Houghton Wesleyan Church
Highlights

Joyfully loving God, wholeheartedly serving others
February 2018
Volume 50, No. 9

Reckless Prayers

"Have mercy on us and help us, if you can."
"What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."
The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"
Mark 9:22-24

How would you describe your prayers, safe or reckless? Careful or carefree? Cautious or adventuresome?

I suspect that most of our prayers lean more to being safe and cautious rather than reckless and adventuresome. In fact, the words *reckless, carefree and adventuresome* connected to prayer might make us uncomfortable. But should it?

I didn't always feel this way. I have always believed in my mind that God still works miraculously in this world. I believe that God heals people who are ill. I believe that God provides when there seems to be no means evident. I believe that God arranges life circumstances that without his intervention would never happen. Yet, more often than not, my prayers about these things were safe and cautious, couched in language that provided God (and even more, me) with a way out. After all, who wants to be embarrassed by prayers that aren't answered?

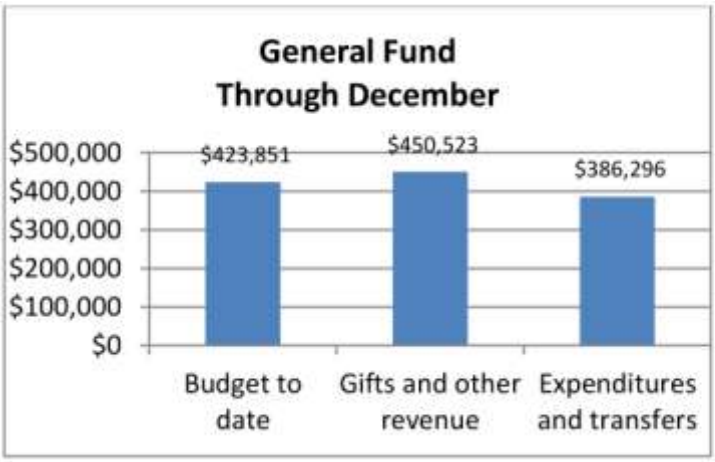
The more I read the scriptures, however, the more I see God's people being reckless with their prayers. The Old Testament is full of stories of people who pray for the impossible and it becomes reality. The Gospels relate story after story of Jesus praying recklessly and God, rather than being shocked, does what Jesus asks. Paul, Peter and John encourage the church to pray, not cautiously or hesitantly, but recklessly.

Praying in faith doesn't mean that God does everything we ask him to do. Our faith-filled prayers are not a means of manipulating God but an active expression of our trust in God. Safe prayers imply that God really doesn't want to help us. Prayers of faith imply that God is more interested in what concerns us than we are. Ultimately, prayers of faith leave the answers to God's infinite wisdom: this, too, is a means of trusting God.

All of us struggle with burdens and concerns that seem impossible. We fear praying prayers that are too big. God calls us to prayers of trusting faith. This is why on Sunday morning, February 4, the pastors and elders will be available to pray with you and for you. After my sermon, from the words of Mark above, we will be available to pray. Let me encourage you to bring your needs and burdens. If you are hesitant to pray, let us encourage you and help you. We believe that God is bigger and greater than all of life. May our prayers reflect what we believe.

Because of Christ,
Pastor Wes

STEWARDSHIP



Our missions emphasis week (February 4-11) might have you wondering how our church financially supports missions, both here and around the world. While many in our church community support missionaries individually, as a church we give financial support to many missionaries and ministries corporately. The two primary ways that this is done are through our general fund and Faith Promise gifts. The church missions committee is tasked each year with working out the details for the proposed missions budget, which is eventually voted on by church members (as part of the general budget) before the beginning of each new fiscal year. Currently the missions portion of the church budget accounts for nearly 15% of overall budgeted expenditures. This includes funding for a variety of local and international ministries, along with financial commitments to many individuals, couples, and missionary families serving throughout the world. Faith Promise gifts (totaling over $33,000) fund several Wesleyan missionaries working through Global Partners and the WNY District. Once each year, we encourage people to consider Faith Promise gifts; as the name implies, a Faith Promise gift is "pledged" in advance, trusting that God will provide the giver with the funds to meet the planned gift.

