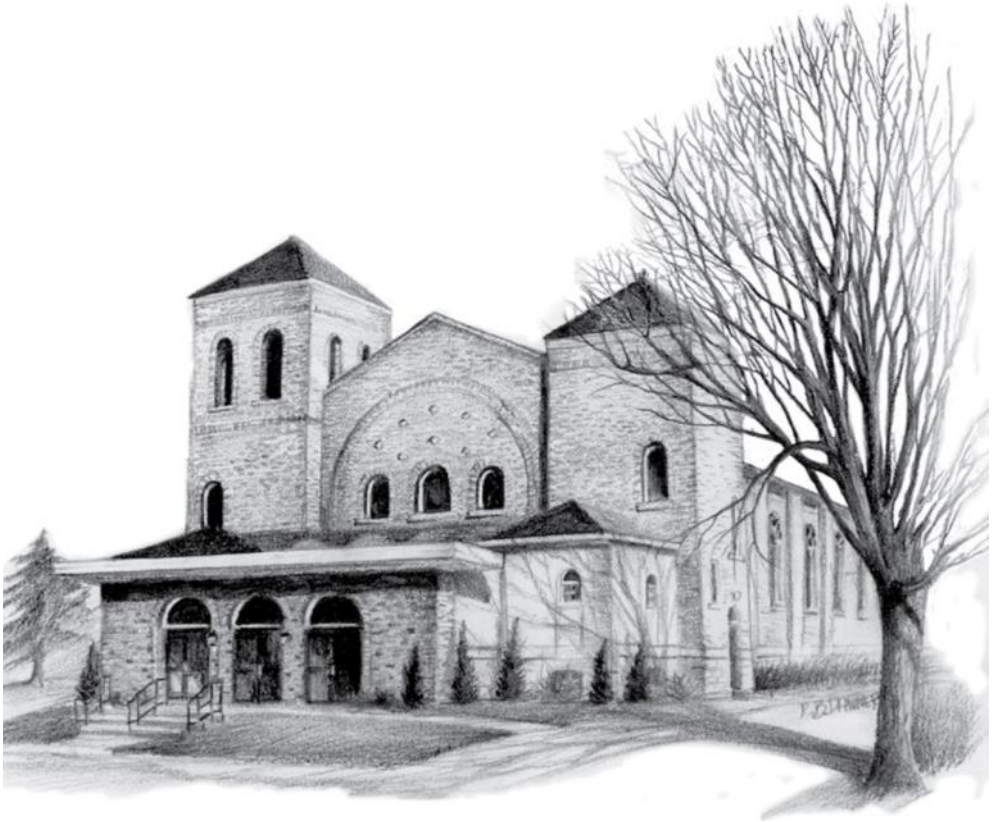
Houghton
Wesleyan Church

Joyfully loving God,
wholeheartedly serving others



Wesley Oden, *Senior Pastor*

Jon Cole, *Youth Pastor*

David Huizenga, *Assistant Pastor*

Cindy Oden, *Assistant Pastor*

Grace Deitrick, *Assistant Pastor*

Emily Spateholts, *Children's Ministry Director*

Judy Congdon, *Organist and Choir Director*

P.O. Box 127, Houghton, NY 14744-0127 • (585) 567-2264 • www.hwchurch.org

Fifth Sunday In Lent

March 17, 2024
11:00 A.M.

Prelude: *St. Patrick's Breastplate* arr. C.V. Stanford & R.V. Williams

Call to Worship

Choral Introit: *Behold the Lamb of God* G.F. Handel

Life of the Church

Children's Sermon: *What's For Breakfast?*

Faithful Now, Man of Sorrows
Offering will be received during the first song.

Confession & Time of Prayer

Son of God, Man of Sorrows, help us to grieve our sin. We confess that we have transgressed your law, that we have fallen short and disobeyed, that we have not loved you with heart, soul, mind and strength, nor loved our neighbor as ourselves. We mourn this affront to your sacrificial death and unconditional love. Forgive us once again and fill us afresh with amazement at your limitless mercy. Transform us more and more into disciples who die to sin and live up to our high and heavenly calling. In your Holy Name we pray, Amen.

Response: ***Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross (refrain)***

Scripture Reading: Luke 23:26-34

Greeting One Another

Sermon: *When We Struggle with Grief*

Hymn: ***Like a River Glorious (#449)***

Benediction

Postlude: *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor (BWV 559)* J.S. Bach

Acolyte: Belle Babbitt **Reader**: Jim Zoller

Musicians:
Alison Young-Ruesser (vocals & guitar), Betsy Webb (vocals & keyboard), Bridget Walton (vocals), Dan Zambrano (cajòn), Jill Jordan (violin), David Huizenga (piano)

