

Hilltop Church

Annual Report 2021

First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, New Jersey



**Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
February 13, 2022**

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Attached are the Annual Reports of the staff, boards, areas of ministry committees and organizations of the First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, New Jersey for the year 2021. The following is a proposed docket for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation held on February 13, 2022 immediately following the 10:00 AM worship service.

PROPOSED DOCKET
Ecclesiastical Meeting

Call to Order – certification of a quorum

Opening Prayer by the Moderator – the Reverend Dr. Merideth Mueller-Bolton

Report of the Nominating Committee – Members at Large

Report of the Endowment Fund

Reports of Session Committees

- Buildings & Grounds
- Nurture, Education and Discipleship
- Fellowship
- Finance & Stewardship
- Mission, Service and Benevolence
- Personnel & Administration
- Worship & Music

Questions and Comments on the Annual Report

Resolutions of Thanks:

Thank you for the dedicated service of the following officers:

Elders: Thank you to Brian Elliott, Cliff Lee, Tom Coffey, Thomas Porter and Kristen Turner who are leaving session after fulfilling their terms of faithful service. Thank you to Dave Kerr for his continued service.

Deacons: Thank you Ginny Higley and Ginny Gilman who are leaving Deacons after faithful service.

Nominating Committee: Thank you to Marilyn Willett, Laura Grzanka, Cathy Malman and David Kerr for their years of service and Elder Fiona Stewart for tasks related to the Nominating Committee.

Audit Committee: Thank you to Mike Whiting, Lisa Lieb and David Kerr for serving on the Audit Committee in 2021.

Assistant Treasurers: Thank you to Dane Manchester and Walter Perkins for their service in 2021.

The Congregation thanks **all those who have given of their time, talent and finances** for the ministry of the church.

Undocketed Business:

New Business as may come before the Congregation at this time.

Permission for the Session to review and approve the minutes of this Annual Meeting.

Adjournment to the meeting of the Corporation with Prayer

Corporation Meeting

Moderator: President of the Board of Trustees – Elder Elisabeth MacDonald

Meeting called to order.

Motion: The Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church meeting on Sunday,
February 13, 2022, adopts all acts of the congregation as acts of the Corporation.

Motion to adjourn.

Closing Prayer.

STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE SESSION

The Church membership records indicate:	<u>2021</u>
Confirmands	7
Additions through Profession and Reaffirmation of Faith	0
Received by Certificate of Transfer	0
Loss through dismissal to another church	4
Removed at member's request	33
Loss through death	2
Total Active Membership	291
Friends of Hilltop	198
Associate Members	4
Average attendance	In-Person & Virtual 80
The Church School Report indicates:	
Total number of pupils to 8th grade	64
Average attendance	3

The Sacrament of Baptism was administered to 1 infant. One member wedding and blessings were performed. Two member funerals were conducted.

Preliminary Nominating Area of Ministry

The Nominating Committee is responsible for seeking members of the congregation to serve in the positions listed below and presenting those members for their respective offices to the congregation for its approval at the annual meeting. The committee will also assist committee chairs, if asked, to recruit members for various church committees. Questions regarding the Nominating Committee may be addressed to any member of the committee or to the Moderator of Session. The following members are hereby nominated for election at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on February 13, 2022.

Elders: Elders are elected for a term of three years. Should an Elder be unable to fulfill a term, an individual is elected to complete the unfilled portion of said term.

Deacons: Deacons are elected to serve a three year term. Should a Deacon be unable to fulfill a term, an individual may be elected to fill the position for the remainder of the term.

Endowment Committee: The Endowment Committee consists of four members of the congregation, each elected to a term of four years. The terms are laddered so that one member will be elected each year. A member may serve a total of two consecutive terms. There is a fifth member who is appointed by the Moderator of Session. Such member may serve as long as s/he serves on Session.

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee is chaired by a member of Session designated by the Moderator of Session and includes a second Elder, a member from the Board of Deacons, and "at large" members elected annually by the congregation.

Audit Committee: The Audit Committee consists of three members elected annually.

Treasurer: To be elected annually

Bud Perkins (Assistant Treasurer)

To serve a one year term

Dane Manchester (Assistant Treasurer)

To serve a one year term

Respectfully submitted, Designated Elder - Chair Fiona Stewart, Jeffrey Betz, Laura Grzanka, Dave Kerr Cathy Malman, and Marilyn Willett.

***Please see separate report for further details.**

Officers Serving in 2021
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Mendham, NJ

THE SESSION (three year term)

2022

Cliff Lee - 2
Tom Coffey - 2
David Kerr
Thomas Porter
Kristen Turner
Brian Elliott

2023

Stefanie Fox - 2
Fiona Stewart - 2
Chris Smith - 2
Christopher Waller
Elisabeth MacDonald
Devyani Morris

2024

Marcia Koch
Bob Willis
John Blumers
Catherine Murphy
Laura Grzanka
Sharon Betz

THE BOARD OF DEACONS (three year term)

2022

Wade Carter - 2
Ginny Higley - 2
Ginny Gilman
Megan Nervi
MaryAnn Fox
Kathy Stoakes

2023

Kathy Claxton
Sue Kear
Liz Siminoff - 2
Hope Swarts - 2
Stephen Sauerma - 2
Paula Raimondo

2024

Bill Maurer - 2
Marcia Chalker - 2
Marilyn Willett - 2
Brian Haumersen
Ruth Denatale

THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE (four year term)

Mitzi Fox – 2022
Bill Lowe – 2023
Robert Caldwell– 2024
Wendy Whiting – 2025

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (one year term At-Large))

*Fiona Stewart
*Laura Grzanka
*Jeff Betz
*David Kerr
*Marilyn Willett
*

THE AUDIT COMMITTEE (one year term)

*Mike Whiting -1
*Lisa Lieb -1
*David Kerr -1

TREASURER (one year term)

Bud Perkins (Assistant Treasurer) - 3
Dane Manchester (Assistant Treasurer) - 3

FINANCIAL SECRETARY (1 Year Term)

