Houghton Wesleyan Church

Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others
September 2025
Volume 58, No. 4

Journeying Together

I have chosen this theme to describe what I anticipate across the next nine months. Robbie and I have come from our home in Nampa, Idaho to journey with you during this time of pastoral transition. We want to walk with you as we prepare the church for the arrival of our next pastor.

You have been lovingly cared for during the 29 years of pastoral leadership with Wes and Cindy Oden. Now we enter an intentional season of looking carefully at where we are as a church, seeking the Spirit's guidance as we anticipate the future.

Working with NXTsteps Church Services (NCS), we have heard the "All Church Assessment." On August 24th Lonnie Bullock was with us to deliver the results of what was learned during an extensive listening weekend in May. A team came to hear you and provide tools to learn how you, the congregation, view your church.

Now with the results in hand and several recommendations offered, we enter a time of prayerful engagement as we journey together. You have spoken. Now we will engage in the process of determining our next steps. There are three things I'm currently preparing for.

Transition Team! I am working with the Elder's Board to create a 12-member transition team to carefully analyze the assessment report and determine how we will engage in conversations, dreaming, planning, and action. The goal is to populate the Transition Team with 2 Elder Board members, 1 staff member, and 9 people from the congregation. This team will have a very important task of beginning to address areas that we identify as mission critical. Communication from the team to the Elder Board and the congregation will be our goal.

Prayer Support! In early September I will be inviting a group to meet with me to talk about our prayer ministry as we journey together. Everything we do must be bathed in prayer. I want to create strategies and gatherings that will help us in our call to let the Spirit of Jesus guide us.

Sermon Series! On the 31st of August I will begin a month-long series on the church. I want to explore biblically with you what the followers of Jesus are to be focused on in our mission, ministry, and daily expression of living.

One of the things I have gotten engaged in since my arrival, has been the final steps toward our major remodel. We are going to see many helpful changes as our building becomes more accessible and the basement refurbished. Thanks to the teams of people who have invested their time in getting us ready for the work. Thanks also to all who have given generously and sacrificially to help us finance the project.

We have been blessed by your hospitality. The groceries, vegetables, notes, gifts, place to live, and loving support has made our transition smooth.

We joyfully anticipate the journey ahead. May we experience a fresh infilling of God's Spirit, enabling us to move ahead with strength and courage.

Pastor Randy

P.S. I will be available on Sunday, September 14th, to talk about the Assessment Report. You have two opportunities for conversation: 9:45 a.m. at Kaleidoscope or 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Building Project Report

Project Overview

The church facilities upgrade, planned to commence this fall, is progressing as scheduled. Major improvements will include a complete renovation of the church basement but without altering the present room layout. New features include replaced ceilings, flooring, paint, and a family-friendly restroom. Accessibility enhancements are also prioritized, ensuring ADA compliance across all levels of the church. Additionally, the passageway connecting the two main buildings will be enclosed to create a climate-controlled indoor space, and a newly expanded entrance will welcome visitors into the Community Room foyer.

Project Management and Timeline

Kinley Contractors are set to begin heavy outdoor construction on Monday, September 8, with project completion anticipated around the start of the new year. Ken Bates has been appointed by the church as the Project Manager and will serve as the primary liaison with Kinley's own Project Manager. Any questions or concerns can be directed to Ken, and detailed plans are available for viewing in the church office with a prior call.

Financial Planning and Congregational Support

The Board of Elders has recently informed the congregation of increased project costs due to some new changes and the delay from spring to fall. A Q&A meeting on August 17, provided members time to learn about the new costs and the resulting upgrades achieved in the interim. Despite financial challenges, the project will continue. The congregation has been informed about the need for more funding and encouraged to participate.

On Sunday, August 24, by a ballot vote of 98-5, congregation members approved allowing the Elders to borrow up to $175,000, if necessary. This borrowing authority ensures that, should our fundraising fall short, we can still meet payment commitments to Kinley Contractors and keep the project on track. We are trusting that borrowing will not be necessary.

There will be some disruptions in normal traffic and building use, but it should be manageable. Thank you for your patience with the process over the next several months. During construction, certain entrances may be closed and parking may be limited at times. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we navigate these temporary changes.

HWC Kids Calendar:

* Kids Connect starts on September 7th during the Discipleship Hour (9:45-10:45 am) for all ages, nursery through 6th grade.

* Kids Club: Saturday, September 20, 9:30-11:00 am, grades PreK-6th

* Preteen Hangout: Sunday, September 21, 6:00-8:00 pm, grades 5th and 6th

* Stewards of Children training: Saturday, September 20, 8:00-10:30 am

* September Curriculum: "In Season: Each season—fall, winter, spring, and summer—brings something unique and wonderful. From leaves changing colors to flowers blooming or animals hibernating, the changing seasons remind us that no matter what, God is with us through it all. In this 4-week series from Psalms, kids will discover how we can respond to God in every season of life. They'll learn that God's words are always in season, God leads us in every season, God hears us no matter the season, and we can thank God for every season."

