

Hillsboro First United Methodist Church

Informational Document

Getting to know us

Updated 1/9/2023

Please visit our Web site (WWW.hillsborofirstumc.org) for announcements and additional details not found in this document.

Short History: Shortly after the Civil War, a small group of citizens in the Hillsboro community felt the need for a Methodist Church. An old log house was used for church and school purposes for many years until the Methodists in Hillsboro erected their first building in 1888. The original church building was in the middle of the existing cemetery and a new brick building was erected in 1949. The fellowship hall extension was added in the 1960's and in 1997 a new sanctuary was erected and the old sanctuary was renovated into classrooms, an office, and restrooms.

Organization: The Church as Connection

United Methodist leaders often speak of the denomination as “the connection.” This concept has been central to Methodism from its beginning.

The United Methodist structure and organization began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness. Methodism's founder, John Wesley, recognized the need for an organized system of communication and accountability and developed what he called the “connexion,” an interlocking system of classes, societies, and annual conferences.

Annual Conferences: The annual conference is a geographical region (comprising districts), an organizational body (made up of elected lay and clergy members), and a yearly meeting. We are in the Tennessee Conference. [Learn more.](#)

Districts: Each congregation in the United States is part of a district, which is an administrative grouping of approximately 40 to 80 churches in a geographic area. We are in the Stones River District. [Learn more.](#)

Charge Conferences and Local Churches: As the visible presence or body of Christ, the local church is the place where members grow in faith and discipleship, putting their faith into action through ministry in the world. The ‘Charge Conference’ is a meeting of our local church leadership with the District Superintendent to report on the state of the church (spiritual, financial, and physical). It is usually held in the fall with the time being determined by the District Superintendent. [Learn more.](#)

Church Policies: The Policies under which the Hillsboro First United Methodist Church operates have been developed and are maintained by a Policy Committee. They cover building use, office equipment, weddings, speakers, memorials, and special offerings, scholarships, requirements for the custodian and secretary. The policies can be found on the church's web site (www.Hillsborofirstumc.org). POC (Point of contact) - Robert Henley

Worship Activities: Our church provides for a variety of meaningful worship experiences. Following each event description is the name of a contact for more information – POC - Deanna Lawson

Sunday School: We feel that Sunday School is an important part of the faith experience. Sunday School provides a small group setting for us to read and study the scripture and to have discussions with other Christians about living the Christian faith. There are classes for children from new born through High School. There are 5 adult classes which are roughly aligned by age groups. Couples usually attend the same class but there is no requirement to do so. The different classes are described on the Church's web site (www.hillsborofirst.org). Sunday School is advertised to start at 9:45 am but many classes use the first 15 minutes as 'gathering time'. Please make Sunday School a part of your worship experience. POC – Bill Myers

Worship: Our worship service begins at 10:30am on Sunday mornings. Our services are typically the traditional service with prayer, scripture reading, singing praises, and a sermon. We often have special music. After the call to worship and a hymn or two the younger children are asked to come to the front for a time with the pastor and are then dismissed to Children's Church. However there is no requirement for them to leave if they wish to remain in the sanctuary. POC - Pastor

Communion: We typically celebrate Christ's communion on the first Sunday of each month. Communion is offered to all. Communion is usually served by individual cups and wafers, but in special services intinction may be used. POC - Pastor

Scout Sunday: Our Church sponsors Scout Troop and Pack 332 and on Scout Sunday they are encouraged to worship with us as a group. Time is taken during the service to recognize the Scouts and their volunteer leaders. POC – Bill Myers

Ash Wednesday: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. This is a six week period leading up to Easter. Christians have historically marked this period by repenting of sins and making a commitment to following a discipline of preparation of the celebration of Easter.

A service is held on Ash Wednesday in which an opportunity to be marked on the forehead by ashes and on some years the celebration of Holy Communion is included. The time of the service will be announced in the weeks leading up to the service. Upcoming dates for Ash Wednesday will be announced. POC – Pastor

Maundy-Thursday: Thursday in the week before Easter is the day when the church celebrates Jesus' meeting with the disciples in the upper room where he washed the disciples' feet, instituted the service of Holy Communion and then went out into the Garden of Gethsemane to be arrested. The service is different each year, but always includes an opportunity to receive Holy Communion. Other activities which may be included are: foot washing (optional) and the stripping of the sanctuary of all decorations. POC - Pastor

Good Friday Tenebrae: For several years Hillsboro First United Methodist Church has gathered on the Friday night before Easter for a Tenebrae (shadows/darkness) service. Either the "Seven Last Words of Jesus on the Cross" or the "Stations of the Cross" have provided the structure of the service. This is a candlelight service in which each candle is extinguished throughout the service until the service ends in complete darkness. POC - Pastor

