



Welcome to the Hilltop Spire

First Presbyterian Church of Mendham, NJ

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NEXT ISSUE:

Articles for the **Lent/ Easter** Issue of the Spire are due to the church office by February 16th! If possible please submit articles by email to office@hilltopchurch.org

Call us at 973-543-4012 or
Fax us at 973-543-0958.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

LENT/ EASTER 2023
February 26th

1st Sunday of Lent
Annual Congregational
Meeting

March 5th

Sacrament of the Lord's
Supper at Hilltop

April 2nd

Palm Sunday
Holy week begins

April 9th

Easter Sunday

NEW FOR THE NEW YEAR!

Looking to become a New Member of Hilltop church? Our next Inquirer's Class will be held in March in the Parlor of Hilltop House. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the meaning of membership at Hilltop is invited to come and meet with Pastor Scot and members of our Membership Area of Ministry. Please contact the church office at office@hilltopchurch.org or 973-543-4012 x10 for more information. We hope you will come get to know us a little better!

ANNUAL MEETING OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MENDHAM

The Session of Hilltop Church has called for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 26th, immediately following worship for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of the Areas of Ministry of Hilltop Church and other business as may properly come before the congregation.

HILLTOP'S NINTH ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

The Fellowship Area of Ministry is hosting Hilltop's 9th Annual Chili Cook-Off THIS SUNDAY, 5-7 PM in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome. NFL Conference Championship games will be streaming on the big screen, plus we will have ping pong, corn hole and crafts for kids! Chili cooks need to arrive by 4:30 with their entry. Contest entries do not need to sign up ahead of time, just show up with your chili in a crockpot ready to go, and we will plug it in for you. Just want to come and sample? Tasting begins at 5...simply cast your vote, and then enjoy your favorite chili and some football with family and friends! Cornbread, salad, beverages, and dessert will be provided too. Please contact Wade Carter at vance83@yahoo.com with any questions.

MEMBER UPDATES

New Members: Charles & Michelle Knorr

Relocations:

Cliff & Cathy Lee: 3482 Sunderland Circle,
Brockhaven, GA 30319



Pastor Letter

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Matthew 5:6

The Christmas season has wound down and the New Year is upon us. As I slow down to look forward into January and beyond to write this note to you all, I find myself thinking more about the year that has just past – a year that brought me to Hilltop to serve among you. In some ways it still feels like Linda and I just arrived in Mendham, as we continue to learn about what the town has to offer. In other ways it feels like we’ve known you all our lives. I have a deep sense that this is where we belong. I am thankful to be with a congregation with such a strong sense of mission and a keen awareness of the movements of the Holy Spirit among us. Your faithfulness and welcoming spirit inspire me as we continue seeking to grow and deepen our experience of God together.

This inspiration to grow and deepen our experience of God leads me back to looking forward into the New Year. We’ve just spent a year with the Gospel of Luke, which emphasizes the historical context of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and sets the stage for the birth of the Church in Acts, which is also written by Luke. Now, we’ll be settling in with the Gospel of Matthew, which has so much to say about Christ’s emphasis on social justice and our responsibility to love and care for our sisters and brothers of this world. Between now and the beginning of Lent we will explore the Sermon on the Mount, beginning this week with a close look at the Beatitudes. We’ll talk about how Jesus’ breathtaking sermon evokes the memory of Moses on another mountainside with the Ten Commandments in hand and how it stakes the claim that Christ himself embodies a New Covenant and provides a new standard of righteousness in the eyes of God.

As we take our first tentative steps into 2023, let’s commit to keeping alive the sense of the newborn baby Jesus that we felt so deeply on Christmas Eve. Let’s continue to explore together our mission as Christ-followers and what God is calling us to do. And, let’s develop our communal and personal spiritual practices to discern and advance the work of the Holy Spirit. That’s a lot for us to do together, and I am so thankful and excited to be a part of it. Happy New Year!

See You on Sunday,

Pastor Scot

Mission News...

Christmas Joy Offering Results

Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas Joy Offering. The \$642.85 collected will be used to provide emergency financial aid to church workers in emergency situations and for scholarships to future church leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and in colleges in communities of color.

