

## *God Is the Ultimate Reality*

*Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth.  
And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you.*

*Why do you have so little faith?*

*(Isaiah 40:28; Matthew 6:30)*

James Stewart was a famous Scottish pastor and educator in the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In one of his sermons, he references a poem by the great Indian poet and mystic Rabindranath Tagore. In this poem, Tagore writes about a narrow lane in a great city, a lane that is surrounded by tall narrow buildings about which there can be seen one narrow strip of blue for about five minutes each day.

The lane seeing the sun for such a short time each day asks itself the question: *Is it real? Is the blue in the sky real?* The rubbish and refuse in the gutters and the paper and trash blowing up and down the alley, the dust, the noise, the traffic must be real and the blue in the sky that can only be seen for a few minutes a day must be the illusion.

Tagore says that this is like our daily life. We are so inundated by false images, by lies about God and ourselves, by the reality of pain and trouble and so seldom see or hear anything else, we find it hard to believe that anything but the common is normal, is reality, is all there is. And that little strip of blue above our heads? **It's so easy to forget that that's reality—that's what we were made for, that's what we are meant to experience.** But when life pushes in on us, we not only forget, but we also find it hard to believe.

Followers of Jesus live with the same dilemma. The world and scenarios of life push in on us continually. We see the powerful gaining and gaining while the vulnerable keep losing. We see injustice ignored. We see pain in so many lives, including our own. We feel that evil is taking more and more ground. **And in the midst of all this, it's easy, very easy, to lose track of what's ultimate reality.**

This mindset is always vital to our walk with Jesus, but it is especially significant when we think about the world in which we live and the need of so many people to know Jesus. If we do not believe—not just with our heads, but with our actions—that God and his kingdom are the ultimate reality, then **what do we truly have to offer the world? And if we do not live this way, why would anyone else think it's important enough to give their life to Jesus?**

This month we are once again setting aside time to think about the world. We are excited to welcome Jon Ortliip and to hear what God is doing through Ambassadors Football. My prayer is that as we listen and engage, our response will reflect our belief—that the ultimate reality is Jesus. It may not always seem to be the case, but this is our hope, our love, our life and the hope, love and life of everyone everywhere.

Blessings,  
Pastor Wes



## STEWARDSHIP—A Life of Generosity

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

### Global Missions Outreach – February 2022

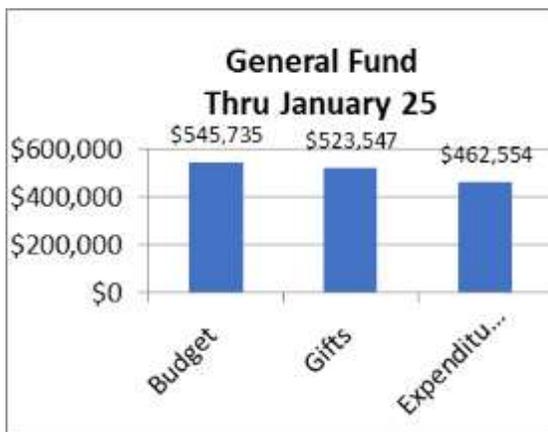
Houghton Wesleyan Church has been committed to God’s global outreach for over one hundred years, supported today in the Annual Community Financial Plan by faithful tithes and offerings. 16% of regular church income goes to global missions. (We are talking \$132,242). The largest portion of these funds (80%) directly assist 35 partner missionaries in nineteen ministries around the world.

You can learn about and pray for these people-treasure and use the annual *Global Mission Partner Directory* with a page on each missionary; catch the monthly *Missionary Mailbag* in church foyers or receive it online by contacting Donna Zoller; check out the picture bulletin board in the CE building; or adopt some to personally connect with. Every week our church prays for this extended global mission family and has a special Sunday to focus on global mission – this year February 13 with Jonathan Ortlip coming to share. (see separate article “Messengers of Good News”).

These people are Jesus’ hands and feet and our representatives in Australia, Buffalo, Czech Republic, Eastern Europe, England, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, Niger, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and several with general leadership and work in Asia, Bible translation, the Muslim world, and in global leadership training.

