### ARCHERY from page #1

been frequenting. He hopes to see more Houghton students at the range in the future.

The endeavor was assisted by many faculty members, including Dr. Laura Sayers, AC Taylor, and the Safety and Security Department. They were key in helping students find and secure space to practice on campus, next to the Field of Dreams. Safety and Security has approved the club's operations; all equipment will be stored with the department when not in use.

While the club is primarily an educational and recreational endeavor, the members are open to competition. Belmont Archery already hosts some casual competitions for colleges, including Alfred University. Houghton Archery Club members will likely have an opportu-

nity to join in on these events in the coming months.

Both Hillman and Caval were enthusiastic when asked why and how interested students should join. For Hillman, archery is an excellent stress reliever that she hopes to share with her fellow students. "You don't think about anything else when you're shooting, you only think about the target and improving your form. If you need a break from school, the stress of college, you can come and we can teach you archery."

Caval had similar thoughts. "It's a really fun thing to do. I've grown up hunting and fishing, and it's the best way I'd share my passion with people." While she also rifle hunts, she said that shooting a bow and arrow is a unique and special experience.

Those interested in joining next semester should plan on bringing their own bows, if they have them. If not, students shouldn't be worried. The club is planning on purchasing two basic recurve bows for those who don't already have their own equipment. ★

## Sudoku

FROM SUDOKUOFTHEDAY.COM

Solution will be printed in next week's issue!

					3			9
		9					8	
5	4	6	8					1
		5		1		2	9	7
	2		5		9		6	
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4					2	9	3	5
	5					1		
8			1					

# Christian Nationalism and Insurrection



MATTHEW UTTARO ('22)

Some years ago, the Faith and Politics Institute pushed an initiative attempting to convince Christians to sign onto the idea of the Golden Rule as the basis for their political formulation. The Golden Rule, as you may have learned in school at a young age, is to “treat others as you would like to be treated.” It is a hopeful undertaking, but its rate of practice has been discouraging. How often are people thinking about how they would like to be spoken to when they are posting aggressive comments on someone’s Facebook or Instagram post? Yet, the Golden Rule is a convenient way to symbolize how we are called, as children of God, to think of others in everything we do and to think of others before ourselves.

You could ask anyone on this campus today, and they would say we are far from instituting the Golden Rule as the foundation of our political lives. America is the most polarized it has been in a long time, and for Houghton’s students, this is all we have ever known of politics—a bitter, endless divide between Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative. This divide took a front seat in the Trump Administration, as the former President took a divisive approach to his political style. Name-calling and labels became the norm on both sides of the aisle throughout the various levels of American government. While we may choose to undertake this belief and make it a tenet of our lives, we are inherently susceptible to falling to confirmation bias and resorting back to our instincts in po-

litical discussion—criminalizing the other side while deflecting any criticism directed at ourselves.

We are in no doubt obligated as Christians to live a ‘Golden Rule’ life and to have our faith inform our politics. But are we honestly doing that? Are we sometimes having our politics inform our faith instead? Political identity has only become a bigger part of how we portray ourselves over the past five or so years, and, with faith also being a defining characteristic of our existence, it seems we may have merged the two. It is no secret that the Christian right sought to prop up Donald Trump as the Christian candidate, as the candidate of people of faith. We were

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*“We are in no doubt obligated as Christians to live a ‘Golden Rule’ life and to have our faith inform our politics.”*

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constantly told that Trump is the person we must vote for because he is “the pro-life candidate.” Say what you will about Trump’s merits as a pro-life advocate, but is there truly any ground to claiming that faith requires a certain political persuasion?

