



The Tomb Is Empty

Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.
(Mark 10:15)

Years ago, I read a story about a young boy named Philip who was born with a severe disability. He was a pleasant child but increasingly aware of the difference between himself and other children. Philip went to Sunday school at the Methodist church, joining nine other eight-year old boys and girls in the third grade class.

They learned, they laughed, they played together. And they really cared about one another, even though eight-year-olds don't say they care about one another out loud. The children struggled with Philip, but the teacher was creative, and he helped them.

The teacher had a marvelous idea for his class the Sunday after Easter. Years ago, a brand of pantyhose came in containers that look like great big eggs. The teacher collected ten of them. When the children came to class that day, they were each given one. It was a beautiful spring day, and the assignment was for each child to go outside, find a symbol for new life, put it into the egg, and bring it back to the classroom. It was glorious. It was confusing. It was wild. They ran all around the church grounds, gathered their symbols, and returned to the classroom. They put all the eggs on a table, and stood around it while the teacher began to open them.

He opened one, and there was a flower, and they ooh-ed and aah-ed. He opened another, and there was a little butterfly. "Beautiful," the girls all said, since it is hard for eight-year-old boys to say "beautiful." He opened another, and there was a rock. And as third graders will, some laughed, and some said, "That's crazy! How's a rock supposed to be like new life?" But the smart little boy who'd found it spoke up: "That's mine. And I knew all of you would get flowers and buds and leaves and butterflies and stuff like that. So I got a rock because I wanted to be different. And for me, that's new life." They all laughed. The teacher said something to himself about the profundity of eight-year-olds and opened the next one. There was nothing there. The other children, as eight-year-olds will, said, "That's not fair—that's stupid!—somebody didn't do it right."

Then the teacher felt a tug on his shirt. When he looked down, Philip was standing beside him. "It's mine," Philip said. "It's mine."

And the children said, "You don't ever do things right, Philip. There's nothing there!"

"I did so do it," Philip said. "I did do it. It's empty. The tomb is empty!"

There was silence, a very full silence. In that moment, a miracle happened. From that time on, it was different. Philip suddenly became a part of that group of eight-year-old children. They took him in. He was set free from the tomb of his differentness.

Philip's family had known since the time of his birth that he wouldn't live out a full life span. And later that that summer, with an infection that most normal children could have quickly shrugged off, Philip died.

At the funeral, nine eight-year-old children marched up to the altar, not with flowers to cover over the stark reality of death. Nine eight-year-olds, with their Sunday school teacher, marched right up to that altar, and laid on it an empty egg—an empty, old, discarded pantyhose egg.

And Jesus said: Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Because Jesus is risen,
Pastor Wes



