



Easter in the Midst of a Pandemic

Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen... The women quickly ran from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy...."
(Matthew 28:5-6, 8)

What a time we are living in right now! Only a few people, even a few months ago, could have imagined our situation.

We grieve for the thousands of deaths. We pray for the hundreds of thousands who are ill. We seek protection for all who are still working in the midst of it. It's a strange time.

The strangeness of our circumstances feels even more difficult as we enter Holy Week. This is a week in which gathering together is most significant. Children waving branches on Palm Sunday, stripping the church and watching each candle extinguished on Maundy Thursday, exploring the destinations of Christ's journey to the cross on Good Friday and the celebration of baptism, breakfast and worship on Easter Sunday. This is a week of symbol and ritual, of touch and taste, of experience and interaction that can only be right when we are together. Or can it?

As important as the in-person experiences of Holy Week are, not being able to do them together in one place doesn't diminish the reality and truth of what they represent. Our inability to wave palm branches or strip the church doesn't mean that we can't celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem nor lament the reality of his death. We may not be able to walk the destinations of the cross, engage in the sacrament of baptism, or sing *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today* with each other, but our situation doesn't diminish the truth that Christ died on the cross, that he rose on the third day and that we are raised to new life with him in baptism.

Do we long for next year when we will once again worship together? Most definitely. But even in our separate homes, we can experience the reality of Holy Week once again because the Holy Spirit is with us—God is not limited by our isolation.

We are going to do everything we can to help us engage in this week in spite of our circumstances. Let me encourage you to do everything you can to engage in this week as well.

Because of Jesus,
Pastor Wes



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Streamed from the church website (hwchurch.org) and Facebook page

Thursday, April 9

Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 pm restreamed from 2019

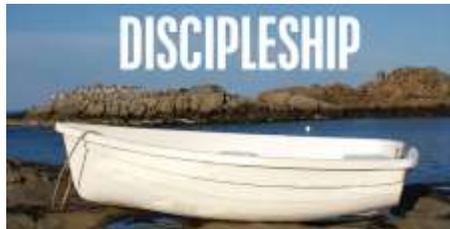
Good Friday, April 10

Good Friday Organ Meditations 1:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 12

9:30 a.m. preservice images and music

10:00 a.m. service will begin with the restoring of the church (archived video from 2018). We are going to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion during the Easter service. Prior to the service, please set aside some bread and juice. After the sermon Pastor Wes will pray over the elements and we will receive them together. The service will conclude with our organist Judy Congdon playing Widor's *Toccata from Symphony No. 5*, which has been a HWC tradition for decades.



SHELTER-IN-PLACE DISCIPLESHIP — Pastor Paul

Consider these few thoughts about growing and thriving as Believers during these unusual and unexpected weeks:

- God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. While our routines and circumstances have been turned upside down, the Holy Spirit is as available as ever...the Word of God is as relevant and fresh as ever.
- Discipleship -growing in our walk with Christ - is both individualistic and corporate. There are new resources popping up all over for us to feed our minds and hearts, but don't get swamped or overwhelmed trying to take them all in. Take time for the simple, quiet, personal moments with God. This may take special effort with the upheaval in home-life.
- It's a challenge to replace Small Groups, SS, and corporate worship with just screen-time. Thanks for those being creative with internet, Zoom etc. Let's look for ways to stimulate one another and keep connections. But one thought is to connect meaningfully with a smaller handful of folks and really invest in these few during this time. Encourage, challenge and pray for this smaller circle. Seek out someone who may be isolated or lonely.
- Share reports of what God is doing. Please communicate to me what God is doing in your lives.

Paulshea@hwchurch.org

Someday we will look back and reflect on these unique weeks and months and hopefully say that our discipleship—our walk with Christ—as both individuals and the Body of Christ, have grown in positive ways. I Thess. 5:23-24.

STEWARDSHIP *a life of generosity*



A generous lifestyle is a way of living that reflects intentionally a life touched by God. It is living with eyes opened for opportunities to give (financially and otherwise) even to total strangers, to give repeatedly, and to give often. It is gratitude in action.

A generous life follows John Wesley's admonition to "give all you can." Even in times of personal scarcity, a generous life looks to the interests of others more than self.

At a time when many of us are "hunkering down" and concerned for our own family's health and safety, we need to find ways to help others. Focusing on others over ourselves takes our mind from the crippling fears that cause us to do nothing but spiral downward.

