



# Hilltop

## Highlights

February 2022



Rev. Lynn Miller Jackson  
Pastor  
pastor@hilltopumchurch.org

### Transforming Love

In December, I wrote: *May 2022 be a year of unboxed, overflowing transformation within and through us in the name of Christ for the sake of the world.* This remains my prayer and personal quest for 2022 and beyond. Throughout the year, we will visit different aspects of transformation—the non-linear process through which multifaceted change emerges as the Spirit of God stirs people and cultures to explore and embrace new mindsets and adopt new behaviors to effectively live into a new future. As we continue in the season of Epiphany seeking God's revelations in our lives, our February focus will be transforming love.

God's interest in us began before our creation and continues without wavering. God's involvement in human history and in our respective and collective lives demonstrates God's ongoing love for us. In the prophetic words of Isaiah (43:1 and 4), the LORD says: "I have called you by name, you are mine. ... <sup>4</sup>Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you..." (For more on this, listen to the Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Sermon: *I Have Called You By Name, You Are Mine*; available on Facebook @HilltopUMC). As recipients of God's love, Jesus charges us to love as we are loved. In John 13:34, Jesus says: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." As we read this command, it behooves us to understand the phrase, "Just as I have loved you" --the significance and radical nature of Jesus' love.

God gave the world the gift of Jesus to bring forth the kingdom of heaven which was and is radically different from any of the kingdoms on earth. Jesus poured out his power and life to demonstrate a distinctly different way of being and loving in community. His lifestyle, teaching, healing, and questioning required people to ponder their ways and to choose differently. Jesus required new mindsets and new behaviors—shifts in both head and heart. Without these inner shifts, any external efforts would not produce fruits that last. Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-48 demonstrates the radical love Christ requires and the inner shift that shapes the outward action.

Matthew 5:38-48 ~ <sup>38</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. <sup>39</sup> But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. <sup>41</sup> If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the

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# PASTOR'S MUSINGS

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one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. <sup>43</sup> **"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'** <sup>44</sup> **But I tell you,** love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

As Jesus instructs, He is shifting his followers to different worldview. To love as we have been loved is to embrace God's transforming love and to extend the same. This is love that does not depend on the actions of another, it is love on purpose. It is surprising, radical love that seeks to share and evoke something different and deeper with our neighbors. It is not retributive but reconciling, not divisive but unifying. Rather than fight or flight, transforming love requires us to pause and ponder and do what is right in God's eyes, not what is easy.

Jesus redefines and puts an exclamation point on love! God's transforming love requires that we **Live Our Value Every day**. Remember, we are precious, honored, and loved by God. Our life in Christ is in an invitation to be transformed by God's love and to be part of working to transform the

world. We have a God whose love can and will transform the world. Let us love on purpose. Ask the LOD to reveal to you who needs to experience God's transforming love.

Surprise some folks. Go and love differently; let your transforming love make a difference. When you have loved as you are loved, may you be transformed and to



## February Birthdays

Carmen Gooch.....	Feb 4
Jamie Olsen.....	Feb 4
Ryder & Zimmer Bolds .....	Feb 4
Charlie Bonsall .....	Feb 9
Barry Welliver .....	Feb 10
Donna Garbrecht.....	Feb 10
Caitlin Collins.....	Feb 14
Doug Orr.....	Feb 16
Leigh Anne Duff .....	Feb 20
Mary Ferraro.....	Feb 22
Jackson Kovach .....	Feb 23
Zoe Watts .....	Feb 23
Bob Brace.....	Feb 24
Elsa Robison .....	Feb 26
Diane Altemus.....	Feb 27
Earl Brown .....	Feb 29

# MISSIONS

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## Transformed by Love

By Cheryl Gentle

Most of you know that our monthly Share Your Bounty donations are delivered to Crossroads Urban Center and the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. Up to 500 people a day receive meals from the Rescue Mission. Hunger and homelessness go hand in hand. So does being cold. A recent article in the "Rescuer" newsletter struck a chord with me. I want to share a small part of one man's story. "It's one thing to be homeless, but being homeless and cold is the worst thing ever. Being cold and dirty is even worse. All the grime and grossness from the streets adds to the misery and makes you feel defeated. You wake up frequently because of the cold so you walk around all night to stay warm. When the sun comes up you try to find a place to sleep because it is a little warmer. If you go into a store, you are not welcome because you are homeless and smell. People wonder, why don't the homeless go to the Rescue Mission where they can get food and shelter. Many of the homeless are afraid of being confined with a lot of strangers and would rather stay outside. But the colder it gets (like this winter), the more people come inside to the Rescue Mission. Now I work in the clothing pantry to help those who chose to stay outside keep warm."