STEWARDSHIP a life of generosity

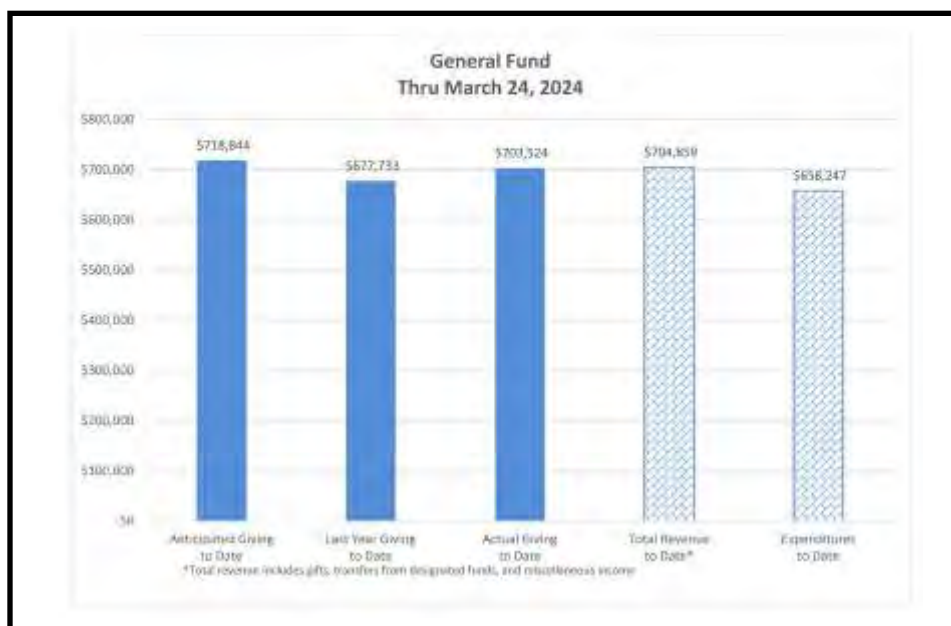
GLOBAL MISSIONS

The question this year is: **How well do you know your missionaries?** It's been a special treat for HWC, just since January 2024, to meet Stacia N. and Kevin and Cindy Austin from Europe, and Chris and Melissa George from Australia. Add to this the visit of Joel and Barabara Trudell last April and the frequent presence of the Dotys, Littles, Szymanskis and Petrillos amongst us. The last four are constantly in touch or visiting overseas Gospel outreach and workers. **How do you get to know your missionaries?** Pastor always prays for some of our missionaries each Sunday. Check the weekly bulletin for details. Donna Zoller publishes condensed news monthly in the Missionary Mailbag, available via email on request or in hardcopy in the church and C.E. foyers. Take a copy! Very soon the large and colorful map in the C.E. Atrium will have photos of all 19 missionary units that this congregation supports. Go to events open to all when our missionaries visit. Everyone is invited to link directly to their personal emails, blogs, Facebook news and in friendly conversation. They welcome personal connection with you.

You should know that 78.5% of our missionary dollars in the church's Financial Plan goes to support this wonderful group of people (plus a small portion to a few retired missionaries). We are also supporting a summer TEN3 trip to Tanzania with the Petrillos, a Highlander Field Hockey Mayterm trip to Costa Rica with Hannah Ogden, and a five-month trip to Zambia with HU Sr/grad Hope Willert. We're excited to announce that Lydia Christensen will be teaching for one year at Hillcrest Christian School in Indonesia starting this summer with substantial start-up funds of \$2000 from our Short Term allotment. Big news: You'll perhaps recall that during the George's recent visit they were lacking funds to return to Western Australia by Easter. They are going (!) and we added an extra \$1000 boost to our regular support to get them there.

A big thank you for the support you more openly give outside of regular church offerings to the Annual Christmas Eve Offering. This year God's people here gave over \$15,000 for discipleship outreach in our two European Global Partner (Wesleyan) fields where Austins and Stacia N. serve. **THANK YOU Houghton Church Family** for your support and prayers for our hands, feet and voices around the world who Shine the Light of Jesus!

Your Global Missions Committee (Nancy Cole, Karen Daugherty, Carolyn Miller, Calvin Schierer, Paulette Schierer, Paul Shea, Mark Sweet, Matthew Webb, Hope Willert, and Donna Zoller

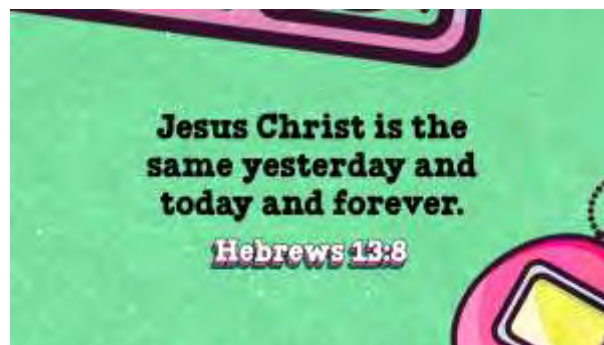




Kids Connect: “Throw Back” - From retro toys to fashion trends, we all love a good throwback. (Especially for grown-ups because it reminds us of being young again.) There are things that remind us of a moment in time, but other things feel timeless and like they’re always in style. In this four-week series, kids will travel through the decades and see that the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels are always trending. As we hear from Jesus, we’ll see it’s always good to be humble, we can always forgive, Jesus is always fair, and love always needs action.

