

The Grove Echoes

March 2026



HICKORY GROVE UMC

“I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word. To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before our Creator and Redeemer...” (UMC Book of Worship)

The season of Lent often arrives quietly. It is a season that reminds us we are still on the journey, learning how to walk faithfully even when the path ahead is not fully clear. As we move deeper into the wilderness, I invite you into a season of reflection, prayer, and shared spiritual growth. Lent invites us to trust God not only when answers are clear, but especially when they are not. In a world that values certainty and control, Lent offers us permission to slow down, ask honest questions, confess our sins, and lean into God's grace together.



I'll be leading *Embracing the Uncertain: A Bible Study for Unsteady Times* (Magrey R. deVega), on Wednesday nights at 7pm in the Trinity Room. Together, we'll explore how our faith can deepen—not despite uncertainty, but through it. This study will include a DVD component with thoughtful teaching, meaningful conversation, and space for reflection. Whether you can attend every week or join when you are able, you are welcome! We will read one chapter each week. You are invited to purchase deVega's book in advance as we will explore chapter 2 (Peter and the Uncertainty of Forgiveness) Wednesday March 4. The study will conclude on Wednesday April 1, during Holy Week.

Throughout Lent, I hope you will also consider participating in our Midday Mercies, a collaborative, traveling 20-30 minute Lenten service on Wednesdays at 12pm with The Vine UMC, Memorial UMC, Commonwealth UMC, and Cokesbury UMC. A light lunch and fellowship will take place after each service. See this newsletter for more information.

Towards the end of Lent, please make special plans to attend our Palm/Passion Sunday Combined Service at 11am on March 28, when we will wave palms and hear our choirs lead us in a Cantata. On Friday April 3 we will gather in the Sanctuary for a 7pm Tenebrae service as we reflect upon the Passion and death of Jesus.

Thank you for your support of our church, for your participation, and for reading. Let us now continue in our observance of a Holy Lent...

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Caitlin

Hickory Grove United Methodist Church

6401 Hickory Grove Road ♦ Charlotte, NC 28215 ♦ 704-537-4686

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30am - 12:15pm

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Traditional Service: 9:00 AM (Sanctuary)

Sunday School for all Ages: 10:00 AM (FLC and Education Bldg.)

Contemporary Service: 11:00 AM (Family Worship Center)

African Service: 11:00 AM (Sanctuary)

Afternoon Adult Bible Study (Spanish) : 1:00 PM (Family Worship Center)

Latino Service: 2:00 PM (Family Worship Center)

Church Staff

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African Ministry

Greetings Hickory Grove Family,

I bring you greetings in the name of Jesus Christ.

I am deeply grateful to the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) for granting me time away for rest and renewal. Thank you to everyone who helped make our worship experiences meaningful during our absence. I especially want to express appreciation to Pastor Caitlin, Alex Kwiagaye, and Victor Teclar for their faithful leadership. I return encouraged and renewed as we continue the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and the world.

Rhema and I would also like to acknowledge and celebrate those who are observing birthdays and anniversaries in the month of March. We pray for your longevity, God's abundant blessings, strength, and joy in the year ahead.

As we continue in the Lenten season this month, we reflect on the suffering of Christ and embrace this sacred time of prayer, sacrifice, and spiritual renewal. Whether we give up something or take on a new spiritual discipline, may this season draw us closer to God. As we journey through March together, it is my prayer that God will continue to bless and strengthen each of you.

With gratitude and blessings,

Pastor Morris

Latino Ministry

As we move closer to the celebration of the resurrection in Easter, our hearts are drawn to the hope we have in Christ. The journey toward the cross reminds us that even in seasons of sacrifice, pruning, or waiting, God is working redemption. If you are weary, be encouraged—God is not finished with you. If you are waiting, be patient—He is faithful. If you are rejoicing, share your joy, your testimony strengthens others. Let us walk through March with expectancy, believing that the same God who brings new life to the earth is bringing new life to our hearts.

