



HICKSCHURCH.ORG

1211 THIRD AVENUE, PO BOX 389 DUNCANSVILLE, PA 16635

December 2025

Up until this last year, I have never been Black Friday shopping. My family wasn't into the event because we're a bunch of introverts. We usually spent that day decorating the house for Christmas, avoiding the crowds of people.

My father and I once made an attempt to go out for a gift for my mom on Black Friday. As my dad got closer into town and saw the traffic, he looked at me in the passenger seat and said, "Nope." He turned the car around and we went home. (Don't worry, my mom still had a nice Christmas.)

Reflecting on this memory, it got me thinking more about the holidays and how great and big our expectations of them can be. I thought about the stressful, time-consuming things we do to ourselves to make Christmas a magical season.



To be clear, I am a *big* fan of Christmas. I recognize the love and care that goes into the holiday season. This is a time where we seek to be exceptionally hospitable people, where we might welcome people into our homes, care for those who have less, and build special memories with family.

But is anyone here **tired** just thinking about all that they need to do to make Christmas special or more hospitable before December 25th?

Are you tired of feeling like you have less time with your family or friends because you're trying to keep up with the expectations and shoulds of Christmas? Do you ever feel like Christmas is here before you know it, and you haven't been able to catch a breath to even think about what this time means for the church?

The Gospel of Luke has something to say about hospitality. Let's take a look.

### **Luke 10: 38-42**

**38** "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. **39** She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. **40** But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

**41** "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, **42** but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Continued pages 2—4**

As we move into our narrative, Mary and Martha are two stay at home followers of Jesus who probably provided room and board for Jesus when he came to Bethany.

Martha is presumably the head of the house and as such, assumes the role of hospitality for her guests. You may know this role. This is the one who is directing the meal preparation; cleaning the house; changing the bedding; giving the pets a bath.

While all the preparations of hospitality are happening, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus, listening to him and serves as a disciple.

Both activities, providing hospitality and learning from Jesus, were culturally considered good and worthy.

Martha is distracted by her many tasks. Ben Witherington III notes that the Greek translates that Martha is distracted by ministry. Martha is operating in her gifts and her ministry by caring for the needs of her guests, providing and preparing food.

Martha is working her butt off (have you been here?) and she asks Jesus, don't you care that Mary isn't holding up her end of the bargain? My work, this ministry I have requires effort, and I'm alone here! I really could have used some help!

Martha thinks Mary has her priorities backwards. She wants Jesus to fix the problem. She doesn't go to Mary directly.

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esus responds, "Martha, Martha..."

Jesus is expressing a concern and a warning.

Jesus does not diminish the work that Martha has before her. Providing lodging, preparing a meal, making sure everyone is taken care of- that's important work.

What Jesus emphasizes is that there is a bigger priority at hand. Mary is concerned with one thing: listening to the word of Jesus. The Greek suggests a play on words; she has chosen one thing, the best dish, the best portion.

Mary realizes that the highest priority in that home is hearing and then acting on God's word. A person has to hear the word of God before one can fitfully respond to it. Hearing comes before doing, learning comes before action. Before one can celebrate Christmas properly, one has to pause to consider, listen, and understand what it's all about.

Martha receives criticism from Jesus because she has misplaced her focus. She is so concerned with meeting the needs of her ministry, that she is pulled away from learning about how to actually minister.

I wonder, if we get so tied down by the work of making Christmas hospitable that we don't have time to learn at the feet of the King of hospitality, are we truly able to demonstrate genuine hospitality?

When Jesus was born, his birth would not have been the messianic vision that ancient Jews had for the birth of their Savior. Jesus was born in the margins; a manger. Jesus' birth was witnessed by the marginalized; shepherds.

The Savior's birth reveals a general lack of welcoming demonstrated by the world.