HWC regularly supports groups including Compass Care pregnancy service, Jericho Road Community Health Center, Rochester Youth Association, Wesleyan Native Ministries, the Jesus Film Partnership, World Hope International, Wesleyan Native Ministries, Liliias Trotter Center, and many short-term outreaches including the recent TEN3 trip with Petrillos to Tanzania. Last Fall the Global Missions Committee channeled special funds for Haiti earthquake relief.

The recent Christmas Offering of \$25,000 for the oxygen plant at LaGonave Wesleyan Hospital in Haiti illustrates special above-budget ways HWC responds to global needs. Pray for the Global Mission Committee\* as we prayerfully prioritize and respond to what God is doing around the world. What a privilege for HWC to generously give of time, talent and treasure in global Kingdom work. Thanks to all.



\*Global Mission Committee

Doyin Adenuga, Elizabeth Beardsley, Rachel Blew, Karen Daugherty, Jonathan Hilsher, Carolyn Miller, Calvin & Paulette Schierer, Janyce Smithley, Donna Zoller and Paul Shea.



# FEBRUARY 13, 2022

## THEME: MESSENGERS OF GOOD NEWS

Isaiah 52:7

“How wonderful to see a messenger coming across the mountains bringing good news, the news of peace! He announces victory and says to Zion, ‘Your God is king!’”

Guest Speaker **JONATHAN ORTLIP**,  
Founder/CEO of **AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL**



*Jonathan & Ruthie Ortlip*

Ambassadors Football – Building relationships and sharing the Gospel using football – in USA with clubs, camps and community service; in **20 different countries** with indigenous ministries and local leaders by training, equipping, churches/coaches. ([www.ambassadorsfootball.org](http://www.ambassadorsfootball.org))

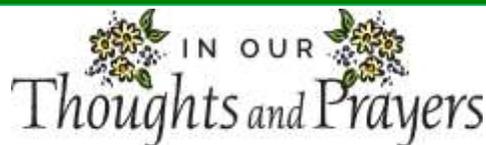


### SPECIAL FEATURES:

Introducing **TOWARD THE GOAL**, a curriculum being developed to help children over the world know Jesus and the Bible in a much more meaningful way.

Distributing the 2022 GLOBAL MISSIONS PARTNER DIRECTORY.

Plan ahead – Don’t Miss MISSION SUNDAY at Houghton Wesleyan, February 13



We pray for the families and friends of

- ✂ Zeke Sardina who died January 4; his service is posted on the Kopley Williams Funeral Home website
- ✂ Eila Shea who died January 9; a Memorial Service will take place May 20, 2022 (11:00 a.m.)
- ✂ Wendy Ott who died January 11; the service is streamed from the Houghton Church website.
- ✂ Harold Grant who died January 18; visitation with the family is January 28, 5-8 pm at Kopley Williams Funeral Home; the funeral service will take place January 29 at 1 pm and will be streamed.

Obituaries are posted on our website: <https://hwchurch.org/community-news/condolences/>



**Sunday School:** Up is Down. Right is Left. Cold is Hot. That's right, we're celebrating opposite day this whole month (or should we say, not celebrating? This could get confusing!) This series will give kids a chance to talk about the counter-cultural things Jesus said. It sounds impossible to believe that struggles bring us closer to Jesus or that our enemies can teach us about love. However, these beautiful opposites remind us that a God we can't see is always with us and that it's better to follow Jesus than our own instincts. Happy Opposite Day!

**February memory verse:** II Corinthians 12:9a - My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.



Thank you to our wonderful team of volunteers who faithfully teach and show God's love to our HWCkids every week. When you see them, pass on your love and thanks!

