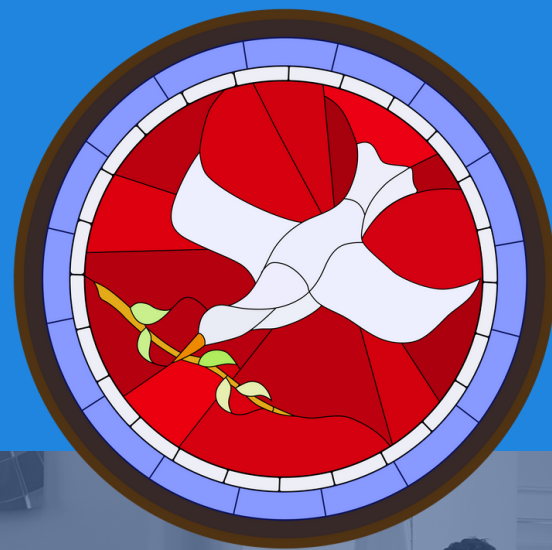


THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | AUGUST 2023



THE VISION

Leading one another into growing relationships with Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit all for the glory of God.

THE MISSION

Reaching upward to God,
Growing inward with God,
Serving outward for God.

Pastor's Pen

BY PASTOR DAN CLARK

As I compose my last pastor's note to you, it is somewhat surreal to see that I have less than fifty days before I step down as your pastor. So, for the last time, my desire is to bless those of you who may read these monthly missives and have ears to hear.

In the Psalm 23:3, King David, an imperfect but ardent follower of God, writes, "He (God) guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Another true follower of God writes in Psalm 85:8, "I will listen to what God the LORD will say." The Apostle John records Jesus' teaching in John 10:4, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me..." And in an old Bible song entitled, "My Lord knows the Way," we read the following lyrics: "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness. Strength for today is mine all the way, and all that I need for tomorrow. My Lord knows the way through, all I have to do is follow."

If you visit the websites of many Christian churches today, you will probably read something like the following: "We exist to do God's will and are being led to follow the Spirit of the Lord in all that we do." More often than not, though, the words espoused, rarely match up with the mission given to the church by the resurrected Christ. I know this to be true, because if you simply do a deep dive on the church budget, you will quickly discover that more time, energy and money is being spent on maintenance rather than living out the Great Commission. This path is of Satan, and not the Lord's. Unfortunately, this path has led, and will

continue to lead, thousands of churches down a different path, that in time, will ultimately close their doors for the last time.

Bowing to the weight of cultural inclusivity, desiring to be open to every whim, opinion and belief, many Christian churches have stepped off the path that God has clearly marked out for them. No longer being guided by God on paths of righteousness, many churches have chosen a less difficult but divergent path. It is a path that does not follow the One who says, "I am the way and the truth and the life." John 14:6 Stepping off the path of righteousness, many churches have severed their connection to the Vine that promises spiritual growth and eternal life. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 Stepping off the path, many churches have chosen to drink the proverbial Kool-Aid, and no longer draw from the living waters. 7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. 8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

As more difficult conflicts and decisions confront the Christian church, each church will have the choice to either mirror the society around them, or remain on the path to follow Jesus who promises to show the way 'through the wilderness.' In time, fewer people will come to the church for truth, or seek ways to impact the world around them, because who in their right mind would want to

(CONTINUED ON PG.)

Summer Worship:

Sundays at 10:00 am

Stay tuned for updates regarding the
Worship Schedule this Fall.

Inside This Issue

Pastor's Pen / cover

Deacon's Corner / 2

Stewardship / 3

Misc. News / 4-5

Haiti Update / 6-7

Calendar / 8

Connect / 9

Deacon's Corner

PAGE 2

Communion News

COMMITTEE: LISA ALEXANDER & DEB REA

Our next communion will be on **Sunday, August 6th at 10:00 am.** Donations of cereal and pasta for the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program are collected on Sundays when Communion is served. Thank you for giving generously to this program. Please place items on the metal rack located in the main entrance foyer.



**NEXT
COMMUNION:
SUNDAY
AUGUST 6
10:00 AM**

Meals on Wheels

COMMITTEE: MARY JORDAN & SANDY MARTINEK

We need a few more drivers to help deliver meals and be a blessing to those in need. If you are interested in volunteering for meal deliveries, please contact Mary Jordan at 412-760-5825.

