

FIRST MID ILLINOIS BANCSHARES INC

Form S-3

March 21, 2017

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 21, 2017.

Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549

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Form S-3  
REGISTRATION STATEMENT  
UNDER  
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

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First Mid-Illinois Bancshares, Inc.  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

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Delaware 37-1103704  
(State or other jurisdiction of (I.R.S. Employer  
incorporation or organization) Identification Number)

1421 Charleston Avenue  
Mattoon, Illinois 61938  
Telephone: (217) 234-7454  
(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

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Joseph R. Dively  
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer  
First Mid-Illinois Bancshares, Inc.  
1421 Charleston Avenue  
Mattoon, Illinois 61938  
Telephone: (217) 258-0415  
(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number,  
including area code, of agent for service)

Copy to:  
Jason L. Zgliniec, Esq.  
Schiff Hardin LLP  
233 S. Wacker Drive  
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Chicago, Illinois 60606  
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Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after this registration statement becomes effective, as determined by market conditions and other factors.

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box.

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If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer  Accelerated filer  Non-accelerated filer  (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)  
Smaller reporting company

#### CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of each class of securities to be registered	Amount to be registered (1)	Proposed maximum aggregate price per unit (1)	Proposed maximum aggregate offering price (1)	Amount of registration fee (1)
Common Stock, \$4.00 par value per share(2)				
Preferred Stock, no par value per share(2)				
Debt Securities(3)				
Warrants(4)				
Depository Shares(5)				
Subscription Rights(6)				
Stock Purchase Contracts				
Stock Purchase Units				
Units				
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$60,000,000.00</b>	<b>\$6,954.00</b>

Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933. The proposed maximum offering price per security will be determined from time to time by the registrant in connection with the issuance of the securities registered by this registration statement. The proposed maximum aggregate offering price has been (1) estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee. In no event will the aggregate maximum offering price of all securities issued under this registration statement exceed \$60,000,000.00. The amount registered is not specified as to each class of securities to be registered hereunder pursuant to General Instruction II.D. to Form S-3 under the Securities Act of 1933.

Shares of common stock or preferred stock may be issued in primary offerings, upon conversion of debt securities (2) or preferred stock registered hereby or upon the exercise of warrants or subscription rights to purchase preferred stock or common stock.

- (3) The debt securities to be offered hereunder will consist of one or more series of senior debt securities, subordinated debt securities, or convertible debt securities, or any thereof, as more fully described herein.
  - (4) Warrants exercisable for common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or other securities.  
The depositary shares registered hereunder will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to a deposit agreement. If the registrant elects to offer to the public fractional interests in shares of preferred stock, then
  - (5) depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional interests and the shares will be issued to the depositary under the deposit agreement.
  - (6) Rights evidencing the right to purchase common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or other securities.
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The registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until this registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

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PROSPECTUS

\$60,000,000

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Debt Securities

Warrants

Depositary Shares

Subscription Rights

Stock Purchase Contracts

Stock Purchase Units

Units

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First Mid-Illinois Bancshares, Inc. (“we,” “us,” “our” or the “Company”) may offer from time to time to sell, in one or more series, and in any combination, the securities described in this prospectus. The aggregate initial offering price of the securities that we offer will not exceed \$60,000,000.00. This prospectus describes the general terms of these securities and the general manner in which we will offer them. Each time that we offer and sell securities using this prospectus, we will provide a supplement to this prospectus that contains specific information about the securities and their terms and the manner in which we will offer them for sale. Any supplement to this prospectus may also add or update information contained in this prospectus. You should carefully read this prospectus and any supplement to this prospectus, as well as any documents we have incorporated into this prospectus by reference, before you invest in any of these securities. References herein to “prospectus supplement” are deemed to refer to any pricing supplement or free writing prospectus describing the specific pricing or other terms of the applicable offering that we prepare and distribute.

We may offer and sell these securities through underwriters, dealers or agents, or directly to purchasers on a continuous or delayed basis. We will provide the names of any such underwriters, dealers or agents used in connection with the sale of any of these securities, as well as any fees, commissions or discounts we may pay to such underwriters, dealers or agents in connection with the sale of these securities, in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol “FMBH”. Our principal executive offices are located at 1421 Charleston Avenue, Mattoon, Illinois 61938 and our telephone number is (217) 258-0415.

These securities are not bank deposits and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency, nor are they obligations of, or guaranteed by, a bank.

