

# Hillside takes note of its 50th year

## HILLSIDE PRESBYTERIAN

1879 Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30032

► Phone: 404-289-3092

► Web site: [www.hillside-church.org](http://www.hillside-church.org)

► Services: Sunday school at 9:30 a.m., worship at 11 a.m.

► Worship style: Traditional, with varied music styles that include Presbyterian and African-American hymnals and some liturgical dance.

► Average Sunday attendance: 80

► Minister: The Rev. Winston Lawson

► Denomination affiliation: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

## Mission statement

"To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of humankind. We are committed to being an inclusive, intergenerational church by creating a caring, Christian community. Hillside reaches out to diverse ethnic and religious groups in our community and beyond to foster a better understanding of all people. We are a servant people, responding to those in need, doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God."

## History

Over the years, Hillside has found itself in an area of changing demographics and has become home to a strong multi-racial congregation. Since its inception in 1955, the church flourished as white middle-class families joined. However, membership dropped from a high of 407 in 1964 to around 45 in 1979. As the neighborhood changed from white to African-American — a time the Rev. Winston Lawson called "white flight" — an African-American pastor came to Hillside. Under Paul Smith, membership began to rise, and 269 congregants were on the roster when Smith left in 1986. A Caucasian minister followed

Smith, and then Lawson, an African-American, joined the staff in 2001. Members recently kicked off a yearlong 50th anniversary celebration with former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young addressing their congregation.

## Pastor's path

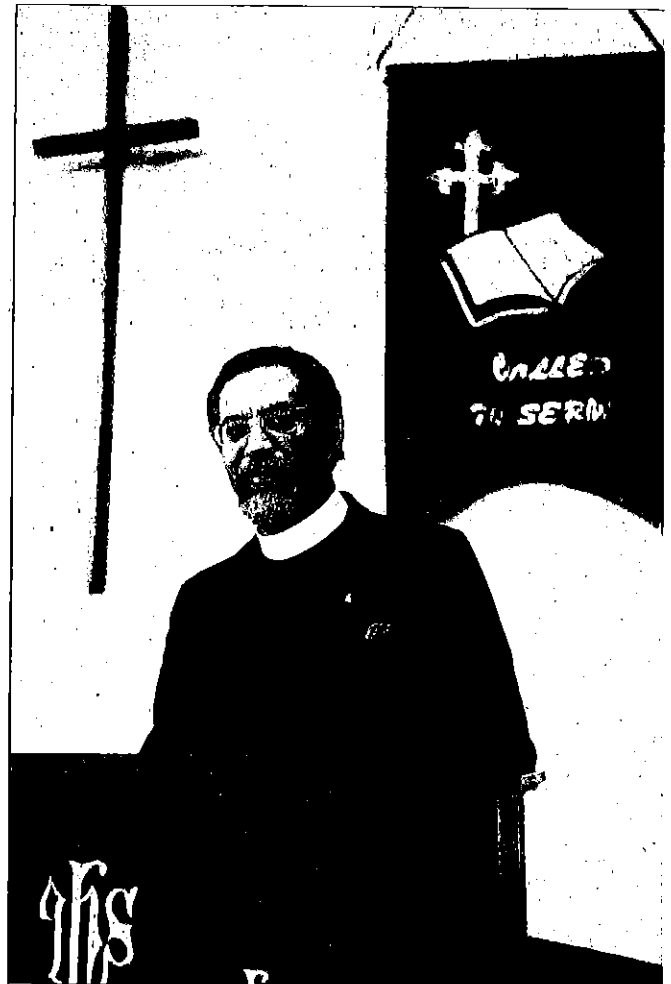
Lawson, 62, is a native of Jamaica. He moved to the United States in 1970 after completing seminary in his home country. After a short stint as pastor of the United Nations Chapel in New York City, he enrolled at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for graduate work. In 1977, Lawson moved to Atlanta to join the staff of the General Assembly Mission Board of the Southern branch of the Presbyterian Church. In 1981, he left the board and served various churches until he was called in 2001 to take the pulpit at Hillside.

