



HICKORY UNITED EPC | FEBRUARY 2026

THE HICKORY MESSENGER



Pastor's Pen

BY PASTOR CLAYTON LAPOSTA

As I look out my window, everything is white! I pray that all of you are staying warm and safe amidst this storm. The final week of January has been an odd one. Between the storm, worship services being cancelled, and the deaths of multiple beloved members of our church, if you're anything like me, it is very easy to feel downtrodden during this season. As such, I wanted to use this Pastor's Pen article as an opportunity to offer you some encouragement.

If you are familiar with the book of Philippians, you'll know the setting of Paul's life as he wrote it. Paul is imprisoned in Rome, he endures the sentence willingly after appealing to be tried before the emperor for the sake of the Gospel's advancement, and the world is not yet kind to the message of Christ with the climax of that period coming in just a handful of years with the destruction of the Temple. All this to say, life is not easy for someone like Paul and really any Christian. And yet, in the face of great opposition and discouragement, Paul keeps going. In fact, in Philippians 1, Paul writes a very familiar verse that makes sense of how he can keep going and how he hopes the Philippians will be able to as well.

In verses 20-21 he says this, "as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." No matter what the outcome, God's glory is front and center. If Paul lives, he will use his life to live for Christ. If he dies, he will experience Christ's defeat over sin and death and be united to him forever. For some of you, you find yourselves in the second portion of these verses. Someone that you, and all of us love has died. Christ will be glorified as he welcomes them into eternal life.

If you're reading this, you also find yourself in the first portion. You are alive today. So how will you use the life you have? Even when you are shut in because of the snow, will you live for Christ today? Whichever section you find yourself in today, knowing that Christ will be glorified and care for us is how you will endure. Despite the sadness that this season has brought to so many, we have a great deal to be thankful for and excited about at Hickory United. As the snow melts and the season changes, think of how each of us can live for Christ today.

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



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.

Spring Blood Drive

Save the date for our annual Spring Blood Drive on Saturday, March 28, 2026.



NOTES OF Thanks

Greetings in the most wonderful name of Jesus. We have the pleasure to accuse reception of checks # 22576 for \$2,600.00 and #22571 \$1,820.00 both issued on 12-18-25. We thank you for your prayers and your financial support. What would we do without your support? The ministry is going well despite all. We give glory to God. Our prayer is that peace reigns in Haiti this New Year. God bless.

~ERMITHE & PIERRE

We are grateful for the amazing generosity and support we've received for the Fort Cherry Angel Tree program again this holiday season! Thanks to the kindness of our community, staff, and local businesses, we were able to provide Christmas for 68 families and 161 children this year. We are thankful for everyone who contributed in any way - together, we've made this holiday season brighter for so many Fort Cherry Families. Thank you again for all your support this year. Wishing you the best in the new year!

~THE FORT CHERRY ANGEL TREE COMMITTEE,
TERRI EILER & LOUIS HILTY

Thank you for giving to DiscipleMakers in 2025! 2025 saw the culmination of our 10 year goal to reach 25 campuses with disciple-making missionaries by 2025. When we set the goal in 2015, we were ministering at 11 schools. The idea of making disciples at 25 campuses seemed remote and ambitious. But God displayed His power and grace, and by the middle of 2025 we were ministering at 26 campuses. We praise God for this growth, especially because each new campus is a story of God's grace. Each campus is a story of God calling at least one missionary (often more than one) to step into the unknown and start a new initiative at a new place. Each is a story of God going ahead of us to work in students' hearts to respond to His Word. Each is a story of students catching the vision of sharing the gospel with their classmates, transforming what usually started as a single small Bible study into a growing movement on their campus. In 2025, we ministered to almost 800 students who attend schools where we had no ministry presence 10 years ago (and to over 1,800 students total).

Underlying all of this growth is one constant: college students' responsiveness to the gospel. It is as Jesus said: The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. When believers that the Word to campus, students respond and God's kingdom grows. Thank you for your investment in this mission to raise up disciple-making disciples of Christ on campus!

~PETER KROL, DISCIPLEMAKERS PRESIDENT

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Annual Flea Market Approaches

BY PATTY LIN GROWDEN

Mark your calendars for March 12-14 and look no further for your next bargain find! It's Flea Market Time! The Annual Name Your Price Flea market is Saturday, March 14 from 9 am - 1 pm in Covenant Center. Truly every item is name your price! All proceeds benefit the ministry and mission work of Hickory United EPC. It's also that time of year again to start cleaning out your closets and garages to donate unwanted items to help supply the flea market.

Doors will open on Friday from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm for church members to shop the pre-sale before the public. Please do not arrive before, as we are finishing up the set up for the flea market and want to ensure it is safe to shop beforehand. Food, homemade pies and baked goods will also be available to purchase, so come hungry or get it to go to enjoy later! We hope to see you there!

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!

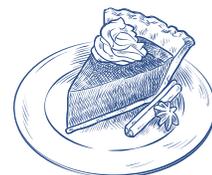


Flea Market Donation Drop-off Details:

Mar. 12 & 13 | 1-7 pm | Covenant Ctr.

- Only drop-off items during designated times. Unload help available. Item pickup not available.
- Please no clothing, shoes, TV's, non-flat screen computer monitors, cribs, and expired car seats.
- Large items that cannot be carried while shopping should be dropped off at Fellowship Hall.

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.



HICKORY CHRISTIAN *Preschool*

Sarris Candy Preschool Fundraiser

We invite the Hickory United Church community to come alongside and help support Hickory Christian Preschool, one of Hickory United EPC's biggest on-site ministries that operates directly under your feet five days a week. The Sarris Candy fundraiser is one of the Preschool's largest, second to the annual Ride for Jesus.

Profits from order sales go towards a variety of necessary budget items that help fund the Preschool and ensure the program's sustainability for future students. Order forms are available now in the Welcome Area. Return order forms & payment to the Main Office no later than February 18, 2026. Please use Hickory Christian Preschool as the organization name for your order and make all checks payable to Hickory Christian Preschool with "Sarris Fundraiser" in the memo line. The teachers and students thank you for your support!

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 1-2 | Winter Break

January 19 | MLK Jr. Day

Orders Due Feb. 18!

GROUP ID:
10-1157



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS



Food & Fellowship
FEB. 8

- JOIN US IN COVENANT CENTER AFTER WORSHIP FOR A POTLUCK AND FELLOWSHIP!
- BRING A MAIN, SIDE OR DESSERT TO SHARE!
- DISH DROP-OFF 8:55-9:30 AM IN COVENANT CENTER

A black and white photograph of a group of people, including children and adults, gathered around a long table filled with various dishes, participating in a potluck meal.

Food & Fellowship

Feb. 8 | 11:15 am | Covenant Center

Bring a main, side or dessert and drop off in the kitchen between 8:30-9:55 am



ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE

Feb. 18 @ 7 PM

A graphic featuring a close-up of a person's hands sifting ash through a sieve onto a surface, with the text overlaid.

Ash Wednesday Service

Feb. 18 | 7 pm | Sanctuary

Imposition of Ashes offered

Free Family Worship Workshop

What is Family Worship? Why is it important? Family Worship is worship done in the context of the family circle! It takes many of the same aspects of worship during Sunday at church and implements them in the everyday practices of home. Family worship glorifies God, binds families together, encourages family members (especially children) in Christ, and makes Christian disciplines like prayer and Bible study a routine in our daily lives.

Why attend? In one week, the Lord provides us with 168 hours of time. Two of those hours devoted to church each week is incredible, but that leaves 166

hours of influence from other things. This workshop will provide you with the tools and skills to give your family a great foundation in faith and face the days and challenges ahead. Discover the importance of family worship, hear testimonies of it's effectiveness, and gain practical methods of how to lead your family well in worship.

Free resources provided:

- Family Worship Helps: Weekly Study Guides on the Westminster Shorter Catechism
- The Westminster Short & Larger Catechisms
- Family Worship Bible Guide by Joel Beeke
- How to Lead Your Family: A Guide for Men Wanting to Be More by Joel Beeke

To RSVP register for this event via the QR code by February 8. Childcare activities available for ages 3-5th grade during the workshop and Youth Group for grades 6-12. Questions? Contact Pastor Clayton: pastor@hickoryunitedepc.org or Michaela Walker: youth@hickoryunitedepc.org.



FEB. 15

Family
WORSHIP
WORKSHOP

6 PM DINNER // 7 PM WORKSHOP
FREE TO ATTEND! RSVP BY FEB. 8



A graphic with a teal and white background. The text 'Family WORSHIP WORKSHOP' is prominently displayed in a large, stylized font. Below it, the event details are listed. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

Family Worship Workshop

Feb. 15 | 6 pm Covenant Ctr. | 7 pm Sanctuary

Scan the QR code to RSVP by February 8

KIDS & YOUTH

HICKORY UNITED Kids

In February, our Pre-K-5th graders' Sunday School will be rich with learning from the early church! Lessons will cover The books of Acts, 1 & 2 Peter, and Hebrews. Kids will close out the month in the book of Hebrews as they discover that God is honored when we live by faith in Him and His word. Join us this month as we focus on the Early Church and what we can learn as we witness God interact with the earliest Christians!

HARVEST STUDENT MINISTRY

In February, our 6th-12th graders will be spending time in Mark 12-13. These chapters include accounts of Jesus giving warnings to the Pharisees and Sadducees and becoming more explicit in his teachings about what is coming next. As we read through these chapters, we will focus on why the Pharisees and Sadducees are being warned, what Jesus is foretelling in his teachings, and what all of these things mean for how we ought to live as we seek to love God and love our neighbors.

QUESTIONS?
CONTACT MICHAELA:
YOUTH@HICKORYUNITEPC.ORG

HARVEST YOUTH EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 AM



EPiC Retreat Recap

On January 23-24 Harvest Students traveled to Camp Ligonier for their second annual Winter Youth Retreat. Although winter weather storms cut the retreat weekend short, students arrived to and from the retreat safely.

Session 1 on the first night included Worship, dance party, games and root beer floats. Session 2 the next day featured a friendly multi-game competition between the churches attending including dodge ball, Mario Kart, coloring pages, and charades. They also enjoyed fellowship and bible study time!

The theme for the retreat weekend was Leadership (one of the EPC's values) focusing on the Gospel of John. In Jesus' kingdom, being a leader means bringing yourself low rather than lifting yourself up!



Minute to Win It Victors

In our Minute to Win It competition, teams competed against each other in Valentine's themed games including racing to unwrap more chocolates than their opponents. Congrats to the victors, Team 1! (right)



Open Gym Night

Feb. 6 | 8:30-10 pm | Covenant Ctr.
Free gym time, games and snacks!



Movie Night: Monsters Inc.

Feb. 13 | 8:30-10 pm | Youth Room
BYO chair or blanket. Popcorn, candy & soda provided.



Wheel of Fortune

Feb. 20 | 8:30-10 pm | Youth Room
Spin the wheel and solve some puzzles!

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

- 2/6 Harvest Open Gym | 8:30-10 pm (CC)
- 2/8 Harvest Super Bowl Party | 6-9 pm (CC)
Food & Fellowship | 11:15 am (S)
- 2/13 Harvest Movie Night | 8:30-10 pm (CC)
- 2/14 Valentines Day
- 2/15 Directory Photo Session Day
Family Worship Workshop | 6 pm (CC)
- 2/16 President's Day
- 2/18 **Ash Wednesday - Lent Begins**
Ash Wednesday Service | 7 pm (S)

- 2/20 Harvest Wheel of Fortune | 8:30-10 pm (YR)
- 2/22 Directory Photo Session Day
- 2/28 Upward Celebration Potluck | 5 pm (CC)

NEXT MONTH

- 3/1 Communion | 10 am (YR)
- 3/6 Harvest Worship Night | 7 pm (L)
- 3/8 Daylight Savings Time | 2 am
Food & Fellowship | 11:15 am (CC)
- 3/12-3/13 Flea Market Donation Drop-off | 1-7 pm (CC)
- 3/14 Annual Flea Market | 9 am - 1 pm (CC)

(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

Staff CONTACTS:

PASTORAL & MINISTRY

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JOIN THE PRAYER TREE:

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SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:

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GET THE NEWS!

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