In addition to our budgeted missions giving and Faith Promise, we have periodic opportunities to give to specific ministries as needs arise. You may remember this fall the Junior Church children collecting for World Hope's 5+2 program, which covers school fees for unsponsored children. More recently our Christmas Eve offering, over $13,000, helped with ongoing hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico.

During our upcoming missions emphasis week, you'll have the chance to learn more about specific ministries we support, and hear directly from a few of the missionaries themselves. If you feel led to increase your financial support for our missionaries through a Faith Promise gift, you may do so by designating your online gift for Faith Promise or by writing "Faith Promise" on the memo line of your check.

*WHY THE **GREAT COMMISSION** Is STILL **GREAT!***

Matt. 28:19-20

FEBRUARY 4 – 11, 2018

Speakers:

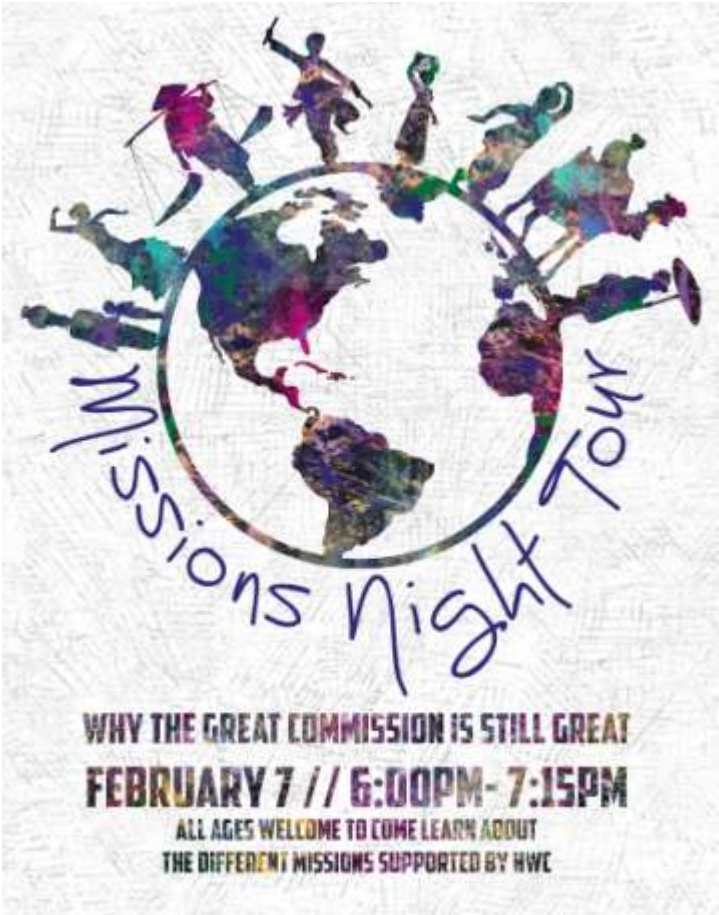
Dr. Don Little,
Drs. Romy and Linda Caringal
Lilias Trotter Center,
Revs. Steve and Ruth Strand.

Events:

Sun. Feb. 4 – Combined Adult/Youth SS - 9:40 a.m.: Partners at Home

Wed. Feb. 7 – **WORLD TOUR for ALL AGES** – 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Rooms: World photo tour, Russia, Middle East, Bible Translation, Local Outreach



Sat. Feb. 10 – SEMINAR: "Still Welcoming the Stranger!" – 9:00 – noon.

A Christian Response to Muslim Refugees in America.
Lilias Trotter Center faculty
Steve & Ruth Strand, Practioners working with refugees in Buffalo.

Sun. Feb. 11 – Combined Adult/Youth SS 9:40 a.m.: Drs. Romy & Linda Caringal.

