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XC INVITATIONAL RETURNS!

CALEB WELKER ('26)

The Houghton fall athletics schedule is in full swing, with the Houghton University Highlander Invitational Cross Country meet this Saturday at 11 a.m.

Cross-country teams from different colleges will compete in the Houghton Field of Dreams courses. The teams scheduled to attend are Alfred University, Daemen College, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Messiah College, SUNY Delhi and St. John Fisher University. These schools will participate in both a men's 8,000-meter race and a women's 6,000-meter race.

At last year's meet, Houghton's Zachary Tucker ('25) was the Highlanders' leading finisher in the men's race, finishing fourth overall with a time of 25:37.80. The Houghton men, who later went on to win the Empire-8 Team Championship, finished second overall as a team



Cross Country Team

COURTESY OF PHEBE GRANT

with 61 placement points. Noelle Linenfesler ('26) finished the 6,000-meter race at 23:17.30 and was in sixth place overall. Houghton was the fifth-placed women's team at the race. Rochester Institute of Technology was the overall team winner for the men's circuit while Ithaca College was the first-place team finishers in the wo-

men's race.

Houghton's Director of Cross Country and Track and Field, Patrick Hager, explained that this is a very big race for Houghton since it is likely the track team's final competition before the Empire-8 Cross Country Championship.

"Taking advantage of each opportunity is crucial for confidence and rhythm," he said.

Since Houghton is hosting the Conference Championships this year, Coach Hager is banking on the athletes associating the course with a good performance.

Some Highlander athletes to watch on the women's side are Noelle Linenfesler ('26) and Aria Larson ('27).

"Noelle has asserted herself as one of the top runners in the region, and Aria has been having a nice sophomore year and is ready for a breakout race," Coach Hager said.

On the men's side, Amos Bixler ('26) and James (J.J.) Eustace ('25) have been the top runners on the team so far and are looking to continue to impress at this event. Coach Hager mentioned that he would love to see Bixler "put himself in position to win the race, and to run a personal best" and that J.J. "is gaining steam on fitness after recovering from an injury."

Coach Hager encouraged students to attend the event because "there is an energy about cross country that is different from other events." He later noted that cross country is "a unique sport, where the athletes are going full throttle the entire race." This makes watching these athletes compete all

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Faculty Lecture: Sarah Massey

JULIA COLLINS ('26)

On Thursday, Oct. 17, Music Professor Sarah Massey will be holding a lecture as part of the Faculty Lecture Series on student engagement and learning. The meeting will be in Library, room 323 at 4:25 p.m.

The Faculty Lecture Series is a gathering where professors get a chance to speak to students and colleagues about subjects they have researched. The lectures occur around once a month and are praised for being a way for professors to connect with students.

Dr. Massey said her lecture will focus on "motivating students to be



Lecture Audience

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transformed by active engagement in learning requires creative strategies."

She explained that "reluctant students who tend to 'stay on the sidelines' due to attitudes that they may FAIL can be empowered to move into the FLOW of activities which can maximize learning."

While she plans to further explain this in her lec-

ture, the main focus will be on "student-first learning." This is important because, according to Dr. Massey, "thinking creatively about how class material is presented takes time but pays off with student engagement."

Senior Colin O'Mara ('25) is excited about the lecture. He said that he wants to attend because

"the lectures are from professors we know who are speaking to their personal areas of interest and study." Having knowledge from professors' personal interests "allows me to become versed in a wide variety of interesting subjects," he added.

O'Mara reports that professors have given lectures on a variety of

topics. He mentioned that there is often "a solid mixture of students and faculty." He goes to as many lectures as he can, even if the topic is different from what students typically discuss.

"If I can receive an interesting lecture on a subject I appreciate, but haven't had time to invest in, on a Thursday evening I'll be there," O'Mara said.

Andrew Walton, a theology professor, is currently a part of organizing the faculty lectures.

"[I] enjoy the chance to step away from my area of study and hear about the exciting work my colleagues are doing in diverse fields," he commented.

Dr. Walton explained that these lectures provide an opportunity to introduce new and emerging topics not covered in classrooms. Faculty lec-

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Feature: Caleb Choate

JULIANA SCHMIDT ('25)

Caleb Choate has been Houghton University's Director of Alumni Engagement since July 2024. His duties include scheduling alumni reunions, overseeing the alumni social media account, and organizing the scarf tradition. While Choate is new to the position, he is not new to Houghton.

Choate has a bachelor's degree in Religion and Philosophy from Roberts Wesleyan University. He worked as a HU's admission counselor before going back to RWU to work in admissions. He then returned to Houghton to work as the Director of Alumni engagement.

