Houghton Wesleyan Church
Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others

January 2017
Volume 49, No. 8

Our Response to a New President

…we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods
or worship the gold statue you have set up.
Everyone must submit to governing authorities.
(Daniel 3:18; Romans 13:1)

Around noon on Friday, January 20, 2017, Donald John Trump will stand on a platform on the West Lawn of the U. S. Capitol building, and take the Oath of Office becoming the 45th President of the United States of America. Acknowledging the responses to the election, this event will be met with a wide range of emotions. Whatever we may feel, this is an opportunity to be reminded of what scripture says about God's people and political leaders.

It's important to remember the words of Paul to the Church in Rome: *Everyone must submit to governing authorities.* And the words of Peter: *For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed* (1 Peter 2:13-14). Both apostles are highlighting an attitude that is an identifying characteristic of God's people: Christians respond to leaders in government with respect and support. This admonition is particularly surprising in the context of the Roman government that typically oppressed the Church.

In our culture that demands taking sides and declaring war against those with whom we disagree, the Gospel calls us to take a stand in such a way that respects, submits and loves those in authority over us—just like Jesus does. This tension means that we treat leaders, particularly leaders who are diametrically opposed to our perspective, with respect even as we hold these same leaders to a standard of peace, justice, compassion, and truth. Living in this tension will tax our faith, but God doesn't seem shy about taxing our faith because it forces us to rely that much more on his grace and wisdom.

Daniel 3 tells the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who are threatened with death in a blazing furnace if they do not bow down and worship the king's statue. They reply: *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.*

Respect and support doesn't imply agreement, nor does it imply acquiescence. Followers of Jesus are called to live in the tension of refusing to demean governing authorities while at the same time remembering that our highest allegiance is Christ. It is imperative to remember that no government or leader of government has ever brought transformation as God intends. God has proven himself able to work through political leaders (Cyrus, Augustus), but only temporarily and only by his mandate, not theirs.

As with every president or anyone who has or will hold political office, Christ calls us to an attitude of humility toward them and their supporters and at the same time to be willing to speak the truth in love about the administration's decisions. We recognize that this tension is difficult in the hotbed of political disagreement and animosity. But we also know that our faith does not rest in any government or political leader; our faith rests in Christ alone.

One more admonition. Paul writes to Timothy: *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth* (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Blessings,
Pastor Wes

Getting to know our college students better…
JOIN **SUNDAY LUNCH II** Event
Community Room – January 29 – Noon Potluck

What to do?
Mark your calendar and invite students you know.
Sign Up to bring food: Large main dish and salad/or dessert.
(Hoping for international dishes but all food welcome!)
Sign up sheets will circulate in S.S. classes or contact Pastor Paul (paulshea@hwchurch.org)

FAITH PROMISE UPDATE: We enter the home stretch for 2016-17 Faith Promise giving towards our Global Partners missionary "Dream Team." God has blessed us with nearly $18,500 to date with $13,275 needed to reach our goal! As God provides pass along funds by the end of May 2017.
PRAISE AND PRAYER NOTE: The Austin support goal is at 76% for a February arrival in Czech Republic. Pray for God's provision.

PRAYER MINISTRY: The prayer room is still available for you to use. Reserve an hour or more at http://www.hwchurch.org/prayer-room/ The prayer room is available whenever the church is open. Walk–ins are welcome with consideration given to a previous reservation.

EPIPHANY: Epiphany, January 6, is a day of great joy for all Christians. It completes the twelve days of Christmas; more important, this is the festival of the manifestation of God's Word made flesh. The central images of the Magi bearing gifts suggest the three races of humanity coming to worship the Christ. A second manifestation was the baptism of Jesus. A third manifestation was the wedding feast at Cana when Jesus first revealed his power. The season of Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday (February 18), which is the first day of Lent. The emphasis of Epiphany is on the revealing nature of God, his desire for all people to know his nature and power—the character of his being. The color is green which points us to life—physical and eternal. The trees green out in the spring to reveal that the trees are still alive. The grass also turns green revealing the life that has been hidden during the winter.

JOINING GOD'S MISSIONS HERE AND BEYOND!