Mitzi Fox

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MENDHAM, NEW JERSEY**

Financial Report

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MENDHAM, NEW JERSEY
Six Year Financial Summary**

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
<u>Contributions</u>						
Pledge Income	\$ 374,440	\$ 435,645	\$ 409,944	\$ 456,485	\$ 449,215	\$ 428,228
Non-Pledge Income	11,040	17,684	21,711	46,144	52,961	66,285
Plate Income	835	4,181	8,030	5,928	7,301	7,334
HCNS Donation	20,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Miscellaneous	325	1,720	3,617	14,449	27,026	8,295
Other Income	32,200	53,585	63,357	96,520	117,288	111,914
Total	\$ 406,640	\$ 489,230	\$ 473,301	\$ 553,006	\$ 566,503	\$ 540,142
<u>Expenditures</u>	\$ 381,518	\$ 404,237	\$ 455,426	\$ 574,588	\$ 555,970	\$ 550,877
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ 25,122	\$ 84,993	\$ 17,875	\$ (21,582)	\$ 10,533	\$ (10,735)

Six Year Results: Presented in the above table are the financial results for the Fiscal Year 2021 and for the past five fiscal years. As a reminder, our fiscal year begins July 1st and ends June 30th in the following calendar year.

In the broadest terms, these results show a general contraction in the financial position of our church. From a high point in 2017, Total Contributions have declined by \$160k, from \$567k to \$407k over a four-year period. This decrease reflects a decline in all Contribution line items, with Pledge Income dropping \$75k and Non-Pledge Income dropping \$42k over the same period. The number of pledging units has dropped as well, from a high point of 121 units in 2017, to 98 in 2020 to just over 50 this year received to date.

Turning to Expenditures, Expenditures over the past three years have declined from a high point of \$575k in 2018 to \$382K in 2021, a decrease of \$193k. Of course, some of this decline is directly related to the reduction in pastor compensation expense as we moved from a two-pastor model to a one-pastor model. Furthermore, the church staff should be commended for controlling expenses to help offset a decline in Total Contributions. However, the impact of a reduction in contributions means that the church has fewer funds available to spend. In many cases, budgets have been cut substantially and we have not been able to grow or even maintain programming and outreach in the community.

Interim Results Through December 31, 2021: Although not presented in this report, the six-month results for the fiscal year which started July 1, 2021 are solid. Our revenue numbers remain strong due to a combination of: (1) new pledges made during last year's emergency fundraising campaign, (2) the fulfillment of outstanding 2021 pledges and (3) donations from Hilltop Christian Nursery School. Positive revenue growth plus ongoing attention to cost control yielded an increase in Net Income year-over-year.

2022 Budget: For the 2022 fiscal year which ends June 30, 2022, Session approved a balanced budget of \$377k.

Line of Credit: It should be noted that as of December 31, 2021 there were no outstandings under the Peapack-Gladstone line of credit.

Closing: While our financial picture is not as robust as we might like it to be, we remain thankful for the gifts of both time and treasure that so many members share with the church.

Many of our members are generous and gracious pledgers, and we thank them for their faithful contributions. We acknowledge God's presence in the life of Hilltop and we know that our church family is filled with so many of his blessings.

Finance Committee

Elisabeth MacDonald, Chair and Session Contact

Dane Manchester, Assistant Treasurer

Walter Perkins, Assistant Treasurer

Mitzi Fox

Bill Lowe

Chris Smith

Brian Elliott

Audit Committee

The audit committee is comprised of three members of the congregation with experience in financial matters. Its responsibility is to review the financial compilation reports completed by the accounting firm Caristia, Kulsar, and Wade, LLC. The financial year of the church is from July 1 to June 30. The report reviewed is dated June 30, 2021. The audit committee met on two occasions, and carried out meetings to review the reports via zoom calls, and email exchanges. Based on our reviews, we accept and approve the findings and reports without issue.

Audit Committee

David Kerr

Lisa Lieb

Michael Whiting

Report of the Endowment Committee

The Endowment Fund was established in 2002 by the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Mendham. The Mission Statement of the Endowment Fund states that the main purpose of the Fund is to make the First Presbyterian Church of Mendham stronger and more responsive to the needs of future generations of the Church. The Fund was dedicated for the following purposes:

- 1.To preserve and maintain the physical facilities of the Church, the manse, Hilltop House, and the grounds.
- 2.To support and nourish specific ministries of the Church.

The monies in the Fund will be used for items outside the annual budget. They will not be used to provide any shortfalls in operating funds in any given year.

The Bylaws of the Fund state that the Fund shall have primary responsibility for the encouragement and management of deferred and special gifts to the Church. Also, that the use of the Funds is restricted to Capital expenditures for the facilities of the first Presbyterian Church of Mendham, New Jersey; new ministries of the Church, not ongoing programs; any use specified by the donor; and the expenses of the Endowment Fund. Day to day operation and maintenance of the Church, its building(s) grounds, and personal property shall remain the responsibility of the Session and not be the responsibility of the Fund.

The Endowment Fund is presently invested in three different mutual funds; the Vanguard FTSE Social Index Equity Fund, the Vanguard Intermediate Investment Grade Bond Fund, and the New Covenant Balanced Income Fund. The New Covenant Balanced Income Fund is a socially responsible Fund that invests in both equities and fixed income. A portion of this Fund, \$130,000, is pledged to The Peapack and Gladstone Bank as collateral against the ongoing short term Hilltop Church Cash Equity Loan from the Bank that helps the Church in covering its operating expenses in times of need. The total market value of the Funds at the end of 2021 was over \$990,000 and represents an almost 100% increase in value in the past 6 years. **This significant accomplishment would not have occurred without the steady and determined guidance of Mitzi Fox and the vision and investment strategy provided by Bob Caldwell.**

The Endowment Fund awarded educational scholarships from the Fischer Fund totaling \$3,000 to Emma Mangino and Lily Montenegro in recognition of their devotion to the church.

