



HICKORY UNITED EPC | NOVEMBER 2025

THE HICKORY MESSENGER



Pastor's Pen

BY PASTOR CLAYTON LAPOSTA

Hello to all of you at Hickory United EPC! It feels almost strange that I have read the Pastor's Pen articles from Pastor Tom for the last handful of months and now I get to write to you myself. Being that November 2nd was my first Sunday here, I haven't had the opportunity to meet all of you yet and most of you have not gotten to know me. I can't wait for that to change in the days ahead!

Although I am a fairly new face to many of you, I wanted to share a bit of my experience at Hickory so far. From the moment my family and I first made contact with the PSC and members of this church, we have been blown away by the kindness and hospitality that this church has shown us. After the service on Sunday, Leslie and I agreed, "this feels like home." Neither of us expected to love this church and it's members so quickly but we do. You have welcomed us and our 2 children with open arms and for that we are so grateful. This is probably not new news to you, but there is something special about this place and these people. As a newcomer, you notice it the moment you walk in the door.

As I think about this new season for our church and the life of my family, I am reminded of the words of Psalm 36:5, "Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds." When you think of this new season for Hickory United, I hope you are amazed at the faithfulness of our God just as I am. Out of uncertainty about what would come next, our faithful God has brought us together. Out of the sometimes scary newness of change, our faithful God has made strangers into friends and family. Whatever you face today, God's faithfulness to those who love him extends to the clouds! And trusting in who he is, even when you can't see how, we can be certain that he is working all things for GOOD.

P.S. Please stop in and see me anytime! Call, text, or email me and we can set up a time that suits you. I want to be a pastor and I want us to be a church that isn't just involved with each other's lives for one hour once a week. I want us to be a tool that God uses to encourage, build up, edify, and bear the burdens of one another throughout every stage of life.

WORSHIP:

Sundays | 10:00 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Sundays | 8:45 am

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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.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Deacon's CORNER



Family Outreach Holiday Food Drive

It's time again for the Annual Food Drive to help those in need that live in our community. Check out the leaves on the bulletin board in the greeting area to see items that are needed. Collection runs through November 16. Your generosity is always so overwhelming that once we take care of our families, we can send the rest to FC Helping Hands families. Thank you.

Items needed include bags of sugar, boxed potatoes, cranberry sauce, stove top stuffing, Jello boxes, canned vegetables, canned gravy, canned sweet potatoes/yams, cake mixes and icing.

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree will be up and ready for you to select your angels on November 9. There will be angels for the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program, Avis Arbor and those in our Family Outreach Ministry. Please note the return date of your Angel.

Fort Cherry Helping Hands

Donations of canned goods, vegetables and boxed cereal and pasta are requested for collection on Sundays when Communion is served. These items will be distributed through the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program 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.

Bereavement Meals

Many thanks to all of those who have donated food for the bereavement meals. It is a wonderful way to care for and love one another.

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

If you would like to place a poinsettia(s) in the church for Christmas in memory of a loved one, order form envelopes will be available November 9 in the Welcome Area. Return payment and form to the offering plate or Main Office no later than Sunday, December 14. Please make your checks payable to Hickory United EPC.

HICKORY CHRISTIAN *Preschool*

Ride for Jesus 2025

BY ASHLEY LEWIS

This month we had so much fun celebrating fall, the beauty of the harvest and Jesus! We had our annual Ride for Jesus and had a wonderful time touring a fire truck and police car! The police chief and fire fighters went over general safety rules and also touched some funny topics at the parents request. It was a blast! We cannot wait to see what the Lord brings for our preschool in November.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Parent Teacher Conferences

Nov. 13 & 14 - No Preschool

Thanksgiving Parties NOVEMBER 24 & 25



No School - Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 26- Dec. 1 - Preschool Closed

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Operation Christmas Child: The Power of a Simple Gift

BY SUE ALRUTZ

Operation Christmas Child partners in more than 100 nations and distributes these gift-filled shoeboxes to boy and girls, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, God's Greatest Gift. Along with each Shoebox, each child is provided the "Greatest Gift", a story booklet that tells the story of Jesus Christ, God's Greatest Gift. These booklets are available in 128 languages. Children are invited to participate in the "Greatest Journey", Operation Christmas Child's 12-lesson discipleship program based on God's Word that teaches them how to follow Christ and encourage friends and families to do the same.