Memory Verse: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."— Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

Kids Club: Saturday, April 20th, 9:30-11am for grades PreK-6th – Join us, as part of the missions week at HWC, for a special missions-themed Kids Club! More details to come in the bulletin, Tuesday letters, family emails, and more!



Congratulations to parents, Nick and Kate Drum at the birth of Collins Elise and Lucas Walter on March 11.

Congratulations to Emily and Michael Spateholts, Sarah and Samuel on the addition of Piper Joy (born March 15) to their family. Emily will be out of the office on family leave through May 31st.



Did You Know?

Our numbers are up to where they were a few years ago. We have twenty children at VPS. Nine of them are second generation students!

We now meet five mornings a week. Eighteen children come on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings and seven on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Of those seven, five come every morning and two are with us for Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays we have two classes. Rachel Blew teaches our two and three-year-olds assisted by Melissa Rosier. Joy Mansfield assists Casda Danner in teaching our fours and fives. Joan Zieja and Brenda Montanye are our volunteers. For many years they have selflessly given many hours each week along with their love, knowledge, and helpful attitudes to make our program run smoothly.

We have one mixed age class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Rachel and Melissa work with two five-year-olds, one four-year-old, one three-year-old, and three two-year-olds on those days.

It's a big year for siblings. Our 20 children come from only 15 families! We have two sets of "regular" siblings with a four-year-old sister and two-year-old brother and two sets of twins with one set having an older brother with us as well.

Twelve of our families (17 of our 20 students) receive our Stone Soup discount this year! That gives them \$10 off per month for MWF and an additional \$5 off for Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Nine of these families (14 students) also receive additional financial assistance. This assistance is in the form of sibling discounts and partial scholarships from our scholarship fund.

This year our Stone Soup dinner raised about ~~\$2,071.00~~ after expenses. About 16 gallons of soup were made. Almost seven gallons went to pre-order take-out orders. The rest went to the 103 people who came in person. Only about one gallon was left which got divided among our staff who put in more than a full day's work! Thank you so much for all who give to one or both of these funds each year! Because of your generosity our children have a fun, loving introduction to school as they learn about Jesus' love for them each week.

Applications for next year will be available in April. We serve children ages two (by September first) through five. We have two morning (ideal for our youngest children), three morning, and five morning options. Please email (casdadanner@hwchurch.org) with questions.

April 2024 HWC Youth News:

Youth Group Sunday evenings in April – 6-8pm

In keeping with the church missions focus in April, for the first three weeks we'll be talking about sharing our faith.

- April 7 – “Worth Sharing”
- April – Intro 30 Hour Famine and “Worth Sharing” part 2.
- April 21 – HU Women’s Soccer team will share about their sports mission trip to Brazil.
- April 28 – Theology of the Body presentation – “Male and Female He created them...” “...and God saw that it was very good.” What does the Bible say about gender?
- May 5 – Theology of the Body – Questions answered.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.”

Matt 28:19-20



Prayer Breakfast is Wednesday mornings at 7am in the Community Room:

No Prayer Breakfast April 3!

Prayer Breakfast is on for April 10,17,24.

For Discipleship Hour – 9:45-10:45 am. In April we'll be studying Hebrews!

Youth Sunday School will meet on April 7, 14, 21, 28. April 21 is HWC Missions Sunday so the youth class will meet in the community room for a special presentation.

30 Hour Famine – May 10-11 – Be on the lookout for more info...

Summer Events- use the links below to sign up!

