Houghton Wesleyan Church

Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others

January 2018
Volume 50, No. 8

New Year Hope

Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world.

(Matthew 12:18-21)

Even though January 1 is no different from any other day, there is something in us that views this day as different from every other day. This day that we designate, somewhat arbitrarily, to be the first day of the new year, carries no special value or purpose except for that which we assign it. Nevertheless, something about the clock striking midnight between December 31 and January 1 fills us with an emotion that we rarely feel at any other time.

As the new year dawns, we feel a certain amount of anticipation about the year to come. We feel like we are starting over. We feel like we have been given a new lease on life. We feel like we are able to put the troubles of the past behind us and see new possibilities before us. I think that this is a gift of God.

It's a gift of God because it's symbolic of who God is and of what God promises us. God is a God of hope. From the beginning of Genesis to the last words of Revelation, God calls us to hope—to hope that life isn't only what we see, to hope that our struggles aren't the last word, to hope that the day is coming when God will, in his justice, put all things right. But our hope isn't just that God will condemn those we dislike and honor those we embrace; our hope is that God, who is just and right, full of grace and truth (John 1:14), will judge everyone with the insight and understanding that he alone possesses. We know that this is true because we know who God is.

I think that this is the point of God's revelation to John. This revelation comes as the church is facing persecution and wondering if they are going to make it, wondering if God is enough. John's Revelation does not minimize the presence and power of evil because God's solution to evil is not to ignore it nor to eliminate it. God's solution to evil is to overcome it by stepping into the middle of it. This is why even though January 1 might be an arbitrary date set years ago, there is something appropriate that this day falls right in the middle of the historic Christmas season (December 25 – January 5).

The reason we are able to live in hope in spite of the chaos of our world is because Jesus is born and because Jesus is born, the hope that God has promised since the beginning now has a face and hands and feet and even though this baby seems innocuous to evil and sin; he is the means God uses to once and for all defeat and enslave the power of evil and sin.

As we begin a new year, do you live with a sense of hope? Life might not be what you want it to be, but do you trust that God is who he says he is? Chaos might be the most accurate description of our world, but do we believe that God is who he says he is? Our answer is the difference between despair and hope.

Blessings,
Pastor Wes

NOTICE: Starting in January, during Valley Preschool hours (MWF 9-11:45), the CE building doors will be locked. Entrance can be gained via the door by the church offices.

PRAYER MINISTRY: The prayer room is still available for you to use. Reserve an hour or more at **www.hwchurch.org/prayer.**

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 14), 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.

STEWARDSHIP

As Pastor Wes mentions in the opening article, January is a time of new beginnings. It's a time to evaluate our lives—our priorities, our attitudes, our resources. It's a time to think about stewardship. It's a time to honestly evaluate the way we steward our time, our energy, our resources, our money. It's also a time to remember that all we have is from God and to remember that we are accountable to him for what we do with what he has given us.

Reflecting back on 2017 and looking forward to a new year, how might you take a step of stewardship faith? Is there a way in which you might more consistently serve? Do you have gifts lying dormant that might fit perfectly with a current need? Is it possible that you are spending an inordinate amount of mental and emotional energy holding a grudge or nursing a hurt from which God is calling you to the freedom of forgiveness? Is God prompting you to be more generous with your money, gifts and time toward his kingdom?

May you find freedom and joy in the discipline and obedience of generosity.

FAITH PROMISE UPDATE: Five months remain for us to see what God provides towards the $33,300.00 goal to support our Wesleyan missionaries. We have received ONE THIRD, $11,000.00. Continue to pray for God to supply the resources. Newcomers are welcome to join in designating toward Faith Promise.

Why the Great Commission is Still GREAT!

