

# Highlights

## HOPE FOR 2022



*“For I know the plans I have for you,”  
says the Lord. “They are plans for good  
and not for disaster, to give you a future  
and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

When I wrote my January 2020 *Highlights* article, I ended with these words: *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.*

When I wrote my January 2021 article, I referenced these words again. Well...here I am writing January 2022 and I’m still thinking about these words.

A year ago, I couldn’t have imagined we would still be in the middle of all of this. I suspect you had similar expectations.

After almost two years, we are worn out, frustrated, uncertain, troubled, concerned and maybe a little bit angry. In addition to everything related to the pandemic, we live in a world of divisiveness over seemingly everything. We continue to grieve mass shootings and all forms of violence and incivility. Sometimes we have to pinch ourselves to believe that it’s all real.

Now, as we prepare to enter another new year, it’s a good time to take stock...not so much of our world as of our lives. We have minimal control over so much of what happens in our world. We often feel powerless. But we do have control over ourselves. Not so much what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens to us and how we are going to live our lives in a world that feels so different to us.

The great question for us at this time, as at every time is this: Are we going to live as if God can be trusted or are we going to find our own pathway to resolution? Are we going to be people who reflect and emit the attitude, presence and Fruit of the Holy Spirit or are we going to use the same strategy as everyone else? Are we going to choose the mind of Christ—humility, servanthood, truth and love, or the mind of self-interest? Are we going to focus our attention on being right or on loving one another?

These are not questions that are limited to our current circumstances, but they are questions that are pertinent in our current circumstances.

Years ago, I read a New Year’s Prayer by W. R. Hunt. It was helpful to me then, it remains helpful even now. I hope it is for you as well.

*Dear Lord, please give me...*

*A few friends who understand me and yet remain my friends  
A mindset about what I do—whatever it may be—that brings glory to you  
A heart unafraid to follow wherever you may lead  
An understanding heart...to discern your Word and your people  
A sense of humor.  
Time for quiet, silent meditation.  
A feeling of the presence of God.  
And the patience to wait for the coming of these things,  
With the wisdom to know them when they come.*

Blessings,  
Pastor Wes



## STEWARDSHIP—A Life of Generosity

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

Kids Ministry Financial Update – January 2022

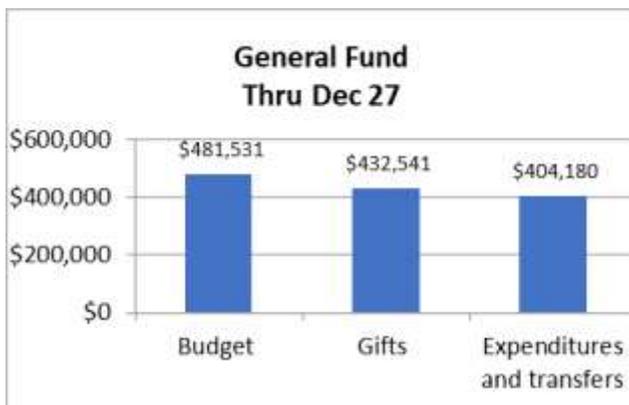
Throughout the pandemic, Kids Ministry has shifted focus from in-house programming to family- focused, home-based support. Though we are still welcoming kids ages 2 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade to attend in-person worship and Sunday School, much of what we have been doing has been reaching families where they are. Your financial support has made that possible.

Much of our budget has been used to do new, exciting, and FUN things over the past two years! We’ve had the ability to provide “The One Year Praying Through the Bible for Your Kids” (Nancy Guthrie) books for every HWC family and give back-to-school-blessings to every school aged HWC kid. We’ve delivered family activity packets for Easter and Advent to help families connect with each other and their faith. We’ve hosted drive-through events and, most recently, a beautiful display of nativities with a evangelistic and invitational handout for participants. We continue to celebrate important milestones in our HWC kid’s lives such as births, dedications, baptisms, and birthdays.

The switch to a new, digitally-based curriculum through GROW has enabled us to print lessons as needed for in-person instruction but to also send full lesson materials via email to all of our families every week. This investment has allowed us to support parents as they minister in their own homes.