Easter Sunrise Service: The Easter Sunrise Service is a community event usually held in one of several community churches. The pastors of the participating churches get together and plan the 30 to 45 minute service. The newest pastor is often ask to give the sermon. Presently, the offering received goes to the community backpack program (described elsewhere). The pastors of the various churches meet together to plan the service in the weeks before Easter. Participating churches have been: Hillsboro First UMC, Hillsboro Baptist, Hillsboro Cumberland Presbyterian, Rutledge Hill Community Church, Prairie Plains Baptist, and Asbury Methodist. There is also a Thanksgiving Community Service that operates under the same guidelines (described elsewhere). POC – Pastor

Mother's and Father's Day Observance: The Youth, along with the Special Events Committee, take time during the service to honor our Mothers and Fathers with special programs, presentations, and gifts. POC – Amy Willis, Allison Dotson, or Maggie Millraney

Community Thanksgiving Service: Each year area churches gather together on the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving in one of the participating churches for a Community Thanksgiving Service. The pastors meet together before hand to plan the service and announce the time and place of the service. POC – Pastor

The Season of Advent: The four Sundays before Christmas mark the season of Advent which helps prepare us for the celebration of Christmas. Appropriate decorations are placed in the Church before the first Sunday of Advent. A part of the Advent decorations in the sanctuary include a wreath with candles for each Sunday in the season. Different families or individuals read an advent meditation and light the candles on each of the Sundays of Advent. POC – Pastor.

Children's Christmas Program: Each year the children's department plans a special service depicting the Christmas message on one of the Sunday evenings during Advent. After the program, everyone gathers in the fellowship hall for a time of food, gift giving and a visit from Santa Claus. POC – Susan McKelvey

Christmas Eve Communion: On most years a communion service is held at the Church on Christmas Eve. The format and time of the service has changed from year to year, but includes the lighting of the Christ Candle in the Advent wreath, music and Holy Communion. POC - Pastor

Social Activities: The following is an attempt to explain what to expect at some of our sometimes 'less than routine' social events that may be unique to Hillsboro First United Methodist Church. Following each event description is the name of a contact for more information – POC (Point of contact).

Wednesday Night Meal/Activities: A meal is served between 5:00 and 6:00 pm on Wednesday evenings followed by activities for all ages from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. The meal is provided by various volunteer members/families of the church and can range from Pizza to meats and vegetables. There is no charge for the meal, but those that can are requested to donate the price of a meal to cover the cost of the food. The programs that follow include activities for children, UMYF, and an adult study of some type. Usually, the meal and activities are suspended when school doesn't meet (for weather or holidays) and during the summer months of June and July. POC – Bobbie Myers

Fellowship Meals: It is important to get to know and fellowship with our fellow worshipers, not to mention eating a good meal. For that reason we have "Fellowship Meals" on a quarterly or so basis. Many times we try to use them for special recognitions or fund raisers. They usually occur following the worship service and consist of a 'pot-luck' dinner. Everyone is expected to bring a dish or two to share, but if you were unable to prepare one, or forgot, we would still rather have you participate. There has never been a shortage of food. On a few occasions food is provided by one of the groups in the church, such as the youth or the United Methodist Men, who are asking for donations as a fund raiser. The meals are open to everyone so please join us at the table. POC – Jennifer Myers

Warmth in Winter: A UMYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship) retreat held in or around Nashville. The event is held in late January. The program contains inspirational talks, music, and fellowship. It is one of the highlights of the year for the youth. POC – Mandy Smith

Valentine Banquet: A banquet for couples, but attended by singles as well. There is usually entertainment, pictures, a fine meal, and a good time had by all. POC – Amy Willis, Allison Dotson, or Maggie Millraney

Men's Chili Luncheon: A meal of soup and/or chili served after worship. Donations are requested to help fund the philanthropic efforts of the United Methodist Men. See a description of this group later. POC – Garry Carter

Easter Egg Hunt: Our Church sponsors an egg hunt on the grounds of the church and makes a special effort to invite all children of the community. A banner and/or sign is displayed in front of the church to announce the event. Plastic eggs are filled by the youth with candy and prizes that are donated by church members. Children of all ages enjoy time spent with friends hunting for eggs, eating snacks, and hearing the Easter story. It was held on Good Friday last year and the turnout was better than usual because we weren't in competition with other egg hunts held on Saturday. The egg hunt is used to evangelize and invite participants to Vacation Bible School and the parents to worship with us on Sundays. POC – Susan McKelvey

High School Graduates Dinner: High school graduates and their parents are treated to a banquet type meal at a nice restaurant or catered at the church (as decided by the special events committee). This banquet is also attended by the SS teacher, the Lay Leader, the minister, the Church Council Chair, and the UMYF leader and their spouses to laud the graduates on their accomplishments and challenge them to keep Christ in their lives as they mature into adulthood. POC – Amy Willis, Allison Dotson, or Maggie Millraney

