



HILLTOP
United Methodist Church

ECHOS
January 2016



www.mankatohilltop.org

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

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FROM THE PASTOR

Two Resolutions That Will Actually Make a Difference in Your Life

I just want you to do two things this January, that's not too much to ask right!? First, I want to pick up a Connect Group brochure, or go to our website, and check out our outstanding roster of Connect Groups starting in February. I promise that you will find something that will both challenge you and also make you feel right at home as you journey deeper into the heart of God with other brothers and sisters from our Hilltop family. From groups on spiritual disciplines or the Old Testament to groups on how to minister to Muslims or how life as a polygraph administrator or an auto mechanic relates to our life in Christ, you'll experience how life in a Connect Group is an absolutely vital part of who we are at Hilltop, and a key component for our individual and communal spiritual growth. So, go now to our website or pick up a brochure at church, read over the list of groups, and pray over which one the Lord is calling you to.

Second, I want to challenge us all to read through *Proverbs* together this month. This is a practice I have done at various times during the month of January over the past several years, and it always proves to be a fantastic way to start off the year. January has 31 days in it, and it just so happens that *Proverbs* has 31 chapters. Starting off the year this is a really easy yet powerful way to make daily scripture reading a habit. So starting on January 1st, I am resolving to read one chapter of *Proverbs* each day until the end of the month. So let's soak up some great, Holy Spirit wisdom together this month... who knows what will come of it!

In all these things, remember that we don't do it to earn anything. We don't work to gain anything. We don't join a Connect Group or read *Proverbs* to earn God's love and grace, we do it because we have already experienced God's love and grace! We do these things because he

invites us deeper and deeper into his own life, and by the power of his Spirit we are able to boldly approach his throne, being made holy as he is holy. So join me—resolve with me—to join a Connect Group this year, and to read our Bibles more as we are transformed inside and out by God's good graces.

Kelly

Southern Prairie District Day

Save the Date! Feb 27th 9 to 3:30 pm - Windom UMC

We are gathering as a district *to connect, inspire, and equip!* Our theme is *Swipe to Unlock Your Church* with exciting breakout sessions on the "whys and hows" of creating Small Group Ministries, Discipleship Plans, Giving Strategies, and more. Bishop Ough and Fred Vanderwerf will be preaching and there will be info booths and morale events to help connect you to resources that will help to unlock your church to reach its fullest potential. Our Ad Council will attend this event as leadership training, in lieu of our traditional leadership retreat.

Online Giving

Hilltop is excited to announce that you can now manage your giving online! Giving online is easy and allows you to set up a one-time or recurring gift and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

Visit the church website at: www.mankatohilltop.com,

Click on the **Give Now** button,

Click on the **Create Profile** button, then

Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your contribution.

Note: If you indicated an automatic payment authorization on your 2016 pledge card, the church office will set up your donation with Anchor Bank. There is no need for you to set up your own automatic payment.

HILLTOP ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Minutes from December Ad Council

Thursday, December 17, 2015, 7:30 pm

Present: Pastor Kelly McCuaig, Jeff Adams, Paulette Adams, Bob Berg, Herb Fast, Karen Frydendall, Joanne Hutchinson, Don Putzier, District Superintendent Fred Vanderwerf.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jeff Adams. Jeff opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the meeting of October 15, 2015, were available for review. A motion was made by Joanne Hutchinson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Bob Berg and carried with all members voting in favor.

Reminders for 2015: Act our size – Mid-size church. Implement changes to our “DNA” – outward focus. Goal – Ministry extension/plant/seed in 2016.

Pastor Kelly McCuaig’s Comments:

Amount of money pledged during the pledge drive is up from last year, both for the general fund and the increase fund.

Attendance each Sunday morning has been averaging 190. A record number of children participated in the Children’s Christmas program. It will be important to consider the numbers of younger children in the church when considering future staffing needs.

An on-line giving program has been implemented, with options via the website and a text-to-give feature, a program provided by Vanco. The text-to-give option will be rolled out on Christmas Eve. In order to give via text, text the number 507-665-1017, then text a \$, followed by the amount you want to give. You will receive a return text in order to identify a credit card or debit card number. Vanco will notify the church of every transaction. These new options will not replace any of the current options, including the envelope system or automatic withdrawal.

The Sunday following Christmas, December 27, will feature only one service at 10:30 a.m., which will be a service of lessons and carols. A coffee hour will be held at 9:15 a.m.

Pastor Kelly is not planning a workshop day for the Administrative Council for 2016; instead will be recommending that Council members attend the District Day, to be held in Windom Saturday, February

27th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Report from Fred Vanderwerf, Visioning Pastor:

Pastor Fred reported on general attendance patterns for United Methodist Churches both nation-wide and in the Southwest District, where 75% of churches worship with under 100 attendees each Sunday. Hilltop is close to averaging attendance of 200 per Sunday, which puts Hilltop among the largest worshipping congregations in the Southwest District. As such, Pastor Fred noted the importance for Hilltop to be seen as a leading congregation with strong lay leadership and strong pastoral leadership. One way to demonstrate leadership is by incorporating research and development, trying new programs and ideas, spreading programs that work. Examples include the Connect Group program, stewardship program and the Intentional Discipleship Plan.

