

Prayer Is More Than Getting God's Attention

Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too. (Mark 11:24-25, New Living Translation)

The 11th chapter of Mark's Gospel opens with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It's a glorious moment for Jesus and His followers, but as we know, it is the beginning of an intense week that will eventually lead to Christ's crucifixion. The following morning Jesus visits the temple and outraged at the moneychangers buying and selling in the Court of the Gentiles, evicts these scam artists in a not-soon-to-be-forgotten moment that incites the religious leaders to violent action against Him.

The next day, Jesus and His disciples pass a fig tree. The disciples are amazed at seeing this fig tree withered as Jesus had commanded 24 hours earlier. When the disciples mention it to Him, Jesus proceeds to initiate a discussion not about fig trees, but about prayer. Jesus reminds them that all things are possible for those who pray with faith. And then Jesus concludes by turning the conversation to forgiveness: "But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too" (NLT).

It seems odd that Jesus would connect "successful" prayer with forgiveness. We would tend to connect "successful" prayer with faith or "successful" prayer with holiness or "successful" prayer with spiritual maturity. But Jesus connects getting what you ask for in prayer with forgiving people who sin against you. This is not a message about a positive attitude in prayer; this is not a message about the magic of prayer; this is a message about the primary focus of prayer: God changing our hearts to be like his.

Jesus has made this same point before. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses the importance of praying in the right spirit and with the right motivation. He presents us with a model for prayer which we call The Lord's Prayer. But immediately following this prayer, Jesus says, "If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you; if you refuse to forgive others, your heavenly Father will not forgive you." Jesus reminds us that one of the central elements of prayer is forgiveness; in fact, until we have a desire to forgive others who hurt us, our prayers will be weak and ineffective. We experience a blockage in our communication with God that is released only when we forgive.

Forgiveness is essential all of the time, but surely, we ought to see the connection between prayer and forgiveness most clearly during the season of Lent. Lent is intended to help us remember and focus our attention upon the cross, that watershed moment in time when our sins are forgiven by the One who is sinless. During this time when we remember how undeserving we are of Christ's forgiveness, let us search for every possible means of forgiving others so that we and our prayers may be set free.

In Christ,

Pastor Wes

SUNDAYS IN MARCH

March 2 (8:20 am / 11:00 am) *Are We Mocking Jesus?* (Mark 15:25-32)
p.m. Small Groups

March 9 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am) **Daylight Savings Time!** Remember Christ! (2 Timothy 2: 1-13)
p.m. Small Groups

March 16: Palm Sunday (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am) *Do You Believe that Jesus Died?* (Mark 15:42-47)
p.m. Small Groups

March 23: Easter

7:45 a.m. Sunrise Service of Worship, Praise, and Baptism (Church)

8:30 a.m. Easter Fellowship Breakfast (Campus Dining Hall)

10:00 a.m. Easter Worship Service: *Do You Understand that We Worship the Living God?*

NO EVENING ACTIVITIES

March 30 (8:20 am / 11:00 am) *What's Your Soul Worth?* (Mark 8:31-38)
p.m. Small Groups

From the Assistant Pastor

Houghton Wesleyan Church

Premarital Seminar

Saturday, March 8th, 2008

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Schedule for the Day

- 8:30 – 9:00 *Breakfast and Welcome*
9:00 – 10:15 **Doug Gaerte: “That’s Not What I Meant: Communication & Misunderstanding”**
10:30 – 11:45 **Nancy Murphy: “In-laws, Out-laws, and Norman Rockwell”**
11:45 – 1:00 *LUNCH (Catered by Pioneer)*
1:00 – 2:00 **Paul Young: “Babies and Other Consequences of Sex”**
2:15 – 3:15 **Laurie Smalley: “Biblical Financial Principles”**
3:30 – 4:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION: “Generational Perspectives on Marriage & Family”**

Panelists:

Jason & Naomi Smith
Nathan and Casda Danner
Peter & Nancy Luckey
Gus & Louise Prinsell

