
Blessings in the name of Christ, Hilldale UMC Family!

2023 has been a year of blessings and growth at Hilldale UMC! Again, we have seen the faithfulness of God get us through the wonderful as well as the difficult times, but as Pastor Stephen always says, **God's Grace and Peace DOES prove stronger!**

Looking back over 2023, the Leadership Board is proud of this congregation and its constant drive to live out the mission of Hilldale by

→ Loving God. Loving people. And, making this world a better place!

God is moving in our church, our community, and our hearts and we have so many things to be thankful for...

- ❖ Worshiping in a growing congregation with new guests and regular attendees every week!
- ❖ We welcomed **Pastor Mary Kate Myers** to Hilldale as Associate Pastor to Children, Youth, and Young Adults and Director of the APSU Wesley Foundation!
- ❖ The creation of the Hilldale UMC/ APSU Wesley Foundation partnership!
- ❖ We saw new baptisms and the joining of 17 new members in 2023 (28 total since October 2022)!
- ❖ Several church wide events that have brought laughter, fun, and HUMC's best talent to the stage!
- ❖ We have an active **children and youth ministry attendance**, with these programs growing as quickly as the children!
- ❖ Celebration of a 45 year legacy and the joy that retirement brings for former Director of Music, Kathy Bearden!
- ❖ Welcoming a **NEW** Director of Music, Besty Adair!
- ❖ **First Sunday Funday** is continuing to bring generations together every month both inside and outside of the church!
- ❖ Adding dozens of all ages to our membership and regular attendees, including many out of state congregants who join us online every week!
- ❖ **Tens of thousands of dollars** has been given for assistance through our Good Neighbor Fund!
- ❖ **Operation Christmas Child** is wrapping up a great year with a goal of packing over 2000 boxes again by November!

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- ❖ **Thousands of dollars given** to local nonprofits, from our general budget, like...
 - Loaves & Fishes, Urban Ministries, Manna Café, Safe Place, Meals on Wheels, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), YoungLife, YMCA Restore Ministries, Soldiers And Families Embraced (SAFE), Habitat House, College Scholarships, and more!
 - ❖ And all of this doesn't even include the **countless volunteer hours our people give** to the community and those in our congregation!
 - ❖ **Most importantly, we witnessed God's faithfulness and steady hand and answered the call as the body of Christ as we walked with Pastor Stephen and others through cancer treatments, major illnesses and injuries, and individual needs.**

Even as we celebrate these successes, it is important that we remember our commitments to our faith, our church, and our ministries. As we continue to grow in our hope and presence in God, we remember that a faithful Christian life must include commitment both corporately AND **individually**; Commitment to *grace, to faith, and to action*. We believe **Christ is calling you** (us) to...

- ❖ Worship God weekly with our Community of Believers
- ❖ Join a regular Group and/or Study to connect with other believers and God's Word
- ❖ Give to the Mission of God through our church
- ❖ Serve others both outside and inside the church
- ❖ Share the invitational love of Christ with those far from God

Our Leadership Board is currently planning for the Nurture, Outreach and Witness of our church and needs your help. Part of our planning requires our best estimate of the financial resources we will be able to use in building the Kingdom of God here in Clarksville, TN and around the world. We also want you to take your next step in faith to give God your "first fruits" in tithes and offerings.

Today you have received a "**2024 Financial Commitment**" card. Take some time to prayerfully consider how God is calling you to support God's Mission through our church. How are you honoring your commitments financially and in action? We are grateful for **ALL** of our people and **ALL** of the ways that they support our vision and mission. **And no matter how often or how much you give, you are an important and beloved part of our faith family.**

- If you are not a regular giver, we want you to consider the commitment to making a regular percentage gift a part of your spiritual practices.
- If you are a regular giver, we encourage you to become a tither by giving 10% of your income to our mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ" here at Hilldale UMC.

→ If **you are tithing**, we believe you have taken yet another faithful step in your faith and invite you to consider opportunities for special offerings inside and outside our church!

After you prayerfully consider your Financial Commitment to the mission of God in 2024, **return the completed card** to the church office, fill it out online, and/or bring it to worship to place in the offering plates. We will have a special time of commitment on November 19th to pray over these commitments and your stewardship.

One of the core values of our church is **transparency in how our finances are handled and allocated**. We undergo regular external audits, have a well developed financial operating procedure, separate the duties of receipts and expense payment for accountability, and report quarterly to our congregation in worship and through mailings.

Our Finance Specialists do want you to know that we ended 2022 in a deficit. The church staff and ministry leaders adjusted expenses throughout the year to match income and reduced spending by \$18,000 from what was anticipated. However, we ended the year with a significantly lower income December than anticipated and income was behind budget by \$32,000. This means we finished 2022 with a \$14,000 deficit.

As we continue into 2024, we anticipate a slight increase in budget due to slight rises in utilities, insurance, a cost of living raise to show them how much our church values them and to help combat rising consumer prices, AND **preparations for our 70th ANNIVERSARY as a church!!!!**

However, even in our current deficit, **we still celebrate that we are DEBT FREE!!!** What an amazing generational legacy for building the Kingdom of God through Hilldale UMC!!

We are inviting you to join us on a mission to support Hilldale UMC and our community!

As you prepare to support God's Mission, we want to make it as easy as possible for you and provide financial stability for the church during the natural high & low attendance times of the year. You can give in multiple ways and we want to mention them here. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

Methods for Financially Supporting God's Mission, in preferred order...

1. **Automated Clearing House** ([ACH Form](#) can be found online or by calling our office)
 - a. This method helps you remain faithful whether you miss a Sunday or not, and it gives the church the best method for understanding its regularly incoming resources. There is no fee for you or the church, and we set it up for you!
2. **Recurring Bill Pay through your bank**

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- a. This method, like the ACH Form, helps you remain faithful even when you miss a Sunday and supports the church on a regular basis. Some banks have fees for bill pay but the church is not charged any fees. You would contact your bank to set this up.

3. Qualified Charitable Distribution

- a. This is a direct gift sent to the church from an IRA. When done correctly, neither the giver nor the recipient are taxed by the IRS. Contact an investment professional or CPA for exact details and to set it up.

4. Recurring Online Giving (through the church website)

- a. This method allows you to give by ACH or Debit Card, is easy and flexible, and can be set up as a regular recurring gift. However, it does incur fees paid either by you or the church.

5. Check (offering plate or mail)

- a. This method, like those above, allows us to provide you with a quarterly and annual financial contribution statement. Also, it is fee-free. However, it is often tied to attendance and can become irregular during times of weather, vacation, and/or other absence.

6. Cash (offering plate)

- a. This method can only be used by placing cash in the offering plate or visiting the church office, meaning it is directly tied to attendance and is often irregular. It also makes it difficult or impossible for us to provide quarterly or annual giving statements.

Thank you for reading this far and for prayerfully considering how you will support God's Mission in 2024 through Hilldale UMC!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the church office, Pastor Stephen, and/or any of the Leadership Board. You can also visit our website for more information, to download the ACH Form, and/or to get started giving for 2024. (hilldaleumc.org/give)

In Christ,

Hilldale UMC Leadership Board, Pastor Mary Kate, and Pastor Stephen