

Hilltop United Methodist Church Council Minutes

Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

In attendance: Burl Maker, Matt Sipe, Michelle Behsman, Brad Propp, Barb Keith, Paulette Adams, Derrick Galinat, Deb Michalski and Don Putzier.

Opening and Prayer: The meeting opened with a prayer led by Don.

Approval of minutes: Minutes from September were sent by email. Matt made a motion to approve the minutes. Burl seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Devotional: Matt discussed the biblical story of Simeon and Anna from Luke 2, focusing on their roles as faithful leaders who awaited and recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Matt drew parallels between the characters' experiences of waiting and seeing God's salvation to the church's mission of offering light and hope to the community. Council members shared personal reflections on signs of God's faithfulness in their church community, including welcoming new members and the positive impact of recent musical changes. They agreed that the presence of God's Holy Spirit is evident in the connections and unity among church members, and emphasized the importance of keeping Jesus Christ as the central focus of their faith.

Discussion of Bibles in Sanctuary: The church council discussed the return of Bibles to the sanctuary, with Deb expressing concern about their absence. Matt explained that the Bibles were removed due to space constraints when new chairs were installed, but have now been returned. The council agreed that while some members prefer digital Bibles, physical copies remain important for others. Council discussed replacing Bibles with updated version in the future, potentially through a memorial Bible drive in 2026.

Financial Report: Burl provided a review of October and November finances. October revealed general giving of \$13,785.69 and income of \$15,436.16, while expenses exceeded income by \$7,289.89. November revealed general giving of \$23,535.00 and income of \$25,303.71, which net income of \$6,668.92. The capital campaign showed pledged amounts of \$497,110.00 with \$425,258.22 received to date, leaving \$72,000 remaining to be collected. The council approved a motion to make a significant loan payment of \$75,000-\$95,000 in January 2026, which would reduce the loan amount from \$211,000 to \$136,000 and lower monthly payments to \$736. The 2026 budget was approved with minimal increases of 0.36% over the 2025 budget, and Matt noted that while the budget serves as a guide, the church maintains a conservative financial approach and only spends money that is available.

Committee Updates: Paulette reported on the successful Operation Christmas Child week, which required two trucks for shipping due to increased participation. The council also noted that all January meetings would be pushed back one week due to scheduling.

Calendaring:

- a. December 21—Children's Christmas Program during service
- b. December 24, 1:30 and 4:30 pm—Christmas Eve Services
- c. January 8—Emmaus Planning Team Meeting
- d. January 11 and 18—Pastor Matt gone (Fred preaching Jan. 11, Katie preaching Jan. 18)
- e. January 15—Emmaus 4th Day Gathering
- f. January 22—Church Council and Charge Conference
- g. January 25—DS Woojae Im guest preacher

Meeting closed with a prayer from Pastor Matt.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Behsman