The Endowment Fund is thankful to George Johnson and his family for their generous bequest. George was an integral part of Hilltop Church and was always generous with his time and resources. By setting up a restricted gift to the Endowment Fund, George and the Johnson family will be able to have an enduring impact on the future of Hilltop Church. **A special 'thank you' to the Johnson Family.**

The goal of the Endowment Committee is to encourage additional contributions that would ultimately grow the Fund to a point of being self-sustaining, able to meet all requests of funds from annual income. The members and friend of the Hilltop congregation are encouraged to consider a gift to the Endowment Fund and to also consider a bequest to the Fund as part of their Estate Planning.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Lowe, Chair
Mitzi Fox, Church Financial Secretary
Dane Manchester: Financial Administrator
Wendy Whiting
Brian Elliott

2021 Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) Report

The Hilltop PNC continues the task of seeking a Pastor. We have been working every Saturday morning normally for 2 hours with the Lord's guidance for almost 18 months (July 2020). We spent the first five months studying our church's Discernment Report, gleaning our congregation's priorities, identifying needed Competencies, writing our Minister Information Form, and gaining approval of both our Session and the Presbytery. Our search is based upon our Discernment Report (can be seen on the church website). In the past year, using the national Presbyterian data base we have been matched with over 200 potential candidates. The process does not always yield an exact match to all our listed Competencies and desired profile. We have read close to 250 PIFs (resumes), viewed over 40 sermons, sent letters of interest to 24 pastors, and had 16 Zoom conversations with 10 potential candidates. We have been excitedly hopeful and humbly disappointed as we journeyed down paths with several candidates. As we meet with more candidates in the weeks to come, we thank you for your continued support. We have welcomed our newly elected member, Lawrence Morris and look forward to his insights and fresh look at the PNC process. This is a long road. God's will and your prayers will carry us forward.

Jeffrey Betz, Stefanie Fox, Lawrence Morris, Per Ralamb, Cassandra Tarentino, Bob Willett

Report of the Transitional Pastor



till·age /'tɪlɪj/ *noun* 1. the preparation of land for growing crops

I have a new word for you: *tillage*. The bible is full of agricultural metaphors – seems it's all about the *soil*. In the time that I've been your transitional pastor, we have been tilling and plowing the soil of Hilltop Church, making it rich and fertile so that the seeds planted here will take root and bear abundant fruit for the Kingdom of God for generations to come. Here are a few reflections on my time with you:

I'm grateful for the fine group of leaders who are diligent and earnest as they discern the course for our church. The ordained officers (elders and deacons) are a hard-working and eminently capable group. They do not shy away from

challenges and as a result have managed to keep the church on course, even without a permanent pastor, during these unprecedented and difficult times.

One of the best parts of being your transitional pastor is working with the wonderful staff: Office Manager Danielle Doyle, Christian Education Director Cathy Malman, Nursery School Director Tori Legacki, Music Director Jim Wynne, and Housekeeper Maria Pappa make a wonderful team; they are dedicated and conscientious. We made a terrific addition in November with Facilities Manager John Andrews, who has jumped in full steam ahead, and is keeping us ship-shape. Please seek out the staff and give them a nod of thanks for all they do on our behalf.

Although the ability to gather in person has been significantly impeded by the COVID pandemic, worship remains the central gathering event for our church. Thanks largely to the herculean efforts of Bob Willis and Dave Kerr, Hilltop has both the technological skill and the commitment it needs to provide a high quality, on-line, virtual worship experience. Your Worship Committee and worship leaders remain committed to bringing beautiful and innovative services to the church, while maintaining time-honored and beloved traditions.

The entire Buildings and Grounds committee has remained attentive to our beautiful campus. They've worked hard to upgrade and update equipment and maintain the buildings and property of our physical plant. Much love and energy go into this effort.

The spiritual formation of the church has continued in robust ways through the vital and life-giving efforts of the Adult Education group, Women and Men's Bible Studies and the Christian Education Committee. These groups have implemented innovative ways to gather and continue to build up the Body of Christ in Mendham. They not only provide spiritual sustenance and intellectual stimulation, but they're also a great source of fellowship. Please join one of these groups if you don't already belong.

Through gracious and generous gifts and offerings from the entire congregation and the vigilance of the Finance Team, Hilltop Church has managed to remain in excellent financial condition. This fall we launched a new Commitment Campaign with a creative approach grounded in that knowledge that faithful stewardship emerges from a shared connection and passion about the work we're doing together. Hilltop is blessed to be in a healthy financial position for the next leg of the journey.

It is my honor to be serving as your interim pastor in this season of transition. I'm grateful for the warm reception I've received and the spirit of cooperation I've felt since I arrived. I'm heartened by the many good things I see. Energy and enthusiasm are abundant. The deep love and commitment for this church by her members is evident everywhere. You are modeling the

great love Christ has for his church and embracing the life-giving breath of God's Spirit. It is gratifying to see the rich tillage it produces!

I hope you'll spend some time in the next few days reading over the reports on the following pages. They speak volumes about the activity of the Spirit at First Presbyterian Church of Mendham.

With love in Christ,

Merideth Mueller-Bolton

Children's and Family Educational Ministries



The most frequent church question I have heard this year: "Where are the children?" It's a very good question, with difficult answers. Parents have been faced with 1) no covid vaccine for their children until Nov, 2021, 2) routines rocked and momentum for church dwindling, 3) sports on Saturdays, leaving Sundays for birthday parties, 4) traditional sports held after noon on Sundays, now scheduled for 9am, 5) many others.

What to do? What do parents want for their child's faith formation? What can our Christian Education Committee do to provide the necessary support to parents and adults? One Christian Education blog suggests the following: be patient, be creative and flexible, and stop asking, "Where are the kids?!"

Your Christian Education Committee has decided to do just that. We have low attendance numbers, but we have continued to offer creative ways for parents and their children to connect to Hilltop Church and deepen their faith.

One shining star this year has been our Adult Education Class. Under the leadership of Troy Guinn-Bailey, the group has flourished, even adding "Fellowship" to their name. They continue to enjoy depth of conversation through lectionary topics, Ted Talks and other online resources. Once a month they gather for Fellowship at a local restaurant. CE is so blessed for Troy's inspired leadership. Thank you, Troy!