- [June 30 – July 5 – Niagara Falls Missions Trip – \\$450](#)
 - [The deadline to register is April 14.](#) Space is limited.

We'll spend a week in Niagara Falls partnering with local organizations who serve that community. We'll sleep on the floor, get our hands dirty, eat interesting foods and meet interesting people! Come ready to serve!!

- July 21 – July 26 – Refresh camp at HU – Teen Track - \$0! Just show up and have fun.
- [July 31st – Kingdom Bound - \\$100 Reg deadline July 1st](#)
- [August 4 – 8 – ADK's Cranberry Lake - \\$250 -](#)
 - [The deadline to register is July 1st.](#) Space is limited.



"I am the Light of the world"



Let the
SON
SHINE!

APRIL 20-21

Houghton Wesleyan Church

**MISSIONS
WEEKEND**

"...let your light shine..."

Matthew 5:16

LET THE SON SHINE

Saturday April 20

FOR CHILDREN – "KIDS CONNECT" – 9:30-11:00 a.m. – C.E. 2nd Floor – Games, Crafts, Stories

FOR WOMEN – MORNING BRUNCH – 9:30-11:00 a.m. – Community Room – Food, Music, Panel:
"Developing Next Gen World Christians."

FOR MEN – BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP – 8:00-9:15 a.m. – Campus Center – Buffet Breakfast and
Mission Testimonials

Sunday April 21

8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Worship Hours - Speakers: **Kevin and Cindy Austin**, Czech Republic
"He Lights up Lives in Czech!"

9:45 Community Room – Adults, University Fellowship, Teens – "Not so Trivial Missions Trivia"

6:00-8:00 p.m. – Youth Group – HU Women's Soccer Stories from Sports Ministry Trip



Our condolences and prayers for:

Deo and Fiona Mulema, Daniel, Micah and Hannah at the unexpected death of Deo's father on March 10.

Family and friends of Louise Prinsell who died March 15. Visitation will take place at Koplér Williams Funeral Home on April 5 from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, April 6, 1:00pm here at the church. The service will be streamed to our FaceBook page and website ([link](#))

From the
Library Shelves



Our church library has a number of books about missions. These are found in the 266 section on the shelves, or in the biography section for specific missionaries. In the junior section there are books with ideas how to help children get involved in learning about missions.

Come on in!



We are pleased to announce our
2023-2024 Woolsey Lecture Series in Theology and Culture
at Houghton University.

Thursday & Friday, April 4 & 5, 2024



Guest lecturer: Dr. John H. Walton
Professor of Old Testament, Emeritus, Wheaton College

Lecture | Thursday, April 4, CFA Recital Hall - 7:00 PM
Reception to follow

Listening Ears & Teachable Minds:
Letting the Text Speak on its own Terms.

Sermon | Friday, April 5, Wesley Chapel - 11:10 AM
Immanuel Theology: What God has Always Wanted

Lecture and Chapel service are open to the public and free to all who wish to attend.

Wellspring Words

Dear Church Family -

Though March came in rather lamb-like, at Wellspring Ministries we had a different feel. Six men arrived like eager lions at our door. Why? Who? Well, these were members of *HC Class of '89* - close friends, who have been coming together to HU from all over the US, returning to the place they met and still love. Their desire this year was just to give back to Allegany County, serving where there was a need. They found us, and we found them. They worked at various tasks, like chopping veggies, vacuuming in places that sorely needed it, and cleaning each chair and table in the dining room. They ate with us, scattering throughout the room, and shared testimony and devotional thought. We were blessed.