Scholar Brendan Byrne emphasizes in his work, *The Hospitality of God*, that despite the deficiency of hospitality given to him, the Christ child will none the less offer the world God's hospitality. Jesus' birth signals God offering salvation and a way forward for the world. While the fullness of salvation may not be experienced at present, Christ's birth suggests that humankind may begin to partake in God's hospitality.

Is it possible that Jesus was telling Martha, can you learn from me what real ministry, hat real hospitality is first? Can you learn about why you are doing this ministry thing in the first place?

Church, before we get caught up in a December that rushes past us as we attempt to make Christmas special and hospitable—can we sit at the feet of Jesus and learn about genuine hospitality and celebration of the season?

Genuine hospitality doesn't mean working ourselves into a frenzy of perfection resulting in our missing the joy of our Savior coming altogether. Genuine hospitality doesn't mean having the perfect family Christmas card. It doesn't mean our homes have to look like something out of a magazine to welcome people in. Genuine hospitality doesn't look like going into debt for expensive, impressive Christmas gifts. Genuine hospitality doesn't look like holiday burnout.

Genuine hospitality looks like a baby who came in the world to offer His presence to us and invites us to extend our presence to others. Genuine hospitality looks like a baby who would include the people the rest of the world looked down on and invites us to welcome to the stranger, the odd ball, the lonely, and the one different from ourselves into community. Genuine hospitality looks like a baby who would teach us all there is to know about the spirit of Christmas if we would sit at his feet to learn.

Mary has chosen to sit at the feet of Jesus as his disciple. As a learner and listener. Brendan Byrne notes that when one listens and receives the word of God and through it hospitality, the proper response is surrender. Surrender, that is, of all the other things that take us away from the main thing.

If we want to celebrate Christmas for its true intent, are we willing to surrender our expectations around what we think Christmas should look like?

In our story, Martha gets the flack. But I want to check in on Mary for a moment, too.

This text emphasizes the value of sitting as a disciple of Jesus and learning how to minister. But one cannot always sit and listen. There is a moment for action as well. This text teaches us that hospitable discipleship is twofold: it is to listen and learn about hospitality from the master and to then go and do likewise.

Maybe you hear yourself in the story of Martha today. You see a task or opportunity for hospitality and you are *on it*.

But maybe your heart longs for more meaning this Advent season. Maybe your heart does not long for a list of to dos. Maybe it longs to celebrate and know the significance of the birth of God with us. Maybe you want to sit at the feet of Jesus and be reminded of the significance of what this month represents. You might admit to yourself that you want that more than the pretty tree or the beautiful Christmas cookies or the never- ending event list.

Or, maybe you find yourself in Mary's shoes today. You are exceptionally good at stopping and reflecting and remembering God's goodness and hospitality. You've been thinking a lot about what it means that God has come to dwell with us; that God has offered His presence and hospitality to the world. The challenge for you is to go and do likewise.

What the Scripture invites both us Marthas and Marys to consider is that if we are to embrace a spirit of hospitality, of owning our own ministries with our unique gifts and talents as members of Christ's body, the source of that knowledge comes from Jesus.

We cannot separate genuine hospitality apart from the one who brought hospitality into the world. And so, during this holiday season, may we sit at the feet and learn from the King, and go and do likewise.

**Challenge: Is this a season in your life to learn at the feet of Jesus, or go and do likewise?**

# Christmas EVE Services

1

3:00 P.M.  
Traditional (Livestreaming)

2

5:30 P.M.  
Children and Family  
Worship

3

7:30 P.M.  
Traditional





## Hicks Youth Ministry: December News



### Youth Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 14th, we will be having are yearly Christmas party. The Christmas party will be from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the church. All youth in grades 7-12 are welcome to attend. If a youth plans to attend the party, please let Jason Garman know by Wednesday, December 4th, so we can ensure we have enough gifts and food for the teens. This will be the last official meeting for 2025. If there are families in our church who would like more information about our ministry, please contact Jason Garman.



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE YOUR GIFTS!