CE hosted Zoom Sunday School from January through June with topics ranging from Mission for Zimbabwe to Jesus' BFFs. Starting in September we held Sunday School outdoors and learned about the "People Jesus Met" and the influence He had on their lives. October brought us back indoors and lessons continued through December.

CE sponsored the following activities:

- 1) Souper Bowl of Caring (raised \$ for the Interfaith Food Pantry)
- 2) Valentines to the nursery school and Sunday School children
- 3) Movement as Prayer afternoon with Veronica Poylangada leading yoga
- 4) Delivered Easter Prayer boxes to Sunday School children and gifts to nursery school
- 5) Mother's Day and Fall Mum Sales raised funds for Nomias and Oti's tuition and support
- 6) Communion, Bible Worship Class-6 children participated in 5 week curriculum, families celebrated with dinner and children received Bibles
- 7) Confirmation Class-7 Children participated with Pastor Alison leading the curriculum. They were joyously confirmed and received Bibles.
- 8) Rally Day-children enjoyed old-fashioned games and crafts
- 9) 2 of our 4 year old children received their Storybook Bibles



10) Children and Adults participated in the Mendham Hunger Walk, raising awareness and funds for Nourishnj

11) Children made hats for Market Street Mission

12) Children celebrated Reformation/Halloween with a party

13) Committee sends birthday postcards to Sunday School children throughout the year

14) New Confirmation Class begins with Dr Merideth Mueller-Bolton leading, 3 young ladies to be confirmed April 2022

15) Families received Advent Calendars

16) Birthday Party for Jesus and Pageant rehearsal

17) Christmas Pageant performed December 19th with 14 children and congregation participating. Thank you to Veronica Poylangada for coordinating our beautiful pageant.

I would like to thank our Christian Education Committee who give so much of their talents, time, creativity, energy and faith to bring valued faith formation to our children, their families and support to me. I wish to especially thank Stefanie Fox for her valued leadership as Chair of our Committee. Thank you to our faithful members:

Dr. Merideth Mueller-Bolton, Loren Darzano, Deborah Fox-Lopez, Kate Coffey, Veronica Poylangada, and Fiona Stewart. Sincerest thanks to Pastor Alison Paden-Peters for her valued assistance in 2021.

We hope we have continued to provide a solid foundation and a deepening in Christian faith this past year for Hill-top's children, parents and adults. It is both a privilege and a sacred responsibility to give our families every opportunity we can, especially in the midst of these challenging times.

Cathy Inglis Malman

Annual Report, 2021



Director of Music Ministries



As I write this report, we have once again entered a time of singing and attendance restrictions due to COVID-19 and the new variant, Omicron. These measures are very necessary, even if it does continue to put a hold on the musical life of the church community.

As many will remember, 2020 had even more restrictions in place. We completely shut down the church, choosing instead to record all the worship music; Prelude, Postlude, Hymns – as well as the choir's anthem. Our Christmas Eve Service was streamed virtually; the entirety having been recorded over the weeks leading up to the service. By the time we approached Easter of 2021, there was hope that we might see a return to normalcy – but even this had to be tempered by the virus. Yes, we had our brass quartet and timpani – but there wasn't a bell choir and we only had a masked quartet to sing the large-scale Easter pieces.

When September arrived, the choir was invited to return to the chancel, albeit masked – but only about a third of the active membership of the Sanctuary Choir chose to attend – personal safety being the foremost concern. We did bring back the Hilltop Oratorio Choir, which began rehearsals for their annual December concert in mid-September. Trying to follow guidelines that would not back the sanctuary, we did not use orchestra, or handbells; rather relying on my accompaniment skills, along with Amy Burns and Loni Bach – our guest musicians. The Oratorio Choir was about 50 percent smaller than previous years, but they proved to be an excellent group to work with, especially when they had to endure wearing masks for two-hour rehearsals. The concert was well-attended, both in-person and streamed – but the hope is that next year we will be able to produce a concert closer to that of previous years.

Along the same lines, I presented the silent film, "The Phantom of the Opera," on October 29. This event was very well received, so much so that I plan to offer another silent film in 2022.

But, in addition to the smaller numbers in my choirs, my biggest disappointment is over the loss of the Joyful Ringers – our handbell choir, as well as the Praise Team, and the Youth and Children's choirs. I hope that these ensembles will return some time in 2022.

Even though we have been limited in



attendance, our devotion to the care and maintenance of the musical equipment of the church is still ongoing. This includes tuning of the pipe organ and pianos. Over the summer, the Peralgallo Organ Company added a change to the Trompette-en-Chamade. (the horizontal silver pipes which are visible from the congregation) Originally only 28 pipes, which is less than half a normal rank of pipes, this limited the way the trompette could be played effectively. With comparatively little money spent, the company was able to add two additional pipes, and re-direct other reed stops so that the trompette is now the equivalent of about 85 pipes. It is a glorious sound!

I look forward to the day when all of the choirs will be fully back in the church, singing to a full congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Wynne,
Director of Music Ministries

Hilltop Christian Nursery School



My first half of the year working as director of Hilltop Christian Nursery School has been an absolute pleasure. The teaching staff and parents continually go above and beyond to support and guide our children to the best learning environment in town. Despite another year of increased rules and regulations due to Covid including mask wearing, limiting outside guests and at times limiting mixing of student pods, our staff found ways to keep students engaged and progressing on their academic, social and spiritual journeys.

This is the 27th year of operation for HCNS, which was founded in 1994. Enrollment for this year is 69 students and a staff of 7 teachers, 10 teacher's assistants, 2 office assistants and a director. All preschool classes for 2 ½ - 5 year olds meet in the morning from 9 - 11:30. Two year olds attend two mornings. Three year olds attend 3 mornings and four year olds attend four mornings. Optional lunch and play is offered an additional hour from 11:30-12:30, 5 days a week. Afternoon enrichment is offered for our 3 and 4 year old students 5 days a week from 12:30-3:00.