- \* Sunshine & Aaron Sullivan (3 & 4 year olds)
- \* Kathy Moore & Matt & Barb Woolsey (Kindergarten & 1st grade)
- \* Karl & Jill Schmidt (2nd & 3rd grade)
- \* Christian and Laura Esh (4th grade)
- \* Sharon McGarvey & Josie Adenuga (5th grade)
- \* Harold Blew & Rhoda Burgett (6th grade)
- \* Jayne Swanson (Connections)
- \* Jess Wartinger & Jamie Potter (SS Superintendents)
- \* Dan Wartinger & Matt Cox (Substitutes)
- \* Jan Schilke (Nursery)
- \* Kathy Reitnour (Cradle Roll)
- \* Jonathan & Nancy Gates, Angela Babbitt, Beth Beardsley, Ann McNeill, Nicole Torraca, Emily & Michael Spateholts (Children's Church)
- \* Casda Danner, Rachel Blew, Joy Worthington, Joan Zieja, Brenda Montanye (Valley Preschool)

**Kids Club** is waiting for you to come back, children! Let us know ahead of time, parents, if your kids plan to attend so that we can prepare the right number of craft projects. February's theme is God's faithfulness. And wow, is He faithful to us! Wednesdays at 6:30!

**NOTE: We are offering a Stewards of Children training on Saturday, February 5th from 9-11am.** Protecting our children and youth is a community responsibility and privilege! Everyone 18+ years old is invited to participate in our Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention training on February 5th from 9-11am. Join us as we discover how we can make the Church a welcome, safe, and comfortable environment for our young people. Stewards of Children training is open to anyone 18+ years old but required for youth and children's ministry volunteers. Questions? Contact Pastor Jon ([joncole@hwchurch.org](mailto:joncole@hwchurch.org)) or Emily ([emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org](mailto:emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org)).

## Congratulations!

Vivian Drew Lundeen was born January 15 to parents Andrew and Melissa, and siblings Adalynn, Cynthia, and Everly  
Wren Pauline Wartinger was born January 19 to parents Dan and Jess and siblings, Adalyn, Elliot, Isaac, Oakley, Upton, and Yukon.



**JULY 10-15, 2022**

[www.houghtonRFKC.com](http://www.houghtonRFKC.com)



**Become an RFKC volunteer and give 52 children ages 6 - 12 "The Best Week of the Year"!  
Here's how:**

**Go to our web-site [www.houghtonRFKC.com](http://www.houghtonRFKC.com)**

Complete and return the 2022 RFKC Application Packet (application and 3 reference forms)

**BEFORE February 25, 2022.**

What roles are needed?

- ⇒ **Counselors!!!** We have 3 types of counselor roles: **Individual Counselors** spend the week accompanying two campers; **Roving Counselors** who mingle with a number of children throughout the day; and **Activities Counselors** who work in the area of crafts and fishing and woodworking;
- ⇒ **Bible Storyteller;**
- ⇒ **Camp Grandma & Grandpa**

What preparation is needed? After receiving your application materials, you will be asked to participate in a 20-minute interview in March followed by training on the afternoon of Sunday, April 24.



**February 9 we host a Pop Up Pantry in the church parking lot.**

**Registration is required and opens Tuesday, February 1 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.*

# WELLSPRING MINISTRIES

Dear HWC Family,

Occasionally at Wellspring, one can have feelings of despair and sadness as we come face to face with difficult people or people in difficult situations - or both. We want Jesus to make things new NOW! Yet, we WAIT and count on your prayers for His wisdom and love each Wednesday and Friday.

In hope we echo the words of Samwise Gamgee,

**" Everything that is sad is going to come untrue."**

Jesus will undo the curse we've carried since the Garden. We all wait meanwhile, and count on His JOY for strength and courage.

News

- ~ Masks? Yes! KN95 if possible.
- ~ the year 2021 ended with our books in the black. Praise the Lord.
- ~ the front porch will soon be refurbished.
- ~ pray with us as we investigate installing a dumbwaiter or elevator to ease transport of items
- ~ approximately 210 children were blessed by the Christmas Room
- ~ Gudy Stevenson will join our once a month devotional speakers in February. :)
- ~ Come visit anytime. Lunch is at 11:55.

Beth Beardsley (for the Board)

## From the Library Shelves



On our shelves this month are books, CDs, and DVDs on love: family love, romantic love, friendship love, love languages and so on. In the audiobook *Eight Twenty Eight*, love prevails in spite of a car accident, brain injury, and constant care. *Falling in Love is Easy, Staying in Love Requires a Plan* and the DVD *Staying in Love* can help. *Small Things with Great Love* by Margot Starbuck explores how you can have an impact on those around you simply through small acts of love. There is also *Yours Till Heaven: the untold love story of Charles and Susie Spurgeon* by Ray Rhodes, Jr.