With love and prayers,
Rev. Candido Albino



Preschool News

February was a really fun month at Preschool and we enjoyed celebrating Valentine's Day with all of our friends and showing love to our community by collecting 167 canned pasta items for the Snack Pack program. Our party included a story, songs, decorating our rooms and making a heart craft to remind us how much God loves us! We also had pictures made. We made spring/Easter gifts to send to our shut-ins. Our staff served dinner at Room In the Inn and enjoyed time spent with others.

We are looking forward to the month of March when we will welcome spring, have individual pictures made, and enjoy our special classes. We will talk about Easter and celebrate with an Easter Party event on April 1 before our Spring Break April 3-10.

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year will begin on March 16 for currently enrolled students and on March 23 for the public. All forms will be on the HGUMC website. It's always an exciting time to being to plan for another school year. Please let your family, friends, and neighbors know about our school!

Our Bible memory verse for March is "Love is Kind" 1 Corinthians 13:4 and we will talk about showing kindness to others as God shows kindness to us.

Sharon Freeze

Preschool Director





Financial News

Deuteronomy 15:10 states : “You shall give to Him freely and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to Him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.”

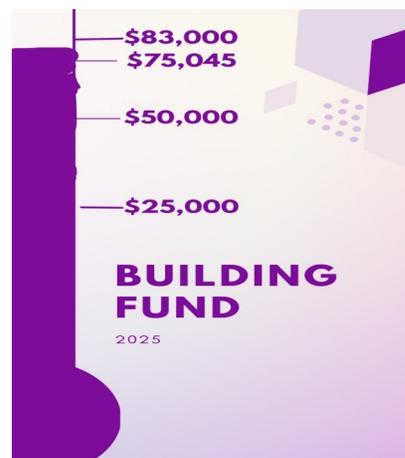
Thank you – thank you – thank you !! We can’t thank our congregation enough for stepping up. As you know, going into the last few months of the year, we were behind our budget for our General Fund and our Building Fund. We made the deficit considerably more manageable – so thank you all so much !! I know our Lord will continue to bless you in all the work you do to further His kingdom !!

However, we are not done. We must continue to keep our church financially stable. This cannot be done without your pledges and donations. We are growing – we do see more people attending our services and we are adding ministries to support those people. However, we need your financial support to do so. Please continue to give to support our wonderful church !! And please continue to pray for HGUMC !!

	YTD December 2025 Actuals		YTD December 2025 Budget
	General Fund		General Fund
Receipts	\$518,610		\$567,517
Expenses	\$503,778		\$549,017
Variance	\$14,832		\$18,500

	YTD December 2025 Actuals		YTD December 2025 Budget
	Building Fund		Building Fund
Receipts	\$75,045*		\$83,000

*Our monthly note payment for the FLC Building is \$6625. As mentioned previously, we still have a healthy reserve, but that will go away quickly if we do not hit the monthly need of \$6625. Please continue to see what you can do to help bring this Fund back up to the monthly note level – thank you so much for your efforts. If we all work together we can do great things in our community – pray hard and thanks again for supporting HGUMC !!



Memorials and Honorariums

(received in the office by February 26th).

If we receive your donation after that date, the Memorial/Honorarium will be listed in the April Grove Echoes.

