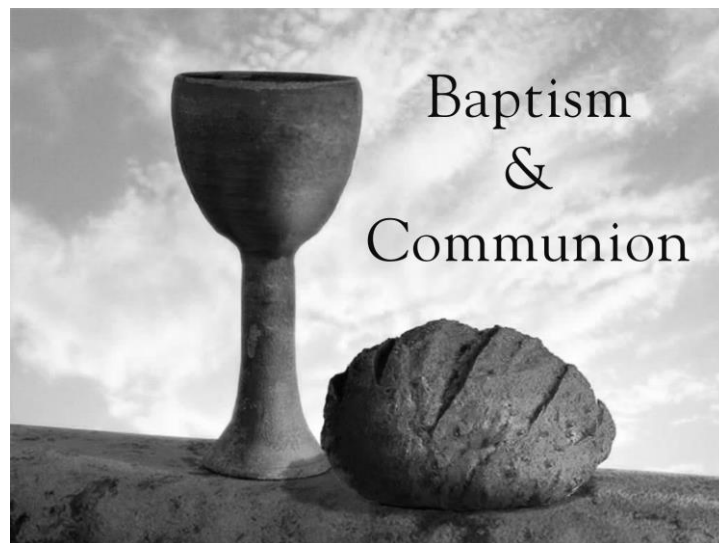


# Hillcrest CHURCH

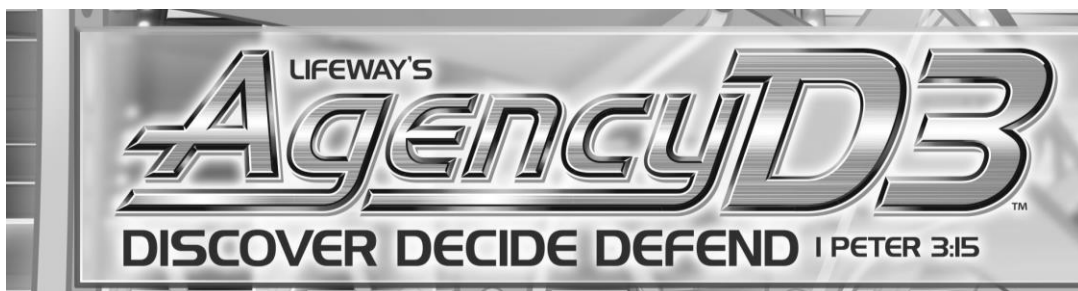
Today's Gathering  
May 31st, 2015

View from the Hill  
Brian Stroh

Singing  
Cindy Cummins, Tarina Stroh, and Jesse VanderWeide



Baptism & Communion  
Pastor Doug Bartel



Is Jesus Really God's Son?  
Tarina Stroh

# 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.siouxfallschurch.com](http://www.siouxfallschurch.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 pages 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

## Baptism

Please join us in celebrating Bethani Oaks, Lauren Zell, and Linda LaPorte on their decision to publicly accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through baptism today. Our next baptism service will be on August 30th. If you are interested in being baptized, please contact Pastor Doug or Pastor Brian.

## Hillcrest at Newton Hills

Join us for a potluck picnic at Newton Hills on Saturday, June 6th. Bring your own meat and drink and a side dish or dessert to share. You may also want to bring a lawn chair for more comfortable seating. We will meet at picnic shelter #1 near the Overlook Tower, starting at 5:30pm. Feel free to stay later for the campfire. A state park license or daily pass is required to enter the park. For directions and/or a map, visit Newton Hills' web site at <http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/newton-hills/>

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday at the Pizza Ranch

Next Sunday is the first Sunday of the month. You are all invited to lunch at the 41<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Adoption Celebration

Join us On Sunday June 7th from 3pm-4:30pm for an informal open-house event, celebrating Nick and JoEllen Welder's adoption of Musa! Gifts are not necessary. If you would like to bring a gift, gift cards to Target or HyVee would be very helpful. Cake and punch will be served.

## Hillcrest at Thunder Road

Join Hillcresters at Thunder Road on Wednesday, June 17th at 7pm. \$16 for a 2 hour unlimited wrist band or \$14 for 4 universal tickets. One ticket is good for go karts, mini golf, and other attractions. You can buy 4 tickets and share among your family or use them all for yourself! Sign up at Welcome Center or contact Brian.

## Serve

### May Outreach Focus – VBS

After services today, we will be moving chairs out of the sanctuary and completing the final touches for VBS, starting tonight. If you are able to stick around for a 20-30 minutes after the service, all help is greatly appreciated!

### June Outreach Focus – Our Neighbors

Hillcrest's Neighborhood Rummage Sale will be held in our parking lot on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am-3pm. This is a free event that we host to thank our neighbors for allowing us to be a part of their neighborhood. Hillcrest provides the space, some tables, advertising, and a free lunch for all buyers and sellers. Hillcresters and their friends are also welcome to participate in the rummage sale. Please contact Jennifer Simons if you are interested in a spot.

In order to pull this off, we need volunteers! Set up will start at 7:30am; the rummage sale will start at 9am; and we will start serving food at 10am. Please sign up at the Welcome Center if you are available to help.