Worship Services: Dr. Don Little, "Why the Great Commission is Still Great!"

PLAN TO PARTICIPATE

First Hand Testimonies. Experienced Voices. Free Event!

MISSIONS SEMINAR

Still Welcoming the Stranger:

a Christian response to Muslim refugees in America

Saturday, February 10th. 9am to 12pm

Houghton Wesleyan Church

Come learn about a Christian response to Muslim refugees in America from our Buffalo friends.

- Drs. Ben Hegeman and Gail Schlosser of Lilias Trotter Center; Revs. Steve & Ruth Strand from Jericho Road and Houghton Buffalo; Special guest refugees and lay volunteers and practitioners.
- Three workshops, variety format, free refreshments, Q&A.

For more information write paulshea@hwchurch.org

MISSIONS NOTES:

Christmas Offering – To God be the glory for $13,700 received for Puerto Rico Relief. Two equal checks of $6,850+ of are being sent:

- To **Wesleyan Academy** for repairs to nine classrooms and other building restoration. Rev. Fernando Vazquez sends his thanks;
- To **World Hope International** for ongoing relief and rebuilding. Rev. Wayne MacBeth sends thanks and promises a report with details.

- **Faith Promise** – **Four months** remain in the drive to support Wesleyan workers like **the Caringals and Strands,** who visit us this month, and then off to Asia to minister healing and hope to un-reached peoples. There is still time to join in with God's surprise blessings with $18,000 to go!
- **Short Term Funding Requests** – Submit applications by March 25th.

Application link:
www.hwchurch.org/www17/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ShorttermMissionApplicationGeneral.pdf or stop by the church office

Youth Group Happenings

Dates to Remember:

February 4: All Church Missions Sunday School in the Community Room
No Small Groups - SUPER BOWL!!
February 11: Missions Weekend - Visit with a missionary
February 20: No Prayer Breakfast - Winter Break

The Annual Buddy Keith Memorial Grand Prix & Sailboat Races will be in the Community Room/Gym on Wednesday, March 21st. We start at 6:00. 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 distributed on Wednesday, February 14 at Kid's Club. If your child is not involved in Kid's Club but would like to participate, please let Pastor Laurie know and we will give them a kit. There will 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.

Communion Sunday is February 18th. Junior Church will not be meeting this Sunday.

Playgroup meets on Thursdays, 9:30 to 11:30 in the community room. All moms, dads, and caregivers are welcome.

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.

We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commands. -John 2:3

Come on over to the Christian Ed building and check out the wonderful new addition to our Children's Library!

A special thank you to

Wendy, Ashley & Ray Ott,

Joy Blasdell and

Harold & Donna Blew

for all their hard work!

Congratulations!

- James Henry was born to Nate & Eileen Jacoby and siblings Elizabeth and Ruth on January 12.
- Dottie Lynn was born to Tom & Darby Luckey on January 16.

From the Library Shelves

February is Missions month at Houghton Wesleyan Church and your church library has, in both adult and children's sections, quite a number of books about missions and missionaries.

February also has President's Day and Valentine's Day. Do you know who is called the Father of our Country? And why did Abraham Lincoln grow whiskers? What's the real story behind Valentine's Day? Come in to our children's library and find out.

L👀K, L👀K, L👀K!! Our children's library has been enlarged! Come see us and enjoy our new space.

★★★★★★★★★★★

Memorial Service

Houghton College Alumni and Classics Professor Dr. Richard Gould and his brother Tom Gould died January 5th and 4th respectively at the Absolut in Houghton. Friends will be gathering at Houghton Wesleyan Church on the morning of April 27, 2018 for a time of celebrating their lives.
A Celebration of Life will take place at Johnson Funeral Home in Dexter, New York on April 28 from noon to 2:00 p.m. followed by a graveside service at the cemetery in Dexter.

Wellspring Ministries

... and loads us with benefits." Psalm 68:19

Dear Church Family,

Your continued support to Wellspring enabled us to brighten Christmas morning for about 325 children(and some adults) by providing gifts from the Christmas Room. Thank you.