Praise God! He is transforming entire communities as a result! Our Church Family here at Hickory United Evangelical Presbyterian Church has been packing Shoeboxes for over 25 years! We have packed and sent over 4000 Shoeboxes from our Church. These shoeboxes have that have touched over 4000 boys and girls from around world.

Thank you so much for your generosity, your dedication and most of all for your prayers to this amazing Mission Project. Please continue to pray for the one child receiving your shoebox gift. May it bless them and be the introduction to our Lord Jesus to them and their family.

This December, Ken and I, have the special opportunity to travel with 40 individuals from the Washington County area to Baltimore Maryland's Processing Center. We will be helping to prepare shoeboxes for international shipping from this location. We look forward to the trip and will plan to share more about it when we get back to Hickory.

Thanks you again for making a positive difference, bringing great joy and hope into the lives of children in need, and for sharing the Gospel of Jesus, through a simple shoebox gift! One Shoebox = One Child = One Eternal Message.

Blessings,
Sue & Ken Alrutz



232 Million Shoebox gifts delivered since 1993

= 232 Million Gospel opportunities

11.9 Million

Shoebox gifts packed and delivered in 2024

10.5 Million

Shoeboxes came from United States

“Go into the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” Mark 16:15

The Living Nativity 2025

BY LYNN VANNASDALE

This December will be the annual Living Nativity's ninth consecutive year running at Hickory United EPC. What began as a humble idea, the Lord has grown into one of the largest outreach events on the church's calendar through the dedication, faith and hard working hands of His people at Hickory United.

Two years ago, the Living Nativity expanded to add a second evening of performances and opened up Covenant Center to the community for a warm meal, kids craft and fellowship time. This year will be no different. It takes the entire church community coming together as a united body for an outreach event of this scale. We are calling upon our congregants to help make this year's Living Nativity even better than the last.

To volunteer for Living Nativity, contact event organizer Ellen Warren: ellenwarren@hotmail.com. There are a variety of roles from support cast members, parking attendants, set-up and tear-down crew, kitchen service, and prayer team members. To bake and donate cookies or work the cookie and hot cocoa stand, see Denise Rollinitis or sign-up now in the Welcome Area. The annual invite challenge is back again this year with postcards available now in the Welcome Area. Grab a stack and invite at least five people to attend the Living Nativity or distribute a few cards at your favorite community restaurants and businesses. The Living Nativity performances run December 6 & 7 from 6-7:30 pm at Hickory United's lower parking lot with walkthroughs every 10 minutes. Admission is free! This is an outdoor event, so please dress for weather accordingly. Let's celebrate with joy the birth of our Savior!



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS



Veterans Day Service

Nov. 11 | 11 am | Sanctuary

Sponsored by the Hickory Lions Club



Hanging of the Greens

Nov. 29 | 9 am | Sanctuary

Adult Volunteers needed to decorate!



Upward Basketball Season Registration

Season 14 is here! Upward Registration is now open to players ages 4 years old (as of Sept. 1, 2025) through 8th grade! Practices begin in early December once a week on your scheduled day. Games run on Saturdays January-February.

- Standard player Registration: \$100 through November 8
- \$5 additional sibling discount!

SERVE IN THE UPWARD MINISTRY!

Our league is 100% volunteer run! We need coaches, assistant coaches, devotion leaders, referees, audio-visual tech, scorekeepers, substitute coaches, team parents, and set up/clean up help each game day. Teens are encouraged to volunteer as well as adults. We provide training and support! To register or volunteer, scan the QR codes below. Note: All volunteers must have completed child safety clearances on file.



Questions? Contact Jackie Fawley: jdfawley@gmail.com



KIDS & YOUTH

HICKORY UNITED Kids

Kids Ministry Sunday School classes have moved from early Genesis to the Gospel of John learning about Jesus' attributes, how he demonstrated his identity as the Messiah through his healing signs and wonders, and connecting it back to their memory verse John 3:16.

Kids are also making connections on how Jesus' teachings link to God's greater plan for our salvation ever since the fall in Genesis.



Our recent weeks discussing the Gospel of Mark have been focused on Jesus' (and the Mark's) consistent emphasis on Jesus' identity. He is the Messiah, the King who was promised and who will be victorious!

