



# Welcome to the Hilltop Spire

## First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, NJ

*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*  
Psalm 100:4-5

### IN THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor  
Stewardship  
Worship Calendar  
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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

#### IN NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 5th  
**All Saints  
Communion**

Sunday, November 26th  
**Christ the King**

Sunday, December 3rd  
**1st Sunday of  
Advent  
2024 Pledge  
Dedication**

#### NEXT ISSUE:

Articles for the Advent  
Spire are due to the  
office by **November  
15<sup>th</sup>**! The Spire is  
available online at  
[www.hilltopchurch.org](http://www.hilltopchurch.org)

**Need to contact us?**  
Email [office@hilltopchurch.org](mailto:office@hilltopchurch.org)  
Hilltopchurch.org

November is a big month at Hilltop Church. It provides an important connection for us, ushering our way among the busy transitions of autumn and dropping us off right at the cusp of Advent. The weather is getting cooler every day and this week we'll be turning back the clocks and regaining an hour of light in the mornings, just in time to gear up for the coming holidays. Since it is the month of Thanksgiving, I sat down intending to write some simple reflections about what we have to be thankful for as a church family and what I'm thankful for as your pastor. Certainly, that would be a long list. Your church family itself is a blessing worthy of thanksgiving, not just to each other but to all the communities whose lives you touch. You can also be thankful for living in a town that is close-knit yet also deeply connected to the whole region and, for that matter, to the world. I am thankful everyday that I have been blessed with the opportunity to be your pastor, and that Linda and I have been able to make our home here with you in Mendham.

But, this afternoon, the thought that lingers in my mind more than any other is that I'm writing about thankfulness during the week between our celebration of the 506th Anniversary of the Reformation and our observance of All Saints' Day. Both are things for which we can be deeply thankful. The birth of the Protestant church marked a cleansing declaration of the centrality of the grace of Jesus Christ, the authority of Holy Scripture over any human enterprise including the Church. It also recentered personal, inward, faith in our walk with God. As important as the events were, they might all seem like obscure theological deliberations if it were not for the concrete faithful examples of the saints who have gone before us, inspiring us with the example of their Christian lives. Family, friends, church members, and complete strangers have shown us the way and testify to the living God among us. This week is a time to be thankful for the Body of Christ, alive in our Reformed Church, and for the promise of eternal life among the other saints in heaven.

More than anything else, let us be thankful that we are children of a loving and eternal God. How can we even begin to respond to such a blessing? I think the opening verses of the passage provided at the beginning of this article give us the most fitting and best way to express our thanks: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing." Let's keep doing that together every week, up on the Hilltop!

See You on Sunday,

*Pastor Scot*

## *2024 Stewardship Campaign.....*

Dear Hilltop Family,



“Restore to me the joy of salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.” Taken from the 51st Psalm, that’s the theme of this year’s Stewardship Campaign. It speaks to a time of recovery, asking the Lord to restore the joys of salvation. Surely, following the traumas of the pandemic, this is a time of recovery. It’s a time when many who had long known the joys of life in the church have somehow become removed from it. Surprisingly, the psalmist doesn’t ask God for anything more than a willing spirit. We are each sustained by our own willing spirit. That is, our own enthusiasm, our willingness, to serve the Lord and serve other people lifts us up more than anything that comes from without. Nowhere does God restore that willing spirit in us more than through a life in the church.

This year’s Stewardship Campaign is one of the most important ones we’ve ever had. Like every church, we’ve had to do a lot of rebuilding since the pandemic. The patterns of life evolved for so many of us. One result has been that many families, couples, and individuals have not yet made their way back to church. The impact on church finances and volunteerism would be hard to understate. I know that so many of you, along with church staff, have been working harder than ever keeping our programs and missions running to ensure that our friends and neighbors have something to come back *to* when the time is right. We must take the same determined approach to financial giving.

You might think it doesn’t make much of a difference whether or not you pledge, but pledges are the only measure to estimate how much income the church will have this year. If only 30% of members pledge, we have to base our spending on a much lower number than we might actually end up with. That unnecessarily curtails our ability to function. In addition to the need for pledging, during this time of historic cost increases our giving per member has essentially remained flat for the past ten years. We hope you will prayerfully consider increasing your pledge this year to help the church keep up with costs. The “Stewardship Facts and Insights” on the following pages provides more information about our finances and answers some frequently asked questions.

There are lots of wonderful and exciting things happening at Hilltop Church. The Holy Spirit is nudging us in new and innovative directions. If you haven’t been part of things here for a while, we’d love to have you back among us. I can’t wait to see what’s next!

