



Welcome to the Hilltop Spire

First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, NJ

FROM THE PASTOR

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.

Mark 6:30-32

The "Usual Suspects..." In business, we often hear about the "80/20 Rule." That is, 80% of the work seems to be done by 20% of the people. In theory, that 20% of high performers will rise to the top. Often, though, they just get burned out. At church, we call those high performers the "Usual Suspects." When a new project needs to be run, we call on a usual suspect to take it on. Of course, they're the ones already involved in a list of other things. But they won't say no. So, we turn to them anyway. If you're reading this, there's a good chance you are one of our usual suspects.

The problem is, with the challenges facing the Church today, it feels like pretty much everyone has to be a usual suspect just to keep the doors open. Lately, I've seen the burnout creeping into a lot of you – in fact, I often feel it myself. With the next six months bringing Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter, the challenges are going to get worse before they get better. *Something's gotta give!* Fortunately, our Savior knows that and reminds us to take time to step back from our labors, to rest in him, and to rejuvenate before getting back to his work. The Good Shepherd's love and concern for your wellbeing is just as important to honor as your own concern for Hilltop Church.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus' disciples have been working so hard they haven't even had a chance to eat. I imagine they've had little time for sleep as well. So Jesus calls a timeout. As vital as their work is, he knows they can't continue at the pace they are going. Jesus tells the disciples to take the boat, find a deserted place, and rest a while. The work will still be there tomorrow and the next day.

In these all-hands-on-deck days, let's remember to look around at our siblings in Christ. Ask how they're doing. Is there something you can help with? Do they need to slow down? If they've taken on too much and you have some capacity, you could even offer to take over something they're doing. And know with certainty that Christ, through the unfailing presence and action of the Holy Spirit, wants to do the same and so much more for you.

I'm thankful that so many of you do so much for Hilltop Church – in fact, I rely on it. But don't forget to ask and allow the grace of Jesus Christ to rest on you. And give you peace.

See You on Sunday,

Pastor Scot

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

IN NOVEMBER
Sunday,
November 26th
Christ the King

Sunday,
December 3rd
First Sunday of
Advent

NEXT ISSUE:

Articles for the
November Spire
are due to the office
by **October 26th**!
The Spire is
available online
at hilltopchurch.org

**Need to contact
us at Hilltop?**
Call us at
973-543-4012 or
Fax us at

Christian Education Update...

The new school year has begun and we are excited to welcome children and families back to Hilltop!

Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark is open and staffed EVERY SUNDAY for children ages 0-4 years old. Enjoy worship knowing your young ones are being well-cared for in the nursery.

Sunday School

Sunday School has begun. We meet with children grades K thru 5 on Sundays during worship. We will gather at the back of the sanctuary after Pastor Scot's children's message and begin our lesson together. Sunday school leaders and teen helpers are always needed and welcomed! The only requirement is a loving heart.

Hilltop Quest

Due to some unexpected staffing changes, the Monday afternoon Hilltop Quest program is on hold until we can fill our lead vacancy. Please be on the lookout for updates!

CE Birthday Bash is Back!

Sunday, October 8th at 5:30pm. Fellowship's Potluck will be followed by our Birthday Cake Raffle and Bash!

If you have never been, we have lots of fun & games and cakes are baked for each month of the year. Folks purchase raffle tickets and place their ticket in the cake of their choice. Winning tickets for each month are drawn as we sing Happy Birthday! Winners are invited to share their cakes or take them home!

Bakers are needed! Please sign up on the Poster in the Fletcher Room or contact Cathy Malman, cimalman12@gmail.com or 973-543-0161.

Funds raised will be donated to "A Light for Zimbabwe" for Nomias and Oti's tuition.

Youth Group

Our fireside youth group gathering in September was a fun evening! The small group stayed busy roasting hotdogs and marshmallows over the open flame, eating s'mores and practicing their amateur movie making skills filming a short skit! And they finished up just in time to get home before the rain started.

October 15 Stony Hill Farm Corn Maze (11:30 am - 1:30 pm)

Sunday Dec 3 at 4 pm - Bowling at Pastime Lanes

Music on the Hill

Megan Pepper opened the Music on the Hill season on September 30 with an enjoyable set. Mark your calendar for the next one on December 16th at 7 pm.

Christmas Pageant

Save the Date! This year's Christmas pageant will be on Sunday, December 24 during the 4 pm Christmas Eve family service. We will continue with our all inclusive, time sensitive "No Stress, No Tears" pageant format we have done the past 2 years. Keep your eyes and ears alert for updates as we get closer to the Advent season.

