Houghton Wesleyan Church
Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others
November 2024
Volume 58, No. 6

Prayer as Rebellion

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
Acts 1:14

I've always loved the story of Daniel and the lion's den. When I was a child, we had a vinyl record of Bible stories. Some of them scared me to death. Some of them encouraged me. The story of Daniel and the lion's den fascinated me. As I've gotten older, it continues to fascinate me.

Although Daniel is an Israelite who is in Babylon as part of a conquered people, the king is so impressed with him that he gives Daniel unimaginable authority. Despite their best efforts, some of the Babylonian leaders who are jealous of Daniel and his connection to King Darius, can find nothing in Daniel's character to use against him. So they look for something in his foreign religion. They discover that three times a day Daniel prays toward Jerusalem so they convinced the king to make a law that no one can pray to anyone except him.

When word of this edict reaches Daniel, he doesn't hesitate. At the threat of death, Daniel goes to his window and prays just as he's done every other day. He is arrested and put in the lion's den but is spared by God's angels who close the mouths of the lions. There is something of rebellion in Daniel's praying. It is not rebellion against the king or even against these men who are jealous of him. It is an act of rebellion about the way people think of prayer. It is an act of rebellion against those who see prayer as superstition and nonsense and against those who see prayer as less important than action. In the run up to this year's presidential election, I have received numerous e-mail messages about the role of Christians. One of the repeated admonitions is that prayer is fine but it's not really how things are going to be changed. If we want things to be changed, we have to act, we have to speak up, we have to fight. And the clear implication is that the battle is too important to leave it to prayer.

Now I'm all for action. And I recognize that we can use prayer as a crutch to give us an excuse for not being involved where we need. But I think our problem is not that we give too much weight to prayer; I think our problem is that we don't give it enough. Something in us is hesitant to believe that we can leave things to God. Besides the fact that if we're going to act in a way that models the Kingdom, in a way that represents who God is, in a way that reflects the Holy Spirit in us, then we ought to be praying more than ever. If we have ever needed the discernment and the courage that can only come through prayer, we need it now.

This is another reason why we are once again hosting our annual 3-week, 24/7 prayer vigil (November 3-24). At a time when divisiveness is high, at a time when anxiety and fear are prevalent, at a time when many are convinced that they do not need God, the answer is not to fight harder; it is to pray. So let me invite you to join in this time set aside for prayer. If you have never experienced a prayer vigil here at HWC or if you've been a part of them many times, the church website has information about the prayer room and your potential experience there.

In Christ,

Pastor Wes

LINK: https://prayervigil.youcanbook.me

Use this link or this QR code to reserve your time in the prayer room. Through this link, you will also be able to get a glimpse of the prayer room and an introduction to all of the various ways in which you can express your prayers and specifically an acknowledgment of God's faithfulness in our stories. Join us for an opening gathering on Sunday, November 3, 3:30pm – 4:00pm as we prepare ourselves for these three weeks of prayer.

STEWARDSHIP- A Life of Generosity

Time. Talent. Treasure.