- ★ Join the Youth Choir and share in song at the Family Christmas Eve Service! All students in 2nd-12th grade are invited to participate.
- ★ Share a special music piece that night through dance, instrument, or song.

~~~~~ See Ms. Laura for details. ~~~~~

## UPCOMING FAMILY EVENTS



- Thanksgiving Dinner 5:00 Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> Duncansville Community Center
- Tree Lighting 5:30 on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> Church Parking Lot
- Christmas Musical on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:45 & 11:15 services
- Family Christmas Eve Service on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30

## KIDS CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

You are invited to join us for a very special presentation on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> during the 9:45 and 11:15 services. Our children have been working hard to bring you "Aaron the Allergic Shepherd." This delightful and comical musical theater production celebrates the birth of Jesus as an unusual and heartwarming tale unfolds. We hope you'll come enjoy the fun and support our talented kids!



SAVE THE DATE  
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025  
EVENINGS OF JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup>

Contact: [laura@hickschurch.org](mailto:laura@hickschurch.org)



# WOMEN IN FAITH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Wednesday, Dec. 10 (snow date Dec. 17)

Noon, Church Social Hall

RSVP by Dec. 3

Donna Fruth 814-695-6236

[djfruth3040@gmail.com](mailto:djfruth3040@gmail.com)

Reservations not required but greatly appreciated

Lunch provided for \$6 payable at the party

Sandwiches and More

Guaranteed fun

All women are invited even if you have never attended Women in Faith but would like to meet the members and enjoy a party.



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## COLLEGE TREAT BAGS

The Women in Faith assembled over 20 bags for our college students.

Thanks to all who donated items for the bags. Names of our college students were taken from the church records and a few names were called into the office. They did their best to get all the names and apologize if a student was missed.

The bags are to be picked up by the college students or a family member and will be available in the church annex by the nursery until Dec. 1.





# Prayer Request

- Pastor Rich and family
- Pastor Allyce and family
- Staff and family
- Tim Ingram- ongoing chemo
- Valerie Burger-ongoing chemo
- George Smith
- AJ- chronic pain
- Brianna- medical therapy
- Izzy- teen in rehab
- Brian and Beverly Fleck
- Shut ins
- Denny Ridenour
- Auntie DeeAnn- palliative care
- Koelle family on loss of David
- Mary Jane Burger
- Bill Lightner
- John Frazier
- Sharon Hoover
- Kelly Binko
- Sandy Steele
- Muriel Woomer
- Til Black
- Outreach opportunities
- Louise Smith
- Denny and Anne Kelly-medical issues
- Jodi's mom, Bonnie Boyce, pressure issues
- Bill Foosht- recovery from surgery
- Annabella Fanelli
- Dick & Judy Baird
- Lee Baird
- College students with finals and travel
- Safe travels this season





# Announcements

- **MINISTERIUM THANKSGIVING SERVICE.** Join churches in our area at The Hollidaysburg Church of the Brethren on Wednesday, November 26th at 7:00 PM for a Thanksgiving worship service.
- **DUNCANSVILLE LIGHT UP NIGHT.** Thursday, December 4 from 6 to 8pm in our church parking lot. There will be the tree lighting, reindeer, Santa, hot chocolate and more. Once again we are looking for donations of homemade soup that we will serve at the pavilion.
- **MEXICO MISSION TRIP.** If you are interested in joining the Mexico Mission trip the dates will be 6/13/26-6/19/26. Please Reach out to office or Aaron for details 814-312-3332or [aaroncidor@gmail.com](mailto:aaroncidor@gmail.com) for more information.
- **AMERICAN RESCUE WORKERS.** The needs are currently canned foods. We are asking for donations to focus on the can goods this month.