As the cold winter continues on, we welcome coats, boots, sweatshirts, gloves, puzzles, games, and books.

As usual, Monday or Tuesday Beardsley porch drop-offs are preferred, please.

Beth Beardsley (for the Board)

2018 Dish-to-pass Meals

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

Surname Initial	Desserts	Casseroles	Salads
• A-F	March	February/April	May
• G-N	May	March	February/April
• O-Z	February/April	May	March

Remaining 2018 Calendar for Houghton Area Senior Citizens

February 8 – "Animals Captured on Film Media" Dave Huth—Communications HC

- We are introduced to some of the members of the amphibians family of vertebrates who usually have a soft, moist skin that is protected by a slippery layer of mucus. Enjoy the show.

March 8 – Greatbatch School of Music Program Armenio Suzano Director—HC

- A program of customized musical selections presented by one of the nation's premier music schools located right at our own Houghton College.

April 12 – "Pathway To Empire—The Story of The Erie Canal" Craig Braack—retired County Historian

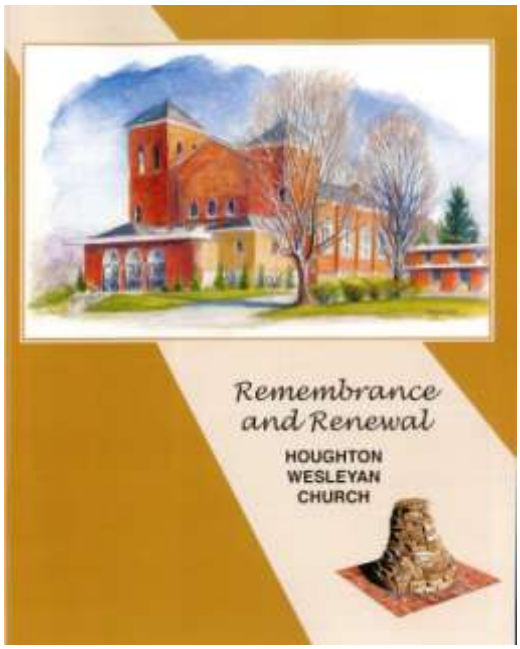
- Hailed as the greatest engineering feat of the 19th century, the Erie Canal survives today. However, it is now used mostly for recreation purposes.
  Program covers why it was built and problems encountered.

May 10 – "Animal Sounds" media presentation James Pomeroy former teacher & biologist

- This program attempts to motivate people to identify by ear some of our fellow crew members on Spaceship Earth. There are a few mammals, a few amphibians, and some of our species of birds.

June 14 – Picnic – no program

- Normal picnic fare to share family style



HISTORICAL BOOKS

At the celebration of Houghton Wesleyan's sesquicentennial in 2002, we published a history book of our church. Since much has changed and transpired over the past 15 years, we have updated and published a revised edition of the 2002 edition. This 24-page book provides a brief overview of our denomination and a longer history of the Houghton congregation. If you have been around for a while, you will connect with many of the articles and pictures. If you are relatively new to the church, this book will familiarize you with the colorful history of this town and this church. The books are available in the church office or in the sanctuary foyer. The books are free, but donations would help to defray the printing costs.

Stone Soup Dinner

to benefit

Valley Preschool

Come enjoy some warm soup and a reading of "Stone Soup" on a winter evening while supporting Valley Preschool through this donation dinner.

