

Making a Difference

Here's a look at the numbers since we launched Hope Scholars:

Year	No. Scholarships <i>(one each year to ORHS)</i>	Total Raised
2012	3	\$1,200
2013	3	\$2,080
2014	5**	\$3,000
2015	5	\$4,200
2016	6**	\$4,395
2017	6†	\$7,785
2018	5†	\$8,580
2019	5†	\$7,130
2020♣	5	\$7,650
2021	5	\$10,900
2022	7***	\$9,950
2023	5	\$13,975
Total	60 (56 claimed)	\$80,845

Note: Hope Scholars Golf Scramble & Silent Auction began in 2020

** One scholarship unclaimed; funds distributed among the next year's recipients

† Includes one scholarship for \$5,000, given by an anonymous donor and designated exclusively for the student at Oak Ridge High School

♣ Beginning in 2020, number includes a scholarship for a student at Lake Nona High School

*** Two scholarships unclaimed totaling \$3,940; funds allocated for 2024

* *Please note: This is not intended to be a "fair" scholarship* (for example, attending church more or being more active does NOT mean more scholarship dollars – see Matthew 20.1-16). Hope Scholars is designed as an act of *sheer grace*. Everyone who submits an essay must sign an *"Agreement of Understanding" commitment*.

We cannot pre-guarantee amounts, since we have no idea how much money we'll receive or how many students will apply. Scholarships may be negligible.

Hope Scholars

A Campaign to Offer
Modest Scholarship Support for Students



Hope Presbyterian Church at Lake Nona

Spring 2024

Updated 2/23/24

What Are We Talking About?

Modest scholarships for all levels of undergraduate education: 4-year, 2-year, 1-year certificate or vocational ed training. Key word: *modest!* (We have *no idea* how much we'll collect or how many people will apply!)

Why Does the Church Care About This?

Two important reasons. First, **Presbyterian theology views all labor as a divine calling** ... maintaining that to serve in any career – whether as educator, engineer, clerk, physician, bookkeeper, scientist, writer, homemaker, attorney, or construction worker -- is equally noble as entering church service. Whatever our work, we engage it as children of God – bearing witness to Jesus Christ.

Second, **in Jesus' own mission statement (Luke 4.18-19), he noted the Kingdom call to proclaim release to captives and freedom for the oppressed. At this juncture in U.S. culture, debt marks the most common "prison" the average citizen faces.** "As college costs spiral out of control and public universities cut back on financial aid, more students and their parents are taking on loans to pay tuition, according to the *Los Angeles Times* Americans' student loan debt surpassed credit card debt for the first time in history in August 2010."¹ In late 2023, student loan debt neared \$1.75 trillion.²

Working together, our individually small contributions are *more* – and have the potential to make a modest but significant difference.

Where Does the Money Come From?

Hope will receive designated gifts through Easter, 3/31/24. Many may also participate in the Hope Scholars Golf Scramble & silent auction, a funding source since 2020. For those who choose to donate, some may make self-identified "sacrifices" during Lent (say, forgoing a "nice to have" – like a luxury coffee or soda) and contribute that amount. Others may sell an item no longer needed and donate the proceeds or a portion. Some may make an extra commitment of some sort. No rules here – just right!

¹ Berman, Jillian. "Student Loans Could Be America's Next 'Debt Bomb,' Report Finds." *Huffington Post*, 8 February 2012. From http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/08/student-loan-debt-bankruptcy_n_1263348.html. Accessed 2/23/24.

² Hann, Alicia. "2024 Student Loan Debt Statistics: Average Student Loan Debt," *Forbes*, 16 July 2023, accessed 2/23/24. From <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/student-loans/average-student-loan-debt-statistics/>

Who Is Eligible & What Do They Have To Do?

Ordinarily a high school senior or graduate (or equivalent) or current undergraduate student of *any age* who: 1) considers Hope their primary faith community *and* attends Hope, on average, at least once per month each quarter -- or who has a parent who does, *and* 2) writes a required 1-page essay (more than 2 full pages will not be considered) on one of the following topics:

1. Scripture affirms that every Christ-follower is a minister -- and that we all live *all of our lives* unto God. Explain what this means to you.
2. Discuss a school, church, or community activity that has brought you joy and helped shape your sense about God's direction for your future.
3. Explain how you think your education will have a positive impact on your life, your family, and/or your community.
4. Discuss how the major or career you are interested in pursuing will allow you to 'grow deeper with God and others' and/or 'reach wider to serve and share God's love with the world.'

Important: Since 2020, Hope has given two equal- or greater-value scholarships outside our walls: one each at Lake Nona High and Oak Ridge High (ORHS), an at-risk school that once bordered John Calvin Presbyterian. When John Calvin closed in 2009 & sold its property to benefit ORHS, the closing church created a fund to launch new congregations; Hope Pres was the first beneficiary – connecting us significantly with that school. Hope has awarded one equal- or great-value scholarship at Oak Ridge since 2012. Neither the Oak Ridge nor Lake Nona senior will be required to write an essay or attend Hope ... This is a gift of sheer grace.

What's the Process?

In-house applicants must submit their 1-page essay (without name or unnecessary identifying remarks) **by PDF or hard copy by Easter Sunday 3/31/24 at 11 am**. They must also sign an "Agreement of Understanding." On Easter morning, a clerk will assign a number to the essay and keep a private list matching names and numbers. *The essay must address one of the four designated topics. Please specify which question you're addressing.* A "first reader" will assess the numbered essays for compliance with guidelines. Afterward, a panel of 3-5 adults who do not have family members in contention will determine whether to designate an "Essay of Note." *All applicants (+ the ORHS & Lake Nona students) will receive an equal portion of funds – though the author of one strong essay may receive a modest additional amount as Essay of Note.*

Scholarship checks will be paid to schools only and not to individuals.