Vacation Bible School: Our Bible School is planned and led by the Children's Ministries coordinator. It usually follows the VBS material and subject matter provided by Cokesbury. All children of the community (ages pre-K through 5th grade) are welcome and adults are needed to help as well. The day/week is filled with singing, listening to stories from the bible, and learning about the love of Christ. The children enjoy recreation, awesome snacks, science experiments and learning to serve others through mission projects. Over the past few years the VBS has been held on a Saturday in early summer. POC – Susan McKelvey

UM Women Ice Cream Birthday Social: Usually held in late August on a Sunday evening, the UMW invites families of the church to make a freezer or two of homemade ice cream to share with others at the church. Those not able to provide ice cream can provide cookies if they want. The tables are decorated and labeled by months to create a festive occasion. Donations are received to go to one of the UMW's mission projects. POC – Donette Porter

All Church Picnic: One of our 'Fellowship Meals', usually held in September, set aside for our church family and their guests to come together, mingle, and socialize at a church picnic. Weather permitting, the event is held at a local park or private pavilion. Food is picnic pot-luck. Bring your own plates and eating utensils. Fun and games for youth and adults alike are usually enjoyed after the meal. POC – Amy Willis, Allison Dotson, or Maggie Millraney

Trick or Trunk: On Halloween, our church sponsors an event at Hillsboro Elementary school (across the street from the church) to provide a treat for the children and adults of the community. Cars are parked along the entrance awning (some cars are decorated – others not) providing candy and treats to the spooks. It has become a hit with the children, their parents, and the people who hand out the treats. It gives the spooks a chance to get lots of candy in a safe environment and it gives adults an opportunity to see many of the children dressed in their costumes. And, it gives the church an opportunity to serve the community and be visible in the community. POC – Linda Willis

Soup Sunday: Usually, on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, there is a fellowship meal to raise money for local hunger projects. Many kinds of homemade soup will be available, but no deserts, since the meal is to highlight hunger. All worshipers are encouraged to stay for soup and fellowship. POC – Mandy Willis

Church Christmas Caroling: Each year, members of the church gather in the fellowship hall, split into several teams, and go caroling to shut-ins and other elderly members of the church. All church members are invited to participate, young, old, singers, and non-singers. A good time is had by all. When we return to the church, there are snacks, drinks, and good fellowship. POC – Amy Willis, Allison Dotson, or Maggie Millraney

Groups: The following is a list of groups within the church that meet to do the work of the church and often provides fellowship at the same time. Following each event description is the name of a contact for more information – POC (Point of contact).

Church Council: The Church Council usually meets at 7:15 pm on the third Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. It is composed of all those who hold [local church leadership](#) positions (such as Lay Leader or chairperson of a committee) but is open to all who want to attend.

The purpose of the council is for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources at Hillsboro First United Methodist Church. It provides the administration for the church to envision, plan, implement, and evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The Church Council is also responsible for approval and oversight of the [church operating budget](#) prepared by the Fiscal Committee. POC – Robert Henley

Vision Team: Our church has a committee that was developed to examine how we can better take Christ to the community. The committee is an ad hoc team made up of Education Chair – Bill Myers, Lay Leader – Jim Bramblett, Mission Chairpersons – Mandy Willis, Evangelism Chair – Deanna Lawson, Children and Youth Leaders – Susan McKelvey, Ashley Weaver, and Mandy Smith, Sunday School Class representatives – Linda Willis and others, and the pastor. We call ourselves the Visions Team because we are trying to envision new and better ways of making Hillsboro First UMC an inviting and worshipful place for both our members and the unchurched community. POC – Bill Myers

Choir: The choir meets at Sunday morning Worship. Membership is open to all who have a desire to sing the Lord's praises. There are no tryouts. POC – Jennifer Myers

UMYF: UMYF stands for United Methodist Youth Fellowship and consists of boys and girls in the 6th grade through High School. They meet on Wednesday evenings after the Evening Meals throughout the year. Fellowship can be defined as: 1. friendly relationship, companionship; 2. community of interest, feeling; 3. communion, as between members of the same church; 4. an association of persons having similar tastes and interest. When you put them all together—you have youth who are connected (and friendly) within our church. They study, recreate, pray, and serve together. They often help other groups fulfill their mission efforts. POC – Michael and Maggie Millraney.

