



HILLTOP
United Methodist Church

ECHOS
December 2016

www.mankatohilltop.org

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

office@mankatohilltop.org

FROM THE PASTOR: THE GIFT OF GIVING

This advent season we're blessed to enter into a season of hopeful anticipation of Christ's promised return to this world. But we do this not only by looking to the future in hope, but also by looking to the past with faith—faith that what God has promised once, he will do again! As we look to the past, to the Christmas story of Luke 1-2, we see that the greatest gift of Christmas is God's invitation to us to live as Christ lives...to participate in giving the Good News to the world, the greatest gift of Christmas is *The Gift of Giving*. As a church this season we'll have many opportunities to practice this gift of giving Good News to others:

Ministry Fair—Sunday, December 11th

Part of giving the gift of Good News to others starts with our ability to give the gift of Jesus to each other. We are called by God to regularly share our faith with others through word and deed...how can we ever expect to share Jesus with those outside our walls, if we can't even do it inside our walls. And this is exactly why we'll be hosting a Ministry Fair on Sunday, December 11th after both the 8:30 and 10:30 services. This will provide an excellent opportunity for each of you to learn more about the various ministries of Hilltop Church, and to discover where God is calling you to serve in sharing Jesus with others in our Hilltop Family.

Children's Christmas Program and Soup/Stew Potluck — Sunday, December 18th

For many of us our first experience with Jesus came as a child, and we are called to do all that we can to raise these children in the love, joy, hope, and grace of Jesus Christ. Be sure to join us on this Sunday as the children give the gift of the Good News to us during the 10:30 service. Then we'll each have the opportunity to serve them as we join together for a Soup/Stew Potluck dinner immediately following the 10:30 service. This will be a fundraiser to send our kids to Church Camp this summer.

The kids will give us the gift of Good News in worship, and we will give them the gift of Good News as we work to send them to Church Camp.

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day Services

I know for many of us it is a challenge to invite people to church, but the Advent and Christmas season is a time when people actually expect *and want* to go to church. Who will you invite to our Christmas Eve service this year? We will be offering two services at 5pm and 7pm. Both services will be identical—candlelight worship services, with lots of music, and a choir blessing us at both services. Then, on Christmas morning we'll be gathering for a *10:30am service only* as we worship God on that glorious Christmas morning! Join us as we receive the gift of Jesus anew again, and also join us in inviting others to receive the gift as well! Give the gift of God's Good News this year, and welcome others into your life of worship this Christmas Eve and Christmas morning!

Opportunities abound this Advent and Christmas Season to participate in God's great gift of giving. Who will you give to this year? Who will God bless in and through your faithful witness through word and deed this season? Who will know of God's love and grace because you gave!?

-Pastor Kelly

What's Kelly Reading?

Each advent season I try to choose a special advent devotional to guide me as I make the journey from Advent to Christmas. This year I've chosen *Advent & Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen*. Nouwen is one of the most beloved spiritual authors of our time, and many lives have been impacted because of his work—mine included. It's not too late to grab a copy (which you can find easily on Amazon.com), and join me in this devotional journey through advent.

HILLTOP NEWS

Hilltop Christmas Festival

The Christmas Festival will be held Saturday, December 3, 2016, from 9 am to noon. We will be selling peanut brittle, crafts, cookies, candies, baked goods, breakfast, and more. There will also be a silent auction of gift baskets and Kids Corner with face painting and make & take ornaments. Half of the proceeds will go to Backpack Food Program. Drop off times for baked goods, crafts, cookies etc. is Friday December 2nd from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. If you have any questions or want to volunteer for a task, please feel free to contact Terry Berg at 625-1865 or bergtb1356@yahoo.com or Kendra Daby at 507-382-5202 or kensdaby@gmail.com

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone at Hilltop for your participation, donations and support for Operation Christmas Child. Hilltop has provided 297 shoebox gifts--that's 297 kids who will hear the message that Jesus loves them, and that there are people in the world who care about them! Thanks for loving God's people!



Total boxes dropped off at our Collection Center this year was 2,793. Total boxes shipped in our truck after our 5 Relay Centers delivered their boxes was 6,462.

Hilltop provided about 20 more boxes than last year and we received about the same number of boxes in the collection center as we did in 2015.

Winter Connect Groups start in February

Fall Connect Groups are coming to an end and we will be launching a new semester of classes in February. You will definitely see the Epic of Eden and Epic of Eden Isaiah classes as well as the very Wesleyan "Class Meeting" that you've heard so much about. Registration will open Dec. 24th, 2016. Watch for the Connect Group Catalog in your Christmas Eve and Sunday bulletins and on the Hilltop website.

