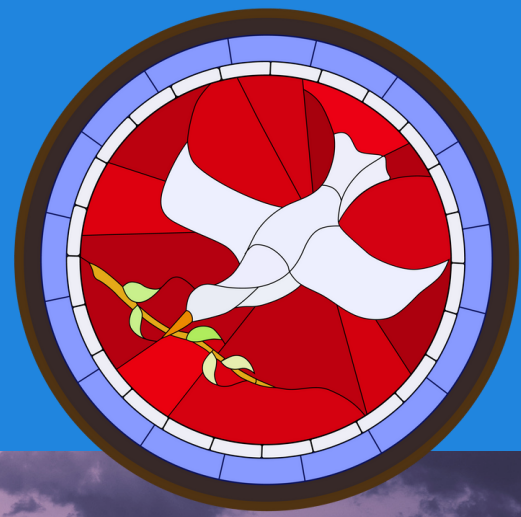


THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | FEBRUARY 2024



THE MISSION

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

THE VISION

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

Pastor's Pen

BY REV. TOM JONES

This year on February 14, we will begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday. According to Christianity.com, "Ash Wednesday focuses the Christian's heart on repentance and prayer, usually through personal and communal confession." That day is the perfect way to begin the season of Lent as we look forward to the celebration of the Resurrection of our Savior 46 days later!

Many Christians will give up something for Lent and begin that sacrifice on Ash Wednesday. Over the years I have given up sweets and/or chocolate. I know to many Christians that practice seems to be somewhat meaningless. However, for me it was quite meaningful in that every time I

craved something sweet I prayed and actually drew closer to the Lord! Many Christians celebrate Lent by reading a book of the Bible, spending more time in prayer, or doing a service project. Any of those ideas are great for making the season of Lent personally meaningful and a time of spiritual growth. Having said all that, it is also helpful to note that Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day this year. Roman Catholics are being asked to celebrate Valentine's Day on a different day this year so that they can observe the 14th with fasting and abstinence.

Do we really have to choose one or the other? Can we not observe Lent by giving of ourselves to others? After all, isn't that what our faith is all about? Jesus gave Himself for us!

Love and Blessings, Pastor Tom

Worship:

Sundays | 10:00 am

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Ash Wednesday Service

FEB. 14 | 7 PM

with Imposition of Ashes

Communion News

LISA ALEXANDER & DEB REA

Next communion will be on **Sunday, February 4 at 10:00 am**. One gluten-free wafer will be available on each communion tray when passed around. **Donations of cereal and pasta will be collected on Sundays when Communion is served.** These items will be distributed to families in our area who require additional assistance. Thank you for giving generously to help these families. Please place items on the metal rack located in the main entrance foyer.

DONATIONS NEEDED!

Accepted items in Foyer drop-off area:

- Boxed Cereal
- Boxed Pasta



Thank you Deacons!

Lisa Alexander, Tracey Fasnacht, and Mary Jordan have faithfully served our church and community for three years and have officially ended their term at the end of January. Thank you Lisa, Tracey, and Mary for your dedication to the ministry and your love for God.

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.

SAVE THE DATE. DONATE. SAVE LIVES.



vitalant.

BLOOD DRIVE

MAR 23 | COVENANT CENTER

7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

HICKORY UNITED EPC 210 MAIN ST. HICKORY, PA

VISIT: [VITALANT.ORG](https://vitalant.org)
BOOK WITH GROUP CODE

G0010081

OR

SCAN
QR
CODE
NOW!



Notes of THANKS

Hickory UP Members-

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

~BRIANNE EILER

Thank you for your continued financial support of the Burgettstown Area Food Pantry. Your support enables us to buy needed food for our clients.

~BETH ENGEL

Just a little note to thank all of my church family and friends for all of their support, food, transportation and prayer these past 10 weeks. The food train set up by Tracey Fasnacht was a life saver. Thank you preparers for your delicious meals and loving hands in preparing them. I'm doing more each day and have 4 months of PT ahead of me. Hopefully in a month I'll be able to drive. Know that you are loved.

