Houghton Wesleyan Church

Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others
November 2026
Volume 59, No. 6

Dear HWC Friends,

`We're excited to share that our prayer vigil is back!

This fall we'll have a one-week 24/7 prayer vigil, beginning on Sunday morning, November 15 and ending on Sunday morning, November 22.

Our theme is ***When the Holy Spirit Comes***... based on Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Our planning team is busy creating meaningful ways to help us engage in this theme, including prayer activities for children.

Our goal is to fill the prayer room 24/7 for that whole week, and in addition, to have a parallel sign-up for people who want to pray in their own homes. Something new this year will be a service of **All-Night Worship & Prayer, 6 PM on Sunday 11/15 through 8 AM on Monday 11/6 in our sanctuary**. There will be music, scripture, and prayer throughout the night; come for a few minutes or a few hours. If you are interested in providing some music, please contact us (kristenallen@hwchurch.org or billallen@hwchurch.org, or call the church office).

How might God want to finish the sentence "When the Holy Spirit comes..." in your life, in our community, in our world, and in the life of our church? We hope this week of prayer will provide deep and fruitful opportunities for God to speak and for us to listen. Author Dutch Sheets writes, "Spending time with God through prayer, worship, and quiet meditation tunes in the soul and awakens the heart, enabling us to hear Him. Life is loud – make it quiet down once in a while. Everything else will scream for your attention, but not the Lord. The Holy Spirit refuses to shout above the clamor and dissonance created by other voices and activities."

What a privilege it will be set aside some time for our lives to quiet down and to spend time with God in prayer. That is never wasted time!

God is on the move!
Pastors Kristen & Bill

A Heartfelt "Thank You" from a Former Royal Family Kids Camp Camper

In Luke 15, Jesus describes himself as a shepherd who loves each one of his flock so much that he will leave all 99 of them in order to pursue and rescue even one who has become lost. Joseph A is that one. Joseph will be speaking during the "Mission Moment" on Sunday, November 8. In June of this year, he happened to be driving past our church when he exclaimed to his wife, "That's the church where I came to camp." He went into the office, and shared with Patty Stalker, "RFKC was the first place I ever heard that God loved me." He expressed a desire to give back in some way. As a result, he was able to reconnect with his RFKC counselor, with a letter of gratitude; excerpts are found be-low. Please accept Joseph's words as a heartfelt "Thank You!" to each of you for the vital role you have played in RFKC over the past 30+ years.

Dear _("Joey's counselor at Houghton RFKC in 1995, '96 and '98),

How do you start a letter like this? How do you put into words the extent of how much someone actually means to you? How do you tell someone that one of your first real encounters with love falls on them, and of all things, not a parent, not a foster parent, not a school teacher, but a camp counselor. Throughout the course of my life, there has been a lot of childhood trauma. Up until my first year in camp, I had never experienced any real love, so putting into words the gratitude for camp being that first place of me experiencing love and you being the person responsible for my safety on both a mental and physical level throughout the course of that five-day camp is something that is irreplaceable and unforgettable.

There are very few people in my life that have had an impact throughout the course of my forty years. I can count on two hands the people. And you're top five on my right hand. I was such a confused young boy, but going to camp was even more confusing for me, because why did it have to end? Why did I have to go back to a foster home where I wasn't loved? People said they loved me, but the action wasn't there, nor was there a bond with someone who said they loved me. During the course of the five days at camp, you showed me what no one else was able to. That speaks volumes of who you are. What I remember about camp is a lot of confusion. How can people exist that are so calm? This is a place without drama where quiet didn't just mean people are sleeping. How can there actually be people that use the word love and show it? How do I become like one of these people? And although I am that person now, it wasn't clear on how I become one of those individuals until later on in my life. . .

I remember the activities we did. I remember who my camp buddy was. I remember that you gave me your hat. I remember there was a hat you wore throughout the course of the week with a duck that had wings protruding out. I would always make fun of it and would tell you that I'm going to steal it and fly away. But when you said goodbye to me at the church when my foster par-ents came to pick me up, you took it off your head and put it on mine. I had that hat for a lot of years. Just seeing it throughout the course of my adolescent life, I remembered every single time I saw that hat that someone loved me. Where it's at now, only God knows.