Perhaps one of the most visible instances of such a merging can be seen in the events that took place in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021. After a speech from various Republican members of Congress and then-President Trump, hundreds of people sporting pro-Trump political apparel and flags staged a violent takeover of the United States Capitol Building. They chose this day because it was the official date for when the U.S. Congress certified the votes of the Electoral College and therefore serves as the final official certification of a presidential election. Former President Trump, well before Election Day, and until his final moments in office, constantly repeated claims of election fraud. These claims got him laughed out of court across the country, and even

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*“[Jesus] said that in everything we do, no matter in what realm of our lives, we should do it in love and affection for our fellow brothers and sisters.”*

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out of the U.S. Supreme Court, who refused to even take up cases regarding the election. The multi-faceted attempt by the outgoing president to delegitimize the results of the election is something we have not seen in modern American history. And it created a dangerous possibility that some of his supporters, willing to believe whatever he says, may take

matters into their own hands.

Now, the point of this article is not to chastise Trump supporters on this campus, nor is it to tell you what to believe politically in any way. Rather, it is to point out that, somehow, at some point, we allowed Christianity to become one political party’s talking point. And, in that becoming the case, the violent insurrectionists that sought to overturn an election saw their actions as justified by God, because only Republicans could be true Christians. Many people have largely avoided coming to terms with what happened on January 6, for understandable reasons: we want to believe that America is a country where, no matter how an election turns out, or how a candidate upholds themselves to the American people, or how any American citizen sees their government, that there is an underlying respect for the electoral system, and for the government that is enshrined in the Constitution as a whole. However, we, as Christians, have to talk about this, because the people that stormed the Capitol portrayed their actions as sup-

ported by God. They claimed through their words and their icons that their attempt at insurrection was mandated by the Lord. I encourage you to look up pictures of some of the signs, flags, and other items brought to the riot that are supposed to represent our faith. Images of a wooden cross and people praying, while on the same Capitol grounds rioters erected a noose and chanted ‘Hang Mike Pence’ as they stormed police barricades; a man, now described as the ‘Qanon Shaman’ leading prayer in the chamber of the U.S. Senate after violently storming the building; signs saying ‘Jesus Saves,’ as if the people inside doing their jobs were somehow damned; signs lumping God together with the Constitution and Donald Trump, as if God endorses specific governments or political leaders.

And there is much more than this. Even after Donald Trump left office in January, the annual Conservative Political Action Conference sported a literal golden statue of him ahead of his first speech there since leaving the White House (I seem to be recalling a certain story about golden statues). What we can see in the Christian imagery at the Capitol during the attack is a growing trend known as Christian nationalism. It is the combination of Christian faith with unwavering support for the American government, most often supporting conservative ideologies and candidates. Christian nationalism often takes a dangerous, often violent approach, as was evident on January 6, with the immediate deaths of five people. The upward trend of it should concern Christians everywhere, as our faith is not one of violence, but one of peace. Never should our faith be used to justify vio-

lence. Furthermore, claiming that God takes a certain political stance goes against what Christ said before his death and resurrection. Jesus did not issue his support for any political faction or leader; his mission was not political. Instead, he gave us wisdom and knowledge that should inform our politics, that should mandate our behavior in what we say and do in and out of the political spheres of our lives. What Jesus said and did on earth may certainly be interpreted as alluding to the politics of his time, but he did not argue that certain beliefs require allegiance to the political party or faction sporting that belief. He said that in everything we do, no matter in what realm of our lives, we should do it in love and affection for our fellow brothers and sisters.

So, where do we fall in this reality? You probably do not think that what you say and do regarding politics, whether big or small, in any way supports or encourages Christian nationalism. That may be true, and in no way am I accusing anyone on this campus of supporting violent acts in the name of Christianity. But are we preaching the true faith of love and peace when we encounter violent rhetoric sporting Jesus’ likeness? Are we avoiding the hard conversations at family holiday parties because we do not want to make a scene? I know I have been avoiding these conversations. So how can we do better? It comes down to being willing to have those conversations. This does not mean you need to comment on all of your relative’s Facebook posts; it means you have to embody true Christian values of peace and love and be willing to call out violations of these values. Christianity is not a faith of individuality but of community. In order to foster that community, we have to be fervent in upholding the ideals given to us.

