

# Welcome to the Hilltop Spire

## First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, NJ

### THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF THE HILLTOP SPIRE!

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment.

*Joel 2:13*

Things are starting to come back to life around here. Since I arrived in Mendham in June, there's been one recurring theme in many of my conversations: "Just wait until September." People will be back in town. The pews will fill up again. Children and teenagers will join us on Sunday mornings. It's going to be wonderful!

Now, September is here. Back to Church Sunday is this week. The excitement in the air is palpable. Churches, including Hilltop but not exclusive to us, tend to have an optimistic "If you build it, they will come" outlook. That *would* be great because we've done a lot of building. The session and its committees have been hard at work planning new fellowship events, mission opportunities, innovative worship, and new Christian Education programs. For example, on the first Sunday of each month, 10:00 am worship will be designed with children in mind. The youth groups will be back in full swing. And we'll be kicking off Hilltop Quest, an after-school program on Thursdays that includes reconstituting the Cherub and Youth Choirs.

One thing we learn from the prophet Joel, though, is the "If you build it, they will come" approach is not how it works for worshiping communities. We have to acknowledge how much our lives have changed with the Covid-19 epidemic these past few years. Our patterns and habits have changed. We've grown accustomed to new places to focus our attention and invest our time. In many ways, we are like the people of Israel to whom Joel wrote. The enemies they faced had also diverted their attention away from gathering to worship God in the temple. Joel wrote that returning to God, putting the Lord back into the center of our lives, has to be an intentional choice for each person. It doesn't "just happen." It's also not something the elders and other religious leaders could do for the rest of God's People.

As the summer ends and fall settles in around us; as our lives once again beat to the patterns of school, work, and family; as, God willing, we establish a "new normal," living beyond Covid, I pray that you'll all return to the Hilltop. Here, the Holy Spirit will lead us to new ministries, new missions, and a new sense of being God's People. Here, your children will once again learn about living in the abundant love and grace of Jesus Christ. I can't wait!

See You on Sunday,

*Pastor Scot*



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### NEXT ISSUE:

Articles for the **Stewardship Issue** of the Spire are due to the church office by **October 1st!**

Please submit articles by e-mail to [office@hilltopchurch.org](mailto:office@hilltopchurch.org)

The SPIRE is available online at [www.hilltopchurch.org](http://www.hilltopchurch.org)

**Contact us at Hilltop:**  
**Call us at**  
**973-543-4012 or**  
**Fax us at**  
**973-543-0958.**

## WORSHIP LIFE...

SEPTEMBER 12TH

**Pastor Scot will Preach:**  
**“Pushing to the Void”**

SEPTEMBER 18TH

**Pastor Scot will Preach:**  
**“Shrewd Living for the Kingdom of God”**

SEPTEMBER 25TH

**PASTOR SCOT WILL PREACH:**  
**“Faithful Seeing”**

OCTOBER 2ND

**Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper**  
**Pastor Scot will Preach:**

## MISSION LIFE...

### NATIONAL MISSION SUPPORT - PDA FLOOD RELIEF

Our Mission Committee strives to support local, national, and international partners, both through hands-on mission and cash contributions. The Mission Committee has sent \$500 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) to support recovery efforts in areas of Kentucky, Missouri, and Virginia which were impacted by severe flooding in July. PDA communicates with Presbyterian leadership in the affected presbyteries to offer resources, process grants, and deploy National Response teams. We hope our donation will help carry the hope of Christ to those affected and those offering assistance.

### Family Friendly Hands-On Mission Opportunity

The Interfaith Food Pantry Network is seeking **home delivery volunteers** for clients in Dover, Wharton and Denville. Volunteers are paired with housebound or disabled clients. Volunteers are given a list of items the client needs and will “shop” for their client from pantry shelves during normal operating hours. Groceries are then delivered to the clients’ home at a mutually agreeable time. Deliveries take place every two weeks or monthly. Clients are located throughout Morris County. This is an excellent opportunity for the entire family to be involved in a hands-on mission activity. If interested, visit <https://mcifp.org/get-involved/> to download an application or contact Russ Hall [russh@verizon.net](mailto:russh@verizon.net) with questions.

## DEACON’S NEWS...

We hope you had an enjoyable summer and “back-to-school” is going smoothly for our families!

As we head into the fall...

- **Lunch with Friends** will resume in October! Lunch with Friends is on the **second Wednesday of each month**, with coffee, fruit and snacks at 11:00 and lunch at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. **Please join us on October 12th.** Volunteers may contact Paula Raimondo with any questions - 973-285-5044 or [rickloribrett@verizon.net](mailto:rickloribrett@verizon.net). We always look forward to new guests and helpers.
- We will be carrying on our tradition of keeping in touch with **Hilltop college students** by sending a note or small gift card via email during the year. Whether your child is back on campus or studying remotely, please provide their email address to Kathy Claxton at [kathyc973@optimum.net](mailto:kathyc973@optimum.net) or Wade Carter at [vance83@yahoo.com](mailto:vance83@yahoo.com).

We continue to send cards and deliver sunshine gifts to those who are experiencing illness or loss, or could use a little cheering up. Please let us know if any members or friends need the support of the Deacons’ ministry, whether it’s a phone call, grocery delivery or some hot meals - we’re happy to help wherever we can.

