

THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | JANUARY 2024



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

I saw a meme recently that showed a person talking on the phone with the description: "Me talking to God to make sure I am registered for the Fun and Successful Package and not the Trials and Tribulations package for 2024!" I think we can relate! So often I hear someone say that they are looking forward to a new year because the current year has had its share of trials and tribulations and next year has to be better.

James 1: 2-4 reminds us to "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, [a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

According to one commentary, the word translated "perseverance" comes from a Greek word that literally means "to remain under." The picture is of someone who is under a heavy load and is choosing to remain in place rather than escape! Without

getting too complicated, the message of James is fairly simple.

When we find ourselves dealing with a trial in life, instead of bemoaning the situation, we should seek to find what God is doing in this situation. In other words, it all comes down to faith. Our faith reminds us that God has a plan and purpose and is always working all things for our good!

Another meme I saw recently reminded me that my blessings always outweigh the trials. So when I feel overwhelmed by the trials, I can remind myself that the blessings are even greater. Having said that, I am looking forward to 2024! There will be trials but there will be many more blessings!

Love and Blessings, Pastor Tom



Worship:

Sundays | 10:00 am

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Communion News

LISA ALEXANDER & DEB REA

Next communion will be on **Sunday, January 7 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

MARY JORDAN & SANDY MARTINEK

Holiday Blanket Drive: Our church partnered with the Calvary Church to gather blankets for this Meals on Wheels outreach. A total of 80 BLANKETS were donated (35 from our congregation and 45 from the Calvary's congregation). Our Meals on Wheels drivers delivered these blankets, with each meal, the week before Christmas.

A Full Year of Thank-You's

We can't thank our congregation enough for their support of the Deacon's bereavement lunches, holiday food drives, Angel Tree gifts, Fort Cherry Helping Hands program, Meals on Wheels, food pantry needs, blood drives and other special projects throughout the year.

We silently evangelize to others through our daily conduct as the servants of Christ. You may never know how many people your kindness has touched and what impact it has made in their lives, but that doesn't matter, our Lord knows and will use our works according to His will.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25:31-40 NIV

Our Meals on Wheels drivers are AWESOME! They not only deliver meals, but they brighten each recipient's day with a smile and a brief visit. This small act of kindness can mean so much to those living alone. Currently, we deliver to 8 clients in our area and have 37 drivers who rotate delivering meals weekly. We want to thank all of the drivers who have helped throughout this year, making this outreach possible:

STEPHANIE BARBERA
JEAN BEDILLON
PRISCILLA BERNARD
JAY CARTER
WANDA CARTER
CAROLYN CHUBA
TOM COWDEN
DARLENE EMANUEL
KATHY FARNER
TRACEY FASNACHT
JACKIE FAWLEY
PIERCE FAWLEY
HAZEL FAWLEY
SETH FAWLEY
PATTY HAMILTON
JANE HECKMAN
MARY JORDAN
JEAN LAURICK
SANDY MARTINEK
JOANN & CLAIR MCCracken
MARTY MCCrORY
JEANINE MILES
JANET MUCHA
DEB REA
KAREN REINARD
LINDA SCHWEITZER
BOB SEE
ALAN SHEPHARD
DICK SMITH
ASHLEY STRNISA & FAMILY
(HANNAH, ELSIE, CALEB, LEVI)
HOPE TAUCH
ELSIE TEMPLE

Living Nativity 2023 Recap:

BY ELLEN WARREN & TRACEY FASNACHT

Dear Church Family,

As I look back on the success of our Living Nativity event, my heart is filled with immense gratitude. For the first time, we extended our celebration to two nights, and what a sight it was! Nearly 600 of our community joined us, and each person's presence is a testament to the hard work you do every year to get the word out for us.

Your participation brought life to this tradition. The laughter and delight of 60 children engaging in crafts and the covenant center filled with people reminded us of the simple joys of fellowship. As we gathered to savor hot dogs, homemade cookies, and heartwarming soup, we experienced not just the flavors of the season but the warmth of our shared faith and friendship.

I am incredibly thankful for the generous donations we received from the community. Their gifts will truly make a difference in keeping our ministry alive. To the dedicated souls who made this event possible – our cast members who reenacted the story with such passion, the structure team who built our stages, the animal handlers who cared for our furry participants, the cookie bakers who sweetened our evenings, the advertisers who spread the word, the volunteers at the hot chocolate stand who kept us warm, and our prayer warriors who enveloped us in spiritual support – your efforts were the backbone of this event.

