Houghton Wesleyan Church
Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others
February 2017
Volume 49, No. 9

Agents of Blessing

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."—Genesis 12:1-3

From the very beginning, God's desire is that every person would know his blessing. Pouring out good on his creation is not an idea that came to God over time. Being a source of joy to all people is not a decision God makes because people are putting pressure on him. His desire and his plan has always been to bless every person.

This is the plan God reveals to Abraham when he calls him from his home and family (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18). God reiterates this plan to Isaac, Abraham's son (Genesis 26:4) and to Jacob, Abraham's grandson (Genesis 28:14). God rescues Abraham's descendants from Egyptian slavery so that they will be his special people (Exodus 19:6). Their special designation, however, is not intended to make them arrogant but rather that they would experience and understand the nature and character of God so that they would become witnesses of God and of his desire to bless every nation and people.

Peter makes this point in his post-Pentecost sermon (Acts 3:25) telling the people who are worshiping in the temple: "You are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, 'Through your descendants all the families on the earth will be blessed.'" Paul reminds the Church in Galatia as well: "Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'" (3:8). Most importantly, this is Jesus' promise to his disciples moments before he ascends into heaven: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Two points are clear in this historic plan and promise. 1) God's intent for his creation is blessing. Too often we think that God's intent is to make sure everyone knows that he is sovereign. He is. But the point he makes—the point that culminates in the coming of Jesus—is that all that God does is for the purpose of blessing. Even his judgment isn't intended for the purpose of crushing those who don't live up to his standards, but rather to reveal who he is, how far we are from him, and his desire that we open our lives to him.

2) God's intent for his people is to be agents of blessing. This is the word to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the word to Israel. This is the word to the disciples of Jesus. This is the word to the church. God blesses us so that we will be agents of his blessing—healing, restoration, reconciliation, salvation, grace. This is the connection between the Beatitudes ("Blessed are…") and the very next words ("You are the salt of the earth…you are the light of the world") (Matthew 5:1-16).

Understanding God's intent reveals why missions is so important to the church. We recognize our privilege and responsibility to be agents of God's blessing to people who are crushed and broken by this world, people who are confused and frightened by a false understanding of God, people who are opposed to God. God wants every person to know who he is and in knowing him to experience his life-transforming blessing. So, as a church, let's give thanks for God's blessings and embrace the call to be agents of God's blessings to others.

Because of Christ,
Pastor Wes

MISSION MONTH – "*JOINING GOD'S MISSION!" II Cor. 5:18-20*

"All this is from God… we are therefore Christ's ambassadors…"

FEBRUARY 1 – Wednesday – 6:15-7:45p.m. FAMILY NIGHT MISSION TOUR!

Starts in the Community Room.

An exciting, interactive, informative, inter-generation evening with sights, sounds, tastes from these places: Haiti, Eleuthera, Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, Allegany County! Learn about Partners at Home, Wycliffe Bible Translators, TEN3, HDMT, LTC, Sports Ministry and more.

You get a passport, a tour guide, souvenirs, and info/prayer guides. **DON'T MISS IT. COME AS A FAMILY. ALL AGES URGED TO COME.**

FEBRUARY 5 – Sunday – 9:40a.m. KALEIDOSCOPE CLASS! Community Room.

Jon and Pat Shea share 50 years experience in Africa and global mission. Nursing, radio engineering, leadership, crisis management in war, prayer ministry, family etc.

FEBRUARY 12 – Mission Sunday at HWC.

9:40a.m. – Buffalo Ministry – Steve and Ruth Strand and refugee guests. Community Room.

8:20, 9:40, 11:00a.m. – Carolyn Miller shares God's Word and 50+ years of Bible Translation, global leadership, insights and perspective from the Word.

Partners at Home mission spot on compassionate outreach close to home.

Make this a month to remember as we join together as Christ's Ambassadors!

MISSIONS COMMITTEE—interested in joining? Contact Pastor Paul.

PRAYER MATTERS

Prayer Opportunities at HWC!

