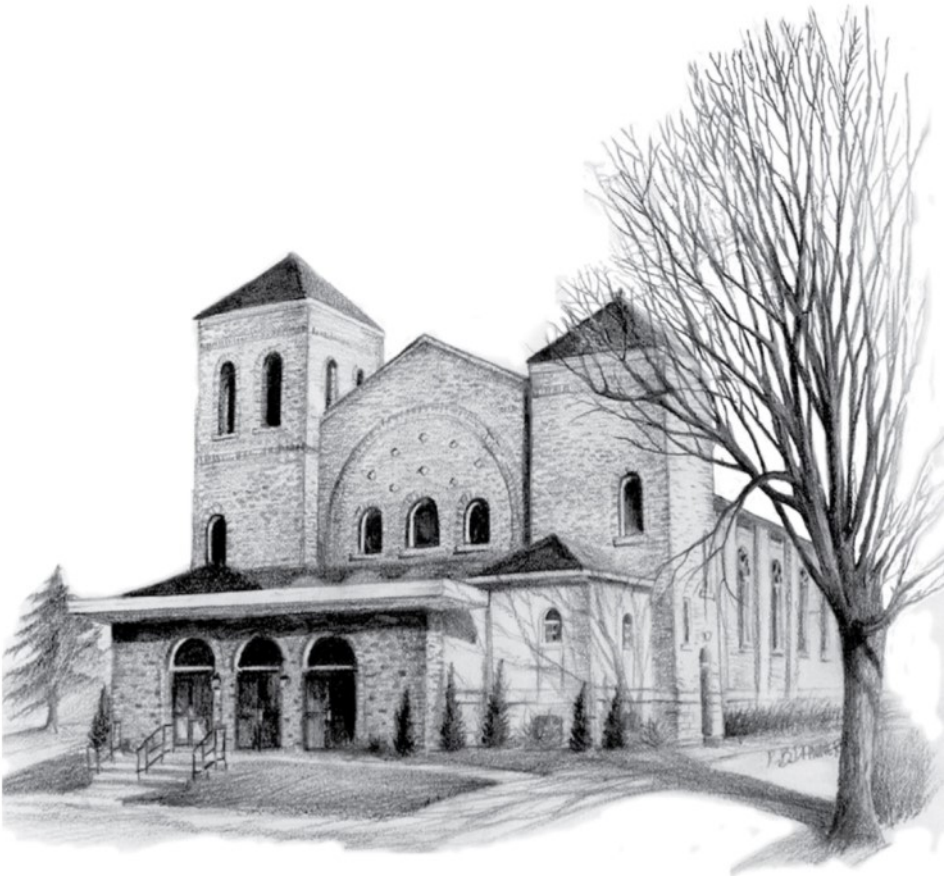
Houghton
Wesleyan Church

Joyfully loving God,
wholeheartedly serving others



Wesley Oden, *Senior Pastor*

Jon Cole, *Youth Pastor*

David Huizenga, *Assistant Pastor*

Cindy Oden, *Assistant Pastor*

Amanda Cox, *Music and Worship Director*

Emily Spateholts, *Children's Ministry Director*

Judy Congdon, *Organist and Choir Director*

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

11:00AM **MARCH 9, 2025**

Prelude: *Prelude on the Kyrie* ……Jean Langlais

Call to Worship (from Psalm 32)

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.

You are our hiding place; you will protect us from trouble and surround us with songs of deliverance!

Opening Prayer

*Hymn 83 ***Praise Him! Praise Him!***

Life of the Church

Children's Sermon: **Giving Back**

*Songs of Adoration: ***Living Hope; Christ is Risen***

(Song sheets available in the foyer; offering will be received during the first song)

Prayer of Confession

Powerful and Forgiving Lord, by enduring the pain of the cross, You have shown us the price love must pay for taking sin seriously. The nails. The crown. The humiliation, mockery and shame You went through delivered us from the stronghold of sin, enabled us to live in the freedom only You can give and opened the way for all to know life in you. Unfortunately, in our contentment we forsake the transforming work of the cross. In our disobedience, we reject the redeeming and forgiving power of the cross. Forgive us, Lord, for the ways in which we do not take our sin as seriously as You do—for what it costs us daily is nothing in comparison to what You have already paid. Help us to reflect on the mercies of Your cross, and as we do, give us the strength and grace to take up our own and to follow. In confessing our sins, let us hear your words of assurance: *In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Amen.*