To Note:

- Easter ham dinner - 3/27, 11:30 am. (Served by the National Honor Society members of Belfast Central School).
- Closed Good Friday - 3/29
- Gudy Stevenson has graciously consented to be our 'go-to' person in Jim's & Dennis' absence Wednesdays and Fridays. She makes a big difference.
- Sam and Vicky Penannan (Jeshua Perry's parents) joined us as volunteers this month, and are prayer warriors indeed.
- Jim Arthur has finished 3 chemo infusions. Dennis Doell's knee surgery recovery is coming well. Thank you for continued prayers for these men.
- Here are some items we can take now, as Spring arrived:
 - spring, summer clothing
 - used garden tools
 - outdoor chairs, porch furniture
 - prom, wedding-type clothing
- We thank you for prayers especially. There's been a notable increase in folks coming by, and we love that.
- A special thanks to Paul, Bob, John, Bill, Donnie, Gudy, Sam, Vicky. What a joy to serve beside these from HWC.

May the cross and empty tomb of our Lord Jesus be the source of our boasting. (Galatians 6:14)

Beth Beardsley (Board member)

Pop-up Pantry May 1 at the HWC Parking lot.

Registration Link Opens April 29

Registration is completed online and opens at 7:00 AM on April 29, the Monday before each distribution. The registration forms operate like "ticket" sales, allowing up to 5 food box registrations per driver/pickup person in a single transaction. If the driver or pickup person is also registering for a food box, they must be included in the ticket quantity for the selected pickup time. Please try to select a pickup time that accommodates the quantity needed to avoid multiple pickup times for one driver or pickup person.

REGISTER AT <https://ACCORDCORP.ORG/PUP>

If you have any further inquiries about our Pop-up Pantry (PUP) events, feel free to contact our ACCESS Center to speak with a services navigator by calling 585-268-7605, option 2. The ACCESS Center operates from Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 3 pm, with a daily lunch break from 12 pm to 12:30 pm.

Daring to Live Into Resurrection Community

Discussion Series Sponsored by Encore

(Encore is a life-long learning program for senior adults at Houghton University)

Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 April 4-May 9

Encore Room, Campus Center

If you are 55+ and want to engage more deeply with other seniors, consider participating to learn what it means to realize the reality of the Resurrection, enabling us to flourish in the midst of this season of our lives.

“Sharon Brous—a leading American rabbi— makes the case that the spiritual work of our time, as instinctual as it is counter-cultural, is to find our way to one another in celebration, in sorrow, and in solidarity. To show up for each other in moments of joy and pain, vulnerability and possibility, to invest in relationships of shared purpose and build communities of care.”

Book promotion for *The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World*. New York: Penguin, 2024

Series Format:

- Six weeks of Discussion, including one week of orientation, each week on a different specific question
- Individuals would sign up for the six weeks, and commit to being at each meeting if at all possible
- Each week will feature a facilitator who will frame the conversation, develop key questions, and then host a panel of contributors (often from our own community) to be followed by group discussion and a consideration of next steps.

Topics:

- April 4—Week 1—Orientation - *During this week, we will introduce each other and the topics. We will host a discussion of possible hopes, expectations, and misgivings about the time together, or perhaps particular topics. The conversation will help the leaders to consider any adjustments they want to make in response to the conversation.*
- April 11--Week 2--How do we apply Scripture when there is not a specific mention of a topic in Scripture? Or how does one learn to think Biblically, taking into account the whole counsel of the scriptures?
- April 18--Week 3—Preparing for one’s post retirement identity and calling
- April 25--Week 4--Preparing for the vulnerability and loss of control as we age ourselves, and as we serve as caregivers for family or friends
- May 2--Week 5--What difference does our Christian faith make to our daily living—and especially as we contemplate death?
- May 9-Week 6—Cultivating lifelong learning so that we continue to grow in our understanding and appreciation of the world—both nature and culture.

Each week will conclude with a consideration of further resources and an opportunity to consider next steps. To let us know you plan to participate or to ask any questions, please call community@houghton.edu

ENCORE is a Lifelong Learning Program for Senior Adults at Houghton University

ENCORE provides educational, recreational, and socially enriching experiences in a Christ-centered, academically excellent environment. The program allows senior adults to build friendships, relax, and immerse themselves in wellness, creativity, and learning.