## Ministries

The congregational care ministry directs four nurture groups for church members as they seek to build relationships with each other. The ministry also oversees larger events like picnics, holiday dinners and an annual retreat. In an attempt to reach across racial barriers, Hillside partners with First Presbyterian of Atlanta and St. Andrews Presbyterian, both predominantly white congregations, according to Lawson. The Rev. Connie Lee is a partnership minister, who splits pulpit time between Hillside and First Presbyterian, and coordinates joint efforts concerning refugee resettlement and prison ministries.

A drug-court ministry works with DeKalb County to offer rehabilitation alternatives for first-time offenders. The church's criminal justice ministry also teams with the Georgia Justice Project, which works with families of prisoners and drives those family members to visit loved ones in prison.

Community ministry includes a Whiz Kids tutoring program and a food pantry



LOUIE FAVORITE / STAFF

The Rev. Winston Lawson assumed the pulpit at Hillside Presbyterian Church in 2001. A native of Jamaica, he did graduate work at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

that, on a recent week, served 12 families. On the international level, Hillside has formed a partnership with a Jamaican church that includes yearly pulpit exchange and mission trips to the area.

## Thoughts from the pastor

"We affirm as part of our mission the openness to all people. We cultivate that

deliberately as a mission in this church and in the Presbytery — service to the community and openness to everybody regardless of gender, race or educational background," Lawson said. "The emphasis is on justice, peace and inclusiveness."

— Candice Hamngar  
For the Journal-Constitution  
candlham@bellsouth.net

CELEBRATE DEKALB 175!

Contact: Edith Wright - Davis

Church: Hillside Presbyterian Church

Address: 1879 Columbia Drive

Decatur, Georgia 30032-5998

Phone: area code and # (404) 289-3092 Fax: (404) 289-2833

Date of Founding of this church: July 1, 1956 \*

Always in DeKalb: yes

If possible would you provide a listing of the ministers, pastors, priests or appropriate leaders during the church's history.

Any other interesting historical background:

October 19-20, 1996, Hillside  
Celebrated 40 years of service  
in the South DeKalb  
Community.

- Pastors**  
 Rev. P.C. (Buddy) Ennis  
 Rev. George McMaster  
 Rev. Roland Perdue, III  
 Rev. Joe Pack Arnold  
 Rev. David C. Stover  
 Rev. Paul Smith  
 Rev. J. Richard Stanford  
 Rev. Robert H. Edwards

Return to:  
Sue Ellen Owens  
Old Courthouse On the Square  
Decatur, Georgia 30030  
404 373-3076

- Interim Pastors**  
 J. McDowell Richards  
 Felix B. Green  
 Dave Verner  
 Mitchell Johnson  
 Richard Dalton  
 H. Eugene Farlough  
 Floyd Rhodes

\* First service March 4, 1956. Church organized July 1, 1956.

# Church Directory

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**Website:** [www.hillside-church.org](http://www.hillside-church.org)

**Mailing Address:** 1879  
Columbia Drive

**Fax:** 404-289-2833

**Email:** [hillspc@bellsouth.net](mailto:hillspc@bellsouth.net)

Decatur, GA

30032-5998

## Staff - Volunteer Positions:

**Lawson, Winston** - Pastor

**Cole, Ernestine** - Parish Associate

**Lee, Connie** - Community Ministry & Mission Partnership

**Thompson, Joseph** - Parish Associate - Retired

**Bryant-Booker, Deloris** - Clerk of Session

**Howell, Robert** - Youth Choir Director - Parish Assoc. for Youth Min.

**Jackson, AnneMarie** - Youth Ministry

**Hill, Dorothy** - Christian Education

**Simmers, Marvin** - Senior Adult Ministry

**Moore, Alice** - Treasurer

**Vaughn, Sarah** - Chair of Worship

**Anthony, Willie** - Evangelism/Church Growth

**Malloy, Raymie** - Mission

**Rogers, Philip** - Director of Music

**Killings, Erma** - Communications/Newsletter

**Scott, Keith** - Website

**Mootenaar, Denise** - Secretary

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