I have the highest admiration for our extremely dedicated teaching staff who give so much of their extra time to ensure their preschool classes are enriching, nurturing and warm environments for development. Many thanks to the following HCNS teachers: Patty Barnes, Liz Daley, Betsy Drew, Eileen Lupo, Cindy Masucci, Nicole Schoenbrodt and Amanda Valenta. I would also like to thank our dedicated office staff Jane Ikeda and Maura Shupack in addition to our morning and afternoon teacher's assistants: Anne Bergeron, Nicky Boulton, Cheryl Brown, Deb Buchanan, Vanessa Cerchio, Karen Fusco, Heidi Nicholson, Faith Raudabaugh, Kristin Stanley and Jen Walsh.

The 2021-2022 school year began with the hope of bringing back many of our unique programs that were lost during Covid. We thought outside of the box and became creative in order to bring back Mommy and Me upstairs in Fellowship Hall which was a huge success and currently has a wait list. We also made it a priority to give back to the community and held our first Toy Drive to support the children's wing of Morristown Hospital. Also, at Christmas many of our families spread cheer and joy by visiting the seniors at Mendham Area Senior Housing by Christmas caroling with our students. It was such a special event! Best of all, we were able to perform our Christmas Pageant for the Lunch with Friends seniors in addition to an in person event for our families in December. We are looking forward to bringing back Mr. Ray for a family music night this spring and hosting our Spring Social in person after a two year hiatus.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the church volunteers and staff that supported our school during the first few months we were open without a grounds manager and helped guide me in my first months as director. A special thank you to Pastor Alison Paden for your guidance, Dane Manchester and Dave Kerr who put in endless hours

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helping us with school setups. Also, thank you to Bob Willis for guiding us through technical support and the Buildings and Grounds Committee for keeping our school grounds safe and clean. Finally, thank you to Danielle Doyle for overseeing our school finances and Reverend Dr. Meredith Mueller-Boulton for your spiritual and emotional support as I began my new role as director during a pandemic.

Warm regards,

Victoria Legacki, Director



Board of Deacons

We were very happy to resume some of our traditional events in 2021, including the All-Church Picnic, Garage Sale and Lunch with Friends. The Deacons continued to care for our congregation by providing meals, sunshine baskets, prayer shawls, funeral receptions, gifts for Baptisms, sending Christmas and Easter cards, and recognizing our high school seniors. We supported Family Services of Morris County activities such as LoveLines at Christmas and meals for Thanksgiving and Easter. We also contributed to the Family Promise Sheltering Program. We hosted the first ever Hilltop baking event on Zoom and participants enjoyed baking carrot cakes together; any donations received were contributed to Hilltop's mission committee to support our mission partners. The Deacons were thrilled to coordinate the enthusiastic church-wide response from so many Hilltop families & friends as we crafted a personalized wedding quilt for Alison Paden. Most important, we stayed in close touch with our small groups during the continued challenges of COVID to check in and offer assistance with anything that folks may need. We would like to thank those who served as Deacons during this past year: Ramona Balderson, Wade Carter, Marcia Chalker, Kathy Claxton, Ruth DeNatale, Mary Ann Fox, John Daly, Ginny Gilman, Brian Haumersen, Ginny Higley, Sue Kear, Bill Maurer, Megan Nervi, Lin Perkins, Paula Raimondo, Stephen Sauerman, Liz Siminoff, Kathy Stoakes, Hope Swarts and Marilyn Willett.



Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Higley and Paula Raimondo, Co-Moderators



Building and Grounds Committee Report

Hello from B&G

The B&G committee works to keep the church buildings and properties running smoothly and safely. We cherish our historical character and natural beauty and work hard to preserve and enhance them. But we also look for new ways to improve safety, save energy, and meet the growing needs of Hilltop.

Our members include: (* = new members)

Bob Willis
Marilyn Willett
Don Eberhart

David Kerr
Wade Carter
Lin Perkins *

Pam Elliot *
John Andrews *

Meet our new Facilities Manager, John Andrews.

John came aboard in October, after our previous Sexton, Matt Paulik, moved to Wisconsin. The new position of Facilities Manager includes the traditional Sexton duties, along with added responsibilities such as managing and negotiating with contractors and inspectors. John is a Marine veteran, and active in the Mendham Boro community as President of the Boro Council and an EMT.



Church Projects:

- Expanded the set of trumpets in the organ, thanks to generous organ fund donations. Specialists from the US and Canada worked with our expert Bob Willis on this months-long project. Jim Wynne has played them to spectacular effect since their debut in spring.
- Added outdoor decorations at fall and Christmas, to share the spirit we feel inside our church with our neighbors outside. The well-loved luminaries continue as a B&G tradition.
- Add technology capabilities to enhance worship and fellowship. We used projection in new ways at Christmas Eve and even Halloween, with a community silent movie and live organ event.
- Repaired the “yankee gutter” built into the historic roof: No more leaks, better steeple lighting.



Hilltop House Improvements:

- Repainted the Pastor's office and updated the equipment and furniture. It's currently being used by Pastor Merideth.
- Removed and replaced the split-rail fence in the rear parking lot. In addition to looking better, it is stronger and provides better protection for children's activities.
- Continue to replace aging lighting fixtures with energy-saving LED replacements.



Manse Update:

We repainted the complete interior of the manse in 2021.

The manse is in wonderful shape to welcome a new pastor. Over the prior two years (2019-20) we painted the exterior, installed new thermal windows, replaced the broken HVAC system, installed new insulated garage doors, and made landscaping improvements.