Major goal to accomplish for 2016 will be to find someone to fill the position for the Wesley Foundation and the Hilltop Youth program. The next step in this process is to develop a job description. This will be accomplished through the Pastor Parish Relations Committee and a task force set up for this purpose. Job descriptions from other Wesley Foundation organizations have been solicited.

Additional areas to look at for future goal-setting include the pastoral care system, staffing for our size, youth program, maintaining an intergenerational congregation, and worship leading to include music lead by guitar/vocals.

Trustee’s Report: Bob Berg reported for the Trustees. The sanctuary roof has been completed and the issue of payment for the garage roof has been taken care of. Remaining roof issue involves the flat roof above the Fellowship Hall and the problem with water/moisture in the west wall. A hole was found in the membrane of the roof and a temporary patch has been put in. Plan for fixing the roof is being investigated. A new issue identified is a problem with external doors being left unlocked overnight. Options to correct this problem include signage by the doors instructing the last person leaving to ensure all doors are locked, notices in the bulletin, re-keying locks and re-issuing keys.

ACTION: Following discussion, the Council approved having the Trustees re-key the external locks and develop a policy for dealing with distribution of keys.

HILLTOP ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Finance Report: Joanne Hutchinson reported. Major repair fund expenses included \$2100.12 for a standing desk and a file for Pastor Kelly's office. The church received reimbursement from the insurance company for the water damage to the parsonage from basement flooding last fall. The roof repair has been paid in full, with \$1060.34 remaining in the church roof fund. At the end of 2015 there will be approximately \$27,000 available for building improvement, adding together funds remaining from previous years with funds set aside for future maintenance.

Christmas Festival: Proceeds from the Christmas Festival totaled \$10,070.00. The Christmas Festival Committee recommended the following distribution:

Mary Martha Circle: \$500.00.

Operation Christmas Child shoebox program: \$500.00

Backpack Food Program: \$5,035.00

2016 Festival Fund: \$1,722.00

Remaining \$4,665.00 recommended to go to either the Trustees or the Technology Fund. The Trustees recommended the money go to the Technology Committee.

ACTION: A motion was made by Joanne Hutchinson to approve \$4,665.00 from the Christmas Festival proceeds be placed in the Technology Fund. Motion seconded by Karen Frydendall and carried with all voting in favor.

The Council thanked Joanne for her service as Finance Chair over the past two years.

Endowment Fund Report: John Phelps had submitted a written report.

Education and Leadership Development Account has grown from its base amount of \$23,600 (\$24,736.12 at the beginning of 2015) to a total of \$25,103.16. Change in value over 2015 has been an increase of \$241.06, or 1.5%.

The Property Account has grown from \$15,650 at the beginning of 2015 to a total of \$15,968.42 currently, a change in value of \$151.24.

Worship Report: Paulette Adams reported that the Worship Team is working on the decorating and un-decorating of the sanctuary to correspond with the Sunday sermon themes.

Pastoral Care Report: Virgil Juliar has been moved into a hospice program. Paul Weingartz is currently in an

intensive care setting in Rochester.

Technology Report: Don Putzier provided a report. He had previously sent out information on potential technology upgrades, and provided a walk-through of the plan for those interested. Pastor Kelly noted he would like to meet in the new year to review the plan and map out a strategy for technology upgrades. The Council noted that Pastor Kelly's microphone ear piece should be checked for proper fit and potentially replaced if needed.

Old Business: None at this time.

New Business: Jeff Adams read a letter from Cindy Scherer regarding the fee charged for wedding coordinator services. The fee was set at \$75 at the time the position was established, and has not been increased since that time. The number of hours she spends at the church providing services is also greater than the number of hours initially considered in the fee. She requested the fee be increased to \$125 per wedding, with an additional fee charged if the participants wished to use the new white draping for decoration.

ACTION: A motion was made by Joanne Hutchinson to increase the Wedding Coordinator fee to \$125.00 per event. The motion was seconded by Herb Fast. Following discussion, Joanne Hutchinson amended the motion to increase the Wedding Coordinator fee to \$150.00 per event, with no additional fee charged if the white drapes were requested. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

Karen Frydendall reported on a program provided through the VINE organization. Participants were given the opportunity to visit Mankato's Islamic Center and hear a presentation on Islam and Islamic customs. She noted that VINE has additional upcoming programs focusing on working with immigrants. She recommended the programs for anyone interested in building positive relationships with the immigrant community in Mankato.

Adjournment/Next Meeting: Closed the meeting with prayer. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paulette Adams, Recorder

HILLTOP NEWS

Weekly Eucharist at Hilltop

Eucharist Service 12:10-12:30 pm

Fellowship Lunch 12:30-12:50 pm

Eucharist is a Greek word meaning ‘thanksgiving,’ so please join us each Wednesday during the lunch hour, beginning on September 30th, to give thanks to God for his love and mercy through the broken body and shed blood of Christ. As one body we will experience the real and present Spirit of Christ amongst us and in us, and be nourished to go forth to be faithful witnesses of God’s love and grace in the world.

We encourage you to bring your lunch with you so that we can continue to fellowship with one another through the lunch hour after the service.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who rang the bell for the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign. They really appreciate our help with their fundraising.

Thanks to those who donated food and/or helped serve the noon meal at the Salvation Army recently. You were a blessing to many!

Also, thank you to all who participated in the Missions Potluck in December. The funds raised there went to the Backpack Food Program, which supplies food to hungry school kids on the weekends and during school breaks.

Thanks, Steph

Thank you so much for the very generous Christmas gift. After all these years I still treasure being your organist/pianist. I get to be around wonderful people and play on wonderful instruments. Also thank you so much to the Max Life for Men for the work they do on my car. Life is definitely less stressful because of it.

Love, Jo Breckenridge

Thank you for the positive response to our request for Christmas Gifts designated for the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center.

Mary Martha Circle

Happy Birthday!

Lucas Peterson	1/01	Julius Fritz	1/16
Micaylia Kraywinkel	1/02	Lois Reese	1/18
Caden Clark	1/03	Peter Jarnstrom	1/18
Penny Johnson	1/03	Chuck Rowen	1/20
Christine Wilson-Winter	1/08	Derrick Galinat	1/23
Matt Rausch	1/10	Betty Goebel	1/25
Tara Swalve	1/11	Dennis Thorsen	1/25
Kelly Rivers	1/12	Dianne Mell	1/25
Mary Gaskins	1/12	Ryan Ortberg	1/25
Adam Brown	1/14	Logan Swalve	1/26
Don Bohn	1/14	Brandon Page	1/28
Debby Westby	1/15	Neil Westby	1/29
Gary Cooper	1/15	JJ Morgan	1/30
Shannon McCuaig	1/15	Del Goebel	1/31
Ella Fritz	1/16		

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



Mary Martha Circle

Date: Wednesday, January 13th
 Time: 1:30 pm
 Hostess: Wanda Allevan
 Devotions: Marci Fast
 Project: Hygiene Kits

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 18, 2016.**

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	
 <p>Take the Challenge and read one chapter of Proverbs each day in January</p>							
3 8:00a Worship 9:15a Kids Kinection 10:30a Worship 11:30p Mission Potluck	4	5 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share	6 Epiphany 12:10p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast	7 12:00p Bulletin Deadline	8 7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast	9 1-4p Organist Practice	
10 8:00a Worship 9:15a Kids Kinection 10:30a Worship	11	12 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share	13 12:10p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast	14 12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Comm. Meetings 7:30p Ad Council	15 7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast	16 1-4p Organist Practice	
17 8:00a Worship 9:15a Kids Kinection 10:30a Worship 12:00p Connect Group Host Training	18 8:00a Newsletter Deadline	19 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share 6:00p Emmaus Dinner	20 12:10p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast	21 12:00p Bulletin Deadline	22 7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast	23 1-4p Organist Practice	
31 8aWorship 9:15a Kids Kinection 10:30a Worship 8aWorship 9:15a Kids Kinection 9:15a Connect Groups 10:30a Worship	24 8aWorship 9:15a Kids Kinection 10:30a Worship	25	26 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share	27 12:10p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast	28 12:00p Bulletin Deadline	29 7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast	30 1-4p Organist Practice



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 find us on facebook:
Hilltop United Methodist Church

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

It's A Wrap!!

I received an e-mail the day before Christmas from Operation Christmas Child's Follow-Your-Box program – there will be shoeboxes from Hilltop going to Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Tanzania and Malawi!!! Perhaps you will receive an e-mail identifying a different country – it would be fun to hear if Hilltop touched lives in any other countries this Christmas season also.



Thank you to all of you who participated in OCC this season, including those who packed boxes, those who helped in the Collection Center, and special thanks to the “heavy lifters” for their work on the final Monday. I hope you each realize that the work you do through this program will provide a positive gospel message and a smiling-giving experience for children and their families around the world!

Final numbers for shoeboxes over the past years:

	2013	2014	2015
Hilltop Boxes	231	229	279
Boxes Taken in By Collection Center	2,514	2,308	2,809
Total Mankato Area, including Relays	4,676	5,212	6,438

You can see that 2015 was a record year for our Collection Center, and it was for OCC as a whole, bringing in over 11.2 million shoeboxes! For the first time, the Mankato shoeboxes did not fit in one truck – we had to call for a second truck to come to take cartons of our boxes! It was also wonderful to have Mary Ware speak at Hilltop in December and tell us about her experience receiving a shoebox as a child in Russia. Hilltop - you make a difference! I am already excited to see what 2016 will bring.

Paulette Adams
OCC Collection Center Coordinator