Mark your Calendars for February.
HWC Missions takes center stage **February 1** – **FAMILY NIGHT - Journey in Our World! 6:15-7:45 p.m.** This will be an exciting multi-generational chance to visit three interactive sites for sights and sounds and even smells to gather information about our mission at home and abroad. Hints: Food packing, Haiti medicine, Middle East outreach, Translation teamwork, Sports ministry, Eleuthera heartbeat and more.

February 12 - MISSION SUNDAY with Carolyn Miller and refugee outreach in Buffalo with Steve and Ruth Strand and guests.

Notes on Adult Ministries

Pastor Paul Shea, Assistant Pastor for Adult and College Ministries

New Year's greetings to all. It has been a privilege to work alongside our other staff and with all the congregation for the last six months. I have had few specific goals but overall my purpose is to **assist us as a Body to grow in our walk with God and in love and service with one another** To that end, I'd appreciate you reviewing the items below and **RECOMMIT --**

To PRAYER - Adult Prayer Group Meets Wednesday 6:30 p.m. each week below the Sanctuary; Men's Morning Prayer Groups meet Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

To WOMEN's BIBLE STUDIES – Four different Women's Bible Studies meet Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Consult the Church webpage or see below for details.

To ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL, 9:40 a.m. - RESTART January 15. Open to All!!

Join us for a wonderful array of approaches and topics as a way to grow in Christ. Visitors and newcomers welcome.

Bible Exposition – Galatians and beyond. With Dr. Paul Young. Rm. 9 below sanctuary.
Book Discussion – Dr. MLKing's ,*Where do we go from here: Chaos or Community?* With Dr. Michael Jordan. Rm. 10 below sanctuary
Book Discussion and Sharing – Steve DeNeff's *The Way of Holiness.* With Ralph and Marilyn Kerr. Rm. 105, opposite the Library.
Kaleidoscope – Variety of Guests and Topics. With David Daugherty. Community Room.
When Mom's Pray – Sharing and prayer. With Sally Johnson and others. Rm. 7.
"Connexion" – **11:00 a.m.** special time. College students & beyond. Variety of discussion topics with guests and sharing. With Paul Shea & others. Rm. 105, opposite the Library

To SMALL GROUPS, Sunday & Monday Evenings – RESUME January 15. Join In!!

Find a place to belong. Multigenerational. Newcomers welcome. Topics and formats vary. Contact leaders or Pastor Paul at paulshea@hwchurch.org (585-567-2264) for more info.

Sunday:
Dan & Jess Wartinger@ Church Rm. 105 opposite library – 5:30 p.m. Ingram's *Balancing Life's Demands.* (For young families, childcare provided.)
Paul Shea@ Woolsey Home – 5:30 p.m. Bible Study & Discussion TBD
Ellis Brotzman@ Church Rm. 10 below sanctuary – 6:00 p.m. Bible Study & Discussion from Genesis.
Debbie Young@ Leax Home – 6:30 p.m. Ruden's *Paul Among the People,* plus Scripture reading.
Monday:
Michael Jordan@ Hutton Home – 6:30 p.m. Discussion TBD
Others: As many as three other unlisted groups meet in various homes. Want to form a new group? Contact Pastor Paul (paulshea@hwchurch.org or 585-567-2264x304) for info.

Wednesday AM Women's Bible Study resumes on **January 11 at 9:30am** in the Good Shepherd Room.
All women are welcome to join us for prayer and study of Revelation.
If you are looking for a Bible study with women who will listen, love, pray for, and accept you, we'd be honored to have you join us, and will begin again with chapter 7.
(Beth Beardsley - facilitator)

Wednesday PM Bible Study —"Entrusted" by Beth Moore resumes January 4 & 18 (not meeting January 11 so we can attend FAMILY EVENT NIGHT)
(Casda Danner - facilitator)

Youth Group Happenings

Dates to Remember:
January 1: No Sunday School/No Youth Group
January 3: No Prayer Breakfast
January 7: Youth Association Rally
January 8: No Sunday school
Youth Group begins
January 15: Go to Sunday School with Parents
January 29: No Youth Group

JAN. 27-29

Winter Retreat

Come enjoy a weekend with friends and digging deeper into God's Word.

Registrations Deadline : January 15
Cost: $75
Contact Pastor Jon with any questions.

Fall Recap

Ninety plus students and volunteers on the first night of Youth Group started this year off with a bang. We have continued to see our young people participate in Youth Group despite the demands of school, sports and other extracurricular activities. There have been many new faces in the sea of youth which has been a true blessing.