~JANET MUCHA

Greetings,

On behalf of the Washington County Children and Youth Services and the children and families we serve, we extend our deepest gratitude for the overwhelming support and generosity you've shown during this holiday season. Your donation of gifts for the children have brought immense joy and warmth to their lives. Your kindness not only made the holidays brighter but has also conveyed a sense of community and care that is touching. The smiles on the children's faces were priceless, and your contribution has made a lasting impact on their lives. Your generosity has exemplified the true spirit of the season. Once again, thank you for your thoughtfulness and compassion. Your support has made a significant difference, and we are grateful to have such a caring community.

~THE HELPING HANDS COMMITTEE, KATE GRANT, BARB MULLEN & ANNE R. SCHLEGEL

Digital Ways to Give

Web



Text

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

In App



MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

FEB. 19

Email Lynn:
communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

Food & Fellowship FEB. 11 BOOYAH LUNCHEON!



- JOIN US IN COVENANT CENTER AFTER WORSHIP FOR A POTLUCK AND FELLOWSHIP!
- DISH DROP-OFF IS 8:55-9:30 AM IN COVENANT CENTER

Let us pray for you Today.

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:
HICKORYCHURCH.COM/PRAYER
OR SCAN THE QR CODE NOW



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

PAGE 4

Flea Market Fun Is Upon Us!

BY PATTY LIN GROWDEN

It's that time of year again to start cleaning out those closets for our annual Name Your Price Flea Market! Mark your calendars for March 14th-16th. Please read ALL of the information listed below for further details.

Donation drop off times for the flea market will be **Thursday, March 14th from 1:00 - 7:00 pm and Friday, March 15th from 1:00 - 7:00.** **PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR ITEMS BEFORE the start time each day as it may interfere with the preschool activities and Drop off/pick up times. ** Church members are invited to presale shop on Friday from 7:00-8:00.

There will be no pick-up of items this year. You must bring your donations to the church and we will help you unload. Large items that cannot be carried while shopping should be dropped off at fellowship hall. Items we are not accepting this year include: Clothing, shoes, TV's, computer monitors that are not flat screen, cribs, and expired car seats (check the back for the expiration date).

The flea market is Saturday, March 16th from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Food will also be available to purchase, so come hungry or get it to go to enjoy later! We are also in need of pies and baked goods to sell during the flea market. If you are willing to bake, please contact Shelley Heinlein.

As always, thank you in advance for your donations, it wouldn't be a success without all of you. If you would like to volunteer or have questions, please contact Patty Lin Growden at 412-721-9660 or Shelley Heinlein at 724-579-5563. We look forward to seeing you there!

2024 Church Directory

The new 2024 Church Directory will be available for pick-up during the month of February and will be free of charge. Stay tuned for details on when and where to obtain your copy. We thank our Outreach Committee for their efforts in organizing photo session days, compiling information and handling printing and distribution for our congregants.

If you had a photo taken in 2023 and did not receive your digital download, please email Lynn directly: communications@hickoryunitedepc.org. All digital photos were sent to those who provided an email address in Spring 2023. Be sure to check your junk and spam folders and filters.

Annual Name Your Price

FLEA MARKET

SATURDAY MARCH 16
9 AM-1 PM



DROPOFF:
MAR. 14 | 1-7 PM
MAR. 15 | 1-7 PM

PRE-SHOP:
MAR. 15
7-8 PM



2024

CHURCH OFFICER INSTALLATION & ORDINATION

FEBRUARY 4



SAVE THE DATE!

Ladies Spring Breakfast

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

9:00 AM | COVENANT CENTER

(BRING A BREAKFAST ITEM TO PASS)

LOVE OFFERING ACCEPTED FOR THE HAITI WOMEN'S
HEALTH EMPOWERING PARTNERS PROGRAM



Ashley Strnisa
SPEAKER

Annual Women's Ministry Breakfast

Women of HUEPC! Join us for our annual Ladies' Spring Breakfast in Covenant Center on **Saturday March 2, 2024 at 9:00 am**. This year our Guest Speaker will be Congregant Ashley Strnisa. Please bring a breakfast type casserole or breakfast item to pass. We will be taking up a Love offering of donations for the Haiti Women's Health Empowering Partners Program. Come for a meal and a message, stay for fellowship with Sisters in Christ and join in prayer. Questions? Contact Cindy Semack: ckt@hky.com

Living Last Supper Casting Call

BY TIM VANNASDALE

3500 years ago, the Jewish people were in bondage to the Egyptians. At the climax of God's struggle with Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go, He had Moses alert the Egyptians and Jews that while nine plagues hadn't softened Pharaoh's heart, a tenth and final plague was coming - the death of the firstborn. The people were instructed that if they were obedient to God's command to mark the doorposts of their house with the blood of a sacrificed lamb, the Angel of Death would pass over their houses, and they would be spared by God from the tenth plague. This act of obedience, repentance, and sacrifice - marked by the blood of a perfect lamb - saved many from death.