The Grounds:

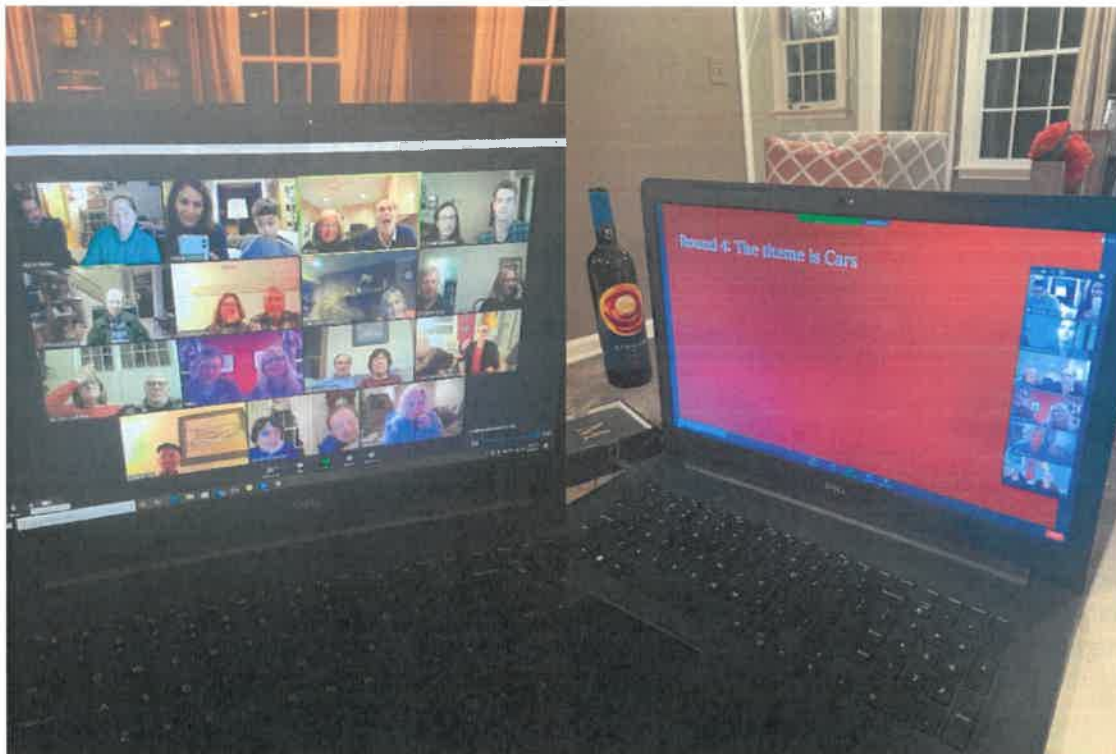
- Major tree pruning and restoration, with the help of our friends at Tamke. The beautiful old maples in front of the church started a special diet to keep them fit and trim for a long healthy life. Many trees were pruned for our safety and their health. A few trees were taken down where they posed a possible risk if they came down during an extreme weather event.
- We invested in a quality zero-turn mower to reduce our landscaping expenses. We also bought a new leaf blower, to quickly clear the schoolgrounds before families arrive on fall mornings.
- Marilyn Willett welcomed the new green thumbs, Pam Elliot and Lin Perkins. Their expertise and helpful hands have improved the appearance and health of all our landscaped areas.
- Special thanks to the Murphy and Morrison families, who "adopted" the beds in front of the church and will help maintain them. We also thank everyone who helps out on our "work days".

Respectfully Submitted,
David Kerr, Chair

Fellowship Area of Ministry

Despite continued restrictions associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic, Fellowship in 2021 was blessed with more opportunities to help bring our church family together.

- Two of our main events, the Chili Cook-off normally held in January or February, and Palm Sunday in the spring had to be cancelled.
- Pastor Alison continued to host on-line “virtual” Fellowship time ahead of our online services. We also held a virtual **Trivia Night** on a Saturday in February, hosted by Cliff Lee’s son-in-law, Dan. It was well attended and enjoyed by families of all ages!



Trivia Night 2/20/20

- In May, Fellowship also played a key role in Hilltop’s emergency fundraising campaign, **Faith in Action/Welcome Home Sunday**. Committee members were asked to assist and coordinate the deliveries of flowers and invitational packets for the campaign. We had several volunteers from Fellowship along with help from Tom Coffey, Kristen Turner and Chris Waller, delivering to roughly 180 families in the area.
- At the Deacon’s Picnic on June 6th (coinciding with Welcome Home Sunday), Fellowship presented Pastor Alison and her fiancé Mitch Peters with the congregation’s monetary wedding gift. Sharon Betz, Marcia Koch, and Dev Morris did the honors, along with a personalized “wedding cake” and flowers.



Congregational Wedding Gift to Pastor Alison and Mitch Peters – Deacon's Picnic 6/6/20

- This past summer also debuted Fellowship's first ever **Ice Cream Socials**, on the front lawn after worship. We hosted them once a month throughout the summer and hope to do more in 2022. They were extremely popular for the young and young at heart, and for many it was a chance to catch up with friends they haven't seen in person for over a year.





Ice Cream Socials June – July – August 2020

- In August, Fellowship organized Pastor Alison's goodbye lunch (special thanks to Cathy Malman for hosting it at her home). The following month, we hosted a well-attended Rally Day (renamed **Welcome Back Sunday** as a book end to Welcome Home Sunday in June) on September 12th. We were grateful to be back in the Hilltop kitchen together preparing food, and had better than expected attendance for the event



Welcome Back Sunday 9/12/20



Welcome Back Sunday 9/12/20

- Fellowship was honored and pleased to host a meet and greet for our interim pastor, the Reverend Dr. Mueller on October 10th.



- Some much-needed updates to the Fellowship section of the church's website were completed thanks to Bob Willis!
- Refreshments for our Christmas concert were cancelled given the rise in COVID cases due to the Omicron variant. We remain cautiously optimistic however that we can resume “normal” activities in 2022. To that end, we look forward to the **Chili Cookoff**, led once again by our team member Wade Carter, tentatively scheduled for **February 26th**.
- There are outside activities that fall under the “umbrella” of our church’s “Fellowship Area of Ministry”, including gathering at the Black Horse Pub after worship, every 4th Sunday. This event is led by Troy Guinn-Bailey and other members of the Adult Education group. We look forward to also developing other events whenever possible, to attract congregants of all ages - ball games, amusement parks, theaters, concerts etc.
- Current active members in the Fellowship area of ministry are: Marcia Koch, Wade Carter, Liz Siminoff, Sharon Betz, Anne Kleemeyer, Kathy Claxton, Devyani Morris, Lisa Jordan, Lissa Anderson, Miriam Ralamb, Ashley Antonello, and Jane MacNeil. Any and all are welcome to participate. We do not have regular meetings. In the past, we considered our preparation time together for various events to be our meeting time. We also utilize email communication when a group consensus is required. We look forward to the day when we all feel comfortable being together in person. Until then, we will encourage and welcome creative ways or ideas for Fellowship to continue during the Covid Pandemic.

