



Today's Gathering

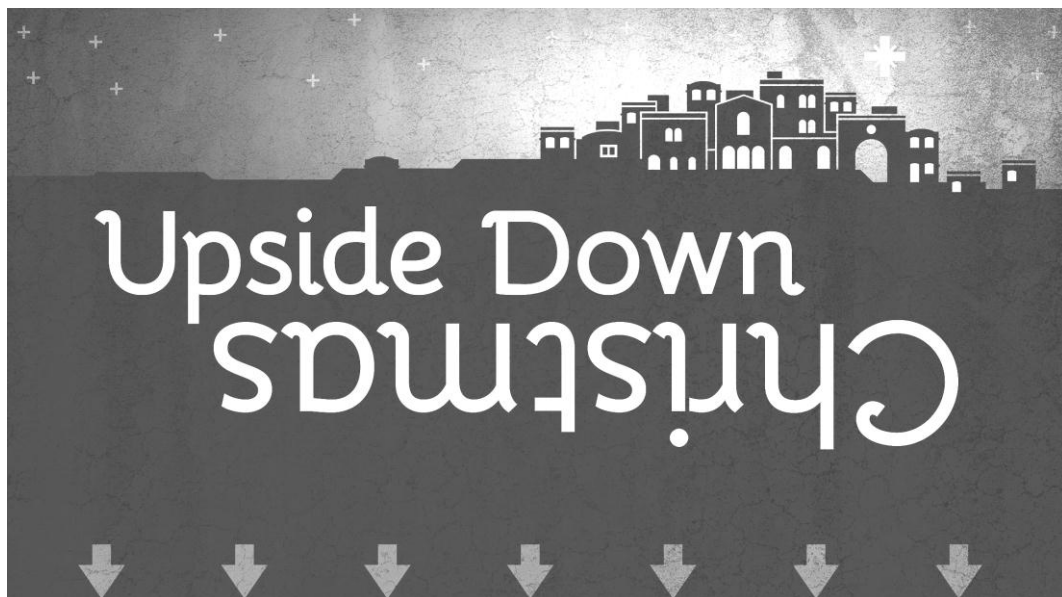
December 7th, 2014

View from the Hill

Pastor Brian Stroh

Singing

Kelsey Slade and Jesse VanderWeide



Slow vs. Fast

Pastor Doug Bartel

For the Kids

From 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Parents can go to the Children's Welcome Center to find out about our Sunday morning options and check their children in. The Children's Welcome Center is located on the east side of the main foyer.

See page 5 of the bulletin for more information about opportunities for Children and Students.

Welcome to Hillcrest

New to Hillcrest?

If you are new to Hillcrest, we'd like to say "Welcome!" We're glad you're here this morning. Please stop by the Welcome Center, following the worship service to meet one of our pastors and receive a **free gift**.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Hillcrest provides many opportunities to get involved with others in the church and the community. If you would like to find out more about classes, Bible studies, and small groups that are offered, stop by the Welcome Center, check out the Ministries section on our web site at www.sioxfordchurch.com, or call the church office at 371-0546.

Our Weekly Bulletin and Devotional

Hillcrest provides this weekly bulletin/devotional to help you connect, serve others and study the Bible throughout the week.

On pages 3-5, you will discover connecting and serving opportunities as well as information regarding Children's and Student's Ministries.

On page 6, you have a place to take notes from the message. Also on page 6 is a memory verse, selected each week by Hillcrest leaders.

On pages 7-12, you will find a short devotional for each day. You will read a new text, some commentary and consider some questions to further your growth, as well as a challenge to help you take what you have studied and start to live it!

On page 13, you will find a Prayer Page, where you can keep track of your daily prayers. On page 14, you will find staff contact info.

Our prayer is that God will speak to you as you study His Word and as a result, it will impact the people in your life.

Want information on even more events happening at Hillcrest? Sign up for our weekly e-mail by marking your connection card and turning it in. Don't forget to include your e-mail address!