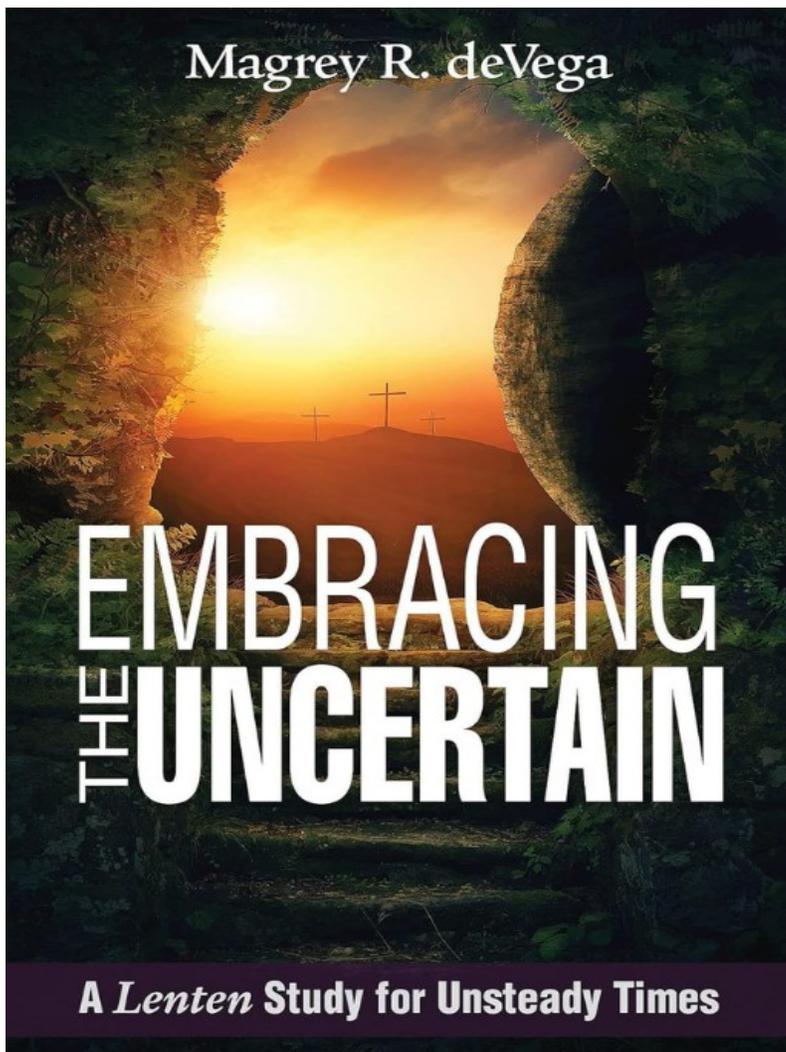
Memorials:

Joann McMurray

Snack Pack: Jeff and Channing Kirkpatrick

Linda Logan

General: Joan and Wade Lowder



Lenten Study

Join us in the Family
Worship Center
Trinity Room

Feb. 25, Mar. 4, Mar. 11,
Mar. 18, Mar. 25, Apr. 1
at 7:00PM

Good Friday

Hickory Grove UMC

Join us
April 3rd 7:00pm
for a Good Friday
service of Tenebrae

6401 Hickory Grove Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28215
hickorygroveumc.com

Hickory Grove UMC

He is Risen!

Sunday April 5
7am Sunrise Service outside
in Courtyard
Breakfast following service

Sunday April 5
11:00am Combined Service
Sanctuary

6401 Hickory Grove Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28215
hickorygroveumc.com

The poster features a central text area surrounded by colorful illustrations of rabbits and Easter eggs. A blue rabbit is in the top left, a yellow rabbit in the top right, a yellow rabbit in the bottom left, and a blue rabbit in the bottom right. Easter eggs are decorated with various flowers and hearts. The background is white with scattered small flowers.

HOP INTO FUN!

EASTER EGG HUNT

MARCH 28TH 2PM-4PM

CHURCH COURTYARD
6401 HICKORY GROVE ROAD
CHARLOTTE, NC 28215

Hickory Grove UMC
PALM SUNDAY

Sunday March 29

**Combined Service Easter Cantata
at 11am (waving of palms)**

**Potluck following the service
Bring a dish to share**

6401 Hickory Grove Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28215
hickorygroveumc.com



East Charlotte UMC
Midday Mercies

2026 Collaborative Lenten Services

**FEB
25**

MEMORIAL UMC
4012 Central Avenue
Preacher: Caitlin Lai
Liturgist from Commonwealth

**MAR
04**

COMMONWEALTH UMC
2434 Commonwealth Avenue
Preacher: Amelia Stinson-Wesley
Liturgist from Cokesbury

**MAR
11**

THE VINE UMC
2101 Belvedere Avenue
Preacher: Pilar Perez
Liturgist from Hickory Grove

**MAR
18**

COKESBURY UMC
6701 Idlewild Road
Preacher: Caroline Camp
Liturgist from Memorial

**MAR
25**

HICKORY GROVE UMC
6401 Hickory Grove Road
Preacher: Suzanne Dornsmith
Liturgist from The Vine

Wednesdays 12pm
Light Lunch Provided