Christmas Lights for Zimbabwe

The Mission Committee thanks all of you who participated in the Christmas Lights for Zimbabwe Advent campaign. The congregation raised \$725.00 which will be sent to our long-time Christian Ed mission partners in the Musirizwi village in Southeastern Zimbabwe. These funds will be used to purchase school uniforms and supplies, children's shoes, and chickens. Previously Hilltop Church has supported the village with funds for a self-sustaining potato seed project, school tuition, uniforms, school supplies, stoves, and funds to build a home. Thank you for helping bring light to those in need this Christmas season through this international mission.

Hilltop Church Time and TaLENT Offering

Have you ever thought about "giving something up" for Lent? Maybe chocolate, candy, or Starbucks's coffee? Well, your Mission, Service and Benevolence Team has a different idea this year: instead of **giving something up**, why not **give something of yourself**? Specifically, your time and talents!

This Lenten season, the Mission Team is organizing a service project which offers flexible ways for you to learn more about Hilltop's Mission Partners: by doing! Have you ever wondered what it is like to volunteer at a food pantry or help build a Habitat for Humanity house? Want to do a service project with your whole family? Now is the time to take that step!

Starting on February 26, 2023 and for the rest of the Sundays leading up to Easter, come see the Mission Team in the Fletcher Room after the service. We will happily guide you through selecting the service opportunity that fits your interests, abilities and schedule. Opportunities include:

- Packing breakfast bags for Nourish.nj on Thursday afternoons
- Cooking a meal at Homeless Solutions on a Thursday evening
- Serving a meal at Table of Hope on a Monday evening
- Helping spruce up Camp Johnsonburg on a Saturday
- Working a Farmers Market at Table of Hope or the Interfaith Food Pantry Network
- Building a house or wall for Habitat of Humanity
- Providing a meal or groceries for Family Promise
- Running the fall Hilltop Coat drive

Please join Hilltop Church in giving of our Time and TaLENTs to help our mission partners this Lenten season!

Christian Ed Update...From CE Director, Britany Gladhill

Thank you so much for the warm welcome here at Hilltop Church. I am so happy to be here, and excited to grow our programming as we move through the new year!

Christmas was magical! In Sunday School, we celebrated Jesus' birthday with Mrs. Malman's delicious pancake cupcakes, and a homemade carrot cake from Amanda Tufts. Thank you!

The following week we continued our celebration of the season with our No Tears Christmas Pageant, and a Hilltop Quest singing performance.



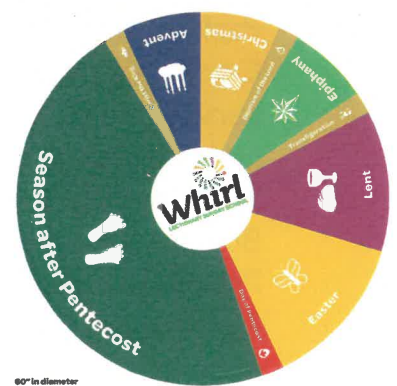
We are off to a strong start, and poised for a great year! We have momentum building in all aspects of programming, and many ideas on where to expand when we are ready.

Sunday School has moved to a weekly format (aside from Youth Sundays), and is now held at the Sanctuary following the Children's Message with Pastor Scot. We will be utilizing the Choir Room and Fletcher Room for now, but will ultimately move back down to the Hilltop House once we grow. We are currently serving children ages Pre K through 4th grade with the goal of covering 5th through 7th grade very soon (dependent on Sunday School volunteers!).

Our curriculum, and lessons, are aligned with the lectionary and weekly sermons so families can leave service having covered similar topics and concepts. We begin each lesson by reviewing where we are in the liturgical year, we search for our weekly scriptures by using the resources in our Bibles (the kids love this part!), and then cover our weekly lesson with accompanying hands on learning when possible.

We have enjoyed many new friends in recent weeks, and look forward to growing Sunday School into a thriving weekly program that walks our children through a solid formation of faith.

If you have a heart for our youth, and would like to volunteer to teach Sunday School, please contact britanygladhill@gmail.com. Prep is simple, and materials are provided in advance.



