

Looking Forward to 2023

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 3:12-14)

January might well be the most intriguing month of the year.

In some ways, January is a difficult month because it signifies the end of all we have been anticipating about Christmas. For weeks and weeks, we have been waiting and planning and preparing for Christmas...and now it's over. December is often a month in which committee meetings are cancelled and a month in which we gather for special events and a month that often brings times with family in a way we rarely experience other times of the year. January forces us to come to the realization that all of that is done and that we must now resume life in all of its commonness and ordinariness. It's not always easy to make this transition.

The irony of January is that our lament about what has passed is also an opportunity to engage life in a new, even exciting way. Even though the first day of January is just another day like any other day, there is something about it that brings hope and possibility for what might be.

I suspect that this is why we make new year's resolutions: we see this as a moment in time when we might move from what has held us back toward what might possibly be. And even though the day is an artificial date on the calendar, it is a gift of God for our mental, physical, emotional and even spiritual well-being.

I think that God understands our need for days like this. He instructs Israel to set up a calendar of days through the year that are intended to be viewed differently from other days. In themselves, there is nothing special about these days, except that God assigns meaning to the days and by doing so, makes them special. He creates these moments as opportunities for his people to, in the words of the apostle Paul: *Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

In whatever way you celebrate the beginning of the new year, let me encourage you to ponder what you might want/need to leave behind and to trust God for what he might have in store for you in the year ahead. I am convinced that God has more for us than we might ever dream or imagine.

Blessings,
Pastor Wes

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.



STEWARDSHIP—A Life of Generosity

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

Lay Shepherd Ministry

The Lay Shepherd Ministry is an active year-round outreach. The Lay Shepherd Ministry is rooted in dividing Houghton, Fillmore and the surrounding area/towns by neighborhood.

Through the structure of this ministry, countless meals are prepared and shared with people who are ill, have had surgery, have had a love one die, or have had a new baby.

Besides sharing God’s love and care in these tangible ways, the Lay Shepherd groups help with several church-wide events including: the Ice Cream Social in August, the Christmas Cookie Fellowship in December following our annual Carol Sing, and they assist the Youth Group with the Easter Breakfast. Even though some of these events have changed or altered over the past couple of years, the Lay Shepherd groups have worked alongside the Pastoral Staff to think of creative ways for connection and fellowship.

During the pandemic, we offered an ice cream drive-through with the pastoral staff giving out various ice cream treats to carloads of people who drove through the church parking lot. We were excited that several people from the area saw the sign of invitation and drove through as well. People were very grateful for the ice cream and a chance to briefly visit with the pastoral staff. It was such a joy to also see and get to visit with many from our church come through to pick-up an ice cream treat.

Last December we held the annual carol sing in the church parking lot. Following the carol sing, one of our Lay Shepherd groups prepackaged and served smores ingredients to make over our fire-pits. Everyone who attended enjoyed this new twist on a cherished tradition.

Through the years, the Lay Shepherd groups have served in a variety of ways and at a variety of gatherings. We are so grateful for all who give leadership to this ministry. We are so grateful for your gifts which enable us to host these events and help so many in our church and neighborhoods. Denise Campbell and Cindy Oden



Praise God for \$16,620.00 received to date for the Christmas Eve Offering for Wycliffe Thailand. Donations are still welcome until December 31.

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 (February 21). Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, is February 22. 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.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 22, 2023, is a day to celebrate and focus on choosing life. This is a day to give thanks to God for life and to renew our commitment to be people who value and respect every life--the born and the unborn. We take this stand because God, the Creator of all things and all people, deeply values human life. Genesis tells us that all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and the Psalmist declares that all human beings are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” (Psalm 139:14). So, on this day, give thanks to God for the gift of life--your life, the life of those you love and the life of all human beings.



Sundays in Kids Min in January:

- 1st - Nursery and children's church (no Kids Connect)
- 8th - Nursery and children's church (no Kids Connect)
- 15th - All programs resume as normal

Kids Connect in January: "Measure Up!" - "When I'm older!" "When I'm taller!" Every kid is excited to grow up — even if it's just to finally ride that big kid roller coaster they've had their eye on. This five-week series is about another kid who grew up — Jesus! Through stories from Jesus' early life and ministry, kids will learn five important truths to help them continue growing: God guides us to safety, we can love God with our actions, we can follow Jesus, God makes us ready at the right time, and God's words help us make wise choices.



- January Memory Verse: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." — Matthew 6:33 (NIV)
- Save the Date: January Kids Club will be on Saturday, January 21st from 9:30-11am. More details headed your way soon!
- Thank you to everyone who helped and attended our Kids Club "Christmas Camp-out"! About 35 kids (including a handful of first time visitors!) and 15 adults had a great time celebrating Christmas with a fun camping twist.