This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities, and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities, in any state or jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

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Investing in our securities involves risks. You should refer to the section entitled “Risk Factors” on page 1 of this prospectus, as well as the risk factors included in the applicable prospectus supplement and in certain of our periodic reports and other information that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and carefully consider that information before buying our securities.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

This prospectus is dated March 21, 2017.

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## ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with SEC using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may sell from time to time, in one or more offerings, on a continuous or delayed basis, any combination of the securities described in this prospectus for an aggregate initial offering price of \$60,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. A prospectus supplement may also add, update, supplement or change information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read this prospectus (including the documents incorporated by reference) and any applicable prospectus supplement together with the additional information referred to under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information.”

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. Neither we nor anyone acting on our behalf is making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement is accurate as of its date only.

Any of the securities described in this prospectus and in a prospectus supplement may be convertible or exchangeable into, or exercisable for, other securities that are described in this prospectus or will be described in a prospectus supplement, and may be issued separately, together or as part of a unit consisting of two or more securities, which may or may not be separate from one another.

The registration statement that contains this prospectus (including the exhibits to the registration statement) contains additional information about us and the securities offered under this prospectus. You can find the registration statement at the SEC’s website at <http://www.sec.gov> or at the SEC office listed under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information.”

## RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves certain risks. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully read and consider the risk factors incorporated by reference in this prospectus, as the same may be updated from time to time by our future filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to as the SEC, as well as those contained in any applicable prospectus supplement. Our business, financial condition or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by any of these risks. The trading price of our securities could decline due to any of these risks, and you may lose all or part of your investment. This prospectus and documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus also contain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Our actual results could differ materially from those anticipated in these forward-looking statements as a result of certain factors, including the risks faced by us.

## SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference contain certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”), such as discussions of the Company’s financial condition, results of operations, plans, objectives, future performance and the business of the Company. The Company intends such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, and is including this statement for purposes of these safe harbor provisions. Forward-looking statements, which are based on certain assumptions and describe future plans, strategies and expectations of the Company are identified by use of the words



“believe,” “expect,” “intend,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “project,” or similar expressions. You should not place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements. Furthermore, forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made. Except as required under the federal securities laws or the rules and regulations of the SEC, we do not undertake any obligation to update or review any forward-looking information, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Our ability to predict results or the actual effect of future plans or strategies is inherently uncertain. The factors that could have a material adverse effect on the operations and future prospects of the Company and its subsidiaries are detailed in the “Risk Factors” section included under Item 1A. of Part I of our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in the “Risk Factors” sections of this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement. In addition, there are other factors that may impact any public company, including ours, which could have a material adverse effect on the operations and future prospects of the Company and its subsidiaries.

FIRST MID-ILLINOIS BANCSHARES, INC.

First Mid-Illinois Bancshares, Inc. is a Delaware corporation and registered financial holding company. The Company is engaged in the business of banking through its wholly-owned subsidiary, First Mid-Illinois Bank & Trust, N.A., a nationally chartered commercial bank headquartered in Mattoon, Illinois (“First Mid Bank”). The Company provides data processing services to affiliates through another wholly-owned subsidiary, Mid-Illinois Data Services, Inc. The Company offers insurance products and services to customers through its wholly-owned subsidiary, The Checkley Agency, Inc. doing business as First Mid Insurance Group. The Company also wholly owns three statutory business trusts, First Mid-Illinois Statutory Trust I, First Mid-Illinois Statutory Trust II, and Clover Leaf Statutory Trust I, each of which is an unconsolidated subsidiary of the Company.

As of December 31, 2016, the Company had total assets of approximately \$2.9 billion, total gross loans, including loans held for sale, of approximately \$1.8 billion, total deposits of approximately \$2.3 billion and total stockholders’ equity of approximately \$281 million.

First Mid common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the ticker symbol “FMBH.”

Additional information about us is included in our filings with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. See “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference” in this prospectus.

#### USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless the applicable prospectus supplement states otherwise, we will use the net proceeds we receive from the sale of the securities offered hereby for general corporate purposes, which may include, among other things, investments in or advances to our subsidiaries, working capital, capital expenditures, stock repurchases, debt repayment or the financing of possible acquisitions. The applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular offering of securities by us will identify the particular use of proceeds for that offering. Until we use the net proceeds from an offering, we may place the net proceeds in temporary investments or hold the net proceeds in deposit accounts at a banking subsidiary of the Company.

#### RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS

The following table reflects our ratio of earnings to fixed charges and ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred stock dividends for each of the years in the five-year period ended December 31, 2016.

On November 17, 2014, the Company completed the mandatory conversion of all of the issued and outstanding shares of our Series B 9% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock into shares of the Company's common stock. On May 16, 2016, the Company completed the mandatory conversion of all of the issued

and outstanding shares of our Series C 8% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock into shares of the Company's common stock. As a result, preferred stock dividends during the years ended December 31, 2012, 2013, and 2014 included dividends due on our Series B Preferred Stock and Series C Preferred Stock, and preferred stock dividends during the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2016 included solely dividends due on our Series C Preferred Stock.

For purposes of computing the ratios of earnings to fixed charges and earnings to fixed charges and preferred stock dividends:

• earnings represent income from continuing operations before income taxes, plus fixed charges;

• fixed charges, excluding interest on deposits, include interest expense (other than on deposits), the portion of net rental expense deemed to be equivalent to interest on long-term debt, and discount amortization; and

• fixed charges, including interest on deposits, include all interest expense, the portion of net rental expense deemed to be equivalent to interest on long-term debt, discount amortization and preferred stock dividends.

	For the years ended December 31,				
	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges:					
Excluding interest on deposits	21.59	19.36	21.34	21.16	13.10
Including interest on deposits	8.57	7.39	6.64	5.74	3.58
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred stock dividends:					
Excluding interest on deposits	11.97	5.12	2.64	2.31	2.19
Including interest on deposits	6.62	3.75	2.24	1.97	1.74

## DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES WE MAY OFFER

This prospectus contains summary descriptions of the common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, warrants, depositary shares, subscription rights, stock purchase contracts, stock purchase units and units that we may offer and sell from time to time. When one or more of these securities are offered in the future, a prospectus supplement will explain the particular terms of the securities and the extent to which these general provisions may apply. The following summary descriptions and any summary descriptions in the applicable prospectus supplement do not purport to be complete descriptions of the terms and conditions of each security and are qualified in their entirety by reference to our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, as amended (our “Restated Certificate of Incorporation”), our Amended and Restated Bylaws (our “Bylaws”), the Delaware General Corporation Law and any other documents referenced in such summary descriptions and from which such summary descriptions are derived. If any particular terms of a security described in the applicable prospectus supplement differ from any of the terms described in this prospectus, you should rely on the prospectus supplement.

We may issue securities in book-entry form through one or more depositaries named in the applicable prospectus supplement. Each sale of a security in book-entry form will settle in immediately available funds through the applicable depositary, unless otherwise stated. We will issue the securities in registered form, without coupons, although we may issue the securities in bearer form if so specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. If any securities are to be listed or quoted on a securities exchange or quotation system, the applicable prospectus supplement will say so.

## DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following is a summary of the material terms, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of our capital stock as contained in our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, which is incorporated by reference herein. This summary does not purport to be a complete description of the terms and conditions of our capital stock in all respects and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, our Bylaws, the Delaware General Corporation Law and any other documents referenced in the summary descriptions and from which the summary descriptions are derived. Although we believe this summary covers the material terms and provisions of our capital stock set forth in our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, it may not contain all of the information that is important to you.

### General

We have the authority to issue 18,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$4.00 per share, and 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock, no par value per share. As of March 3, 2017 we had 12,479,559 shares of common stock and no shares of preferred stock issued and outstanding.

### Common Stock

**Dividend Rights.** Holders of our common stock are entitled to receive such dividends as are declared by the board of directors, which historically has considered payment of dividends semi-annually. The ability of the Company to pay dividends, as well as fund its operations, is dependent upon receipt of dividends from First Mid Bank. Regulatory authorities limit the amount of dividends that can be paid by First Mid Bank without prior approval from such authorities. For further discussion of First Mid Bank’s dividend restrictions, which would impact dividends on the Preferred Stock as well as our common stock, see Item 1 - “Business - First Mid Bank and First Clover Leaf Bank - Dividends,” and Item 8 “Financial Statements and Supplementary Data” Note 16 - “Dividend Restrictions,” in our Annual Report on 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016.

**Voting Rights.** Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote per share in all matters to be voted upon by stockholders. Certain amendments to our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, as amended, or the approval of certain business combinations, require the approval of at least 75% of our outstanding capital stock

entitled to vote. Removal of a director from our board of directors requires the approval of at least 66 2/3% of our outstanding capital stock entitled to vote.

