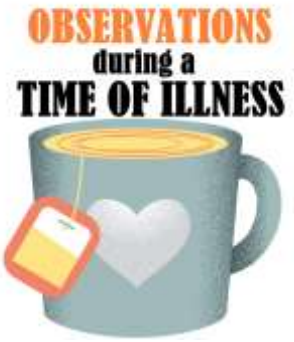
Houghton Wesleyan Church

Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others

January 2020
Volume 52, No. 8



Your love, God, fills the earth!
Train me to live by your counsel.
(Psalm 119;64, MSG)

Sometimes life surprises us. I was certainly surprised a few weeks ago to discover that I had contracted pneumonia. I did not see that coming! Nor did I have any idea of how it would affect me (and subsequently, others around me) … despite the warnings of many. Though I am much improved, the process of improvement has been different than I would have ever imagined. But as with most of what we encounter, I have learned some things along the journey.

For one thing, I have learned that illness is humbling. To need and/or allow others to do what I would normally do is not easy. Honestly, I have fought this from the beginning. I had to force myself to let others do tasks that I would otherwise accomplish. I think that part of my struggle here is that most of us are better at giving than receiving. The act of giving allows us to maintain a level of control that the act of receiving must relinquish. We like to help others; we tend be less inclined to let others help us. But the gospel of Jesus is about giving and receiving. When Jesus desires to wash Peter's feet, he objects (John 13:8). I find it interesting that when we have practiced footwashing, it's always easier to find people who will wash feet than to find people who are willing to have their feet washed.

I have also discovered that much of my sense of worth is wrapped up in what I do, which creates a problem when I am constrained to limit what I do. Productivity, accomplishing tasks, is important to living as a positive presence in this world, but when being productive defines who I am, things like illness cause me to wonder about value and worth. In this struggle, I am reminded that God's love for me is not contingent on my accomplishments, but on the fact that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16).

It has also become clear to me that relationships, particularly the church, are vital to my well-being, spiritual and otherwise. I am grateful for everyone who makes the live streaming of our Sunday worship services a reality. I found great joy and even a sense of connection being able to watch each service. But I also discovered that watching is not the same as being present. I had a feeling that I would be worn out the first Sunday morning I came back. I was correct, in spite of the fact that I didn't preach. But I wanted to be present because I missed the relationships of the church. Like Paul, who yearns for his friends to visit him (2 Timothy 4:9-13), personal interaction is healing. Why? Because God designed us to be in relationship. Relationships are a gift that we often underestimate.

As I continue on this journey of recovery, I want to thank you for your support—every card, every word of affirmation, encouragement and warning, every prayer is precious to me. I also want to thank our wonderful staff who filled in admirably and those who willingly and enthusiastically preached on short notice.

And one more thing. As we prepare to enter a new year, none of us know what the future holds, but we do know that God is trustworthy and good…and ultimately, that's enough.

Blessings,
Pastor Wes

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 affirming 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.

EPIPHANY: 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 is the baptism of Jesus. A third manifestation is the wedding feast at Cana when Jesus first revealed his power. The season of Epiphany continues through Shrove Tuesday (February 25). Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, is February 26. 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 points us to life—physical and eternal. 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.

STEWARDSHIP – A Life of Generosity

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15)

God's radical generosity to us comes in the form of Grace – freely given to all. We respond to this grace with thankfulness and gratitude. Because God's grace is an "indescribable gift," one would expect our expressions of gratitude would be radical in return – coming from the very core of who we are. Simply put, stewardship is a spiritual discipline rooted in our relationship with God.

At the dawn of the New Year we can be filled with hope for what is to come as we are mindful of His many blessings in the year just past. A new year is also an opportunity to look for ways to do things better in the coming year. How can we be better stewards of what God has entrusted to our care – resources like time, energy, and money?

May you find freedom and joy in the discipline and obedience of radical generosity.

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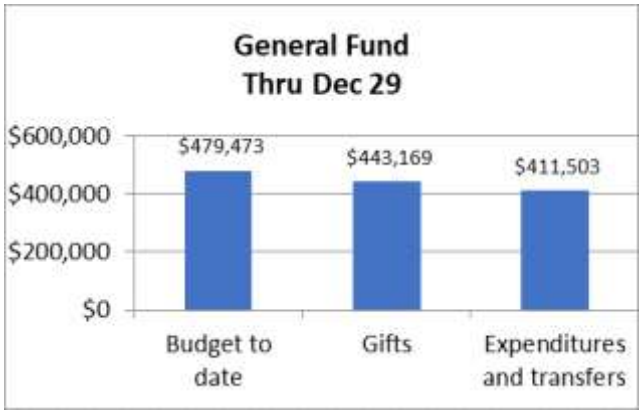


THANK YOU

to everyone who helped decorate inside and outside the church for the Christmas season. Your involvement makes the celebration even more meaningful.

