

Hickory Creek Community Church

Paving the Way



The Gospel of Jesus Christ – Changing lives at Hickory Creek both now and for eternity!

FRANKFORT, Ill. – Life Change. God is in the business of changing lives and He is changing lives through the ministry of Hickory Creek and in the lives of the people of Hickory Creek.

He has changed the life of a man who has come to Hickory Creek for 5 years and struggled with Alcoholism. Over time, through the love of people willing to confront and help, through the Holy Spirit of God bringing conviction, and through the reality of the effects of being an alcoholic on his life and on his family, he eventually sought help and has been sober for 2 years thanks to the Lord's work.

The Lord has touched a woman in our church who was burdened to help PASS minister into the lives of guys and girls facing a crisis pregnancy. As she prepares to be able to counsel and share the hope and forgiveness of Jesus Christ so their lives can be changed, the Lord is changing her life as well.

Just last month, Ken Moss was baptized. He received Christ as His Savior at Christmas. Even though he is still without a job, he recognizes that while the circumstances of 2010 have been terrible, it was a great year because he received Jesus Christ as his Savior and then obediently followed him in baptism.

At total of 8 people were baptized last month and 23 were baptized last year. We had 2 dozen salvations that we know of last year, and at least 7 that we have had the opportunity to pray with as they confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior. More people continue to come and hear the life changing message of Jesus Christ. Our average attendance on a Sunday is at record levels even as we see new people each week.

Lives are being changed now and for eternity. This is what Hickory Creek is about and this is what Hickory Creek will continue to be about.

Six years ago Hickory Creek was a small church that not many in the community even knew existed. We had heard countless times as the church began to grow, that people did not even know there was a church here!

Over these past six years,

God has grown this church from a place where 30 to 40 who loved the Lord were worshipping in a single use sanctuary with pews bolted to the floor, to a church where 360 people meet each week to worship in a sanctuary that is used in multiple ways throughout the week to minister to and reach out to the families of this community with the gospel of Jesus Christ so lives can continue to be changed.



As the Lord has grown us, over the years, we have had to add facilities, services, staff and leadership. Hickory Creek is again arriving at a point of out-growing our ability to effectively minister to this community with the facilities, staff, services and leadership that currently exist, so the leadership has been praying and seeking God's wisdom to discern our next steps in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and continuing to see lives changed now and for eternity.



To accommodate the growth we have been seeing, the Eldership, in coordination with the Deacons, have begun to take steps to prepare Hickory Creek to be a church that can continue to be a place where the Lord is changing lives as we continue to seek to fulfill the commission He has given us. Here are some of the steps we have already begun to take and are seeking to take over the coming months.

Searching for a Pastor of Discipleship and Teaching

We have begun our search for a Pastor of Discipleship and Teaching so that we may improve our ability to disciple, minister to, and lead the people the Lord is bringing here. We know that lives are transformed *“through the living and enduring word of God.”* (1 Peter 1:23, NIV). We want people's lives to be continually changing into the likeness of Jesus' life. Therefore, our Search team is pouring over resumes even now, seeking out the man the Lord is leading here. Our hope is to have someone hired by mid-summer so we are prepared for our typical fall growth season. However, we believe it is best to have the right person no matter how long it takes, rather than the wrong person at the time we would like. Please continue to pray for our search team for wisdom and guidance in our search for this staff member.

Expanding our Leadership

Not only do we need more staff, but we have been seeking to increase our leadership so we can continue to lead this church well. The church nominated several people at the beginning of this year for the offices of elder and deacon. After much prayer and discussions, Joe Kelley has accepted his nomination to be an Elder and Paul Coverick and Bob Lullo have accepted their nominations to be Deacons. Please be praying about these nominations and be interacting with these men during the next two months. We will be having a membership meeting in May to discuss these nominations and vote on each man to fulfill the role they have been nominated for.