**Liquidation Rights.** If the Company liquidates, dissolves or winds-up its business, either voluntarily or involuntarily, our common stockholders will share equally in the assets remaining after creditors and preferred stockholders are paid.

**Miscellaneous.** The issued and outstanding shares of our common stock are fully paid and nonassessable. Holders of our common stock are not entitled to preemptive rights, and will be notified of any stockholders' meeting according to applicable law.

#### Preferred Stock

**General.** We may issue up to 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock, no par value per share, from time to time in one or more series. Our board of directors, without further approval of our stockholders, has the authority to fix the dividend rights and terms, conversion rights, voting rights, redemption rights and terms, liquidation preferences, sinking funds and any other rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions applicable to each series of preferred stock. The issuance of preferred stock, while providing flexibility in connection with possible acquisitions and other corporate purposes, could, among other things, adversely affect the voting power of the holders of our common stock.

We will describe the particular terms of any series of preferred stock being offered in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to that series of preferred stock. Those terms may include:

- the number of shares being offered;
  - the title and liquidation preference per share;
  - the purchase price;
  - the voting rights of that series of preferred stock;
  - the dividend rate or method for determining that rate;
- thding="0" style="border-collapse:collapse; margin-left:0.1%;width:99.9%;">

We cannot predict the actual final underlier level or what the market value of your notes will be on any particular trading day, nor can we predict the relationship between the underlier level and the market value of your notes at any time prior to the stated maturity date. The actual amount that you will receive at maturity and the rate of return on the offered notes will depend on the actual initial underlier level, which we will set on the trade date, and the actual final underlier level determined by the calculation agent as described above. Moreover, the assumptions on which the hypothetical returns are based may turn out to be inaccurate. Consequently, the amount of cash to be paid in respect of your notes on the stated maturity date may be very different from the information reflected in the examples above.

## ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS SPECIFIC TO YOUR NOTES

An investment in your notes is subject to the risks described below, as well as the risks and considerations described in the accompanying prospectus, in the accompanying prospectus supplement, under “Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes” in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and under “Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes” in the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. You should carefully review these risks and considerations as well as the terms of the notes described herein and in the accompanying prospectus, the accompanying prospectus supplement, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. Your notes are a riskier investment than ordinary debt securities. Also, your notes are not equivalent to investing directly in the underlier stocks, i.e., the stocks comprising the underlier to which your notes are linked. You should carefully consider whether the offered notes are suited to your particular circumstances.

The Estimated Value of Your Notes At the Time the Terms of Your Notes Are Set On the Trade Date (as Determined By Reference to Pricing Models Used By GS&Co.) Is Less Than the Original Issue Price Of Your Notes

The original issue price for your notes exceeds the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as determined by reference to GS&Co.’s pricing models and taking into account our credit spreads. Such estimated value on the trade date is set forth above under “Estimated Value of Your Notes”; after the trade date, the estimated value as determined by reference to these models will be affected by changes in market conditions, the creditworthiness of GS Finance Corp., as issuer, the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor, and other relevant factors. The price at which GS&Co. would initially buy or sell your notes (if GS&Co. makes a market, which it is not obligated to do), and the value that GS&Co. will initially use for account statements and otherwise, also exceeds the estimated value of your notes as determined by reference to these models. As agreed by GS&Co. and the distribution participants, this excess (i.e., the additional amount described under “Estimated Value of Your Notes”) will decline to zero on a straight line basis over the period from the date hereof through the applicable date set forth above under “Estimated Value of Your Notes”. Thereafter, if GS&Co. buys or sells your notes it will do so at prices that reflect the estimated value determined by reference to such pricing models at that time. The price at which GS&Co. will buy or sell your notes at any time also will reflect its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes.

In estimating the value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as disclosed above under “Estimated Value of Your Notes”, GS&Co.’s pricing models consider certain variables, including principally our credit spreads, interest rates (forecasted, current and historical rates), volatility, price-sensitivity analysis and the time to maturity of the notes. These pricing models are proprietary and rely in part on certain assumptions about future events, which may prove to be incorrect. As a result, the actual value you would receive if you sold your notes in the secondary market, if any, to others may differ, perhaps materially, from the estimated value of your notes determined by reference to our models due to, among other things, any differences in pricing models or assumptions used by others. See “Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes — The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors” on page S-32 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738.