Be a voice of Hope - Let others know that God is with us and God is for us! (Psalm 46)

What does the Bible say about giving?

Giving is meant to be a joyful expression of thanks to God from the heart, not a legalistic obligation. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV)

Our attitude in giving is more important than the amount of our gift. In Luke's account of the poor widow giving two coins at the temple, Jesus watched everyone putting their offerings into the money box, but he stopped to comment on the widow. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others." (Luke 21:3 NIV) Perhaps what Jesus appreciated most was her attitude and her willingness to give.

Our financial giving reveals a picture of our lives surrendered to God. "Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1) NIV. When we truly recognize all that Christ has done for us, we'll want to offer ourselves wholly to God as a living sacrifice of worship to him. Our offerings (financial and otherwise) will flow freely from a heart of gratitude.

As you continue to serve God, may you find freedom and joy in the discipline and obedience of generosity.



From the
Library Shelves

I was reminded the other day that during this uncertain time we should remember to be thankful. Thankful for the things we take for granted, like pushing a button and our coffee is made. Thankful for our families, and the extra time with them. Thankful for our church leaders, who are doing everything they can to allow us to worship and still be safe. Thankful for our God, who is ALWAYS in control.

So, play board games, read a book together, get on the floor and play with your kids, make popcorn and have a movie night, take a walk outside....and when the time comes, welcome back to your church library!



Hey, Parents -

Are you feeling a bit overwhelmed in your present isolation situation? Do you doubt whether you are balancing parenting and working at home well? Church time on Sunday doesn't look like you think it should? Don't despair! Here are two notes of encouragement for you. First, take it to the Lord. He promises to give us peace and to guard our hearts and minds from despair. He hears and is acting; He really is! And, second, know that you're doing better than you think! Really! It's going to be fine, because God is good and is working even now. Keep relying on the Lord throughout the day, encourage every family member to gently share their feelings with one another, and be ok with how things go around the house. Remember that years from now these frustrating times will in large part be forgotten. What your family WILL remember are the good times and the love you share. Hug, sing, play games, wrestle around on the floor with your kids, play dress up, tell stories. It's ok if it all looks kooky. Opportunity knocks - relax and love. God's got it all in His loving hands.

Ann McNeill
Director of Children's Ministries
(HWKids Wednesday, RFKC, Library & Cradle Roll)
Houghton Wesleyan Church
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Hey, Kids - If you picked up a boat kit at Kids' Club or looked forward to building your veggie car, why not build yours? Your parents can join [HWCKids page](#) and then the [HWCKids Wednesday Night group](#) to post photos of your creations. Miss Ann and your teachers look forward to seeing them if you decide to "build and show."

Please continue to sign into the hwc kids Facebook page and hwc kids Wednesday night to access our amazing Easter resources. God be praised for this wonderful wonderful week in the history of his love for us!

Applications for Valley PreSchool will be ready in May.

Applications for Valley Preschool, a ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church, will be available sometime the end of this month. VPS meets on Monday, Wednesday, & Friday mornings from September through May and is for children ages three (by December 1st), four and five. Join us for the 2020-21 school year.

Congratulations!

...to Jesse and Melissa Fink and siblings Evelyn and Levi at the birth of Selah Joy on March 2.

Prayer Partners

Community People who have not signed up yet to be a Prayer Partner with a Houghton College Student and desire to do so, call Austen Kewin (215-353-8692) or email austenkewin@hwchurch.org.

Wellspring Ministries

Wellspring Ministries is closed until further notice in accordance with Allegany County declaration.

Check the Facebook page for future details.

<https://www.facebook.com/WellspringMinistriesAllegany/>

There is a sign on our door of whom to contact in case of an urgent food need by a family.

Please do not put donations on the Beardsley porch until we reopen.



Jesus words to us- "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27

Beth Beardsley (for the Board)



[Click HERE](#)



[Click HERE](#)

GIVE HELP!
Please put me on the helper list!



[Click HERE](#)

Let's Talk
Sometimes you just want to talk to someone. We would love to talk and pray with you.

YOUNG AT HEART (HOUGHTON AREA SENIOR CITIZENS)



The Houghton Area Seniors from northern Allegany County usually meet monthly on the second Thursday for fellowship, food, and an interesting program—sometimes music, sometimes a travelogue, sometimes local color, sometimes valuable information—always interesting. The rest of our season is cancelled and we look forward to meeting in the upcoming year.