Thank you for being a good example of what love is. For not trying to change me throughout the course of camp, but just being there. I don't remember all the conversations that were had, but the one common denominator was you always made me feel like everything was going to be okay, and I felt safe. That was what I needed more than anything at that point in my life that no one else gave me. . .I've been a part of some pretty big things in my life. Throughout all the things that I've been a part of, God's always been there. Although at different times throughout life, it's been hard to acknowledge that. I went through more foster homes before being given up for adoption. I was adopted from a group home, but then my adopted parents sent me to a boarding school for four years, one of those boarding schools that is probably the worst thing a kid like me could've gone through. . . Going through what I've gone through and having a few good people in my past such as yourself, I believe that God can use me in the life of youth in the ways that others maybe can't be.

Currently I reside in Pennsylvania . . God has been so good to me and has blessed my wife and my story with lots of success in different arenas of life in a very short amount of time. It's just amazing how people throughout the course of one's person's lifetime can affect them years later. Thank you for being one of them. *Sincerely, Joseph A*

HWC Youth Group (Grades 7-12)
November 2026

Youth Group - Sundays 6:00-8:00pm

- **Nov 1 - Masks 3:** Labels - We can stop judging others because we have experienced God's love and forgiveness.
- **Nov 8 - My Friend Is Struggling 1:** God can use us to love and support friends who struggle. ***Meal Night!***
- **Nov 15 - My Friend Is Struggling 2:** We can share God's hope with friends who feel hopeless.
- **Nov 22 - Illuminate 1:** The Light Predicted - Jesus came to meet humanity's deepest need.
- **Nov 29 - Illuminate 2:** The Light Breaks Through - Jesus is our light in the darkness.

Discipleship Hour (Sunday School) - 9:45am

- November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Exodus

Prayer Breakfast - Wednesdays at 7:00am

Prayer Breakfast meets Nov 4 and 18 in the Community Room. No Prayer Breakfast Nov 11 (Veterans Day) or 25 (Thanksgiving break).

FOLLOW 2026 December 28-31 - Register by November 16

Follow is December 28-31 in Cincinnati. Registration is $350 through November 16. **Register here.**
A $50 deposit may be submitted to Houghton Wesleyan Church. Standard family rates and scholarships are available. ***Please do not let cost keep your student from attending - see PJ for details.***

Nerf Night - Thursday, November 19 - 7:00-8:00pm

Join us for an hour of Nerf games and fun. Invite a friend!

Looking Ahead

December 13 - Progressive Dinner - Home hosts will be needed.

January 29-31, 2027 - District Winter Retreat - $125 by December 13; half price for students attending Follow. Register Here! After Dec 13 but before January 13 the rate is $150. Our standard family rates apply! Scholarships available! See PJ for details.

November Lessons: "Breaking News: Kids may not be absorbing the news cycle like adults are, but they are experiencing the news cycle through others around them. In this series, kids will have a chance to journey with a few prophets – Micah, Amos, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah – to discover news they can count on. Kids will learn that when things go wrong, they can choose what's right; when they worship God, they can be sincere; when times are tough, they can count on God; when they are lost, God will guide them, and that they can be faithful just like God is faithful."

November Memory Verse

Kids Club: PreK - 6th grade, join us on Saturday, November 21st from 9:30-11:00am as we "travel" with Global Partners to the country of Nicaragua to learn how we can make a difference by being thankful.

Preteen Hangout: 5th and 6th graders, join us on Sunday, November 15th from 6:00-8:00pm for a time of faith, fellowship, and friends. We'll be spending some of our time participating in the prayer vigil/ worship night together.

1st Sunday of Advent is November 29th. Take-home discipleship materials will be available at the Welcome/Check-in Desk for families to use together during the season of Advent.

What is Pastor Emily reading this month?

Come Ye Children adapted from Charles Spurgeon by Ryan Frank. Wonderful book about the importance of discipling young people and welcoming them into the Kingdom; meant for parents, volunteers, and pastors.

Let Go & Run Beside: the Essentials of Intentional Preteen Ministry by Sean Sweet.