Every fall we get together on a Sunday afternoon for Storm the Heights (an intense game of capture the flag). We are happy to report that this year there were no major injuries and everyone had a great time. Mike and Amanda Cox shared a short message with the group and we enjoyed some hot chili and fellowship with one another.

For Sunday School this fall, Dan Moore, Ellis Brotzman, and Sarah Derek shared their wisdom with us, helping us to think deeper about intelligent design, prayer, and the Psalms. We are so grateful for their investment in the lives of our young people!

We deeply appreciate your prayers as we seek to connect young people to Jesus and to His church!

Blessings!
Pastor Jon and the HWCYG crew!

THANK YOU: The Pastoral Staff would like to thank you for your generosity and gratitude to each of us this Christmas season. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and appreciation we felt through your many gifts, personal acts of kindness, and your kind words. We feel privileged to be a part of the godly tradition of the Houghton Wesleyan Church and to participate in ministry with you. We look forward to the year ahead and all that God has planned for you and for us.

PLAYGROUP will start up again on January 12th, 9:30 - 11:30 in the Community Room. Moms, Dads, Grandparents, Caregivers, All are invited!

Sunday School does not meet on January 1st or January 8th. See you again on January 15th!

Junior Church will begin again on January 22nd. They will not meet on January 1st, 8th, or 15th for Communion Sunday.

36 Shoe boxes were put together at our **Operation Christmas Child Packing Party.** Our boxes were sent out this last month to Ghana, The Dominican Republic, Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe

Thank you for your prayers and support for our children as we commit ourselves to nurturing their faith in Christ. We had hoped to restart our Wednesday night children's ministries in January but due to staffing issues, we are unable to do so. We are working to develop more programs where our families and church body can minister to our children, including expanding the PALS program for both boys and girls. (PALS is a mentoring program where an adult and child are pared together. PALS will have very specific expectations for both the adult and child. And there will be a variety of events for PALS to choose from to attend.) To be a part of this ministry to our children, please contact me (emilyhoffman@hwchurch.org).

Our Caroling Night was great! Thank you to everyone who participated and those that listened to us sing. We have received very sweet thank you notes. One note said: "What a superb way to spread the good news."
The Family Event Nights have been one means of connecting the generations of our church. Our children have been given opportunities for outreach and to show Jesus in ways that are applicable to them while being supported and encouraged by their families and the larger church family. We have exciting plans for more Family Event Nights in 2017.

January Family Event Night

This month we will be visiting the Absolute Nursing Home.
We have two dates of activities. You do not need to attend both to participate.
Wednesday January 11th, 6:15 at CHURCH – cookie and card making, intro to visiting the nursing home.
Saturday January 14th, 10:00 – 11:30 at NURSING HOME – playing games, story reading, sharing cookies and cards. The Grandpas and Grandmas love having books read to them. We are looking for kids who would like to read stories.

As the church, nurturing the faith of our children and youth is one of our highest priorities. Thank you for what you have done in the past and for what you are going to do in the future to help us in this vital task.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is January 15

Every year in the United States alone, more than one million babies are aborted. Statistics show that 50 % of U.S. women who obtain abortions are younger than age 25, and at current rates, nearly one-third of American women will have an abortion. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 15, 2017, is a day to celebrate and focus on choosing life.

The Wesleyan Church supports the sanctity of life and those who choose to trust God despite difficulties. January 15, 2017, marks Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, an event observed the third Sunday of every January. Wesleyans are encouraged to observe this day on which many take a stand for human life.

Because all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are "fearfully and wonderfully made," (Psalm 139:14) abortion grieves his heart. God, the Creator of the universe, deeply values human life and it says so in his Word:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! (Psa. 139:13-17 NIV).

PASTOR WES' BLOG: Pastor Wes posts a new blog most every Wednesday or Thursday on the church website. The blog addresses current events, practical matters of our faith and often further thoughts related to the previous Sunday's sermon. You may access the blog on the church homepage (www.hwchurch.org) or by subscribing to receive an email notification when the blog has been posted. Your comments are welcome.

Each week approximately 75 students (and their leaders) come to youth group for activities, study, discussions, and fellowship. Following their small group times, the students gather in the community room and gym for snacks and further interaction.

