

The Hickory Rock Messenger

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



Helping Others, Making a Difference

Through our local Baptist association, we now have access to a regular sizable inventory for stocking our Food Pantry, at no cost. That means we have almost unlimited food resources to show love to people in our community who would appreciate some help with food.



If you would like to help brainstorm ideas for connecting the gifts we have to the people who need them, look for the sign-up sheet on the new building bulletin board, or let Stephanie Rider know. Soon, we'll invite everyone who's volunteered to get together and help make plans. To focus our time and energy, we envision having a distribution afternoon one Saturday, for people to come by and get food. Kids and youth can certainly help plan and distribute items.

Since we started it 2 years ago, our Food Pantry has assisted over 35 households. Now we can show God's love to many more and on a regular basis. There is a deep need among many Franklin Co. families, and now we can help meet that need.

Matthew 25:34-40 "The King of heaven will say to the righteous, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Youth Party

It's party time, for Youth & College students! On Sunday, Feb. 7, the Youth will throw a Half Super Bowl Party. We'll start at 5:00 with snacks, a fun spiritual discussion, games, and then watch the first half of the Super Bowl. We'll be done at half-time. All friends and snacks are invited!

(Plans are being made for the Weekend Mission Trip this spring and for Youth Camp this summer, so be on the lookout for upcoming details about that, and start getting excited!)



Wednesday Night Topics



The adults began their series on "Our Faith & Others" by learning about what it means to be Baptist. We have also talked about Judaism and, in the next few weeks, we'll talk about Catholicism, various Protestant denominations, other Christian groups, and Islam. All adults are invited to bring questions Wednesday nights at 7:00.

Meanwhile, the Kids Class has been talking about how nobody is perfect, so we all need God's forgiveness. Next they'll be thinking about what they can do to stop repeating bad actions avoid sins. They pray, play, and say whatever the Lord lays on their hearts. They're comfortable being themselves and learning from each other. How great is that?!

Adult Sunday School Party

It's party time, for the grown-ups! The Adult Sunday School class is throwing a party at Steve & Jennifer's house on Sat., Jan. 30, starting at 5:00 pm. Make sure everyone knows about it—where it is and that they're invited. We can even arrange carpools if we like. If you want to bring some food, check the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Inclement Weather

In case of bad or questionable weather, as soon as a decision is made, it will be posted on the church's Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/hickoryrockbaptistchurch. We've already had to cancel a Sunday morning and a Wednesday night because of snow or the possibility of it. So check if you're curious, and always be sure to use good discretion about getting on the roads.



Lent: Preparing for Easter



It's hard to believe, but the time to prepare for Easter is soon upon us. Because Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, 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 ministry (Matt 4:1-11), Lent lasts 40 days 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 10, during the usual Bible Study time (7:00 pm). It will be an opportunity to be still, listen for God, and hear a reminder of humility. All are invited to come worship.

A Word from the Pastor

I'm a creature of habit, so I really rely on my weekly schedule to help structure my work time, my family time, and the nightly time when I get to collapse after playing with my sons. Things like church, school, office, visits, and father-sons time help give my life a rhythm. I know when I'll be productive, when I'll be playing, and when I'll be recuperating. So if that rhythm gets thrown off, so does everything else.



Over the past month, my rhythm was disrupted a number of times. First, during the holiday break, when both school and Wednesday church activities were on hold for 2 weeks. Then more recently, we had to cancel church because of a freak blizzard one Sunday morning and the possibility of snow showers on a Wednesday night. As I write this, school was out 3 days this week for MLK Day, a teacher work day, and now more snow. During these times when my schedule isn't what it usually is, it's hard for me to know what I'm supposed to be doing. If my weekly or daily milestones aren't there, I can barely remember what day it is!

One of the many reasons I'm thankful for our church is that it helps give my life a good, steady rhythm. Most everyone in the world has a weekly rhythm, but that doesn't mean it's good, or steady. But whenever we gather at Hickory Rock, it's like the ticking of a metronome for me. If I get too rushed or stressed, then our Sunday morning worship helps me slow down and focus on God as we pray and sing together. Or if I start to lag behind one week, our Wednesday night Bible study group forces me to get in gear, because I know that good questions will be asked and inspiring points will be raised. Being together at church steadies my life. Not too fast, not too slow.

Or maybe our weekly activities are like the beeps on a heart monitor. Your connection with God and others gives your life a heartbeat, and being together at church helps you gauge how strong that heartbeat is—too low, too fast, out of balance? It's like a regular check-up, where you can talk about your life symptoms with the spiritual medical group of our congregation—fellow doctor-patients who can help you diagnose and treat your emotional ailments.

So I encourage you to take advantage of the weekly wellness check that Hickory Rock offers. Come sit down and share what's going on in your life. Let others offer support, and be a support for them. Take turns being both a doctor and a patient, because "we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load." It will strengthen your heart's beat, and help keep your life in a good, healthy rhythm.

Grace and peace, – *Stuart*

Nursery Schedule



Hickory Rock loves kids, especially little cute ones! We are pleased to offer childcare for ages 5 and younger during worship. So whenever 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.)

January 31 - Linda
February 7 - Sharon
February 14 - Diane
February 21 - Ella
February 28 - Kathy

March 6 - Miranda
March 13 - Robin
March 20 - Sara L.
March 27 - Charlene

Upcoming Events

January 24, Sunday,

12:05 pm - Business Meeting to elect deacons

12:15 pm - Deacons Meeting

6:45 pm - Baptist Women

January 30, Saturday, 5:00 pm - Adult Sunday School Party

February 7, Sunday, 5:00 pm - Half Super Bowl Party

February 10, Wednesday, 7:00 pm - Ash Wednesday Worship

Every Wednesday -

7:00, Prayer & Bible Study (adults). Share prayer concerns, then explore the Bible and other spiritual issues.

7:00, Building Faith. 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.



"My Neighbors"

by Faye Johnson

Across the road and down the way
Is a house that shines with love;
Sounds of children fill the air
As they play, beneath the sun above.

There's a sweet and holy presence there
Anyone can feel.
I sit on my porch across the way
To watch. Many hours are filled.

The lady there is smiling
As so many gather there.
A daycare, for anyone who needs
A happy day to share.

As they grow up each day is filled
With a loving presence there.
Until each mother holds out her arm,
Carries them home, to finish with their care.

To receive a color copy of *The Hickory Rock Messenger* 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, call the office and leave a message.