Food Pantry Donations

COMMITTEE: DEB REA & MARY JORDAN

We will be placing a **red tub** in the welcome area for donations of food items. These items are distributed to the food pantry families on the 4th Tuesday of each month. This outreach helps provide food assistance to over 100 families per month!!

2023 Deacons:

Moderator - Mary Jordan

Vice Moderator - Deb Rea

Secretary - Tracey Fasnacht

Treasurer - Deb Rea

Lisa Alexander

Ken Alrutz

Tracey Fasnacht

Janet Green

Mary Jordan

Sandy Martinek

Rich Moore

Deb Rea

Bob Spencer

Dave Willkens

A Deacon's Role in the EPC:

According to Scripture, those who bear the office of Deacon should especially exhibit the spiritual qualities of the Christian and should be steady and reliable. The first duty of the Deacon is sympathy and service, and together the Board of Deacons carries out the ministry of compassion. As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, the Deacon is especially bound to fulfill those duties and to be an example to all.

Ref: The Ordination and Installation of Deacons Book of Government 14-1E.

vitalant.

**LEND AN ARM TO
SAVE A LIFE.**

BLOOD DRIVE

SEPT. 9 | COVENANT CENTER

7:30 AM -11:45 AM

HICKORY UNITED EPC

210 MAIN ST. HICKORY, PA

**BOOK NOW:
VITALANT.ORG**



STEWARDSHIP

and Mission Ministry Team *Managing God's Gifts To Us*

PAGE 3

August 6 - Transfiguration

"Jesus ...was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light." - Matthew 17:1

Jesus appears to his closest friends as bright as the sun and continues to appear to us in a similar way. How does God's light appear in your life through those closest to you?

August 13 - Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

"Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly." - Matthew 15:28

This passage from Matthew shows Jesus being persuaded to heal a child through the pleas of the mother. Let us be open to growing in our sense of compassion.

August 20 - Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'" - Matthew 16:16

His response to Jesus' "Who am I?" question foreshadows Peter's lifelong commitment to follow Jesus. We are invited to make our answer too, in words and in our lifelong actions.

August 27 - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

"But Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'" - Matthew 16:23

What a turnaround for Peter! Last week acclaimed by Jesus, this week called Satan. It reminds us that we won't always get it right, won't always avoid a nasty stumble. Like Peter, we too can recover and become a great follower of Jesus.

***Our Culture of
Thankfulness
& Generosity***

Notes of THANKS

Dear Pastor Dan & Church,

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God." (1 John 3:1) Greetings in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is always a pleasure for me to write to you. thank you for all that you are doing for us. I don't know what we would do without you. you are too kind and too generous to us. Thank you for check #21723 in the amount of

\$1,900.00 issued on 6/26/2023. Thank you for your support of our children to go to school. School was out for the summer last week to be back in session in September. Though there was difficulty it was a successful school year. thank God and thank you for all your prayers. God Bless.

~VAUGELAS PIERRE

Thank you for your generous financial support of the Burgettstown Area Food Pantry. Your support enables us to meet the needs of our clients for food to meet their nutritional needs.

Respectfully,

~BETH ENGEL

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

PAGE 4

(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

follow others who say they know the Way but ignore it?

P.S. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve God's people at Hickory United EPC. I thank and praise God for leading Judy and me to Hickory and providing me the opportunity to be your pastor for the past three and one half years. By God's grace, mercy and love, we have been blessed to come to know many of you as friends. May you, the 'body of Christ' at Hickory United EPC, chose to follow the One who is the only Way, so that you may bless and glorify God until the Risen Christ returns in all His glory!

~BLESSINGS, DAN

IS YOUR IMMEDIATE CHILD OR GRANDCHILD
ON ACTIVE DUTY?

Let's Honor Them!

- SUBMIT FULL NAME & A FRAMED PHOTO
- BRANCH OF MILITARY SERVICE
- DROP-OFF TO CHURCH MAIN OFFICE



*Thank
you to all
our donors!*



Congrats

MEET HICKORY CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL'S NEW
DIRECTOR! MS. ASHLEY
ALREADY SERVES AS A
BELOVED TEACHER OF OUR
PRESCHOOLERS, AND WE
ARE SO EXCITED TO HAVE
HER IN THIS NEW ROLE!



Ashley Lewis
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Rise Up & Pray Ladies!