2017 Pledge Update

A big "thank you" to all for your 2017 pledge! Thanks to your generosity we have already received over 63 pledges with \$187,180 pledged to the general fund and \$28,170 pledged to the increase fund. Pledges are still coming in and it's not too late to turn in your pledge. I want you to remember that your gift funds a ministry that changes lives. The Lord has some amazing things in store for us in 2017, including a new, full-time position to help lead our youth as well as help us plant a college ministry here in Mankato. Thank you for being a part of the Hilltop family and for helping us accomplish the vision God has given us.

You may drop your red envelope in the offering plate or in the mail so we can count you in as we carry out God's mission for us in 2017.

2017 Offering Envelopes

Please find your box of offering envelopes at the Welcome Center. If you no longer use the envelopes you need not take them. If you would like to use them and don't see your name, please contact Michelle in the office at 387-3877.

Weekly Eucharist

Wednesdays at 5:30pm



Please join us each Wednesday from 5:30-6:00 pm to express joyful thanks for the goodness of God and His unconditional love for us. As we encounter Christ in the bread and the wine, we are repeatedly touched by divine grace and progressively shaped into Christ's image to be people motivated by love, empowered and impassioned to do His work in the world. Please note—we

will NOT have Eucharist on the Wednesday after Christmas, December 28th.

"And we thank Thee that the darkness reminds us of light. O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."

-T.S. Eliot

HILLTOP NEWS

Worship and Technology

During our weekly worship services, we want to have the best worship experience possible. Those who contribute to the service play a big part in the front of the sanctuary. However, we always have several people behind the scenes who help set up and operate our sound and projection system and are part of our technology team. We also record the 10:30 am service for broadcast on KTV each week.

We currently have eight people who help with our various technology needs. We need several more people to help make this ministry really rock! If you are interested in helping, please contact Don Putzier at 345-1553 or drdcp@hickorytech.net for more information. Youth are also welcome! We are very flexible with how people can contribute and are happy to provide any needed training. Even Stephanie Putzier, who says she is “technologically impaired,” is helping!

Welcome Center Hospitality

Thank you for signing up to offer radical hospitality to those who walk through our doors on Sunday mornings. Making the coffee and setting out the treats plays a really important role in the way our church fellowships with one another and welcomes guests into the church.

You can sign up to serve at the SignUp.com website at:

<https://signup.com/client/invitation/6775657374/1634673/false#!1634673/false/false>

Red Kettle Campaign



**MAKE
CHANGE
HAPPEN.**

Come join in the fun and ring the bell for the Salvation Army on Saturday, December 17th at Shopko

(indoors!) from 1:15 pm until 5:15 pm. Please sign up for a 1-2 hr. shift at the Welcome Center.

Mary Martha Circle

This group will not meet in December but will get together again in January.

Mission Support

Mallory Westphal attended Hilltop while she was a student at MNSU, graduating in May of 2013. She assisted with the youth and helped Pastor Fred in the office and also attended the Walk to Emmaus. She has an opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip with her church, Lake City UMC, February 28-March 13, 2017 to Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Lake City UMC has teamed with Bryan and Molly Canny, who are missionaries with Evangelical Church Missions, and the New Hope Tutoring Center in Santa Cruz. New Hope seeks to provide a safe environment for children afterschool where they can receive homework assistance, personal encouragement, and daily devotional lessons demonstrating a love of Christ.

While there, Mallory will be doing construction projects, painting and finishing work on a new school for New Hope Tutoring Center. She will be part of the neighborhood outreach, help with class registration and interact with children. She and others from Lake City UMC will take with them school supplies and Sawyer water filters to distribute to the families in need.

She is excited about serving the Lord in this new way and is asking for your support through prayer. Specifically, she asks that you would join her in praying for the children she will be working with at New Hope. You can also be a partner with her in this mission by making a financial contribution towards to the \$3000 cost of the trip. Your tax deductible gift should be payable to the Lake City UMC (please DO NOT write her name on the check and leave the memo line blank). There are addressed envelopes and a form available at the Welcome Center if you would like to make a contribution.

Worship Band

If you feel called to share your musical gifts and would like to sing or play with the worship band, please email Michael at m@michaeljamesolson.com.

HILLTOP NOTES

Children's Memorial Service

Sunday, December 11th 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Hilltop United Methodist Church

Each year, candles are lit around the world in memory of children who have died. Join us for a candle lighting memorial service to honor and celebrate the lives of children who died during pregnancy, childhood, or adulthood. Families and friends are invited to attend a candle lighting service. Parents may bring a remembrance keepsake or framed photo of their child for display. Families may submit names of children who have died to be included in the printed program for the service. For more information or to request a release form for the program, call the Hospice office at 507-385-2989. Names may be submitted no later than Monday, Dec. 5th.

Online Giving

You can 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 2017 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.

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 January newsletter is **Mon., Dec. 19, 2016**.

Happy Birthday!

