



May 26, 2020

Dear Houghton Church Friends,

I hope that you are well and that you are sensing God's presence with you wherever you are. Here are some reminders and some new information related to Houghton Wesleyan Church.

Reopening

- Thank you for your prayers as our Task Force works on a plan for reopening the church building for worship and other activities. We continue to embrace the tension of opening as soon as it is appropriate and recognizing the need to be fully prepared for that time.
- The Elders have approved this plan for our next steps:
 - We will abide by the state's mandates for when Houses of Worship are permitted to open.
 - We will start with in-house worship services before contemplating smaller groups (i.e., Sunday School, small groups, etc.)
 - We will open the church building for worship when we have protocols in place to maintain social distancing. This would include protocols for people entering and exiting the sanctuary and building, seating arrangements during worship, and planning an appropriate number of services (within reason) to follow the protocols.
 - We will open the church building for worship when we have cleaning supplies and cleaning personnel to disinfect between services.
 - We will take appropriate steps to maintain the quality of online streaming for all who continue to worship online.

Election Update

- Our yearly elections and the vote on the Community Financial Plan will take place next week. You may vote either by mail-in ballot or online.
- Paper ballots will be mailed to you Friday, May 29. The link to the online ballot will be sent on Monday, June 1.
- [CLICK HERE](#) to access the ballot, information on people nominated and a summary of the Community Financial Plan.

Staffing Information

- This is Austen Kewin's last week working with us. For the past two years, Austen has served as a Ministry Resident focused on College Ministries. We have appreciated Austen's ministry.
- I encourage you to send notes of appreciation to him either by email (austenkewin@hwchurch.org) or using the church post office address (P.O. Box 127, Houghton).

Upcoming Events

- **Virtual Prayer Vigil:** Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, 6:30 p.m. The Reopening Task Force appreciates your prayers. If you are uncertain how to spend your time in prayer, let me suggest that you pray for the Task Force and the decisions being made. You can [SIGN UP NOW](#) for times in 15-minute increments..
- **Music Program:** Thursday, May 28, 6:30 p.m., we will be offering an evening of music from the archives of our church video library. This will include choral anthems, various ensembles and a children's choir.
- **Sunday Worship:** this Sunday at 10:00 a.m. we will worship together online celebrating Pentecost. I will be preaching from Leviticus 23 and Acts 2, asking: *What Does Pentecost Tell Us About God?* 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, Facebook, or by contacting the church office.

- **Youth Group:** Youth meets Sunday night at 6:00pm. This is the last youth group meeting of the year. Pastor Jon will send a Zoom link.

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!
- 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.
- Here is a [LINK](#) of specific prayer concerns related to the COVID-19 needs at Jericho Road, in Buffalo and beyond.

Valley Preschool

- Though we can't know for sure what the fall looks like yet, the Valley Preschool team is starting to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year. Valley Preschool meets three mornings a week at the Church and is a great introduction for children to school with plenty of hands-on lessons and social interaction with peers.
- If you have or know of a 3-5 year old who might be interested in preschool, we invite you to fill out an application today; these are available on [Facebook](#), the [website](#), at the Church office or by contacting Casda Danner (casdadanner@hwchurch.org) or Emily Spateholts (emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org). The small application fee will go up on June 1st.

Resources

- We now have a Houghton Wesleyan Church YouTube Channel. [HERE IS THE LINK](#) to access it. It helps us if you subscribe to our page.
- In addition to the HWC Kids Facebook page, parents are invited to subscribe to our newly created Youtube channel, [HWC Kids](#) 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 - click [HERE](#)
 - 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>
- It is not too late to engage in prayer for Muslims around the world during Ramadan (April 23 – May 23). 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/>.

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.
- 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).

Church Finances

- In these uncertain times, thank you for your generosity.
- 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 wesoden@hwchurch.org

Pastor Cindy cindyoden@hwchurch.org

Pastor Jon joncole@hwchurch.org

Pastor Paul paulshea@hwchurch.org

Children’s Ministry: Emily emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org and Ann annmceNeill@hwchurch.org

Worship Ministry: Amanda amandacox@hwchurch.org

College Ministry: Austen austenkewin@hwchurch.org

Office: pattystalker@hwchurch.org (office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m.)