Youth Sundays will take place the **first Sunday** of each month. In this service, the readings will be done by our youth, the service will be family friendly, and (eventually) our Cherub Choir will sing pieces that they have rehearsed with Mr. Wynne in recent weeks. **On these weeks, there will be no Sunday School.** Instead, we will all enjoy the sermon together and have fellowship following service!

CBW is back! Our Communion, Bible and Worship Class (for 3rd and 4th graders) is back and will begin April 21. We have a full roster of students, but have room for more friends! Please contact us if interested!

Mrs. Malman will be teaching the year's CBW. The course covers the basic Bible foundations, prayer, Presbyterianism, and communion! The course will close with a brunch for CBW families, Bibles presented to the children during worship, and communion with the congregation.

- Weeks 1 (April 23) and 2 (April 30): Intro and study of the Bible and the treasures it holds
- Week 3 (May 7): Presbyterian history, and an intro to how we worship! The children will also tour the sanctuary, learn about serving as a kirklighter, and have an organ presentation from Bob Willis & James Wynne.
- Weeks 4 (May 14) and 5 (May 21): Communion! Why do we take communion? How did Jesus celebrate the first communion at the Last Supper? We will also taste foods that Jesus may have eaten, and remember what he did for us.
- Week 6 (June 4): Students will receive Bibles in worship service, and share communion with the congregation. Worship will be followed by a fun brunch with CBW families in the Hilltop House.

If interested in CBW, please contact: britanygladhil@gmail.com

Hilltop Quest is thriving! We have grown to 20+ friends each week, and a growing waitlist! The children absolutely love the simple fellowship and fun that we provide on Monday afternoons.

It is an absolute joy to get to know these children, and to also cover them in prayer as they grow. This program is simply not possible without volunteers, and we must sincerely thank Maureen Hunt and Lori Caldwell for their time each Monday and the attention to the hearts of these precious children.



BUT...we need more help! If you are interested in helping on Monday afternoons, please contact britanygladhill@gmail.com (Teens are welcome!)



Looking forward... Stay tuned for updates on Youth programming, an updated Youth Room in the Hilltop House, a nursery refresh, and more!



Our Stewardship and Finances...

Thanks to everyone who has submitted their pledges so far! Many folks stepped up their pledge to cover inflation, and we're pleased to see new names join in.

Our 2023 campaign is off to a good start, and we've reached about 70% of our goals:

Pledges received in December: 54 (Goal: 80)

Pledges total: \$ 263,705. (Goal: \$360,000)

It's not too late to pledge and meet our goals! Remember, the Magi presented their gifts in January, and February is the month to share heart-felt gifts. If you haven't yet returned your pledge, or lost your pledge card, it is easy to get this done. You can:

- Send a confidential email to mitzihilltop@gmail.com
- Write it on a note and put it in the offering plate
- Drop it off or mail it to the church office

(Tip: Write "Pledge" or "Stewardship" on the envelope to keep it confidential.)

Thank you again. We are blessed to have a congregation that grows in faith and support.

- David Kerr, 2023 Stewardship Chairman

Eye On Stewardship From The Finance & Stewardship Area of Ministry

Presented below are financial results for the first six months of this fiscal year as compared to the prior two years. We might characterize these results as "holding our own" as our cash position remains solid and there are no borrowings under the PGB line of credit. Income showed an increase of \$9k as compared to the same time period last year. However, although not shown in this table, Pledge Income, the most important driver of revenues, is down \$15K from the same period last year (\$209k versus \$194k.) Luckily, this shortfall was more than covered by a very generous bequest received by the Church upon the passing of a long-time congregant. On the Expense front, Expenses exceeded prior year because of expected increases in Personnel Expense related to the installation of our permanent pastor and well as unusual expenses for the maintenance of the Church's steeple. And while an increase in Expenses was predicted, it should be noted that over the prior two-year period, the rate of increase in Expense has greatly exceeded the rate of increase in Income. In sum, for the six months, the Church recorded a Net Loss of \$2k.

We are incredibly appreciative of our congregation's financial support for Hilltop Church. We are grateful for all contributions to our Church, regardless of amount. 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.

SIX MONTHS JULY - DECEMBER	2022 \$(000)	2021 \$(000)	2020 \$(000)
INCOME	\$247	\$237	\$214
EXPENSE	\$249	\$169	\$177
NET GAIN OR LOSS	\$2	\$68	\$37

Deacons' News... We wish you a Happy New Year!