Two special moments we captured the spirit of our gathering. Every year we're amazed we're always blessed with live baby Jesus. Before our second performance, our little angel fell ill but we were so fortunate to have a backup family to take their place. The first time we ever had a backup family. What is most important is our first baby has recovered from his illness thankfully. We did have one sheep make a break for freedom but with patience and a bit of laughter, we got him to safely rejoin his herd.

We have so many memories, so let's look forward to our next event. Please mark your calendars for our next Living Nativity on December 7th and 8th, 2024. May this event continue to be something our community looks forward to each year.

Again, Thank you for making this event a success and a beautiful expression of our faith and community spirit.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Ellen Warren and Tracey Fasnacht



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

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Let us pray for you today.

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:

HICKORYCHURCH.COM/PRAYER

OR SCAN THE QR CODE NOW



NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES!

A study of Philippians based on *Be Joyful (Even When Things Go Wrong You Can Have Joy)* by Warren Wiersbe

STARTING JAN. 7
8:45 AM | PARLOR
LED BY RON STEWART

OUT OF OFFICE

forever

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE
RETIREMENT OF

BRUCE SHARPNACK

Physician at Hickory Family Practice

Dear Saints at Hickory UEPC:

"You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." (2 Cor. 9:11) Greetings in the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus. Thank you so much for your prayers and the sponsorship of our children. They would not go to school if it was not for your support. Thanks for check # 21862 in the amount of \$1,780.00 issued on 11-5-2023. Thank you doesn't seem to be enough. All is going well at the mission. God Bless.

~ERMITHE & PIERRE

**Notes of
THANKS**

REMOVAL
of the GREENS
JANUARY 6 | 9 AM

Food & Fellowship
JAN. 14

NEW YEAR, NEW RECIPE!

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

Hickory United Evangelical Presbyterian Church
210 Main Street, Hickory, PA 15340

REGRETS ONLY BY JANUARY 12 TO
LAURA AT (724)-356-2247

Join us for food, drinks, and celebrating!

KIDS & YOUTH MINISTRY

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DATES & REMINDERS

STUDENT SERVICE -
SATURDAY, JAN. 6 | 8:30-1p

YOUTH GROUP 6-12 Grade -
NOW ON SUNDAY NIGHTS
starting January 7

SUNDAY SCHOOL ALL AGES:
SUNDAYS @ 8:45 AM

KIDS FEATURE: Our Melody Makers had the opportunity to ring the Prelude three times in December! A very special Prelude performance was conducted at the Annual Choir Christmas Cantata on December 17. Fantastic Job kids, Ms. Wanda & Ms. Patty Lin!



QUESTIONS?

Contact Youth Ministry Director
Michaela:
youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

Gingerly Besting the Competition

BY MICHAELA WALKER

Our gingerbread house decorating competition at the Youth Christmas Party was a success! Youth divided into teams and using decorating kits, were tasked with creatively collaborating on a unique design and title for their Gingerbread structures. Living Nativity guests voted on the houses as they filtered into Covenant Center after their walkthrough, and the constructors of “Hurricane City (Known as my Bedroom),” rallied enough votes to win! Congrats to Zach, Ricky, Allison, and Seth.



SUNDAY NIGHTS

YOUTH GROUP

6:30 PM-8 PM

HICKORY UNITED EPC

SERVICE PROJECT FOOD BANK DISTRIBUTION

8:30 AM-1 PM
JAN 6, 2024

HICKORY PRESCHOOL

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UPCOMING DATES:

**January 1-2 NO SCHOOL
Christmas Break**

**January 15 - NO SCHOOL
Martin Luther King JR
Day**

A December to Remember

BY ASHLEY LEWIS

The month of December was filled with so much love and joy at the Preschool! We celebrated the birth of Jesus by learning about His story daily and having parties.

The 4 year old had a Christmas Program with roughly 150 people in attendance. The students each had a line to memorize that told the Christmas Story. They sang songs like *Away in a Manger*, *Silent Night* and *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. All Glory be to God. What a beautiful time it was.

We ended the day with refreshments and fellowship in Covenant Center. I pray many seeds were planted at just the right time! Merry Christmas from the Preschool!



Merry Christmas
&

Happy New Year
from The
Preschool Staff!

QUESTIONS?