Congratulations to parents, Garrett and Kristin Luckey, siblings, Liam and Adelyn and great grandparents, Herb and Karen Williams at the birth of Marcus Joel Luckey on November 22.

New Year, New You?

January 1 may not be a magical day or provide you with superhero powers to actually keep those ambitious resolutions. But *can* provide a helpful opportunity to reflect on current habits and commit yourself to new things. Consider whether January 1, 2023 might be the nudge you need to pursue...

New encouragement? New gratitude?
New spiritual growth? New inspiration?
New motivation? New relationships?
New connections? New self-discipline?
New prayer life? New joy!



If those sound inspiring, and you'd like to move forward in your walk with Christ, then commit to this new opportunity: Join an **HWC Banding Group**! Still unsure? Come and hear some stories from current banding participants' experiences of discipleship: **Wednesday, January 18, 2023 @ 7pm** in the Community Room.



Stone Soup Dinner Fund Raiser for Valley Preschool



Six years ago I never could have imagined that our Stone Soup Dinners would be the success they have been, especially continuing in a different form through covid! I am excited that this year we plan to have an in person dinner again as well as take out.

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 eight of our twelve students have benefited by being able to have a \$10 per month discount on tuition from the funds raised last year.

Our Stone Soup Dinner this year is on Friday, January 27th from 5:15 – 6:30 for both our in person meal and take-out. 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. Pre-orders (online or by contacting Casda Danner, VPS director) are important again this year, especially since we will also be serving soup inside again. Consider ordering some soup and donating it to be added to the prepared freezer meals the church is providing to those needing meals in various times, and make two donations in one!

Date – Friday, January 27, 2023

Time – 5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

Place – Houghton Wesleyan Church

Food – Stone Soup (beef soup or vegetable soup)

Payment – Donation by cash, check, or online at hwchurch.org

Take Out available in 16 oz or 32 oz. containers

If you have questions, please contact Casda Danner at 567-4314 or casdadanner@hwchurch.org To order online: <https://tinyurl.com/vpsstonesoup>, by email: casdadanner@hwchurch.org, or call Casda at: 567-4314 (landline!). Come enjoy some warm soup on a cold evening and support Valley Preschool!

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

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY meets every Wednesday, January 11 through mid May at 9:30-10:45 a.m. in the Good Shepherd Room (under the sanctuary). We would be glad to have you come for a time of Bible study and prayer.

If you have questions, please contact Lyn Harter at Lharter@hotmail.com

WELLSPRING WORDS

"HOPE is the poor man's bread." (G. Herbert)

For those with little or nothing, HOPE is what keeps them going.

The lasting, true HOPE offered at Wellspring is not a wish or object or hot meal, but a PERSON - Jesus... and we all identify as poor, needy without Him. He is the indescribable GIFT that takes us through to eternity.

As you pray for Wellspring Ministries in the quieter months of winter, will you pray that the HOPE we have in Jesus will be communicated by the Holy Spirit to hearts and minds. People need the Lord.

As 2023 dawns we do thank you for walking with us in this ministry of HOPE, and we pray that this "God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

We reopen Wednesday January 4, 2023 - 10 am. to 1:15pm. Note - if Belfast Central School is closed due to weather, we are as well. Come have lunch with us... or a cup of coffee! Happy New Year to our HWC friends.

Beth Beardsley (for the Board) 567-8117.



January 25th we host a Pop Up Pantry in the church parking lot.

Registration is required and opens Tuesday, January 17th 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.*

From the
Library Shelves
Happy New Year!



In this new year, why don't you come on in to the church library and see what we have that might interest you.

There are DVDs, and books on CD, some are fiction, others are biographies, history, Bible studies, and Christian living. There are also many books in those same categories, by such authors as David Jeremiah, Max Lucado, Billy Graham, Lynn Austin, Terri Blackstock, Lauraine Snelling, and more.

The children's rooms have many books, CDs and DVDs of interest. There are items about animals, space, history, and just learning about our world. We have fiction books about horses, other animals, boys and girls in history and much more. There are also easier books for our beginning readers and picture books.

Come on in and see what we have....and Happy New Year!

