

**Hilltop United Methodist Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Pastor Matt Sipe, Derrick Galinat, Karla Lassonde, Michelle Behsman, Kerry Rausch, Don Putzier, Jocelin Maine, Jean Jackson and Paulette Adams.

Don opened with prayer.

Minutes: Matt made a motion to approve the minutes from May with a second from Jocelin. The motion carried.

Bible Study: Pastor Matt began a devotional based on the scripture of the Emmaus Road, which was the focus of this year's Annual Conference Session in St. Cloud. Matt asked council members to consider where they might see themselves on this road at this time.

Finance Report: Don provided a report of May finances. General giving was \$23,572.00. Expenses were \$24,909.21 and the net income was \$477.79. Working general fund balance at the end of May was \$47,419.18. A motion was made by Kerry to approve the finance report with a second from Jocelin. The motion carried.

Calendaring:

- a. June 12 to 25 - Pastor Matt gone
- b. June 28 - Second Annual "Getting Sauced" Barbecue Event
- c. July 23 - Faith Night at Moondogs
- d. Jul 26 - Bonfire and games
- e. Aug 30 - Hilltop Carnival
- f. Fall schedule - Resumes Sept. 10
- g. Oct. 26 to 29 - Men's Walk to Emmaus, Fairmont
- h. Nov. 2 to 5 - Women's Walk to Emmaus, Fairmont

Feasibility Study Discussion:

Don provided a quick overview of what information has been provided thus far, building plans and feasibility study report. He referred to a schedule of potential actions items on page 19 of the study. He also called attention to the data that showed a majority of those interviewed felt that youth and Sunday school space were of primary importance. Pastor Matt felt that it is important at this time to focus on what upgrade is most important and also, how comfortable and willing would we be in taking out a mortgage to achieve this goal. Thoughts shared included: interest rates, construction costs, what upgrades would provide Hilltop with the most value and immediate impact. How much do we want to invest? What is our direction?

Pastor Matt felt that expanding the footprint of the building cannot be done without a loan, but the amount that Mark Davy and Associates estimates that we can raise can provide for a very healthy remodel. It was mentioned that the bathrooms would not need to be done, if we are not changing the footprint. There was discussion of remodeling the entire south side to provide for nursery and Sunday school space. Attention was drawn to what visitors may be seeking from Hilltop and perhaps we need to focus on several areas like the Welcome Center, Sanctuary, and space for kids and youth. Other comments: remodeling will enhance what we have, we won't lose people because we didn't make a bigger church overall, an existing space renovation could go a long way and have a more immediate impact. Jocelin mentioned the importance of have a secure, safe place for the youth that has controlled access. Lighting, screens, paint and carpet in the sanctuary were mentioned as priorities for that space. The sliding glass divider would be nice, but not necessary. A member attending the meeting felt it was extremely important that we involve more people in making decisions about what upgrades are to be included in a future remodel plan. It was noted that a kitchen remodel is also a recognized need. Derrick added that it is important that we keep the long range plan in mind as we consider remodeling. He also stated that the fellowship hall leak will cost approximately \$10,000. Don provided a summary of all that was shared.

There was discussion about next steps with Brunton Architects and the need to re-engage the Hilltop building team. There was a question about the cost in continuing to work with Brunton. Derrick estimated that additional cost to revise plans would be approximately half of what initial cost. It was mentioned that our initial payment was to be applied to actual building costs. There was a question about whether we proceed with a capital campaign and do we hire Mark Davy & Associates to conduct the campaign. Don suggesting moving forward with capital campaign, to be conducted by Mark Davy & Associates. Derrick asked where the funding would come from to hire Mark Davy & Associates. Pastor Matt suggested using the Increase Fund, which was earmarked for expansion and growth. Michelle shared that the Increase Fund was \$42,309.06 and she supported Matt's assessment of the intended use of this fund. Don made a motion to hire Mark Davy & Associates for the capital campaign to be funded with the Increase Fund. The motion was seconded by Pastor Matt. The motion carried.

Discussion turned to scheduling a building team meeting in the coming weeks, to be led by Don. Michelle discussed the communication plan moving forward, as a lack of communication was mentioned in the feasibility study summary. There is a dedicated webpage for building updates, which was shared in the e-newsletter. This was used to provide a copy of the feasibility study summary, but hard copies were also sent by mail. Michelle suggested a multi-pronged approach in communicating future building plan information with members. Pastor Matt asked if a town hall after worship might be in order as one format. Jean asked that we consider members who are not connected to technology and ensure that they are receiving information. Derrick asked about the availability of church council minutes and Michelle said that there is a binder in the office with paper copies and they are available on our website. Matt shared the link in the group chat: <https://www.mankatohilltop.org/minutes>. Michelle said that we could include a direct link to the minutes in the e-newsletter each month, but that still does not address those that do not have email. Jean asked if there might be a communication committee and Matt suggested that the conversation continue outside of this council meeting and invited Jean to meet at a later date.

Fall Schedule: Pastor Matt asked for input on our Wednesday and Sunday worship schedule in the Fall. Wednesday worship and the Community Meal were a great experiment this past year, but did the schedule work? Jocelin expressed that there was not enough time to cover Christian education for our youth with the packed Wednesday schedule. She suggested that education be conducted on Wednesdays, with both worship services on Sunday. Don also shared support for having two worship services on Sunday, with youth and education programming on Wednesday. Pastor Matt asked that council think and pray about how to best meet needs through the worship and education schedule. and he suggested that a decision be made at the next council meeting **Thursday, July 20, at 7:00 pm.**

Pastor Matt closed in prayer. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm. Respectfully submitted, Michelle Behsman