We will continue to focus on this theme throughout the month of November. Jesus' disciples still hope that his victory will be over the Roman empire... Stay tuned to find out if they're right!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 AM



Kids: Fall KidVenture
Tuesdays | 5:30-7:00 pm | Covenant Ctr.

NO KIDVENTURE NOV. 25



Harvest Worship Night
Nov. 7 | 6-12th grade | Youth Room

Join us for an intimate evening singing worship songs together and sharing a time of prayer outside of Sunday morning service.



Harvest: Youth Group
Weds. | 7:30-9 pm | Covenant Ctr./Youth Rm

NO YOUTH GROUP NOV. 26



Harvest Gratitude
Nov. 21 | 6-12th grade | 7-8:30 pm

Harvest & Hickory Lions Collab

Harvest Youth Group and the Hickory Lions came together at the end of October to bag canned goods for 75 recipients of McDonald Meals on Wheels program.

The library floor was a sea of blue reusable bags filled with items for recipients to use in case of inclement weather when a Meals on Wheels drive is unable to deliver a meal.

We are grateful to our Harvest students for their participation and look forward to more collaborations like this in the future!



NOVEMBER CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

- 11/2 **Daylight Saving Time Ends**
Pastor Clayton's First Day & Communion | 10 am (S)
Food & Fellowship | 11:15 am (CC)
- 11/4 **Election Day**
- 11/7 Harvest Worship Night | 7 pm (YR)
- 11/9 Memorial Sunday | 10 am (S)
- 11/11 **Veterans Day Service** | 11 am (S)
- 11/16 Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection | 10 am (S)
- 11/21 Harvest Gratitude | 7-8:30 pm (YR)
- 11/27 **Thanksgiving Day - Office Closed**
- 11/28 **Office Closed**
- 11/29 Hanging of the Greens | 9 am (S)
- 11/30 **First Sunday of Advent**

Staff CONTACTS:

PASTORAL & MINISTRY

SENIOR PASTOR

Clayton LaPosta | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 102)

pastor@hickoryunitedepc.org

YOUTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Michaela Walker | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 103)

youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

MUSIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Tim VanNasdale | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 111)

tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org

LAY PASTOR

Lou Templeton | (724) 356-7835

ADMINISTRATIVE / SUPPORT

OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Michelle Danna | (724) 356-4424

office@hickoryunitedepc.org

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Lynn VanNasdale | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 106)

communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

TREASURER

Melissa Fluharty | treasurer@hickoryunitedepc.org

ASST. TREASURER & CONSULT

Linda Carter

AUDIO VISUAL TECHNICIAN

David Sykut | david.sykut@hickoryunitedepc.org

FACILITY ASSISTANT

Will Smith

HICKORY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Ashley Lewis | (724) 356-7337

(724) 356-4424 (Ext. 101)

hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org

NEXT MONTH

- 12/5 Harvest Open Gym
- 12/6 Living Nativity Performance | 6-7:30 pm (Lower Lot)
- 12/7 **Second Sunday of Advent & Communion** | 10 am (S)
Living Nativity Performance | 6-7:30 pm (Lower Lot)
- 12/13 Secret Sisters Reveal Party | 9 am (CC)
- 12/14 **Third Sunday Advent & Choral Cantata** | 10 am (S)
Joyful Noise Christmas Program | 10 am (S)
Food & Fellowship | 11:15 am (CC)
- 12/19 Preschool Christmas Program | 6 pm (S)
Harvest Christmas Vigil | 7 pm (YR)
- 12/21 **Fourth Sunday Advent** | 10 am (S)
- 12/24 **Christmas Eve - Office Closed**
Candlelight Services | 6 pm & 8 pm (S)
- 12/25 **Christmas Day - Office Closed**

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

CHECK ONLINE CALENDAR FOR FULL LIST OF RECURRING
WEEKLY/MONTHLY MEETINGS: hickorychurch.com/calendar



CHURCH JUST
GOT AN *upgrade.*

- Submit Online Prayer Requests
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- Virtual & Audio Bible Features
- Fast Calendar Access
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HICKORYCHURCH.COM



724-356-4424



OFFICE@HICKORYUNITEDPC.ORG



210 MAIN STREET, HICKORY, PA.



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TEXT 'HICKORYUNITED' TO 84576 & JOIN THE MAILING LIST!