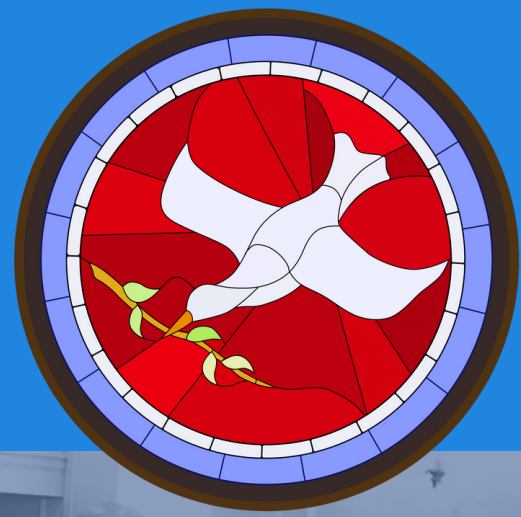


THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | DECEMBER 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 REV. TOM JONES

Luke 2: 10-11: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

As I write this pastor's page it is a few days before Thanksgiving. Christmas songs are already playing on the radio and stores have already started their marketing for the Christmas holiday season. And, if that were not bad enough, a new Thanksgiving slasher movie is being advertised on TV. Clearly, Thanksgiving is being pushed aside for the biggest shopping season of the year.

Personally, I love Thanksgiving and I especially love the fact that it comes about a month before the celebration of the birth of our savior. That helps me focus on being thankful for the celebration that is yet to come. Being thankful is the perfect way to prepare for a time of giving and sharing our many blessings with others.

As a pastor, I am keenly aware of how this time of year can be a difficult

time for so many who have suffered a loss of a loved one. As someone who also has suffered the loss of a loved one, I understand that the best way to respond is to focus not on the loss, but on the blessing.

Believers understand that loss is temporary but the blessing is eternal. December 3rd is the beginning of our Advent celebration. Advent is a time of looking back at the first coming of Jesus Christ and looking forward to his second coming. He came to bring us salvation and is coming again to bring us the full reality of eternal life! When He comes again we will be reunited with those whom we have lost.

My prayer for our church family is that each one of us will experience a true peace and a deep joy as we celebrate His birth together!

Love and Blessings,
Pastor Tom

Worship:

Sundays | 10:00 am

Inside This Issue

Pastor's Pen / cover

Deacon's Corner / 2

Misc. News / 3-4

Kids & Youth / 5

OCC Update / 6

Preschool News / 7

Calendar / 8

Connect / 9

Communion News

LISA ALEXANDER & DEB REA

Next communion will be on **Sunday, December 3 at 10:00 am**. One gluten-free wafer will be available on each communion tray when passed around. 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.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Holiday Blanket Drive

NOW - DEC. 17

- GIFT A VELOUR BLANKET TO A MEALS ON WHEELS CLIENT FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR!
- DONATION DROP-OFF IN RED TUB IN WELCOME AREA

Poinsettia Orders

\$9.00 EACH | DUE DEC. 12
ORDER FORMS IN WELCOME AREA

- RETURN TO OFFERING PLATE OR MAIN OFFICE
- CHECKS PAYABLE TO: HICKORY UNITED EPC

Holiday Food Drive Update

Thank you to all who donated food items for the holiday food drive. Your generosity provided food for Thanksgiving and Christmas to **three single families and one family of ten**.

Angel Tree

Angels for the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program, Avis Arbor, and those in our family outreach ministry are now available on the Christmas tree in the Welcome Area. Each Angel will include a date due & wrapping instructions. Please be sure to read your information carefully and sign out your Angel on the sheet in the welcome area. Questions? **Contact Tracey Fasnacht: 724-747-2571**

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.



It's Secret Sister Season!

Start the new year with a Secret Sister! Join a fun group of Jesus loving women who want to share their joy and encouragement with one another through prayer and cards. Sign-up now in the Welcome Area!