Valley Preschool continues to serve our Church and community with amazing faith and play-based instruction. This year, we were able to open up our program to 2 year-olds as well! Every family in the program continues to receive tuition reduction through your gifts to the Church and your support of the annual Stone Soup dinner. We even had the opportunity to upgrade the tables in the VPS classrooms this year to something more kid-friendly and adaptable.

Your contributions continue to financially support our regular ministries as well:



- ⇒ New material for the library
- ⇒ Supplies for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening kids’ programming
- ⇒ Health and safety products for all of our classrooms
- ⇒ Operation Christmas Child supplies
- ⇒ Support for Royal Family Kids’ Camp
- ⇒ Cradle Roll gifts and mailings for families with new babies
- ⇒ Appreciation gifts for our wonderful team members
- ⇒ Subscription to our database that enables safety check-in, mass emails and texts, birthday reminders, etc.
- ⇒ Special resources for families facing crisis, grief, etc.
- ⇒ Upgrades to our classrooms such as flooring and painting

Thank you for giving to the Church and blessing us with the ability to continue connecting and growing with our HWC Kids and Families! We are so thankful that we get to serve them; we couldn’t do it without each of you and your gifts and prayers. Blessings to you!

Emily Spateholts and Ann McNeill

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

**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 (March 1). Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, is March 2. 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.

**THANK YOU:** 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.

## MISSIONS UPDATES!



- **Christmas Offering** - Many thanks for the generous donations towards the in-house Oxygen Generation Plant at LaGonave Wesleyan Hospital, Haiti. Check Sunday bulletins and other HWC communications for totals as they come in. We are grateful for the privilege of partnering with this ministry in Haiti. At the time of printing, \$22,784 has been donated.
- **Clothing Drive** - Thanks all those who donated winter and other clothing for folks in Buffalo. We delivered many bags of coats, hats, boots for all ages to Westside Promise Neighborhood.

**MISSIONS WEEKEND** – Save the dates of February 12-13, 2022 for the missions emphasis activities surrounding that weekend. Jonathan Ortlip, founder and director of Ambassador Football will be main speaker. Further details of other activities will be forthcoming.

Every year in the United States alone, more than one million babies are aborted. Statistics show that 12 % of U.S. women who obtain abortions are younger than age 20, and at current rates, nearly one-fourth of American women will have an abortion. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 16, 2022, 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 16, 2022, 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



Congratulations to these people who were baptized on December 19: Sierra Bramer, Dakota Bramer, Talon Bramer, Griffin Raymond, Duncan Raymond, Evelyn Raymond, Indigo Knapp, and Steven Schell.



## Stone Soup Dinner Fund Raiser for Valley Preschool

It's time for our fifth 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. It is something in addition to our scholarship program that we started to help make Valley Preschool affordable to more families.

This year six of our twelve students have benefited by being able to have a \$10 per month discount on tuition from the funds raised last year. Due to lower numbers again this year, we're so grateful that last year's proceeds were enough to cover ongoing extra needs and hope to build back enough of a reserve for families next year.

Our Stone Soup Dinner on Friday, January 28th will be a drive-thru event with take-out again this year. Youth parents: drop off your student for Winter Retreat and take soup home for supper! We plan to have both 16 ounce and 32 ounce to-go containers of soup (beef or vegetable) available for pick-up from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. We also plan limited deliveries within Houghton starting at 6:15. Pre-orders are important again this year, as we don't want to grossly over or under estimate soup and container amounts. Consider ordering some soup and donating it to be added to the prepared freezer meals the church is providing to those needing meals in these times, and make two donations in one!

Date – Friday, January 28, 2022

Time – 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Place – Houghton Wesleyan Church (under the “overhang” of the C.E. Building by the kitchen door)

Food – Stone Soup (beef soup or vegetable soup) in 16 oz or 32 oz. containers

Payment – Donation by cash, check, or online at [hwchurch.org](http://hwchurch.org)

Take Out (with delivery – starting at 6:15 - within Houghton if requested)

If you have questions, please contact Casda Danner at 567-4314 or [casdadanner@hwchurch.org](mailto:casdadanner@hwchurch.org)

To order online: <https://tinyurl.com/vpsstonesoup>, by email: [casdadanner@hwchurch.org](mailto:casdadanner@hwchurch.org), call: 567-4314, or get the paper form below to the church office.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Type, size, and number of containers needed      \_\_\_\_\_ Beef      \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetable  
   \_\_\_\_\_ 16 oz.      \_\_\_\_\_ 16 oz.  
   \_\_\_\_\_ 32 oz.      \_\_\_\_\_ 32 oz.

