

The Ultimate Toolkit

Client Spotlight: Hillside Community Church

A growing church in the heart of California discovers the ultimate toolkit that helps increase engagement, grow giving, and makes the truth of Jesus more accessible for their community.

About Hillside Community Church

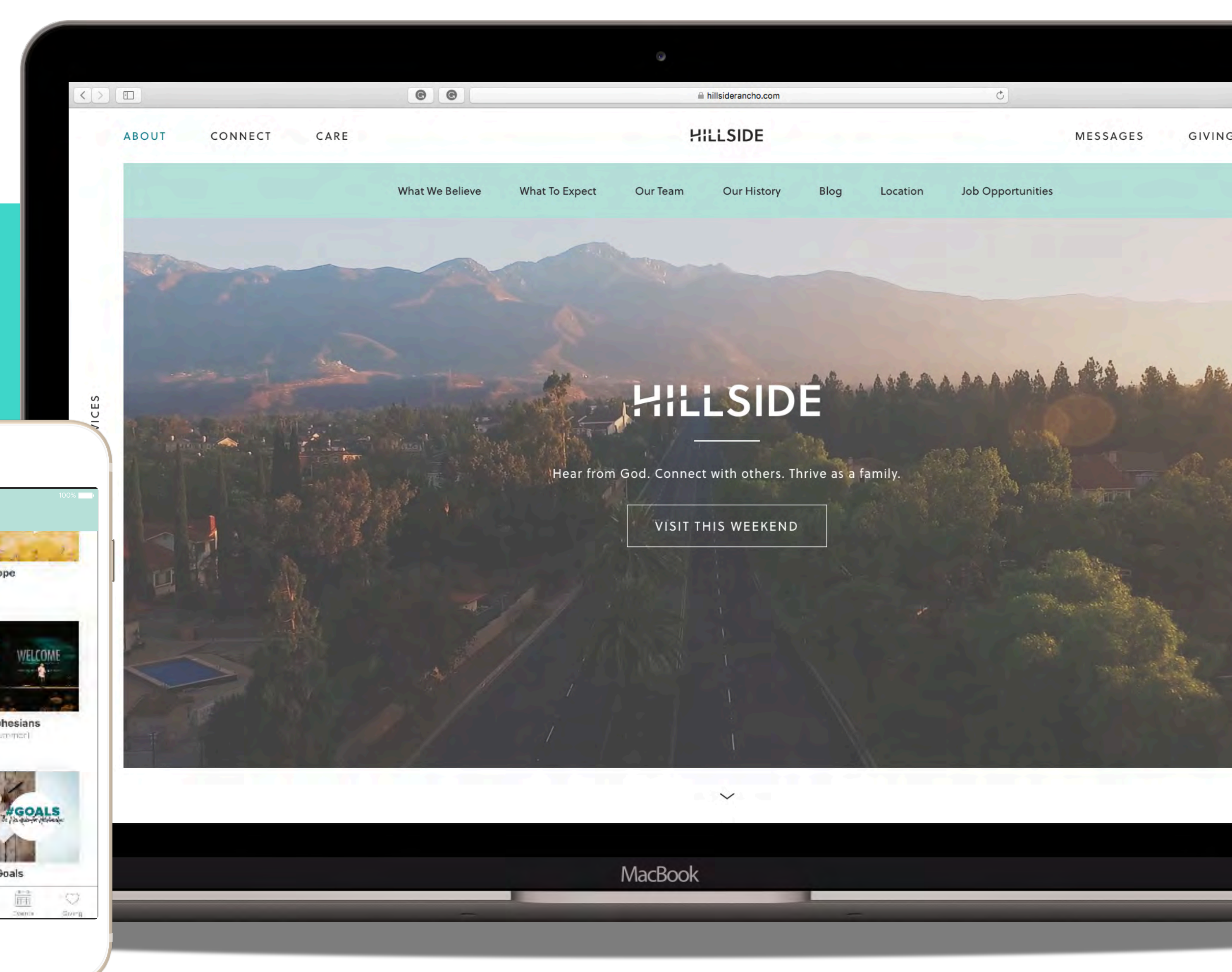
Nestled at the base of Angeles National Forest, Hillside Community Church serves about 3,000 people from the surrounding Inland Empire area of Southern California. The church was planted 35 years ago, with many founding members still in attendance. Today, they serve a wide demographic of people with an increasing number of young families.

A Digital Strategy

With an increasing focus on reaching the younger generations, Hillside Community Church decided to go back to the drawing board and find the best opportunities for using both an app and their website. “We did a lot of surveying to find out how many people used an electronic Bible, how many people took notes on their phone, and essentially how many people interact with digital content while in church,” said Morgan Nottingham, Project Coordinator for the Communication Department. After collecting all the data, Morgan and the rest of the team at Hillside made the decision to use the church website as an external tool to attract first time visitors, and have their app be primarily for their church community - with the sole idea of having one place for people to go to stay connected to the life of the church. “We didn’t create the app with the hope of using it to provide all the same

Going Digital Checklist:

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| ✓ Know your Community | ✓ Develop a Content Strategy |
| ✓ Do Your Research | ✓ Evaluate Printed Material Savings |
| ✓ Develop a Plan for Web vs. Mobile | ✓ Create an Adoption Strategy |



information that's on our website," said Morgan. "We wanted it to help us connect with our church, encourage them to read the Bible, watch media, and share our church's content with them." If you download Hillside's app, you will find sermons, events, giving, a custom Bible reading plan, and more content tailored to regular attendees, while the website showcases content that is more relevant to visitors and first-time guests.

“The biggest asset for us is that we positioned ourselves so that we are only using one tool, and the Subsplash Platform is the complete toolkit.”

- Ryan Hubbard, Hillside Community Church

The Results

Hillside's strategy saw an increase in engagement both in the app and on the web. They noted that about 33% of new visitors on Sunday indicated that they heard about the church through the website or social media. Additionally, app usage has steadily increased by 20% year over year, with an average of 800 sermon plays each month. When the church decided to run a financial campaign to help those affected by Hurricane Harvey, they intentionally made the only option to donate to that fund available via Subsplash Giving in the app. In three weeks, \$71,000 was raised. All who donated created a new Subsplash Giving account, making it easy to set up recurring donations when they returned to the app. The church also **saved roughly \$20,000** annually by adding their Sunday bulletins to the app and eliminating printing costs.

This simple yet calculated strategy has not only helped Hillside save money, but puts relevant information in front of the people who need it most. Those who are looking for a church can easily find the information they need where they are most likely to search for it (on the web), and once they attend a service, they can easily stay connected with the app.

Moving Forward

Implementing a new communication strategy can sound like a daunting task, so we asked Ryan and Morgan how they did this for their church. “A huge part of our success [in moving forward with digital content] comes from our senior leadership believing in the value of digital and social interaction,” said Morgan. “We know that the younger generation is the future of our church, and we found that that generation is much more dependent on electronic devices.” In addition to catering to the younger generation, Hillside made sure that everyone in the church knew where to go to get the content they needed. “Our Senior Pastor talks about the app from the stage,” said Ryan. “We wanted to make sure we communicate that it’s OK to use your phone in church, and that the app is where to go to stay connected.” Hillside’s congregation is certainly enjoying the benefit of having one place to go to stay connected and so is the church staff. “The biggest thing for us is that we positioned ourselves in a way so that we are only using one tool,” said Ryan. And that tool has helped more people in the Inland Empire hear the good news of Jesus’ saving grace.

“We had to consider ways to make our communication go beyond Sundays. The app is the way we communicate with our community Monday-Saturday.”

- Morgan Nottingham, Hillside Community Church

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