Effectively Fulfilling the Great Commission

As we are adding staff and leaders, the leadership has been wrestling with how we continue to fulfill the Great Commission while maintaining the family friendly feel that the Lord has used to help reach and minister to people through Hickory Creek. Through your input as well as input provided by focus groups we have conducted within the church, we have found that Hickory's size has been one thing that has helped people connect. Our service size is not so big that you get lost in the crowd and not so small as to not be able to effectively minister to people. Therefore, we feel that keeping our service size to around 300 to 350 or so, is imperative to continuing to be “Hickory Creek,” a church that really does Love God, Love People and Live it Out!



At the same time, we believe that fulfilling the Great Commission means reaching more people and helping them grow in the Lord so their lives can be transformed. How do we maintain who we are and effectively fulfill the Great Commission? We believe that the Lord has put before us some opportunities and is leading us to seize these opportunities and take the following steps to deal with the growth we have been experiencing so we can continue to be faithful to the Great Commission, see lives changed and maintain the family-feel that God has used to make Hickory Creek the effective church that it is.

IDOT Route 30 Expansion - Left Turn Lane

First, as you have heard and seen some of the work going on along Rt. 30, IDOT is preparing to expand Lincoln Highway from Harlem in Frankfort to New Lenox. The original plans for this expansion called for a non-mountable median to run from 108th Avenue to Butternut Creek Drive prohibiting entry into Hickory Creek from the West. Everyone coming from the West would have to make a U-turn at Butternut Creek in order to enter the church grounds. But, after much prayer and negotiation, IDOT was willing to put in a turn lane at our expense, if we moved our entrance further to the West. The leadership has determined that access to this property is essential for us to continue to effectively minister on this site and maintain its value.

Village Sewer and Water

The expansion of Rt. 30 also brings with it an opportunity to tap on to Frankfort's sewer and water system at a substantially lower cost, than it would otherwise be since we would have to bore under Rt. 30 if they were not going to be expanding it. We have to be connected to Frankfort sewer and water in order to do any further expansion. We would have to abandon our septic field to add parking and install fire sprinklers if we were to add any more square footage to our building. Our engineers have estimated the cost savings to be as much as 50% if we performed this work during the expansion. To take advantage of this opportunity means we would need to be ready to proceed with this project by this fall (2011) when it has been estimated that IDOT will be working in front of the church.

We are in the process of obtaining estimates for moving our entrance, closing off our old entrance, and bringing Frankfort sewer and water to our site. IDOT has estimated the cost for the left turn lane to be around \$120,000. While we don't have formal estimates yet on the other work, all totaled, our costs could be \$300,000 combined. While these costs are significant, we feel they are necessary in order to optimize the use of our land, reach more people for Christ, see lives continue to be changed and maintain our property value. To miss this opportunity would only reduce the value of our property and limit our potential of being used by the Lord.

Add Parking Spaces

Additionally, we believe that we need to be the best stewards that we can of this site. We believe that maximizing the potential of this site will bring us to our optimum attendance level of 300 to 350 per service. Currently, however, we are unable to grow beyond about 250 in one service due to our current parking capacity. In order to even accommodate 250, requires us to shuttle people off site. So while it is technically possible to fit 300 people in our sanctuary, it is not achievable due to parking limitations. Our concern is we are losing people for Christ due to this situation.

We believe the remedy to this problem is to expand our parking lot. We are in the process of obtaining bids to add 50% more parking to our site, which would require the removal of our septic field. This would give us 134 spaces (44 more than our current 90 spaces). We average 2.2 to 2.6 people per car in our parking lot currently. If we maintained that average, our parking capacity would be 300 to 350 per service, which we believe to be the optimum size of this site.



Adding Additional Worship Services

Once we have added parking, we believe that we could quickly maximize our current services. To continue to fulfill the Great Commission and yet maintain our service size, we have tentative plans to add a Saturday evening worship service beginning in October of this year (2011). We believe that adding this service will help us to continue to be able to see lives being changed as we reach this community effectively for Christ, reaching people that we may not be able to with only services on Sunday. Furthermore, we hope to have hired a Pastor of Discipleship and Teaching in order to help carry the load of this increased ministry.