Don't Miss it!

2020 MISSIONS WEEK

WORD and DEED

"Whatever you do, whether in Word or Deed. Do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus…" - Col 3:17

II Timothy 2:9; Col. 1:25; Matt. 5:16

Speakers:
Steve and Margie Doty, Wycliffe Bible Translators
Dan Irvine, World Hope International

February 5 – Kid's Club Missions Night 6:00 p.m.
February 9 – Mission Sunday Worship Services, 9:45 Sunday School, 6:00 Youth

As of December 29, the Christmas Eve Offering for Canaan School in Haiti totals $16,598.85.

DISCIPLESHIP

Women's Bible Studies Resume:

- Wednesday, January 8 – 9:30 – 10:45, John's Epistles – Good Shepherd Room
- Tuesday January 14 – 10:00-11:00, Bible Study – Room 5 below Sanctuary
- Friday, January 17 – 9:00-10:45, Colossians (Childcare available) – Primary Room C.E.

Small Groups Begin the Week of January 12

Interested in Starting a New Group? (Materials and even training available.) Looking for a Group to Join? In either case, contact Pastor Paul for info. paulshea@hwchurch.org or 585-567-2264

Adult Sunday School Options January 12

- When Moms Pray – Room 6 (Below Sanctuary)
- Bible Exposition – I John – Room 9 (Below Sanctuary)
- Book Discussion – "Keeping Sabbath Wholly", Dawn – Room 10 (Below Sanctuary)
- Video Discussion – Apostle's Creed – Room 105 C.E. Bldg.
- Kaleidoscope – Guests/Topics – Community Room

ALL WOMEN: What could be better on a Winter morning than fellowship, fun, and yummy food? Escape the wintry cold by joining us on February 8 for a Women's Gathering.
Watch for more details in the coming weeks.

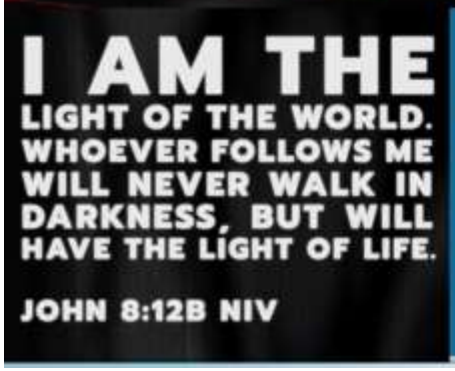
HOUGHTON/FILLMORE WESLEYAN CHURCH YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

JANUARY 2020

Go-to-SS-with-Your-Parents Day!
January 12

Youth staff to meet in the youth room at 9:45 for Food, Fun and Fecundity.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs	Friday	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 one 10am service!	6	7 Prayer Breakfast @7:00am	8	9	10	11
12 Go to SS w Parents today! Life Groups 6pm	13	14 Prayer Breakfast @7:00am	15	16	17	18
19 SS Life Groups 6pm	20	21 Prayer Breakfast @7:00am	22	23	24	25
26 SS Life Groups 6pm	27	28 Prayer Breakfast @7:00am	29	30	31	



January Lifegroups...

Jan 5—No Life Groups

Jan 12—Giant Game Night
Jan 19— Social Media

Jan 26—New Series begins—"The Chase" John 8:12

Happy New Year! We pray that this year will be filled with joy, fun, laughter, peace, and new, exciting experiences and memories for all of our children and their families.

Kids' Club 2020 starts on January 15th at 6 p.m.

Our lessons and activities for the month will address being honest about how sin affects us and Jesus' power to forgive us and change our lives. The fun part of the "Let's Face It" unit will be using our artistic talents to create fun masks for telling the Big Bible Story.

In February our focus is on the life-changing teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. In March's "Shake It Up" lessons we will guess the contents of mystery boxes, bringing to 'light' the greatest light of the world. We'll conclude club meetings in April with an Easter "Seek & Find" in which kids will discover hidden items and learn what a relationship with Jesus looks like. We won't meet in May.

Next semester, our team will have a new member and a new format with singing and drama, so invite your friends and get ready to learn more about God's Big Bible Story!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School (and the regular schedule for Children's Church and Jr. Church) starts up again on January 12th! Thank you to those who joined our Children's Church team during the Christmas break: Beth Beardsley, Heidi & Gabe Huizenga, Jesse & Melissa Fink, John & Helena Oden, Caleb Smith, Meghan Taylor, Jill McNeill & Michael Spateholts. Thank you so much for blessing our kids!

Stone Soup Dinner for Valley Preschool

It's time for our third community-wide Stone Soup Dinner.
This donation dinner gives our
church family, current and former Valley Preschool families, and the greater community an opportunity to contribute to a general fund to help off-set rising tuition costs in the coming years. Nine of our seventeen students have benefited by being able to have a $10 per month discount on tuition from the funds raised last year! Come enjoy some warm soup on a cold evening and support Valley Preschool.