Youth Group in January:

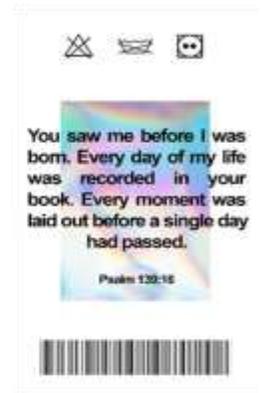
Jan 15 and 22– Exclusive Drop – A series about identity in Christ!
Jan 29 – No Youth Group due to Winter Retreat

Prayer Breakfast 7am in the Community Room

PB is on for: January 17, 24, 31

Discipleship Hour in January

Jan 15 – is “Go to Sunday School with your Parents day!” Youth staff meet in the youth room
Jan 22 - Genesis Series begins!
Jan 29 – The Flood



Winter Retreat January 27-29

The final deadline for Winter Retreat is January 15th!

See the brochure here...

...and the registration form here!

(For the [HWCYG annual permission slip click here.](#)

Or scan here!) ----->





Condolences to the family and friends of Marilyn Main who died November 26.

Our Next

Men's Breakfast

is on Saturday, January 14, 8:00 am
in the Community Room



Enjoy great food, a brief Q/A “around the table” activity, and info on upcoming opportunities. Planning to come? A heads-up would be helpful.

Text/email or tell one of these guys:

- Bryan Davidson
- Nate Jacoby
- Don Little
- David Huizenga

For rent—

Fancher Drive, Houghton, 4 bedroom house, spacious living room and dining room. Furnished or unfurnished. Month-to-month available. Contact: Becky 585-567-2727.



Allegany Log Homes has re-opened.

In addition to selling log cabin kits, plans and supplies we are providing custom kiln drying with our iDRY vacuum kiln located on Dugway Road in Fillmore, NY. Our --vacuum kiln dries lumber 5 times faster than a conventional kiln.

Gregg and Wendy Reinbold 585-567-2583 or alleganyloghomesny@gmail.com hours by appointment

Summer Camps at Houghton

Do you know someone who would be interested in a music or sports camp this summer at Houghton University? They can experience an unforgettable week on campus featuring premier instructional camps in music, basketball, volleyball, tennis, or soccer. These camps provide students with a great experience, small group skill development, leadership and character development, and direct preparation for college. All campers will receive instruction from expert staff who are leaders in their field - but more importantly care about our campers! There are opportunities for students entering grades 1-12!

Register online at: [Summer Camps at Houghton](#)

BASKETBALL CAMPS (Register by April 15 and receive \$30 off ...excluding Building for the Future Day Camp)

June 25-29: Girls Basketball Camp (entering grades 4-12)

July 2-6: Boys Basketball Camp (entering grades 4-12)

July 3-6: Building for the Future Camp (entering grades 1-3)

MUSIC CAMPS (Register by April 15 and receive \$30 off)

June 25-28: **Choir and Band Camp** (for girls and boys entering grades 7-12)

June 29-July 1: **Advanced Strings Camp** (for girls and boys entering grades 10-12)

VOLLEYBALL CAMP

July 23-27: for girls entering grades 7-12 (Register by April 15 and receive \$30 off)

TENNIS CAMP

July 16-20: for boys and girls entering grades 7-12 (Register by April 15 and receive \$30 off)

SOCCER CAMPS (Register by April 15 and receive \$30 off ...excluding Mini Day Camp and Advanced/ID Camps)

July 16-20: Girls Soccer Camp (girls entering grades 4-12)

July 17-20: Mini Day Camp (9am-3pm, boys & girls; entering grades 1-3)

July 21-22: Girls Advanced/ID Camp (girls HS grad years: 2024, 2025, 2026)

July 23-27: Boys Soccer Camp (boys entering grades 4-12)

July 28-29: Boys Advanced/ID Camp (boys HS grad years: 2024, 2025, 2026)

Campers accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Certain weeks fill up fast, so it is best to register as early as possible.

Questions? Call the athletics office at 585-567-9645 or email conferences@houghton.edu



CHURCH STAFF

Wes Oden, Senior Pastor
567-2024 wesoden@hwchurch.org

Jon Cole, Youth Pastor
307-9950 joncole@hwchurch.org

David Huizenga, Discipleship & College Pastor
585-365-5863 davidhuizenga@hwchurch.org

Cindy Oden, Assistant Pastor
567-2024 cindyoden@hwchurch.org

Paul Shea Volunteer 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

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

January 1 (10:00 Indoor/Streaming)
The Love of God is Our Only Hope
(Pastor David Huizenga)

January 8 (10:00 Indoor/Streaming)
Rest for the Soul
(Pastor David Huizenga)

January 15 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
a.m. *The Church Looks Like...* (Mark 2)

January 22 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
a.m. *The Church Looks Like...* (John 15)

January 29 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
a.m. *The Church Looks Like...* (1 Corinthians 15)