There are multiple ways we pray – individually, families, prayer vigils and groups. Here is a partial list of some prayer groups that are open to others joining in. Welcome…

TUESDAY – 7-8:00 a.m. – Youth Prayer Breakfast, Community Rm – Visitors welcome.
10:00 a.m.-noon – Women's Bible Study & Prayer Group – Below Sanctuary Rm. 5
WEDNESDAY – 8-9:00 a.m. – Men's Prayer Group, Chamberlain Bldg. 4th floor on campus.
9:30-10:45 a.m. - Women's Bible Study & Prayer Group - Good Shepherd Room
4:30-5:00 p.m. – Koinonia Prayer Ministry – College Prayer Chapel
6:30- 7:30 p.m. – Adult Prayer Group, Phil/ Donnie Stockin Home
THURSDAY – 7-8:00 a.m. – Men's Bible Study and Prayer Group – Sodexo (Breakfast optional)
8-9:00 a.m. – Men's Prayer, Below Sanctuary Rm.

Other Women's and Men's Bible Study Groups include prayer throughout the week. Let the Church Office know if there are more prayer fellowships meeting regularly. The prayer room is available every day. Call the Church Office (567-2264) to reserve space if desired.

Youth Group Happenings

Dates to Remember:
February 5: No Youth Group
February 21: No Prayer Breakfast

Spring Dates to Remember

April 7-8: Spring Fling
May 5-6: 30 Hour Famine

Student Profile

Hi! My name is Emma Cole. I have been attending Youth Group unofficially since birth, but officially for a year. I continue to go to Youth Group because it is really fun and all my friends go. I have a couple of aspects that I really enjoy about Youth Group, the first is at the beginning when we are all together as a big group playing a game. I also enjoy our small group time that allows us to open up more with friends and talk about things that we normally wouldn't in a larger group.
Something I have learned from Youth Group this year comes from us reading the book, "Mean Girls." Through this book we have learned what it looks like to be a "mean girl" and that we can try to help others who are being hurt by a "mean girl" or are being one. I have also learned that we as Christians should not make other people who are not Christians feel bad about not being Christians. But that we should be kind and show God's love to them.

Favorite verse:
"When I am afraid, I will trust in you."
- Psalm 56:3

Emma Cole

The Annual Buddy Keith Memorial Grand Prix & Sailboat Races will be in the Community Room/Gym on Wednesday, March 8th. We start at 6:15. All are invited to attend. Please bring a snack to share.
Children of all ages are invited to attend and participate. Cars (grades 3 to 6) and Boats (grades kinder to 2nd) will be available to pick up beginning February 1. There will also be fun activities for the littlest kids (age 2-4)!

We have named the annual races in memory of Buddy Keith because of his faithful assistance to them for the past several years. Not only did Buddy cut out all the sailboats, he also helped many of the Wednesday evening club children with their race cars. We are so grateful for all of Buddy's work and help to make these races possible.

Teachers and Helpers Needed for Children's Church

Because of College breaks, we have a couple dates where some extra help is needed in Children's Church for our 2-4 year olds. Teaching materials are available and all supplies and snacks are provided. Contact Emily Hoffman (emilyhoffman@hwchurch.org) if you can help!
Sunday, February 26: 8:20 service - Helper needed
11:00 service - Teacher and Helper needed
Sunday, March 5: 11:00 service – Teacher and Helper needed

Communion Sunday is February 26th. Junior Church will not be meeting this Sunday.

Playgroup meets on Thursdays, 9:30 to 11:30 in the community room.

Memory Verse Challenge

We would like to encourage our children, youth and congregation members to memorize scripture. Work on learning this verse in February. This verse goes along with our Children's Sunday School lessons for February.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5

Empowered to Connect Conference

April 7 – 8th
10 am – 6 pm both days

Fillmore Wesleyan Church
20 E Main Street
Fillmore, NY 14735

- Bring your own sack lunch.
- Light refreshments provided.
- Donation of $10 to attend.
- Visit HWChurch.org for tickets.
- Equipping families, churches and professionals to better serve children impacted by adoption and foster care, as well as children who experience anxiety, anger and/or sensory processing issues.
- Featuring Trust-Based Relational Intervention® methods developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross from the TCU Institute of Child Development to help bring attachment and connection in families.
- NASW Continuing Education Credits for this conference are available.