## Eye on Stewardship

From The Finance & Stewardship Area of Ministry

We saw the usual summer slowdown in pledge income for the first two months of our new fiscal year. We encourage members to stay current with their pledges to help support Pastor Scot, Jim Wynne, and the Worship Committee with their many impressive plans for the new church year starting in September. Shown below are summer pledge results for this year and the two prior years.

	2022 \$(000)	2021 \$(000)	2020 \$(000)
<b>JULY/AUG PLEDGE INCOME</b>	<b>\$53.3</b>	<b>\$72.7</b>	<b>\$51.2</b>

# OUR FELLOWSHIP LIFE...

## Music on the Hill

Join us for "Music on the Hill," a time of fellowship and music in Hilltop House. Come for dessert and coffee on Saturday, September 17, from 7:30 - 8:30 PM and listen to local artist Megan Pepper perform her original music and your favorite covers! You might know Megan as our own Hilltop member Megan Turner who has shared her talent with us during Sunday worship and the pageant many times! We hope to see you there.



## Hilltop Women's Bible Discussion Group

Hilltop Women's Bible Study will resume for the fall session on **Thursday, September 22.**

We meet at 9:45 am for a visit and start the study at 10:00 am, finishing no later than 11:30 am. We are a group of all ages interested in expanding our knowledge of the Bible and our personal spiritual journey. We take turns leading the weekly discussion.

For the fall we will begin with a 6-week study of the book of Revelation, Revelation: Extravagant Hope by Margaret Feinberg. The publisher notes: "of all the books of the Bible, Revelation is the one that mystifies and unsettles people the most. From numerical signs to monsters, the book of apocalypse in the Bible can be difficult to wrap our minds around, but the message that Revelation really brings is hope."

Please consider joining us! For additional information, or if you have questions, contact Ginny Gilman, [gggilman@att.net](mailto:gggilman@att.net) or 973-543-6699.

## Hilltop Men's Bible Discussion Group

Our Men's group will resume meeting again in September via Zoom on **Saturday mornings at 8:30 am.** The group averages 8 men with friendly discussion. If you have any questions or are considering joining the group please contact Bob Willis at [rwwillis@att.net](mailto:rwwillis@att.net)

## Hilltop Church Adult Education and Fellowship

Adult Education and Fellowship meets each Sunday 4:45-6pm (except last Sunday if the month when we go to Blackhorse per below) via Zoom. On the last Sunday of the month from 11:15am-12:30 pm Adult Fellowship at Black Horse Pub immediately after service. For more information please contact the church office at [office@hilltopchurch.org](mailto:office@hilltopchurch.org) or all 973-543-4012 ext 10

## Fun night of Fellowship at the Somerset Patriots Baseball Game

As we welcomed Rev. Scot McCachren...the Somerset Patriots welcomed Hilltop Church! On Friday, July 22nd members and families of Hilltop Church along with Pastor Scot and his family attend a Somerset Patriots baseball game.



## Hilltop Church Participates in the Annual Labor Day Parade

Pastor Scot along with members of Hilltop Church took part in the Annual Mendham Borough Labor Day Parade on Monday, September 5th!



## MARK YOUR FALL CALENDAR:

### WELCOME BACK SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

### WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>

### REFORMATION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

### ALL SAINTS REMEMBRANCE

OCTOBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT HILLTOP!

Sunday School for all ages Sunday mornings at 8:50 am. Children and families invited to attend Worship in the Sanctuary.

Christian Education has been busy planning our new Fall schedule as well as Welcome Back Sunday on September 11th.

Welcome Back Sunday will be an extra FUN day! Getting to know our friends, lots of fellowship and old-fashioned games! After the Brunch fun will continue outdoors, weather permitting! Hope to see all our children!

Any questions, please email Stefanie Fox @ [stefaniefox@comcast.net](mailto:stefaniefox@comcast.net)

## Hilltop Christian Nursery School Update

It was a busy and productive summer at HCNS! We are so appreciative of the collaboration of Buildings and Grounds and the church staff to help HCNS power through some big improvements this summer. If you visit the school you will notice the entry ramp is repaved, the classrooms are freshly painted, the electrical outlets replaced to meet child safety guidelines, the kitchen updated, and a filtered water unit added to reduce disposable water bottle consumption. Our updates were generously funded from our school parents at our annual fundraiser. In addition, we are thrilled to be the recipient of a state grant which gave us the opportunity to make plans to continue improving our buildings and grounds, curriculum and staff development over the school year. This year we welcome 13 new families into our preschool program for a total of 50 families. In addition we have 21 children enrolled in our Friday morning Toddler Time and our staff has grown to 18. Please keep HCNS in your prayers for another successful school year filled with laughter, learning, friendship, songs and spiritual growth. Thank you to Dave Kerr, John Andrews, Bob Willis, Danielle Doyle, Bud Perkins, Maura Schupack and Pastor Scot for all their support this summer.



## Prayer Chain...

For many years, the Hilltop Prayer Chain has been a way for members to support each other in the daily challenges of life. Many requests have come through and the prayer chain is one way for us to hold each other in prayer. This is a **confidential prayer chain** meant for our community and friends of Hilltop who promise to be faithful in praying with and for one another. We ask everyone to get permission from the person we are praying for before sending a request to us.

If you want to **receive Prayer Chain emails** or have a **Prayer Request to share** - send it to [hilltopprayerchain@gmail.com](mailto:hilltopprayerchain@gmail.com)