



God Seeks Us

The Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" Genesis 3:9

In addition to books about ministry, I love reading old murder mysteries. I especially enjoy Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple, Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, as well as stories of Ellery Queen and Perry Mason. In addition, I have become fond of Richard and Frances Lockridge, the mid-twentieth century husband and wife writing team who created the characters of Mr. & Mrs. North.

One of their books, *Murder Out of Turn*, is set in the context of the Norths inviting some friends on a camping adventure in the Adirondacks. In one scene, the friends are sitting in one of the cabins talking about the case that has unexpectedly arisen when the North's cat comes in with a rabbit in its mouth. The rabbit has been injured by the cat and is relieved to be set free. Despite the explanation that this is what cats do, one woman expresses her frustration and anger with the cat: "If only they wouldn't hunt! They're so gracious and beautiful, but they hunt." Stroking the rabbit, she says, "It's trembling." And then she adds, "It's dreadful to be hunted."

That last line caught my attention. She's right. It is dreadful to be hunted. You feel it when you are about to be discovered playing hide and seek. You feel it as you are chased around the playground during a game of Tag. One of the most vivid short stories in my memory from high school was Richard Connell's *The Most Dangerous Game* that tells of a man who washes ashore on an island and is forced to be the target of a hunter's pursuit. She's right, it's dreadful to be hunted...unless you're being hunted by someone who loves you, who is hunting you not to harm you but to rescue you.

This is the image of God woven through the pages of scripture. God's loving search for us starts in the Garden with Adam and Eve. He calls out, "Where are you?" a question not of an angry hunter but of a loving parent, not a call for retribution but for reconciliation.

Francis Thompson masterfully describes God's seeking in his poem *The Hound of Heaven*. He describes fleeing God and of God lovingly searching, seeking for him to the ends of the earth. In many ways, Thompson's poem is a commentary on Luke 15 in which Jesus describes The Lost Lamb, The Lost Coin and The Lost Son. In each case, the hero is not the one lost but the One who seeks and finds.

The scriptures tell us that when God is seeking us it's not dreadful; it's lifegiving. It's not frightening; it's the purest joy. It leads not to despair but to hope, not to judgment but to life. I think that we could say with confidence that the heart of the gospel is that God hunts us because he loves us, in order to redeem us.

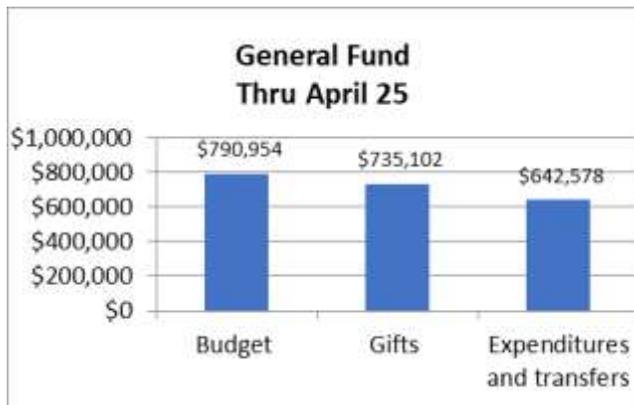
As we make our way through the treacherous waters of life, it's important to be reminded that despite the struggles, God hasn't given up on us. When we are tempted to wander into self-centeredness, God pursues us. When we are tempted to close our eyes and ears to the pain of others that makes us uncomfortable, God pursues us. When we are tempted to see others as the enemy to defeat rather than beloved children of God to love, God pursues us. When we are tempted to doubt the goodness of God, he proves his character by continually pursuing us.

So, my prayer is that we will experience the joy, peace and life of God's love for us—pursuing us, never giving up on us, seeking us—in order to redeem and restore us. And in this truth to run not away from him but into his loving arms of grace.

Because God seeks us,
Pastor Wes



STEWARDSHIP *a life of generosity*



In a few weeks, our congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2021-22 Community Financial Plan (sometimes referred to as the budget).

This year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our nation's economy, building the 2021-22 Community Financial Plan (CFP) has been especially challenging. The proposed CFP for 2021-22 remains essentially unchanged from 2020-21. We had hoped to increase support for several things, but feel it is unwise to do that now. Nonetheless, if at some point in the year we find church giving is increased over what we have projected, we will with thanksgiving add those things when it becomes possible.

There are important reasons why we seek the entire congregation's approval of this proposed CFP.

1. The Community Financial Plan reveals the mission and vision of Houghton Wesleyan Church.

You have heard it said that an individual's checkbook provides a glimpse of their priorities. Church financial plans are similar. The way resources are allocated throughout the course of a year should reflect the church's mission and vision.