For the kids, *Mirabelle Shows Love and Kindness to Mr. Beet*. Will it Change him? Find out in the Vegetables DVD *Beauty and the Beet*. We have the book *I Love My Mama*, about a little elephant and his mama. And the book *Don't Forget to Remember*, by Ellie Holcomb, encourages us to remember that no matter what, God loves us.

So come on in and see what we have for you!!



## Outdoor Service Weather Conditions Updates

We are entering the time of year when we need to address bitter cold weather and the potential of snow and ice storms. As much as we value the outdoor option, we want to use wise caution for the safety of all who might attend. With this in mind, we have adopted weather guidelines for the outdoor service. We will move the outdoor service into the sanctuary based on any of the following conditions: • Temperature predicted to be below 20 degrees • Wind chill predicted to be in single digits • Snowstorm or ice storm is predicted with a high degree of certainty In the event that weather conditions create the need to move the outdoor service into the sanctuary, we will communicate this decision by Saturday noon in these ways: • We will post on the church website ([www.hwchurch.org](http://www.hwchurch.org)). Be sure to refresh your web browser in order to get the most updated information. • We will put a message on the church answering machine (585-567-2264). • We will send out an announcement by text and email through the regular channels



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

County Office Building  
7 Court Street, Room #30  
Belmont, New York 14813  
Phone: (585) 268-9250  
Fax: (585) 268-9264

**TO: Allegany County Media and Agencies**  
**FROM: Tyler J. Shaw, Public Health Director**  
**RE: Free COVID-19 At-Home Tests**  
**DATE: January 18, 2022**

### **News Release: Free COVID-19 At-Home Tests**

The Federal Government recently released the COVID-19 at-home test-ordering link. Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four (4) free at-home COVID-19 tests. The tests are completely free and orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. Please consider placing an order for tests now so you have them when you need them.

Please visit [www.covidtests.gov](http://www.covidtests.gov) in order to place your order. If you have any questions at all or do not have internet access, we are happy to assist by calling (585) 268-9250.

Would you like to join an effort to pray at home for Afghan evacuees and other refugees living in America? If so, drop Ann McNeill an email at [annmneill@hwchurch.org](mailto:annmneill@hwchurch.org) or give her a call.



**Community Announcement**  
Mount Pleasant Cemetery Association public meeting  
Thursday, February 17th, 8-9pm, Houghton Firehall.



Thank you to everyone who made our Stone Soup event such a success! We made about 16 gallons of soup. Around 30 people/households ordered for themselves and/or the freezer meal program. We put just over three gallons of soup in the freezer. Our expenses were just under \$230, which is up from other years, but the count on Saturday was \$1,463.00 in donations which does not include online giving and anything else that comes in. This year half of our students have gotten a \$10 reduction in tuition each month from this fund, and it is wonderful to know that we will be able to offer similar tuition discounts next year as well. I am amazed and grateful for such generosity! Thank you to our Valley Preschool families for providing all of the vegetables for our soup and for doing so much chopping ahead of time this year! It made things go quickly on Friday afternoon. Thanks also to VPS staff and volunteers Joy Mansfield, Rachel Blew, Joan Zeija, Brenda Montanye, Donna Blew, Nathan Danner, and Emily Spateholts for chopping, stirring, labeling soup containers, serving, cleaning up, washing pots, handing out and delivering soup, and helping in so many ways. Many thanks to this church family and our community for your support of and generosity to Valley Preschool and for providing freezer meals to have on hand for those in our congregation who need a meal to ease their load in a time of need.

# Sundays in February

**February 6** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
*Generous Cooperation with God* (Luke 16:1-16)

**February 13** (8:45 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
Jon Ortlip (Missions Convention)

**February 20** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
*The Risk of Generosity* (Matthew 25:14-30)

**February 27** (8:45 Outdoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)  
District Superintendent Joey Jennings



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## CHURCH STAFF

**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**

808-8925 [emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org](mailto:emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org)

**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)

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