



Fresh Beginnings with God

Then the king...went up to the Temple...with...all the people from the greatest to the least. The king read...renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, regulations, and laws with all his heart and soul. He promised to obey all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll....As the people of Jerusalem...renewed their covenant with God... And throughout the rest of his lifetime, they did not turn away from the LORD, the God of their ancestors. Cord.
2 Chronicles 34:29-33 (NCT)

We commemorate the new year in a variety of ways: most of these have to do with ending something we don't like and/or starting something we do like. We tend to call them resolutions. These resolutions are often related to activities we want to avoid or stop: losing a few pounds, spending less time on the internet, quitting smoking, lessening our TV watching, becoming more patient or less angry and on and on we go. We also think of resolutions as something we want to start doing: exercising three days a week, spending more time with our family, reading more, devoting more time to prayer and Bible study, going to bed at a more regular time, being more thankful, saying something pleasant to at least five people every day.

Even though the movement from December 31 to January 1 is no different from any other night to day, turning the pages from one year to the next causes us to think of turning over a new leaf, of making some changes in our lives. The new year causes us to feel as though it's a fresh beginning and that is good. It's something that people have been doing for a long time.

Beginning in the mid-18th century, John Wesley, attempting to replicate the gatherings of Israel like that described in 2 Chronicles 34, began the practice of holding services on New Year's Day. Throughout the history of His people, God has made covenants with them. When the people turn away from Him, He sends a leader to bring them back and to lead the people in the renewal of their covenant with God because of His covenant with them. Wesley's covenant renewal services were held for the express purpose of helping His people examine their lives and, subsequently, recommit themselves to God, reigniting spiritual fervor for growth in the year to come. These gatherings were an opportunity to acknowledge God's lovingkindness in the past and to express hope and confidence in God's continued grace and presence in the future. In his Journal, Wesley expressed the powerful blessing of these times of recommitment:

"Many mourned before God, and many were comforted" (April 1756); "It was, as usual, a time of remarkable blessing" (October 1765); "It was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences ... I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for a fresh manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings" (January 1, 1775).

On Sunday evening, January 10, we are going to participate in a Wesley Covenant Renewal Service. I believe that this can be a wonderful time of reflection, thanksgiving, honesty and grace. You don't have to wait until the 10th to renew your life with God; you can do it today. Acknowledge your sin. Give thanks for God's unfailing grace to forgive your sin. Receive His cleansing. Go forth to live in the peace, joy and love of Christ who gave His all for you.

Pastor Wes

THANK YOU: The Pastoral Staff would like to thank you for your generosity and gratitude to each of us this Christmas season. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and appreciation we felt through your many gifts, personal acts of kindness, and your kind words. We feel privileged to be a part of the godly tradition of the Houghton Wesleyan Church and to participate in ministry with you. We look forward to the year ahead and all that God has planned for you and for us.

From Pastor Todd

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:3-6)

2010 is upon us! Once again I'm amazed at how quickly the past year has gone. As we step into this new year, let's pause and give thanks to God for his many blessings in *all* our ministries and especially our Sunday night small groups ministry.

We finished 2009 with another good semester of small groups. It's encouraging to hear how God has been at work among us through this ministry. Spiritual growth has taken place through fellowship with one another and the study of the Word together in these small group settings. It wouldn't have been possible without our small group leaders: **Warren Woolsey, Doug Mayhle, Steve Castor, John Fraser, Dan and Jessica Wartinger, Carlos Gildemeister, Kevin Austin, and Calvin and Paulette Schierer.** These dedicated men and women deserve much praise and many thanks for their hours of preparation and the effort they gave to leading these groups. To each of you, we say, "Thank you!"

Equally important to the success of our small groups are those who host them. We have some terrific hosts: **Paul and Margaret Johnson, Doug and Judi Mayhle, Philip and Sue Brooks, Phil and Donnie Stockin, Mike and Audra Beardsley, and Carlos and TJ Gildemeister.** These dedicated men and women deserve much praise and many thanks for their hospitality – for selflessly opening their homes and providing a place for our groups to meet. To each of you, we say, "Thank you!"

Small groups will begin again on Sunday, January 24th, 2010; I'm looking forward to another great semester of fellowship and spiritual growth together. If you're not already involved, I invite you to check out the small groups we offer – the spring semester 2010 small groups listing will be out soon with detailed information on each of the groups we offer.

Small groups are one of the best ways I know to connect with one another and grow together in Christ. I encourage you to get involved in one of our small groups this next semester and see the difference it makes in your life!

