



December 13, 2023

A Note from Erin West, Hilliard Food Pantry

**Dear Friends,**

In a world that often feels divided, there are moments that remind us of the incredible power of unity and compassion.

**Today, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to you, our dear friends at Hilliard United Methodist Church, for your unwavering support and incredible generosity in sharing your space with the Hilliard Food Pantry Plus.** Your kindness has been a shining light in our community, especially during some challenging times.



Our journey since the fire in July has been quite a rollercoaster ride. The unexpected fire disrupted our operations and left us facing uncertainty. We had a temporary home at Guide Church but quickly realized that it was not an optimal location as we were entering the winter.

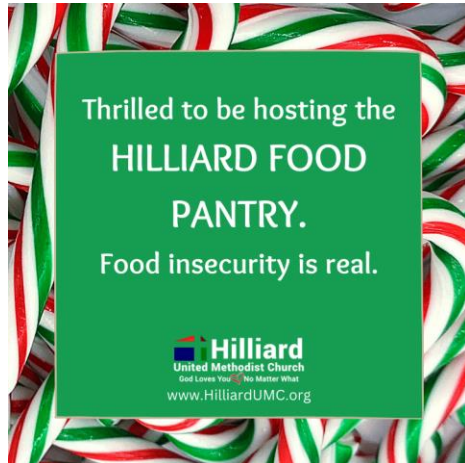


Your willingness to open your doors and provide us with a place to continue our work was a lifesaver. Your creativity and compassion gave us the support and stability we needed to get back on our feet and do so without missing a beat. (Here's Pastor Jon with Food Pantry and church volunteers in October, blessing the Pantry's opening in our Warehouse 839 studio.)

**It's essential to recognize that food insecurity and poverty are struggles that sometimes remain hidden in suburban communities like**

**ours.** Even in beautiful and resource-rich neighborhoods, there are individuals and families facing tough times.

Contrary to common misconceptions, these challenges aren't limited to urban areas. Suburbs across the country grapple with issues such as food insecurity and poverty. Factors like inflation, limited access to well-paying jobs, and the growing wealth gap have pushed many of our neighbors to their limits.



In this situation, parents often make the heart-wrenching choice between skipping meals themselves to ensure their children are fed or face the daunting task of deciding whether to pay the rent *or* put food on the table.

### **It's a reminder that hunger doesn't discriminate by zip code.**

The Hilliard Food Pantry has a long and inspiring history addressing this hunger and providing resources to make a difference. We were established in 1963 with a simple yet profound mission: to improve the well-being of our community by providing food and support. Over the years, we have grown from a small grassroots effort into a vital resource, serving hundreds of families each month.

**HUMC has been with us all along this journey, providing volunteers in the early days, space for the Toy Give Away at Christmas, and now housing the Pantry itself.**

You are an integral part of our story. The church has played a pivotal role — supporting us not just with space and volunteers but a shared purpose. Your commitment to our mission reflects the true spirit of community and compassion.

We are profoundly grateful for your generosity in allowing us to operate out of your building. This partnership has been key to our ability to serve effectively, providing us with a stable and welcoming environment to conduct our vital work.

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your invaluable support and the significant role you play in our ongoing mission. We cherish our partnership with Hilliard United Methodist Church and are excited to continue working together to make a positive difference in our community. I suspect that we will grow our partnership and make a real difference in our community — together.

**There's a special opportunity to serve Hilliard families this weekend through the Food Pantry — we invite you to come help out at our annual Holiday Store!** Our volunteer coordinator, Jessica Deem, says we have the most



need this Friday, 11am-2pm, finalizing donations, and on Sunday afternoon (shop is open 1:30-7:30pm), with several serving roles available (there are also spots available on Saturday; shop is open 8:30am-2:30pm). 'Hope to see you then!  
<https://hilliardumc.org/events/food-pantry-holiday-store/>

With gratitude,

Erin



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