Houghton Wesleyan Missions Emphasis. **February 4-11, 2018**
Guests: Dr. Don Little; Drs. Romy and Linda Caringal and more. Events: Combined S.S. classes (4th & 11th); Mid-week all-generation "world tour" (7th); Saturday Seminar on Islam (10th) ; Sunday services (11th). *Discover how we can partner with what God is doing around the world and close to home.*

NEW YEAR…NEW GROWTH! Consider joining with others in **SMALL GROUPS** to deepen fellowship and Body Life, and strengthen discipleship. Groups begin the week of ***JANUARY* 14.** Please contact leaders for more information since space is limited in most. Tentative listing:

Time	Place	Leaders	Info
Sundays: 11:00 am	D. Gurley home	JL Miller 585-567-9691	Video & discussion. Child care provided.
5:30 pm	HWC Room 105	Wartingers 585-330-4628	N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope.* For young families, childcare provided.
5:30 pm	D. Mayhle home	Doug Mayhle 585-567-8241	Shared light supper followed by discussion.
5:30 pm	M. Woolsey home	Paul Shea 585-567-4597	Inductive study of Bible book TBD
6:30 pm	J. Leax home	Deborah Young 585-567-8066	D. Willard, *The Allure of Gentleness.*
Mondays: 6:30 pm	B. Hutton home	M. Jordan 585-567-4642	Group Discussion TBD.
Tuesdays: 6:30 pm Every other week	HWC Room 105	L. Dashnau 585-437-2134	Guide book study on Marriage. For married couples. No childcare provided.
Wednesdays: 6:30 pm	J. Fink Home	J. Fink 814-558-6285	F.Chan, *Crazy Love.* For Young Couples, limited space
6:00-7:15	HWC Room 10/or TBD	M. Walters 585-567-8411	"Spiritual Cardiology." For new Believers or those "stuck" in their walk with God. * (See below)

Additional groups are forming. For info contact Pastor Paul Shea: paulshea@hwchurch.org

*"Spiritual Cardiology: The Ways and Means of Discipleship." Dr. Walters leads six weeks especially designed for new believers, or those "stuck" in their walk with God -- helpful for seekers after genuine Christian discipleship but desiring clear basics and beyond. (Limited space. Contact Pastor Shea (paulshea@hwchurch.org) to sign up.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL – January 14th we resume Adult S.S. classes. **All are welcome to find a class that fits your interest.** Here are the five options at 9:40 a.m.:

- Mothers' Pray, Room 7;
- II Timothy Exposition, Paul Young, Rm.9;
- Book Study: Wright's *Surprised by Hope*, Boyd's *Seeing is Believing,* Michael Jordan, Rm 10;
- Communications, L. Sisson & J. Mucher, Room 105;
- Kaleidoscope Topics & Guests, Community Room.

And one more option at 11:00 a.m. College+ Discussion Group, Pat and Sarah Hager, Rm 4.
Note: On February 4 & 11 all adult class meet in Community Room at 9:45am for Mission Guest presentations!

Youth Group Happenings

Dates to Remember:

January 2: No Prayer Breakfast - Christmas Break
January 7: No Youth Group
January 14: Go to Sunday School with your parents - Staff Meeting in Youth Room
Youth Group: NERF WAR & Pizza (bring favorite nerf gun & lots of ammo)
January 15: Last day to register for Winter Retreat
January 21: Screen Free Weekend! -Can you really go 2 days without seeing or using technology?
January 28: No Youth Group

STUDENT PROFILE

Hello! My name is Kate Howe. I began attending Youth Group a year ago this past October. I keep coming back to Youth Group because I love learning more about God in an environment with my friends who also love the Lord. My favorite part about Youth Group is the amazing conversations we have in our small groups about Jesus and other important lessons in the Bible. But nine square is also pretty fun. Youth Group has taught me to be bold in my faith and not to be afraid to step outside my comfort zone. Everyday I try to show others Jesus' love for us.

Favorite verse:
"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

- Joshua 1:9

Kate Howe

KIDS CORNER

Our verse for the month of January is 2 Timothy 3:16:
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Kid's Club will be starting up again on January 17th from 6:00- 7:15 on Wednesday nights. All kids 1st - 6th grade are welcome! Our Spring semester schedule is on the church website.
If you need a registration form, please contact Pastor Laurie

We need 2 assistants to help lead the kids to their stations. If you are interested, please let Pastor Laurie know. Thank you to all who substituted for our regular Children's Church volunteers during Christmas vacation. It was great to offer a break to our teachers! If anyone would like to help out on Easter Sunday during the 10:00 service, please contact Pastor Laurie

STONE SOUP

Dinner Fund Raiser for Valley Preschool

Come enjoy some warm soup and a reading of "Stone Soup" on a cold evening and support Valley Preschool. This donation dinner gives our church family, current Valley Preschool families, and the greater community an opportunity for to contribute to a general fund to help off-set rising tuition costs in the coming years.