In His Peace,
Pastor Todd



EPIPHANY, January 6, is a day of great joy for all Christians. It completes the twelve days of Christmas; more important, this is the festival of the manifestation of God's Word made flesh. The central images of the Magi bearing gifts suggest the three races of humanity coming to worship the Christ. A second manifestation was the baptism of Jesus. A third manifestation was the wedding feast at Cana when Jesus first revealed his power. The season of Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The emphasis of Epiphany is on the revealing nature of God, his desire for all people to know his nature and power—the character of his being. The color is green which is a sign of life. The trees green out in the spring to reveal that the trees are still alive. The grass also turns green revealing the life that has been hidden during the winter.

YOUTH NEWS

Youth Ministry

Staff and Teachers Fellowship – Saturday, January 16, 9am – 11am in the youth room at the church; if you participate in a leadership role in the youth ministry, please make plans to join us for this time of collaboration and enrichment. **Refreshments** will be served. (of course!) **Childcare provided!** Just let us know the ages and number of children you will be bringing. The Youth committee meeting will follow.



MSM – January - Wed.- 6:30– 8:00pm
January 13 - Kick-off!
20 - *The Purity Code*
27 - *The Purity Code (cont'd)*

HSM Youth group Sunday Evenings at 6:00pm:
In Jan. we are meeting at Pastor Jon's House.
Senior High January- *The Screwtape Letters*
January 10 – Screwtape 1
17 – Movie night!
24 – Screwtape 2
31 – Screwtape 3

Prayer Breakfast: Tuesday Mornings:
Jan. 12th, 19th, and 26th. 7:00 AM in the community room.

Winter Retreat 2010

Camp Hickory Hill
January 29 – 31st

Imagine!

*Every day we see and hear about what is wrong in the world.
But what would it look like if all the wrongs were made right?
What would your world look like if things were as God meant for them to be?
Can you IMAGINE?*

Tubing, hot chocolate, games and activities, challenging messages, great times of worship!
Hope to see you there!

Cost: \$60 if received by Jan. 6th
\$70 if received by Jan. 20th

Leave from the church at 6:30 on Friday evening and return on Sunday the 31st around 1pm. Get brochures/permission slips from Pastor Jon or at youth group, or on our website.

www.hwchurch.org/YouthNews.htm

PRAYER MINISTRY:

Doug and Judi Mayhle are leading a new ministry of prayer that will serve as a bridge between our fall prayer vigil and the Lenten prayer vigil. This ministry will involve people praying in the prayer room during our Sunday morning worship services. The bulletin will contain more information about being involved.

The prayer room is still available for you to use. Reserve an hour or more at www.hwcprayerroom.wordpress.com. This website also hosts Pastor Wes's blog about prayer and Christian life. You may also receive daily tweets from Pastor Wes through Twitter (www.twitter.com/pastorwesoden).



SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE WEEK,

which begins January 17, is a week Christians of all denominations have chosen to affirm that human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions including the unborn, the aged, the widowed, the mentally handicapped, the unattractive, the physically challenged and every other condition in which humanness is expressed from conception to the grave. In this regard, we join with our brothers and sisters in Christ as we reflect on the value of God-given life and the importance of sharing this truth with others through both words and deeds.

Sanctity of Human Life Week is observed in January to mark the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions to legalize abortion. Since then, the scope of the issue has broadened as stem cell research, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, chemical and partial-birth abortion, cloning, xenotransplantation, artificial intelligence and cybernetics have become part of the discussion. To learn more about these crucial issues and how we as Christians can respond, consider exploring the excellent books and DVDs on various topics in bioethics in our church library or investigate these online resources: **The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity:** www.cbhd.org ; **Heartlink:** www.heartlink.org/hottopics/index.cfm ; **Focus On theFamily:** <http://family.christianbook.com/fotfsanctityof-human-life/1014779027> and **The Center for Bioethics and Culture:** www.thecbc.org .

THE LIBRARY CORNER: G. K. CHESTERTON



“The same lesson [of the pessimistic pleasure-seeker] was taught by the very powerful and very desolate philosophy of Oscar Wilde. It is the carpe diem religion; but the carpe diem religion is not the religion of happy people, but of very unhappy people. Great joy does not gather the rosebuds while it may; its eyes are fixed on the immortal rose which Dante saw.”

G.K. Chesterton, *Heretics*

According to the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, Gilbert Keith Chesterton (29 May 1874 – 14 June 1936) was one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century. His prolific and diverse output included journalism, philosophy, poetry, biography, Christian apologetics, fantasy and detective fiction.

So beloved and popular (even today) is this great man that there is a society dedicated to him: *The American Chesterton Society*. In Minnesota a Catholic high school is named after him, and an actor on a 30 minute, one-man show on EWTN (The Eternal Word Television Network) does weekly impersonations of Chesterton. George Bernard Shaw, his “friendly enemy” according to *Time*, said of him, “He was a man of colossal genius.”