- Complete a sign-up card by Dec. 10
- Place the completed card in the white box in the Welcome Area or bring it with you to the info meeting.
- Attend the Info Meeting on Dec. 10 after the service in the Parlor to find out your Secret Sister!

Questions? Contact Cindy Semack: ckt@hky.com

Living Nativity Invite Challenge WILL YOU...

- INVITE 5 PEOPLE TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE OF LIVING NATIVITY?
- TAKE A FEW POSTCARDS TO INVITE YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS OR CO-WORKERS!

Save the Date: Christmas Cantata

Hickory's Chancel Choir has been hard at work since October preparing for the annual Christmas Cantata. Music Director Tim VanNasdale has selected a brand new cantata for this year's program, titled *A Journey to Joy* by Joseph M. Martin. This year's cantata provides both an intricate and challenging score instrumentally and vocally.

Martin's cantata invites listeners to "take the journey to Christmas with this inviting cantata that is filled with music of hope and promise. The prophecy and acclamation of Christ's birth is wonderfully conveyed through new music and fresh arrangements of treasured carols, alongside a scripture-based narration. With its vivid musical contrasts, this work is designed to be approachable for choirs of any size."

Live accompaniment will be performed by Marybeth Glasgow Schotting on violin, Mary Beth Malek on clarinet and Nikki Coffield on flute, under direction of Tim VanNasdale.

A Journey to Joy takes place during the Sunday worship service on December 17 at 10:00 am. All are invited to attend. May it be a blessing to you!

7TH ANNUAL *Living Nativity* HICKORY UNITED EPC

**SAVE THE DATE!!!
DECEMBER 9 & 10**

A Journey to Joy A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS

**DECEMBER 17
10:00 AM**

Featuring

THE HICKORY UNITED CHANCEL CHOIR
MARY BETH GLASGOW, VIOLIN
MARY BETH MALEK, CLARINET
NIKKI COFFIELD, FLUTE
&
DIRECTED BY TIM VANNASDALE

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

PAGE 4

Digital Ways to Give

Web



Text

"HICKORY" TO
888-364-GIVE (4483)

In App



Let us pray for you today.

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:

HICKORYCHURCH.COM/PRAYER

OR SCAN THE QR CODE NOW



Notes of THANKS

Dear Saints at Hickory Church:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do" Ephesians 2:10. Greetings in the Holy name of Jesus our Lord. Thank you for your heart for children that causes you to think of our children to make sure they get an education and food to eat at school. Thanks for check #21841 in the amount of

\$1,780.00 issued on 10/26/23. Thank you very much. Thank you for your prayers as well. We need them a lot. God continue to watch over the mission. He is in control. God Bless.

~ERMITHE & PIERRE

Cub Scouts 1365 in Hickory, led by Cub Master, Tim Growden, visited City Mission recently to drop off a generous donation of hygiene products for our veterans. They also took a tour of our Veterans House. Thank you, Cub Scouts 1365!

~CITY MISSION

Thank you so much for continuing to support our Helping Hands program. Your donation was just in time to buy turkeys for Thanksgiving!

~BRIANNE EILER



JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

DEC. 18

Email Lynn:
communication@hickoryunitedepc.org

REMOVAL
of the GREENS
JANUARY 6 9 AM

Upcoming Events

2nd Sunday of Advent - Dec. 10
WORSHIP | 10 AM

3rd Sunday of Advent - Dec. 17
CHORAL CANTATA | 10 AM

Christmas Eve Sunday - Dec. 24
WORSHIP | 10 AM
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE | 6 PM
(WITH COMMUNION)

New Years Eve - Dec. 31
WORSHIP | 10:00 AM

KIDS & YOUTH MINISTRY

PAGE 5

UPCOMING

STUDENT SERVICE -

SATURDAY, DEC. 2

(Home repair for a community member)

CHRISTMAS PARTY -

SATURDAY, DEC. 16 // 4-6 PM

REMINDERS:

- No Youth Group
December 28
- No Sunday School
December 31

5th QUARTER DATES:

5th Quarter at Hickory Church is back for 6-12th graders during Basketball season! Save the dates for these upcoming 5th quarter events. Details forthcoming:

- **DECEMBER 1**
snacks & board games
- **DECEMBER 8**
pizza, popcorn & movie

QUESTIONS?

