

HICKORY UNITED EPC | SEPTEMBER 2026

THE HICKORY MESSENGER

Pastor's Pen

BY PASTOR CLAYTON LAPOSTA

When I was in college, Leslie and I both attended Geneva College, we were required to attend chapel every Wednesday. As a student, chapel always seemed like a chore but as an adult, I'm thankful for that requirement and I wish I had paid closer attention! It was laid out like any other worship service. We prayed, sang, and listened to a sermon delivered by one of the faculty members or a guest speaker. Now something unique about Geneva is that they are affiliated with a Presbyterian denomination called the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. While we share many things in common with this brother denomination, one thing that is different is that RPCNA churches hold to what is called a "Regulative Principle" for worship. This means that if something is done in worship, it has to be found in the Bible first. The place where you would most notice this is in the singing. RPCNA churches only sing the Psalms (much like we've done this summer) without any instruments. It's different, but really beautiful once you get used to it. So guess what we sang at chapel? That's right, Psalms!

I'll never forget that one Wednesday my Old Testament professor was leading worship at chapel and he taught us how to sing a Psalm in Hebrew. Do I remember the Hebrew words without looking them up? Absolutely not. But I do remember the Psalm. Psalm 133, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity." I may not be able to recite it in Hebrew on the fly but the idea is absolutely true. The ability for strangers turned family through our shared adopted Father to be together is one of the greatest blessings we enjoy. With the start of another Sunday School year and the celebration of Back To Hickory Sunday I find myself reflecting on how thankful I am for this church. We truly are blessed to have this place where brothers and sisters dwell in unity. Unlike any church I have ever seen, this isn't a place where we spend an hour together and call it a day. People are here, together all the time. There are so many opportunities for friendships to blossom and grow throughout the week. I think of our church and I agree with the Psalmist, "how good is this!" With the start of Sunday School, I want to challenge you to expand your vision of how you see Hickory United EPC. Have you joined a Sunday School class or small group? Are you joining something outside of Sunday morning to connect with other people? If not, why? Don't overextend yourself but at the same time, don't isolate yourself. Some of the dearest friendships you will ever have are waiting for you. In this season, try something new. Meet someone new. And I guarantee you will see how good it is for brothers to dwell in unity and discover even greater how wonderful this church is.

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



Food Pantry Donations

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 150 people a month!

Helping Hands

Donations of ramen noodles, peanut butter, cereal, canned meat, fruits and vegetables, ready-to-make meals like Hamburger Helper and Mac and Cheese for the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program are collected Sundays. Financial contributions are also appreciated. Please place your items on the collection shelf in the greeting area foyer. Thank you for remembering the families in the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program.

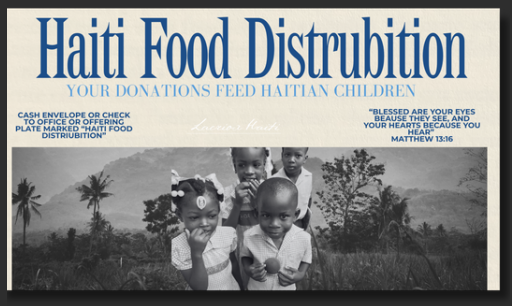
Blood Drive

September 26th is the next blood drive. Donating blood can save up to three lives and provides health benefits for the donor. Regular donations are linked to lower blood pressure and reduced risk of heart disease. See you in Covenant Center!!

Help Feed Haitian Children

We are always collecting donations for our Haiti Food Distribution program.

Donations supply rice and beans to Haitian children and their families.



NOTES OF Thanks

Dear Saints at Hickory,

Greetings. We thank you for taking to heart our ministry to such an extent that you sponsor our precious children to go to school. Thanks for check #22774 $1820. Thanks for your prayers. We also uplift you in our daily prayers, knowing that no church can exist without prayer. God Bless

~ERMITHE & PIERRE

Dear Friend of Pine Springs Camp

Thank you for your generous support of the ministry of Pine Springs Camp. We are currently in Week 7 of our 9-week summer program, and although we have faced some challenges, God continues to provide in wonderful ways. Every financial gift helps us offer year-round opportunities for campers of all ages to "encounter Christ in a vital way."

One of the ways the Lord provides is by sending dedicated staff each summer to care for campers and share the love of Christ with them. This year's staff has been a tremendous blessing to our ministry. We are grateful for the young men and women who have committed to serve as counselors, lifeguards, adventure staff, leadership staff, and support staff. In addition, 16 high school students are serving on our Timothy Staff in work crew and kitchen roles. I continue to be amazed by their commitment and passion for serving Christ and our campers. Although many of them could earn more money elsewhere, they have chosen to invest their summer in ministry. Being around them and seeing their heart for service is one of my greatest rewards. This year, we also welcomed five staff members from the Dominican Republic and three from Mexico. Each of our international staff members has added so much to our ministry. This, too, is another way God provides for Pine Springs Camp.

