

Hickory Grove Family,

I am writing to share an update regarding our worship schedule. After listening to many of you, and through much prayer and discernment, the initial plans for combined services on Communion Sundays have been adjusted. The Administrative Council, along with Pastors Candido, Colston, and myself, have agreed upon a new rhythm for our life together—one that differs from what was previously announced.

Going forward, we will gather for a combined worship service every other month, on the last Sunday of the month. For Hickory Grove, this new rhythm will begin on Sunday, March 29, with our Palm Sunday Cantata at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by a potluck in the FLC.

As a church, we seek to order our common life in ways that build up the body of Christ, honor our diverse needs, and bear faithful witness to God's grace at work among us. I am grateful for your faithfulness, your honesty, and your care for our shared worship life. I look forward to continuing to deepen our life together as a church, trusting in God's nurturing grace and abiding love to guide us forward.

Gratefully,  
Pastor Caitlin

## **WEEKLY E-NEWS**

### **MLK Office Closure**

The Church office will be closed on Monday January 19th in observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

### **Upper Room Devotional Update**

Many have been asking about the Upper Room Devotional Guides for the months of January/ February. We have been having some issues getting in touch with the company about the current shipment and will most likely not be receiving them this month. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Youth and Children Valentine's Event**

The youth and children will have a Valentine's Day event on Sunday February 8th from 12:30 to 1:45. Lunch will be provided. Children will meet in the Trinity Room and Youth will meet in the Parlors

## **Equip and Connect Training**

Equip & Connect is designed for and open to all local church leaders serving as Lay Leaders, or on Church Councils, Trustees, Pastor Parish Relations Committees (PPRCs), or Finance Committees. Metro and Uwharrie's District Training will be January 25, 2026 from 2:00PM to 4:30PM at Forest Hill UMC in Concord. Connect with other leaders across your district and learn about roles, best practices, and new ideas for ministry! Please contact Pastor Caitlin if you have questions.

## **Grounded in Gratitude: A 5 Week Study (Jan 14 - Feb 11)**

Start the new year in a posture of gratitude with Pastor Caitlin in the Trinity Room on Wednesday nights at 7pm. Using scripture, emotions, questions, and personal stories, this study is designed to expand our understanding of gratitude, exploring how we may find elements to value even in the most difficult situations.

## **2026 Rev. Dr. MLK, Jr. Commemorative Service**

Join the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church for Standing Strong and Moving Forward, our 2026 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Program. This special gathering will be a time of worship, reflection, and recommitment to the work of justice, love, and hope. Together, as followers of Christ and heirs of Dr. King's legacy, we will honor his life and renew our dedication to creating a better world. The service will take place on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at University City UMC, Charlotte, NC

## **Metro District Deep South Pilgrimage**

You are invited to this meaningful and inspiring trip that will take place on April 9-12, 2026. The cost is \$250 per person, and includes bus transportation, hotel accommodations, entrance fees to all sites, and a ticket to the play. Itinerary highlights: The Edmund Pettus Bridge, all three Equal Justice Initiative sites, The Rosa Parks Museum, To Kill a Mockingbird (play) and more! Please RSVP to the church office if you are interested by Thursday January 22nd.

## **1946 Documentary @ Light of Christ UMC**

The WNC LGBTQ+ Inclusion Team invites you to a free community dinner and special documentary screening on Monday, January 26 at 6 PM in Light of Christ United Methodist Church's sanctuary. The evening begins with a complimentary, catered meal, followed by a screening of the documentary 1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture at 6:45 PM. The film follows a team of researchers uncovering how a single Bible mistranslation helped shape the modern anti-gay movement within Christianity. A

facilitated conversation with panelists from the Western North Carolina Annual Conference will follow. This event is FREE and open to all—whether you're exploring faith, care about justice, or are simply curious to learn more. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot today

<https://lightofchrist.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3338423>

### **Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times (Feb 18-Apr 1)**

Join Pastor Caitlin in the Trinity Room on Wednesday nights at 7pm in the Trinity Room. We'll be using Magrey DeVega's book "Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times" as our guide. You are invited to purchase the book in advance via amazon, or contact the church office if you need assistance. Participants are expected to read the first chapter before our first session on February 18th.

### **Support Businesses in East Charlotte!**

Local businesses in East Charlotte are suffering due to the increased presence of ICE and Border Patrol in the area. If you're planning to shop or dine out, please consider supporting one (or more!) of these businesses. You find a directory (9 pages) by clicking the link:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAG5wobI3tU/UkRye9ON4P9ou\\_476LpdoA/view?utm\\_content=DAG5wobI3tU&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=uniquelinks&utlId=h3679edeofa](https://www.canva.com/design/DAG5wobI3tU/UkRye9ON4P9ou_476LpdoA/view?utm_content=DAG5wobI3tU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=h3679edeofa)

### **Super Bowl Sunday Chili Fundraiser**

The United Women in Faith will be having a fundraiser on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 8. They will be selling pints of chili for \$10 per container along with fritos and cookies. Thank you for helping with raising funds for women, children and youth through UWF!

### **Contemporary Service Task Force**

Pastor Caitlin is looking for partners in ministry to dream, offer input or feedback, and try new things for our 11am contemporary worship service. Is God calling you to serve our church in this way? Please reach out to Pastor Caitlin if you feel God's nudge!

### **SNACK Pack**

Please consider making a financial donation to the SNACK pack program to help 48 Hickory Grove Elementary School students. We are also in need of regular sized plastic bags/grocery bags. If you have any questions, please call Jennifer Stribling at 704-617-2520.

## **New Giving Options**

Text to Give - text HGUMCGIVE to 73256 or use the Online giving from HGUMC website. Go to [hickorygroveumc.com/give](http://hickorygroveumc.com/give) and complete the online giving form. All transactions are secure.