

## FBC HICKORY CHURCH PROFILE

### **Mission:**

The mission of FBC Hickory is to worship and glorify God, to lovingly teach the truth of the scriptures and to nurture those in our fellowship to spiritual maturity so that we will minister in Christ's love to the needs of all people and lead those who are lost to a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **Identity:**

We are a body of baptized believers who share a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as Head of the church and Lord of our lives. With the Bible as our guide, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to the centrality of worship, the study of the Bible, the freedom of the individual and of the local church, the practice of Christian baptism, the Lord's Supper, and of Christian stewardship, the larger body of Jesus Christ, the servant role of leadership, theological education, the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the principle of a free church in a free state. We are a church led by the Holy Spirit that utilizes congregational polity for decision making.

### **Historical Overview:**

Our church has a legacy and heritage of which we are very proud. Our town of Hickory Tavern was incorporated on December 14, 1869. The population of Hickory Tavern in 1870 was only one hundred. On May 7, 1870 our church, Hickory Tavern Baptist, was organized with eleven charter members. In 1873 Tavern was dropped from the name and the church became "First Baptist Church Hickory" which is the name it still bears. Since our inception, we have had twenty-one senior ministers.

Today, our church has multi-million dollar facilities and we are blessed to be entirely debt free. We now average 280 participants in worship weekly with an annual budget of \$1.4M. We are an active participant in various mission opportunities in our city, state, country, and world-wide. We embrace our rich history but look forward to a bright future as we continue to seek God's will and direction of our church.

### **Location:**

Hickory is located in the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina with a population of over 40,000 and is the hub of a metropolitan area of 365,497 people. Hickory is the largest city in Catawba County (population 143,810) although nearby town of Newton is the county seat. The city is approximately one hour north of Charlotte (population over 1 million), just over one hour east of Asheville, NC, and one hour south of the beautiful mountain communities of Blowing Rock and Boone, NC. While Hickory and the surrounding counties have a strong history of furniture and textile manufacturing, the economy has diversified and includes fiber optic cable manufacturing, data storage facilities including Apple and Google, and other high-tech industries.

Sophisticated healthcare is available through two hospitals and numerous medical practices encompassing all specialties. Our education systems are very strong and offer public, private and Christian school options. Additionally, Hickory is home to Lenoir Rhyne University and Catawba Valley Community College – both having achieved state-wide and national recognition in various programs and fields of study.

FBC Hickory is located just one block away from Hickory's thriving downtown business district which hosts shops, restaurants, and children's parks. The "Sails" serves as the centerpiece and hosts bi-weekly farmer's markets, musical events, and festivals, such as Oktoberfest. Lake Hickory serves as the city's northern border and offers 100 miles of shoreline and numerous recreational activities.

### **Affiliations:**

We affiliate with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

### **Mission Opportunities:**

Missions have historically enjoyed a tremendous focus at FBC Hickory and that emphasis continues with boundless opportunities! In addition to ministering to and caring for our congregation, we strive to spread the Word and care for our community and beyond. Sunday morning Bible study is a time of close fellowship and depth in scriptural discovery. Wednesday evenings include a meal at our dining facility, prayer time, varied Bible study opportunities for adults, Refuge Student Ministry Bible study and Youth Ensemble, missions programs for children, and both adult and children's choral / handbell programs. Ministry outreach includes broad efforts by our local North Carolina Baptist Men's group, Women's Missionary Union, FBCitykids, Carolina Mission Team, In-As-Much Ministries, Rent-a-Kid, Vacation Bible School, Sabbath Soup and our Child Development Center – a full-time preschool program serving our church body and ministering to the greater Hickory community.

### **Worship:**

Worship is central to our mission and strives to provide connection of the worshiper to God that is contextually meaningful to our heritage, yet culturally relevant. We currently offer a uniquely focused service of worship that incorporates a broad array of the worship arts, demonstrating excellence and purposeful engagement for all who participate.

#### ***Fulfilling Worship***

First Baptist Church of Hickory seeks to fulfill its vision and mission by being a fellowship recognizing the centrality of worship in all of its expressions. While the church provides a variety of individual and small group worship opportunities, the church chooses corporate worship each week for the fellowship to express their worship collectively in sincerity and truth.

Corporate worship is purposefully structured to embody all biblical aspects including corporate prayer, the reading of scripture, in-gathering of offerings, corporate singing and the proclamation of God's message. Our fellowship acknowledges that corporate worship is active and participatory. Since corporate worship is literally the work of the congregation, each member seeks to invest the fullness of their person in mind, heart and voice.

Our fellowship also embraces the special observances of Christian baptism and sharing of the Lord's Supper as integral components of our corporate worship. These specific observances reinforce our identity as followers of Christ and our commitment to each other in a community of believers. Other observances, shaped by and faithful to scripture, are incorporated into worship to acknowledge the permanence of God throughout the seasons of our lives both individually and corporately.

#### ***Corporate Worship as an expression of Unity***

Members of our fellowship come from a variety of backgrounds and worship traditions. The church worships in a single service incorporating the best aspects of the multitude of styles of Christian worship:

- Our emphasis on one corporate worship opportunity each week engages the entirety of the fellowship in an expression of the overarching desire of the members to be together.
- Our "Reaching In" affords the fellowship the opportunity to demonstrate their shared devotion to Christ and in turn, support and strengthen each other.
- Our sanctuary allows membership to meet together in one space allowing the full fellowship to engage in worship with each other weekly.
- This approach preserves the structure of the existing small group Bible study that is highly valued by the membership.

***Excellence in Worship***

The act of worship is a direct offering to God of our time and talent of the fellowship. For that reason, FBC Hickory continues to pursue excellence in the worship arts regardless of its form. The congregation has a heritage of excellence in the expression of worship in multiple styles engaging the talents and creativity of its membership as well as guest participants. We are blessed with an infrastructure that does not restrict expression but can support this diversity of worship styles. Our commitment to stewardship calls the congregation to fully utilize these resources in “Reaching Up” in worship of God and “Reaching Out” to the community.