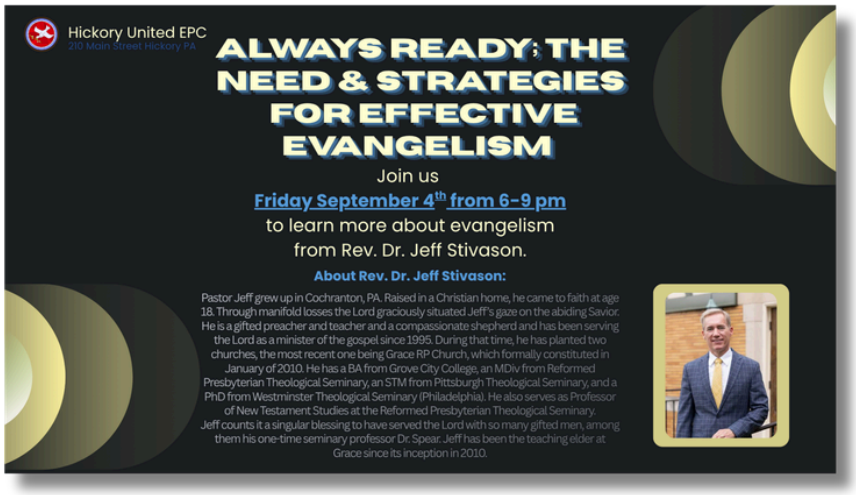
Your generosity has helped us meet the many needs of operating camp, including supporting our incredible staff. hank you again for your financial and prayer support.



~Greg Davis

/Executive Director

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS



EVANGELISM SPEAKER

Join us September 4th as Dr. Rev. Jeff Stivason joins us to speak on the need for effective evangelism.

We've invited churches from across the area to join us as we come together with one purpose: to reach our community with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Come learn how we can effectively share the Gospel and reach those who need to hear it.



BACK TO HICKORY SUNDAY

Join us September 13th at 11:00 AM for a wonderful time of food, fellowship, and fun at Cross Creek Park!

Bring a dish to share and come enjoy some great fellowship with our church family. This is a wonderful opportunity to come back to church, reconnect, and spend time together!

We'd love to see you there!



WOMEN'S RETREAT

This year's Women's Retreat will be at Agape Retreat Center in Hickory PA. Come join us this month on September 19th 8:45 am - 2:00 pm for a word from speaker Amanda Crews who will be speaking about prayer. Admission is $10. Breakfast, lunch and snack are provided. Check in at 8:45 followed by fellowship. RSVP no later than September 6th. Money due at this time, as well. We hope to see you there!

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS



5TH QUARTER

Our First 5th Quarter Was a Success!

Last month, we hosted our very first 5th Quarter, and it was such a fun and exciting night! We created custom footballs for the occasion, which the Fort Cherry cheerleaders were able to hand out to students during the game. We also passed out 150 flyers to let the students know they were invited to join us afterward.

Following the game, students came back to our church for an evening of food, fun, and fellowship. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to welcome them, spend time together, and create a fun environment where they could relax and enjoy themselves after the game.

We are so thankful to everyone who helped make our first 5th Quarter possible. We're excited to continue building relationships with the students and look forward to many more fun opportunities like this in the future!



APPLE FESTIVAL

Join us Sunday, October 4th at 9:00 AM as we head off campus to the Hickory Apple Festival!

We'll gather together for a special time of worship, fellowship, and an encouraging message. Bring your family and friends, and come enjoy a wonderful morning together as we worship in the community!



MENS MINISTRY KENNYWOOD FAMILY DAY.

The Men's Ministry will be hosting a Family Day at Kennywood on Saturday, September 26. We will meet at the church at noon and travel to Kennywood together.

Tickets are $15 per person, and lunch will be provided. We invite you and your family to join us for a day of fellowship together.

KIDS & YOUTH MINISTRY

KIDS & YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 - 9:45 AM

KIDS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please note that there will be no Kids and Youth Sunday School on the second Sunday of September. We encourage all families and youth to take note of this schedule change and plan accordingly.

Regular Kids and Youth Sunday School will resume on the following Sunday. We look forward to seeing everyone back and continuing to grow together.



YOUTH

NO YOUTH GROUP

There will be no Youth Group Sunday September 6th.. But we we will continue the next week.



YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group is still happening EVERY week!

Join us Sunday evenings from 6:00–8:00 PM in the Covenant Center and the Youth Room for a fun night of fellowship, games, discussion, and community. Best of all—DINNER IS ON US!



YOUTH GROUP PRAYER TREE

New this month is the Harvest Youth Prayer Tree. Submit your prayer online under the youth tab, in the weekly emails or scan the QR code and let us know how we can pray for you. Whether your request feels big or small, we believe in the power of praying for one another.



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

9/4 ***Evangelism Speaker*** | *6 PM*

9/5 ***Wild Things Game*** | *7 PM*

9/6 ***Worship & Communion*** | *10 AM*
No Kids/Youth Sunday School

9/7 ***Labor Day*** | *Office Closed*

9/13 ***Back to Hickory Picnic*** | *11:30 AM*

9/18 ***Women's Retreat*** | *8:45 AM - 2 PM*

9/25 ***5th Quarter*** | *8:30 PM*

NEXT MONTH (OCTOBER)

10/4 ***Apple Festival Service***

10/11 ***Worship & Communion*** | *10 AM*

10/12 ***Colombus Day***

10/ 23 ***5th Quarter*** | *8:30 pm*

10/31 ***Halloween***

(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



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GET THE NEWS!
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