1500 years later, Jesus was commemorating this event with the twelve disciples at the Passover Feast. It would be the last time that he would be with all of his disciples this side of the tomb. At this supper, Jesus established a new covenant with those that would follow him. He took Matzo bread - striped and pierced - and offered it to his disciples as his body. He poured the wine for his disciples as a symbol for how his blood would be poured out for the forgiveness of sins only hours later. When we in obedience and repentance participate in the Lord's Supper, acknowledging the sacrifice that Jesus - The Lamb of God - made on our behalf, we honor the covenant He made that saves us from spiritual death.

The Living Last Supper is a piece that incorporates monologues written from the perspectives of Jesus' twelve disciples along with choral anthems that encourage us to reflect upon this incredible moment in history. It is my hope that this piece will move us all to grow in relationship to Jesus - the one who promises to wipe our sins away, heal our brokenness, dry our tears, and give us new life. I hope you'll join us and invite others to join us on **Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 7:00 pm**

CASTING CALL

Men of the church, if you are interested in taking on a role as one of the twelve apostles in The Living Last Supper, please reach out to me. The monologues are short, and I have no doubt that getting to participate in this moving and powerful piece will be a blessing to you and everyone that attends.

Interested? Contact Tim: tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org or (517) 617-1935

CASTING CALL: *The Living Last Supper*

SEEKING MEN FOR VARIOUS SPEAKING ROLES
PERFORMANCE: MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28 @ 7 PM
CONTACT TIM VANNASDALE:
TIM.VANNASDALE@HICKORYUNITEDEPC.ORG

KIDS & YOUTH MINISTRY

PAGE 6

DATES & REMINDERS

NO STUDENT SERVICE PROJECT THIS MONTH!

SUNDAY SCHOOL ALL AGES:
SUNDAYS @ 8:45 AM

SUPERBOWL WATCH PARTY:
FEB. 11 | 6-11 PM | 6-12 GRADE

QUESTIONS?

Contact Youth Ministry Director
Michaela:
youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

Student Ministry Update

BY MICHAELA WALKER

We are excited to announce our new Youth Ministry name and logo! Welcome to Harvest Student Ministry!

This ministry aims to equip students to sow seeds that will bear good fruit. We invite students to first receive and then respond to the love that God has shown us. Christ has invited us to come and see who he is, to see the magnitude of his love for us, to walk in his footsteps and become more like him.

When we sow to respond to God's love, we will reap a harvest to sustain ourselves and provide a witness to those around us. Join us to start planting!

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
Galatians 6:9

Winter Youth Retreat Recap

BY MICHAELA WALKER

At the end of January, 11 Harvest Students joined other EPC churches on a Winter retreat at camp Ligonier! During this time, we focused on how Jesus transforms us when we respond

to the call to follow him.

We also competed against the other churches in camp activities! It was a fruitful time for relationships with one another and with Christ!



HARVEST STUDENT MINISTRY

HICKORY UNITED EPC



INDOOR SPORTS GAME NIGHT! FEBRUARY 16

Volleyball
8-9 PM



SUNDAYS 6:30-8 PM

YOUTH
GROUP

HICKORY UNITED EPC



HAVE A **HEART** FOR HAITI: LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION UPDATE OF 2.1.24



We begin 2024 with hope for peace for Haitian families.

You are part of that hope as supporters of the LaCroix New Testament Mission

The LaCroix New Testament Mission strives to create a safe environment for the students, teachers and congregation members. Teachers are brought to school on the mission bus so that they do not have to navigate public transportation. Classes are held daily Monday through Friday, and serve a hot lunch to the children each day.

The meals are prepared by women from the community who treat the children with love and respect and make sure they each have enough food to sustain them. Many families depend on the school lunch program to keep their families fed.