Approximate time between 5:30 & 6:30 for pick-up \_\_\_\_\_

Please deliver my order (deliveries will start at 6:15) Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact info. for order confirmation

Email (preferred) \_\_\_\_\_ or phone \_\_\_\_\_

Come enjoy some warm soup on a cold evening and support Valley Preschool!



# WELLSPRING MINISTRIES

As our year ended at Wellspring we noted that:

- ◆ Masks are back for all, except for eating times.
- ◆ The Christmas Room provided gifts to well over 200 children. Parents enjoyed choosing 2 items for each child. Thanks to those who helped add to our shelves.
- ◆ Volunteers were recognized and feted at a dinner in Belmont. We could not stay open if it were not for these folks who know what to do and do it well.
- ◆ (A special thanks to J-L Roederer who has helped with the 'hauling'.)
- ◆ Note: the kitchen crew could use a substitute volunteer to fill in on occasion.
- ◆ The annual Christmas ham meal was held December 22, and served by the Allegany County Sheriff's Department.
- ◆ We are closed December 24, 29,31 to give us family/friend time. January 5 we reopen at 10 am.



Because of your generosity and His enabling we are able to fulfill the purpose marked out for Wellspring Ministries at its inception:  
"To share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people of Allegany County (and beyond) by providing food, clothing, and household goods; and to mentor them to become all that God created them to be."

Please join with our Board as we pray for a year of growth in our love and dependence on God as we attend to the needs of others. If you are aware of, or have a need yourself, for food, or a specific bill payment, let us know. These are difficult days... but a new year dawns.

Beth Beardsley ( for the Board) 567-8117. (Happy New Year to you.)

From the  
**Library Shelves**  
Happy New Year!



On our library's New Books shelves are some books we hope you will be interested in, like *Promised Land* by Elizabeth Musser; *Women of the Bible Speak*-wisdom of 16 Bible women and their lessons for us today, by Shannon Bream; *Deep and Wide*-creating churches un-churched people love to attend, by Andy Stanley; *The Offering* by Angela Hunt, and more.

The children's New Books shelf has *Any Place, Any Time, Any Prayer*-a true story of how you can talk with God; then there is *I Wonder Why the Sea is Salty* and other questions about oceans. We have *Sneezy the Snowman*, and also *Megan and Jim's Sled Trip*. Find out how many letters of the alphabet it takes to build a fire truck in *Alphabet Rescue*. Discover the unlikely friendship between a little girl and a baby rhino in *Lola and Tiva*. There are a number of Easy Reading books too.

As always, please check your shelves at home for any church library books you may need to return. Thanks! And enjoy reading!



## ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMP NEEDS YOU TO VOLUNTEER NOW MORE THAN EVER!!!

Consider serving this summer during the week of Sunday, July 10, - Friday, July 15, 2022. God may be calling you to change the trajectory of a child's life, and in the process you will be molded more and more into the image of Christ. Royal Family Kids Camp has been a ministry of the Houghton Wesleyan Church to children ages 6 – 12 with substantiated histories of abuse and neglect since 1995. It is one of more than 250 camps operating in 45 states and 12 countries under the leadership of *For the Children*.



First-time volunteers are required to submit an application and three references by mid-February and to participate in a twenty-minute interview in early March. Houghton RFKC needs volunteers to serve as individual counselors (one counselor for every two campers), as photographers, as crafts and activities counselors, and in the area of drama and music. If you have a heart for children, we need you at camp! For more information or application materials, contact Nancy Murphy, at [nancy.murphy@houghton.edu](mailto:nancy.murphy@houghton.edu) or by calling or texting (585) 376-4053.



On November 30 of this year, Paul Martin, CEO of *For the Children*, published an article through Focus on the Family entitled, *The Epidemic of Childhood Trauma in the US Foster Care System and How Christians Can Help*. Paul starts by telling the story of one little girl, Anna, then ties the direct healing ministry of Christ and his followers to this Kingdom work, ending with the following statement:

*For the children, we can all make a difference and save the lives of the innocent.*

If you have an iPhone lying around or retiring when you upgrade, we'll turn it into a camera to help with our church video streaming and recording! Connect with the tech team for answers from Ken Bates or Nathan Danner at [streaming@hwchurch.org](mailto:streaming@hwchurch.org).



