



HILLTOP
United Methodist Church

ECHOS
January 2015

www.mankatohilltop.org

facebook: [hilltop united methodist church](https://www.facebook.com/hilltop.united.methodist.church)

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FROM THE PASTOR

Resolve

I got two favorite things with my boys to entertain guests at get-togethers. The first is the double rocket – an acrobatic trick with me on my back with one boy hoisted up on my legs and the other standing on my hands as I bench press him into the sky. It's probably the last year I can do that. The other is not a trick but a memorized prayer. It's John Wesley's Covenant prayer. It reads like this:

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing: I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

I love it that my boys know this prayer. I love it because it's a great prayer! I love it because it's at the heart of Methodism! I love it because it's the core of discipleship! But I got to be honest I really love it because I RESOLVED to teach them it!

A few years ago while doing course work at Asbury Theological Seminary I had the assignment of establishing a RULE OF LIFE for myself. Now, a *rule* in this sense means "guide" or "regime". A *rule of life* is kind of like a garden lattice – a structure you put in place to facilitate the growth of a plant. And so my personal rule of life consists of 12 things I seek to incorporate into my life regularly in order to flourish in my relationship with God, my family, and in ministry to God.

I keep my rule of life taped to the bottom of my desk and I pull it out every once in a while to see how I'm doing and recalibrate. Each of the 12 rules are specific – 20 minutes each morning with God; exercise 4 days a week; intentional date night weekly with Stacy; work to encourage 10 to attend the Walk to Emmaus. You can see they kind of sound like *resolutions*. And like New Year's Resolutions I have varying degrees of success with these rules.

So looking over my rule of life again today, I just had to tell you about my kids knowing the Wesley Covenant Prayer by heart. Why? Because Fred's rule 2b reads "Children: Practice daily 'creative' bedtime prayer with them." Don't you see? Because of this rule of life I resolved to teach my kids that prayer. And today they know it (In fact, better than me)! I'm ecstatic! Why? Because I know for a fact I have not practiced "daily" prayer with my kids at bedtime, and even when I do it isn't always "creative." But I also know because of my rule I have done it more often than not and I have been more creative (like teaching them Wesley's prayer) than I otherwise would have. I can look over the list and see where I have failed, but I can also see that with no list there would likely be no success.

I don't know if you have make new year's resolutions, but I invite you to take the time to list 3 holy habits in your life with God, 3 in relationship to your family and friends, and 3 in relationship to your life's calling. These "rules" should breathe life, not take life from you. Make them challenging but attainable. Post them where you can check in from time to time.

Discipleship is not simply desire to follow Jesus, but intentionality or resolution to do so. Come by my office anytime and I will be happy to show you my rule of life as an example, and for limited time only the boys and I will show you the double rocket.

Happy New Year, Pastor Fred

Dear HILLTOP family –

We want to sincerely thank you for the many gifts, cards, and sweet treats we received from you over the Christmas holiday and throughout 2014. Thank you most of all for walking this journey together with us – sharing your hearts and lives with us, and allowing us to do the same with you. How blessed we are to know the One who is the greatest gift – JESUS – and to worship, follow, and serve Him together with you! We are praying for you and for a wonderful 2015 – that each of us may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way (Colossians 1:9-14).

The Vanderwerfs

Stacy, Fred, Levi, and Madden

HILLTOP NEWS

Minutes from December Ad Council

Thursday, December 18, 2014, 7:30 pm

Present: Pastor Fred, E.J. Scharmer, Jeff Adams, Paulette Adams, Heather Gowanlock, Bill Scherer, Rolly Utzinger, JoAnn Hutchinson, Don Putzier, Herb Fast, Peggy Phelps, John Phelps

The meeting was called to order by John Phelps. John opened with prayer. John thanked the Ad Council members for their service to Hilltop in 2014.