**MOMS IN PRAYER SMALL GROUP
WEDNESDAYS | 10:00 AM
STARTS AUG. 16 | PARLOR**

- enjoy sweet fellowship
- study God's attributes
- learn to pray scripture over your family
- be consumed by God's love

**Contact Merri Clark
240-434-6236**



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

PAGE 5

Open Hospitality Training

THURS.
AUG. 3



6-8 PM
PARLOR

SIGN-UP IN WELCOME AREA!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT LYNN:

COMMUNICATIONS@HICKORYUNITEDEPC.ORG



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GOT AN *upgrade.*

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HAPPY Retirement!

Thank you Pastor Dan & Judy

for your leadership, heart, and service to the Lord and Hickory United. You have been a blessing to this congregation and will be missed. Congratulations on retirement! May you continue to celebrate, glorify and serve the Lord in new ways. We pray you both continue to "live abundantly" as you so often encourage us to do, and enjoy this next chapter God has in store for you.

Discipleship Team Seeking

SMALL GROUP COORDINATOR

Contact Natalie:

NATALIEJENGEL@GMAIL.COM



Small Groups
AT HICKORY CHURCH

AUGUST

Potluck Schedule

8.6 POLISH PARTY

8.13 OPEN WEEK

8.20 SOUPS & SALADS

8.27 HAM N' SPUDS (Baked Potato Bar)



BAPTISMS

NANCY ELIZABETH LITTLE
MICAH LEVI TUSTIN

Congratulations to Nancy Elizabeth "Betty" Little baptized on July 16, and Micah Levi Tustin baptized on July 30!

HAVE A **HEART** FOR HAITI:

LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION

UPDATE JULY 2023

PAGE 6

DEAR FRIENDS AND FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS OF GOD'S MINISTRY:

Greetings in the glorious name of Jesus Our Savior. Here I am again, knocking on your door to share with you the highlights of LaCroix's ministry. Thank you for your interest in God's ministry and for letting me keep you informed of all the activities and news of LaCroix New Testament Mission. Anyway, as you know, I always come with good news.

SCHOOL-TEST PERIOD

In the various schools of LaCroix New Testament Mission, can't we shout aloud like Samuel: "Ebenezer, Ebenezer, so far the Lord has helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). We thank God for allowing us to finish this school year. Our students take their final exams this week. Then it's the turn of other students to take official exams. Once again, we would like to thank our loyal sponsors who have always supported us in our task of educating our children so that they can have a better future. Thanks to our dear coordinators, who have once again worked so hard to find a solution to the difficulties we face in this complicated year. What you do is wonderful. Finally, a sincere tribute to each and every one of you.

LARGE FOOD DISTRIBUTION

As you know, despite Haiti's poverty, social problems and political instability are complicating the lives of the poorest. People trapped between hunger, insecurity, violence, bad weather, and earthquakes. This is why it is an urgency to donate food to these people, who are living in unparalleled misery. On the first day of distribution, we sent out 600 cards for 600 families, and three hours before the morning distribution, we saw a crowd of people in front of the mission's main gate, exceeding 800. That's the situation here at the mission. But in fact, the guards let those with cards in first and place them in line. If one of the mission leaders enters through the main door while these people are gathered, you'll hear almost every remark from every one of them wanting to tell you, You didn't send me a card, I came so you'd remember me; Thank you to everyone for giving these people something to eat at this difficult time. What you do is precious. Many thanks!



HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI: JULY UPDATE CONTINUED...

PAGE 7

TIME OF WORSHIP AND PRAISE TO GOD AT SCHOOL

If there's a time the kids especially love, it's chapel time, when they gather in the sanctuary on Friday mornings to worship and praise God. During this hour-and-a-half-long service, they pray, worship and praise God. They learn a Bible story and sometimes hold Bible verse contests or premium song competitions between classes. It's a lively time at school. This week, one of the highlights of worship and praise service was when a teacher sat down, visibly ill, as an epidemic of fever, flu hit everywhere in the country. She explained that she didn't want to go to bed and she came to work at the school. She sat in the sanctuary following the service of the children. When the children began to sing and dancing, she got up like everyone else, sang, danced and praised God. When I asked her, "Are you all right?" "Yes, I am, it's like I've been cured!" It's true, when a sick person enters God's presence, he must come out healed! It was really wonderful! Amen!!



SCHOOLCHILDREN'S PASSION FOR SPORT

Sport is an important part of life, and these days it's a great way to make money. In our schools, when we see children's passion for sport, we want to blend education and sports. In Haiti, the number one sport is soccer. It's the passion of the majority of young Haitians. That's why we have so many budding footballers in our schools. If you want the guys to get together without talking, all you need is a ball in your hand. The second favorite sport is basketball. During the summer vacations, we have to have a soccer field and refurbish the basketball court which is in very poor condition.