Date – Friday, January 26, 2018
Time – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. (readings at 6:00 & 6:30 p.m.)
Place – Houghton Wesleyan Church community room
Food – Stone Soup (beef soup or vegetable soup), breads/rolls, and dessert

Take-out available

If you have questions, please contact Casda Danner at casdadanner@hwchurch.org

An Opportunity for Spiritual Direction

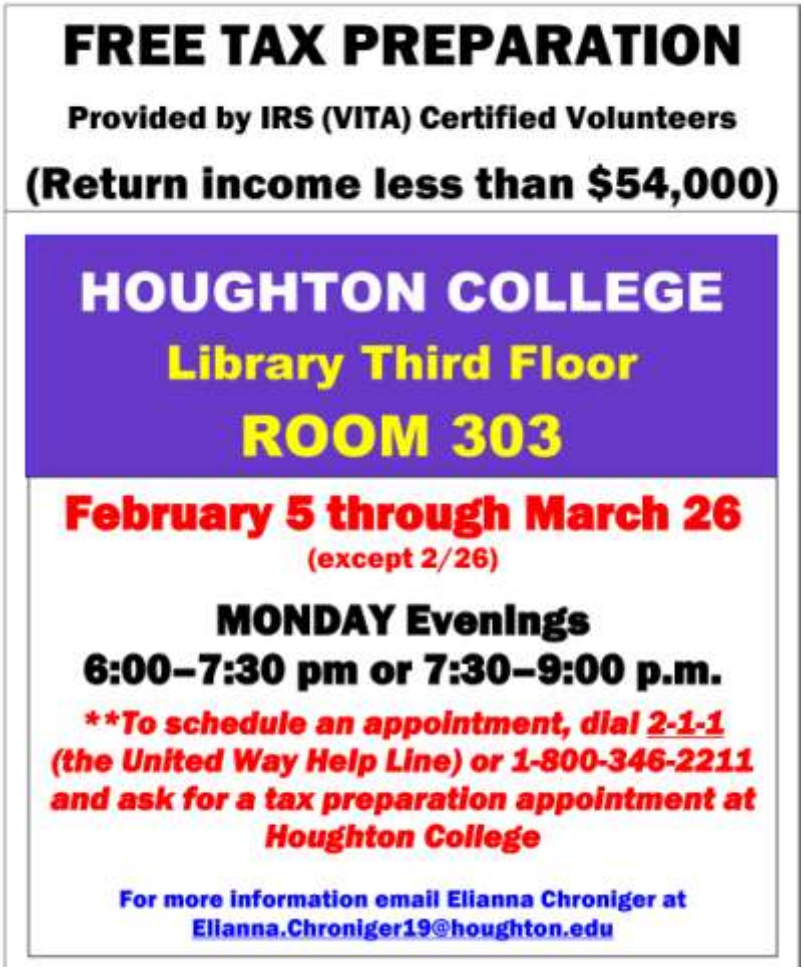
We are all pilgrims on our journey with God looking to develop a deeper life with God. As a spiritual director I help you read the maps and road signs of your life and journey with Jesus. My role is to prayerfully companion you and help you listen for God's invitations to you. Perhaps you are in a time 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.

Pete Roeske
SNOWPLOWING
service
585-689-0368

Open again in the Spring
HELPING HANDS CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE
BARBARA ELLIOTT
9722 RT 19 APT B
HOUGHTON NY 14744
716 801 2077

Sunday, January 28: Welcome Back Student Potluck
We welcome college students' return to the community with a dish to pass in the Community Room beginning at noon. Call Pastor Paul to help with a main dish and salad or dessert. 585-567-2264



SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

February 4 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *What Do You Mean, "If I Can?"* (Mark 9:14-29)
p.m. Small Groups

February 11 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. Dr. Don Little (Missions Convention)
p.m. Small Groups

February 18 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *The Shadow of the Cross Reveals Our Hearts* (John 19)
p.m. Small Groups

February 25 (8:20 am / 9:40 am / 11:00 am)
a.m. *The Shadow of the Cross Reveals Our Motives* (Matthew 27)
p.m. Small Groups

CHURCH STAFF

Wes Oden, ***Senior Pastor***
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Jon Cole, ***Youth Pastor***
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Paul Shea ***Assistant Pastor***
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Amanda Cox, Music & ***Worship Director***
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Laurie Smalley, ***Children's Ministry Director***
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Church Office, M-F, 8 AM-Noon & 1-5 PM,
567-2264 **office@hwchurch.org**