

The Hickory Rock Messenger

News of how God's Spirit is moving through the ministries and activities of Hickory Rock Baptist Church



February Fun



This Saturday, February 7, at 5:00 will be Family Fun Night! There will be a pancake & sausage supper for everyone. Then the kids will watch a movie on the big screen while the adults play games for prizes. We'll play the Match Game, and the grand prize this year is a \$50 gift card! Think you have what it takes to win? All people and ages are welcome. The youth will be servers, and all donations will help them go to Youth Camp and the Weekend Mission Trip. We should be done by 8:00.

Sunday, February 15 will be Baptist Women Day. The worship service will include testimonies from the women of our church and a recognition of Baptist women mission work around the world. The guest preacher last year did such a great job (our very own Sara Lamkin), that she was invited back again. So come hear about all the great ways the women of our church are working and serving to change the world.

The next Coffee & Snack Fellowship will be Sunday, February 22. Don't miss it!



Time to Get Ready for Easter

Already? Yep. It's hard to believe, but February 18 is Ash Wednesday, the first day of the season of Lent. Because Easter celebrates the resurrection of Christ, it is one of the most important days of the year for Christians. So it's good to spend time preparing our hearts to celebrate it. Much like Advent is a time to get ready for Christmas, the time to get ready for Easter is called Lent. Because Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the desert before beginning his public ministry (Matt 4:1-11), Lent lasts 40 days (not counting Sundays) and is a time focused on prayer, repentance, and self-reflection.



We'll begin our preparation for Easter with an Ash Wednesday worship service on February 18, during the usual Bible Study time (7:00 pm). It will be an opportunity to be still with God's Spirit, listen for the Lord's voice, and hear a reminder of humility. Everyone is invited to come worship.

Easter Activities

+ We are collecting supplies to make Easter baskets until early March. That afternoon we will assemble them so they're ready to be delivered to orphans and children of inmates. Place donations in the box in the foyer.

+ The Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday afternoon, April 4. We will have snack, crafts, and egg-hunting areas for all ages (rain or shine). All friends are welcome!

Kids News

Bible Drill Begins

Starting Sunday, February 8, the monthly kids time that takes place during the sermon will begin again. Last year they learned about worship; the year before they learned about missions. This year they'll learn more about the Bible. What books are in it, how it's organized, and how to find verses you want to remember. They will learn and practice in their very own monthly Bible Drill, with Mrs. Sara as their drill sergeant.



The Bible Drill time will help the kids with their 100 Verses Challenge that's part of our 100th Anniversary plans. For each verse they memorize, they get a dollar from the Bible verse jar. And to help them remember it, they can repeat the verse later for a quarter. They need to check the bulletin board in the library to make sure all the verses they've memorized so far are up there.

Wednesday Class

The new Wednesday kids group is having a great time these days. Each week they add to their faith folder: what they talked about, what they want to pray about, and a memory verse for the week. It meets on Wednesday evenings at 7:00, during the Prayer & Bible Study time. You can drop kids off for it or, better yet, join the discussion with other adults as we study the Bible. (We're almost done with our "What's in the Old Testament?" series, and will soon start a new series called "Picturing God: Art of the Old Testament.")

Anniversary Plans



This August, Hickory Rock will turn 100 years old! We will celebrate a lot, and you can help us get ready: dig out your old photographs. We need pictures of the church building, church activities, and people who were members years ago. We can borrow them, scan them in the computer, then return them. Everyone is invited to help plan festivities. Even if you can't serve on the team, you can still contribute stories, pictures, memories, food, and more. The next planning meeting will be Sunday, February 22, at 5:30 pm.

We're in the process of ordering new and improved t-shirts (\$10 each).

And soon we'll have invitations available for you to mail to friends and family. August 2 will be Anniversary Sunday, with special presentations, memories, stories, and a lunch after. Everyone you know is invited!

Nursery Schedule



Hickory Rock loves kids, especially little cute ones! We are pleased to offer childcare for ages 5 and younger during worship. So when you're out & about, and you see someone with kids, you can tell them that Hickory Rock has a great nursery with loving nursery workers!

Below is the nursery worker schedule the next few weeks. If you can't make it on your day, simply find someone to switch with. (If you want to be removed or added to the nursery worker list, let Sara L. know.)

February 8 - Charlene
February 15 - Jeanette
February 22 - Kim D.
March 1 - Linda

March 8 - Sharon & Laine
March 15 - Diane
March 22 - Ella
March 29 - Kathy & H'Laiza

Save the Dates

Start getting excited about these things:

Youth Weekend Mission Trip - April 24-26
Church-wide Summer Kick-Off Party - June 6
Vacation Bible School - June 16-19
Youth Camp - July 6-11
Anniversary Sunday - August 2



Upcoming Events

February 7, Saturday, 5:00 - Family Fun Night: Pancake & Sausage Supper

February 8, Sunday,

11:00 - During worship we will ordain Sharon to the deacon ministry
11:40 - Kids Bible Drill (Fellowship Hall)

February 15, Sunday, 11:00 - Baptist Women Day in worship

February 18, Wednesday, 7:00 - Ash Wednesday worship service

February 22, Sunday,

12:00 - Coffee & Snack Fellowship
5:30 - 100th Anniversary Planning

Every Wednesday -

7:00, Prayer & Bible Study (adults). Share prayer concerns, then explore the Bible and other spiritual issues.
7:00, Kids Group. All school-aged kids are invited to learn about God and have fun.
7:45, Choir Singing. Anyone who enjoys music is invited to come, sing along, and enjoy the fellowship.