The difference between the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date and the original issue price is a result of certain factors, including principally the underwriting discount and commissions, the expenses incurred in creating, documenting and marketing the notes, and an estimate of the difference between the amounts we pay to GS&Co. and the amounts GS&Co. pays to us in connection with your notes. We pay to GS&Co. amounts based on what we would pay to holders of a non-structured note with a similar maturity. In return for such payment, GS&Co. pays to us the amounts we owe under your notes.

In addition to the factors discussed above, the value and quoted price of your notes at any time will reflect many factors and cannot be predicted. If GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the price quoted by GS&Co. would reflect any changes in market conditions and other relevant factors, including any deterioration in our creditworthiness or

perceived creditworthiness or the creditworthiness or perceived creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. These changes may adversely affect the value of your notes, including the price you may receive for your notes in any market making transaction. To the extent that GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the quoted price will reflect the estimated value determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models at that time, plus or minus its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes (and subject to the declining excess amount described above).

Furthermore, if you sell your notes, you will likely be charged a commission for secondary market transactions, or the price will likely reflect a dealer discount. This commission or discount will further reduce the proceeds you would receive for your notes in a secondary market sale.

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There is no assurance that GS&Co. or any other party will be willing to purchase your notes at any price and, in this regard, GS&Co. is not obligated to make a market in the notes. See “Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes — Your Notes May Not Have an Active Trading Market” on page S-31 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738.

#### The Notes Are Subject to the Credit Risk of the Issuer and the Guarantor

Although the return on the notes will be based on the performance of the underlier, the payment of any amount due on the notes is subject to the credit risk of GS Finance Corp., as issuer of the notes, and the credit risk of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. as guarantor of the notes. The notes are our unsecured obligations. Investors are dependent on our ability to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore investors are subject to our credit risk and to changes in the market’s view of our creditworthiness. Similarly, investors are dependent on the ability of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor of the notes, to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore are also subject to its credit risk and to changes in the market’s view of its creditworthiness. See “Description of the Notes We May Offer — Information About Our Medium-Term Notes, Series E Program — How the Notes Rank Against Other Debt” on page S-4 of the accompanying prospectus supplement and “Description of Debt Securities We May Offer — Guarantee by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.” on page 42 of the accompanying prospectus.

#### The Amount Payable on Your Notes Is Not Linked to the Level of the Underlier at Any Time Other Than the Determination Date

The final underlier level will be based on the closing level of the underlier on the determination date (subject to adjustment as described elsewhere in this pricing supplement). Therefore, if the closing level of the underlier dropped precipitously on the determination date, the cash settlement amount for your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had the cash settlement amount been linked to the closing level of the underlier prior to such drop in the level of the underlier. Although the actual level of the underlier on the stated maturity date or at other times during the life of your notes may be higher than the final underlier level, you will not benefit from the closing level of the underlier at any time other than on the determination date.

#### You May Lose a Substantial Portion of Your Investment in the Notes

You can lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes. The cash payment on your notes on the stated maturity date will be based on the performance of the underlier as measured from the initial underlier level set on the trade date to the closing level on the determination date. If the final underlier level is less than the buffer level, you will have a loss for each \$1,000 of the face amount of your notes equal to the product of (i) the sum of the underlier return plus the buffer amount times (ii) \$1,000. Thus, you may lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes, which would include any premium to face amount you paid when you purchased the notes.

Also, the market price of your notes prior to the stated maturity date may be significantly lower than the purchase price you pay for your notes. Consequently, if you sell your notes before the stated maturity date, you may receive far less than the amount of your investment in the notes.

#### Your Notes Do Not Bear Interest

You will not receive any interest payments on your notes. As a result, even if the cash settlement amount payable for your notes on the stated maturity date exceeds the face amount of your notes, the overall return you earn on your notes may be less than you would have earned by investing in a non-indexed debt security of comparable maturity that bears interest at a prevailing market rate.

The Potential for the Value of Your Notes to Increase Will Be Limited

Your ability to participate in any change in the value of the underlier over the life of your notes will be limited because of the cap level. The maximum settlement amount will limit the cash settlement amount you may receive for each of your notes at maturity, no matter how much the level of the underlier may rise beyond the cap level over the life of your notes. Accordingly, the amount payable for each of your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had you invested directly in the underlier.