Date – Friday, January 24, 2020
Time – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Place – Houghton Wesleyan Church community room
Food – Stone Soup (beef soup or vegetable soup) and breads/rolls/dessert
Eat In or Take Out

You can contribute by donating at the dinner and/or by providing cookies and brownies to be our desserts for the evening. We welcome other help as well, so if you can assist in some way or if you have questions, please contact Casda Danner at 567-4314 or casdadanner@hwchurch.org.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is January 19

Every year in the United States alone, more than one million babies are aborted. Statistics show that 50 % of U.S. women who obtain abortions are younger than age 25, and at current rates, nearly one-third of American women will have an abortion. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 19, 2020, is a day to celebrate and focus on choosing life.

The Wesleyan Church supports the sanctity of life and those who choose to trust God despite difficulties. January 19,2020, marks Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, an event observed the third Sunday of every January. Wesleyans are encouraged to observe this day on which many take a stand for human life.

Because all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are "fearfully and wonderfully made," (Psalm 139:14) abortion grieves his heart. God, the Creator of the universe, deeply values human life and it says so in his Word:

> *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
> *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*
> *Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*
> *Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*
> *How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! (Psa. 139:13-17 NIV).*

From the
Library Shelves

Shelves. They can hold many things: knick-knacks, other decor, storage boxes, paper, toys, but mostly BOOKS! The church library shelves are missing 50-60 books because they have been checked out and not returned. Could they be on <u>your</u> shelves? Please return any books you might have and allow others to enjoy them too. If you have any questions, come to the library and ask, or leave a note.

Why not start the New Year reading with your family? Our children's area has any number of books that would be good to read together. Or read on your own, choosing something from our adult fiction shelves, or pick a book from our non-fiction shelves and learn something new, or find help and encouragement in your Christian walk.

Please stop by!

The church library is open whenever the Christian Education Building is open.

ELEUTHERA Mission Trip

We are so thankful for the years of support that our church has given us on our 16 years of missions trip to Eleuthera! This year we leave on Jan 5th, a little later than our usual time, but with our new flexible schedule, we can go when the ticket prices are a little cheaper now.

This year, just Bob and I will meet Rev Kimberly Gladden in Hatchet Bay. Usually we do a Kid's Bible Camp when we're there, but with the devastation of Hurricane Dorian which hit the island of Abaco, a little north of Eleuthera, we were asked to change things up this year and help with the many refugee families that have no home left in Abaco and now live in Hatchet Bay. The churches are all taking turns cooking for the families and providing what they can to help them feel comfortable. We will be taking a turn to cook for the families and doing some special things with the children. We covet your prayers and are so thankful for your support again this year!

Thank you,
Bob and Laurie Smalley

Mrs. Alice Fletcher
1805 Kensington Dr. Apt. 152
Waukesha WI 53188

Welcome to the 1st Annual

Christmas Tree Burning Fundraiser

sponsored by the

Houghton Volunteer Fire Department,

January 5th.

The fire will be lit at 6:30pm. Bring your own chair! Hot Chocolate will be available as long as supplies last. Drop off your tree at the north end of the fire hall parking lot anytime on Saturday the 4th, or Sunday the 5th. Pick-up available in the Town of Caneadea on the afternoon of the 4th. Email Jon Cole to get on the list for pickup. Jon.Cole10@Houghton.edu

Wellspring Ministries

With gratitude to God and to our supporters we closed the year in the 'black', having accomplished several projects and goals. We thank you. For those of you who desire to give individually by mail in the coming year, our address is:

5993 County Rd. 16
Belfast, NY 14711

- Well over 400 gifts from the Christmas Room were selected by custodial parents for 200 plus children.

- On December 20 a delicious ham dinner was made by the capable kitchen staff and served to over 100 folks by the Sheriff's Department and the men of Genesis Bible Church. Afterward families left with a piece of ham and a bag of foodstuffs to make their own Christmas meal at home for loved ones.

- Through the kindness of an individual a flat screen tv/monitor was given to us, and mounted on a wall in the dining area. We are excited to consider its possible uses. How good God is!

- We closed on December 20, giving our volunteers a needed break, and will reopen Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

Please do not put any items for Wellspring on the Beardsley porch until Monday-Tuesday January 6,7.

(Your past contributions have been so helpful to folks. Often what you send is just what someone wanted or needed. I've seen it with my very eyes!)

John Wesley is to have said, "PRAYER IS WHERE THE ACTION IS." Please PRAY us into the new year.
We know this is God's work - not ours. The evil one knows that, too. We need victories to happen, and
are continuing to pray for future leadership in the coming years.

