

Hilltop United Methodist Church Council Minutes

Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

In attendance: Burl Maker, Brad Propp, Pastor Matt Sipe, Paulette Adams, Barb Keith, and Don Putzier

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

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

Devotional: Matt presented a devotional based on Ephesians 2:1-10. Matt discussed his upcoming sermon on John Wesley's "The Scripture Way of Salvation" from Ephesians, emphasizing the importance of understanding salvation as God's grace through faith rather than based on works. The discussion highlighted the need for the church community to demonstrate God's grace in their actions and interactions. Matt noted that while Hilltop Church does well in understanding and practicing grace, there are still opportunities to apply these principles in various contexts including workplace situations.

Creation Care and Facility Use Policy: Matt presented a new Creation Care and Facilities Policy that combines existing facility use policies with environmental sustainability requirements for both internal and external groups using church facilities. The policy would require the use of compostable and reusable products, with the church providing or pre-approving these items and covering costs for those who cannot afford them. Don also noted challenges with packaging from external vendors, acknowledging that some non-recyclable containers would need to go to landfill.

Matt discussed updating the suggested donation amounts for building use, noting that costs have increased significantly since the pandemic and suggesting adjustments of \$5-10 per item. He plans to consult with Derrick about these changes and aims to finalize a revised version in August for approval. The trustees are also planning a memorial tree planting program to complement the policy, which will be announced to the congregation in the fall alongside a related sermon series.

Financial Management Policies: Matt mentioned working on updated financial policies with Michelle's help, aiming for approval by the end of the year. He briefly discussed the potential for future solar installation, though this is not currently feasible due to ongoing roof repairs.

Youth and Kids Connection Update/Wednesday evening programming: The group discussed scheduling for Wednesday night activities, deciding to have meals starting at 5:30 pm, while starting Kids Connection at 6:00 pm and keeping choir, confirmation, and youth group at 6:30 pm. They agreed this timing would allow younger children to finish by 7:00 pm while accommodating later arrival times for adults for other groups and activities.

Financial Report: Burl provided a review of May and June finances. Matt announced that capital campaign letters will be sent to those with outstanding balances, encouraging completion by November. The finance report showed healthy numbers. Burl made a motion to approve the May and June finance report, seconded by Matt. The motion carried.

May Summary

General giving: \$14,092.93

Capital Campaign: \$7,166.93

Total Income: \$16,344.76 (does not include Capital Campaign funds received)

Expenses: \$21,034.63

Net Income: -\$4,689.87

Working general fund balance 5/31/26: \$40,778.47

Capital Campaign pledge: \$497,110.00

Capital Campaign funds received to date: \$463,368.83 (93% of goal, \$33,741.17)

June Summary

General giving: \$12,917.93

Capital Campaign: \$1,564.93

Total Income: \$14,844.64 (does not include Capital Campaign funds received)

Expenses: \$20,740.19

Net Income: -\$7,460.19

Working general fund balance 6/30/26: \$34,905.10

Capital Campaign pledge: \$497,110.00

Capital Campaign funds received to date: \$464,933.76 (93% of goal, \$32,176.24)

Committee Updates:

Technology—Don recommended upgrading to Easy Worship 8, which has various improvements, including compatibility with both PC and Mac operating systems. It requires a \$240 annual subscription for support and updates. Support for Easy Worship 7 is no longer available. The tech group will evaluate this prior to upgrading.

Operation Christmas Child—Paulette noted that delivery of Christmas boxes will be occurring soon.

Calendar:

- a. July 26—Bray Park service/baptism
- b. August 31—BBQ event in the evening
- c. September 2—Youth event at Valley Fair, combined with several other area churches
- d. November 16-23—Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection

Meeting closed with a prayer from Pastor Matt.

Respectfully submitted by Don Putzier, with edited notes from AI