

# THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | SEPTEMBER 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.

## *A Message From the Session*

BY RON STEWART

If you remember, we used the Transitional Pastor process in our search for Pastor Dan Clark. Christopher Mathewson lead us through a church revitalization meeting; a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis; and a vision team. This resulted in a vision and mission statement and a plan to move forward. The next step was engaging with Fort Cherry School District where the door had opened to us. This would have involved mentoring students, after school programs, and other opportunities to meet community needs.

However, shortly after Pastor Dan arrived, we and the school district were shut down by COVID. Pastor Dan was then faced with the awesome task of keeping the church together, working through the resulting reduction in church giving, and other pressing issues. As we opened back up, Dan focused on getting us on board with the mission and vision we had adopted before he came and implementing a next step in discipleship by starting small group studies.

Further, we had to immediately improve and increase our electronic presence on the internet, FaceBook, and other venues to

reach those who could not return to church. However, by now, the open door at the schools had closed.

After considerable discussion, Session decided that before we bring in a new pastor, we need to revisit our implementation plans and decide where we are going. This will make the effort to find a pastor who is on board with us easier. So, we decided to bring in a Transitional Pastor to focus on identifying and implementing the next steps in our mission and vision. We believe that we do not need to repeat the earlier steps in the transitional process as described above.

The Transitional Pastor will also assist us in forming the Pastoral Search Committee, lead us through the search process for a permanent senior pastor, and, of course, preach, counsel, visit shut-ins, and officiate at baptisms, weddings, communion, and funerals. This will provide continuity until we fill the senior pastor position.

The Session has appointed Blake Grove, J.D. Little and Ron Stewart to serve as the Transitional Pastor Search Team. The team

## Worship:

Sundays | 10:00 am

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# Deacon's Corner

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## Communion News

COMMITTEE: LISA ALEXANDER & DEB REA

Our next communion will be on **Sunday, September 3 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.

## Meals on Wheels

COMMITTEE: MARY JORDAN & SANDY MARTINEK

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!!

## Vitalant Blood Drive: Saturday, September 9!

"Because of You, Life Doesn't Stop. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. This could be a little girl in the ICU or a mother with Stage 3 leukemia. If you're worried about needles, don't be—most blood donors compare the experience to a mild, split-second pinch! The entire process is very safe and very fast, and you will feel amazing knowing you potentially saved up to three people." ([vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org)) There is currently a shortage of summer blood donations. Our goal with this blood drive is 33 units! Walk-ins welcome. Booking online appointments ahead of time are encouraged at [www.vitalant.org](http://www.vitalant.org).

ON THE DAY OF YOUR APPOINTMENT, SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT WITH YOUR DEVICE TO FAST-TRACK THE COMPLETION OF YOUR HEALTH HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE.

USE OUR GROUP CODE  
BELOW WHEN BOOKING.

GROUP CODE:  
**UG001008-1**



## 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.*

# HICKORY PRESCHOOL

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## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

September 5 | Pre-K 3's

September 6 | Pre-K 4's

## SAVE THE DATE:

Annual Ride for Jesus  
Fundraiser | Oct. 19 & 20

It's the largest fundraiser of the year for our Preschool! Sponsor a rider per lap or contribute a flat donation amount. Stay tuned for more details on how you can help support our Preschool.

## *A New Year in a New Role*

BY ASHLEY LEWIS

Hello, my name is Ashley Lewis and I am excited to introduce myself as the new Director here at Hickory Christian Preschool. I am thrilled to have been given this opportunity to further the Kingdom of God and create a lasting impact for generations to come. I have over 7 years of experience teaching children of all ages. Last year I worked here at the preschool as a 3 and 4 year old teacher but before that I was a teacher at Hillcrest Christian Academy teaching 3rd, 5th and 6th grade. Before that I taught at a learning center for 4 years and had a broad range of students from infants all the way up to 12 year olds.

I have lead numerous mission trips to El Salvador, with the youth group and women of our church, spreading the word of God to orphanages, feeding the homeless and taking school supplies and food to children/schools on remote islands. I absolutely love working with children and feel this is exactly what God has called me to do. We are looking forward to a blessed and safe school year filled with the Holy Spirit and joy of the Lord! Thank you in advance for your prayers!