Children's Sunday School at HWChurch *by Emily Hoffman*

Our Sunday School is great! It really is wonderful. We are blessed with amazing teachers who love and care for our children. We have great teacher aids and academy kids that come each week to help. It is a blessing to have such a loving and encouraging environment for our children – of all ages. As I walk around to check in on classrooms on Sunday morning, I often get stuck. I'm stuck in the nursery oohing and awing over the babies – often because the nursery workers have to tell me how wonderful the child is. Or I am busy watching how kids are interacting with each other or one of the academy kids or adults in the room. They are acting out the bible story for the day or passing around the teddy bear as they pray. I love seeing the eyes of the older kids light up as their teacher is telling them a bible story or sharing about God in their life. The best is watching the teachers – to see them getting into telling the story and the joy of teaching.

Our children are being taught well. We have an awesome new curriculum. Each grade level learns the same story and bible verse each week – in ways that are applicable and appropriate to them. They are presented with a lot of different ways to interact with the lesson and apply the lesson at home. (The 4-year-olds had toads visit their class one week.) There are also memory verses for the monthly unit and a new memory verse each week. Our 4-year-olds to 4th graders receive a devotional book each month that goes along with what they are learning at Sunday School. So many parents have told us how much their child enjoys their devotional time.

Thank you to all our teachers, aids and academy students! And to our Sunday School Superintendents, Jess Wartinger and Jamie Potter – they make sure everything is running smoothly and everyone is well taken care of. We are always in need of substitutes. Our teachers take time to visit family, go on mission trips, or they are ill. Our college students are not able to be here during college breaks. Please let us know if you would be interested in helping out, sometimes short notice, in any of our Sunday School classes. It is a fun and exciting place to be!

Project Grace

Who we are: Project G.R.A.C.E is a ministry of Houghton Wesleyan Church. We are non profit and meet once a month to discuss known needs of our local communities and try to find ways to help.

About: Project G.R.A.C.E is an idea that was developed through our missions committee, Partners at Home. With needs continuing to grow in our communities, we are hoping to help in whatever way we are able to. Project Grace stands for Giving, Restoring, Advocating, Caring and Engaging. We receive requests through email at projectgrace@hwchurch.org, by phone at 585-567-2264 or by letter to Houghton Wesleyan Church Project Grace; P.O. Box 127; Houghton NY 14744. Applications for assistance are available in the church office and online.

What we offer: One area we are passionate about is helping with service projects in the local community to increase the quality of living for families. Another area is to assist families with medical needs that are required to travel. We hope to be able to help with travel reimbursements, parking, hotel costs, meal costs while traveling etc.

Services available are the Foster Care Closet and Family Support, Financial Counseling, Next Generation Sustenance, Benevolent Fund, Public Health/Immunizations, and Food Pantry,

Get Involved: We are always looking for help with Project Grace. If you have a skill set, experience or just a heart of service-you will be an amazing asset. You can e-mail us at projectgrace@hwchurch.org, or call us at 585-567-2264 to learn more about getting involved.

FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING LIST

While we accept food donations of all kinds, due to space limitations and to help us run the pantry more efficiently, please limit your donations to the items on the following list when shopping.

-Pasta	-Spaghetti sauce*	-Macaroni & cheese
-Canned tuna	-Canned chicken	-Ramen noodles
-Baked beans	-Canned chili	-Canned beef stew
-Soup	-Boxed rice	-Boxed oatmeal packets
-Canned fruit*	-Canned vegetables	-Peanut butter*
-Cereal	-Jelly or jam*	-Jarred applesauce
-Syrup*	-Granola bars	-Boxed pancake mix
-Canned pasta (Spaghettios, Ravioli)		-Boxed potato mixes
-Helpers (Hamburger, Tuna, Chicken)		-Fruit juices/juice boxes
-Snacks (cookies, crackers, jello, pudding, fruit snacks)		

*An item with an asterisks donates a traditionally high need item.
**Due to health and safety concerns, we do not accept opened items or home-baked goods.
***We can also use your recycled plastic shopping bags if you would like to donate them.

NOTE: Monetary Donations (checks to Houghton Wesleyan Church with "FOOD PANTRY" on the Memo Line) provide fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, eggs, cheese, and milk, as well as emergency groceries for families in our community. The Food Pantry has a refrigerator and a freezer to store items.
NOTE: Perishable Pantry Donations may be brought to the church office throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued donations!

The Library Corner

The church library is open whenever the Christian Education Building is open.