Sometimes I ride the TRAX downtown and transfer at the Courthouse station. Just waiting there for 15 to 20 minutes

can be bone chilling. I see many homeless people huddled in corners or walking up and down to stay warm. I try to imagine what it feels like to try to sleep like that. It is a painful thought. Our winter coat and clothing drive is one way we can help the homeless stay warm. Donating unneeded blankets and warm clothes can be done at any time by placing them in the bins by the church kitchen. By the way, we even have 2 new blankets stored in the office work room. If you ever see someone outside in the cold, you are welcome to take one. This is how we share our love to our neighbors. We have all heard the expression, "there but for the grace of God go I" and it is true. Chris Croswhite, the director of the Rescue Mission, recently said, "hope is the key to homelessness. When our homeless friends have hope that the future can be better, it stirs them to try. And when they do, God rescues them." We are the hands and feet that do God's work in this broken world. When we share hope and love, not only do we transform the lives of others, but WE are transformed. What a blessing!





# MOTHER'S MORNING OUT



Becky Elliston  
MMO Director  
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## Transforming Love

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*

-1 John 3:1

Quite some time ago, a dear friend gave me a start up from her friendship plant. It was beautiful and green and healthy. I placed it in the right spot for sunlight and watered it as directed. Lately, I've noticed the leaves wilting and showing brown spots. Some of the leaves have started curling in a way they weren't before. I became concerned and researched the proper care for this plant. (I was even slightly superstitious that if the plant died, it might somehow reflect on my friendship) The answer seemed to be that the plant needed a bigger pot with more room for the roots to grow.

At MMO, we are lucky to have the chance to help the children learn and grow. When we offer them grace, patience, guidance and love, they begin to thrive. It is a great privilege to witness their growth.

We are so blessed to have a Father that loves us more than we can imagine. He knows the plans he has for us and wants us to thrive in our lives. He stands by us as we learn from our mistakes and the difficult things that we encounter along our way. God transforms us with his grace, patience, guidance and deep love. And He always knows the right size of pot to plant us in.

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18

## FINANCE

### 2021 Year-End Financial Data

By Betty Long, Finance Chair

Income Received:

Congregational Giving \$430,474

96% of budgeted congregational giving

Other Income Received      \$ 55,766

Total Income Received      \$486,240

97% of budgeted income

Expenses Incurred      (\$458,476)

91% of budgeted expenses

Net Income for 2021      \$ 27,764

The Finance Committee is grateful for the support from the congregation in 2022.

Your support during this pandemic has been inspirational. Because of you, Hilltop was able to maintain our ministry in 2021.

The Finance Committee submitted to Church Council the 2022 budget of \$540,143 for approval. Unfortunately, there were budget lines that were eliminated or decreased from what was requested by committees due to the outcome of the pledge drive. The Finance Committee remains faithful that the budget approved by Council is a strong, healthy budget for

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# TRUSTEES

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By Mike Montoya, Trustees Chair

Peter was considered to be the Rock of the Church. Jesus said, "...and upon this rock I will build my church..." Matt 16:18

Way back in the early 80s; our Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) would do our service projects on this property. Ironically, one of our tasks was to clear the property of rocks.

Fast forward to 2022 and the property is hardly recognizable from where we started so many years ago. We have done so many great things on this property. It is my sincere belief that we have so many more great achievements ahead of us. We will continue to serve The Lord and His Flock.

2022. We will continue to remain active in keeping the congregation informed on the finances of Hilltop. Your giving in 2022 will sustain our budget and continue our ministries at Hilltop. Giving is everything we do after we say I believe. Do not hesitate to bring your questions, thoughts, etc. to the Finance Committee throughout the year.