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



HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI: END OF 2023 UPDATE

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DEAR FRIENDS IN THE LORD AND PRIVILEGED PARTNERS IN GOD'S MINISTRY,

Greetings Shalom in the Holy Name of our Almighty Redeemer Jesus Christ! We pray that God's mercy and peace be upon you all. We hope this update finds you in great shape.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BIG HEART

In this one I want to let you know that all is well in the New Testament mission. Our schools function perfectly with the presence of children who benefit from the teaching received and enjoy their hot meals every day. Speaking of food, I would like you to know how important it is for these schools to have food. The children are happy to come to school every day because they know they will find something to eat. Despite the economic difficulties that exist in the USA, many sponsors have helped their sponsored children and want to ensure that they and their families have food. The same goes for our kind donors who want children and all teachers to be able to receive a hot meal when they come to school.

Every child, and adults know how blessed they are by our brothers and sisters, the sponsors and donors who live in the United States. If I were to convey their thanks and gratitude, I would not be able to. So all this is just to tell you how grateful the people here are to you. We do not have enough words to express our gratitude to all our loyal friends for their help and assistance. It is through your dedication that we can continue to work in this ministry in Haiti which serves the population, particularly the poorest.



PREPARATION IN ALL SCHOOLS

Our children in elementary and other classes are preparing for the first trimester exams. For those in preschool, they are preparing a Christmas party. Because the teachers work with them on songs that mark this era. Last time I was not too far away I was able to hear a choir and when I moved forward I was surprised to notice with my own ears how they sang a Christmas carol quite well.

I will never stop saying thanks to all the supporters of the LaCroix New Testament Mission who have contributed strongly to the education of several generations of young people in our community. Thank you for continually being in our side. Thank you for supporting this ministry with your prayers and financially. We would not do it without your help.

**With lots of agape love,
LA CROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION**

HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI: UPDATE PART 2

PAGE 8

DEAREST BELOVED FRIENDS & PARTNERS OF THE LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION!

Greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ! In a few days it will be the end of this year. But first we are going to find ourselves in the middle of this period called the mystery of the incarnation. A much-loved period when God became man to be closer to his people. This is why the Bible says in John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son, from the Father, full of grace and truth." It is a moment of sharing and love. **WE MUST SAY THANK YOU LORD FOR COMING.**



THE JOY OF SPONSORED CHILDREN

On the occasion of this very special moment across the world when a Savior was born to us to show us God's love for humanity, the sponsors of the sponsorship program also wanted to show their love for their sponsored children. So they sent their sponsored children and even others bags of food. It's like a mobilization of certain players in the sponsorship program to help these children and their families. We have already started this large distribution; we will continue during this week. Some children whose sponsors sent extra money are receiving food and money both. Unfortunately, you will not be able to feel the overflowing joy that fills the hearts of these people when receiving this great present. **THANK YOU DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH.**

ITS EXAM PERIOD!

As I announced to you previously, December is the first month of exams, these are the first term exams and the schedule for this week of exams has already been published since Friday. After passing these exams, they will receive their report cards at the end of this month. In Haiti we say that we prepare June in September, which means that students must take their study seriously from the start of the school year. This is what we want children to practice here in our schools. And we teach them to continue like that at University.



EPIDEMIC IN THE REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY AND PREPARATION OF A MOBILE CLINIC

Almost everywhere there is an epidemic of fever, headache, cough and flu that the population is coping with. This is the worst time for these epidemics to appear. They add to the number of problems that already exist. It must be remembered that in Haiti currently it is as if there is no government. For three years the country had been going from decline to decline. It is clear that the people who are in this administration are destroying the country to arrange their affairs. To respond and support people living under the influence of this epidemic this week we planned several mobile clinics. We pray that these people can find something to answer their cases. Thank you for continually being by our side. Please support this ministry with your prayers and financial donations. We wouldn't do it without your help.

JANUARY CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

1/1 New Years Day - Office Closed

1/6 Epiphany

Upward Games Begin | 8:00 am (CC)

Removal of the Greens | 9:00 am (S)

Cub Scouts Derby Workshop | 2:00 pm (CC)

1/7 Communion | 10:00 am (S)

Ron Stewart New Adult SS Class Begins | 8:45 am (P)

1/14 Monthly Food & Fellowship Potluck | 11:15 am (CC)

1/15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Preschool Closed

1/27 Cub Scouts Derby Race | 3:00 pm (CC)

1/28 CC Reserved | 12-6 pm

Sharpnack Retirement Party | 2-6 pm (CC)

2/1 First Day of Black History Month

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

- Staff Meeting (Every Other Week) | 10:00 am (LB)
- 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 | 8:15 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 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*

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



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!



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APP!



SHARE
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