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. The season of Lent is a time for reflection and action as we ponder the death of Jesus. These 40 days lead us through the deserts and valleys of life and through the peaks and joys of life. On this Fourth Sunday in Lent, we remember the depths of God's love for us in Christ. May our worship help us to focus on our need and on his grace.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING is Palm Sunday. Pastor Wes concludes the series of sermons focusing on some of the interactions between Jesus and others in the last hours of his life. Next week's sermon, *When We Struggle with Death*, is from Luke 23:36-43. We will gather for worship at 8:30 and 11:00. The 11:00 service will be streamed. All children are invited to participate in the procession of the palms at the beginning of each service (8:30 and 11:00) on Palm Sunday. Please meet in the sanctuary entry way 10 minutes before the service begins.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 28 (Maundy Thursday)

6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, March 29 (Good Friday)

10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Journey to the Cross (Community Room)
Come and go, interactive event moves through the various moments from Jesus praying in the Garden to his burial in the tomb. All ages are welcome.

3:00 p.m. Organ Meditation

Sunday, March 31 (Easter)

7:45 a.m. Easter Baptism Service
8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Worship Service

EASTER BAPTISM: If you are interested in being baptized on Easter Sunday morning, March 31, contact Pastor Wes (office@hwchurch.org) about attending the baptism class.

The Church welcomes your **EASTER LILIES** for Easter Sunday, March 31st. We have purchased several lilies which you may purchase for $16.00 each or you may bring your own lily to drop off at the church office by Good Friday, March 29th. If you would like to purchase one or more liles, you may use the online giving option, mail a check to the church office (indicate Easter lilies), or drop off payment at the church office. If you wish to purchase a lily in memory or in honor of a loved one, please email (pattystalker@hwchurhc.org) or call Patty (567-2264) with your information by Monday, March 25th. Thank you.

STEWARDSHIP

Budget Needed: $685,409.71 / **Budget Received:** $661,142.50

MISSION MOMENT – We pray for Breanna Smithley working in England with young people most of whom struggle with mental health, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Her specialized training in this area is crucial. She requests prayer for energy and strength in temporarily needing to daily commute an hour and a half each way to serve, and to spread God's love with students and staff. (See month *Missionary Mailbag* in church foyers.

PERSECUTED CHURCH – Imagine if it were against the law to pray for the sick! In February the Hindu BJP party in northeastern state of Assam, India introduced a bill banning "magical healing" meaning even Christian praying for healing. Punishment includes prison and fines. The bill awaits India's president's (same BJP party) ratification. We pray for God to intervene.

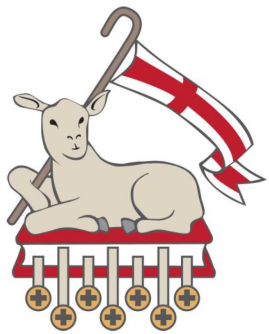
NOTE: Applications for church fund assistance are due at the church office by March 20th. Short Term Mission Trip Applications are available from the church secretary or at **hwchurch.org/global-outreach/**

PRAYER CONCERNS: for the family and friends of Louise Prinsell and for all who are grieving; for people with health concerns: Jack and Linda Leax, Jim Arthur, Beth Pocock, Kyle Boon, Linda Roth, Paul Roth, James Bates, Vesta Mullen, Terry Ayers, Scarlett Gildemeister, Kim Pegula, Grace Taylor, Karen Gaerte, Andy Mikolajczyk (Mary Lingenfelter's brother), Denise Zambrano, Cameron Green, Vangie Grant, Lenore Paige, Dan and Sarah Gurley, Chelsea Ellis, Mark Mayhle (Doug's brother), Jeshu, Kurtis and Eliyah Perry, Reuben Samuels, Emily Crikelair; for all dealing with tragedies and disasters including the recent storms; for refugees throughout the world; for protection, wisdom and peace in Ukraine and in Israel, Gaza and the entire Middle East; for a Chinese pastor who has been detained by the police for more than two years; for St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Belfast (Father John Cullen).

Notes on the Choral Introit

"Behold, the Lamb of God" from Handel's *Messiah*
It is recorded in John 1:29, and again in John 1:36, that at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry John the Baptist said of him: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (NIV)

Handel takes this quote from John the Baptist and places it in the opening chorus of Part II of Messiah, the section of this famous oratorio focused on Jesus' passion and death. From this side of history we realize (as did Handel) that it was through Jesus' suffering and death that he took away the sin of the world, and thus Handel chose to clothe this declaration of John the Baptist in the music of a funeral march with its characteristic minor key and persistent dotted rhythms.

The dotted rhythm, during Handel's time, was also employed as a musical symbol of royalty. The text says "Behold the Lamb of God" but the musical elements Handel chose also say "Behold the King." We know that Jesus was and is both.

Historically Handel's "Behold, the Lamb of God" has perhaps most often been understood as an anthem about the crucifixion, and it surely is. But this interpretation does not capture all its layers of meaning. The choir sings it this morning as part of our call to worship, inviting us in our moments together, as John the Baptist declared long ago, to "look at the Lamb of God."