You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Underlier Stock

Investing in your notes will not make you a holder of any of the underlier stocks. Neither you nor any other holder or owner of your notes will have any rights with respect to the underlier stocks, including any voting rights, any right to receive dividends or other distributions, any rights to make a claim against the underlier stocks or any other rights of a holder of the underlier stocks. Your notes will be paid in cash and you will have no right to receive delivery of any underlier stocks.

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#### We May Sell an Additional Aggregate Face Amount of the Notes at a Different Issue Price

At our sole option, we may decide to sell an additional aggregate face amount of the notes subsequent to the date of this pricing supplement. The issue price of the notes in the subsequent sale may differ substantially (higher or lower) from the original issue price you paid as provided on the cover of this pricing supplement.

#### If You Purchase Your Notes at a Premium to Face Amount, the Return on Your Investment Will Be Lower Than the Return on Notes Purchased at Face Amount and the Impact of Certain Key Terms of the Notes Will Be Negatively Affected

The cash settlement amount will not be adjusted based on the issue price you pay for the notes. If you purchase notes at a price that differs from the face amount of the notes, then the return on your investment in such notes held to the stated maturity date will differ from, and may be substantially less than, the return on notes purchased at face amount. If you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount and hold them to the stated maturity date, the return on your investment in the notes will be lower than it would have been had you purchased the notes at face amount or a discount to face amount. In addition, the impact of the buffer level and the cap level on the return on your investment will depend upon the price you pay for your notes relative to face amount. For example, if you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount, the cap level will only permit a lower positive return on your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount. Similarly, the buffer level, while still providing some protection for the return on the notes, will allow a greater percentage decrease in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount.

#### Your Notes May Be Subject to an Adverse Change in Tax Treatment in the Future

The tax consequences of an investment in your notes are uncertain, both as to the timing and character of any inclusion in income in respect of your notes.

The Internal Revenue Service announced on December 7, 2007 that it is considering issuing guidance regarding the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of an instrument such as your notes, and any such guidance could adversely affect the tax treatment and the value of your notes. Among other things, the Internal Revenue Service may decide to require the holders to accrue ordinary income on a current basis and recognize ordinary income on payment at maturity, and could subject non-U.S. investors to withholding tax. Furthermore, in 2007, legislation was introduced in Congress that, if enacted, would have required holders that acquired instruments such as your notes after the bill was enacted to accrue interest income over the term of such instruments even though there will be no interest payments over the term of such instruments. It is not possible to predict whether a similar or identical bill will be enacted in the future, or whether any such bill would affect the tax treatment of your notes. We describe these developments in more detail under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. You should consult your tax advisor about this matter. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, GS Finance Corp. intends to continue treating the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes in accordance with the treatment described under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 unless and until such time as Congress, the Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service determine that some other treatment is more appropriate.

#### United States Alien Holders Should Consider the Withholding Tax Implications of Owning the Notes

The Treasury Department has issued regulations under which amounts paid or deemed paid on certain financial instruments (“871(m) financial instruments”) that are treated as attributable to U.S.-source dividends could be treated, in whole or in part depending on the circumstances, as a “dividend equivalent” payment that is subject to tax at a rate of

30% (or a lower rate under an applicable treaty), which in the case of any amounts a United States alien holder receives upon the sale, exchange or maturity of the notes, could be collected via withholding. If these regulations were to apply to the notes, we may be required to withhold such taxes if any U.S.-source dividends are paid on the stocks included in the underlier during the term of the notes. We could also require a United States alien holder to make certifications (e.g., an applicable Internal Revenue Service Form W-8) prior to the maturity of the notes in order to avoid or minimize withholding obligations, and we could withhold accordingly (subject to the United States alien holder's potential right to claim a refund from the Internal Revenue Service) if such certifications were not received or were not satisfactory. If withholding was required, we would not be required to pay any additional amounts with respect to amounts so withheld. These regulations generally will apply to 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2021, but will also apply to certain 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) that have a delta (as defined in the applicable Treasury regulations) of one and are issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2017. In addition, these

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regulations will not apply to financial instruments that reference a “qualified index” (as defined in the regulations). We have determined that, as of the issue date of your notes, your notes will not be subject to withholding under these rules. In certain limited circumstances, however, you should be aware that it is possible for United States alien holders to be liable for tax under these rules with respect to a combination of transactions treated as having been entered into in connection with each other even when no withholding is required. You should consult your tax advisor concerning these regulations, subsequent official guidance and regarding any other possible alternative characterizations of your notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

**Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding May Apply to Payments on Your Notes, Including as a Result of the Failure of the Bank or Broker Through Which You Hold the Notes to Provide Information to Tax Authorities**

Please see the discussion under “United States Taxation — Taxation of Debt Securities — Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding” in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the applicability of FATCA to payments made on your notes. The discussion in that section is hereby modified to reflect regulations proposed by the Treasury Department indicating its intent to eliminate the requirements under FATCA of withholding on gross proceeds from the sale, exchange, maturity or other disposition of relevant financial instruments. The Treasury Department has indicated that taxpayers may rely on these proposed regulations pending their finalization.