Respectfully Submitted,

Devyani Morris

No Report

Mission, Service and Benevolence Area of Ministry

The mission program of the First Presbyterian Church of Mendham helps us to be the serving church God wants us to be and provides opportunities for us to be witnesses to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. We support people, programs and ministries in the community and worldwide which spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and extend help to those in need. – Mission Statement of the MSB Area of Ministry

During 2021, the MSB Area of Ministry committee members included: Sharon Betz (chair), John Blumers, Ginny Gilman, Russ Hall, Paula Kumpf, Cathy Malman, Hope Swarts, Wendy Whiting, Rev. Paden, and Rev. Mueller-Bolton.

As in prior years, MSB's focus in 2021 was Hands-on Mission. However, the Covid 19 pandemic continued to substantially restrict our ability to engage in "hands-on" activities. We have continued to support our mission partners in modified ways.

Interfaith Food Pantry Network – Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, the Pantry continued with prepared food bags and operated with staff and limited volunteers. The "Pantry Partner" program has expanded to 28 county-wide partners. MSB members remain active on the Board and as volunteers. In November, Hilltop and the Mendham Interchurch Committee partnered in a three Sunday food drive held in the Hilltop House parking lot. We worked with St. John the Baptist Convent, Brookside Community Church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, and Grace Lutheran Church. We delivered 34 turkeys, 1,526 pounds of non-perishable food, and \$100 to the Interfaith Food Pantry Network.

Nourish.NJ – Due to Covid 19, NNJ continued to do bag meals prepared and distributed by staff. They do not expect to return to their pre-Covid routines (at least for a while). They are now based in downtown Morristown at 36 Sussex Avenue. Meals are prepared at the Morristown United Methodist Church and are distributed at the Sussex Ave. facility, Senior Housing, and markets. A new space in Victory Gardens will open in Spring 2023. The Hilltop Breakfast Bag team packed 100 breakfast bags each month. We prepared 30 "Personal Acts of Kindness Kits" for adults and 15 for children. Hilltop Church and Brookside Church joined together for the local Hunger Walk with participation from Hilltop's 2021 Confirmation class. We also collected and packed items for the "Purple Apron" meal project.

Homeless Solutions – We provided four Emergency Shelter dinners according to Covid protocols. On the three occasions when we were not allowed to cook and serve in person, MSB delivered a chicken dinner to the shelter.

Act Now! Youth Fellowship – Local repair projects were held since Covid prevented travel to Appalachia this year. MSB contributed funds. A domestic 2022 mission trip is scheduled for July 23-31.

Camp Johnsonburg – In addition to virtual programs, the camp was able to provide on-site camping and retreat opportunities with modified procedures for Covid. They are seeking to expand and modernize their programs and campus. The camp is embarking on a two-million-dollar fundraising effort to improve infrastructure and programming. MSB supported the camp with funding.

Market Street Mission Clothing Drive – With the assistance of Hilltop Christian Nursery families, we collected 28 coats and 37 hats.

Table of Hope – The Spring Street Community Development Corporation (CDC), associated with Bethel AME Church, sponsors the Table of Hope in Morristown, a community kitchen offering dinner at no cost Monday through Friday to needy residents in the area. Like other food providers, TOH has

switched from sit-down dinners to staff-prepared food bags and serves about 80 meals each day. MSB helps as permitted by Covid protocols and with funding.

Morris Habitat for Humanity – The program now encompasses six NJ counties. Two new homes were dedicated. Work continues at the 25-unit project on Bennett Street, Randolph. Currently, we support Habitat through funding.

Family Promise –Covid 19 prevented congregational hosting of families again this year. We supported two weeks of their hotel sheltering program with meals, gift cards for groceries, meals, gas, and transportation. Deacons supported the program with a donation as well.

Mission Gifting Cards -- Our annual Christmas fundraiser offered the opportunity to contribute to one of our 8 hands-on mission partners and receive a card announcing the gift and explaining the mission. A paperwhite flower bulb was offered with each card. \$1320 was raised and distributed according to the wishes of our contributors.



Light for Zimbabwe – MSB contributed to the CE potato farm project in Zimbabwe.

PDA—We funded disaster relief.

Special Offerings – MSB organized the One Great Hour of Sharing and Christmas Joy Offerings, collecting over \$500 for each.



A Mission Star was given to Ginny Gilman for her dedication to Nourish.NJ and other MSB projects.

The MSB website was updated thanks to the wonderful help and expertise of Bob Willis.

For the 2020-2021 church budget year, the Mission, Service and Benevolence budget totaled \$17,000. This money was used to fund supplies for our limited hands-on projects and as donations to our mission partners. Due to budget cuts, we have \$10,237 to fund mission in 2021-22.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Betz, Chair

Nurture Education and Discipleship

As we lived through year 2 of the pandemic, our Christian Education team stayed true to our commitment to serve the education needs of our children and families. Though our challenges were great - Zoom fatigue, wariness and weariness around being in groups while remaining socially distant, competing commitments outside of church - the dedicated group continued to find ways to meet the families where they were and provide lessons, opportunities, and resources to bring Christian Education into their lives. As Director of Family Ministries, Cathy Malman inspires us all with her dedication and spirit, and truly serves the Lord and our families in her role.