November 2024—The Food Pantry

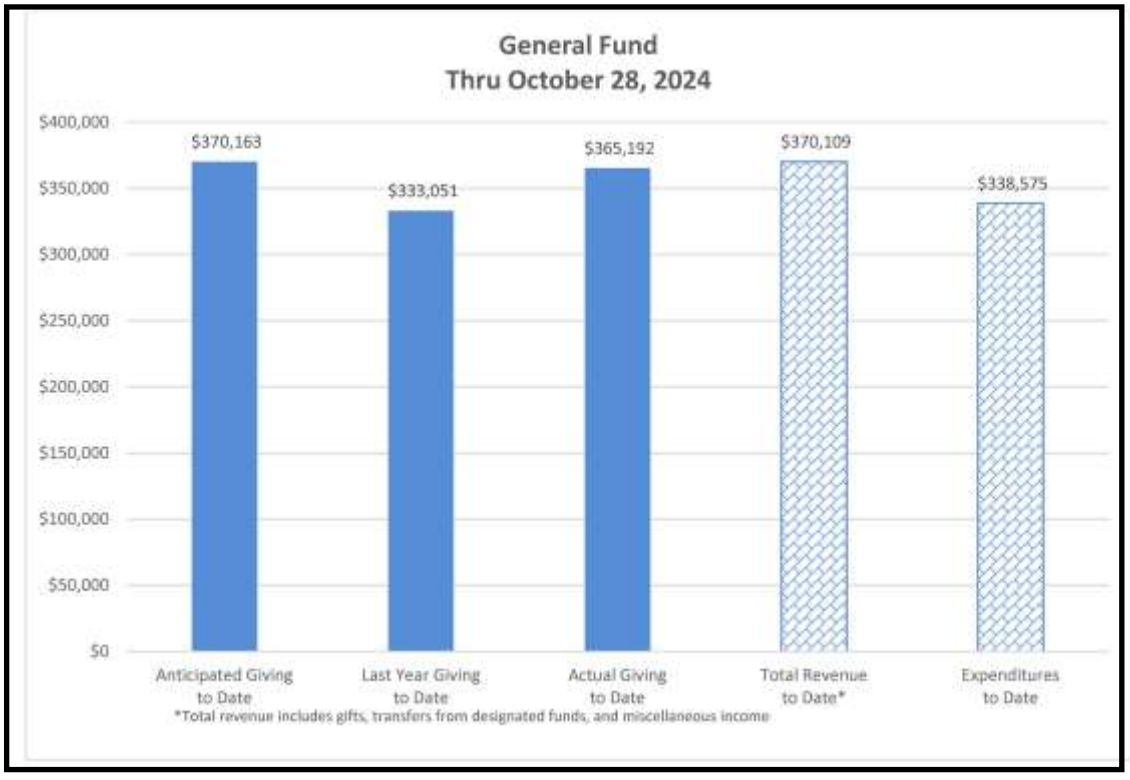
I (Pastor Jon) had a meeting this week with the director of the Fillmore food pantry. As we toured their operation and the director showed me all that is happening there, I was impressed with the spirit of generosity, the hard work, and the volunteer hours that go into that ministry. I was also struck again by the importance of food assistance to our area. Both of our organizations are seeing increasing need in our community. As food and gas prices continue to rise and government food programs decrease, many families are having trouble meeting their needs for food.

At HWC, our church's food pantry is available for anyone that could use a little help with their food budget. There are no questions about, or restrictions based on, income. People simply call the church office and give us some basic info, then arrange a time to pick up the food. Volunteers put together the order with a combination of dry goods from the pantry shelves and fresh food purchased by the food pantry team. Here are some of the details:

- We spend, on average about $100 per order. Depending on food pantry supplies and the size of the family, that number can be as little as $50 and as much as $150.
- We try to provide about 3 days worth of food, but err on the side of generosity
- Our volunteer shoppers use their judgment regarding what is in stock, healthy, and inexpensive.
- During busy seasons we will get 3 – 5 requests per week; slower seasons will see 3 – 5 requests per month.
- We are listed as an "emergency" food pantry which means that we will serve individuals and families one time per month.
- To ensure safety, we do not give out opened items or home-cooked donations

Thank you for giving so that our church can provide this valuable resource! Pray for God's blessing on our community and on families that are in need. Pray for wisdom as the Local Outreach committee looks for ways to collaborate with like-minded organizations in our area.

Grateful to serve with you,
Pastor Jon



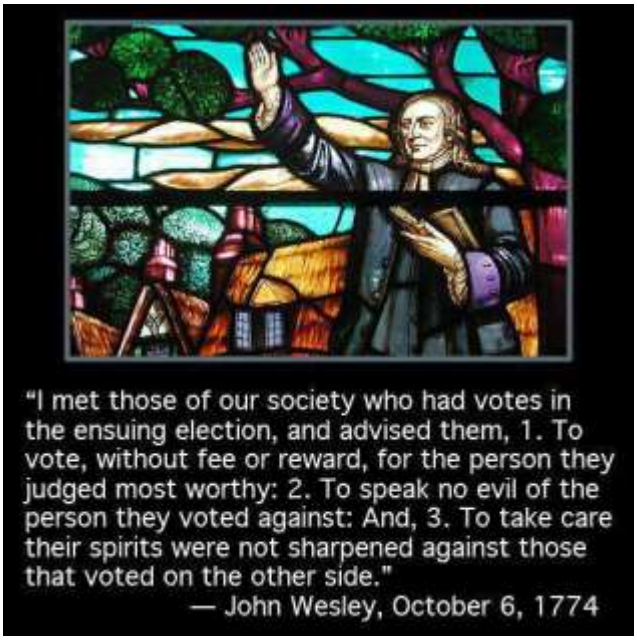
On Sunday, November 24th , we will once again have a food pantry drive during both morning worship services. It's time to stock the church pantry with all of those wonderful Thanksgiving staples:

- ☐ Shelf stable: cranberry sauce, stuffing, gravy mix/ canned, green beans, dried onions, cream of mushroom soup, instant potatoes, pumpkin pie filling, canned milk, cinnamon, nutmeg & cloves.
- ☐ Long lasting: squash, potatoes, onions
- ☐ Freezer: small turkeys, turkey breast, or ham; frozen pies; dinner rolls. (During the week drop these off at the church office)

Decorating for Advent

Please join us on Saturday, November 30, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. All are invited to help decorate the sanctuary for Advent. Please email Linda lindashea.knapp@gmail.com, if you have any questions about decorating, if you want to let Linda know you are planning to come or you may just come on November 30 to help decorate. Thank you!

ENCOURAGEMENT TO VOTE: As you are surely aware, Election Day is Tuesday, November 5. We encourage you to exercise the privilege to vote for national, state and local leaders as well as various propositions.



- November Series (include image): "Unsung Heros: Super-heroes aren't heroic only when they feel like it — they're brave each and every day. The best heroes can even inspire the people around them to be brave, faithful, and hopeful in their own lives, too. In this 4-week series, kids will learn more about what it looks like to see God as the hero of our story as they hear the story of Ruth and Naomi. They'll see how God gives them companions, opportunities, boldness, and hope so they can be heroes, too!"

- November Memory Verse

Mark Your Calendars!
- Kids Club: Saturday, November 16th from 9:30-11:00am - "Unsung Heroes"

- Preteen Hangout: Sunday, November 17th from 6-8pm

Giving Tree
Once again, we have the opportunity to support our chapter of Royal Family Kids Camp through our giving tree initiative. Starting November 10th, two Christmas trees will be set up, one in the CE building foyer and one in the sanctuary foyer. These trees will have tags on them with supplies needed by RFKC, ranging from toiletries for campers to birthday gifts for the "all-kids birthday" celebration at camp. Grab a tag (or two or three), shop for the new, quality item, and return it to the box near the tree or to the Church office by December 15th. Your gifts last year were an incredible blessing to camp, saving hundreds of dollars and making the campers feel loved.

** This Giving Tree initiative will continue to be offered annually in place of the traditional Operation Christmas Child boxes as we focus our giving towards a local ministry directly supported by our Church.
Gifts to Operation Christmas Child can be given directly through Samaritan's Purse if desired: https://www.samaritanspurse.org/.

November 2024 HWC Youth News:

Youth Group in Nov – Sun evenings 6-8pm – 7th – 12th

- Nov 3 – Restart 1
- Nov 10 -Restart 2
- Nov 17 -Restart 3
- Nov 24 – Remember When Wk 1(Christmas!)

Prayer Breakfast in October:

November 6,13,20! *No PB on Nov 27!*

Christmas hymns coming soon!

Pancakes and Prayer, 7am, community room. See you there!

Discipleship Hour (SS) 9:45 in the youth room, 7th – 12th grades:

November 3 & 10 - The Book of JOB

Nov 17 & 24 - Ecclesiastes

(For the HWCYG annual permission slip click here.)

Upcoming Events:

Winter Retreat – January 24-26, 2025

Mark your calendar. Registration will open Nov 1st.

The early bird deadline is Dec 1 and is $100.

After that Registration will cost $120.

Wellspring Words for November

November is HARVEST TIME!

We continually "gather in" at Wellspring Ministries, only to see it "go out" in the form of nutritious meals, food boxes, clothing, books, decor, etc. What a joy to see things repurposed.