"And should any of you desire to attain to an understanding of the things which he reads, let him love. For it is useless for him who loves not, to attempt to read or to listen to this Canitcle of love, because the "ignited" Word can obtain no lodgment in a heart that is cold and frozen."
Saint Bernard, 2nd Century

This cold and snowy winter month when we celebrate love, Saint Valentine and our country's presidents, stop by and check out the resources recently purchased or donated to the church library.

New books for children include: *The Wolves Are Back, The Eagles Are Back,* and *The Buffalo Are Back*, by Jean Craighead. We also have *I Spy a School Bus,* and *I Spy Treasure Hunt: a Book of Picture Riddles* by Marzollo,
and the first 28 books of the *Magic Tree House* series.

CDs for children added were: *The Pilgrim's Progress, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, A Man Without a Country, Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. New DVDs donated were *Franklin: Back to School, Andre* (the story about a seal), and *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

For adults the library now has these books*: Philippians* by Gordon Fee, *Colossians Remixed* by Walsh, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God* by Dawn, *Every Young Man's Battle* by Arterburn, *More Leadership Lessons of Jesus* by Briner, and *Wisdom and Wonder* by Abraham Kuyper. New CDs for adults include: *The Duggars: 20 and Counting*, *A Love That Multiplies, Unlikely Angel* (Atlanta hostage Ashley Smith), *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Thanks Mom*, *Chicken Soup Moms and Sons*, *Chicken Soup: a Book of Miracles.*

ALL WOMEN

We are planning one – possibly two – opportunities for all women to get together for fun and fellowship during these long Winter months. Please watch the church bulletin for details and dates.

Wellspring Ministries

Seen on my grandson's public school wall in NYCity
" A SMILE IS A CURVE THAT STRAIGHTENS THINGS OUT."
When I read that, I thought of Wellspring. We always want to be on the lookout for those needing love. Providing the lifeline of friendship for the lonely and seemingly unloved costs us little more than a smile and an encouraging word. Especially in this season of bitter cold, a smile and a cup of tea goes at least a little way to help ease the pain of life not only for those who come to Wellspring, but for anyone we as believers meet anywhere.

This month we are:
~grateful for the powerful kitchen presence of our own Kathie Brenneman
~appreciative of Barbara Elliott's cutlery wrapping and attention to the rest rooms
~enjoying a new double stainless steel sink ,wider and shallower than the original, making access easier
~reviewing our Constitution and Abuse Prevention Policy
~asking prayer for several of our volunteers with serious health needs
~aware that without you - your prayers, material contributions, and financial help, Wellspring would not be standing as strong
We DO have a need for a painting crew to do some interior wall brightening. If interested, contact Beth Beardsley.

"Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens... and loads us with benefits."
Psalm 68:19
Beth Beardsley (for the Board)

An Opportunity for Spiritual Direction: We are all pilgrims on our journey with God looking to develop a deeper life with God. As a spiritual director I help you read the maps and road signs of your life and journey with Jesus. My role is to prayerfully companion you and help you listen for God's invitations to you. Perhaps you are in a time of transition, or you would like to deepen your relationship with God, or grow in becoming more aware of him in your life. If so, you might like to consider a relationship of spiritual direction. *If you would like to talk more about spiritual direction contact me at* jeanielittle5@gmail.com *or phone 585-610-5999.*

Thank you for the prayers, cards, and many acts of kindness during Carol's recovery from surgery and Ken's hospitalization. We want to especially thank Carolyn Washburn for stepping in and being our transportation and caregiver. We are so thankful to live in such a loving community.

Ken and Carol Stonemetz

Thank you for your words, acts and prayers of kindness in the midst of my recent incident with a kidney stone. Cindy and I are blessed to be family with you.

Pastor Wes

Houghton Area Senior Citizens Luncheon February 9 at Noon

Lunch catered by Black-Eyed-Susan Catering.
Menu: apple-bacon BBQ chicken, rice pilaf, fresh vegetables, cheesy biscuits, garden salad and lemon squares.
Cost is $12.50 per person.
Advance reservations required.
Call Ellis Brotzman @ telephone number 585-207-5011 to make reservations.