See You on Sunday,

*Pastor Scot*

## Our Worship Life...

**WORSHIP IS AT 10:00 A.M.**  
**NOVEMBER PREACHING SCHEDULE**

**NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS!**

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**  
**Pastor Scot to Preach**

**NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**

**Pastor Scot to Preach**

**NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>**

**Pastor Scot to Preach**

**NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>**

**Rev. Courtney Cromie to Preach**

## Our Fellowship Life...

**Upcoming Second Sunday Events — Mark your Calendars**

Sunday, November 12, at 3:45 pm  
 Potluck "Tailgating" Party  
 Hilltop House Fellowship Hall  
 14 Hilltop Rd, Mendham  
 Hilltop Church  
 First Presbyterian • Mendham, NJ

**BRING YOUR FAVORITE TAILGATING FOODS TO SHARE!**

**Giants on the BIG Screen!**

are you ready for some FOOTBALL?

Sunday, December 10 at 5:00  
 Hilltop House, 14 Hilltop Rd, Mendham  
 Hilltop Church  
 First Presbyterian • Mendham, NJ

**Christmas Potluck and Carol Sing**

Get into the Christmas spirit with good food and fellowship!

**Just added! All Church Bowling at Pastime Lanes**

**Sunday, December 3rd from 4:00-6:00 PM**

Two whole hours with the bowling lanes to ourselves! We'll meet at Hilltop House at 3:50 and walk over to Pastime Lanes together. Bring \$10 to help cover pizza. BYO adult beverages.

**Hilltop Women's Bible Discussion Group** - The Hilltop Women's Bible Study Group meets at Hilltop House Library on Thursdays, at 9:45 AM, for socializing, and then our studies begin at 10:00 AM. The sessions end by 11:30 AM. Newcomers are always welcome, and there is no need to wait for a new study topic to start attending. For the Advent Season, beginning with our October 26th meeting, we will be discussing the Adam Hamilton study, "The Journey." This 5-week Advent study will take us through November 30th, with no meeting on Thanksgiving. Next, on December 7th, we will watch, and discuss, a Christmas DVD presentation, by Adam Stanley, "Who Needs Christmas?" Then, on December 14th, is our Women's Bible Study Christmas Social. We will break until the New Year, resuming again on January 11th, with a new study using N.T. Wright's "For Everyone Bible Study Guides - Romans." For those in need of remote access, we offer a zoom link and welcome virtual attendees! Hope to see you there! Any questions please email Amy Beal at: [ajbeal2@comcast.net](mailto:ajbeal2@comcast.net)

**Men's Bible Study Group** - Saturday mornings in the Hilltop House Library from 8:30-10:00 am

**Adult Education** - Sundays immediately after Church in the Hilltop House parlor and tries to wrap up its meetings by around 12:30. On the final Sunday of each month there's no formal meeting and, instead, we typically meet at the Blackhorse Pub for fellowship and brunch. We hope you'll join us.

## *Our Life in Service and Mission.....*

### **MAKE IT HAPPEN AT HILLTOP Opportunities to serve**

Are you considering how you can get involved at Hilltop Church? Maybe you took the Make it Happen at Hilltop form home and you are still thinking about how to share your time and talents. There are many choices .... many needs... many ways to get involved. You could try something new, help out, make new friends, understand the church better, and participate in Christ's work in the community.

"Make it Happen at Hilltop" forms are still available at the sanctuary and Hilltop House if you need one. See Wendy Whiting, Linda McCachren, or Sharon Betz to discuss the opportunities. You can return the form in the collection plate or in Sharon's (mission) mailbox at Hilltop House.

### **Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center Marked for the Future Campaign**

In the fall of 2021, Camp Johnsonburg kicked off their Marked for the Future Campaign. The goal was to raise \$2M in order to fulfill their visions for the future of the camp. Hilltop church made generous donations to this campaign. The camp has met its goal in donations and pledges! They are building a new pavilion, expanding their nature program for preschoolers, upgrading some of the cabins, and upgrading the kitchen. Upcoming plans include expansion/ renovation of the dining hall, renovation of the Rec center, and construction of yurts.

Camp Johnsonburg is New Jersey's Presbyterian Camp and is only 45 minutes away. Explore their camping and retreat opportunities at [www.campjburg.org](http://www.campjburg.org). There are camp fliers at Hilltop House. Hilltop has supported Johnsonburg for many years with campers, counselors, board members, and contributions of time, talent, and money.

HOMELESS SOLUTIONS, INC.



## A NIGHT IN THE COLD

FRIDAY, DEC. 1st

RAISE FUNDS & AWARENESS  
FOR THE HOMELESS



Pastor Scot and a Hilltop team are sleeping outside on December 1.

Get in on the action!



Join the Team or Make a Donation by following the above QR code or from the link at:

<https://www.hilltopchurch.org/mission-partners>

## *Our Life in Service and Mission (con't).....*



### **Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive**

It's time for our annual Thanksgiving food drive with the Mendham Interchurch Community. As you know, Russ Hall, who passed this year, used to run this event and was quite passionate about it. So, to celebrate a day dedicated to giving thanks, let's help others feel

blessed and cared for too!