September Memory Verse

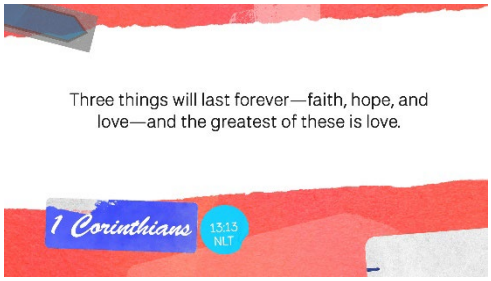
- Pom-pom Class Challenge! This year, we're continuing to see how many pom-poms we can add to our jar in the Primary Assembly room, but we're mixing it up. This year, earn a pom-pom for your class by memorizing the monthly verse, bringing your Bible, bringing a friend, or adding your tithe to any of our "banks". Let's see if we can fill the jar for a year-end party!

- HWC Kids Give: Last year, our Kids Connect classes gave a total of $55.82 to the Church! We are so proud of them for giving generously from what God has given to them. We'll be deciding as a group what to use our tithe for!

Did you know Houghton Wesleyan Church has a library? It is located in the CE building, just down the hall from the church offices. Did you know there are three rooms to the church library? The first room is where the check-out counter, card catalog, CDs, DVDs and most of the adult books are kept. The second room has shelves for the adult biographies, DVD Bible studies, reference books, and a work area for processing new books. Leading off from the first room is the third room, which houses the children's/junior library shelves.

Our library is self-serve, and is open whenever the church is. Please follow the instructions on the board at the check-out desk for any items you wish to take out. Return your items through the slots in the front of the check-out desk when you have finished them.

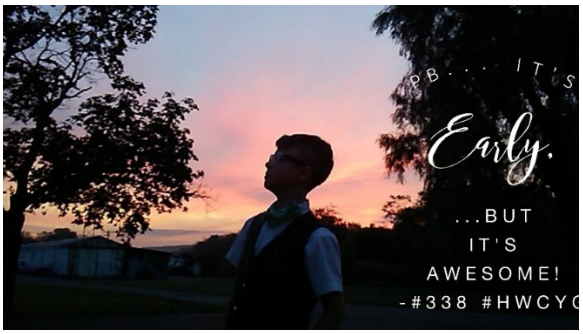
September 2025 HWC Youth News:



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

- Sept 7 – No YG
- Sept 14 – Beach Party and Hotdog roast – 3:33-5:55pm
- Sept 21 – Keep It Simple – 1 – Faith is a Decision!
- Sept 28 – KIS 2 – Hope is a Promise

Sometimes we over complicate things… this fall we begin with a series titled, "Keep It Simple" in which we will be encouraged to focus on what is most important. Faith is a Decision, Hope is a Promise, and Love is an Action. Can't wait to see you in Youth Group!



Prayer Breakfast begins on Wednesday, Sept 10, 7am in the Community Room

Sept 10, 17, 24

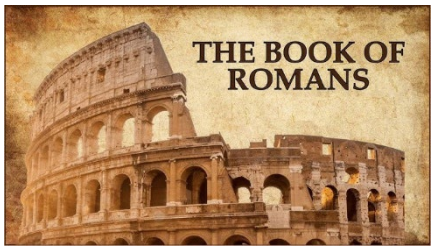
For the HWCYG annual permission slip click here.

Discipleship Hour (SS) in Sept: *This year in SS we are focusing on the NT and will begin in Romans!*

- Aug 31 – **Parents meeting in the Community Room! 9:45 am**

Ask questions, get critical info, listen to the plan for the year, and sign an annual permission slip. Youth Group parents, this one is for you. (Also…donuts.) 😊

- Sept 7 –Australia Team Trip Report in Kaleidoscope.
- Sept 14 – Youth Staff Meeting! Students go to SS with parents.
- Sept 21 - This week we begin our 3-week series on Romans!
- Sept 28 – Romans



Fall Events:

Sept 14 – Beach Party and Hotdog Roast – 3:33-5:55pm

Oct 12 – Storm the Heights – 3:33-5:55pm

Oct 31 – Nov 1 – Regional Follow event at Revive, Hamburg

Dec 14 – Progressive Dinner

Houghton Royal Family Kids Camp: Planning for Transition

The biggest question we answer for abused, abandoned and neglected kids is, "Am I Loved?" (RFKC)

Houghton Royal Family Kids Camp (RFKC) will be transitioning to new leadership for our 2027 camp. I have decided, after considerable thought and prayer, that my role as Director of Houghton RFKC will come to an end AFTER the upcoming camp, which takes place July 5 - 10, 2026. I want to make you aware of this transition, because of your faithful commitment to RFKC, and because we know that God cares about this ministry to these very special Allegany County children. My hope is that God's Spirit is leading someone (or several someones) from our Church to step forward with a desire to learn more about how your gifts can be used to bring the Love of Christ to future Royal Family children.