Connect

1st Sunday at the Pizza Ranch

Today is the first Sunday of the month. You are all invited to lunch at the 41st Street Pizza Ranch following the 10:30 service. This is an informal event, so simply show up and enjoy lunch with other Hillcresters. There is no need to RSVP and each person/family will be responsible for the cost of their own meals.

Christmas Eve

The whole family is invited to join us for Hillcrest's candlelight service on Tuesday, December 24th at 5:30pm. This celebration includes a children's story, candy canes for kids, and homemade hot chocolate after the service. Please note there will be no child care provided, so that all of our volunteers can spend this time with their families, as well.

Christmas Schedule

Sunday, November 30th – Angel Tree sign up starts

Saturday, December 6th – Women's Ministry Festival of Tables

Saturday, December 13th – Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program at 10am

Sunday, December 14th – "Christmas in Black & White" Children's Christmas Program. Meet in gym (pre-schoolers in the Dog House) at 8:40am.

Wednesday, December 17th – Delivery of Angel Tree gifts, starting at 6pm

Wednesday, December 17th – Additional serving opportunities; Contact Pastor Brian if you are interested

Wednesday, December 24th – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 5:30pm

Wednesday, December 31st – 180 Student Ministries New Year's Eve Party

Monday Night Women's Study

We will begin a new study January 5th, 6pm – 7:30pm in the Fireside Room. We will be going through the book Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament by Christopher J. H. Wright. "Christopher Wright is convinced that Jesus' own story is rooted in the story of Israel. In this revised and updated book he traces the life of Christ as it is illuminated by the Old Testament. And he describes God's design for Israel as it is fulfilled in the story of Jesus." All women are welcome. For further information or questions, contact Vicki Tigner 605-201-7955.

Connection Group

Next Friday, December 12th we'll meet at the Western mall at 6pm to watch the Christmas light display! Great for kids! After that we'll head over to Peachwave or Scooters for some ice cream or coffee! If you have questions or need directions contact Jessi at 261-7092. Hope you can make it!

Moments for Moms

All Moms (no matter how old your "kids" are) are invited to meet at the 26th Street McDonalds on Wednesday, December 10th from 12:15pm-1:15pm. You can buy lunch for you and your kids, if you like. Kids play, while moms chat and pray together. Led by Tarina Stroh.

Serve

December Mission Focus – Angel Tree

The mission focus for December is Angel Tree, a ministry that provides Christmas gifts to local children whose parents are in prison. If you took a tag last week, please remember that there are several siblings on the tree. To keep it fair, we ask that you please purchase ONE gift for your child at a cost of \$15 or less. The gifts will need to be bought and wrapped with the tag placed on the outside of the gift. The gifts then need to be returned to Hillcrest by December 14th. We will also need volunteers to help deliver the gifts on Wednesday, December 17th, starting at 6pm.

Season of Giving

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported Hillcrest Church this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Visit <http://www.sioxfallschurch.com/> or contact the church office for more information.

Children's Ministry

All children should stop at the Children's Check-In, located on the north side of the front foyer, before going to their classroom.

9 AM Children's Program

Building Blocks: Infants and 1 year olds
Bird House: 2-4 year olds

10:30 AM Children's Program

Building Blocks: Infants & 1 year olds
Bird House: 2 year olds
Tree House: 3 year olds
Dog House: 4 year olds
Club House: K-5th Grade

"Christmas in Black & White"

Next Sunday, December 14th, during both services, Hillcrest Children's Ministries will be performing their Christmas Program, "Christmas in Black & White." All children in pre-school through 5th grade will participate. Please have children arrive in the gym by 8:40am. We will also have a special dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 13th at 10am.

Student Ministry

180 Sunday Classes

Middle School and High School students are invited to meet in the Youth Room during the 10:30am service. Students will then break into small groups.

180 Wednesday Nights

Middle School students meet from 6-7:30pm and High School students meet from 7:30-9pm. Includes lesson, small group time, snack, and games!