Longer Range Plans

While these plans take us through the end of this year and perhaps beyond, we are also looking into some longer range plans to continue to reach this community such as some modest expansions to our building to optimize the use of this facility and site as well as adding other sites to the ministry of Hickory Creek to be able to continue to reach people for Christ. We will be pursuing these plans as the Lord leads and provides.



Paving the Way

We believe that moving forward with these plans will help “Pave the Way” for those in this community as well as the future generations who will be reached for Christ through the ministry of Hickory Creek and see their lives changed for now and for eternity. In mid-March, we will be starting a sermon series called “Paving the Way” that will help **unite us in service, challenge us with sacrifice and grow us in faith** as we seek the Lord’s strength in accomplishing His will.



Prayer Vigil – Friday, March 25th 3pm to Saturday, March 26th 3pm

We also understand that the direction the Lord is leading us cannot be accomplished apart from Him, so we want to be completely focused on following His will. To do that, we want everyone here to be praying. We will be hosting a 24 hour prayer vigil from **3pm Friday, March 25th to 3pm Saturday, March 26th**. You will have an opportunity to sign up for a time slot for you and/or your family to come up to the church and be praying for His will to be accomplished through the church as well as for some of the many needs of the people in the church and our missions efforts.

Celebration Sunday

Over the weeks of the campaign we look forward to seeing how the Lord will work in us and through us. We will see how He wants to work in each one of us as we follow Him in Faith, commit ourselves to Serve, and glorify Him through Sacrifice. As we conclude the “Paving the Way” series on April 17th we will have a Celebration Sunday where we will worship the Lord through song, testimony, and by making commitments to sacrifice in regards to our time, treasure and talents. After our second service on that day, we will continue to celebrate with food and fellowship as we rejoice in the work the Lord has done and in the work we trust Him to continue to do.

Sacrificing Time, Talent & Treasure

We are going to be asking each family that calls Hickory Creek their home, to be making sacrifices with their time, talents and treasure to the Lord and there will be opportunity for people to commit to help this church through service and financial commitment. We ask each family to be praying together about how the Lord is leading them to worship Him through these sacrifices.

How will these resources be spent?

The financial resources raised over the course of this campaign will be used to help Hickory Creek continue to be used by the Lord to see lives transformed. Ten percent of what we raise will be used for our missions and benevolence efforts, around the world and locally. Using 10% for missions and benevolence efforts will help keep us focused on the fact that our mission is, and always will be, about people. We seek to reach and minister to people to see lives changed for God’s glory. The remaining 90% will be used for the expansion initiatives that we have outlined throughout this letter so that we can continue to reach people and help them grow in the Lord to the glory of God.

God has been at work in and through Hickory Creek over the past several years changing earthly lives and eternal lives. We have seen the kingdom of God expanded as people have come to receive Christ as Savior through this ministry. We have seen God glorified as people have followed faithfully in baptism and service; as people have sacrificed and grown in their relationship with the Lord; and as people have been cared for through the ministry of this body of Christ. Let’s all commit together to help Hickory Creek be a place where God can continue to reach people and change their lives.



