

The Grove Echoes

October 2026



HICKORY GROVE UMC

What does it mean to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us? This October, we will enter our stewardship season using Tom Berlin's book *Defying Gravity* as our guide. The now-Bishop Berlin invites us to think about stewardship not simply as raising money or balancing a church budget, but as a spiritual practice. Stewardship is about learning to live with open hands—to recognize that everything we have ultimately belongs to God and to ask how God is calling us to use it.



His invitation comes at an important moment in the life of our church. We have been blessed with a beautiful campus, a long history, and generations of faithful people who have invested their time, energy, prayers, and resources into Hickory Grove United Methodist Church. We are grateful for all that has been given to us and faithful stewardship asks us to look honestly at what we have been given and consider how those gifts can best serve God's mission today, tomorrow, and for the next generation. This raises some important questions for us as a congregation about our mission: What is God calling us to do with our property? Who in our community could be blessed by the resources God has placed in our hands? Are our buildings and spaces being used in ways that reflect the mission God is giving us for the future?

This is a question that many churches in our area have been asking. It's become so common that the City of Charlotte now has a "Faith in Housing Initiative." Over the past few years I have heard stories of churches repurposing their cherished property for daycares, community centers, affordable housing, women's shelters, workforce housing, mixed-use spaces and senior housing to meet the needs of their community. While furthering God's mission remains the top priority in decisions made, faithful people are repurposing their church properties. When a redevelopment project is strategic, many are also able to receive ongoing income to support their ministries for generations to come.

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Hickory Grove United Methodist Church

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

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

There may be a temptation to think of redevelopment as a reflection of something that has gone wrong—that we have somehow failed to maintain what previous generations gave us or didn't try hard "enough." But maybe faithful stewardship sometimes means having the courage to change how we use what we have been given so that it can continue to bear fruit. The Hickory Grove community no longer has dirt roads, the streets are busier, and the population surrounding the church has changed over the years.

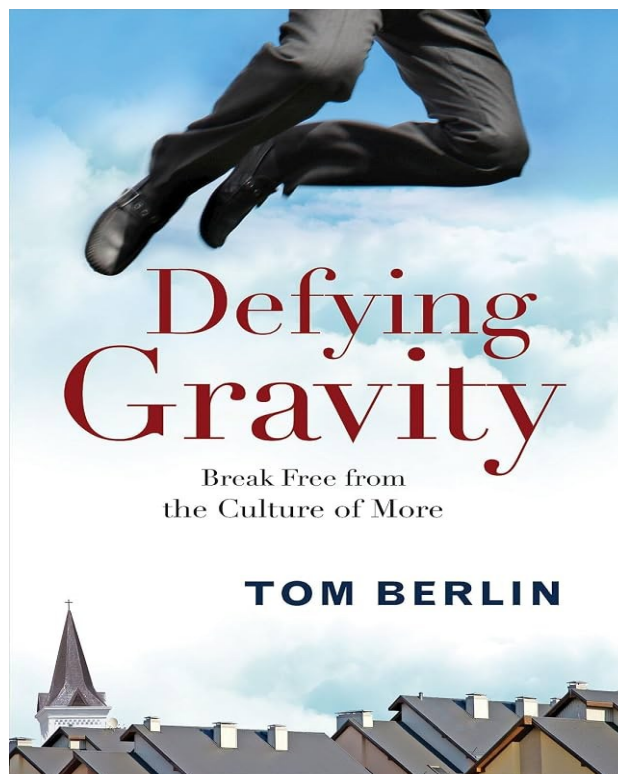
Faithful stewardship is not asking "How can we preserve what we have?" but it is asking "How can what we have help us participate in what God is doing next?"

That is what it means to defy gravity, which we will reflect upon this month. We resist the forces that pull us toward fear, scarcity, and simply maintaining the status quo. Instead, we trust that God is still at work and ask what faithful, generous, courageous stewardship looks like in this season.

During our stewardship month, I invite you to pray about more than your financial pledge for 2027. Pray about our whole church—our time, our talents, our finances, our buildings, our land, and our relationships. What has God placed in our hands? And how might God be asking us to open those hands and use these gifts for the sake of our neighbors, our community, and the kingdom of God? The future of the church is not something we inherit. By God's grace, it is something we faithfully help build.