*Matt is a junior majoring in Adolescence Education and Augmented History and minor-ing in Political Science.*



The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton College since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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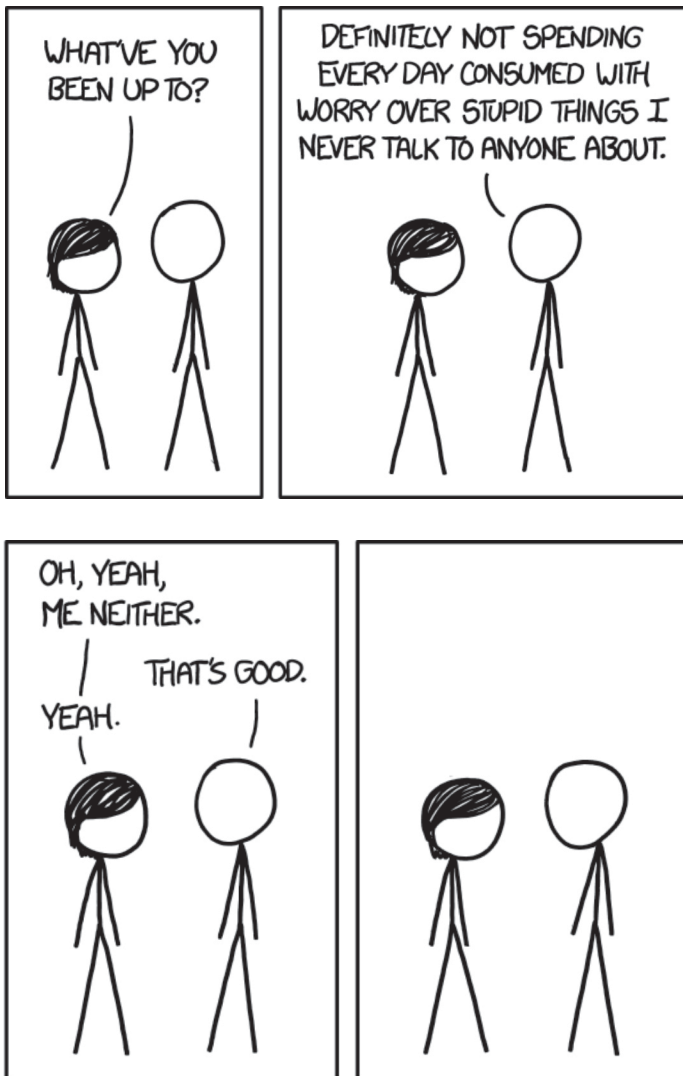
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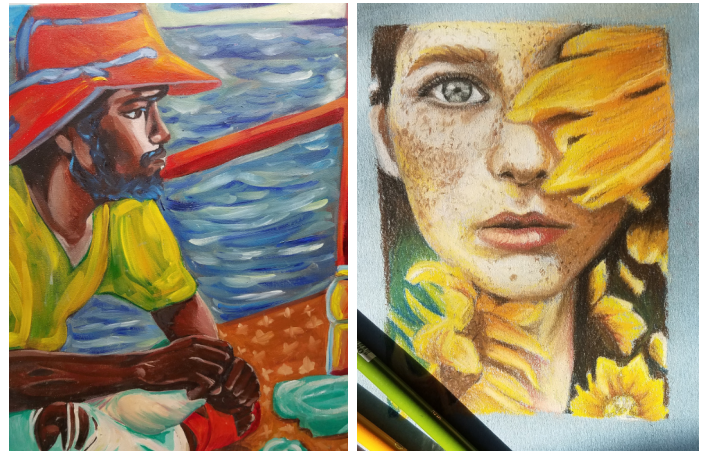
XKCD - Pastime



FROM XKCD.COM/1222

Artist of the Week

Jessie-Fay Abbott



About the Artist



Hi there! I'm Jessie-Fay Abbott, and yes, I have a double first name. I am currently a Junior at Houghton with a double major in Art and History. Before coming to Houghton, art was not something that came easily for me. It was only through a lot of effort that I learned to love art.