"Even in the Christian University circle," Choate said, "I believe Houghton is a special place, in the sense that we truly are a community that gathers."

Glen Hampson, Senior Admission Counselor, worked with Choate in the admission office for a time before he returned as Director of Alumni Engagement.

He comments on Choate's character, "having worked with Caleb in the admission office for a time, I got to see how he immediately brings this positivity and joy to the people that he serves and works with. He's just one of those people you meet and recognize that he's doing exactly what God had in mind for him."

Choate's favorite spot on campus is the hiking trails, specifically the overlook.

"My favorite thing to do is pop in a podcast, usually BBC in our time and I'll walk the trails. Go to the overlook and just spend some time out there," he said.

Choate also enjoys reading, poems and playing the guitar or banjo. Choate revealed that he is actually in a band and has published a few poems.

Choate lives in Houghton with his wife, Juliana, and their two-year-old son. He is devoted to his work at HU where his foremost concern is helping current and past students at Houghton alike.

Phyllis Gaerte, the Se-

nior Director of Community Engagement, works closely with Choate and commented that, "he has already proven over the course of the last couple of months his high standards for excellence and warm personality as he plans for and hosts alumni both on and off campus."

"I like to help students develop that relationship with Houghton early on," he said, adding that it should be a place that is integral to the people they will eventually grow into.

Although Choate is coming out of the busy season of homecoming—which he compared to the Super Bowl—he will be no less busy.

Choate believes that God called him back to Houghton, and he wants to emulate Him in all aspects.

"I want to offer my work to God in all that I do," he said. ★

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the more entertaining, as they strive to represent Houghton University to the best of their abilities.

The event is free, so come out and support the Highlanders. ★

LECTURE from page #1

tures "also serve as a valuable model for students, demonstrating the research process in action," he added. These lectures bridge the gap between professors' personal and academic interests.

Dr. Walton himself specifically said that he enjoys talking about the Old Testament.

He said that "my favorite topics to talk about are Job and the Psalms, specifically the Psalms of lament." This topic is interesting to him because he appreciates "the raw honesty of these biblical texts which provide us with the chance to wrestle with the profound and sometimes unanswerable questions of human existence."

Dr. Massey's lecture provides a space to learn about music, education and connecting with others. ★

Question of the Week

Is Houghton a safe place to share your opinions?



Also on the STAR website

Puzzles

All sudokus provided by sudokuoftheday.com.

Difficulty: Diabolical

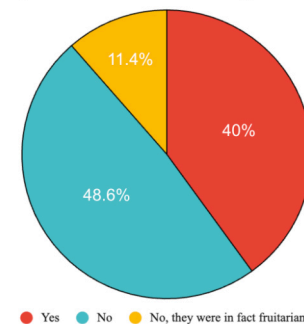
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Difficulty: Easy

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	4		7				1	2
			1					3

Weekly questions open to anyone affiliated with Houghton University.

Question: Do you think humans were vegans before the Fall?



Respondents: Current students (28); Former students (1); Faculty/staff (6)

On American Christianity and Its Failures



PAUL CLAYDON

regards the Bible as both true and divinely inspired, offering clarity and comfort through its teachings.

When discussing American Christianity, I'm not singling out any specific denomination. This term is much broader than Southern Baptist, Wesleyan, or even American evangelicalism as a whole. Across American Christianity, four significant errors have emerged: Revivalism, Pietism, Mysticism, and Enthusiasm. Each in its own way diverting attention from Christ and his words of comfort and life.

Revivalism champions the idea that the Christian journey starts with a personal choice to follow Christ. It elevates the role of emotions, often seeking to stir a decision through orchestrated experiences. However, this approach contradicts the biblical teaching that humans are "dead in sin" (Ephesians 2:1). Salvation is portrayed as a gift from

"There is a profound comfort and assurance found in trusting God's promises over our own efforts."

foundation of your decision but on the foundation of grace given to you by God as a free gift.

Pietism identifies the Christian life with the progression of good works. It emphasizes personal piety as the hallmark of true faith. Yet, such emphasis can overshadow the gospel's core message: that Christ's work, not our own, assures salvation. The purpose of the law is to show us our sinfulness and

While personal spiritual experiences are valuable, elevating them above Christ's mediated work on the cross can lead to an inward-focused faith. I'm sure you've heard phrases like "I'm going through a drought, I'm just not feeling it in the spirit", "I've lost my passion", "I feel far from God" and many others. Mysticism causes Christians to base their faith on feelings. As a young person, I would go to church camp every summer and feel deep sorrow and conviction about the way I was living my life. I would go up to the altar during service and cry, having people praying over me and I would commit myself to living a better life for Jesus. But every year after camp ended, I would slowly go back to the way I was before. I felt terrible, especially when my mom would say things like "was camp really for nothing". This is what happens when you base your faith on your feelings. The Bible never guarantees we will be able to feel the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't mean he isn't there. Mysticism only offers comfort through experience and if that experience isn't there then the comfort is gone. It teaches that God is there and he loves me through my feelings but when those feelings aren't there I'm left to conclude that either he's not there or he doesn't love me.

