



*Joyfully loving God,
wholeheartedly
serving others*

May 5, 2020

Dear Houghton Church Friends,

As we walk through the stress and fatigue of these frustrating and uncertain times, please know that our staff is praying for you and is available to you. We also want to thank you for your prayers for us.

Here is some information related to the life of the church.

Reopening

- You might be wondering when we are going to be able to return to worship and other activities together. I am wondering, too. Matt Webb and I are putting together a task force of staff, healthcare professionals and technology people to help us think through this question and respond appropriately.
- We are acutely aware of the tension between caring for the health of our congregation and the desire and importance of being together. We will communicate information with you as soon as possible.
- Please know that we will not be gathering at the church during the month of May. Beyond that is what the task force is working on.

Election Update

- As I mentioned last week, our yearly elections and the vote on the Community Financial Plan have been postponed to June 7. Because of the uncertainty of our circumstances, we are conducting the elections online and by mail-in ballot. More information will be available in the coming weeks.
- The ballot and the Community Financial Plan are in the Highlights newsletter that will go out to you this week.

Streaming Information

- Thanks for the pictures you have sent. Please continue sending them for the preservice slides. Send them to any staff member.
- Send your comments, ideas or words of gratitude about the streaming to streaming@hwchurch.org.

Upcoming Events

- **Virtual Prayer Vigil:** Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, 6:30 p.m. You can sign up now for times in 15-minute increments (<https://hwchurch.org/prayer-room/>). Materials are available on the prayer vigil page of the church website. This is a wonderful way of supporting and caring for each other.
- **Music Program:** Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m., Amanda Cox will lead a time of worship music. It will be live streamed through the regular channels.
- **Houghton College Commencement:** Baccalaureate is this Friday at 6:30 p.m. and Graduation is this Saturday at 10:00 a.m. You may access both events through the college website or use [this link](#).
- **Sunday Worship:** this Sunday at 10:00 a.m. we will worship together online. I will be preaching about the grace of the Kingdom from Ezekiel 37. The weekly bulletin, which includes the worship order, financial information, prayer concerns and events in the life of our church, is available on the church website or by contacting the church office.
- **Mother's Day:** Mother's Day is a joyful day for most, but for many it is the opposite—they commemorate International Bereaved Mother's Day instead. Today, we ache with those mothers, fathers, siblings, and grandparents who grieve a recent or past loss of an unborn child, infant, or grown child of any age. We pray that you will find comfort and peace in this day. Since we cannot be together right now to remember the lives lost, we will hold our annual Bereavement/Remembrance service in the fall. Please note that as we give thanks for family this Sunday, we will also be praying for all who feel grief related to family as well.
- **Youth Group:** Because of Mother's Day, youth group is **not** meeting this week.

Ministry Opportunity

- A BIG thank you to all of our HWC Kids team members who have creatively reached out to their classes during this time. From notes, to Zoom game sessions, remote Catechism quizzing, and story time, they are what make our program thrive. Thank you! We appreciate you!"
- We were so pleased with the success of our first virtual Hymn Sing, and we thank all who participated! We will hold our second virtual Hymn Sing on Thursday, May 14. If you would like to submit a hymn or song for that service, please contact Amanda Cox (amandacox@hwchurch.org / 567-870). She will make sure that there is no overlap and will give you instructions. Videos for our May 14 service will be due to Amanda by Saturday, May 9.
- As we look ahead to the summer and fall, we are seeking people interested in spending time with our HWC Kids on Sunday mornings. Openings are available for Sunday School, Children's Church, Jr. Church, and Nursery. Our biggest need is for 2 leaders for Jr. Church (grades K-3rd, 8:20 service), either on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Contact Emily Spateholts (emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org or 585-808-8925) if you would like to be a part of building the faith foundation of our kids.

Resources

- In addition to the HWCKids Facebook page, parents are invited to subscribe to our newly created Youtube channel, HWC Kids (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8XkjmFQ99pmZhh-nuOl_iA), where we are working on uploading the videos from our virtual Sunday School lessons and Children's sermons the last few weeks. Check it out.
- Many devotional resources are available. Here are a few:
 - Barnstorming: Seeking Sanctuary in the Seasons of a Rural Life (<https://barnstorming.blog/author/briarcroft/>).
 - Seedbed is a daily devotional from J.D. Walt (<https://www.seedbed.com/>).
- Here are a couple of Bible reading resources:
 - YouVersion is a daily Bible reading program (<https://www.youversion.com/>).
 - Here is a blog for listening to daily Bible reading....an Old Testament, New Testament and Psalm passage each day: www.dailyradiobible.com.
 - Dwell is an audio Bible app that is providing free access for churches until June. The app provides Bible reading in voices with various background music: <https://dwellapp.io/covid19>.
- If you are interested in prayers related to the Coronavirus, here are some videos from Prayercast:
 - <https://prayercast.com/you-reign-coronavirus.html>.
 - <https://prayercast.com/coronavirus.html>
- Ramadan is a special time for Muslims and has proven to be a season in which Muslims are more open to God speaking into their lives. Here are some resources to help us pray for Muslims during these 30 days.
 - The website Prayercast is sending a daily email with a brief video highlight ways to pray for Muslims during this time. Sign up to receive the email at www.LoveMuslims.org.
 - 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World is an information and prayer booklet. You may access it at <https://www.30daysprayer.com/>.

Church Finances

- Thank you for your generosity. Once again, the giving last week exceeded expectations. In these uncertain times, thank you for what you are able to give.
- For financial gifts, we encourage you to use [ONLINE GIVING](#) or to mail your check to the church (P.O. Box 127, Houghton, NY 14744).
- For your convenience we are now accepting credit cards on our on-line giving site. In order to avoid the higher fees associated with credit cards, we do encourage you to consider using the bank transfer option (EFT). If using a credit card is better for you, we have added the option for you to donate the transaction fees if you wish, but you are under no obligation to do so.

Connecting

- The pastoral staff continues to pray for you and to support you. Even as we are making contact with you, please do not hesitate to contact us if you want to talk or if you have a need.
- Stay in touch with others. Please limit calls to between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

- We have created links on our webpage to address needs: “Get Help,” “Give Help,” and “Let’s talk.” You may access these links here: <https://hwchurch.org/covid-19-updates/>.

If you have questions, concerns or needs, do not hesitate to contact us (585-567-2264, office@hwchurch.org, or any of us individually). If you have needs in the coming weeks, please let us know.

Thank you so much for your support and prayers for our church, our county, our nation and our world. The heart of our faith is that God is good, and that God is faithful. He is at work—when we see it and when we don’t.

You continue to be in our prayers. We pray God’s grace and comfort upon you.

Blessings,
Pastor Wes

If you need assistance with streaming on the website or Facebook, contact Patty Stalker (585-610-6883).

If you need assistance with streaming on a device (Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, etc.), contact Nathan Danner (585-567-4314).

Roku Connection Instructions

- Download the Houghton Wesleyan Church App.
- Open Roku.
- In the search box, type HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH, then click on it.
- Click on ADD CHANNEL
- Click OK.
- Return to the Home Screen. You will see our App in the list.
- Click on the Houghton Wesleyan Church App to access live or archived services.

AppleTV Connection Instructions

- Connect the iPhone to your AppleTV streaming device.
- Use an iPhone to access the Houghton Wesleyan Church website (www.hwchurch.org).
- Click WATCH ONLINE.
- Choose the live service.