In Christ,

Pastor Caitlin



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

As we enter the beautiful month of October, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and the many ways God continues to bless our church, our families, and our community. October provides a wonderful opportunity for us to pause, give thanks, and reflect on how we are using the gifts God has entrusted to us.

Throughout October, our sermons and worship services will focus on stewardship. Stewardship is about much more than financial giving. It is about faithfully offering God our time, talents, gifts, resources, and witness. Everything we have comes from God, and we are called to be faithful stewards of God's blessings.

As we reflect on stewardship this month, may we ask ourselves: How can I use what God has given me to bless others and strengthen the ministry of Hickory Grove United Methodist Church? May our stewardship be an expression of gratitude, faith, love, and commitment to God's mission.



We give God thanks for the successful African Ministries Food Sale, and we extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated, volunteered, donated, purchased food, and supported this important ministry. Your hard work, unity, and generosity made the fundraiser a success. Most importantly, we celebrate the spirit of fellowship and community that was demonstrated through this effort.

We are also grateful for the successful hosting of the S. T. Nagbe Distant Members Fellowship last month and for their generous donation to the We Care Ministry. We thank God for the opportunity to gather, fellowship, and support one another in ministry.

We also look forward to our Fall Festival, a special time of fellowship, family, fun, and community. We invite everyone to come together, bring your family and friends, and enjoy this wonderful season of celebration. Church is not only a place where we worship together; it is also a place where we build relationships, encourage one another, and share God's love with our community.

October is also a month of celebration as we give thanks for everyone who will be celebrating a birthday or anniversary. This month is especially meaningful in my household, and I want to give special thanks to God for my wife, Rhema, as she celebrates her birthday in October.

To everyone celebrating a birthday or anniversary this month, may God bless you abundantly. May your birthday be a reminder that your life is a gift from God and that you are a blessing to others. May each year bring renewed opportunities to serve God, love others, and fulfill the purpose God has placed within you.

As we celebrate, we also remember those among us who are walking through seasons of grief following the loss of loved ones. We hold you in our prayers and ask God to surround you with God's presence, comfort, and peace. May God strengthen every grieving heart and remind us that we do not walk through difficult seasons alone. As a church family, let us continue to pray for, encourage, and support one another.

May this October be a month filled with gratitude, generosity, fellowship, and renewed faith. May we faithfully use all that God has entrusted to us to bless others and advance God's kingdom.

Pastor Colston Wuor-Gabie Morris

Latino Ministry

October brings visible reminders that life is filled with seasons of change. The leaves begin to turn, the days grow shorter, and the air becomes cooler. Creation itself reminds us that change is a natural part of life. Our lives—and our churches—also experience seasons of change. Sometimes change is welcomed; other times it brings uncertainty, questions, and even fear. Yet Scripture reminds us that while circumstances change, God remains faithful.

There are good things happening at the Latino Service: new ministry of Dance/Drama and new people coming to worship.

Rev. Candido Albino



Preschool News

We are thankful for October and the promise of fall weather and all the beauty that goes with it. The first month of school is behind us and we have 48 students and we are starting to settle into our new routines. We have completed our safety drills – both fire and emergency – and hope that we will never need to use these skills.

October will be our first month participating in all of our special activities – Music Class, Bible Stories, Fitkids, and our newest class – ArtKids. Our photographer will be here on October 9 for individual pictures. Fall Break will happen on Thursday and Friday October 15,16. Charlotte Speech and Hearing will be here on Monday, October 5 to do speech/language screenings for our children. We will have our Fall Parties on Friday, October 30 and the children will get to come to school in their costumes that day – cuteness overload! Their parents will gather in the FLC for a type of “Trunk or Treat” (without the trunks of course) and the children will get to parade through and see all of the décor as they receive a treat.

We really appreciate all of the prayers and support we receive from you. Enjoy the month of October.