Time of Prayer

Song of Response: ***I Will Wait for You***

*Scripture Reading: Luke 23:26-43

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

*Hymn 86 ***My Jesus, I Love Thee***

Greeting One Another

Sermon: **Seeing the Cross Through the Lens of Guilt**

Pastor Wes Oden

*Song ***Kyrie Eleison***

*Benediction

*Postlude: *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, BWV 642 ……J. S. Bach

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*Please stand if able **Acolyte**: Micah Mulema **Scripture Reader**: Daryl Stevenson

Musicians:
Evie Cox, Mike Jordan, vocals; Amanda Cox, piano & vocals;
Christopher Moeller, guitar; Betsy Webb, keyboard & vocals;
Jill Jordan, violin; Simon Sardina

WELCOME TO THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH. The season of Lent is designed by the ancient church as a means of reminding Christ's disciples that the passion, suffering and death of Christ are central to our faith. Though this is a solemn season in which we contemplate our sin, it is also a season to give thanks that Jesus goes to the cross to redeem all of creation.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING is the Second Sunday in Lent. Pastor Wes continues a Lenten series of sermons focusing on lenses through which we see the cross. Next week's sermon, When We Are in Bondage is from Matthew 12. We will gather for worship at 8:30 and 11:00. The 11:00 service will be streamed.

EASTER BAPTISM: If you are interested in being baptized on Easter Sunday morning, April 20, contact Pastor Wes (office@hwchurch.org) about attending the baptism class.

ALL WOMEN Join us on Saturday, March 22, beginning at 9 am for the **Spring Women's Gathering.** Our theme is *Celebrating the Women in Our Lives.* Come to be inspired, to have fun and fellowship with other women, and to enjoy some delicious food. If possible, please bring a small item that represents an important woman in your life. We hope to see you then!

BUILDING PROJECT:

Fundraising Goal:		$ 250,000
Gifts Received:	$ 164,613	
Pledges Outstanding:	$ 80,900	
TOTAL RECEIVED:		$ 245,513
Remaining to Goal		**$ 4,487**

MISSION MOMENT: Alan & Sheri Shea Praise God that the voltage regulators arrived without delay. The diodes and bearings were installed on Tuesday. The timing could not have been more exact – clearly guided by God. Prayer for a safe return flight for Alan on March 9. Pray for strength, discipline and clear mind and a time to visit with people – to further God's kingdom. Continue to pray for Sheri as she sees her new health care provider and that all goes well with that transition.

STEWARDSHIP
Budget Needed: $680,067.55 / **Budget Received:** $654,151.79

HWC KIDS

- This week in Kids Connect, kids hear Jesus share a story about workers who were entrusted with different amounts of gold. BIG IDEA: We can give back to God. BIBLE: Matthew 25:14–29; Deuteronomy 26:1–11
- March Memory Verse: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." — Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)
- Kids Club Family Swim: Saturday, March 15th at Houghton University pool. FREE for HWC families from 12-1pm with open community swim following.
- Preteen Hangout: Sunday, March 16th from 6-8pm

PERSECUTED CHURCH: INDIA—On Dec. 5, 2021, police and members of a radical Hindu organization entered a church in western India and arrested Pastor Sawan and an elder. A Hindu priest had complained that Sawan had tried to convert him to Christianity. After 45 days, police released all the Christians except Sawan. The pastor was denied access to a Bible, and when he became ill, he was transferred to a government hospital and chained to his bed. Despite the hardships, Sawan made the best of his time in prison, meditating on memorized Bible verses and sharing the gospel with other prisoners. "I shared the love of Christ and prayed for them," he said. "I was able to bring four inmates to Christ." Almost 10 months had passed before Sawan's sixth request for bail was finally granted, and he is currently at home awaiting trial. Our Christian family members in India face increasing pressure from the government. Arrests and imprisonments are common, and "anti-conversion" laws have been used as a way to keep Christians from speaking openly about their faith.

PRAYER CONCERNS: for all who are grieving; for all with health concerns: Karen Szymanski, Jane Allen, Jane Roeske, Beth Beardsley, Gary Wickard, Linda Leax, Beth Pocock, Paul and Linda Roth, James Bates, Terry Ayers, Scarlett Gildemeister, Kim Pegula, Karen Gaerte, Cameron Green, Vangie Grant, Dan and Sarah Gurley, Chelsea Ellis, Mark Mayhle, Jeshu, Kurtis and Eliyah Perry, Reuben Samuels, Emily Crikelair; for protection, wisdom and peace in many places of conflict; for all recovering from recent tragedies and disasters; for Yorks Corners Mennonite Church (Pastors Matt Havens & Sarah Lehman Demster).