4:30 *Dismissal*

Cost: \$30.00/couple

Registration Deadline: March 5th

Contact the church office to register or for more information

HOLY WEEK EVENTS

- **Palm Sunday, March 16:** Children are invited to process into the worship service carrying Palm branches. Notes will be sent home with the children from Sunday School giving more details about this special morning.
 - **Wednesday, March 19:** Regular activities
 - **Maundy Thursday Service, March 20, 7:00 p.m.** This is a moving and powerful time to remember Jesus’ last night on earth. We will share the the Lord’s Supper and follow the ancient practices of “Stripping the Church” and “Tenebrae.”
 - **Community Good Friday Service, March 21, 12:00 -1:00 p.m. Fillmore Wesleyan Church.** Pastors from area churches will join our pastors in this solemn remembrance of our Lord’s death.
 - **Easter Day, March 23**
 - 7:45 a.m. Resurrection Service
 - 8:30 a.m. Catered Breakfast (Campus Dining Hall) (Donations accepted)
 - 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
- NO EVENING ACTIVITIES**

The Flower Committee welcomes Easter Plants to decorate the church for Easter Sunday. If you would like to honor a loved one, please give the information to Patty Stalker in the church office by Monday, March 17, and please leave your plants in the sanctuary basement by Good Friday, March 21.

...Youth News

Youth Group in March

- 5th – Easter: Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” with discussion to follow! 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Combined Group. **Permission slip is mandatory for this event.** This movie is rated “R” for “sequences of graphic violence.” Parents and other adults are encouraged to join us.
- 12th – Easter: “The 5 W’s” Jr. High 6:30 - 8:00 / Sr. High 7:30 – 9:00
- 19th --Holy Week – No Youth Group -come to the service of Tenebrae on Thursday at 7 p.m.
- 26th - “Hungry for the Kingdom I: *The King and I*” Jr. High 6:30 - 8:00 / Sr. High 7:30 – 9:00

Prayer Breakfast

Tuesday mornings March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th at 7:15 AM in the community room!

Event info

March 8th – “Core” Training for Youth leaders at the Hub in Hamburg
Youth Committee Meeting - 7pm – Monday, March 10th in room 105 at the church.

Ecuador 08 important dates in March:

1st and 2nd – Rochester Retreat – leave Houghton at 4 pm return on the 2nd at 5pm.

30th - E08 Training 4pm; Presentation in Sunday evening church service!
Please pray for our team as we prepare to serve the Lord in Ecuador!

Check out the Youth Webpage at <http://www.hwchurch.org/Youth.htm>
for more info and permissions slips!

MEMBERSHIP CLASS: Monday, March 10, 6:30-9:00 p.m., Pastor Wes will host a membership class for all who are interested in joining the Houghton Wesleyan Church or who would like to know more about our congregation. Attending the class is a pre-requisite for membership, but attending the class does not obligate you to join. The class is a good opportunity for making an informed decision about membership. If you are interested in attending the class, please contact Pastor Wes or the church office by noon on Monday, March 10.

ORGAN UPDATE: Mr. Louder continues to work on the final stages of the organ with a completion date projected for this spring. We continue to explore grant options and continue to receive gifts for the organ project. Thank you for your continued prayers for Mr. Louder, his assistants from our congregation and from the Houghton College School of Music, and for the ongoing financial progress.

CHURCH SERVICES ON THE INTERNET: Our worship services are now available online. You may access them on the church website (www.hwchurch.org) or on iTunes (www.itunes.com). The services are also available for reproduction in CD or mp3 format, which may be ordered through the church office. Most weeks the services are available on iTunes by late Sunday afternoon and on our website by late Monday morning.

CHURCH SERVICES ON THE RADIO: All of the sanctuary services of the Houghton Wesleyan Church are available to the Houghton area at **89.9 FM**.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK

April 20-27

Volunteers - "the debt we owe them is as great as the sum of the ages."

They touch our lives and the lives of our children and youth. They work for love: the love of sharing God's Word and love with others. We want them to know how much we appreciate them and all that they do for God and His kingdom. We invite you to creatively express your appreciation to our volunteers during this week. Expressing appreciation can take many forms, such as a note to a volunteer, a word of appreciation, a flower or plant, a plate of cookies or muffins, or any number of other ways. Thank you for your involvement in this appreciation week and for your prayers for our volunteers. Thank you!