Contact Youth Ministry Director Michaela:

youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

Melody Makers Ring Sweet

Last month Melody Makers made its fall debut by ringing a prelude at Sunday service! Melody Makers handbell practice has been brought into the Sunday School classrooms for Grades 1-5, under direction of Ms. Wanda Carter. Their first performance was fantastic and we are all so proud of their hard work!



Youth Group Top Golf Outing

Our recent Top Golf event was a success! We enjoyed golf, lunch, and community. We were so excited to welcome two new students to the event. Join us in prayer about their future involvement and the continued growth of our student ministry!

Stay tuned for our next Youth Group Hangout event! In the meantime students grades 6-12 are welcome each Thursday for Youth Group night at Hickory Church.



Photo credit: Jake Carter

THURSDAY NIGHTS

YOUTH GROUP

6:30 PM-8 PM

HICKORY UNITED EPC

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2023



PAGE 6



OCC Final Update

BY SUE ALRUTZ

We are so excited to announce that **155 shoeboxes** were collected and dedicated this year for Operation Christmas Child from Hickory United EPC. We want to thank everyone that packed a shoebox. These boxes will bless and touch 155 children across the globe. We want to send our a special thanks to Ellen Warren who asked that we pack a shoebox in honor and memory of her husband, Stephen which was so very thoughtful. Many of you shared with us that you packed an extra box for Stephen. We want to thank those folks who were unable to pack a shoebox, yet generously donated a financial gift to help with shipping costs and the Greatest Journey books that are given to each child.

Thank you to the Prayer Warriors that continue to pray earnestly for the children that will receive a shoebox and that it would open their hearts to the love of Jesus. We ask for prayers for the hundreds of volunteers at distribution centers across the United States, that inspect and ready the boxes for shipment to over 170 countries across the world. Please continue to pray for safe passage of these shoebox gifts as they go by planes and ships to villages, orphanages, war torn cities, and remote tribal areas. Please also pray for those trained Operation Christmas teams members, ministry partners and local teachers that present the gospel through the Greatest Journey books given to each child and written in their native language. We want to especially thank Lynn VanNasdale, who was instrumental in sharing our weekly OCC Tid Bits and for her work in assuring that the selected videos were played each week.

So many of you have shared that the videos were inspiring and powerful, telling true stores from actual shoebox recipients that touched them deeply. Thank you to those who helped to get the boxes from the sanctuary to the vehicles on Shoebox Sunday.. It was so helpful. Last but certainly not least, we want to thank our very good friends, Connie and Rick Weaver who took the lead in organizing the loading of the boxes and for driving them to the Washington collection site.

Thank you EVERYONE! What a loving and generous Church Family we have at Hickory! We are truly blessed beyond measure!

SINCERELY,
~KEN & SUE ALRUTZ



Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. - Matthew 28:19

HICKORY PRESCHOOL

PAGE 7

UPCOMING DATES:

CHRISTMAS PARTY:
PREK 3s - DEC. 19

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM:
PREK 4s - DEC. 20

CHRISTMAS BREAK:
(no school) DEC. 21-31

STAFF FEATURE:



Meet our newest addition to the preschool staff, Ms. Krisztina Zalasdy! She will be a classroom aide for our Pre-K 3 year olds this year. We are so excited for her to join our team. Welcome to Hickory Christian Preschool Ms. Tina!

QUESTIONS?

Contact Preschool Director,
Ashley Lewis:
preschool@hickoryunitedepc.org

Thanksgiving Parties

BY ASHLEY LEWIS

This past month at the preschool we focused on Thanksgiving and being grateful! We learned about the very first Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims and Native Americans. The students learned why the Pilgrims came to America-freedom to worship the Lord!

Before Thanksgiving break, we ended the month with two wonderful parties that were filled with love, gratitude and most importantly, Jesus! Students had fun with a variety of Turkey themed craft projects and shared all they are thankful for. What a blessed month it has been!