2. The plan reveals the path forward. Our church has goals, and the CFP demonstrates how those goals will be reached. This year's overall goal is to maintain the same level of support for all parts of the CFP – staff; missions (local, global and specific missionaries); church ministries (youth, congregational care, discipleship, children, and music/worship); building operation and maintenance; and administrative expenses.

3. The financial plan keeps everyone accountable. It keeps people from overspending, and also underspending. You might think that underspending sounds like a point of celebration, not concern. But since our CFP reflects the current mission and game plan, underspending may also be a red flag. A financial plan keeps everyone accountable.

When you vote to approve this plan, you also indicate your commitment to support this plan through your faithful giving for which we are profoundly thankful.

How do you access the HWC CFP for 2021-22? It is posted on the church website at <https://hwchurch.org/vision/vision-meeting-annual-meeting/> or you can obtain paper copies by contacting the church office.

ELECTION OF LEADERS: Due to the current circumstances, we will again offer two options for voting: 1) online and 2) mail. Anyone who does not have online access or prefers, paper ballots will be available. A sample ballot and information about each nominee will be sent to members in the coming weeks.

COMMUNITY FINANCIAL PLAN: You will be receiving information related to the Community Financial Plan in the coming weeks. The vote about the Plan will take place with the Election of Leaders, both online and by mail.

STAYING CONNECTED: Pastor Wes continues sending out a weekly update on Tuesday and a video meditation on Thursday. Both can be accessed through email, text or the church website and Facebook pages. If you are not receiving these communications and would like to, please contact the church office (office@hwchurch.org) or 585-567-2264.

The family room is open for use!

Your children are ALWAYS welcome in the sanctuary but this cozy space across from the prayer room is available for parents or guardians to take a child who needs food, a clean diaper, or space to wiggle and play. A TV for streaming the service is also available. Thank you to Rachel Blew, Daryl Stevenson, and Michael Spateholts for making this space beautiful!



HWC Kids, you're invited back to "Children's Church!" Starting in May, we are going to be offering a modified children's church for children in preschool through 6th grade. During Pastor Wes' sermon, we will be meeting in the community room for crafts, activities, games, and/or a brief lesson. If the weather is nice, we will plan on being outside in the side lawn or on the playground. We can't wait to see you there!!



* In order to open back up, Covid protocols will be in place, including sanitizing, masks, and social distancing.

** Our normal safety and security precautions will also be in place, so parents, please drop your child/ren off during the song before the sermon in order to check them in and receive your pick-up tag.



Our May Scripture:

Romans 8:14 - For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God..



Applications for Valley PreSchool

Valley Preschool is a ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church for children ages three through five. We meet Monday, Wednesday, & Friday mornings from 9:00 to 11:45. While we don't know all of the details about how things will operate next year, we will have student applications for the 2021-22 school year available at the beginning of May. Paper copies will be available in the church office and it will also be available on the church website. Please contact Casda Danner if you have questions (casdadanner@hwchurch.org OR call 585-567-4314).

SMZ - Next Sunday Morning Zoom, May 2, 9:00 - 9:50 a.m. Dr. Ken Schenck looks at the *Work of the Holy Spirit in John 16*. All are welcome to join in by using the Zoom Link (<https://zoom.us/j/93689062279>) and email paulshea@hwchurch.org or text the church office (585-610-6883) for the passcode.

Join SMZ each Sunday Morning for ZOOM from 9:00 to 9:50; same link and passcode for May.



CHURCH CLEAN-UP DAY MAY 1

Help beautify our church facility by participating in our annual Church Work Day on Saturday, May 1, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Doughnuts and coffee will be available. Our attention will focus on the exterior of the building and landscaping of the church grounds so bring gardening tools, such as shovels, rakes, and wheelbarrows. Children are welcome. (Rain Day is May 8)

Youth Group News

Midweek check in - Wed at 1:15pm
Sunday morning zoom Sunday School - 9am - Malachi
We are continuing our 30 Hour Famine series.
JR High YG - 3-4pm
Sr. High YG - 5-6pm

The 30-hour famine will take place on May 7-8.

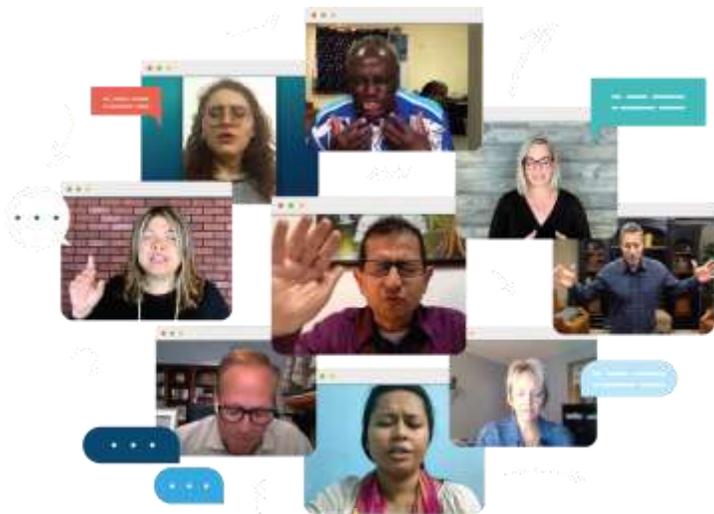
Please contact Pastor Jon if you need zoom links for any event or if you have other questions.



