



Hilliard UMC Community,

As the chair of Finance Committee, I'm grateful for the chance to reach out to each of you to share some reflections and some updates, both on our financial situation and our upcoming plans for 2023. Included in this letter is your 2023 Pledge Card, which I'll share more about below.

2022 proved to be an exciting time for our church as we saw our services shift further back to 'normal' after two challenging years. Our current services are looking more like they have in the past, including drinks and donuts (my boys' favorites!) to allow us to sit down together after the challenges presented by the global pandemic. Our community grew in new ways as we welcomed new friends and celebrated more time spent together. I've personally met more church members in the past 6 months than I had in the previous 6 years!

My wife, Ashley, and I visited Hilliard UMC for the first time for a Christmas Eve service in 2016. We had recently found out we were pregnant with our first child and wanted to make sure they had an opportunity to build their faith in Jesus Christ. We sampled too many churches that preached about God's love for all but failed to demonstrate it to the communities that were the most neglected. We were on the hunt for a church that specifically accepted our friends and colleagues that belonged to the LGBTQ community; it was a bit shocking how long it took us to find one. Ashley and I were fortunate to stumble upon this church that we're proud to call home as it not only fit exactly what we were looking for but also broadened our perspective far beyond.

*HUMC at Pride Fest 2022*

HUMC is a unique option for the Hilliard community. As demonstrated regularly, our church stands with those where other churches would choose to close the door. You can see this in our commitment as a reconciling congregation to support our LGBTQ communities, our regular support of the community through Wednesday night dinners, Alcoholics Anonymous, Hilliard Farm Market, Feeding Hilliard Students, the commitment of our children's and youth ministry to curriculum that lifts up the stories and faces of the marginalized, and most recently, the engagement with a consultant to help us become a more anti-racist and interculturally competent community, so that we can be more welcoming of people from diverse backgrounds. This level of commitment is, simply put, what makes HUMC so special.



Like many organizations, HUMC has experienced financial challenges over the last years. Despite significant efforts to cut costs, a decrease in giving and the loss of substantial rental income from the previous Taekwondo tenant meant that we ended this past year in a \$27,000 deficit. We were also not able to pay our apportionment giving to the Annual Conference at the 65% level we had budgeted. While we were able to cover this shortfall by using most of our surplus fund, we know that this is not a sustainable path moving forward.

2023 offers us an opportunity to join in the spirit of 'new beginnings', committed to our work of sharing God's Love "no matter what." We will need the support of our congregation as we seek ways to focus on three areas to address our shortfalls: increasing giving, growing our faith community, and finding innovative & creative ways to generate sustainable income for the long haul. We are also committed to transparency and clear communication as we work to move forward.

- **INCREASING GIVING** – This letter is a first step to invite you as a part of our congregational family to financially support the church in 2023 through your pledge. A pledge is a commitment to provide funds to the church so it may operate. This allows the church staff to be paid, the facilities to function, and enables our primary outreach. Submitting a pledge allows the church to properly budget for and plan future events; it gives a clearer view of what services we can expect to offer in the coming year. We ask that you review your financial position with your family & through prayer then prepare a pledge card indicating how you can contribute to further the call of our church and community. This is an investment in the future we are building together!  
On Sunday, February 5, we will share more details about exactly where our expenses went in 2022 and what changes we expect in 2023. We will then present our pledge cards in worship on Sunday, February 12, 2023. We hope you will make every effort to be present on both Sundays. This is an important moment to demonstrate our commitment to keep the church active and alive to spread the message that all are loved. For those of you who worship online or are unable to be at worship that Sunday, you may complete your pledge commitment online at our website (<https://hilliardumc.org/estimate-of-giving-2/>), bring your card with you the following Sunday or mail it to the church. If at any time you feel you must adjust your pledge, you may do so by notifying the church office. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call 614-876-2403.
- **GROWING OUR FAITH COMMUNITY** - There are many more families in the same position Ashley and I were 6 years ago: looking for a church that reflects the message of inclusion and love. Our church leaders are diligently refining how we operate our Warehouse services with ambitious plans to build the service into regular Sunday rotation in the second half of the year. One of the key things we will need to make this happen is a music staff member to lead the band at the Warehouse 839 service. One of our generous members will be working with us, pro-bono, in the first half of the year to improve our ability to communicate and market to the larger community the unique identity and benefits of being a part of HUMC. We want to work hard to get the message out!
- **INNOVATIVE & CREATIVE WAYS TO GENERATE SUSTAINABLE INCOME** – We received a \$10,000 grant from the West Ohio Conference to launch a non-profit arm of HUMC to house our outreach ministries and educational learning offerings in the community. Our hope is to get this 501c3 up and going this year and begin applying for grants and other funding to help support the overall work of the church in the community.



It's important for you to know that your leadership remains energized and optimistic about what God will do through HUMC in 2023. Thank you for all the ways in which you contribute and participate with the work we are doing at Hilliard United Methodist Church to share God's love "no matter what."

In Christ,

Will Thorsberg, HUMC Finance Committee Chair