Our committee remained flexible with our curriculum and supportive of the Director of Family Ministries when her responsibilities were streamlined. Session also approved our proposal to move Sunday School to during worship when our school year began in September. Our struggle to bring children in, even before the pandemic, is one that we are constantly addressing and brainstorming. We strive to offer teachings and ideas for the whole family that can be discussed at home for those who cannot make it to Sunday School. Many thanks to Loren Darzano, Fiona Stewart, Veronica Poylangada, Deb Fox-Lopez, and Kate Coffey for all their effort and creativity. Pastor Alison Paden-Peters was part of the committee prior to leaving and Dr. Meredith Mueller-Bolton has been joining the group lately as well.



Special thanks to Troy Guinn-Bailey for his tireless leadership of our Adult Education group. He leads spirited discussions and fellowship gatherings for a faithful bunch, and welcomes all to join the fun!

Our year in review was filled with many activities.

January: Mission month reviewing our work in Zimbabwe and local missions

February: Souper Bowl of Caring and Valentines for church youth and HCNS students

March: Movement as Prayer led by Veronica Poylangada

April: Delivery of Easter prayer boxes and gifts to Sunday School families and gifts for HCNS students

May: Mother's Day plant sale; 7 confirmands join the church

June: Communion, Bible and Worship class concludes with 6 participants

September: A Simpler Rally Day with old fashioned games and fun!; (2) 4 year olds receive storybook bibles

October: Fall mum sale; Mendham Hunger Walk; Reformation Sunday/Halloween party

November: Children make fleece hats for Market Street Mission; New confirmation class with 3 members begins

December: CE delivers advent calendars to youth families; No Stress/No Tears Christmas pageant is held with children able to play multiple parts and participation from the congregation—young and young-at-heart alike!



We continue to serve the Lord and our families, and welcome and appreciate the prayers and support of our congregation.



Respectfully submitted,

Stefanie Fox
CE Chair



Report of the Personnel and Administration Area of Ministry

This year has seen changes in our Hilltop staff, and we are appreciative to those who served throughout the year. We thank Pastor Alison Paden and Matthew Paulik for their years of service to Hilltop and wish them well in their new journeys. We have continued to be served faithfully by Danielle Doyle (Office Manager), Cathy Malman (Director of Christian Education), Jim Wynne (Director of Music Ministries), and Maria Pappa (Housekeeper). We were also joined briefly by Reverend William “Tex” Culton, who served as Bridge Pastor. Finally, we were blessed to add two new staff members to the Hilltop family. Dr. Reverend Merideth Mueller-Bolton (Transitional Pastor and Head of Staff) and John Andrews (Facilities Manager) joined us in the fall.

All of our staff members work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep Hilltop running, and we are grateful for their efforts. These are just a few of the “hidden” tasks they do on our behalf:

- Danielle supports all of the committees of the Session, manages payroll, and publishes both the weekly “What’s Happening” and *The Spire*.
- Cathy coordinates a variety of Christian Education activities that have evolved during the pandemic, including sending Lenten packages and Advent calendars to our youth and their families. She is also the Appalachian Service Project contact for the church.
- Jim selects and prepares wonderful preludes and postludes, in addition to rehearsing the choir.
- Maria keeps all of our buildings clean.
- John keeps everything in working order.
- Merideth provides spiritual support to individuals, moderates Session, and meets with all the committees of the church.

The Personnel and Administration committee is grateful for this year’s partnership with Building and Grounds, whose members stepped into the roles needed during a time of transition. From caring for the nursery school grounds to weekly trash disposal to event setup, volunteers from B&G kept the church running for several months while we collaboratively searched for a Facilities Manager.

As we move into the next phase of Hilltop's life, maintaining our current staffing and installing a new pastor remain challenges we face.

The Personnel and Administration Committee encourages you to give generously to support the staffing that makes Hilltop run. We also invite new members to join our committee. Please contact the church office if you are willing to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Turner, Chair



Worship and Music Area of Ministry

The Worship and Music Area of Ministry provides oversight and support for worship services and the music ministry. Our primary task is planning worship services and music events with the pastor and music director. In addition, we arrange for ushers, flowers, and candles, as well as prepare communion, decorate the sanctuary for holidays and liturgical seasons and oversee the operation of Noah's Ark Nursery. Our services and other events require the organization and efforts of many people. We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge a few of them and thank them for their important service. As you read through the list, you will see how much they contribute to our church life.



We were blessed in 2021 with the leadership of Pastor Alison Paden until her departure, then guest ministers and now our interim minister, Reverend Dr. Merideth Mueller-Bolton. Similarly, Jim Wynne, our Director of Music, continues to bring fresh music to each worship service. We always need choir members, so please consider adding your voice to Hilltop's worship. Thank you to Bob Willis, who continues to be a dedicated and passionate caretaker of our amazing organ.

The Noah's Ark Nursery provides loving childcare for our youngest ones through age three during our services. The Worship Workshop program engages our younger members ages four through 2nd grade during services. Unfortunately, we have been forced to suspend both due to the pandemic, but look forward to restarting them as soon as possible.



Thank you to the Buildings and Grounds committee for their continued support of our special events and care of the sanctuary.

Thank you to Mitzi Fox who serves as our Flower Coordinator, making certain that the flower arrangements on the communion table, Christmas poinsettias, and Easter flowers are always beautiful.

Thank you to Dave Kerr, who serves as our Usher Coordinator and to the other members who perform this service.

Thank you to Bob Willis, who prepares for and stewards our live streaming of Sunday worship. We continue to add to the audio/visual live streaming capability. These facilities will ensure that we continue to offer a live streaming worship option for our congregants near and far for years to come. We would greatly appreciate more volunteers to help run this valuable part of our worship experience.

Thank you to our committee members for their dedicated service: Laura Grzanka, Lissa Anderson, Tom Porter, Betsy Manchester, Eric Balderson, Reverend Dr. Merideth Mueller-Bolton and Jim Wynne.

Finally, a heartfelt and appreciative thank you to all the dedicated individuals who perform in our music ensembles, dutifully serve as ushers and greeters, prepare and serve communion, donate flowers, and perform so many other tasks to support worship at Hilltop. And of course, thank you to all Hilltop congregants for gathering in His name each week to share the Good News with each other.

Respectfully submitted,

Cliff Lee, Chair

Annual Report for 2021