MAY 7 & 8

GO TO

30hourfamine.org/team/HFWChurchYouth
to learn more, join us, or support us



PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 23

TOGETHER, hosted by Wayne Schmidt, General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church, will be broadcast live from Marion, Indiana on Sunday, May 23, at 7 a.m. & 7 p.m. Eastern. The service will feature focused prayer delivered by Wesleyans from across North America and a time of worship. This 75-minute service is being brought to you with the goal of jump-starting a momentum in the heart of every Wesleyan for a movement of God to see the local church rise to the calling to be Unleashed.

We desire another Pentecost moment, and to that end, Wesleyans across North America and the world are invited, not simply to observe but to actively participate.

RSVP now to participate at
<https://www.wesleyan.org/event/together-filled-sent>



From the Library Shelves



Hey Kids! Do you like to help your parents cook? You might like to read *If You Love Cooking, You Could Be...* and learn what cooks do and the different places they work. Or maybe you like animals—learn about the rescue of a baby sea otter after he was separated from his mother in *Rescuing Rialto*. More interested in history and computers?—learn about the 6 women who programmed the first all electronic computer in *The Women Who Launched the Computer Age*.

For the adults, we have *The Family Shaped by Grace*—how to get along with the people who matter most. Or we have the DVDs *Overcomer*, about a coach and his high school cross-country team, and *I Still Believe*, singer Jeremy Camp's story. There are also two new series by Tracie Peterson, and books by Wanda Brunstetter, Lynn Austin, and Karen Kingsbury.

Come on in and see all of our new books. The library is available when the church building is open. Please remember to wear your mask and practice social distancing.

Enjoy reading!!!

Wellspring Ministries



We are Praising! Praise with us.

- East Hill Foundation awarded us a \$15,000.00 grant. We will use it to upgrade 4 of our bathrooms, and replace older windows. Warren Greatbatch, son of Wilson, is on the Board of East Hill, and it is because of his continued interest and support of WM that we have been blessed the second time with a grant directed our way.
- Continued financial and donation support. Thank you, HWC.
(Come paw over our 'stuff' and take what you can use. We have lots of material, craft items, holiday items, and many children's books that your family may enjoy.)
- Faithful volunteers. (Bob Stalker runs a mean vacuum cleaner!!!)

We are Praying! Pray with us.

- Meal attendance to increase.
- God's working in hearts.
- Meaningful conversations with volunteers and guests that will encourage life changes, renewal.

In His Service, The Bd. of Wellspring (Beth Beardsley)

"Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered."
(Proverbs 11:25)

CONGRATULATIONS!

to Andrew and Susie Roorbach and to brothers Christian and Matthias at the birth of Gideon Laurence Roorbach on April 14.



Genesee Rapids are Coming

Planning for the Rapids upcoming season which includes 42 games is progressing nicely. The roster is nearly complete, sponsorships are strong with several new sponsors being added. In the past our greatest challenge has been finding host families for the players to stay with. Once again this year this IS OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE. We are very thankful for those families who have hosted players in the past. We are trusting God to answer this need this year as He has done previously.

Please consider this ministry opportunity of being a Host Family. Several families who have served as host families in the past have continued contact with their players and some have even visited the players at college. Here is the information you need.

All players must be fully vaccinated prior to their arrival in Houghton. The players will stay with you from approximately June 4 to approximately July 22nd, depending on how far the team goes into the play-offs but no later than July 27th.

If you are able to host two players, each player must have a bed of his own. If the only thing stopping you is the need of an extra bed, we have extra beds we can provide. We provide all linens.

All players commit to following the rules of your house and are under a nightly curfew.

On a typical day, host families are asked to provide breakfast and the team will provide lunch and dinner on most days. There will be opportunities in the schedule for the players to have dinner with their host family on their days off if you want to have them join you. What you normally eat is what our guys will eat.

Each week both you and the players will receive a tentative schedule. One of our priorities in having the Rapids in our community is to minister to college baseball players from throughout the country, some of whom are not Christians. Paul Shea serves as the Chaplain for the team. He conducts Bible studies with the team on a regular basis.

Most Home games for the Rapids are at 7:00PM, except on Sundays when games start at 2:00PM (doubleheaders usually begin at 4:00PM). Our home field is at Houghton College.