## *Meet Your '23-'24 Preschool Teachers!*



*Sherry Bruno*

PRE-K 4 TEACHER



*Becky Couter*

CLASSROOM AIDE



*Karen Hodgson*

PRE-K 3 TEACHER



*Shelly Short*

PRE-K 3 TEACHER



*Beatrice Zalazdy*

PRE-K 3/4 TEACHER



## Notes of THANKS

Dear Pastor Dan & Church,

"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). Greetings in the name of the Great Provider, the Lord Jesus. I can't find the right words to express my gratitude for your kindness and generosity that keep our school going for the sake of our children. thank you so much for supporting 95 of our children to go to School. You

are making a difference. Thank you for check #21749 in the amount of \$1900.00 issued on 07/19/2023. Thank you for prayers. All continue to go well at the mission. We thank the Lord. School is going to be back in session next month, September. Last week we had VBS at the mission - next week VBS in LaCoupe one of the remote villages. When we had food distribution people out of district come knowing that we turn no one down. We thank the Lord for his provision. Thanks. God Bless.

~VAUGELAS PIERRE

I would like to thank everyone that sent cards and called with birthday wishes. It means a lot to me. Thank you!

~SHEILA CARTER

Dear Hickory Church,

Judy and I have been humbled and overwhelmed by your many grace-filled blessings of congratulation, encouraging words, cards, hugs, and handshakes. Thank you, also, to Bill Clark for officiating our send-off following Sunday's worship service. Thank you to the leadership of the church for laying on hands and blessing us with prayer.

We will cherish the gifts of the glass encased American flag, flown over Hickory church, and the rooster watercolor. These gifts, and the many memories gathered during our time at Hickory, will forever remind us of the many friendships we formed together at Hickory United. We praise God for calling us to Hickory and serving you. Please be assured that Judy and I will continue praying for all of you.

~ BLESSINGS, JUDY AND DAN CLARK

## Digital Ways to Give

Web



Text

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

In App



Discipleship Team Seeking

## SMALL GROUP COORDINATOR

Contact Natalie:

NATALIEJENGEL@GMAIL.COM



Small Groups  
AT HICKORY CHURCH

## 7TH ANNUAL Living Nativity

HICKORY UNITED EPC

SAVE THE DATE!!!  
DECEMBER 9 & 10

vitalant

LEND AN ARM.  
SAVE A LIFE.

## BLOOD DRIVE

SEPT. 9 | COVENANT CENTER

7:30 AM - 12:30 PM

HICKORY UNITED EPC

210 MAIN ST. HICKORY, PA

BOOK NOW:  
VITALANT.ORG



# MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

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(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

has been working with the Presbytery to understand the process and to identify candidates. We have two candidates to date and have begun to do due diligence with the expectation that we will have a Transitional Pastor in mid to late September.

In the meantime, it is the intent of Session to fill the pulpit on Sundays with our own Ruling Elders. We ask that you continue to honor our Elders by your attendance as we move forward together. The call for the Transitional Pastor is given by the Session; the call for the senior pastor will be given by a vote of the members of the congregation. We will keep you informed as we go forward.

## OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE!



SEPTEMBER

25

Email Lynn:

[communications@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:communications@hickoryunitedepc.org)

OFFICE CLOSED  
SEPTEMBER 4

*Happy Labor Day!*

## NEW WOMEN'S SMALL GROUP OFFERING!

*"Isaiah: Striving Less and Trusting God More"*

SUNDAYS | 8:45 AM  
BEGINS SEPTEMBER 17

Sign-up in Welcome Area Aug. 27  
Questions?

Contact Bethany: 724-255-5088

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Contact Barb Rea:  
724-255-5175

*We're  
Hiring!*

HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI:  
LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION

MEET & GREET WITH  
PASTOR PIERRE!

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

@ 7:00 PM

COVENANT CENTER



*Living Nativity*

PAINT DAYS  
SEPT. 16 & 23 | 10 AM -2 PM  
LOWER PARKING LOT

CONTACT ELLEN: [ELLENWARREN@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:ELLENWARREN@HOTMAIL.COM)

Join us for this year's Volunteer Paint Days! We'll work on painting the interior of the stages to bring a new level of beauty to our stages. Just bring your paint clothes and grab a brush! We'll supply the water, pop and pizza. Rain Date is scheduled for September 30.



# KIDS & YOUTH MINISTRY

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE:

Starting September 10, Sunday School kicks off at its new time 8:45-9:45 am. Worship Service will still be held at 10:00 am.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2ND GRADERS!

The following students will be receiving their bibles this year:

*Gabby Carter*

*Donovan Geisler*

*Max Danna*

*Mia Mele*

*Arie Groszkiewicz*

*Domenic Mechtel*

**STAY TUNED FOR THE RETURN OF KIDVENTURE IN 2024!**

## QUESTIONS?

Contact Youth Ministry

Director Michaela:

[youth@hickorunitedepc.org](mailto:youth@hickorunitedepc.org)

## welcome

### YOUTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Hello, Hickory Church! I am so excited to introduce myself as the Youth Director. Students, I cannot wait to get to know you, and parents, I cannot wait to get to know your kids! I am coming to Hickory from Chicago, IL, having just graduated from Wheaton College with a degree in Christian Formation & Ministry. Throughout my studies there, the Lord led me deeper into student ministry and gradually invited me to join him in a more permanent role showing his love to kids and teens.