United Women of Faith: The UWF (UMW) members meet at 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month. They have prayer, a devotional, and then a business meeting to discuss the various ministries undertaken throughout the year. Their main mission focus is on children, youth, and women. Funds for supporting these missions come from pledges, the World Thank offering, the UMW ice cream social, the annual bake sale, and outside contributions. They are connected to both the district and conference organizations of the United Methodist Women. There is no better way to get to know some of the fine Christian women of the church than through this organization. They laugh together, pray together, and would love to have all women of the church to become a member. POC – Donette Porter

United Methodist Men: The Hillsboro United Methodist Men's group meets the second Sunday of each month for a breakfast meeting at the church fellowship hall. Breakfast is served promptly at 7:00 am. Following breakfast is a devotion and business meeting. All men are invited and encouraged to attend. POC – Larry McKelvey

Ministries:

Christmas for others: Our church has provided Christmas for several needy families in the community each year. Family names are submitted by teachers at the elementary school and the number of children in the family and their sizes are provided to the church. Members and organizations within the church take a family (an envelope with the needs and sizes enclosed) and purchase the cloths requested and some toys (also requested on the form). Added to this is a food basket put together by the Missions coordinator. On one of the last days of school before the Christmas holidays, a family member will come by the church fellowship hall and pick up their Christmas gifts. About a dozen families are served in this manner each year. POC – Linda Willis

Shoe Box Ministries: The ministry gets its name from gifts which are prepared and sent in shoe boxes to children all over the world. It is a part of Operation Christmas Child which is a project supported by Samaritan's Purse. Each fall the members of our congregation are given the

opportunity to join the thousands of churches and other organizations around the world to provide gifts to needy children. Early in the fall the church's mission chairperson receives the information needed to fill and get the boxes ready to ship. You may choose to contribute a complete box or items for the youth to pack for you. The boxes are provided. In addition to receiving a Christmas gift, the child is given an opportunity to enroll in "The Greatest Journey". This is a 12 lesson Bible Study, in their own language, guiding the child through what it means to faithfully follow Jesus Christ. POC – Mandy Willis

Meals Delivery: Once a month (on the second Saturday) meals are prepared and delivered to church members or community persons who are homebound or confined at home for some reason. Our adult Sunday School classes take turns preparing meals and delivering them. Our meal delivery coordinator provides a monthly menu and list of people who need meals. Other community churches provide a meal on the third Saturdays of the month. If you know someone who would appreciate a meal, notify the POC of that person's needs. POC – Elain Weaver

Backpack Ministry: This program helps students of Hillsboro Elementary School by sending them home on Fridays with supplemental weekend meals. The food is purchased through 2nd Harvest Food Bank. The program is run by donations and volunteers. It takes approximately \$3.50-\$4.00 per week per child. We currently have 50 children participating weekly, but that number can vary. If you know of any children who could benefit from this program, please contact the POC or the school liaison, Linda Willis. (Also highlighted on the church web site.) POC – Jan Henley

Martha's Ministry (Dinners at funerals of Church members): A committee exists to serve families during the loss of a loved one. The committee makes every effort to follow the family's wishes regarding funeral dinners. Every family has different wishes. Sometimes they want a meal at the church, Sometime they want food brought to the home. The size of the Family determines how much food and how much help is needed. This information is communicated on an individual basis. POC – Hope Guffey

Further involvement:

How do I become more involved in church activities? Getting to know the church and the people in the church can be frustrating and take a long time if Sunday morning worship is your only connection to the church. You are encouraged to belong to any of the small groups associated with the church where relationships and activities are less formal and can lead to a richer church experience. Sunday school is one of the best places to become involved. Classes are somewhat age related and small enough to get to know each member on a personal level. Other groups and their meeting times are outlined in the bulletin each Sunday. If you want to take a leadership role in the church, talk to the pastor or the POC for suggestions on where your help and leadership could be the most useful. POC – Jim Bramblett

If I want to become a member, what should I do? Preparation for the experience of profession of faith and confirmation is to be provided for all people, including adults, by the pastor. So notify the pastor when you are ready to join the church and he will discuss membership requirements with you. POC – Pastor Danny Freeman

How do I sign up for the Church Newsletter? There is a good chance that if you add your address to the pew registrars in the sanctuary during the worship service that you will be picked up and added to the Newsletter mailing list. If you want to make sure you are on the mailing list, just call the church secretary, Linda Grose, on the church phone (931-596-3311) on her normal workday, Monday or Friday mornings. Or, you can email your request to her. POC – Linda Grose

When I have questions about church activities, programs, policies, or traditions, to whom do I address them? The Pastor is one of the best sources of information on current activities or policies within the church. But, sometimes others are needed to answer questions regarding things the pastor may not know. The Lay Leader or Chair of the Church Council should be able to guide you to a source that can answer your questions. For questions on United Methodism, the “Discipline” is a good source and a copy should be available from the pastor. POC-Pastor Danny Freeman.