Sharon Freeze, Preschool Director
704-537-4658
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Youth and Children's Ministry

Nursery, Children, and Youth have resumed during the 10am-11am Sunday School hour! Following worship September 20th, our youth met with Sandy Ubriaco, College Counselor at Queens Grant High School over lunch to learn about college.





FALL FESTIVAL

***Saturday October 17, 2026
12pm-3pm***

Kids' Crafts

Inflatable Bounce Houses

Games

Popcorn

Live Music and Dancing

Face Painting

*Food and Drinks for Sale
and Much More!!*

Hickory Grove United Methodist Church

6401 Hickory Grove Rd

Charlotte, NC 28215

Prayer Quilts

Prayer Quilts that were made on August 29th by Mary Wyant, Mrs Kim Long, Karen Lowery, Deborah Parker, and Susan Fox. They are going to be Christmas gifts for HGUMC's shut-ins and any other loved ones. If you are interested in one of the extras, contact Susan Fox.



Donations for Hickory Grove Elementary School

Sneakers-small kid's sizes 11-13 & 1-3

Uniforms-blue or khaki pants/white or blue short sleeve collared shirts

(Sizes 4 - 10 most needed)

Play-Doh

Belts- small sizes



Put donations in the teal bins in front of the church office or in the FWC lobby!

2026 District and WNCC UWF Events Calendar

October 3 @ 9:00 am

UBUNTU

Alliance Center 4 Education

700 Parkwood Ave, Charlotte



United
Women
in Faith

October 24 @ 10:00

Metro District Leadership

Development Day

All Local Unit Officers (Virtual)

October 17

Leadership Development Day

LDD All District Officers (Virtual)

Bet on the Community - Providence UMW Signature Event & Luncheon Featuring Molly Grantham

Providence UMW will host a special General Meeting and Luncheon on Tuesday, Oct. 6 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in | Wolfe Hall of Providence UMC. This signature event features Molly Grantham and is open to all Providence UMW members, friends, family, and our community. Molly is a four-time Emmy Award-winning journalist, popular speaker, author of three books, founder of a non-profit pediatric network, advocate for various cancer causes, and a mom.

Registration Options:

Individual registration: \$20

Table of 6: \$120

When registering, you'll select your sandwich preference: **turkey, ham, or veggie.**

Register Here: <https://www.providenceumc.org/upcoming/umw-oct2026>

National Week of Action Against School Pushout October 17 - October 25, 2026

United Women in Faith will join the Dignity in Schools Campaign and allied organizations for the 2026 National Week of Action Against School Pushout on October 17 - October 25, 2026. This is a special time of the year when we recommit ourselves to the work of interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline and ending school pushout. We invite United Women in Faith members and friends to learn, act, and/or lead during the National Week of Action Against School Pushout by planning to participate in one or more of the following activities.

- Watch Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools.
- Read stories from movement leaders in Lift Us Up, Don't Push Us Out!: Voices from the Front Lines of the Educational Justice Movement
- Advocate for The Ending PUSHOUT Act from your home. Commit to email and call your Senators and Representative to ask them to cosponsor The Ending PUSHOUT Act if they have not yet done so.
- Join a local, in-person action, if you can. If you live near a local Dignity in Schools Campaign member organization that is hosting an in-person action, please join and show your support!
- Plan a United Women in Faith Day of Action Against School Pushout in your community, church, or unit sometime between October 17-25, 2026.

Memorials and Honorariums

(received in the office by September 30th).

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

Memorial:

Sue Sasser

SnackPack: Nancy and Timothy Williams

Von Weathers

SnackPack: Nancy and Timothy Williams

Ruth Perry

SnackPack: Nancy and Timothy Williams

Nokie Tuttle

SnackPack: Nancy and Timothy Williams

Hayne Baucom

General: Denny and Becky Baldwin, Cokesbury/Epworth Sunday School Class, Gail Breeyear and Sherrill McLaughlin

Building Fund: Channing Kirkpatrick

Honorarium:

Kathleen Robinson

SnackPack: Nancy and Timothy Williams, Robbie Bost

Pete Scercy

SnackPack: Robbie Bost



Blessing of the
Quilts was on
September 20th.
These beautiful
quilts will be
going to Dahlia
Grove!