A CROWDED CAFETERIA

Every day at the New Testament Mission, the cafeteria is always full of children and young people from all sections who come to enjoy a delicious meal. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, because you make it possible for these children to have a daily hot meal at the school. As the old saying goes: *"A hungry belly has no ears"*. You allow them to learn with full bellies. Thank you for all this. May the Heaven shower its grace on you!



Thank you for supporting this ministry with your prayers and your finances. We are very grateful to you. Your prayer and donation are so important for us. THANK YOU AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

AUGUST CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

8/3	Hospitality Training 6:00 pm (P)	8/24-8/25	Preschool Teacher In Service Days
8/6	Communion 10:00 am (S)	8/28-8/30	Preschool Teacher In Service Days
8/7	Hickory Students (6th-12th) Pool Party 5:30 pm (Strnisa Farm)	8/29	PreK Parent Night 7:00 pm (S)
8/13	Pastor Dan's Last Preaching Day	8/31	PreK 4's Open House 9:00-11:00 am
8/16	Moms In Prayer Small Group 10:00 am (P)	9/1	PreK 3's Open House 9:00-11:00 am
8/19	Covenant Center Reserved	9/3	Communion 10:00 am (S)
8/21	Newsletter Submission Deadline	9/4	Labor Day - Office Closed

RECURRING WEEKLY MEETINGS/CLASSES/GATHERINGS

SUNDAYS

- Sunday School - Adult/Youth | 9:00 am (Various Locations)
- Sunday School Lite (Pre-K - 5th grade) | 9:00 am (Loft/CC)
- Unified Worship Services | 10:00 am (S)
- Food & Fellowship Potluck | 11:15 am (CC)

MONDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)
- Volleyball | 7:00 pm (CC)

TUESDAYS

- Staff Meeting (Every Other Week) | 10:00 am (Parlor)
- Boy Scout Meeting | 7:00 pm (CC)

WEDNESDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)
- Praise Band Practice | 7:00 pm (S)
- Cub Scouts | 7:00 pm | (CC)

THURSDAY

- Competitive Volleyball | 7:00 pm (CC)

FRIDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)

SATURDAYS

- Yoga | TBD - *please check the online church calendar for when meetings resume*

RECURRING MONTHLY MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

- Building & Property Meeting | 7:00 pm (P) | Every 2nd Wednesday
- Discipleship Meeting | 6:30 pm (LB) | (P) - Every 2nd Monday
- Deacons Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 4th Monday
- Outreach Committee Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Prayer Shawl Ministry | 12:00 pm (CC) | Every 1st Wednesday
- Preschool Team Meeting | 12:30 pm (FH) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Security Team Meeting | (P) Every 1st Wednesday
- Session Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 3rd Wednesday
- Stewardship Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 1st Monday **after** 1st Wednesday of the month
- Women's Cancer Survivors Group Meeting | 12:00 pm (CC) | Last Wednesday of the month
- Women's Ministry Meeting | 12:15 pm (P) | *Monthly meetings are fluid, please check the online church calendar*

(CC) Covenant Center (CR) Choir Room (FH) Fellowship Hall (L) Loft (LB) Library (P) Parlor (S) Sanctuary



HICKORY UNITED EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Pastoral & Ministry

Pastor Dan Clark | dan.clark@hickoryunitedepc.org

Lay Pastor, Lou Templeton | (724) 356-7835

Director of Music Ministry, Tim VanNasdale | tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org

Administrative / Support

Office Manager, Paula Steele | paula.steele@hickoryunitedepc.org

Communications Coordinator, Lynn VanNasdale | communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

Financial Director, Linda Carter | linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org

Assistant Treasurer, Melissa Fluharty | melissa.fluharty@hickoryunitedepc.org

Audio Visual Technician, David Sykut | david.sykut@hickoryunitedepc.org

Hickory Christian Preschool

School Director, Ashley Lewis | (724) 356-7337 | hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org

Facilities

Sexton, Eugene Short | (724) 356-4424 | sexton@hickoryunitedepc.org

Facility Assistant, Will Smith | (724) 356-4424

Prayer Tree

Phone Requests: Sharon Mechtel | (412) 496-9147

Email Requests: Sharon Merckle | sharon.merckle@yahoo.com

Join the Prayer Tree List: Email Paula Steele | office@hickoryunitedepc.org

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APP!



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