This year, the Interfaith Food Pantry Network expects to give out 2200 Thanksgiving bags! So, they really need our frozen turkeys and non-perishable Thanksgiving dinner fixings. Fixings needed include: cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, corn muffin mix, brownie mix, gravy (can, jar or packet), stuffing mix, and canned sweet potatoes, corn, or green beans.

Please take note of the single date for the food drive: November 12, 2023, from 9:30AM-12:30PM down in the parking lot at Hilltop House. This is the Sunday BEFORE the Sunday before Thanksgiving, i.e. a week earlier than in the past. So, shop early and often, to earn those free turkeys by November 12th.

Please contact Wendy Whiting at wawhiting27@gmail.com with any questions.

*"I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do." - Helen Keller*

### **Thanksgiving Morning Turkey Trot**

In its 17th year, and live again after last year's virtual race, the Turkey Trot goal remains the same – to support the Literacy Volunteers of Morris County as they teach residents to **read**, to help the Interfaith Food Pantry Network as they **feed** residents in need, and help keep each of us fit with our annual holiday **run**. Registration at:

[www.readfeedrun.org](http://www.readfeedrun.org)

**GINTY FIELD MORRIS TOWNSHIP (GPS ADDRESS: 49 Woodland Ave., Morris Township, NJ)**

7:00 a.m. Packet Pick-up & On-Site Registration

8:30 a.m. 5K Run

8:45 a.m. 1 Mile Fun Walk/Run

9:15 a.m. Kids' Trot (12 & under)

9:30 a.m. Awards Ceremony



## *Eye On Stewardship* From The Finance & Stewardship Area of Ministry

Presented in the table below are the three-month results for the fiscal year which began ended July 1, 2023 and results for the prior two fiscal years. We continue to see the same trends in our financial results as were reported in the last issue of The Spire. For three months of the year, Total Income of \$79k reflected a significant decrease of \$40k from the prior period total of \$119k. This decline is a result of two factors: (1) Pledge Income continued to decline, from \$92k two years ago, to \$75k last year to \$68k this year and (2) last year's results included the receipt of funds from a very generous bequest. As noted in previous commentary on our financial position, the continuing decline in Pledge Income - since a high point in 2018 - remains a concern as this is the key driver of the Church's financial health.

Turning to Expenditures, our largest expense categories are Personnel and Buildings & Grounds. On the plus side, Buildings & Grounds expenses declined substantially from a year ago; recall that last year, we incurred significant expense for steeple repairs and painting of the Church. We appreciate that all areas of ministry continue to carefully manage expenses. As a result of the above factors, the Church reported a Net Loss of -\$12k for the first three months of this year.

As we enter into a season of stewardship, we ask that all church members support Hilltop to the best of their ability. Through our gifts to Hilltop Church, we can continue to fund the work that God calls us to do both here locally as well as in the broader world community.

Three Months July - Sept	2023 \$(000)	2022 \$(000)	2021 \$(000)
<b>Income</b>			
Pledge	\$68	\$75	\$92
All Other	\$11	\$44	\$2
<b>Total</b>	\$79	\$119	\$101
<b>Expense</b>	\$91	\$131	\$80
<b>Net Gain or (Loss)</b>	<b>-\$12</b>	<b>-\$12</b>	<b>\$21</b>

## *Christian Education Update...*

First of all, our beloved Director of Christian Ed, Britany Gladhill, stepped down from her position. Special thanks to Britany for her guidance in starting up the Quest program and for serving our children and families so ably! We are now actively searching fill the CE Director Position. If interested please contact the church office.

**Sunday School** is in session! We have missed so many of you! It is held in the Sanctuary Fletcher Room immediately after Pastor Scot's "Time with Children." We are currently teaching about the life of Jesus.

Yes! We will be having a **Christmas Pageant!** The pageant will take place during our 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service. Please check your emails/What's Happening for a rehearsal time and for other events leading up to Christmas.

And for you 3rd graders—**Communion, Bible Workshop** will be held in the New Year, possibly February-March. Watch emails for details!

**Vacation Bible School** is coming to Hilltop! June 17th-21st. Stay tuned for additional details.

Also, as we have been out of touch with so many of you. PLEASE let us know how we can help with your children's faith formation. We know lives are so very busy with schedules, but we want you to know that Hilltop Church has you. We lift you up in prayer daily and we can provide the resources you need to help your child learn the important lessons Jesus has taught us.

## *Deacons News...*

### **Lunch with Friends**

The **November Thanksgiving Luncheon** will be held on **November 8th** with coffee, fruit and snacks at 11:00 and lunch at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Volunteers are needed to bring food, set-up, serve and clean up - contact Paula Raimondo with any questions or to volunteer. We always look forward to new guests and helpers! Planning ahead, the December luncheon will be held on December 8th with ham and a variety of side dishes offered.