**January 12 we host a Pop Up Pantry in the church parking lot. Registration is required and opens Tuesday, January 4th at 8:30 am Call 585-209-0052.**

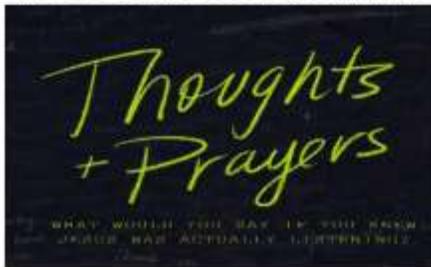
*Leave your name, phone number and the number of families you are picking up for. The Cuba Cultural Center will return your call and give you a time and number.*

## January Youth News:

- Jan 2 – No Youth Group or Sunday School
- Jan 9 – No Youth Group or Sunday School – *HVFD Christmas Tree Burning!* Come for Hot Chocolate and a large Christmas tree fire! 6:30pm at the HVFD parking lot.



- **Sunday School in Jan:**
  - o Jan 16 is *"Go-to-SS-with-Your-Parents"* Day! All youth staff and volunteers will meet at the HVFD for a staff meeting during the SS hour.
  - o Jan 23 and 30 – Guest speaker Ken Schenk will help us think about the book of Genesis
- **Youth Group in Jan:**
  - o Jan 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> - Youth Group Resumes! We're kicking off the semester with a two week series called, *"Thoughts and Prayers"* – In this series we'll discover that prayer is far less complicated and way more powerful than we might have thought!



- o Jan 30<sup>th</sup> – No Youth Group due to Winter Retreat!

## Jan 28-30<sup>th</sup> – District Winter Retreat at Penn York Camp

There is still time to register! The final deadline for registration is January 15<sup>th</sup>. See Pastor Jon for the brochure and permission slip.





We will hold Kids Club on Wednesday nights starting January 19th at 6:30. Parents who would like to enroll their children are asked to email Ann McNeill so preparation can begin for the children who will attend. We will continue to explore the pivotal events in the Bible through the Jesus Storybook Bible, rejoicing in the great rescue that Our Savior accomplished for us!



January 16<sup>th</sup> we resume Adult Sunday School classes. **All are welcome to find a class that fits your interest.** Here are the four options at 9:45 a.m.:

- \* Mothers' Pray, Room 7 or Outdoors
- \* Book Discussion Group—The Good Shepherd Room
- \* Dr. Paul Young (and others) in the Community Room— The Epistles of John (streamed)
- \* Ann McNeill and Patty Stalker on *The Chosen* Film & Bible Study in Room 105

Note: On February 13 all adult classes meet in Community Room at 9:45am for Mission Guest presentations!

# Sundays in January CHURCH STAFF

**January 2** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
a.m. Philippians 3: 12-21 Pastor Paul Shea

**January 9** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
a.m. *Return on Investment* (Matthew 13:44-45)

**January 16** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
a.m. *Generous Forgiveness* (Matthew 18:23-35)

**January 23** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
a.m. *The Vocation of Generosity* (Luke 12:16-21)

**January 30** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
a.m. *The Joy of Generosity* (Matthew 20:1-16)

**Wes Oden, Senior Pastor**

567-2024 [wesoden@hwchurch.org](mailto:wesoden@hwchurch.org)

**Jon Cole, Youth Pastor**

307-9950 [joncole@hwchurch.org](mailto:joncole@hwchurch.org)

**Cindy Oden, Assistant Pastor**

567-2024 [cindyoden@hwchurch.org](mailto:cindyoden@hwchurch.org)

**Paul Shea, Assistant Pastor**

567-4597 [paulshea@hwchurch.org](mailto:paulshea@hwchurch.org)

**Amanda Cox, Music & Worship Director**

567-4870 [amandacox@hwchurch.org](mailto:amandacox@hwchurch.org)

**Emily Spateholts, Director of Children's Ministries**

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**Ann McNeill, Director of Children's Ministries**

716-801-3425 [annmcneill@hwchurch.org](mailto:annmcneill@hwchurch.org)

**Church Office, M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-5 PM,**

567-2264 [office@hwchurch.org](mailto:office@hwchurch.org)