Christmas LoveLines

We would like to thank all those who participated in this years LoveLines Christmas Program for Center for Family Services. This year we were thrilled to bring back our angel tree in the Fletcher Room and delighted to see so many families generously donate gifts to children and families in need. We received thank you notes from many of the children who received gifts and they were all singing praises for the generosity of Hilltop Church.

Lunch with Friends

Our December and January luncheons were well attended and joyful events. Delicious homecooked meals were served. Paula Raimondo gifted one of her beautiful quilts and participants even enjoyed a visit from Santa! Please feel free to join us February 8th for our next celebration. Doors open at 11 for fruit, coffee, and snacks and lunch is served at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. These events are open to all members and friends of Hilltop Church. We'd love for you to join us! For more information or questions please contact Paula Raimondo at 973-285-5044.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you like to knit or crochet? Have you ever wanted to learn? The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a great place to come enjoy some time together, learn a new skill, and do something creative for those in need. This ministry makes hats for Nourish NJ, scarves for graduating seniors, prayer shawls, and baptism blankets. All supplies are provided. The group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1:30 pm. Any member or friend is encouraged to contact Marilyn Willett at 973-543-2092 for more information.

Pancake Supper - Save the Date

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper is scheduled for February 21st. Details to follow!

Please continue to let us know if any members or friends need the support of the Deacons ministry. Whether it's a phone call, meal, or other forms of support, we are all ready, willing, and able to help.

Upcoming Events at Hilltop Church...

Andrew Fletcher Estate in Mendham to host Mansion in May


Andrew Fletcher was a major benefactor of Hilltop Church and Mendham Borough Library. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher donated Three Fields, their large country estate on Cherry Lane, to the Borough in the 1960s with 'life use' of the property. The 9,000 square foot stone, brick and tile-roofed French manor style home, beautifully situated on almost 36 acres, was designed by New York architect Greville Rickard and built between 1929 and 1930. The property was owned for many years by the Fletcher family, was sold in the 1980s after the Fetters' deaths and is currently being restored by a new owner.

Three Fields will be the site of the 20th Mansion in May fundraiser organized by the Women's Association of Morristown Medical Center.

We are hosting a presentation by the Mendham Borough Library on Three Fields and the Fetters on Wednesday, April 12 at 7 pm in Hilltop House. The speaker will be local historian Barry Thomson, author of several books on large historical estates in Morris and Somerset counties. He is currently researching Three Fields and the Fetters for the Women's Association, in preparation for the opening of estate in May.

Please plan to attend this no-charge community outreach program. Registration information will be on the Library website as we get closer to the date. The Mendham Borough Library is the primary organizer of this event. However, if you are interested in lending a helping hand, please contact Dane Manchester at 973-543-5449 or Elisabeth MacDonald at 917-670-5782.

"Is There Nothing Sacred?"
The Hilltop Presbyterian Church Concert Series presents
"A Concert of Transcriptions for the Pipe Organ"
Arrangements of famous music not usually heard on the Pipe Organ
- and None of it Is Sacred Music!



Beethoven: Symphony #5 in C Minor
Handel: Entrance of the Queen of Sheba
Strauss: Tales from the Vienna Woods
Ketelbey: In A Persian Market
Alford: Colonel Bogey March
Grieg: Morning Mood
Von Suppe: Poet and Peasant
Tchaikovsky: Dances from "The Nutcracker"
Rossini: William Tell
Sibelius: Finlandia


Audience Participation Encouraged!
Dancing in the Aisles Permitted!
Humming Along and Tapping Your Toes Are the Order of the Day!

James Wynne, Organist
Sunday Afternoon, February 26 at 3:00 p.m.
Tickets: \$10 for Adults - Children under 12 are Free!

Hilltop Presbyterian Church
20 Hilltop Road, Mendham, NJ
For Ticket Information, call: 973-543-4012

MUSIC ON THE HILL
FEATURING MEGAN PEPPER

Donations to support
ACTNow/Appalachian
Service Project



An evening of live music & dessert

February 25, 2023
7:30PM

Hilltop House
14 Hilltop Road
Mendham, NJ