Each morning in December, Houghton Academy students listened to quotes taken from Chesterton's vast body of work. His humor, wit and wisdom are a good way to end-or begin-a new year! Stop by the church library and read some of his words that are on display on the library bulletin board. The library also has some of Chesterton's books for you to enjoy.

Donnie Stockin, (for the library committee)



Come to our **Wesleyan Kids For Missions** club meeting on **January 17 at 9:40**. We are studying The Czech Republic, not Croatia. We will see how the English and Sports Camps spread the Gospel there. Offerings will go to the ministries of Wesleyan Kids for Missions and the Sports Ministry in the Czech Republic.

Thank you for all you give; we were able to send in \$40.00 the first quarter for the needs of others.

District Women's Event
Saturday, April 24
from 9:30-3:00
at Levant Wesleyan Church
Guest Speaker: Kathy Coleman
A silent auction is planned to help benefit Hope Refugee Services.
Begin planning now to take part in this.

Wednesday evening Children's Ministries in January:

Due to the holidays, our children's ministries (AWANA Puggles & Cubbies, Girls' AWANA Club, & Boys' AWANA Club) will NOT meet on January 6th. They will resume their regular schedule on Wednesday, January 13th, at 6:30 p.m. Thank you.

Girls' AWANA Club Ministry Opportunities:

We have five openings with the Girls' AWANA Club ministry for the second semester (January-May). We need volunteers for our Kindergarten class, our 4th grade class, and our 6th grade class. Girls' AWANA Club meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:45. Please contact Kerri Lord, Heather Hannan, or Cindy Oden (567-2264) if you are interested in learning more about becoming involved in this important ministry to our girls.

Boys' AWANA Sparks (Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd Grades)

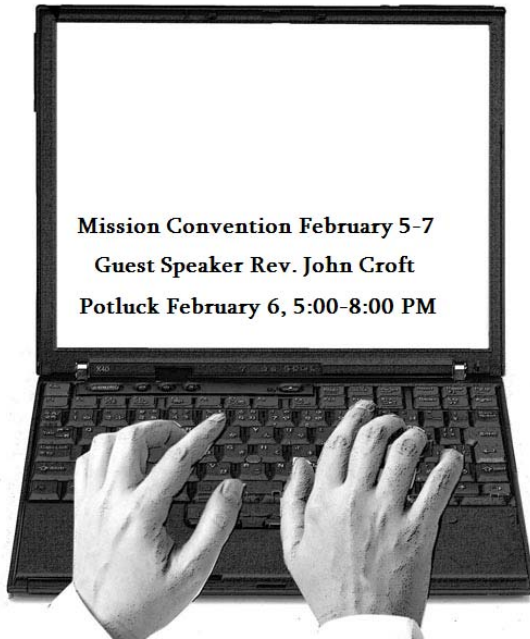
EARPLUGS! With the church budget, can we afford some earplugs? The Spark boys make a lot of noise! Singing songs, memorizing and reciting Bible verses, sharing prayer requests for family and friends, and sharing their praises. Even Story Time is loud. We are working our way through the book of Acts. The boys are engaged in the stories: Laughing, answering questions, helping to act out the story, retelling us stories we learned previous weeks.

The noisiest is game time. The boys are cheering each other on, excited for their teammates to do well. The boys will chant "tug-of-war" until we get the rope out. It's their favorite game! Brandon and I are especially thankful for the volunteers that come each week and endure the noise with us. But we are most thankful for the wonderful boys that come to AWANA each week, even if they make a lot of noise!

-Emily Hoffman

Our Family in Ministry: Steve & Margie Doty – Wycliff Bible Translators

Margie continues to teach linguistics and translation at Payap University in order to earn our visa and also train people how to translate the Bible. Steve has been traveling to other countries to check on translation efforts. On one of the trips he checked the first translation of a portion of the Bible into one of the languages in that nation. It was the Gospel of Luke; and it was a good translation, and he helped make it even better. One of the team's difficulties was in trying to translate the term "glory." Here's something you can try to see how challenging translation is. Pretend that word didn't exist in the English language and try to paraphrase the following two verses without using the word "glory": Luke 2:9 and Acts 7:55.



Mark Your Calendars!

You won't want to miss the Mission Convention with our guest speaker, Rev. John Croft, or the Saturday evening February 6: Potluck Dinner and Missions programming presentation. 5:00 - 8:00 pm or Sunday morning - All three worship services, the combined adult Sunday School Class and WKFM.



Thank you to those who decorated the church so beautifully for Christmas:
Bruce and Kathie Brenneman
Grace and CindyLu Taylor
Margaret Wynn
Jack Wolfer

Many thanks to all who prayed for me and sent lovely cards during my illness this fall. I am so grateful and thank God for each of you.