FOR SALE: 9734 Route 19 in Houghton NY



Many room and possibilities. Need more bedrooms, larger kitchen, home office or business? First floor has handicap accessibility with wide hallways and approximately 2000 sq. ft. of living space. Previously was a doctor's office. High Efficiency furnace (2017) air-conditioning and water heater. 2010 steel roof with snowguards. 1st floor 4 half-bathrooms, 5 exam rooms, could be bedrooms. Upstairs 1-bedroom apartment has its own kitchen, laundry, living room. Full bathroom with own furnace. Two additional upstairs rooms could be bedrooms. Great location in Houghton, walking distance to college, restaurants, post office. Detached garage. \$75,000. Call Michelle Schmidt for more information at ERAYORKSHIRE.COM for more views.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

We appreciate all of the food donations that have been made for the Food Pantry. Because of concerns related to lingering contamination, we have decided that it would be best for us not to collect food.

We have people who are willing to shop for us. If you would like to donate to the Food Pantry, right now it is better for you to donate funds rather than food.

The Food Pantry continues to serve our community. We also continue delivery of Meals On Wheels. If you have need for these services, call the church office at 585-567-2264.



Have Coffee with a Friend

Schedule a time to call and encourage each other, sharing gratitude, good news, and what you have learned from your Bible reading and current blessings. Pray together.





Phil Merrill (585) 610-8882

INSIDE & OUTSIDE

PAINTING &

POWER

WASHING

(HOUSES
& DECKS)



I have been discussing Rapids summer baseball with our Board of Directors over the last 24 hours.

We have discussed several factors.

- 1) The extension of the social distancing recommendation through April 30
- 2) Some Host Families have begun to express their concern about bringing players into their homes, not knowing how "hot" the virus is in the region the players are coming from.
- 3) Houghton College campus is still closed and concerns exist that the campus may not open in time to handle our season needs.
- 4) Player safety. Most players will not have participated in meaningful preparation before arriving in Houghton.
- 5) Pitcher needs. Given the fact that workouts will be limited, pitchers who come will probably be limited in their innings making an even greater need for additional pitchers which would further strain our host family situation.

For these reasons I am sad to inform you that we have advised our league that we will not be fielding a team this summer. We expect other teams in the league will come to the same conclusion based on a league meeting held last night.

We expect to return to the league with a renewed commitment to providing a great baseball opportunity to young college players in an environment where they can further their walk with Christ.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Ralph

SUNDAYS IN APRIL

April 5 10:00 a.m. Online (pre-service streaming at 9:30)
When We Mourn for Jesus (Luke 23:26-31)

April 12 10:00 a.m. Online (pre-service streaming at 9:30)
When Our Hopes Are Dashed (Mark 15:42-16:4)
Holy Communion (prepare elements before the service)

April 19 10:00 a.m. Online (pre-service streaming at 9:30)
What Is the Call of the Kingdom? (Philemon)

April 26 10:00 a.m. Online (pre-service streaming at 9:30)
What Is the Future of the Kingdom (Revelation 21)

Streaming begins at 9:30 a.m. and includes announcements and photos you submit of your family during previous streamed services.

CHURCH STAFF

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



Image: J. H. Burdett/
National Garden Bureau/
United States Library of
Congress]

LEARNING BY DOING

Dr. Prinsell suggests that this is the perfect time for kids and parents to plan a GARDEN! Look for a plot to develop, learn the needs of various plants (sunshine, companion plants, temperature and soil needs). Dr. Prinsell reminisced about times when 40% of vegetables were grown in the home garden and "Victory Gardens" are making a come-back. Gardens teach planning skills and nutrition along with pride in providing food for meals.

COVID-19 UPDATES are posted online at <https://hwchurch.org/covid-19-updates/>
We post a weekly letter from Pastor Wes, a midweek visit, special music by Amanda Cox and Judy Congdon and ways of contacting staff if you have needs, want to offer help or need to talk.

Other ideas:

Some SMALL GROUPS are doing online studies.

The weekly Wednesday Prayer Group is shared each week until we meet again.

(call the church office if you would like to be added to the list)

Missionary Updates continue. Would you like to receive an email with current news?

Upcoming Plans for those without Internet: We will be burning DVDs. If you have a DVD player and would like to have a service please let us know (567-2264)