"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
1 Thessalonians 5:11

Raising Up Spiritual Champions: In With The Good

Give each family member a card with Philippians 4:8 printed on it. Ask them to think about the activity they do most - listen to music, watch TV, play video games or other games, cook, etc. Ask each person to place the card on the object or in the area where he or she does the activity. During the week, challenge family members to think about the positive side of their favorite activity that fits the verse and honors God, such as cooking food for family members, keeping in touch with friends, or choosing TV shows that have a positive message. Have them write what honors God on the card and keep it visible as a reminder to choose things in our lives that honor God.

"And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."
Philippians 4:8

This month's RAISING UP SPIRITUAL CHAMPIONS NEWSLETTER is available in the church and Christian Education foyers for those who would like them. For the month of March, the themes include Hardworking: Solving Problems; Hardworking: Stay Focused; Hardworking: Strive for the Best; and more.

Palm Sunday: On Palm Sunday, March 16, children are invited to be a part of the processional into the sanctuary at the 8:20 and 11:00 worship services. Each child will carry a palm branch and will lay it on the altar. Notes will be sent home with the children from Sunday School giving more details about this special morning.

Wednesday Evening Children's Ministries

The Wednesday evening children's ministries which includes AWANA Puggles & Cubbies, Pioneer Girls, and Boys' AWANA Club will meet on March 5th, 12th, and 19th. Due to Easter Break, these ministries will NOT meet on Wednesday, March 26th. They will resume their regular schedule on Wednesday, April 2nd. Thank you.



"NAMISTE" - a word for greeting in the Nepali language

Yes, we will be studying Nepal on MARCH 16 at 9:45 a.m..

Our guest speaker is KYLE AUSTIN who has been there and is going back soon. Do come and bring a friend! Remember those coins for our offering!

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Have you ever realized that there are consistently a large number of families with small children that attend our church? You may be wondering how, in view of this, church stays so quiet on Sunday mornings. The answer is that many of our preschool-aged children make their way to Children's Church.

Once they arrive they enjoy singing Bible songs. Those requiring hand motions such as "Deep and Wide," "This Little Light of Mine" and "My God is So Big" are definitely fan favorites. This year we have also introduced an array of musical instruments including finger cymbals, triangles, wooden blocks, tambourines and various shakers and rattles which the kids love to keep the beat with—at least their own. Not to mention they provide good cover for those of us leaders who fall under the category of vocally challenged!

Singing is followed by a Bible story. After seeing such a great response last spring to using a flannel graph to assist in illustrating the lessons, we decided to invest in a vibrant and extensive new set made up of several hundred beautiful pieces. They are used every week. The children become more engaged in the story as they expectantly await their turn to add their piece to the scene.

Prayer and snack time follow a craft or coloring page, as well as play time. As you can see from the kids' quotes below, these are Children's Church equivalents to lunch and gym.

Our littlest church-goers also enjoy a variety of special events for the holidays. At Easter they participate in the "Running of the Palms" and at Christmas they are invited to "A Birthday Party for Jesus!"

We have a great contingent of energetic teachers. We are extremely grateful for the commitment and care they put into this ministry, as well as their love for children. Most of our workers are college students, many not from the local area. Parents and others who might cross paths with these individuals, let's make sure we let them know how much their participation and dedication means to our church with words of appreciation, encouragement and thanks. If you haven't already, please take a moment to introduce yourselves to them, deepening their connection with our church body.

Quotes from Kids

Emma: "I like Nicole."

Luke: "I like to play games"

Nicole: "I like to color in Children's Church"

Eli: "I like coloring, playing games, having snacks and playing with play-dough and puzzles."

Quotes from Teachers

"I love helping with the kids at Houghton Wesleyan; through working with them I am reminded of the joy of a "child-like faith." I leave Sundays filled with the love of God shown through the love of the children I work with."

"I miss the children at my home church and wanted connection with families."