*Want to know when things happen?
Check the church calendar at
hickoryrock.org/activities/calendar.
It's updated regularly, as our
ministries form and move. Bookmark
the link and check back often!*

A Word from the Pastor

I still forget that it's the year 2015, and I can't believe it's already February. Like it or not, the time keeps ticking by. If only there was something to help us slow down, to savor the days more, and to really prepare our hearts for the future...

Fortunately, there *is* something. That's exactly what the season of Lent is for. Our lives get so full, and our schedules so dictated by distractions, that before we know it, time has passed, kids are grown, things have changed, we got older, and it was all a blur. So the point of Lent is to stop that rush of distraction, and instead, to pause, focus, pray, look around, and notice how God is moving in the world and in you.

In order to help focus their focus, many people choose things to give up for Lent. Sometimes it's things they consider distractions; sometimes it's everyday amenities that they do without, and instead of indulging in them like normal, they spend that time praying or giving thanks. Those are all very good ideas.

I do admit being cynical about some people's Lent declarations. In seminary, when everyone tries to appear as holy as possible, every year I would hear passionate proclamations in the student lounge from folks who wanted everyone to know of their sacrificial, martyr's spirit. This tended to involve treats like candy or soft drinks...

"Hey Stuart. Are you doing anything for Lent?"

"I don't know. I haven't really--" "Well I'll tell you what I'm doing. I am giving up chocolate for Lent."

"Oh. That sounds... good?" "Yeah, it'll be hard, but I just really want to focus on God."

Now, I shouldn't have been skeptical about those conversations. I should have been supportive. But I'm a petty cynic. I never said anything out loud, but I couldn't help but think, "Does not eating chocolate help you get closer to God?" Some people would give up meat, but vegetarians do that all the time. Does that mean a vegetarian is more spiritual than me, a meatatarian? And some people would give up soft drinks, but I stopped drinking those years ago (except in caffeine emergencies). Did that speed up my Christian walk and I didn't even know it?

Looking back now, I wonder: maybe those little, temporary sacrifices did have a helpful, spiritual effect on people. Even if it seems arbitrary to me, whatever helps a person think about God more or pray more is a good thing. So go with what works. But what I am still skeptical about is trying to convince others or yourself that you are extra holy just because you have paused some bad habit you have for 40 days, only to pick it back up again afterward. If it didn't make a difference, then what's the point?

A different approach to Lent is to take *on* something instead of give *up* something. Different ideas could be: reading a chapter in the Bible before you start the day, or pausing 5 minutes after lunch to focus yourself in prayer, or debrief your day in a journal before going to sleep. Maybe you could add a small act of service to each day, find one person to pray for every day, or even just open your eyes wider so you can notice anybody who needs some help.

Anything that helps you focus more on God's Spirit working in and around you is a good thing. But what works for some might not work for others, so get creative. Try something new, stop something old, whatever works. Then, at the end of Lent, when it's time to celebrate Easter's resurrection, you'll be in the zone, focused, ready for new life.

Grace and peace,

Stuart





The mission of Hickory Rock is to show our love for God through prayer, service, and fellowship, as we proclaim God's love for all people, encouraging them to grow in the hope, peace, and joy of Jesus Christ.

"God's Holy Church"

by Faye Johnson

When the doors are open wide
I want to be there.
With the worshipers inside
I want to be there.
When the music fills the air,
When the love of you we share,
When the Spirit lingers there,
I want to be there.

You visit me, your Spirit sweet.
I lay my all beneath your feet.
Precious Lord, at church, I meet.
I want to be there.

He visits me for precious hours.
I feel His holy power.
At the Sabbath worship hour
I want to be there.

He suffered pain up on the cross.
Showed his love with tragic loss.
When I can praise him with my voice
I want to be there.

Shut-In Member List

Remember those people who are unable to be with us in person but are still with us in spirit. Visit or write them so they know they are an important part of our family of faith.

Madeline Bobbitt (Franklin Oaks Nursing Center, 1704 NC 39 Hwy, Louisburg 27549)

Marjorie Duke (Lawndale Manor, 601 Lakeside Dr., Garner 27529)

Richard Shearin (Louisburg Manor, 114 Smoketree Way, Louisburg 27549)

Mildred Smith (Louisburg Nursing Center, 202 Smoketree Way, Louisburg 27549)

Elsie Tharrington (Louisburg Manor, 114 Smoketree Way, Louisburg 27549)

Your church is your community. Is there an announcement you have, some good news you're celebrating, or a prayer concern you want to share? Then let us know! We want to know, celebrate, and pray with you. You can leave a phone message at the church, fill out a prayer card in the pew rack, or just let Pastor Stuart know.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. -1
Peter 4:1

The Hickory Rock Messenger is published roughly once a month. To receive a color copy by e-mail, send a message to info@hickoryrock.org. If you would like to change your address or add someone to the newsletter list but do not have e-mail, simply call the office and leave a message.