Hilltop recently received \$110,000 from the installation of the Google Fiber Hut. Mission Shares were paid from this amount, leaving \$99,000. The Finance Committee formed a subcommittee to determine best case options for these funds. Committee members were Galen Ewer, Betty Long, Joanne Myers, Doug Orr, Pastor Lynn and Kathy Wheeler. This committee recognized the opportunities

## Achievements

- Media Stage: Doug Orr has spearheaded this project and is moving at breakneck speed! (see photo below)
- Google fiber hut is finishing installation
- Phone system complete
- ADA Accessibility: Great work from Paul Mitchell, Maggi Welliver & Galen Ewer. Trustees was able to set goals and target dates

If you think you would like to help in one of our many projects going forward; please reach out to me Mike Montoya (Cell 801 755-0339 or email [mikemontoya666@gmail.com](mailto:mikemontoya666@gmail.com))

We need ALL skill sets.

and challenges of receiving such a large sum of money and they worked together giving careful consideration to many opportunities on how best to use the funds. Their overall goal was to be good stewards and servants of the resources God provided to Hilltop. Working together the subcommittee presented to the Finance Committee and subsequently to Church Council for their recommendation and approval for the use of these funds.

These recommendations, now approved by Church Council, are now presented to the congregation of Hilltop.

Hilltop recently underwent a study on the level of its compliance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA). The three levels of achievement are Bronze, Silver and

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# NEW THINGS

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## Abundant Health Ministry

Abundant Health is a health ministry sponsored by the conference. This ministry offers ideas, activities and education to inspire and support our community on our journey to embrace abundant mental, physical and spiritual health.

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. - John 10:10b, NRSV

As United Methodists, we are committed to creating abundant health for all – a global connection striving for mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Lifesaving health ministries are enriching the lives of people around the world. How can we also improve the health of our church and local communities? We have joined the Abundant Health Church Community of the Mountain Sky Conference in seeking ways to inspire and fully live our lives as God intended.

John Wesley was a strong proponent of preventive care and healthy living, so United Methodism has a long history of engaging in ministry that supports mind, body

and spirit. We can keep the tradition by building a strong health ministry presence in our church. You can learn more about the Abundant Health Ministry at Mountain Sky Conference | Abundant Health ([mtnskyumc.org](http://mtnskyumc.org)). If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Teresa Rivera at [rivera.slc@comcast.net](mailto:rivera.slc@comcast.net).

In the upcoming months, we'll be exploring ideas that bring opportunities and resources to families and individuals who are seeking a fuller, more abundant life. As we do this, we'll offer resources that you can take advantage of in this newsletter. This month, there is an opportunity to learn more about first aid for mental health. Did you know that one out of every five Americans experience mental illness each year? These two virtual sessions will help us recognize signs of struggle of mental health in ourselves, family, friends and colleagues and provide practical methods on how to manage ourselves and others in crises. More information can be found at: [Read press release and register](#)

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Gold. Hilltop did not make it to the Bronze level. To improve Hilltop's handicap accessibility, \$15,000 will go toward immediate handicap upgrades within the church. This includes replacing the north entrance door with a handicap accessible door, making the main floor bathroom doors handicap accessible, providing hear-

ing devices for use in the sanctuary and making handicapped seating available in the front of the church.

The A/V improvement and remodel in the sanctuary is underway. This new upgrade will provide improvements both within the sanctuary and for live streaming. Grateful donations have been received for this portion of the project. An addition-

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# LENT 2022 MARCH 2- APRIL 16

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By Pastor Lynn

Our Lenten Series will be *Full to the Brim*, developed by the creative team at A Sanctified Art. About the theme:

*"The scriptures for this Lenten season (in the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C) are filled with parables and promises of God's abundant and expansive grace. Jesus as a mother hen, a prodigal son welcomed home, a fig tree nurtured with care and hope, precious oil poured out lovingly and freely, stones shouting out with praise — these sacred texts are brimming with a gospel of grace. We've done nothing to deserve or earn this grace, and yet, like water, it spills over. Full to the Brim is an invitation—into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. It disrupts the scarcity mentality that capitalism, oppression, or hierarchy can plant inside of us. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.*

We recognize that traditional iterations of Lent often emphasize restraint, confession, and piety. The origins of Lent were that one was to leave their old life behind to fast and prepare to be baptized into a new way of living. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from the rat race, corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more



expansive and full life of faith. And so, *Full to the Brim* trusts the promise of our baptisms—God has already claimed us as God's own and nothing we can do will ever change or erase that.

*Full to the Brim* doesn't ignore or deny sin and suffering. It doesn't absolve accountability for wrongdoing. Instead, it contextualizes our faith. If love is our beginning, how can we live our lives led by love's promises? It reminds us to live fully—as we pursue justice and hope, or express grief and gratitude. And so, this Lent, let us trust—fully—that we belong to God. Let us increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us."