Julie Foster	12/01	Johnny Bittner	12/16
Barb Keith	12/03	Marlys Marrs	12/17
Paula Smithson	12/03	Adam Born	12/19
Joseph Eckert	12/04	Cori Mundt	12/20
Meghan Moore	12/05	Dan Held	12/22
Mike Mattox	12/05	Holly Aasen	12/23
Ron Beaty	12/05	Matthew Lee	12/23
Jeanette Phillips	12/09	Dean Zimmerli	12/26
Ella Gavin	12/10	Sarah Horn	12/28
Joan Lang	12/14	Aaron Daby	12/29
Anna Rivers	12/16	Sophia Morgan	12/29
Jacob Zierdt	12/16	Brad Propp	12/30

Happy Anniversary!



Craig & Diane Zimmerman	12/02
Mike & Dee Mattox	12/10
Nate & Whitney Chandler	12/12
Matthew & Emily Lee	12/18
Dan & Fiona Swanson	12/21
Rick & Penny Johnson	12/23
Linda Vogel/Peter Jarnstrom	12/26
Dianne & John Mell	12/27
Rolly & Zada Utzinger	12/27
Bob & Terry Berg	12/28

Worship Attendance Statistics

Sundays:	2016	2015	2014
November 6	192	198	197
November 13	168	233	183
November 20	225	227	213
November 27	207	210	219
Average	198	217	203

December 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><i>"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle."</i></p> <p>-Francis of Assisi</p>						
<p>4</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:30a Kids Kinetion 10:30a Worship</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1:00p Prayer Shawl 6:30p Class Meeting</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:45a Men's Bible Study 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share 6:30p Epic of Eden 7:00p Epic of Eden Isalah</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5:30p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 6:30p Hope for the Weary Mom 9:00p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>8</p> <p>12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Worship Band 6:30p Class Meeting</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1-4p Organist Practice</p>
<p>11</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:30a Kids Kinetion 10:30a Worship 3:00p Children's Memorial Service</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1:00p Prayer Shawl</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6:45a Men's Bible Study 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share 6:30p Epic of Eden</p>	<p>14</p> <p>5:30p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 6:30p Hope for the Weary Mom 9:00p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>15</p> <p>12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Worship Band 6:30p Class Meeting 6:30p Committee Mtg. 7:30p Ad Council</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>17</p> <p>McCall/Adams Wedding</p>
<p>18 GREEN BAG DAY</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:30a Kids Kinetion 10:30a Worship with Children's Program 11:30a Soup/Stew Luncheon</p>	<p>19</p> <p>8:00a Newsletter Deadline 1:00p Prayer Shawl</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:45a Men's Bible Study 1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share 6:30p Epic of Eden</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5:30p Eucharist 6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>22</p> <p>12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Worship Band</p>	<p>23</p> <p>-office closed- 7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>24 CHRISTMAS EVE</p> <p>1-4p Organist Practice 5p Worship 7p Worship</p>
<p>25 CHRISTMAS DAY</p> <p>10:30a Worship</p>	<p>26</p> <p>-office closed-</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1:30p Women's Bible Study 5:30p Prayer & Share</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:30p Choir practice 9:00p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>29</p> <p>12:00p Bulletin Deadline 6:30p Worship Band</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7a Men's Morning Risers 12:30p KTV Broadcast</p>	<p>31</p> <p>1-4p Organist Practice</p>



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 find us on facebook:
Hilltop United Methodist Church

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” - Ephesians 5:8

MINNESOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Bishop Ough addresses “division and discord” November 22, 2016

In a letter to all United Methodists on behalf of the Council of Bishops, Council President Bishop Bruce R. Ough lamented the post-election division and discord and called for a renewed commitment to the vision of the Beloved Community of Christ.

“As disciples of Jesus, we stand against all expressions of hatred, discrimination, oppression, and exclusion. As those who serve Christ, we love whom Christ loves. As stewards of Jesus’ good news, we are peacemakers, pray for our enemies, and seek reconciliation with those from whom we have become estranged,” he said. “Immigrants are scrambling for the shadows. Indigenous peoples are disrespected and forgotten. Children of color are being bullied and threatened. Muslims are being labeled and listed. Women are ridiculed and objectified. The LGBTQ community is filled with fear. Racism is being legitimized. Hundreds of millions remain impoverished without access

to educational opportunities, economic resources, or equal justice. We must stand against the meanness and hatred that is upon us. We must stand for what is best in us as people of God.”

“In order to transform the world, in faithfulness to Christ’s command, we must model respect and kindness and extinguish the fires of animosity. And thus, we call on all churches to engage in genuinely honest dialogue and respectful conversation, such that others who observe the action in our lives might declare, ‘See how they love each other!’”

“As people of faith, we are charged to build the beloved community because Christ has broken down the dividing walls and ended the hostilities between us. Yet, we continue to build walls in the church and the world which separate us and cause our hearts to grieve.”

<http://www.minnesotaumc.org/newsdetail/bishop-ough-addresses-division-and-discord-6730249>