I am passionate about showing God's love to students. I believe that student ministry is not a lesser ministry or a stepping stone to something better; it is a worthy calling and a whole ministry in and of itself. Adolescence is a time of intense growth and change. I aim to provide a ministry for students that offers God as a solid floor to stand on as they experience this rapid development. I can't wait to get started!

Students, I am excited to get to know you! And I am excited to get involved in the surrounding schools and get to know many more students to come!

~IN CHRIST, MICHAELA



*Michaela Walker*



# HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI:

## LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION

### UPDATE AUGUST 2023

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#### REPORT CARD RESULT FINAL EXAMS

Distribution of end-of-year report cards this week. The school staff has been very busy these past two weeks preparing the report cards and re-registration at the same time. It was a monster job. They deserve credit for a job well done, because all the entities that make up the school - parents, students and teaching staff - are satisfied. We give glory to God for allowing us to achieve this goal in a very depressed and difficult social context. We owe our success to the support of people like you who have helped us. It has been so difficult, and your help has made it possible. We look forward to the start of the new school year in mid-September, God willing! This week is also marked by official exams. Many young students are on their way to take national exams. On our side, 32 young people are due to sit the national exams to mark the end of their high school careers, starting this week. We pray for their success. They have come a long way, but with determination and prayer they will succeed.

#### MORE FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN THIS MONTH

Again at the beginning of August, we received a delivery of a food truck to the mission and immediately began distributing food. More than 600 families received food and next week more families will receive it. Glory be to God in heaven who has enabled us to serve these people. A big thank you to everyone who contributed so that these people could have this food. An important fact to mention is that when someone receives a bag of rice, he doesn't just eat with his family. If a neighbor doesn't receive a card inviting him to come to the mission, he shares the food with that person. That's a lot more than 600 families receiving food. So I will continue to pray for more grace, more blessings on each and every one of you who made this program possible.



**"Dear children, let us love not in words or tongue, but with actions and in truth."  
- 1 John 3:18**

#### LACOUPE FOOD DISTRIBUTION

We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to have a great food distribution in the village of Lacoupe this week. Each time we serve this population, we feel something that makes us very happy. We feel that we are doing something that pleases the angels in heaven. Let us remember that God calls us to share his holy words in word and deed. Thank you so much for helping us at LaCroix New Testament Mission to fulfill the vision God has allowed us to have for serving the needy. We are delighted this week to have been able to serve food to more than 250 families in this village. It is a great achievement at a time when hunger is critical and the price of the most basic foodstuffs is extremely high. And Glory, glory to God the Most High! Again, our thanks go to each of you who have allowed our Lord to direct you to help these people. What a heart of gold you have! What a spirit of service heaven gives you! May the grace and blessing of Almighty God be with you always!



# HAVE A **HEART** FOR HAITI: AUGUST UPDATE CONTINUED...

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## INTRODUCING A SPONSORED FAMILY

I'd like to introduce you to a lady who is the mother of a sponsored child. Her name is Yolene CHARLES. She comes from Platon, a mountainous region southeast of La Croix. She is the mother of 11 children, 7 of whom are still alive. Her husband no longer lives with her. She therefore plays the role of both father and mother. To look after her children, she goes to the market every Tuesday and Friday as a street vendor to try and sell what she used to cook at home. She started this business in 2012. It was helping her with the children because things were going well. Today, her business is bankrupt, following a prolonged illness. And then there's the problem of insecurity in our beloved country of Haiti. This situation of insecurity persists. It has become much more difficult to go to the market at the moment, as gangs are confined to certain corners. In Platon, where she lives, people live at the mercy of the rain, like LaCroix. No water, no harvest. It's an almost inaccessible region, surrounded on either side by mountains. Many thanks to Pastor David and Cherrie MORGAN for choosing to sponsor two twins in this family, Jodlène and Jodler. Only God can reward you for what you do for them. Blessings!



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IN LACOUPE

Two weeks ago there was VBS for the children in Lacroix. This week it is the turn of the children in Lacoupe. The children learn new things, listen to a Bible story, worship God, play together and have a hot meal. That's why we wanted this summer program, just to keep them in the mood to live together. Because we know that during holidays and vacations, these kids have no entertainment and nowhere to go. For this VBS we welcomed almost 300 children, all of whom enjoyed this long-awaited and much-loved moment. We pray that we can always have VBS for them.