"My favorite thing about Children's Church is seeing the excitement that the children have; it really encourages me and makes me get excited about life."

"My favorite moments are when I can talk individually with the children and get to learn a little about them and from them."

We ask for your continued prayers for this area of ministry in our church.

Thank you,
Elaine Tooley, Barb Rangel, Karry Beardsley and Bitsy Mayhle

"A Day With Kay"

This special District women's event will be held at Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church on Saturday, March 15, 2008, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

International Bible teacher and five-time Gold Medallion winning author Kay Arthur founded Precept Ministries International with her husband Jack in 1970 with the vision to establish people in God's Word. Today God is using Precept Ministries to reach more than 140 countries with inductive Bible studies translated into more than 65 languages. Kay is also the teacher and host of Precepts for Life, a radio and television program which reaches a worldwide viewing audience of over 94 million, teaching them how to discover Truth for themselves.

For more information, please contact the District Office at 716-646-0282.

Please register by March 1st. Childcare is NOT available. Lunch will be on your own.

Registration forms are available at the Welcome Center in the lower foyer of the church. Cost: \$25 for advanced tickets or \$30 at the door.

Library Corner

During the Lenten season, many devote more time to prayer, reading God's Word and seeking devotional materials. Our library offers a number of resources to help. Many items are marked with a pink Easter logo. There are also a number of good children's books available.

Some authors available that you may find helpful at Easter time are: Max Lucado, Anne Graham Lotz, Paul Maier, Michael Card, D. James Kennedy, Walter Wangerin, Jr, Peter Marshall, Gloria Gaither and Alfred Edershein. Please see the card file for titles.

There are some new DVDs centered on Islam: *Stephen's Test of Faith*, *Underground Reality Vietnam*, and *Obsession*.

A new book by Ben Carson, M.D. is called, *Take the Risk*. This is not the usual "self-help" book. Carson includes many illustrations from his own Christian life journey and makes "down to earth" relevant suggestions about taking a risk in your own life.

An update of the Books for Africa project: Last month we presented the need of the Kamakwie Secondary School library for books after the destruction by the rebels wiped out their books. Jo Anne Lyon of World Hope International reports that a container will be sent from the World Hope warehouse in Louisiana in June with items for Sierra Leone. If we can get the books there, she assures us that they will go with that shipment. We are looking for books that are old classics that you may want to donate and help with the cost of shipping to Louisiana. Thank you for the books that have already been donated and for the financial help offered.

Remember Kay Arthur will be speaking at Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church in Clarence, NY, on March 15. We are planning a display of her books in the library.

Calling for Aileen Ortlip Shea's Portraits

We are honoring Aileen Shea this coming summer with a memorial, retrospective exhibit of her portraits in the Ortlip Gallery. Some of her work is in homes in the Houghton and surrounding area. If you would be willing to loan us your cherished paintings from June to September 2008 we would be very grateful. Or, perhaps you know someone who would be willing to loan their AOS painting for the exhibit.

Be assured that that Ortlip Gallery in the Houghton College Center for the Arts is a safe area, with 24 hours video camera coverage. The Gallery is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Please call Roselyn Danner at 567-2766 or 567-9341 or send email roselyn.danner@houghton.edu .

COMMUNITY PAGE



All-you-can-eat

HVFD SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Tuesday March 4, 2008

5-7:30 PM

Houghton Wesleyan Church Community Room

\$6.00 / Adult \$25 / family of five or more

[Spaghetti / salad / garlic bread / delicious desserts / beverages]

DESSERT REQUEST !!!

We are preparing to feed approximately 300 and would very much appreciate your contribution of a dessert (or two). We encourage chocolate as well as non-chocolate desserts. Please bring these items to the church kitchen / community room in time for them to be displayed on the serving tables. (Make sure to indicate your name on the underside of the platters) Please notify me, Jean-Louis Roederer, if you can help out with

a dessert, by e-mail or phone (-9475 office / -8319 —home).

On behalf of your firemen and the entire Houghton community.

Thank you.