Host families receive a complimentary Family Pass to all Rapids games.

For more information please call Ralph Kerr 716-969-0688.

Dear Church family,

Over this past year of the Covid induced isolation, we made the decision to move to Grand Island, NY to be closer to our daughter Emily. We love the Houghton community and have loved our time being part of this very special community ever since we were warmly welcomed almost 30 years ago with our three young children. The people of this community have been a blessing to us and our family, and we will miss all of you, our dear friends, greatly! So with sadness about leaving, we say Goodbye for now. We are sorry that the isolation brought on by Covid prevented normal gatherings and seeing more of you prior to leaving, but please feel free to visit us on/in Grand Island!

New address:

Dave & Jane Buteyn

625 Williams Rd.

Grand Island, NY 14072

(Jane's Phone # is listed in the directory)

Old Timer Challenge



Phil Merrill
(585) 610-8882

INSIDE & OUTSIDE



PAINTING &

POWER

WASHING

(HOUSES & DECKS)

This year members of the 2021 Rapids will again challenge the “Old Timers” in the Annual Old Timers Game. The game will be held on Sunday, June 6 at 2pm at the Rapids home field at Houghton College. Bill Swanson will again serve as the Coach for the Old Timers. A variety of community members have played for the Old Timers in the past several years. These players have included Dr. Schierer (he is usually injured in practice or during the game) Becky Hutton, Matt Hopkins, Jeff Boon, Don Haingray, Alicia Mucher, Souly Sanasith, and many other outstanding stars. This is always a fun time for all involved and a great way to meet the 2021 Rapids players.

This is a fund raising event for the Rapids. The fee to play is \$50. All players receive a New Era baseball cap and a tee shirt. Old Timers players are available to give autographs after the game. If you are interested in playing this year contact Ralph Kerr 716-969-0688. The roster fills up quickly so call today.

FOOD GIVE AWAY

MAY AND JUNE SCHEDULE
CUBA CULTURAL CENTER, INC.

May	June
5/5 Belfast Central School, Registration begins 4/27	6/9 Houghton Wesleyan Church, Registration begins 5/29
5/12 Houghton Wesleyan Church, Registration begins 5/4	6/16-18 Cultural Center - pantry box, Registration begins 6/8
5/19-21 Cultural Center - pantry box, Registration begins 5/11	6/23 Cuba-Rushford High School, Registration begins 6/15
5/26 Cuba-Rushford High School, Registration begins 5/18	

Registration is **REQUIRED**
To register call 585-209-0052

SERVE WOMEN | SAVE LIVES

WALK for LIFE

But we are not among those who shrink back... but of those who have faith for the preserving of the soul. HEBREWS 10:39

NEW Walk for Life Weekend Experience

<i>Be Inspired...</i>	<i>To Act...</i>
Online Walk Rally	In-Person Walk
Friday, April 30 th 7:00-8:00PM	Saturday, May 1 st 9:00AM-12:00PM

BUFFALO: Delaware Park
ROCHESTER: Highland Park Bowl

COMPASSCAREWALK.COM



**MAY 26 is DR. PRINSELL'S
99th BIRTHDAY!**

**Help him celebrate with a
CARD SHOWER!**

**Dr. Gus Prinsell
7336 Campus Heights
Houghton NY 14744**



COMING SOON!

Visit our **YOUTUBE CHANNEL** to catch up on recent Sunday Morning ZOOM **SMZ**
You can also watch Children's Sermons, Music, Services, etc.

SUNDAYS IN MAY

- May 2 *If I Should Wake Before I Die* (1 Corinthians 15:58-16:9)
10:00 a.m. Indoor/Streaming
11:15 a.m. Outdoor
- May 9 *Relationships of Resurrection Faith* (1 Corinthians 16:10-24)
10:00 a.m. Indoor/Streaming
11:15 a.m. Outdoor
- May 16 *We've Been Left Behind...and That's a Good Thing* (Acts 1:1-11)
10:00 a.m. Indoor/Streaming
11:15 a.m. Outdoor
- May 23 Pastor Paul Shea
10:00 a.m. Indoor/Streaming
11:15 a.m. Outdoor
- May 30 Youth Sunday
10:00 a.m. Indoor/Streaming
11:15 a.m. Outdoor

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
amandacox@hwchurch.org

Emily Spateholts, Children's Ministry
808-8925 emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org

Ann McNeill, Children's Ministry
annmceill@hwchurch.org

Church Office, M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-4PM,
567-2264 office@hwchurch.org



- May 1, 8-11 a.m. is Church Clean up Day (page 4)
- May 7-8 is the Youth 30-Hour Famine (page 4)
- May 23 is Pentecost Sunday and *Together*, celebrated 7 am and 7 pm. (RSVP) (page 4)