This elephant (photographer Paul J Hilton) is one of the endangered species that are helped by Leuser at Wildlife Asia.

The late Frances Gilberts' Grandson, Nicholas Alden, is raising funds for endangered species in Sumatra, including rhinos, tigers, orangutans, and elephants. If you'd like to support the organization he supports, Wildlife Asia, here is a link to their site: https://wildlifeasia.org.au/project_saving_leuser/
The funds would be greatly appreciated.



The Rapids are Coming!

This year the Genesee Rapids Baseball Team is celebrating its 10th Anniversary Season. Players have been recruited, coaches have been hired, volunteers have offered their help in so many areas for which we are grateful. The one area where we have a significant need is in housing for the players. Ideally this involves host families agreeing to have a couple of players stay with them for the months of June and July. This is a unique opportunity for families in our area. Here's what Judy Hopkins said last year about her experience of being a host family.

"Rapids players have the opportunity for spiritual development, community service, and they live in HOMES with families. Players LOVE families, children, pets, and a place to "come home to" while here. I'm writing to encourage you to consider inviting players to stay with you for the season. In some past seasons, there were not enough homes, and some players had to stay in the "Town Houses" on the university campus. It's just not the same—lack of fellowship, supervision, a home & family. Their baseball schedules keep them busy all the time, the team provides most of their meals, but a place to call home is vital."

Would you consider this opportunity to provide a home for a couple of players this year. For the details visit our website www.geneseerapidsbaseball.com or call Ralph Kerr, Rapids General Manager 716-969-0688



**Painting (Indoor & Outside) &
Power Washing (Houses and Decks)
Phil Merrill (585) 610-8882**



REFRESH

RETREAT & FAMILY CAMP

Refresh Family Camp at Houghton University will be held **July 21-26, 2024**. We are pleased to announce our speaker for this year is Rev. Dan Leroy. Plan ahead to take a group from your church! This is a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with your church family.

This "vacation with a purpose" has something for everyone!! Recreational activities, fellowship opportunities and spiritual challenges give you and your family the opportunity to relax, rejuvenate and most importantly, REFRESH!

Save the date! CompassCare's Walk For Life May 4

A local walk hosted by Houghton Wesleyan Church will take place on May 4 from 3 to 6 pm and includes a picnic supper at 5 pm <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2xwalkforlife/> for details; Contact Becky Hutton, 585-567-2727 (call or text), lindolruthhutton@hotmail.com.

FREE RABIES CLINICS 2024

Sponsored by: Allegany County Department of Health

For Dogs, Cats & Ferrets 3 months (12 weeks) & older

NYS Residents Only

Saturday, April 27, 2024 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

- Genesee Valley School- Bus Garage

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Saturday, August 3, 2024

- Centerville Garage

- Town of Willing

Saturday, Sept 28, 2024

- Genesee Valley School- Bus Garage

Pre-registration required for all Rabies Clinics.

alleganyco.gov/departments/health

585-268-9250



SUNDAYS IN APRIL

April 7 *The Promise of Heaven*

8:30 am – Worship Service

9:45 am – Kids Connect, Youth Sunday School, Adult Discipleship

11:00 am – Worship Service/Streaming

April 14 *The Reality of Hell*

8:30 am – Worship Service

9:45 am – Kids Connect, Youth Sunday School, Adult Discipleship

11:00 am – Worship Service/Streaming

April 21 Kevin and Cindy Austin (Missions Weekend)

8:30 am – Worship Service

9:45 am – Kids Connect, Youth Sunday School, Adult Discipleship

11:00 am – Worship Service/Streaming

April 28 Pastor Grace Deitrick

8:30 am – Worship Service

9:45 am – Kids Connect, Youth Sunday School, Adult Discipleship

11:00 am – Worship Service/Streaming

CHURCH STAFF

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Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to noon & 1 to 4 p.m.