180 Events

- The Winter Camp has been scheduled for February 12th-15th. Pick up a brochure and registration form at the Welcome Center or from Meriah for more information.
- On Wednesday, December 31st, starting at 8pm, students can ring in the New Year together here in the Hillcrest gym. We will have snacks, play board games, and there will be prizes! Bring your friends! Cost is \$5.

Message Notes:

Title: Slow vs. Fast

Scripture: James 1:22-25; John 3:16; Matthew 1:18-25

Notes

For those going deeper:

This week's memory verse

Matthew 16:26 (NLT) And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

Monday

Subject: Pride vs. Humility

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Commentary:

Naaman was a great commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was highly regarded and he was used to the best treatment and he had come to expect nothing less. However, he had been stricken with leprosy, a very contagious and hideous disease in his day. He very much desired to be healed, and when he got wind of the prophet Elisha and his dealings in Israel, he made a beeline for the prophet's house. However, when Elisha heard that Naaman had arrived he sent a messenger to simply tell him to "wash 7 times in the Jordan River and you will be healed". Now, Naaman was a very proud man and he expected the royal treatment, or thought he deserved it. How could Elisha treat him so ordinarily? Naaman had a choice to make. He could humbly obey Elisha's request and receive God's mercy and healing, or he could cling on to both his pride and his leprosy. Naaman made the correct choice. Which choice would you make today?

Questions for further thought:

1. Why is pride such a huge hurdle in accepting God's mercy and forgiveness?
2. What steps could I take to minimize the amount of pride and self will in my life? How might that change my view of God and my faith in His great promises?

Challenge:

Resolve to ponder these 3 things during the week ahead

- 1) Do I believe God's ways are best?
- 2) Why does God want my obedience more than most anything else?
- 3) Do I believe God can use anything or anybody to accomplish His purposes?

Tuesday

Subject: What's Up with Baptism?

Scripture: Acts 2:37-41, Matthew 28:19-20

Commentary:

In this passage, Peter had just preached a message about what Christ had done for people. In verse 36, he finished with "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified". He had just preached the Gospel. In verse 37, the people were deeply moved and asked "Brothers, what shall we do?" It seems they somehow realized that they had a hand in the death of Jesus even if they hadn't been present when He was nailed to the cross. In verse 38, Peter gives the definitive answer. "Repent and be *Baptized* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". There is repentance and faith in Christ and that is followed by baptism. Baptism is public identification with Christ. It's standing up and claiming publically that I am a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith. Repent (turn from sin) and turn to Christ in faith for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose today.

Questions for further thought:

1. Is baptism necessary for salvation? Why or why not?
2. How important is baptism? Did Jesus really command us to do this? (See Matthew 28:19)

Challenge:

Perhaps you've taken the steps of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as your only means for salvation. Perhaps you're now considering the next step of baptism. Don't delay. Do it today.

Wednesday

Subject: Man's Biggest Problem;
God's Larger Solution

Scripture: Romans 3:21-24;
Isaiah 6:5, 64:5-6

Commentary:

It seems as if we have a big problem, maybe even the biggest a person can have. It appears as if everyone also has the same problem– a universal affliction. This problem is sin and God takes it very seriously. In Romans 3:23, it says "All have sinned and fallen short..." Romans 3:10 says "None is righteous, no, not one..." It appears we have been born into this condition and we have settled in rather nicely. But that isn't the worst of it. In Isaiah 59:2, it says "But your iniquities (sins) have made a separation between you and your God". *That* is a huge problem. So, what is my plan? I figure I can work it off, or I'll be really good. It seems that not only do we not have a capacity to be good, but by our desire to erase our sin by being good we offend God. God offers a free gift of salvation through His son and I slap it away saying "No, I'll do it myself". It's God doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. We owe a debt that we cannot possibly pay. But Jesus Christ stepped in and took our punishment if we come in repentance and faith. Now that is GOOD NEWS!

Questions for further thought:

1. At what point did I understand and respond to the Gospel? Have I shared this Good news with anyone else?
2. After reading Romans 3, how differently do I view the sin in my own life? What can I do today to change this predicament?

Challenge:

Read and meditate on Romans 3. Resolve to tell at least one person about the Good News of the Gospel.