## THE UNDERLIER

The S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index includes a representative sample of 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy. The S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index is calculated, maintained and published by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC (“S&P”).

As of July 31, 2017, companies with multiple share class lines are no longer eligible for inclusion in the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index. Constituents of the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index prior to July 31, 2017 with multiple share class lines will be grandfathered in and continue to be included in the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index. If an S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index constituent reorganizes into a multiple share class line structure, that company will be reviewed for continued inclusion in the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index at the discretion of the S&P Index Committee. Also as of July 31, 2017, the criteria employed by S&P for purposes of making additions to the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index were changed as follows:

with respect to the “U.S. company” criterion, (i) the IEX was added as an “eligible exchange” for the primary listing of the relevant company’s common stock and (ii) the former “corporate governance structure consistent with U.S. practice” requirement was removed; and

with respect to constituents of the S&P MidCap 400<sup>®</sup> Index and the S&P SmallCap 600<sup>®</sup> Index that are being considered for addition to the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index, the financial viability, public float and/or liquidity eligibility criteria no longer need to be met if the S&P Index Committee decides that such an addition will enhance the representativeness of the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index as a market benchmark.

As of February 1, 2019, the 500 companies included in the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index were divided into eleven Global Industry Classification Sectors. The Global Industry Classification Sectors include (with the approximate percentage currently included in such sectors indicated in parentheses): Communication Services (10.27%), Consumer Discretionary (9.96%), Consumer Staples (7.18%), Energy (5.56%), Financials (13.51%), Health Care (15.14%), Industrials (9.50%), Information Technology (20.02%), Materials (2.68%), Real Estate (3.01%) and Utilities (3.17%). (Sector designations are determined by the underlier sponsor using criteria it has selected or developed. Index sponsors may use very different standards for determining sector designations. In addition, many companies operate in a number of sectors, but are listed in only one sector and the basis on which that sector is selected may also differ. As a result, sector comparisons between indices with different index sponsors may reflect differences in methodology as well as actual differences in the sector composition of the indices.) As of the close of business on September 21, 2018, S&P and MSCI, Inc. updated the Global Industry Classification Sector structure. Among other things, the update broadened the Telecommunications Services sector and renamed it the Communication Services sector. The renamed sector includes the previously existing Telecommunication Services Industry group, as well as the Media Industry group, which was moved from the Consumer Discretionary sector and renamed the Media & Entertainment Industry group. The Media & Entertainment Industry group contains three industries: Media, Entertainment and Interactive Media & Services. The Media industry continues to consist of the Advertising, Broadcasting, Cable & Satellite and Publishing sub-industries. The Entertainment industry contains the Movies & Entertainment sub-industry (which includes online entertainment streaming companies in addition to companies previously classified in such industry prior to September 21, 2018) and the Interactive Home Entertainment sub-industry (which includes companies previously classified in the Home Entertainment Software sub-industry prior to September 21, 2018 (when the Home Entertainment Software sub-industry was a sub-industry in the Information Technology sector)), as well as producers of interactive gaming products, including mobile gaming applications). The Interactive Media & Services industry and sub-industry includes companies engaged in content and information creation or distribution through proprietary platforms, where revenues are derived primarily through pay-per-click advertisements, and includes search engines, social media and networking platforms, online classifieds and online review companies. The Global Industry Classification Sector structure changes are effective for the S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index as of the open of business on September 24, 2018 to coincide with the September 2018 quarterly rebalancing.