Christian Education, Nurture and Development for Adults at Hilltop Church

Women's Bible Study Group - Thursday mornings in the Hilltop House Library from 9:45-11:30 am

Our study on Acts and will wrap up on Thursday Oct 19. We decided we would start our Advent study on Oct 26. We will be discussing the Adam Hamilton study, "The Journey." Newcomers are always welcome. Some of us already have the study book since this is the same Advent study that we did in 2021. There is a weekly video we will watch together each week also. *If you do not already have the book, it can be ordered on Amazon or other church websites, here is a link to view on Amazon with photo:* <https://a.co/d/9WKINAn>

(Be careful not to order the "season of reflections" devotional book under the same title also by Adam Hamilton.) This next 5-week Advent study will take us through November 30th, with no meeting on Thanksgiving.

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.

Eye on Stewardship From The Finance & Stewardship Area of Ministry

Presented in the table below are the two-month results for the fiscal year which began ended July 1, 2023 and results for the prior two fiscal years. Total income of \$56k reflected a significant decrease of \$38k from the prior period total of \$94k. This decline is a result of two factors: (1) Pledge Income continued to decline, from \$73k two years ago, to \$53k last year to \$49k 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. As a result of the above factors, the Church reported a Net Loss of -\$4k for the first two 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.

Two Months July - August	2023 \$(000)	2022 \$(000)	2021 \$(000)
Income			
Pledge	\$49	\$53	\$73
All Other	\$7	\$41	\$6
Total	\$56	\$94	\$79
Expense	\$60	\$79	\$48
Net Gain or (Loss)	-\$4	\$15	\$31

Fellowship Life...

Take a Walk with the Pastor

Pastor Scot and Linda enjoy a walk at Mountain Valley Park (the Mud Hole) at 10:00 each Saturday morning. They'd love for you to join them! The walk will be as short or as far as you want. There's even some benches where we can just sit and chat if you'd rather. It's not about walking - it's about being together! Please note, if it is raining the walk will not take place.

Upcoming Second Sunday Events at Hilltop Church



**Family Heritage
Potluck Dinner**

Sunday, October 8 • 5:30 pm • Fellowship Hall

Bring food that represents your family!



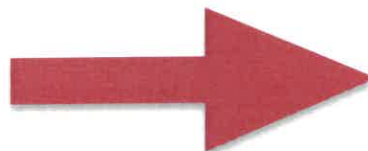
Sunday, November 12, at 3:45 pm
Potluck "Tailgating" Party
Hilltop House Fellowship Hall
14 Hilltop Rd, Mendham

BRING YOUR FAVORITE TAILGATING FOODS TO SHARE!

Giants on the BIG Screen!

Are you ready for some FOOTBALL?

Please go online to check out our **new website** at **Hilltopchurch.org!** Or, with your cellphone, you can use this **QR code** to learn more about what is happening at Hilltop Church!



Mission Update ...

Annual Coat Giveaway

Clean out your closets and donate your gently used coats of all sizes (except rain or windbreakers) to the Market Street Mission's Annual Coat Drive. Also collecting new hats, scarves, gloves. Plastic bin for coat collection is in Hilltop House Closet or email Cathy Malman, cimalman12@gmail.com for collection. **Last day for donation is 10/22!** Many thanks!

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Hilltop Church will be collecting turkeys and other holiday foods to donate to the Interfaith Food Pantry Network again this year! Details to follow. Contact Wendy Whiting at wawhiting27@gmail.com for any IFPN questions.

Deacons Update...

The Deacons are pleased to invite everyone to **Lunch with Friends** this month. Please join us for a lovely home-cooked meal on October 11th. Doors open at 11 for coffee and snacks and lunch is served at noon.

The next **Prayer Shawl ministry** is on Wednesday, Oct 18th at 1:30 in the parlor. Anyone who wants to knit or learn to knit is most welcome. We have plenty of supplies to share. Call Marilyn Willet at 973-543-2092 for more information.

Our **small group ministry** keeps in touch with every member of Hilltop via email, mail, text or phone. If you wish to speak with your Deacon please contact Marilyn at willetstation@gmail.com

From the Director of Music Ministries...

2023-24 Hilltop Church Concert Series Upcoming Events

The 2023-2024 Hilltop Presbyterian Church Concert Series presents


The Jersey Brass Quintet and
The West Jersey Woodwind Quartet




Friday evening, October 13th
7:00 pm
Adults: \$20 Students: \$10
For Ticket Information, call: 973-543-4012
*This concert will also be live-streamed.
Please call for more information.*

Hilltop Presbyterian Church
20 Hilltop Road
Mendham, NJ 07945

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

Patron of the Arts

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.

Our Annual Christmas Concert Returns

The Hilltop Oratorio Choir – an ensemble comprised of Sanctuary Choir members and other interested singers from around the area – has begun rehearsals for their **Annual Christmas Concert "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"**. The concert will be held on **Sunday, December 17 at 4 pm**, in our Sanctuary. Again this year, we plan to offer two ways for you and your family to view the concert: In person and in the comfort of your home via live stream.

Ticket information is still forthcoming – but mark your calendars so you don't miss this wonderful holiday event.