Louise Prinsell

Dear Church family,

Thank you so much for the many prayers for my dad during his struggle with cancer. I will miss him but am so thankful that he is completely healed and with our savior he loved so much. He went to be with the Lord the day before the prayer vigil ended, and as many of you prayed for him as we did, we now realize all our prayers were answered and his perfect healing has come.

Sincerely and with thanks;
Karl and Jill Schmidt,
Angela and Dan Gilroy and family,
Abby and Jeremy Schirle

COMMUNITY PAGE

Houghton Area Senior Citizens

Luncheon January 14: 12:15 PM in the Community Room
Program: A Day in the Life of Mary Rose, Houghton's Friendly Postmaster

Please bring your table service and the dish designated by the initial of your last name:
A-F, Salad G-O, Dessert P-Z, Casserole

MAKING IT HOME

House cleaning & organizing services.
Kirsten Jeffers 808-2831

Peter W. Roeske
Snowplowing Services,
585-689-0368

HOUSE SITTING NEXT SUMMER: Cam and Esther Arensen work as pastors/missionaries in the Arab Emirates. They would like to take a short sabbatical next summer in the Houghton area (June 29-Aug 8) They are looking for a house sitting situation. If anyone knows of a house that might be available, please contact Jon Arensen at 567-2020.

Do you have a working portable sewing machine that a Houghton Academy student could use for one week in February? If so, please contact Krista Roorbach at kristajoy75@yahoo.com or 567-4515. Thanks for considering.

Two Apartments Available in a Lovingly Renovated Old Victorian Home, 10911 Main Street in Hume. Private entrances, porches and garage. Call 567-8262 for more information.



High School Basketball Tournament @ Houghton College

The annual Counselors' Classic basketball tournament will be held at HC on (Tues & Wed) December 29 & 30. Boys and girls varsity teams from four county schools will be playing; proceeds support college scholarships for local students. Game times – 2:45, 4:30, 6:30 & 8:00 each day.

Literacy West NY is in need of tutors to work with adults in Allegany and Wyoming County. Tutor training is provided and the tutor would commit to meeting the learner for 2 hours/week at a public location. Tutors may teach reading, math, or ESL. The need is great with about 1 out of every 10 Allegany County adults without a high school diploma. If you are interested to learn more, feel free to connect with Jonathan Hilsher at 585-268-5213 or jhilsher@lwny.org.

If you are missing coats, scarves, mittens, etc., check the **LOST & FOUND** in the foyer outside the Community Room.

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

January 3 (10:00 am)

a.m. Pastor Todd

NO EVENING ACTIVITIES

January 10 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am, 6:30pm)

a.m. *Baptism, Sins and Jesus* (Matthew 3:13-16)

p.m. John Wesley Covenant Service

January 17 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am, 7:00pm)

a.m. *Thanksgiving Prayer* (2 Corinthians 8-9)

p.m. Praxis

January 24 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)

a.m. *Heartbeat Prayer* (Psalm 84)

p.m. Small Groups

January 31 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)

a.m. *Attentive Prayer* (Is. 6:9-10; Mt. 13:14-15)

p.m. Small Groups



Weather Closing Information

During periods of hazardous weather conditions, closing information will be posted on WKBW-TV and online at www.wkbw.com. We will also endeavor to update this information on the church website: www.hwchurch.org

CHURCH STAFF

Wes Oden, Senior Pastor, 567-2024, woden@hwchurch.org

Todd Leach, Assistant Pastor, 567-8288, tleach@hwchurch.org

Jon Cole, Youth Pastor, 307-9950, jcole@hwchurch.org

Cindy Oden, Discipleship Pastor, 567-2024, coden@hwchurch.org

Amanda Cox, Worship Director, 567-4870, acox@hwchurch.org

Laurie Smalley, Volunteer Pastor for Outreach, 567-8302, lsmalley@hwchurch.org

Our Condolences to the family of LaNora Keith who died Saturday, December 19.

Please be in prayer for Mildren VanderVeen and her family at the death of her sister Maria.



Congratulations to parents Jeff and Andrea, to brother Jack, and to Grandma Ruth and Uncle Kyle at the birth of Jared Kingston Boon on Monday, December 21 at 7:42 AM. Jared weighed 7 lb. 14.5 oz. at birth and was 20.5 inches long.

Please be in prayer for Valerie Mills Daly, former secretary of the Houghton Wesleyan Church (1987-1992): sharing the work with her husband Jim at Camp Michigamme in Northern Michigan, was diagnosed with breast cancer in June of this year, and after surgery received both chemo and radiation treatments. Another tumor has been found in the vertebrae of her neck. She had surgery this Tuesday, December 29, and after recovering from surgery, will be facing another round of radiation. If you wish to send greetings to her, they may be mailed to her at P.O. Box 141, Champion, MI 49814, and she receives email at valdaly@yahoo.com