We appreciate all the parents and family of youth who provide these snacks (for 75 people each week!) on a rotating basis. There are openings for second semester starting in February and running through May. If you are the parents/family of students in youth group who didn't get to sign up at the fall meeting OR if you are a community member who would like to contribute to the youth ministry in this way, please contact Casda Danner (casdadanner@gmail.com or 567-4314) to learn more about this opportunity and to sign up for a snack date.

The Library Corner

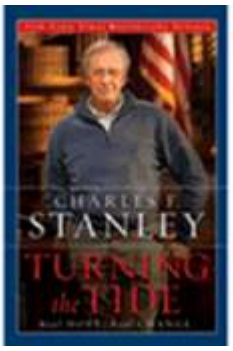
The church library is open whenever the Christian Education Building is open.

Leave the past to the mercy of God,
and the present to the love of God,
and the future to the benevolence of God.
Saint Augustine of Hippo

May your new year be full of God's mercy, love and benevolence! The library committee added more DVDs to the children's collection. Here are a few: *Greatest Heroes and Legends* (complete collection), *McGee and Me* (complete collection), *Stuart Little* (3 movies), *Red Fury, The Secret Garden, Air Buddies, Rio 2, Owlegories, Fruitcake Christmas,* and *Paddington Bear (*complete collection). For family viewing we purchased: *The Last Straw, New Hope, The Blind Side, The Lucky One, The Coat of Many Colors* (the life story of Dolly Parton), and *God Gave Us Wings*.

Two new CDs were ordered for the music section: *Gaither Vocal Band Hymns*, and *I'd Rather Have Jesus* by George Beverly Shea, and five new adult audiobooks were added: *Compelling Interest: The Real Story Behind Roe v. Wade* by Roger Resler, *Darkness Rising* by Lis Wiehl, *Wherever I Wind Up: My Quest for Truth, Authenticity and the Perfect Knuckleball* by R.A. Dickey , *The Spirit Well* by Stephen Lawhead , *Lincoln's Battle with God: A President's Struggle with Faith and What It Meant for America* by Stephen Mansfield, and *Abandoned to God: The Life Story of the Author of My Utmost for His Highest* (Oswald Chambers).

Quite a few books were donated to the adult library: *The Power of Christmas Prayer* by Stormie Omartian, *Traveling the Prayer Paths of Jesus* by John Indermark, *The Water is Wide* by Pat Conroy, *Faith and Freedom* by Marvin E. Frankel, *The Healing Path* by Dan B. Allender, *Roaring Lambs* by Bob Briner, *The Comfort of Home* by Maria M. Meyer, *The Caregiver's Toolbox* by Carolyn P. Hartley, *Slave* by John MacArthur, and *The Rock That is Higher* by Madeleine L'Engle. Max Lucado's *Grace Happens Here* was purchased for the adult library, and In the large print book section three new books were added: Charles Stanley's *Turning the Tide*, Lisa Wingate's *The Prayer Box*, and *31 Days to Happiness* by David Jeremiah.



IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Condolences to the family and friends of Blanche Weaver who died November 22, especially daughters Gwen Mercer and Karen Liddick and their families.

Condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Bill Allen who died December 29, especially wife Jane, children Beth, Bill, and Becky and families. Funeral arrangements will be announced at a later time.

Wellspring Ministries

The November-December 'roller coaster ride' has now slowed to a manageable pace at Wellspring. We rejoice that we were able to provide many families with gifts in the annual Christmas Room. That room opened in mid-November and went all the way to our closing day, December 21. On that day we had a delicious ham dinner for the clients, as well as a calendar/pen gift. (Due to remaining monies left from the East Hill Foundation Grant, we were able also this Christmas to send each family home with a ham piece.) So many this season went home with 'new to them' Christmas decorations, warm coats, and bedding. It is because of YOU that we have such nice items to share... and can always use cold weather items well into the new year.

We reopen Wednesday, January 4.
(Items may be dropped off again on the Beardsley porch Monday and Tuesday, January 2, 3. Please do not put things there over the holiday weeks.)

If we had a **2017 Resolution List** to submit to you, our church family, it might include:

- Learning and incorporating better ways to help folks with their varied needs, concerns. (We did have a helpful meeting with the Dept. of Social Services recently along this line.)

-Inviting new volunteers with a commitment to Jesus.

-Praying more fervently for His direction for new board members/ CEO as we look ahead.