Houghton Royal Family Kids Camp (RFKC) is one of over 200 camps operating worldwide. Since 1995, Houghton Wesleyan Church has provided oversight for a welcoming, one-week residential camp experience designed to meet the unique and overwhelming needs of children of abuse, abandonment and neglect. It is through intensely supportive interaction with carefully selected and trained followers of Jesus that the question "Am I Loved?" is answered. Because of our 31-year history and the long-term commitment of many of our volunteers, Houghton RFKC has been described as a "well-oiled" machine. We have excellent volunteers overseeing each aspect of RFKC, including staff selection, training and supervision; curriculum (drama, music, Bible and more); crafts; activities; dining hall; and photography. We also have a fantastic bunch of committed counselors, as well as strong working relationships with our local Allegany County Department of Social Services, which refers our campers to us, and with Camp Asbury Retreat Center (Silver Lake, NY), which hosts our camp for one week each July.

Please pray about this opportunity! Talk to your friends and loved ones to get their thoughts and support. Speak to Nancy Murphy or Emily Spateholts if you would like more information. We would be glad to meet with you at your convenience. Because Nancy will continue as Director until the conclusion of our 2026 camp, the next ten months will provide a great opportunity for someone to see first-hand what's involved behind the scenes. It will also provide time for the incoming leadership to receive required training from *For the Children* (CA), our national overseeing organization.

> "The overall effectiveness of Royal Family KIDS camps that I have experienced is that one week at camp can be as effective as one year of counseling sessions." Becca C. Johnson, Ph.D. (FTC)

For the Children,
Nancy Murphy, Director

7448 Centerville Road, Houghton, NY 14744 * Camp Director: (585) 376-4053 * houghton.rfkc@gmail.com

Discipleship is all about *growing* in our walk with Christ, and a powerful way to grow is by engaging one of the classes HWC offers during Discipleship Hour (Sundays, 9:45-10:45am). As kids go back to school, how about you step into some new learning and growing and relationship building too! Here are the many options:

- **Devotional Classics (a reading & discussion group for all adults)**
- **Kaleidoscope (for all adults, a class whose content varies weekly)**
- **Exposition of Acts (in depth Bible study for all adults)**
- **Women of the Word (study and fellowship for women)**
- **Men's Discipleship (study and fellowship for men)**
- **Coffee and Connections (fellowship and support for parents)**
- **Moms Who Pray (for mothers of all ages, a time of prayer)**
- **University Fellowship (for students or college-age young people)**
- **Youth Sunday School (for 7th thru 12th grades)**
- **Kids Connect (classes for PreK thru 5th grade)**

Join with brothers and sisters in Christ as we grow together!

Valley Preschool, a ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church, meets Monday through Friday mornings with two morning, three morning, and five morning options for children ages two through five. We still have lots of room for all ages (2-5) on Tuesdays and Thursdays and room for a few more 2 - and 3 - year olds on MWF (or M - F)! Contact Casda Danner at casdadanner@hwchurch.org with questions or for information.

Information available at
https://hwchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/VPS-Information-pages-2025-update

Applications available on our bulletin board and at
https://hwchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-26-VPS-Application-form-1.pdf

Steve Pocock is Retiring October 1

After 22 years of caring for our Houghton Wesleyan Church physical plant, Steve Pocock is stepping up to retirement as of October 1. After a long career in ministry overseas, Steve and Audrey settled back into Houghton, their hometown. Audrey recently retired from the university and Steve will soon follow, allowing for a range of new experiences together, both for some travel and volunteering their time in ways they will choose.

Letters of interest for carrying forward the full time custodial position and to request a detailed job description may be sent either via email to office@hwchurch.org or ground mail to Houghton Wesleyan Church, P.O. Box 127 (9712 Rt 19), Houghton, NY 14744. Including a brief resume of work history is suggested but not required to begin a conversation. Candidates should be willing to undergo a New York State background check.

Term of service, renewed annually, would commence in October, 2025. Customary and reasonable compensation and benefits apply.

Request and submit applications until September 6 through Mike Spateholts (mikespateholts@hwchurch.org). Interviews begin soon thereafter and will continue until the position is filled.

SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

September 7 (8:30 a.m. (Outdoor) / 11:00 a.m. (Indoor/Streaming)

September 14 (8:30 a.m. (Outdoor) / 11:00 a.m. (Indoor/Streaming)

September 21 (8:30 a.m. (Outdoor) / 11:00 a.m. (Indoor/Streaming)

September 28 (8:30 a.m. (Outdoor) / 11:00 a.m. (Indoor/Streaming)

The Discipleship Hour begins September 7th (9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.) with classes for PreK through Adult. See Page 6 for the list.

September 7th the Australia Team will report on their trip in *Kaleidoscope* (Community Room).

CHURCH STAFF

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Jon Cole, Youth Pastor
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David Huizenga, Discipleship Pastor
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Judy Congdon, Organist & Choral Director
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Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to noon & 1 to 5 p.m.

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