Date – Friday, January 26, 2018
Time – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Place – Houghton Wesleyan Church community room
Food – Stone Soup (beef soup or vegetable soup) and breads/rolls/dessert

You can contribute by donating at the dinner and/or by providing cookies and brownies to be our desserts for the evening. We welcome other help as well, so if you can assist in some way, have questions, or can provide dessert items, please contact Casda Danner at 567-4314 or casdadanner@hwchurch.org

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is January 21

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 21, 2018, 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 21, 2018, 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.

All Women—

Escape the February ice and snow at our
Winter Women's Gathering.
Watch for more details in the coming weeks.

WOMEN'S PRAYER AND STUDY GROUPS MEET:

- Tuesday (Hiler) 10:00 a.m. HWC Sanctuary, lower level, Room. 7;
- Wednesday (Roederer) 9:30 a.m. HWC Room 10 (Good Shepherd Room);
- Friday (Cox/ Wiesman) 9:00 a.m. Christian .Education Building 2nd floor.

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

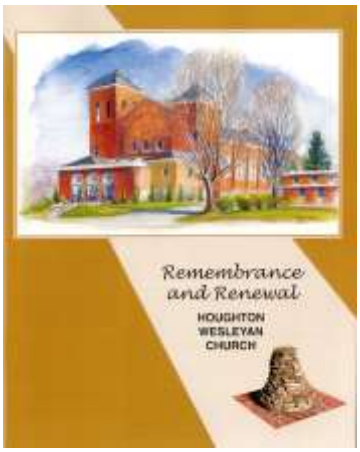
From the Library Shelves

In the New Year, come on in and see what your church library has to offer. We have books about the Bible, and about people in the Bible. There are biographies, Christian living books, books about relationships and books about missions. We have books on managing our finances, and caring for our elderly parents. There are even books on the history of Houghton and the surrounding area. We have a good fiction section too.

Our children's section has many of the same subject offerings. And because the library is not just books anymore, in both sections we have CDs and DVDs on a variety of subjects as well as books on CDs.

So, come see us and check something out, then snuggle down in your chair, with your family and ENJOY!!

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.



HWC History Book:

In 2002, we published a history of our church as we celebrated our sesquicentennial. Since we have long since exhausted our supply of these books and desired to published an updated version, we now have available new history books that cover our history from 1852 to the present. The books are available at no cost, though a donation would help defray the printing costs. You can pick up a book at the church office or in the lower foyer of the sanctuary. We hope that this publication will cause you to give thanks to God for his faithfulness to us in the past and for his promise of faithfulness into the future.

The Board of Wellspring Ministries wishes the Houghton Wesleyan Family a very joyful and fruitful 2018, Thank you for your supportive gifts, donations, and prayers. We reopen Wednesday, January 3

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

- **Terry Ayers**
- **Claire Bintz and littles**
- **David & Luanne Brubaker & Family**
- **Lyn Harter**
- **Emily Hoffman and littles**
- **Shelley Noyes**
- **Cindy Oden**
- **Lynne Perry**
- **Joellyn Reitnour**
- **Kristen Sanasith**
- **Paul Shea**
- **and a special thank you to Elsa Kettinger who orchestrated volunteers and cared for the flowers.**

The Smalleys are headed to the island of Eleuthera again right after Christmas. We are so excited to have Rose Jones, Zach and Carlos Gildemeister and Liam McNeill going with us this year! We so appreciate the support our church gives us each year. We will be doing some hurricane damage clean up as well as our usual Kid's Bible Camp. Thank you all for your prayers!

Senior Citizens Luncheon
January 11—noon

"Living Sustainably Saving Money"

Speaker Brian Webb—Sustainability Coordinator at Houghton College

A workshop offering practical tips for living sustainably in our daily lives. Participants will learn how to care for their environment while working within their existing budget.