Join us for a transformative Lenten Season as we engage scripture, music, art, prayer, and devotional resources to experience *Full to the Brim- An Expansive Lent*. May the world be washed anew by our overflow.



# MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

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David Fleming  
Chair, Music & Arts  
Ministry

## By David Fleming, M&A Chair

As we have continued to move through life in a world radically altered by the pandemic, I am struck by the blessings we have experienced in being forced to change our routines and find different ways to get things done. We have done a lot of this “pivoting” at Hilltop and we have much more to do. The best part of being involved with this faith community is the opportunity to see the Spirit of God shining even brighter in the darkness. God is using this light to illuminate the hope and the love we share as a family, but God is also illuminating vast opportunities for transformation in the world. It is up to us to carry this light forward and shine it in places that make us uncomfortable. Let’s face it! Before we can be comfortable in any situation, we must first be uncomfortable. That is what we are called to do so we can draw our circle of inclusiveness wide and show that we are truly a place where love lives and everyone’s ideas are valued.

We can do this. We have proved it to ourselves week after week during this difficult time. We have been forced out of our comfort zone and, while we long for the day when we will no longer live under the restrictions of the pandemic, let us use this experience to see that to be like Jesus is to be different. To be different is to be uncomfortable, but Jesus sought out those in the margins of society and so we must do the same if we are truly striving to be like him.

The Music & Arts Ministry has been blessed by a radical love from our Hilltop

family and the broader community, but we could not accomplish what we do without the steadfast support of this congregation and many others. We consider outreach a key part our mission and we strive to show God’s love to all of you and to those in the community who we do not know, but wish to know. Like every other program and ministry of Hilltop, there is so much more we can do!

We invite you to share in our annual “Celebrate Music & Arts” fundraiser concert either in person or virtually on Sunday, February 20th beginning at 5:00 pm. This year we are doing things a little differently!

While there will be plenty of celebration of musical arts, we will also be celebrating visual arts with a display of painting, drawing, photography, and crafts from artists in our community. The physical display will be in the narthex leading up to the concert and also visually as part of the concert video feed. The artists will have the opportunity to introduce their work in a short video before it is shown during the concert. If you are interested in sharing your own talents in this way, please contact Becky Elliston.

Finally, we are seeking those from the church family who are not Music & Arts volunteers, but who are touched by our ministry to bring your video testimonial of inspiration and appreciation for the Ministry. What do we do that touches you and

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# MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

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## Ladies Sing

Calling all women of the congregation to join our special Women's Choir, which will present a musical offering in worship on Sunday, February 27, UMW Sunday. Rehearsals begin first week of February. Contact Roberta Shimensky ([music@hilltopumchurch.org](mailto:music@hilltopumchurch.org) or 801.571.5777 x1004) for information.

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inspires you to share your experience with others? If you have a story to tell, please contact Roberta Shimensky.

We look forward to sharing with you and thank you for your financial support, but also for your expressions of love and appreciation and for your prayers. Please invite your friends and family to share your Hilltop Music & Arts experience!

## Start of HGC 2022 Season Postponed

Due to the recent surge in covid, the Hilltop Gospel Choir will start its 2022 season Tuesday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m. This is a change from our initial February 1 start date. We are going to run a slightly abbreviated rehearsal schedule due to the later start but are looking forward to presenting two concerts in the community before we do final preparations for our July tour to England.

HGC Board of Directors met and made the decision, in the interest of the safety of our community, that vaccinations and masking are required for participation this year. Contact Roberta Shimensky ([music@hilltopumchurch.org](mailto:music@hilltopumchurch.org)) for information on our 2022 season.

This is going to be an amazing year! Gratitude, joy, and love well up in us at the opportunity to come together once again. We are truly blessed by the work that God has called us to do.



# READINESS 360 SURVEY

## And the Readiness 360 Survey Said...

In December 2021, we embarked on a serious conversation about our readiness to reach new people in new ways. The Christian movement in North America was strong for so many generations because churches planted new churches that planted new churches. Untold thousands of churches, decade after decade, state after state! Only a small percentage of today's churches still have multiplication of ministry on their radar. Our church does - and that sets us apart!

We asked the Hilltop congregation to participate in the *Readiness 360* process. The survey many of you took assesses our church's spiritual and practical readiness for faithful and effective ministry in the 21st century. Thirty-nine (39) people took the *Readiness 360* survey, a mix of staff, key leaders, and active ministry participants.