-Jean-Louis Roederer, Auxiliary Coordinator

Wooden Bowls For Sale

Please Turn in to the BOWLING ALLEY, *Where One Good Turn Follows Another*

Olson Clark, Craftsman

By Appointment: 585-567-2301

9906 Luckey Drive, Apt. 2, Houghton NY

The Community Blood Bank of Western New York is joining forces with the Fillmore Central School Entrepreneurship Club to host a blood drive on Tuesday, March 11. The blood drive will be at the Fillmore Fire Hall. Come between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. to give blood for your community. Call 567-2289 to make a reservation (walk-ins are also welcome). help make our mission possible!

CHURCH STAFF

Wes Oden, *Senior Pastor*, 567-2024, woden@hwchurch.org

Todd Leach, *Assistant Pastor*, 567-8288, tleach@hwchurch.org

Jon Cole, *Youth Pastor*, 307-9950, jcole@hwchurch.org

Cindy Oden, *Discipleship Pastor*, 567-2024, coden@hwchurch.org

Amanda Cox, *Worship Director*, 567-4870, acox@hwchurch.org

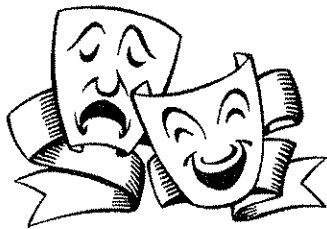
Laurie Smalley, *Volunteer Pastor for Outreach*, 567-8302, lsmalley@hwchurch.org

Church Website: www.hwchurch.org

Mission Website: hwcmisions.org

Church phone number: (585) 567-2264

Thornton Wilder's **OUR TOWN** March 13, 14, 15 at Rosemary Rysinger Auditorium



SPRING DRAMA

Houghton College's spring drama production will be Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winning *Our Town*. It will be presented on March 13, 14, and 15 in the Rosemary Tysinger Auditorium at Houghton Academy. There will be three evening performances at 7:30 p.m. and a Saturday afternoon matinee at 1:30.

A special feature of this production, Director Bruce Brenneman's final one, is the appearance of four Houghton College alumni, three of whom will be reprising their roles from previous productions of this play. David Brubaker will reprise his role of the Stage Manager and Brad Wilber will reprise the role of Simon Stimson, both from the 1990 college production; Steve Pocock will recreate Doc Gibbs from the 1975 Fillmore Central School production; David Perkins will appear as Mr. Webb. A very talented group of students complete the cast.

Tickets are \$5.00 each and are available by calling 567-9461 or they may be purchased in the Campus Center lounge during lunch and dinner the week of the show. All seats are reserved.

Houghton Area Senior Citizens:

March 7, 9:00 a.m. Senior Citizens Coffee Hour at Subway

March 13, 12:15 p.m. Monthly Luncheon Meeting: Program by College Reading Theater

FOOD GUIDE FOR POTLUCK DINNER

Please bring your table service and the dish designated by the initial of your last name:

A-F, Casserole G-O, Salad P-Z, Dessert

Free Tax Preparation sponsored by Houghton College

In cooperation with the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)

- Tax preparation services for Federal and New York State tax returns focusing on taxpayers with income of \$40,000 or less
- Available every **Tuesday, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.** (except 3/25) Chamberlain Center – Room 122
- Make an appointment by emailing Jonathan Mindrebo at Jonathan.Mindrebo@houghton.edu or calling the Houghton College Events line at 567-9210 on Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Please bring:
 - Proof of identity
 - Copies of all W2, 1098, 1099 forms
 - Social Security numbers for all individuals on your tax return
 - Banking information if you want your tax refund direct deposited
 - 2006 Tax return if possible

What do you need?

- Is your basement flooding? If that's the case you better call me right now!
- Is your sink slow? • Want to knock a wall out? • Do you have a light that doesn't work?
- Firewood to be cut? brought in? • Snowplowing? shoveling?
- Need to go somewhere? Olean? Buffalo? Florida? • Need something moved?
- What?! I don't do dishes unless your REALLY need them done! :-)

Pay me what you can. Tom Machamer (716) 498-5100 and leave a message... I'll call you back.