### **Advent Wreath Workshop and Social**

The Deacons would like to invite everyone in the congregation and friends to an **Advent Wreath Workshop and Social**, to be held right after church, in Hilltop House, on **December 3rd**. All ages are welcome. We will make age-appropriate advent wreaths and provide simple family devotionals for the season. We will have light refreshments, including holiday snacks, and Christmas music as we craft and visit. All the materials will be provided. Save the date!



### **FIS/ LoveLines Ministry**

The Hilltop Deacons are partnering with the Center for Family Services this Christmas season so that some families in Morris County can provide their children with Christmas gifts. As we have done in years past, there will be a **Christmas tree with angel tags located in the Fletcher room on November 19th and 26th**. The tags will have the child's gender, age and 2 requested gifts. Please keep purchases around \$50.00 per child. **The gifts will be dedicated during the December 10th worship service.** Please bring your gifts with you. If you are not able to attend the service, please drop off during the prior week at Hilltop House. The gifts do not need to be wrapped. Attach your angel tag to the outside of the bag. If you would prefer to purchase gift cards, please use Walmart or Target for \$50.00. Thank you for helping us to make the Christmas season merry!

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**


Do you like to knit or crochet or would you like to learn? The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the the third Wednesday of the month. The group will meet at 1:30 pm on **November 18** in the Hilltop House parlor. All supplies are provided. Contact Marilyn Willett at [willetstation@gmail.com](mailto:willetstation@gmail.com) for more information.

## *Prayer Shawl*



## Music Ministries Upcoming Events...

The Hilltop Church Concert Series presents  
**The Annual Silent Movie Night**



The 1922 Silent Film -  
 Starring Lon Chaney and  
 Jackie Coogan in  
 Charles Dicken's  
**"Oliver Twist"**

Organ Accompaniment  
 by James Wynne

"Please, Sir...I Want Some More!"

Friday Evening, November 17 at 7:00 pm  
 Hilltop Presbyterian Church: 20 Hilltop Road, Mendham  
 Tickets: \$15 Adults: Students \$10 /Children under 12 are FREE!  
 Live Stream: \$25 per household  
 Call: 973- 543-4012 for ticket information or Live Stream link

The Hilltop Presbyterian Church presents  
**The Annual Christmas Concert**  
**"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"**



Featuring:  
**The Hilltop Oratorio Choir, Orchestra, Organ,  
 and Handbell Choir**  
**James A. Wynne, Conductor**

Sunday Afternoon, December 17, 2023 at 4:00 pm  
 Tickets: 20.00 Adults/ \$10.00 Students and Children (Under 7 are Free)

**The 2023-2024 Hilltop Presbyterian Church Concert Series**  
 For ticket and concert information, call: 973-543-4012  
 All Concerts May be 'Live-Streamed.' Call the Church Office at the number above  
 Mondays through Thursday to arrange to receive the link.

Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm  
**The Jersey Brass Quintet and  
 The West Jersey Woodwind Quintet**  
 Adults: \$20 Students: \$10

Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>  
 Silent Movie Night – James Wynne, Organist  
**"Oliver Twist"**  
 Starring Jackie Coogan and Lon Chaney  
 Adults: \$15 Students: \$10

Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm  
**The Hilltop Oratorio Choir Christmas Concert**  
**"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"**  
 The Hilltop Oratorio Choir, Orchestra, Bells, and Organ  
 Adults: \$20 Students: \$10

Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 pm  
**Organ Transcriptions, Part II**  
**James Wynne, Organist**  
*Orchestral music not written for the organ but played on  
 the instrument anyway!*  
 Adults: \$15 Students: \$10

Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm  
 (Snow Date: Saturday, March 2)  
**The Yale 'Spizzwinks(?)'**  
*Established 1914 – The Oldest Undergraduate  
 A Cappella Ensemble in the United States*

Special Masterclass for High School Students at 3:30 with  
 Dinner with the 'Winks' at 5:00  
 Combination Class/Dinner/Concert tickets for students: \$25  
 Concert Tickets - Adults: \$20 Students: \$10

**Hilltop Presbyterian Church**  
 20 Hilltop Road  
 Mendham, NJ 07945

**Church Office at Hilltop House**  
 14 Hilltop Road  
 Mendham, NJ 07945

**The Rev. Scot McCachren, Pastor**

**James A. Wynne**  
**Organist and Director of Music**



Please consider becoming a patron of the arts for our 2023-24 Hilltop Concert Series. The cost is \$200 and your name will appear in all printed programs. In addition you will receive 50% off all event tickets which you may use to buy any number of tickets. Please contact the church office for more information or visit our website to sign up at <https://www.hilltopchurch.org/patrons-of-hilltop-music>