-Praying for the Holy Spirit to open minds to a clear understanding and acceptance of the salvation we have through Jesus.

-Making Wellspring a place where people feel loved, accepted, and helped.

-Keeping our 3rd Tuesday evening meal (5-7 pm) up and running for those who cannot come during the daytime hours. (Would any group at Houghton Church be willing to host our meal on February 21st, or another 3rd Tuesday?)

THANK YOU for your financial commitment to us. We covet your prayers even more. The evil one desires to foil this work of God.

Beth Beardsley (for the Board)

We are so thankful to our church family for your support and prayers during our missions trip to Eleuthera this year. It is wonderful knowing you have been praying for us. We so appreciate being able to partner with you each year.

Thank you,
Bob, Laurie, and Angie Smalley, David and Katie Brubaker

Houghton Area Senior Citizens meeting January 12th

LUNCHEON at NOON
Bring the dish indicated by the first letter of your last name:

- A-F Desserts
- G-N Casseroles
- O-Z Salads

PROGRAM at 1:00 P.M.
A Virtual Walk Through Letchworth Park
By Dr. Connie Finney

THANK YOU to the people who decorated the church so beautifully:

- **Terry Ayers & Brooklyn Templeton**
- **Dar and Suzanne Beardsley**
- **Tori Bowers**
- **Kathie Brenneman**
- **David & Luanne Brubaker**
- **Carolyn Miller**
- **Nancy Petrillo**
- **Jessica Romance**
- **Diane Wilkins**
- **and a special thank you to Joyce Fisher who orchestrated volunteers and cared for the flowers.**

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.*

Gudy and I appreciated dearly all the written and spoken expressions and actions of care following my heart attack December 3. The responses of both church and town communities are reasons we choose to live in Houghton during retirement. We are grateful for the prayerful support as I heal up and get used to some new normals every day. I feel good, am under excellent care, and expect to resume virtually all previous activities. Thank you.

Gratefully,
Daryl Stevenson

Pete Roeske
SNOWPLOWING
service
585-689-0368

A Special
THANK YOU

We want to thank the Houghton people who sent us cards and remembrances at the time of my recent leg fracture. I am out of the cast now and doing well. We wish you all a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Storer & Wilma Emmett

WNY WOMEN of Worship

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2017 | 10:00am - 8:30pm
HOUGHTON COLLEGE

LISA ALLEN
Proverbs 31 Ministries
Executive Director
of Ministry Training

WHITNEY CAPPS
Proverbs 31 Ministries
Author, Speaker, Blogger

$95 EXCLUSIVE PACKAGE FOR WESLEYAN WOMEN OF WESTERN NY

Refresh your inner-spirit with a day of seminars featuring keynote speakers from Proverbs 31 Ministries and an evening of speaking and live music featuring Laura Story.

Includes: Daytime Seminars and Luncheon, Private Wesleyan Women Dinner & Up-Front Seating for Keynote Speaker and Laura Story concert.

The **Houghton Area Woodworkers' Club** will meet again on Thursday evening, January 19, 7:00 pm, in the Good Shepherd room under the sanctuary. Our focus will be on a) species of hardwoods and b) cuts of boards. Specifically, characteristics of various wood species, suitability for particular projects, and ease of workabiliy; types of lumberyard cuts that yield different figures/grains, cupping/splitting risks, and selecting patterns for panel glue-ups. What fun, eh? If you have a hankering for learning about such things, please come. Everyone is welcome. Send questions to Daryl Stevenson (daryl.stevenson@houghton.edu).

PLAYGROUP

- **Begins again on January 12**
- **Meets Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30 in the Community Room for Fun and Fellowship**
- **Everyone welcome, Moms, Dads, Caregivers, Kids**

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**

Kevin Austin, ***Assistant Pastor***
808-1644 **kevinaustin@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**

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

January 1 (10:00 am)
a.m. Pastor Paul Shea
NO EVENING ACTIVITIES

January 8 (10:00am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Experience Blessing?*
(Matthew 5:1-20)
NO EVENING ACTIVITIES

January 15 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am, 5:00pm)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Obey God?*
(Matthew 5:21-48)
p.m. Small Groups

January 22 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Serve God?*
(Matthew 6:1-18)
p.m. Small Groups

January 29 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)
a.m. *How Do Kingdom Citizens Handle Real Life?*
(Matthew 6:19-34)
p.m. Small Groups