Hickory Creek – April 2005



Hickory Creek – October 2007



Hickory Creek – May 2008

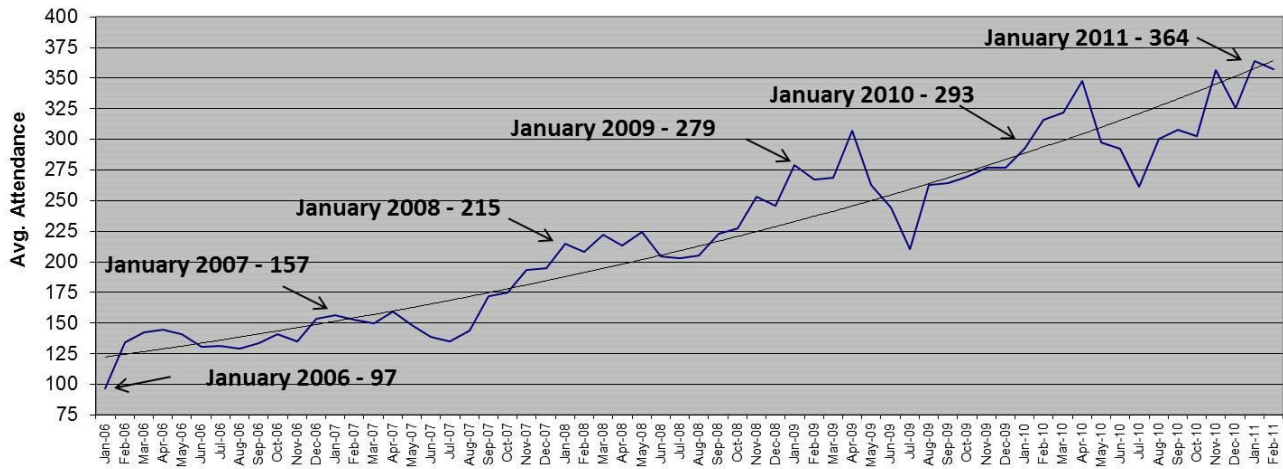


Hickory Creek – June 2010

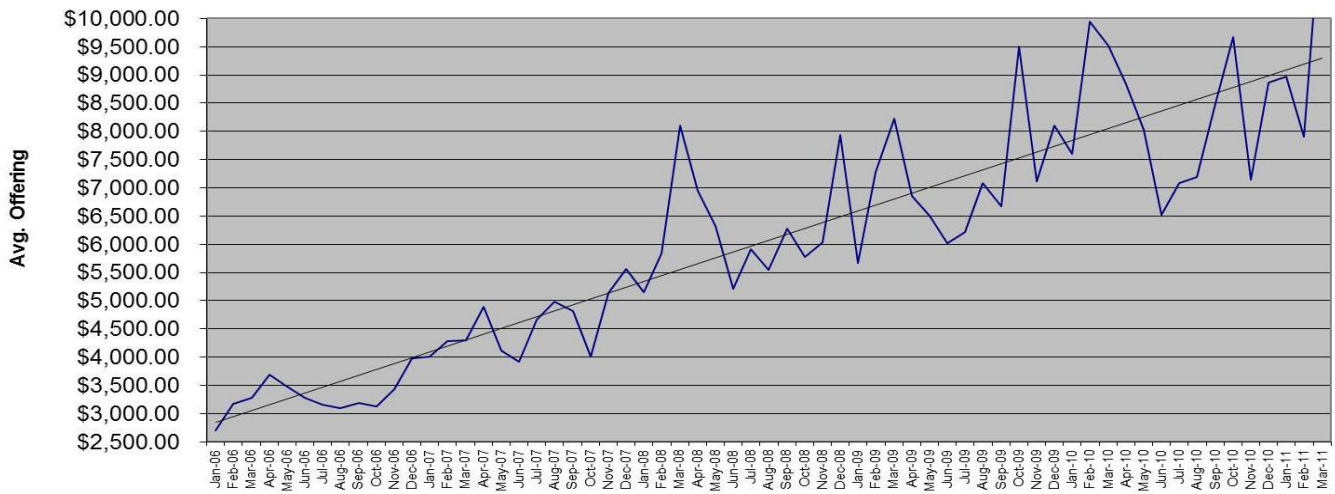


Hickory Creek with expanded parking and possible facility additions

Monthly Attendance



Weekly Average Offering Each Month



Hickory Creek has averaged about 30% growth in attendance over the past 5 years.