Approval of Minutes: Following review and 2 minor corrections, Jeff Adams moved and JoAnn Hutchinson seconded to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2014 Ad Council meeting. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Fred reported that the brochure for the next set of Connect Groups, which start on Sunday, February 1, 2015, will be printed and available for distribution at the Christmas Eve services. For the Lenten season in 2015, there will be an Ash Wednesday service and the standard Holy Week services, however, for the other Wednesday night services we will try leveraging the Connect Groups. The Vanderwerf family will be participating (Fred is officiating) in a wedding the weekend of January 3, 2015. Terri Horn will be preaching Sunday, January 4, 2015. Discussion occurred about implementing Carbonite as a backup solution for the church computers. Don Putzier will explore further.

Trustees Report: Bill Scherer reported that the following projects were completed this month: two toilets were replaced in the parsonage; Bill replaced the upstairs hall light at the parsonage; two replacement stove/oven units were installed in the kitchen; electrician Brad Nelson gave a gift of money to Hilltop which was applied to the new stoves; All costs for the new stove were covered by gifts from 10 church families; Bunn Coffee-maker was recalibrated; Brad Nelson replaced the dimmer switch for the LED lights that shine on the sanctuary window. There is still a buzz in the sound system. Further research will be done to eliminate the buzz.

Finance Report: JoAnn Hutchinson reported that revenue from the Christmas Festival was \$9,000. The funds will be distributed as follows: \$4,500 to the Back Pack Food Program, \$500 to the Mary Martha Circle, \$500 to Operation Christmas Child, \$2,000 to the Trustees for current and future projects. Other money will be distributed to other accounts and will be applied toward next year's festival expenses.

Endowment Fund Report: John Phelps reported that in 2014, the "Education and Leadership Development Account" had grown from \$23,644.57 to \$24,973.18 (up 5.6%) and the "Property Account" had grown from \$15,000 to \$15,793.14 (up 5.3%).

Evangelism Report: John Phelps reported that the committee reviewed: Hilltop Intentional Plan for discipleship; Connect Group schedule for February 2015; 2014 completed activity list and upcoming 2015 plans.

Worship: Paulette Booker reported that the Worship Team met on Sunday, December 14, 2014, to finalize plans for the remainder of the Advent services and for Christmas Eve candlelight services at 5 and 7 p.m. Thanks to the Fellowship Team and everyone else who helped decorate the sanctuary and narthex! We

will remove the Christmas decorations and family Christmas tree on Sunday, January 4, following the 10:15 a.m. service. Families will be encouraged to remove their ornaments at any time following the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

Missions: Heather Gowanlock reported that the Salvation Army has assigned four Sundays for Hilltop to cover in 2015. Efforts will be made to identify volunteers to help for those 4 Sundays. Discussions were had about involving the confirmation students and youth in these service opportunities. The Christmas Eve offering will be dedicated to the Red Bird Mission, which is our fourth quarter mission focus.

Youth: EJ Scharmer reported that: the youth helped out with the Christmas Festival; went Christmas caroling at Oak Lawn; had a pizza party at Aasen's home where they made various Christmas goodies. EJ is putting together a PowerPoint Presentation highlighting Youth activities for 2014.

Technology: Don Putzier reported that: a new amplifier for our audio/visual system was installed in November; adjustments to the pulpit microphone and wiring conduit will be made in the future; Easy Worship upgrade will hopefully occur in January 2015.

New Business: Pastor Fred noted that there will be a leadership planning retreat, similar to prior years, scheduled for February 2015.

Next Meeting/Adjournment: The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 7:30 pm. Pastor Fred closed with prayer. Meeting was adjourned.

Happy Birthday!

Lucas Peterson	1/01	Lois Reese	1/18
Micaylia Kraywinkel	1/02	Peter Jarnstrom	1/18
Caden Clark	1/03	Chuck Rowen	1/20
Penny Johnson	1/03	Derrick Galinat	1/23
Christine Wilson-Winter	1/08	Betty Goebel	1/25
Matt Rausch	1/10	Dennis Thorsen	1/25
Tara Swalve	1/11	Dianne Mell	1/25
Kelly Rivers	1/12	Ryan Ortberg	1/25
Mary Gaskins	1/12	Logan Swalve	1/26
Adam Brown	1/14	Brandon Page	1/28
Don Bohn	1/14	Neil Westby	1/29
Debby Westby	1/15	JJ Morgan	1/30
Gary Cooper	1/15	Del Goebel	1/31

Happy Anniversary!