Thursday

Subject: The "Invisible" God

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:5-7

Commentary:

Intellectually, we all know that God is everywhere. But if we were to be completely honest, there are times that we may admit.. God seems so far away from me. I'm not sensing His presence in my life. I'm not seeing Him work, and the like. I have certainly felt that from time to time. Why this apparent "disappearance" act by God? I would submit that one of the primary reasons for this is human pride. Pride is the complete state of anti-God. It seems that God will remain dormant as long as He sees within our hearts an elevated opinion of ourselves. Pride repels and repulses Him. God loves us and will be waiting for us with open arms, but He won't force His way into our lives. We must demonstrate a humble willingness to receive Him. So how is that going? There doesn't seem to be much of a middle ground. Either you're increasing in humility or you're increasing in pride. As 1 Peter 5:5 says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Sure makes you want to take that extra helping of humble pie, doesn't it?

Questions for further thought:

1. Has God seemed far off to me lately? Could this be a pride issue?
2. Have there other times when God seemed "invisible" to me? What was the problem at that time?

Challenge:

Read James 4 where it also speaks about pride and the value of humility within God's kingdom.

Friday

Subject: Meeting Jesus

Scripture: Luke 24:28-32

Commentary:

This is the story of two disciples that walked to Emmaus and in the process took on an unlikely companion, the risen savior Jesus Christ. Interestingly, the story leaves us with three results of time spent with Jesus. The first clue that you have been spending time with Jesus is that your heart is burning. Is there something stirring in your spirit? Something that may have not been there before? Only God can produce that kind of result. Secondly, does your time with Jesus deepen your faith that Christ is risen? Once the disciples realized who they were walking with, they believed and they went to find the others. The third clue that you have spent time with Christ is an irresistible desire to confess Christ before others. Do you possess any of these qualifications? If so, it is highly likely that you have been truly introduced to Jesus.

Questions for further thought:

1. When was the last time that I spent a significant amount of time with Jesus? What were the results?
2. How are the three results of time with Jesus affecting the way I live? Or isn't it?

Challenge:

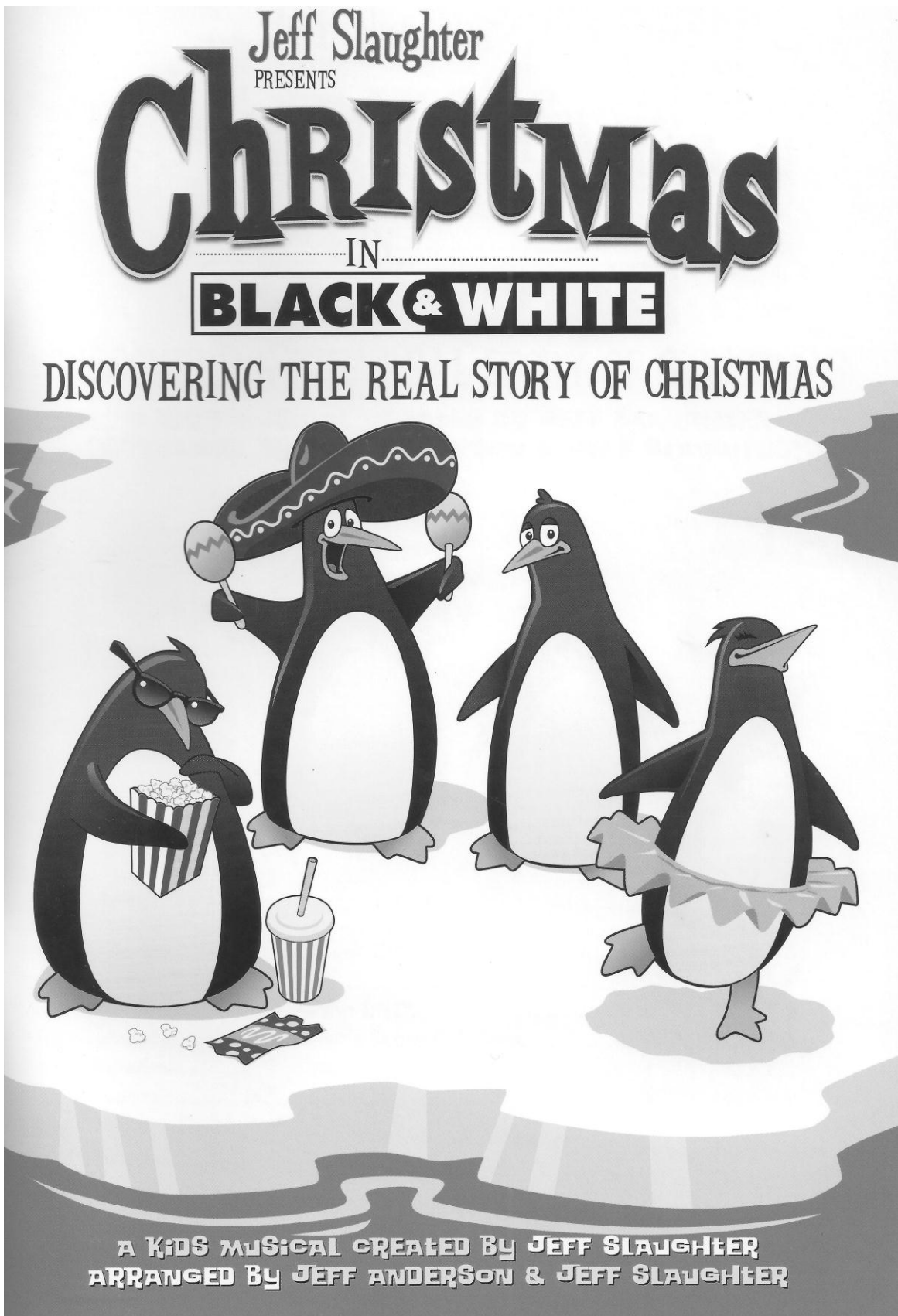
Resolve to spend more time with Jesus this week whether in prayer, quiet time, or scripture reading.

Saturday

(Looking to Sunday)

Children's Christmas Program

A Black & White Christmas



Prayer Page:

Write down the prayer concerns and praises you want to remember throughout the week. Pray every day!

If you would like to receive the email prayer chain, check the box on the Connection Card. You can also submit prayer requests through the church web site or by calling the church office.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Staff Contact Information



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Children's Ministries Coordinator

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Jennifer Simons

Administrative Assistant

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Connection Card

Please fill out, tear at perforation and place in collection plate or drop off at Welcome Center as you leave.

PRAYER REQUESTS

☐ Keep confidential (Pastoral staff) or ☐ Put on the Prayer Chain

☐ I would like to sign up for Hillcrest's upcoming event. (Please specify.)

My next step today is to:

- ☐ Read and study the scriptures and devotionals, provided on pages 6-12.
- ☐ Attend the Christmas Eve Service on December 24th at 5:30pm.

Additional Comments:



4301 E. 26th St. Sioux Falls, SD 57103

605-371-0546

www.siouxfallschurch.com

Connection Card

Please fill out and tear at perforation and place in collection plate or drop off at Welcome Center as you leave.

Name _____ Address _____

E-Mail _____ City/State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Check all that apply:

- ☐ 1st Visit --- How did you hear about Hilcrest? _____
- ☐ 2nd Visit _____
- ☐ Returning Guest _____
- ☐ Regular Attender _____
- ☐ Members _____

(web site, newspaper, radio, name of person who invited you, etc.)

I am interested in:

- ☐ beginning a relationship with Jesus ☐ being baptized
- ☐ receiving the Hilcrest Informational E-mail.
- ☐ joining a small group ☐ becoming a member of Hilcrest
- ☐ volunteering ☐ praying for my Hilcrest family (received via e-mail)

One of the pastors will contact you with information on these subjects.

Your Age Group:

- ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-35
- ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65 ☐ over 65

☐ Single ☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

☐ Other: _____

**Names & Birthdays of
members of your
household**