Because He came to rescue us,
Beth Beardsley (for the Board)

WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP resumes meeting January 8 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Room 9 below the sanctuary.

The Online Directory

Since Lifetouch Church Directories were printed in 2017, we have had 138 updates as people move, change email preference or cell phone numbers. The most current information is always available in our Mobile Directory. Information is secure and will require a password. Email the church office at office@hwchurch.org and you will receive the link and password for access.

Celebrate Recovery

If you were to look at yourself and the new, growing, and changing self 30 days from now, what would have happened to get you there? What actions would you be taking starting right now to be living in that new way of life? Start with one healthy new choice & step and let God move you into a beautiful and hope-filled changed life. go to www.hwchurch.org/celebrate-recovery/

Celebrate Recovery meets from 7 to 9 PM on Thursday nights in the Good Shepherd Room (lower level of the church). Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling our lives.

January 16 we ill have a **pre-meeting fellowship dinner** starting at 6:00. Call Carolyn Miller at (585) 748-9692 by January 15 f you would like to come so we will have plenty of food for everyone.

FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING? Here are some items in high need:

-Pasta
-Canned tuna
-Baked beans
-Soup
-Canned fruit*
-Cereal
-Syrup*
-Spaghetti sauce*
-Canned chicken
-Canned chili
-Boxed rice
-Canned vegetables
-Jelly or jam*
-Granola bars
-Macaroni & cheese
-Ramen noodles
-Canned beef stew
-Boxed oatmeal packets
-Peanut butter*
-Jarred applesauce
-Boxed pancake mix
-Boxed potato mixes
-Fruit juices/juice boxes
-Canned pasta (Spaghettios, Ravioli)
-Helpers (Hamburger, Tuna, Chicken)
-Snacks (cookies, crackers, jello, pudding, fruit snacks)

NOTE: Monetary Donations (checks to Houghton Wesleyan Church with “FOOD PANTRY” on the Memo Line) provide fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, eggs, cheese, and milk, as well as emergency groceries for families in our community. The Food Pantry has a refrigerator and a freezer to store items. NOTE: Perishable Pantry Donations may be brought to the church office throughout the year. Thank you for your continued donations!

YOUNG AT HEART

Formerly SENIOR CITIZENS

Our January gathering will be on **Wednesday, January 22**. Note, in January only, the change from Thursday to Wednesday of that week. Our meal begins at noon in the Houghton Church Community Room, and following good fellowship over the meal, we will hear from retired Houghton Business Department Professor Richard Halberg **on Financial Planning.**
Dick Halberg will guide us through some of the complex financial decisions leading to and into retirement. Choices and resulting tax consequences will be discussed.

As a reminder, here is our January potluck meal schedule:
initials A-F bring desserts, G-N bring casseroles, and O-Z bring salads (or swap with a friend.)
Bring your own table service. Everyone 55 and older (including any caregivers) will be warmly welcomed. Ask a friend who may not normally come to join you, and all of us.
Questions? Contact Daryl Stevenson at 716-397-6864 or at daryl.stevenson@houghton.edu..

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Our Condolences to the families of
Carlos Gildemeister at the death of his father, and
Kathy Bogdan at the death of her mother.

Pete Roeske
SNOWPLOWING
service
585-689-0368

Prayer Room:

the prayer room is available every day, 8:00am – 9:00pm (holidays excluded). You may reserve the prayer room online (www.hwchurch.org/prayer-room/) or by contacting the church office (567-2264). Walk-ins are welcome with consideration given to a previous reservation.

CHURCH STAFF

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

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

Cindy Oden, ***Assistant Pastor***
567-2024 **cindyoden@hwchurch.org**

Paul Shea, ***Assistant Pastor***
567-4597 **paulshea@hwchurch.org**

Amanda Cox, Music & ***Worship Director***
567-4870 **amandacox@hwchurch.org**

Emily Spateholts, ***Director of Children's Ministries (Sunday ministries & Valley Preschool)***
808-8925 **emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org**

Ann McNeill, ***Director of Children's Ministries (Wednesday Kids Club, Library, RFKC, Cradle Roll)***
437-5151 **annmcneill@hwchurch.org**

Austen Kewin, ***Pastoral Ministry Resident***
austenkewin@hwchurch.org

Church Office, M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-5 PM,
567-2264 **office@hwchurch.org**

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

January 5 (10:00am)
a.m. Rev. Dr. Sarah Derck

January 12 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am,)
a.m. *What Do We Do About God?* (Psalm 63)
p.m. Small Groups

January 19 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)
a.m. *What Is Our Task About God?* (Colossians 1)
p.m. Small Groups

January 26 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)
a.m. *How Do We Interact With Each Other?* (John 13)
p.m. Small Groups

As We Start the New Year

Houghton Wesleyan Church
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Houghton NY 14744

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