This December, we look forward to our Pre-K 3 year old class Christmas party while our Pre-K 4 year old class will practice for their annual Christmas Program for family and friends on December 20 at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary.

Please pray that the children's Christmas message to their families will inspire their loved ones to continue to seek a closer relationship with Jesus this season, and that those in need of a church home find one here at Hickory United.



HICKORY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Sarris Candy Fundraiser

DELIVERY DAY:

DEC. 5



DECEMBER CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

12/1	5th Quarter 9:00 pm (L/CC)	12/16	Student Christmas Party Grades 6-12 4-6 pm (L)
12/3	Communion 10:00 am (S) First Sunday of Advent	12/17	Third Sunday of Advent Choir Cantata 10:00 am (S) <i>Living Nativity Rain Date</i>
12/8	5th Quarter 9:00 pm (L/CC)	12/24	Christmas Eve Worship 10:00 am (S) Candlelight Service & Communion 6:00 pm (S)
12/9	Living Nativity 6:00 pm (Lower Lot/CC)	12/25	Christmas Day - Office Closed
12/10	Second Sunday of Advent Living Nativity 6:00 pm (Lower Lot/CC) Food & Fellowship Light Reception 11:15 am (CC) Secret Sisters Get Together 11:00 am (P)	12/31	New Year's Eve
		1/1	New Year's Day - Office Closed

RECURRING WEEKLY MEETINGS/CLASSES/GATHERINGS

SUNDAYS

- Sunday School - All Ages | 8:45 am (Various Locations)
- Worship Services | 10:00 am (S)

MONDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)
- Tim V Small Group | 6:30 pm (CR)
- Volleyball | 7:00 pm (CC)

TUESDAYS

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

WEDNESDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)
- Moms in Prayer Small Group | 10:00 am (LB)
- Praise Band Practice | 7:00 pm (S)
- Cub Scouts | 7:00 pm | (CC)

THURSDAY

- Youth Group 6-12 Grade | 6:30 pm (CC/L)
- Competitive Volleyball | 7:00 pm (CC)

FRIDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)

RECURRING MONTHLY MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

- Building & Property Meeting | 7:00 pm (LB) | Every 2nd Wednesday
- Discipleship Team Meeting | 6:30 pm (LB) | (P) Every 2nd Monday
- Deacons Meeting | 6:30 pm (LB) | Every 4th Monday
- Hospitality Ministry Team Meeting | *Monthly meetings are fluid, check online church calendar*
- Outreach Committee Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Prayer Shawl Ministry | 12:00 pm (LB) | Every 1st Tuesday
- Preschool Team Meeting | 12:30 pm (FH) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Security Team Meeting | (P) Every 1st Tuesday
- Session Meeting | 6:30 pm (LB) | Every 3rd Wednesday
- Stewardship Meeting | 6:30 pm (LB) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Women's Cancer Survivors Group Meeting | 12:00 pm (LB) | Last Wednesday of the month
- Women's Ministry Meeting | 11:15 pm (LB) | *Monthly meetings are fluid, check the online church calendar*



HICKORY UNITED EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Pastoral & Ministry

Transitional Pastor, Rev. Tom Jones | pastor@hickoryunitedepc.org

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

Youth Ministry Director, Michaela Walker | youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

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

Administrative / Support

Office Administrative Assistant, Michelle Danna | office@hickoryunitedepc.org

Communications Coordinator, Lynn VanNasdale | communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

Co-Treasurer, Linda Carter | linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org

Co-Treasurer, Melissa Fluharty | melissa.fluharty@hickoryunitedepc.org

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

Hickory Christian Preschool

Preschool 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

Join the Prayer Tree Weekly E-List: contact communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

LET'S GET LINKED!



scan



GET THE
APP!



SHARE
SOCIAL!

text

HICKORYUNITED
TO 84576



follow



@hickorychurch
hickorychurch.com



724-356-4424
210 Main St., Hickory, PA.
15340

contact