Did you know? Pastor Emily has a big collection of books related to parenting, discipling kids, tough topics for kids (pornography, identity, grief, trauma, etc.), and more that you are more than welcome to borrow? Send Pastor Emily an email or stop by Monday-Thursday morning to sign a book out.

Valley Preschool News (or when 10+11=16)

Valley Preschool is off to a good, if different, start! This is the first year since and including our beginning in 1968 that we have only 10 children each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning. We usually run between 17 and 22. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings we have 11 children compared with our usual (based on the last 4 years) six to eight. But why does 10 plus 11 equal 16? Because five of our 16 come all five mornings. It has been quite an adjustment in planning. Also new this year compared to last and many other recent years is that six of these little ones were only two years old at the beginning of the year and we have seven girls among our 16 children. Last year 16 of our 21 were Kindergarten eligible and only three of 21 were girls.

Fewer children also means a smaller staff. We are very thankful for Brenda Montanye who continues to volunteer her time on Wednesdays with us. Olivia Tetta is teaching the twos and threes this year and I have the fours and fives. Kat Tiedemann is still with us, but only (other than for special events) on Tuesdays and Thursdays…, so far. We would love to add to our students numbers and have Mrs. Kat back with us more days, BUT we have pretty specific needs to make that happen. We cannot take more two-year-olds this year as it is already a very young group, but we do have room for additional threes, fours, and fives on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and/or more fours and fives on Tuesday/Thursday. (I told you they were specific needs!)

In Bible time so far we have learned about creation, Adam & Eve, Noah (thank you Mrs. Moore for letting us use the ark in your Sunday School room!), Abraham & Sarah, and Isaac & Rebecca. We have hatched two butterfly, had an incredible hungry caterpillar market in our dramatic play center (thank you Miss Olivia!), mixed primary colors, talked about our families, harvested the vegetables planted last spring, learned about fire safety in school, at the fire hall, and with a special visitor, had apple day, been to Montanye's farm, played in an an apple orchard and market (also in dramatic play and thanks to Miss Olivia), read books with and without projects, built with blocks, learned about chlorophyll and why leaves change color, done puzzles, played in sand and water, painted, learned nursery thymes, and much more. Walk through our hallway to see some of the things we have been up to and watch for other news in upcoming Highlights.

If you have or know three, four, or five-year-olds who would love Valley Preschool, please let them and me know by contacting me (casdadanner@hwchurch.org)!

Loan Closet

Just a Reminder: The church has a collection of items if you need bed rails, crutches, commodes, raised toilet seat, wheel chairs and various padding/cushions, walkers, walker bag, cane, shower chairs, tub chairs, grab bar, free-standing tray table for bed or wheelchair

All women are invited to join us on
Saturday, November 7 at 9:30 am
in the Community Room
for a morning of music, food, fun,
fellowship and inspiration,
featuring Pastor Kristen.
See you then!

FALL FRENZY—A Fall Festival Fundraiser for Houghton Academy

Join us on **November 7th from 4:00–6:00 PM** for an afternoon of fall fun, fellowship, and community! Enjoy games, BINGO, a bake sale, a basket raffle, and live worship with a band. Bring your family and friends for a fun-filled event while supporting Houghton Academy and connecting with our community. Everyone is welcome, and we hope to see you there!

HWC Men's Ministry seeks to encourage and strengthen fellowship between the men of our church with the aim of growing in the grace and service of our Lord Jesus Christ. All men of the church are most welcome at our pancake breakfasts held about once a month at 8am Saturday morning. It's a time of fellowship, food, and some thoughtful sharing about our walk with Christ. Breakfast is free & we'd love to have you join us November 14.

A heartfelt thank you to all who worked so hard to make Tom's Celebration of Life the memorable occasion it turned out to be. So appreciative!
Laurie Machamer.

Tom Machamer's graveside committal on October 18 was followed by a time of Celebrating Tom's Life and God's Goodness through him.

Lyn Harter's brother LaVay Sheldon, died on October 16 and the Celebration of Life is Sunday, October 25

Ron Sweeney's Celebration of Life takes place at the church on October 24 beginning with slides followed by a service and refreshments at the Community Room.

SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER

November 1:
- Bill preaching
- Title: **Calling All Saints!**
- Scripture: Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27 NIV

November 8:
- ---Kristen preaching
- Title: **Praying with Confidence**
- Scripture: Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV

November 15:
- Bill Preaching
- Title: **Prayer: It's What Disciples Do**
- Scripture: Mark 1:35-39 NIV

Prayer vigil begins this morning

November 22: – Thanksgiving Sunday
- Kristen preaching
- Title: **My Thanksgiving List**
- Scripture: Psalm 103 NLT
- Prayer vigil ends this morning

November 29: – ADVENT 1
- Kristen preaching
- Title: ***A Great Light* - Week 1: The Light of Hope**
- Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7, Luke 1:26-38 NLT

CHURCH STAFF

Kristen Allen, Co-Lead Pastor
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Bill Allen, Co-Lead Pastor
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Jon Cole, Youth Pastor
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Emily Spateholts, Children's Pastor
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Church Office 585-567-2264
pattystalker@hwchurch.org
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to noon & 1 to 5 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Not all our church staff have regular office hours, and those that do have schedules that vary, depending on meetings, events, and other appointments. However, it may be helpful for you to be aware of the hours when they are generally available at the church. Note: weekly staff meeting is Tuesday at 9-11 AM.

Patty Stalker – Administrative Assistant – M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-5 PM

Kristen Allen – Co-Lead Pastor – M-Th, 10 AM-5 PM

Bill Allen – Co-Lead Pastor - M-Th, 10 AM-5 PM

Emily Spateholts – Children's Pastor – M-Th, 8:15 AM -12:15 PM

Jon Cole – Youth Pastor - Mon 1-5PM, Tues 2-5 PM, Wed 6 AM-3 PM, Fri 9 AM-5 PM

Fillmore Food Pantry Food Distribution
November 11, 2:00 to 5:15 p.m.

AZURE delivers preordered food & items to the church parking lot once a month. See azurestandard.com for more info or call the office for local contact.

On Sunday, November 22 , 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.

CHRISTMAS PRISM 2026 performance at Houghton University December 5

Performance 7:30 PM Dinner upgrade (limited seating) 5:30 PM

Come and hear the angels sing!

This year's Christmas Prism invites us into the Christmas story through the voices of Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds - those who witnessed the wonder of that holy night firsthand. Featuring music from across Houghton's ensembles alongside beautiful readings and moments of reflection, *Hear the Angels Sing* is an evening of music, story, mystery, and joy. Together, we'll listen again for the good news proclaimed by the angels: **Glory to God in the highest!**

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERINGS—What will we do together this Christmas?

Every year our Christmas Eve Offering focuses on significant projects. Last year's offering supported nine local benevolent crisis ministries; in 2024 Youth outreach in Australia, Liberia, and SriLanka benefitted from your Christmas Eve offering; in 2023, Eastern Europe developed Media Evangelism and Bible Studies with our help; Building the Thailand Wycliffe Translation Center was 2022's project; and Haiti's LaGonave Hospital serving 120,000 people built a critically needed Oxygen Generator Plant (2021).

Coming In January...Let's Read Together!

This spring we'll be reading the whole New Testament together as a church! Curious what this is all about?

We'll be reading in a unique format, using *Messiah*, the first of six volumes of *Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience* program. *Messiah* takes the reader through every book of the New Testament in a format developed for the purpose of being read and understood, not referred to like a reference book.

Messiah is a new way to interact with God's Word, but it is not a new translation. Published by Tyndale, it is *The New Living Translation* – a well-respected translation done by a team of scholars. It's one of the most readable translations available.

This 16-week reading plan begins on Sunday, January 10. The sermons each Sunday will be based on what we've just read, and there will be opportunities to explore more in weekly Immerse groups.

The church will have books available, and there is also an audio version. Stay tuned for how you can get a book and participate in an Immerse group. In the meantime, you can find out more at www.immersebible.com, or by talking to a member our Discipleship Team (Eileen Jacoby, Josie Adenuga, Beth Stevick, Don Little, Pastor Bill, & Pastor Kristen).