Children also participate in Bible Study and music in chapel time to help them stay connected to God. They are also taught a social gospel helping them to feel part of a community greater than themselves. The mission school is a haven for love and peace for the people of the seven communities served by the mission.

BUT....

It has again been a tough year for people living in Haiti. Many young people who could have been contributors to the community have gone to other countries seeking a safer environment. This brings challenges for them that are not realized until they arrive in their new location.

It is a difficult situation for the people who stay in Haiti and no longer feel safe in their homeland.

The Mission seems to have the Hand of God over it. The staff is willing to serve its people and although some have gone seeking a better life, others choose to remain and make life better for the children and families of the community.



HAVE A **HEART** FOR HAITI: LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION UPDATE CONTINUED...



**Dearest friends and esteemed supporters of the LaCroix ministry,
Greetings in the glorious name of the Son of God, the almighty Lord Jesus Christ.**

THERE IS NO FUNCTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN HAITI

The population of Haiti is tired of living this kind of life. They live in fear and cannot go to their normal activities like going to the market etc. When they go out, they only know when they return home if they will come home safe. They cannot sleep peacefully at night for fear of getting kidnapped. For more than three years now Haitians are experiencing a famine. It is still doing its course. The people in Lacroix and its vicinity would not know what to do if it was not for the food that the mission provides for them every month with the financial aid, they received from you.

NO SCHOOL AT THE MISSION COMPOUND - FOOD DISTRIBUTION

School was back in session in January. Now, due to political instability, strike for two weeks school has been closed. The satellite schools of the mission are functioning because they are inside the villages and not out as the school in Lacroix. In Lacroix school children come in civil clothes to receive food and money that their sponsors sent for them. As you can see in the attached photos regarding the food distribution, this is a new strategy we use to divide people into smaller groups and they come at different times of the day. We do this to keep the safety within our walls. With large crowds it is very difficult to have full control. We pray to God for a good and safe climate so that children at the mission can return to school safely. So, last week, we managed to give food to 300 families. This week we are going to continue to serve more villages. Thank you very much for always supporting this ministry in the work that God has given us to do. You won't be able to imagine how many people you help through the New Testament Mission. Thank you for your big heart! May God continue to shower his grace and blessings on you.



Thank you very much for your great love for God's work. Your love for your neighbor is priceless.

Thank you for continuing to participate in God's work. Your support and prayers are very precious to us.



Let us continue to pray together, because our strength and our deliverance are in prayer.

Blessings!!!

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2/4 Communion 10:00 am (S) | 2/16 Harvest Students Indoor Sports Game Night 8:00 pm (CC) |
| 2/11 Food & Fellowship 11:15 am (CC)
Church Directory Distribution - <i>following potluck</i> (FH)
Harvest Students Superbowl Watch Party 6:00 pm | 2/19 President's Day - Preschool Closed |
| 2/14 Ash Wednesday Lent Begins
Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm (S)
Valentine's Day | 2/25 Upwards Celebration Banquet 12:00 pm (CC) |
| | 2/29 Leap Day |
| | 3/1 Women's History Month Begins |
| | 3/2 Outreach Movie Night (TBA) 5:30 pm |

RECURRING WEEKLY MEETINGS/CLASSES/GATHERINGS

M-F

- Upward Basketball Practice | 5:00 pm (CC)

MWF

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC)

SUNDAYS

- Sunday School - All Ages | 8:45 am (Various Locations)
- Worship Services | 10:00 am (S)
- Youth Group (Grades 6-12) | 6:30 pm (L/CC)

MONDAYS

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

TUESDAYS

- Boy Scout Meeting | 7:00 pm (CC)

WEDNESDAYS

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

THURSDAY

- Handbell Practice | 6:00 pm (S)
- Choir Practice | 7:00 pm (CR)
- Competitive Volleyball | 7:30 pm (CC)

SATURDAY

- Upward Basketball Games | 8:00 am - 1:00 pm (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 Tuesday
- Staff Meeting | Every 1st Tuesday 10:00 am (LB)
- 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*

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



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PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

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hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org

Prayer Tree

JOIN THE PRAYER TREE:

communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:

hickorychurch.com/prayer



CHURCH JUST GOT AN *upgrade.*

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- Member Messaging
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& JOIN THE MAILING LIST!