Enthusiasm teaches that spirituality is chiefly an inward journey. It prioritizes personal spiritual experiences over the communal and doctrinal aspects of Christianity. The problem with this is, enthusiasts look for God for his certainty, for his truth, for his

comfort and for his spirit only on the inside. Enthusiasm fails to see that the Lord's work is chiefly on the outside. Enthusiasm is bad because it takes our focus off of Christ and puts it on to our hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" Our salvation isn't found in our hearts, in our feelings or anything inside of us. Our salvation is found only in Jesus Christ, his promises and the grace gifted to us through the word and the Holy sacraments.

The teachings prevalent in American Christianity can be heavy and burdensome, contrasting sharply with Jesus' invitation to find rest in Him: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The true yoke of Christ is light; it is centered on forgiveness, mercy, and loving-kindness. The core of Christian faith should pivot on these aspects rather than personal determination or emotional experiences. There is a profound comfort and assurance found in trusting God's promises over our own efforts.

In conclusion, American Christianity, in its various expressions, has drifted towards a self-centric theology. To address its shortcomings, believers might embrace an approach that prioritizes the grace and promises of Christ over individualistic interpretations. By doing so, they can rediscover the rest and assurance that the gospel promises, and center their faith back on Christ, where it rightfully belongs. ★

Paul Claydon is a sophomore studying theology. His interest is working to build Christ's Kingdom here on Earth.

"The true yoke of Christ is light; it is centered on forgiveness, mercy, and loving-kindness."

God, not a reward for human choice (Ephesians 2:8-9). In American Christianity the Christian receives Christ as an act of their own will. In Biblical Christianity, Christ receives the Christian as an act of God's will. Life and faith should not be built on the

highlight our need for a savior. The gospel is the good news that our savior has come and paid the penalty for our sins. Pietism focuses on the law and neglects the gospel.

Mysticism claims believers can experience God directly, without mediation.

Have an opinion you want to share?

CONTACT
Rebecca.Dailey25@houghton.edu

SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 600 words

SUBMIT TO
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The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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The Houghton STAR

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Review

Biblical Lessons from the Title IX Training

Written By: Timothy Murray ('28)

When most people hear the phrase “Title IX training” they do not have fond feelings of the experience, rather they usually remember that it was long and uninteresting. For a class I read an article about how we should be trying to make work more fun, and I decided to try and apply that to Title IX training by looking for biblical narratives during the videos. This made the whole training not only go a lot faster, but it also helped me find interesting things about Jesus.

Firstly, Jesus loves us unconditionally, even before we choose him over the ways of the world. This is important to remember when we feel like we have failed God after becoming Christians, because even when we sin, we are welcomed back with open arms by Jesus. Another big thing about our relationship with Jesus is that, unlike our earthly friends, He will never let us down and He is always with us.

Something very important about our relationship with Jesus is that it lasts eternally. We get to walk with Jesus every day and that means we should be spending time with him and getting to know him better. I think it is very important to enjoy the moments we have with Him, because our relationship with Jesus should be the most important one. We should remember that He died for us and loves so much more than we can

even comprehend.

When we are spending time with Jesus we don't have to be afraid to talk to Him and have hard conversations, because Jesus is always willing to listen with us and give us comfort in times of need. He is also always watching over us and cares about us more than our closest friend on earth could ever do. Another very good thing about Jesus is that there is always more of Him to discover. Our relationship with Jesus never ends until we die and get to spend eternity with Him.

When we choose to follow Jesus we also choose to follow His plan for us. When we decide to follow Jesus he gives us a guide which is to follow His plan for you. The best thing we can do is to fully surrender to His plan for our lives. Even though it can be hard at times, His way is the best and will bring you the truest joy and satisfaction. Throughout the journey of life, Jesus is with us in our good and bad moments and we should praise him throughout all of them. He is working all things together for our good. The more we pursue Him, the more we will get to know him.

These are only a few of the lessons that I found during training, and I found the whole process very uplifting and edifying as well. I would highly encourage everybody to do this! ★



Artist of the Week

Caleb See ('25)



Hi, my name is Caleb, but some of you know me by my artist tag “CABLUB”. I am a senior theology and art double major. And all I have left to say is that yo should come to the senior art show in the spring to see some more of my current work.