The above information supplements the description of the underlier found in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. This information was derived from information prepared by the underlier sponsor, however, the

percentages we have listed above are approximate and may not match the information available on the underlier sponsor's website due to subsequent corporate actions or other activity relating to a particular stock. For more details about the underlier, the underlier sponsor and license agreement between the underlier sponsor and the issuer, see "The Underliers — S&P 500 Index" on page S-40 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

The S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index is a product of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, and has been licensed for use by GS Finance Corp. ("Goldman"). Standard & Poor<sup>®</sup> and S&P<sup>®</sup> are registered trademarks of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC; Dow Jones<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC ("Dow Jones") and these trademarks have been licensed for use by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC and sublicensed for certain purposes by Goldman. Goldman's notes are not sponsored, endorsed, sold or promoted by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, Dow Jones, Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or any of their respective affiliates and neither S&P Dow

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Jones Indices LLC, Dow Jones, Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC or any of their respective affiliates make any representation regarding the advisability of investing in such notes.

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#### Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier

The closing level of the underlier has fluctuated in the past and may, in the future, experience significant fluctuations. Any historical upward or downward trend in the closing level of the underlier during the period shown below is not an indication that the underlier is more or less likely to increase or decrease at any time during the life of your notes.

You should not take the historical levels of the underlier as an indication of the future performance of the underlier. We cannot give you any assurance that the future performance of the underlier or the underlier stocks will result in your receiving an amount greater than the outstanding face amount of your notes on the stated maturity date.

Neither we nor any of our affiliates make any representation to you as to the performance of the underlier. Before investing in the offered notes, you should consult publicly available information to determine the levels of the underlier between the date of this pricing supplement and the date of your purchase of the offered notes. The actual performance of the underlier over the life of the offered notes, as well as the cash settlement amount, may bear little relation to the historical closing levels shown below.

The graph below shows the daily historical closing levels of the underlier from February 8, 2009 through February 8, 2019. We obtained the closing levels in the graph below from Bloomberg Financial Services, without independent verification.

#### Historical Performance of the S&P 500® Index

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## SUPPLEMENTAL DISCUSSION OF U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES

You will be obligated pursuant to the terms of the notes — in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary — to characterize each note for all tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier, as described under “Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences” on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. Pursuant to this approach, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP that upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, it would be reasonable for you to recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference, if any, between the amount of cash you receive at such time and your tax basis in your notes. Pursuant to Treasury regulations, Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) withholding (as described in “United States Taxation — Taxation of Debt Securities — Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding” in the accompanying prospectus) will generally apply to obligations that are issued on or after July 1, 2014; therefore, the notes will generally be subject to the FATCA withholding rules. Pursuant to recently proposed regulations, the Treasury Department has indicated its intent to eliminate the requirements under FATCA of withholding on gross proceeds from the sale, exchange, maturity or other disposition of relevant financial instruments. The Treasury Department has indicated that taxpayers may rely on these proposed regulations pending their finalization.

## SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION; CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

See “Supplemental Plan of Distribution” on page S-49 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 and “Plan of Distribution — Conflicts of Interest” on page 94 of the accompanying prospectus. GS Finance Corp. estimates that its share of the total offering expenses, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$ .

GS Finance Corp. will sell to GS&Co., and GS&Co. will purchase from GS Finance Corp., the aggregate face amount of the offered notes specified on the front cover of this pricing supplement. GS&Co. proposes initially to offer the notes to the public at the original issue price set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement, and to certain securities dealers at such price less a concession not in excess of % of the face amount. GS&Co. will pay a fee of % from the concession to Axio Financial LLC in connection with its marketing efforts related to the offered notes. GS&Co. is an affiliate of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and, as such, will have a “conflict of interest” in this offering of notes within the meaning of Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (FINRA) Rule 5121. Consequently, this offering of notes will be conducted in compliance with the provisions of FINRA Rule 5121. GS&Co. will not be permitted to sell notes in this offering to an account over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of the account holder.

We expect to deliver the notes against payment therefor in New York, New York on , 2019. Under Rule 15c6-1 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, trades in the secondary market generally are required to settle in two business days, unless the parties to any such trade expressly agree otherwise. Accordingly, purchasers who wish to trade notes on any date prior to two business days before delivery will be required to specify alternative settlement arrangements to prevent a failed settlement.

We have been advised by GS&Co. that it intends to make a market in the notes. However, neither GS&Co. nor any of our other affiliates that makes a market is obligated to do so and any of them may stop doing so at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity or trading market for the notes.

The notes will not be listed on any securities exchange or interdealer quotation system.



We have not authorized anyone to provide any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is an offer to sell only the notes offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information contained in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is current only as of the respective dates of such documents.

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GS Finance Corp.

Leveraged Buffered S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index-Linked Notes due

guaranteed by

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC