

# THE HICKORY MESSENGER

HICKORY UNITED EPC | MARCH 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.*

## *Pastor's Pen*

BY PASTOR DAN CLARK

I have been thinking about how much quieter the season of Lent is as compared to the Advent season. With the exception of maybe Easter dinner, planned, intentional family gatherings are rarely experienced during Lent. Roasted turkeys, honey glazed hams, stuffing, cranberry dishes, and a variety of pies, are not on the 'big' meal agenda. Baking dozens and dozens of cookies to give as gifts aren't on our 'to do' lists. Easter e-card gift promotions are non-existent. The worry and fuss and hand-wringing of buying the 'right' Easter present is rarely in the forefront of our minds. There are no scheduled Easter parties with friends, colleagues or church members. Decorating trees and houses with blinking, multi-colored lights, or singing along to Easter carols on the

radio, just don't happen. For me, the absence of all that noise, is okay. Personally, I relish the quietness and solemnity of Lent. I can't help but wonder if many people actually hear the whisper of God in the cacophony of the Advent season.

I can blame the commercialization between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day for inflaming the selfishness, pride, and desires of the human heart. But we can be so easily hypnotized by the "busy-ness" of preparing for all the distractions of the Advent season that very few actually anticipate the coming of the Christ child. It has been my sad observation, that for many, "the real reason for the season," only momentarily comes to light, if and when, they may attend a Christmas Eve Candlelight service. And then, in the blink of the eye, it is all over. I am thankful that the season of Lent is

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## **Sunday Worship Services:**

8:30 am Contemporary

11:00 am Traditional

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# LENT EVENTS

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## MEN'S LENTEN PRAYER GROUP

**STARTING FEB. 27**  
**MONDAYS | 9 AM**  
**PARLOR**

*Gather  
with brothers in Christ  
for praise, prayer and  
a weekly Psalm.*

**Contact Alan:**  
**724-993-5611**

OFFICE CLOSED  
APRIL 7 & 10

*Have a Blessed Good Friday!*

## Palm Sunday Worship

WITH COMMUNION

APRIL 2 | 8:30 & 11:00 AM

## Scenes of His Ministry: in Concert

MAUNDY THURSDAY CANTATA | APR. 6 | 7 PM

## Easter Sunday Services

APRIL 9 | 8:30 & 11:00 AM



# Deacon's Corner

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## Easter Flowers

If you would like to place a flower in memory of a loved one for the Easter Sunday service, please pick up an order envelope on the wood table in the welcome area.

**Sunday March 5-Sunday, March 26th:**  
**Order envelopes will be available in the Welcome Area.**

**Sunday, March 26th** - Last day to place your flower order!

Place your completed envelope including your check/money in the offering plate or drop off at the church before this date. Please make checks payable to "Hickory United EPC" and note "Easter Flowers" on your check.

- Tulips & Daffodils \$9.00 per flower
- Lilies \$10.00 per flower

**Sunday, April 9th** - Please pick up your flowers after the 8:30 or 11:00 Easter Service. Any plants left after April 9 will be donated at the Deacons' discretion.

## NEXT COMMUNION: APRIL 2

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 in the church's main entrance foyer.

**SAVE THE DATE.**

**DONATE.**

**SAVE LIVES.**

vitalant.

## BLOOD DRIVE

**MAR 25 | COVENANT CENTER**  
**7:30 AM -12:00 PM**  
**HICKORY UNITED EPC**  
**210 MAIN ST. HICKORY, PA**

BOOK NOW:  
VITALANT.ORG

**Group Code:**  
**G0010081**

## 2023 DEACONS COMMITTEES

Bereavement - Bob Spencer & Deb Rea  
Food Pantry - Deb Rea & Mary Jordan  
Meals on Wheels - Mary Jordan & Sandy Martinek  
Cards (Seniors' birthdays, special occasions, get-well & Sympathy) - Mary Jordan  
Shut-ins & Military - Janet Green  
Communion Chairs - 8:30 am Lisa Alexander, 11:00 am Deb Rea  
Deacons' Corner - Lisa Alexander  
Family Outreach - Tracey Fasnacht & Dave Willkens  
Special Projects - Rich Moore & Dave Willkens  
Flowers - Ken Alrutz & Rich Moore  
Transients - Bob Spencer

To reach out to any of the Deacon committees, please leave your message with Paula in the main office (724) 356-4424 and the appropriate committed member will return your call as soon as possible.

## 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.*

# UPWARD BASKETBALL '22-'23 SEASON

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## *Upward: Season Recap*

BY JACKIE FAWLEY

In the early morning every Saturday in January and February the Buck Stop Babes start brewing the coffee and warming the hot dogs. They open the fresh doughnuts and bustle about preparing to serve “the best priced breakfast in town” to the families and players of Hickory’s Upward Basketball League, aka The Fun League. The blue screen of the projector is brought to life, the players slowly make their way into Covenant Center, sleepy parents tie sneakers and send their children off with a water bottle to find their coach. The rhythmic thud of dribbling balls begins and grows with intensity until at 8:00 sharp, the first game of the day is announced and players, suddenly wide awake, are announced and run out to take on their opponents.

Over a decade ago, an excited group of individuals made an announcement to the congregation over supper in Covenant Center. A new ministry would be started here in this church. This ministry was Upward Basketball. Upward Sports focuses not just on sports, but on the whole person. This results in an experience that allows players to learn the sport and learn for life by understanding God’s plan for their life. The first season of Upward Basketball was held in the winter of 2012 and consisted of about 32 players. Fast forward 11 years...

Sunday, February 26, 2023 we wrapped up our 11th season of this ministry with 81 registered players. These youth, ages 4 to 14 come to us from at least 12 different schools, 15 churches, and communities as far as 24 miles away. Nearly 70 family units visited weekly to watch the games and cheer for ALL of the players.

Each year, the planning begins in late summer and lasts through October. Commissioners discuss details for the upcoming season. Coaches, referees and game day volunteers are recruited, ideas on what to keep and what to change from one season to the next are exchanged. A buzz starts among returning players wondering who their coach will be. Who will be on their team? Some new players are a little nervous, others are bursting with excitement!

Based on Luke 2:52 “And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”, Upward Basketball volunteers are tasked with the responsibility to help build players mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially. Every week, 19 coaches and assistant coaches dedicated an hour during practice guiding the youth through warm-ups, instruction, drills, and scrimmages.

Weekly practices not only build athleticism by teaching and reinforcing skills, they allow players to grow in confidence, decision making and self-regulation. Coaches then returned on Saturdays for their team’s game to help their players in action. Sometimes the coaches just couldn’t resist jumping in for some game play themselves!

During each practice, teams have a devotion time. These devotions encourage spiritual growth. This season, the devotions were focused on responsibility (Luke 16:10), obedience (Hebrews 13:17), initiative (Phillipians 2:4) and The Good News. During week 8, players learned about and memorized The Good News from John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Six different referees spent game day on their feet and kept games running smoothly. They reminded players of the rules, encouraged the players when needed, and celebrated with them on their achievements. Security team members served a double role as the welcoming crew while at the same time manning the door for over 5 hours each Saturday to ensure the safety of our game days. High in the booth, our audio visual team worked in shifts to keep the scoreboard, audio and music all functioning as needed all day. The Buck Stop Babes kept families, coaches and players properly fueled and hydrated all morning long! They also lovingly provided plenty of ice packs and first aid for all of the bumps and scratches that come with kids and sports.

Of course, what would a game be without halftime volunteers? During each game, parents, grandparents, siblings and friends were entertained by games, participated in activities, watched a cool science experiment, and even heard music from our own Praise Band all while reinforcing the lesson that the players learned in their own devotion time. This continuity allowed the same message to be delivered not only to the players but also to their families.

Most importantly, there were many from our congregation who prayed for the league this season. Please continue to pray that the season did in fact impact the youth and the families who participated this season.





# UPWARD BASKETBALL '22-'23 SEASON

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*Thank you to the many hearts and hands it takes to make each Upward season happen!*





# MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

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(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

prolonged without great fanfare or outside exploitation.

Lent affords those who still believe in the miracle of the resurrection of Christ, undisturbed time to look inward, reflect, self-evaluate, submit, and practice acts of self-sacrifice. The Lenten season allows us time to be quiet, to ponder our unworthiness before God, to contemplate that we cannot obtain salvation on our own, and to understand that our best efforts to be righteous (right with God) fall short of the glory of God and rest solely on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Our forty day journey during Lent is to remind us of the quiet time Jesus spent alone during His forty days in the wilderness.

We have been gifted with holy time to commune with God and intentionally examine where and who we are in our spiritual journey with Christ through prayer, repentance, and fasting. It is a quiet time to reflect on how much we are in need of God's grace in our lives to live a transformed life that reflects our thankfulness for God's love for each of us. It is a time to be still and to know God, and to renew, refocus, and refine our action-

able commitment of faith to Christ. But all of this can only happen when we are willing and ready to come to the foot of the cross of Calvary and look up.

Only then, will we truly see the love of God pinned to the cross like a beautiful butterfly on a specimen board. Only then, alone, but in the very presence of God, will we begin to fathom the immeasurable dimensions of the agape love that Christ offers to every human being that has ever walked the earth. Love without prejudice, love without an agenda, love without expecting anything in return, love for the glory of God.

It is my hope and prayer that you will use the Lenten season, not to try to make yourself better, but that you will slow down. That you will take time to talk with God without holding back. That you will believe and call upon the Holy Spirit to enable you to grow deeper in your relationship with Jesus Christ. That you will be quiet, really quiet, and listen carefully to God's leading to become the follower who is willing to walk in His footsteps, to speak with His words of grace and encouragement, and to live life abundantly, a life that only Christ can give.

Blessings, Dan

## Notes of THANKS

*Our mission partner,*

*On behalf of the mighty work that God is doing in Sierra Leone, W. Africa, we want to thank you for your blessings, prayers, and generous support this past year. We can't say enough about how grateful we are to have your involvement in this ministry! The needs of these villages are numerous and endless, but your support for this year has helped with food, shelters, church buildings and supplies just to name a few. More importantly, your support has helped bring numerous adults and children to know our Savior Jesus! What a blessing to know that we can touch so many lives in so many ways. Again, thank you for walking with us on this journey. We look forward to working with you again this year and cannot wait to see what the Lord will accomplish through this ministry. God Bless!*

*~In Christ*

REV. BESTY L. RUMER

Sierra Leone Coordinator for the Presbytery of the Alleghenies & the EPC

*We want to express our deepest gratitude for the heartfelt blessings that have been bestowed upon us during this new chapter of our lives these past months. The Hickory Church community has been supportive, enthusiastic, gracious, generous and above all, incredibly loving and celebratory with us as we entered into the covenant of marriage. Special Thanks to Mary Jordan and the Prayer Shawl Ministry members for gifting us a lovingly handcrafted rainbow afghan (see Gen. 9:16). A multitude of thanks to everyone that contributed to the very generous "Love Offering" presented to us by Pastor Dan on behalf of the congregation. We are so blessed!*

*~Love & Blessings*

TIM & LYNN VANNASDALE

*Thank you for your generous donation to the cornerstone Presbyterian Tornado Relief Fund.*

*~Sincerely,  
RANDY BOONE*



# MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

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## *New Directory on the Way!*

We are excited to announce photo date sessions for the new 2023 Church Directory! Elders will be calling for updated contact information and for you to select your preferred photo day. **Photo dates are April 2, 9, 16 and 20!** Personal directory copies will incur a small printing fee. All Participants get free digital copies of their portrait photos.

MARCH 18



9AM-2PM

## NAME YOUR PRICE! FLEA MARKET



### DROPOFF:

MAR. 16 | 1-8 PM  
MAR. 17 | 1-7 PM

### PRE-SHOP:

MAR. 17  
7-8 PM



Desserts  
Needed for  
Flea Market

MARCH 18

Contact Shelley: 724-356-7815



NEW MEN'S  
Small Group

PARABLES  
FOR  
WORK

Saturday's @ 7:30 am  
March 11-April 22  
Breakfast & Book Study

Contact Bruce Sharpnack:  
bclsharp@comcast.net  
724-255-0975

## KIDVENTURE

### K-5TH GRADE

6-7:15 pm

Returns March 7 - May 16

## Rise Up & Pray Hickory

Wednesday, April 26

1-2:30 pm

Hickory Church Sanctuary

210 Main Street, Hickory PA 15340

- Join women of all ages from across western PA.
- Learn more about Moms in Prayer
- Pray for our children and our schools
- Be encouraged to rise up and pray!

### Questions? Contact:

Merri: 240.434.6236 | clarkwwmd@msn.com  
Ashley: 724.480.8803



# HAVE A HEART FOR HAITI: LACROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION

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**"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other."  
(John 15:16-17)**

## **FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF GOD'S MINISTRY:**

Greetings in the Mighty Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

On January 19 the door was opened for us to go to Haiti and we went. We made safe travel. We thank the Lord. We did not announce our coming. The church people could not believe their eyes when we walked in. They were very happy to see us and vice-versa.

The school has increased greatly in numbers. There are so many children that they are crammed in the classrooms. In our observation at least four more classrooms are needed. My wife and Me Altenor are thinking about the locations where these rooms are to be built. The cafeteria is needed to be extended to accommodate more children. There are over 1300 children. This is a very good problem to have. It was wonderful to see the children eating in the cafeteria and the preschoolers eating in their classrooms. What we like the most is when the children told us that this meal is the meal they rely on the most. The children are happy to come to school and enjoy their meals very much. We thank the Lord that we are able to buy and get food delivered at the mission. It is again the work of God because food is scarce. The sewing class has thirty students. They are all eager to learn the trade. They are making progress already. I saw their work. They are all happy to be in the class. They know that they have already jobs waiting for them.

If you were to ask what is the greatest need for now, we would say FOOD. The situation is no better. The insecurity has caused people not to be able to get back to their normal activities because they are living in fear. FOOD is not only scarce but it also COST AN ARM AND A LEG in the market place. People can't afford it. We thank all of you for sending money to buy food to give to your sponsored children along with nonsponsored ones. We appreciate that very much. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for also sending money to buy FOOD for GENERAL DISTRIBUTION. YOU SAVE THE DAY FOR THESE PEOPLE. We thank the Lord for putting you on our path to bless this ministry beyond our imagination.

We thank the Lord for making provision not only to feed the children but also to pay the employees of the ministry. The Lord knows the needs. He even inspired Westminster Presbyterian Church to send us money to buy fuel. How did they know we needed money for fuel? The Lord told the leaders and they obeyed Him. As we have said before fuel is five times more expensive than before.

When the situation is getting worse is when the deliverance is close. We will not give up because God is with us. He is with us 24/7. We just need to turn our concerns to Him before they turn to worries. God is faithful. We belong to Him. He can be trusted. We continue to covet your prayers.

**May the Lord bless you!  
-Ermithe and Vaugelas**



## 2023-2024 Registration

Registration for the 2023-2024 school year is well underway! If you are ready to register, you can pick up a registration form here at school or download from our website at [hickorychurch.com](http://hickorychurch.com) under the Preschool tab. Classes are filled in the order that registrations are received. Only a few spaces are left!

Please return your completed application, book fee, and non-refundable registration fee as soon as possible!



## *Preschool Family Night Fun!*

The Women's Ministry at Hickory United is hosting a special event to bless the many students and their families that regularly attend Hickory Christian Preschool. **Friday, March 10 will be Family Night from 5:30-7:30 pm in Covenant Center.** We welcome all preschool families to sign up for this free event as a chance to spend some quality time together, meet other families and the Hickory Church community, as well as enjoy some games, pizza and a unique Easter themed craft!

**Sign-up deadline to attend this event is Friday, March 3.** A Sign-up sheet is available at the check-in/drop-off table inside the preschool, or you can RSVP directly to Ms. Maria with the names and number of those attending in your party.

We also welcome our Hickory Church community to attend and help make this event a successful, friendly and fun evening for all! There are several volunteer roles that need to be filled and we could always use an extra pair of hands and a smiling face! Greeters, meal servers, craft helpers, etc. are all welcome. Volunteer sign-up station is on main floor at the circular table in the Welcome area. Please sign-up by March 5.

If you have empty egg cartons you wish to donate as materials for our themed craft, please place on the rectangular table located outside the main office in the Welcome Area.

Questions? Contact Ms Maria for family sign-up or Judy Clark to volunteer.

HICKORY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL  
**FAMILY**  
MARCH 10 **NIGHT**  
FOOD GAMES CRAFT FUN!  
**VOLUNTEER DEADLINE: MARCH 5**  
CONTACT JUDY: (816) 500.4666

# MARCH CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

**3/1 First Day of Women's History Month**

**3/5 Second Sunday of Lent & Communion**

**3/7** KidVenture Resumes (K-5th grade) | 6:15 pm-7:00 (L)

**3/10** Preschool Family Night | 5:30-7:30 pm (CC)

**3/12 Third Sunday of Lent**

Daylight Savings Begins

**3/16** Flea Market Item Drop-off | 1:00-8:00 pm (CC/FH)

**3/17** Flea Market Drop off | 1:00 - 7:00 (CC/FH)

Flea Market Church Member Pre-shop | 7:00-8:00 pm (CC)

**3/18** Flea Market | 9:00 am-2:00 pm (CC)

**3/19 Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**3/25** Vitalant Blood Drive | 7:30 am-12:00 pm (CC)

**3/26 Fifth Sunday of Lent**

**4/2 Palm Sunday & Communion**

Church Directory Photo Sessions (P)

## RECURRING WEEKLY MEETINGS/CLASSES/GATHERINGS

### SUNDAYS

- Worship Service | 8:30 am Contemporary & 11:00 am Traditional (S)
- Sunday School - Adults | 9:45 - 10:45 am (Various Locations)
- Hickory Kids (Pre-K - 5th grade) | 9:45 - 10:45 am (Various Locations)
- IGNITE (6th-12th grade) | 9:45 am (L)

### MONDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC) - *will not meet March 20*
- Men's Lenten Prayer Group | 9:00 am (P)
- Volleyball | 7:00 pm (CC)

### TUESDAYS

- Staff Meeting (Every Other Week) | 10:00 am (Parlor)
- KidVenture | 6:00-7:15 pm (L) - resumes March 7
- Boy Scout Meeting | 7:00 pm (CC)

### WEDNESDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC) - *will not meet March 23 or 29*
- Praise Band Practice | 7:00 pm (S)
- Cub Scouts | 7:00 pm | (CC)

### THURSDAY

- Handbells | 6:30 PM (CR)
- Choir | 7:30 pm (CR)

### FRIDAYS

- Fit Club | 8:00 am (CC) - *will not meet March 24 or 31*

### SATURDAYS

- Men's Breakfast & Book Study Small Group | 7:30 am (CC Kitchen) - *starts March 11*
- 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 | 7:00 pm (P) | Every 4th Monday
- Outreach Committee Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Prayer Shawl Ministry | 12:00 pm (CC) | Every 2nd Wednesday
- Preschool Team Meeting | 12:30 pm (FH) | Every 2nd Tuesday
- Security Team Meeting | (P) Every 1st Tuesday
- Session Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 3rd Wednesday - *Session will not be meeting the month of February*
- Stewardship Meeting | 6:30 pm (P) | Every 1st Monday **after** 1st Wednesday of the month
- Women's Ministry Meeting | 12:15 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





HICKORY UNITED EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Pastoral & Ministry

Pastor Dan Clark | [dan.clark@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:dan.clark@hickoryunitedepc.org)

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

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

## Administrative / Support

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

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

Financial Director, Linda Carter | [linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:linda.carter@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Assistant 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

School Director, Maria Moore | (724) 356-7337 | [hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org)

## Facilities

Sexton, Eugene Short | (724) 356-4424 | [eugene.short@hickoryunitedepc.org](mailto:eugene.short@hickoryunitedepc.org)

Facilities Assistant Housekeeper, 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)

## 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