## BACK TO SCHOOL PREPARATIONS

School starts soon. At LaCroix New Testament, we provide uniforms, school supplies and books. This really helps the parents. That's what makes the difference in our schools. As you know, every summer vacation, we give jobs to students graduating from the technical school, sewing section. They sew uniforms for preschool children. The graduates are sewing uniforms, making money. Already we pray for all children God can guide them back safely in school.



**Thank you so much for thinking of this ministry. You have been very faithful in supporting this ministry with your prayers and finances. This ministry that you love so much could not continue to exist to carry out its works without your prayers and donations. THANK YOU AND BLESSINGS!**



Meet & Greet Picnic  
with Pastor Pierre & his wife, Ermithe

Saturday, September 16 from 2:00 to 7:00 pm

Shelter 1 at Peterswood Park  
750 Bebout Road Venetia, PA 15367

A catered picnic dinner will be served starting at 4:00.

We ask \$10.00 per person to defray the cost of the picnic dinner, because Friends of Haiti prides itself on all donations going to support the people of Haiti.

Please use the form below to RSVP mailed along with your donation for the picnic  
OR

You may RSVP by credit card at [friendsofhaiti.org](http://friendsofhaiti.org)

Whether you are a child sponsor, former traveler, or a supporter of The LaCroix New Testament Mission, please join us to meet the Pierre's and connect with other people who support the work of the mission in Haiti.

Pastor Pierre and Ermithe are the founders and directors of the mission. They dedicate their lives to caring for the people of the LaCroix Community and improving life for the people who live there.

Any surplus donations will be given to the Pierre's for the work of the mission.

Hosted by Friends of Haiti, Executive Board

Questions? [1haitichildsponsor@gmail.com](mailto:1haitichildsponsor@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

We plan to attend:

---

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending \_\_\_\_\_

Contact email or phone # just in case \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the cost of the picnic dinner

Checks can be made to:  
Friends of Haiti  
PO Box 1441  
McMurray, PA 15317

# SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

<b>9/1</b>	PreK Open House   9:00-11:00 am Sanctuary Reserved	<b>9/9</b>	<b>Blood Drive   7:30-12:30 pm (CC)</b>
<b>9/2</b>	Sanctuary Reserved	<b>9/10</b>	<b>Sunday School Kickoff</b> (Sunday School Schedule begins at 8:45 am)
<b>9/3</b>	<b>Communion   10:00 am (S)</b>	<b>9/16</b>	Living Nativity Paint Day   10 am-2 pm (Lower Lot)
<b>9/4</b>	<b>Labor Day - Office Closed</b>	<b>9/17</b>	Women's Ministry Mtg   11:15 am (P)
<b>9/5</b>	PreK 3's First Day	<b>9/23</b>	Living Nativity Paint Day   10 am-2 pm (Lower Lot)
<b>9/6</b>	PreK 4's First Day	<b>9/26</b>	<b>Pastor Pierre Meet &amp; Greet   7:00 pm (CC)</b>
<b>9/7</b>	Choir Resumes	<b>9/30</b>	<i>Living Nativity Paint Day Rain Date (Tentative)</i>
		<b>10/1</b>	<b>Communion   10:00 am (S)</b>
		<b>10/9</b>	<b>Worship Service at Hickory Apple Festival</b>

## 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 | 11:15 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



# LET'S



HICKORY UNITED EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Pastoral & Ministry

Music Ministry Director, Tim VanNasdale | [tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Youth Ministry Director, Michaela Walker | [youth@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:youth@hickoryunitedepc.org)

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

## Administrative / Support

Office Manager, Paula Steele | [office@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:office@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Communications Coordinator, Lynn VanNasdale | [communications@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:communications@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Co-Treasurer, Linda Carter | [linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Co-Treasurer, Melissa Fluharty | [melissa.fluharty@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:melissa.fluharty@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Audio Visual Technician, David Sykut | [david.sykut@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:david.sykut@hickoryunitedepc.org)

## Hickory Christian Preschool

Preschool Director, Ashley Lewis | (724) 356-7337 | [hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org)

## Facilities

Sexton, Eugene Short | (724) 356-4424 | [sexton@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto: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](mailto:sharon.merckle@yahoo.com)

Join the Prayer Tree List: Email [office@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:office@hickoryunitedepc.org)

# LET'S GET LINKED!



scan



GET THE  
APP!



SHARE  
SOCIAL!

text

HICKORYUNITED  
TO 84576



follow



@hickorychurch

[hickorychurch.com](http://hickorychurch.com)



724-356-4424

210 Main St., Hickory, PA.  
15340

contact