Bill & Adela Scherer	1/1
John & Judy Harrington	1/4
Andrew & Mary Bittner	1/5
Dianne & Mark Daby	1/5
Kim & Taylor Waknitz	1/8
Jim & Kathleen Mehrman	1/22
Bob & Char Kraywinkel	1/26

Thank you

I wish to thank every one who has visited me and for all the prayers. Special thanks to the Tuesday afternoon Women's Bible study group. I'm at Laurel's Edge now and Virgil is at home and needs prayers also. - Irma Juliar

January Calendar at Hilltop

Details to each calendar event can be found at <http://mankatohilltop.org/calendar/> by clicking on the event.


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Newsletter Submissions When submitting newsletter articles, be sure to include the date, time, location, other details, contact name and number, and the name of the team or committee hosting the event. There is a submission form on the shelf by the copier or submit to office@mankatohilltop.org and include "newsletter article" in the subject line. The deadline for the February newsletter is Monday, January 19, 2015.						
4 8:15a Worship 9:15a Kids' Kinection 10:15a Worship	5	6 EPIPHANY 1:30p CG-Women's Group 5:30p Prayer & Share	7 6:15-8:00p Youth Group 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p CCTV Worship	8 12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:00p Lasting Imprint	9 7:00a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p CCTV Worship	10 1:00-4p Organist Practice
11 8:15a Worship 9:00a Confirmation Class 9:15a Kids' Kinection 11:30a Mission Potluck	12 8:00a Newsletter Deadline	13 1:30p CG-Women's Group 5:30p Prayer & Share	14 1:30p Mary Martha Circle 6:15-8:00p Youth Group 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p CCTV Worship	15 12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Committee Mtgs. 7:30p Ad Council Mtg.	16 7:00a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p CCTV Worship	17 9:00a-12p Connect Group Training 1:00-4p Organist Practice
18 8:15a Worship 9:00a Confirmation Class 9:15a Kids' Kinection 10:15a Worship	19 8:00a Newsletter Deadline	20 1:30p CG-Women's Group 5:30p Prayer & Share	21 6:15-8:00p Youth Group 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p CCTV Worship	22 12:00p Bulletin Deadline	23 7:00a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p CCTV Worship	24 1:00-4p Organist Practice
25 8:15a Worship 9:00a Confirmation Class 9:15a Kids' Kinection 10:15a Worship	26	27 1:30p CG-Women's Group 5:30p Prayer & Share	28 6:15-8:00p Youth Group 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p CCTV Worship	29 12:00p Bulletin Deadline	30 7:00a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p CCTV Worship	31 1:00-4p Organist Practice



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HILLTOP CONNECT GROUPS

I let a friend talk me into joining a Pilates workout class at the YMCA with her. I'm a strength-training-boot-camp kinda gal. I didn't know much about Pilates – just that it was different – and that made me nervous. But a schedule change in the Y programming meant it was either Pilates or Running and, well, THAT's not gonna happen. So, Pilates it was.

And I have to tell you, I'M HOOKED! The 45-minute class is not easy, but I love the way I feel when it's over – and I can tell I'm gaining strength and flexibility from it. Now that I'm a semester in, I wonder why I never tried Pilates before! I'm so grateful for the gentle push from a friend and the schedule change at the Y which forced me to try something new!

Have you tried a Connect Group yet? (If so, I hope your experience was one that will keep you coming back!) If not, let me be that 'pushy' friend and encourage you to give it a try! With 12 different groups offered, you are sure to find one that interests you and works with your schedule.

Perhaps you've seen the winter/spring Connect Group brochure—it was inserted in the Christmas Eve worship bulletins and we will continue to insert them in the worship bulletins throughout January. Feel free to share them with a friend!

Registration is easy – you can stop at the welcome center following worship service or register online at www.mankatohilltop.org. Someone will be there every Sunday in January to answer your questions and help you register. Most Connect Groups begin the week of February 1st and run 6-12 weeks. Please register by January 25th and encourage a friend to register as well!

-Stacy Vanderwerf



Mary Martha Circle

Date: Wednesday, January 14th
Time: 1:30 pm
Hostess: Anita Ries
Devotions: Wanda Allevan
Project: Valentines