Program at 1:00 p.m. ***Senior Pharmacy–Drug Issues***
Presented by Anita Mattison, ***Coordinator of Services***
Allegany County Office for the Aging

Connecting Our Community

Do you ever see people and wonder what their names are? Have you ever heard an announcement regarding a member and wished you could put a face with a name? Are you a new member and wish you had something to help you put names with faces? Help is on the way! We are producing a pictorial family album! There is no cost to have your portraits taken, and you will receive

a complimentary 8x10 portrait
An app for smartphones that will allow you to connect (see below)
and a 6" x 9" directory for participating.

At your session you will be able to view your images electronically and have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits to share with family & friends. Watch for weekend sign-ups or visit our website to schedule your own appointment. We have reserved March 14, 15, and 16 and April 24, 25, and 26 . Lifetouch photographers will come to the church Community Room for this event.

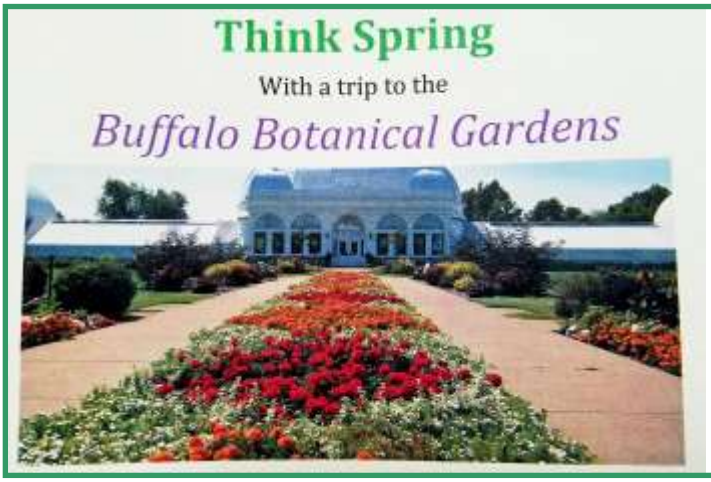
A Recital of Vocal Music

Amanda Cox, soprano & Sharon Johnson, piano
featuring Kelly VanKirk, mezzo-soprano
& Chantalle Falconer, violin
Wednesday, February 8 at 8pm
Recital Hall, Center for the Arts, Houghton College
Thursday, February 9 at 7pm
Nancy Howe Auditorium, David A. Howe Public Library, Wellsville

Pete Roeske
SNOWPLOWING
service
585-689-0368

Helping Hands Christian Alliance
Barbara Elliott
9722 Rt 19 Apt B
Houghton NY 14744
716 801 2077

Grounded due to poor weather? Here is your chance to cut loose and look towards spring. I am a freelancer who enjoys pet sitting, house sitting, and even house cleaning. I am available to help you with any of these needs. I do not have transportation now but have plenty of helping hands who are willing and able to get me around if necessary.
My services are strictly first come first serve and I only charge a donation for my services.
I also create cards and have several designs to choose from. I sell them for $5.00 a dozen or .50 cents a card.



WHEN: Wednesday, February 8, leaving at 9 am; returning 3 pm

COST: $20 (includes entry fee)

ADDITIONAL INFO: Transportation provided; bring money for lunch on the road.

CONTACT: Bob Smalley to register by February 6th
585-567-9389/
robert.smalley@houghton.edu

MINIMUM OF SIX PEOPLE NEEDED

The **Houghton Area Woodworkers' Club** next meets on Thursday, February 16 at 7:00 pm in the Good Shepherd room under the sanctuary. All are welcome. Feel free to bring any project you have made or photos of them. Send Daryl Stevenson any questions.

SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

February 5 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Handle Real Life?* (Matthew 6:19-34)
p.m. Small Groups

February 12 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. Carolyn Miller (Missions Convention)
p.m. Small Groups

February 19 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Influence a World Struggling with Sin?* (Matthew 7:1-14)
p.m. Small Groups

February 26 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Know Who's In and Who's Out?* (Matthew 7:15-29)
p.m. Small Groups

CHURCH STAFF

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

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

Cindy Oden, *Assistant Pastor*
567-2024 **cindyoden@hwchurch.org**

Paul Shea *Assistant Pastor*
567-4597 **paulshea@hwchurch.org**

Amanda Cox, Music & *Worship Director*
567-4870 **amandacox@hwchurch.org**

Emily Hoffman, *Children's Ministry Director*
567-8138 **emilyhoffman@hwchurch.org**

Church Office, M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-5 PM,
567-2264 **office@hwchurch.org**

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