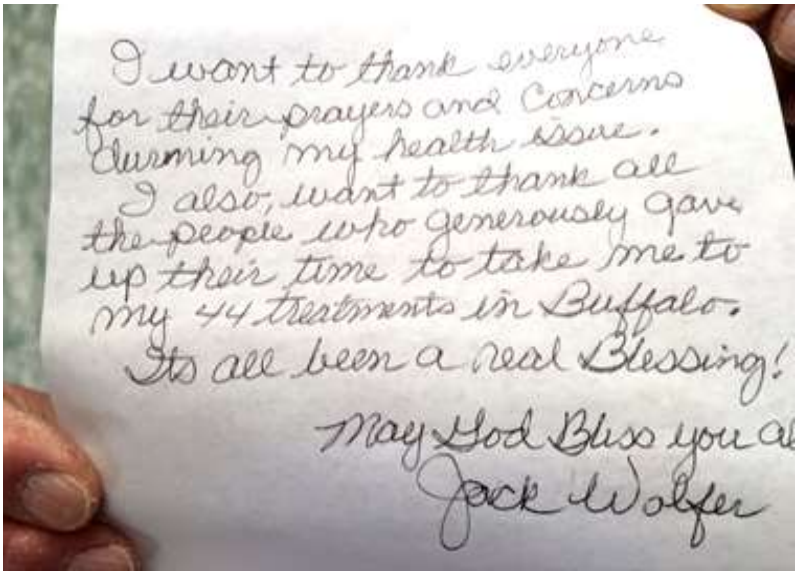
Dish-to-pass Meal

The first letter of your last name determines your food to share:

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

Thank you to Absolut for the beautiful Christmas wreaths at the front doors.

Thanks to the twenty folks on two occasions from the college and community who helped restore and erect the Ortlip Nativity Scene.



take them a meal

For those times in life when filling their table will warm their hearts.

Thank you for your prayers for Nancy, Jon, Luke, and Emma Cole. Because people are asking about taking them a meal or two, we are opening this up to the congregation. You may go directly to **TakeThemAMeal.com** and locate the schedule by the recipient's last name (**Cole**) and the password is **volleyball** .Thank you for praying for and helping the Cole family as they are dealing with Nancy's breast cancer diagnosis.

FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING? Here are some items in high need:

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

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!

Helping Hands Christian Alliance

At Buddy's Place

Barbara's Cards: 75cents per card, a bakers dozen for 5 dollars.
New card designs- come and check it out.
New Item being added every month.
Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Pete Roeske
SNOWPLOWING
service
585-689-0368

The 13th Annual Counselors' Classic Basketball Tournament

will be held on Wednesday & Thursday, December 27-28 at the Nielsen Center on the Houghton College Campus.
The tournament will feature varsity teams from

- Bolivar-Richburg Central School
- Cuba-Rushford Central School
- Fillmore Central School
- Genesee Valley Central School
- Whitesville Central School

Game times both days are 2:45; 4:30; 6:30 and 8:00.

The tournament supports the scholarship fund of the Allegany County Counselors Association. Contact Bruce Campbell for additional information.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Our Condolences to the family of

- Guyneth Neal, Linda Leax's mother, who died December 22
- Howard Phillips, Marilyn Kerr's brother, who died December 24
- Warren Woolsey who died December 24

Go to our homepage https://www.hwchurch.org and click "watch online" to stream services

Streaming Services

All our Sunday and special services are streamed live and also archived for later viewing. Each service has its own link. View the services on computer, tablet, or smartphone at your convenience.

SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

January 7 (10:00am)
a.m. Rev. Mike Walters

January 14 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am, 5:00pm)
a.m. *How Much Bread Do You Have?* (Mark 6:38)
p.m. Small Groups

January 21 (8:20am, 9:40am and 11:00am)
a.m. *Can You See Me Now?* (Mark 8:23)
p.m. Small Groups

January 28 (8:20am, 9:40am & 11:00am)
a.m. *What Do You Mean, "If I Can?"* (Mark 9:23)
p.m. Small Groups

As We Start the New Year

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**

Laurie Smalley, *Children's Ministry Director*
567-8302, **lauriesmalley@hwchurch.org**

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