James chapter 3 talks about a 'harvest of righteousness' sown in peace by those who make peace. We pray for THAT KIND of HARVEST more than any other. Please pray that people will discover peace with God amid the ongoing turmoil of life.

Join us, too, in focused prayer for a new executive director. Jim Arthur is retiring.

Note: November 20- Christmas Room opens. (Any parent is welcome to 'shop' for a child at no cost.)

November 22- Annual Thanksgiving dinner at 11:30 pm
Thanksgiving Week - closed

With grateful hearts to God for abundant blessings that come to us from Houghton Wesleyan -
The Board of Wellspring Ministries

From the
Library Shelves

Someone came into the church library recently looking for the next book in Neta Jackson's House of Hope series, *Who Do I Talk To?* Though our records show that we do have all four of the books in that series, the last three books were not on the shelves and had not been signed out. **Please, please, please,** sign out any items you borrow from our church library. The instructions to sign items out are on the bulletin board beside the sign-out counter.

Would you all look on your shelves at home for these and any other church library books you may have borrowed, read, and not yet returned? We would love to have them back so others may enjoy them also.

Thank you!

Betty Jane Pocock celebrates her 90th Birthday on November 4th.
Please send cards to 7420 Hillside Drive, Houghton NY 14744

WEEKLY LETTER & WEEKLY VIDEO:

Each week Pastor Wes sends out a letter with information related to the life of our church and a brief video with a devotional thought. If you are not now receiving these communications and would like to, please contact the church office. Both the letter and the video are distributed by email and text, depending on your preference.

The Fillmore food pantry is a supported ministry of our church and could use some volunteer help. The pantry is located in the basement of the Methodist Church in Fillmore and distributes food on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 1:30 until 5:15. If you are interested in volunteering please call the HWC church office or contact: Terry Sweet, tasweet321@gmail.com

Visit the Ortlip Gallery this Fall
to experience
Ian Campbell's exhibit, *After Birds*,
which is on display
October 21st - December 13th

Gallery hours are
Monday thru Saturday, 9 am – 6 pm,
in the Center for the Arts
at Houghton University.

Ian's exhibit chronicles through infrared photography the landscapes of extinct or endangered bird species.

Accompanying every photograph is a John James Audubon illustration of the bird which is hauntingly absent from each landscape, reminding the viewer that the conservation of ecosystems is necessary for these beautiful species to exist. Tranquil yet poignant, this exhibit transports you to a deeper level of our shared human-natural experience.

Royal Family Kids Camp needs at least 10 people ages 18 - 80 to volunteer as counselors for one week of camp (Sunday, July 6 - Friday, July 11, 2025). All you need is L.O.V.E.: **L**ove the Lord, be **O**pen to hurting children, be **V**ulnerable enough to step forward in faith, and have a quiet **E**nergy to help two children feel safe and loved. To learn more, **contact Nancy Murphy** at houghton.rfkc@gmail.com or go to our website https://www.houghtonrfkc.com.

SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER

November 3 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
Healing for Damaged Emotions (Genesis 29-30)

November 10 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
Let's Put that Behind Us (Genesis 32-33)

November 17 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
I'm Not Going to Make This Easy (Genesis 42-45)

November 24 (8:30 Indoors / 11:00 Indoor/Streaming)
Don't Forget Me (Genesis 50)

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS:
Please remember that you need to turn back your clocks one hour on Saturday night, November 2.

CHURCH STAFF

Wes Oden, Senior Pastor
wesoden@hwchurch.org

Jon Cole, Youth Pastor
joncole@hwchurch.org

Cindy Oden, Assistant Pastor
cindyoden@hwchurch.org

David Huizenga, Assistant Pastor
davidhuizenga@hwchurch.org

Emily Spateholts, Children's Ministry
emilyspateholts@hwchurch.org

Amanda Cox, Music and Worship Director
amandacox@hwchurch.org

Judy Congdon, Organist & Choral Director
judycongdon@hwchurch.org

Church Office 585-567-2264
office@hwchurch.org
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to noon & 1 to 4 p.m.