*Readiness 360* assesses four critical capacities for multiplying thriving ministries. In the rating system, our church's level of multiplication energy is indicated by the number of rabbits (God's most adorable multipliers). The more multiplication energy our church has, the more ready we will be to start something new. Hilltop is strongest in terms of Spiritual Intensity and is most challenged in terms of Missional Alignment.

### Spiritual Intensity

There is some fire in people's hearts at Hilltop, but it isn't burning as brightly as it should for

multiplication. We have some work to do in strengthening the personal connection between our people and God and God's mission for us in the world. To do this, we are encouraging everyone to reconnect with God through renewing spiritual practices both personally and as a church body. Here are some opportunities:

Sunday 9:15 Prayer Service. In the coming months, we will explore different prayer practices. Find what resonates with you.

Women's Bible Study (Monday 9:30am at Hilltop); Wesley Bible Study (Sun, 9:00am | Zoom); and others to come.

### Dynamic Relationships

Hilltop has seen some amazing relationships and friendships across the years. However, the DNA of these relationships is not currently indicative of the church as a whole. We have some work to do in terms of cultivating trust within the church and relating effectively to folks who are different from the majority of the members. Our new Inclusion and Connection Teams will be hosting more dialogues and upcoming events to help people connect or reconnect and build more dynamic relationships. Look for these opportunities in future monthly Hilltop Highlights newsletter and our Happening at Hilltop weekly e-newsletter.

### Missional Alignment

Many folks at our church have a good

 In Crisis  Not Ready  Ready In Many Respects  More Than Ready

# READINESS 360 SURVEY

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sense of where God is calling us to go, but others are not aligned with this point of view. Now is the time for serious conversation about our priorities. We are seeking input to understand and engage different perspectives. There is room at our expansive table for everyone to have a voice. We do not have to perfectly agree on every point to be in fluid communication and community. There is no meaningful growth with some healthy tension. God has begun a good work and will see it through. Our challenge is to align our priorities with God's will and to move in the same direction. One way to join this dialogue is to attend our monthly Church Council meetings. All are welcome.

## Cultural Openness

On one hand, many in our church want to reach diverse people, but many in the church still have great apprehension about what this might mean in terms of changing the face of Hilltop. There may be some limitations in terms of how far the church is able to reach toward different kinds of people in the next few years unless we improve our cultural openness. Open communication will be critical.

We asked questions about Hilltop values. Acceptance, hospitality, and inclusiveness continue to be identified in the survey as values that are important for Hilltop.

All these survey results are important to let us know where we are versus who God is inviting us to become. God is with us, working within us individually and among us collectively. In the words of Paul to the

Philippians, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

If you would like to join our Readiness process, share your voice, help us get aligned and move forward with God, please contact me (Pastor Lynn) or Teresa Rivera, Church Council Chair. We need and value your prayers, presence, gifts, witness, and service. We will share updates on our progress as we go.

  
**READINESS 360**  
Multiply your impact.





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# Hilltop

## Highlights

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### Sunday Schedule

Sunday School for All	9:00 am
Worship	9:00 am
Fellowship Time	10:00 am
Worship	10:30 am
Fellowship Time	11:30 am

Pastor Lynn Miller Jackson  
Email: [pastor@hilltopumchurch.org](mailto:pastor@hilltopumchurch.org)

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al \$15,000 is allocated to completely finish the A/V upgrade in the sanctuary. This includes LED screens for projecting, improved lighting in the sanctuary and assist with hearing devices for the hearing impaired.

- To continue improving ADA accessibility \$34,000 will be set aside in designated funds for future ADA bathroom upgrades on the main floor.
- \$20,000 will be set aside in designated funds to go toward the replacement of the Organ.
- \$15,000 will be set aside and directed toward the establish of new ministries both within and outside Hilltop.

The Finance Committee will continue to investigate ways to match the above distributions through grants, creative fundraising opportunities, etc. Hilltop will continue to receive funds for the lease of land for the Google Fiber Hut for the next 25 years. Funds received in 2022 will be approximately \$20,400. Each following year the amount will be increased by 3.2% for inflation adjustment. These yearly funds will be used for building use, new ministries or improving established ministries both within Hilltop and outside of Hilltop. We welcome feedback on this effort, and input for consideration for future funds utilization.