- **2026 ALTAR FLOWERS.** Thank you to everyone who sponsored altar flowers this year. The flowers often reflect the season adding additional color to our sanctuary. The donors and people the flowers are in honor or in memory of are noted in the Sunday bulletins. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Welcome desk in December for the coming year.



- Have you felt a wrestling inside of you lately, a hunger to grow closer to the Lord?
- Have you had a desire to “dig deeper,” but just didn’t know where to begin? Well, then we have the perfect place for you to start, at the feet of the Jesus.
- Join us for our first Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, November 26, at 6:30 in the church house. It can be your quiet, personal first step to finding a deeper connection with God. All ages are encouraged to attend.



|                   |        |                    |        |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| Jolene Cidor      | Dec 01 | Noah Geist         | Jan 03 |
| Woods Hardesty    | Dec 01 | Betty Wilkinson    | Jan 03 |
| J.J. Wyant        | Dec 01 | Ethan Cutshall     | Jan 04 |
| Jason Garman      | Dec 07 | John Dively        | Jan 05 |
| Rick Gibson       | Dec 07 | Til Black          | Jan 06 |
| Holly Guise       | Dec 12 | Benjamin Wright    | Jan 06 |
| Tricia Priel      | Dec 15 | Kaitlyn Lenhart    | Jan 09 |
| Ryan Royer        | Dec 15 | Rosella Pavlatos   | Jan 09 |
| Rachel Sibal      | Dec 15 | Scott Magnetti     | Jan 10 |
| Faye Virsack      | Dec 15 | Donna Lindsey      | Jan 12 |
| Jenna Zelem       | Dec 16 | Tom Pooley         | Jan 12 |
| Donato Fanelli    | Dec 19 | Debbie Treese      | Jan 13 |
| Heidi Fogle       | Dec 19 | Glenn Keiper       | Jan 14 |
| Bob Lenhart       | Dec 19 | Steve McMahon      | Jan 17 |
| Casey Walters     | Dec 20 | Gloria Smith       | Jan 18 |
| Allyce Logue      | Dec 22 | Isabella DeStefano | Jan 21 |
| Clark Monahan     | Dec 23 | Sue Franks         | Jan 22 |
| Mary Jo Campolong | Dec 24 | Wade Plowman       | Jan 24 |
| Marley Dick       | Dec 24 | Jodi Albrano       | Jan 26 |
| Denise Latoche    | Dec 25 | Linzi Biesinger    | Jan 26 |
| Zach McCloskey    | Dec 26 | Paula Brennecke    | Jan 27 |
| Michael Smith     | Dec 20 | Mel George         | Jan 27 |
| Ezekiel Reasy     | Dec 30 | Terry Koelle       | Jan 27 |
| Caden Thacker     | Dec 30 | Bracken Ackinclose | Jan 29 |
| Remi Shanholtz    | Dec 31 | Reece Franks       | Jan 29 |
| Cresson Thacker   | Dec 31 | Elli Seymour       | Jan 29 |
|                   |        | Livia LeCrone      | Jan 30 |



**Help us Celebrate Your Birthday!**  
**Please consider filling out a Church**  
**Directory Form.**

# Church Directory Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Emails: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names & Birthdates

May we put your information in the public church directory?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Yes, but only a portion of my information \_\_\_\_\_

If we acquire any photographs from church events with you or your family members, may we have your permission to publish them to our website or social media pages?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**\*\* If you have already filled this form out, you DO NOT need to fill it out again.**

**Hicks Memorial Methodist Church Staff**

**Rev. Rich Morris, Senior Pastor**  
Rev. Allyce Logue, Associate Pastor  
Cathy Baird, Sexton  
Bob Baird, Building Superintendent  
Laura Wallace, Children's Ministry Coordinator  
Kathy Ozio, Financial Secretary  
Chelsey Dick, Church Secretary & Nursery Coordinator  
Heidi Fogle, Treasurer  
Jason Garman, Youth Director  
Elaine Mallory, Organist  
Jeromy Ross, Technology  
Jean Rupp, Choir Director

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**Building Communities of  
Devoted Followers of Jesus.**