### Urban Plunge

Hillcresters are invited to a unique short-term mission opportunity July 17-19 right here in our own city! Hillcrest's own Kevin Skogstad will be leading a team of Hillcresters through an opportunity called Urban Plunge. You'll experience a completely different side to Sioux Falls as you minister and interact with under-resourced people from Sioux Falls. The cost is \$130 for the weekend and includes meals, lodging, and a T-shirt. Participants must be at least 12 years old, and we need a minimum of a group of 10. A deposit of \$25 is due by **June 15th** in order to reserve your spot. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or contact Pastor Brian if you are interested in this opportunity.

### Giving Convenience

Summer is a busy time for many individuals and families, with weddings, sports, camping, vacations, and other recreation. If you would like to remain faithful in your giving, regardless of your schedule, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up this summer, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Visit [www.siouxfallschurch.com](http://www.siouxfallschurch.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  
Dog House: 3 & 4 year olds  
Club House: K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade

*There will be no Club House today, so that children can celebrate Baptisms and participate in Communion with their families. Child care is still available for infants through pre-school.*

### "Agency D3" VBS

Starts tonight from 6pm-8pm. It's not too late to register and it's FREE! Stop at the booth in the back foyer for more info!

### Summer Fun Days – Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

Sunday, 6/14 from 2-4pm. Parents can drop children off at the Butterfly House & pick them up at the Outdoor Campus, or they can attend with their children. Cost is \$5 and children will memorize John 3:16 or John 3:17 (if they memorized John 3:16 last year.) Sign up in the back foyer or on our web site if your child plans to attend.

## Student Ministry

### 180 Sunday Classes

There will be no Sunday School classes today, so that students can celebrate Baptisms and participate in Communion with their families.

### 180 Wednesday Nights

On Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, students are encouraged to come to the church to help out with VBS. Activities start at 6pm and clean up will start at 8pm. This will take the place of our normal Wednesday activities for the week.

### 180 Events

The new Summer Calendar is available at the Welcome Center and at the Student Ministries board in the back foyer.

# Message Notes:

Title: Is Jesus Really God's Son?

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29-36; Isaiah 42:1

**For those going deeper:**

This week's memory verse

*1 Peter 3:15 (HCSB) but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts.*

*Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.*

# Monday

Subject: The Difficulty of Accepting Grace

Scripture: Acts 3:18-21

## Commentary:

Grace is defined as God's unmerited favor or God giving us what we don't deserve. This is a wonderful and amazing gift that God gives freely to those who repent and turn to Christ in faith, but this Amazing Grace is still difficult for two different kinds of people. First, those people that are awash with guilt. The thought is that *God is so mad at me that there is no way that He would accept me*. When God's grace is presented to them, they feel too unworthy to accept it. However, there is a second class of people that find it difficult to accept God's grace and this group may indeed be under the most sinister of Satan's illusions. These are the self-righteous people who do volunteer work, who have never been in trouble with the law, who pay their bills and the like. These hardworking folks are basically honest can very quickly spot a dozen people that are worse off than they are. The idea that they cannot contribute to their own redemption is an insult to their sense of accomplishment and, thus, God's grace is seen as utterly offensive. You've probably heard the saying "God helps those who help themselves". It is so unfortunate that so many have come to believe this, when in reality God really only helps those who cannot possibly help themselves. This is when God really shows up, when we finally come to the end of our futile attempts to help ourselves.

## Questions for further thought:

1. How difficult is it for me to accept God's amazing grace?
2. Are there any people in my life that I have a hard time seeing as being forgiven? Why?

## Challenge:

Look for opportunities to seek out a person in which you may have had differences of opinions in the past. Seek to practice grace by opening the lines of communication and to begin the healing process.

# Tuesday

Subject: A Watered-Down Gospel

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1-3

## Commentary:

Without question the greatest life to live is the Christian life, because God takes a life that was empty, aimless, and worst of all, headed for certain judgment and turns it around and transforms it. He forgives all our sin, removes our guilt, and literally takes residence inside us through His Holy Spirit. This all is a result of the power of the gospel proclaimed and believed. However, some have been lulled to sleep by a watered-down version of the gospel; a gospel that promises forgiveness but rarely mentions the need to repent (turn) from your sin. A gospel that promises peace but never warns of persecution. A gospel that says God wants you to be healthy and wealthy and never have problems of any consequence. A gospel that says you will so find the favor of God that a parking space will always be available for you. I know this sounds silly, but that is the lure of some of today's pep talk preaching. But this is the gospel of the Bible. The Christian life is not a playground, but a battleground. Not only is there a God who loves you enough to offer a provision for sin's forgiveness, but this is the same God who also wants to change you and use you for His Kingdom work now.

## Questions for further thought:

1. Do I fully understand the level of spiritual battle that is raging all around me?
2. Do I love and praise God as much during times of trial as during times of blessing? Why or why not?

## Challenge:

Be actively seeking individuals with which you could share your faith. Be ready as God provides those opportunities.



# Wednesday

Subject: Gratitude First?

Scripture: Luke 17:12-18

## Commentary:

Perhaps one of the most graphic illustrations of ingratitude in the Bible is Jesus' healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17. The lepers stood at a distance and garnered Jesus' attention as they called out in loud voices saying "Jesus, Master have mercy on us". Leprosy was a skin disease that caused a person to be deemed ceremonially defiled (symbolic of sin) and they were forced to live outside the village, separated from those that were deemed *clean*. Jesus initiated their healing, sending them to the priests where their miraculous healing could be publically certified. You would expect to see a rousing display of profound gratitude from the healed lepers. And yet gratitude escaped the attention for most (nine to be exact) of the aforementioned healed. Now some were probably excited to tell their families and some were probably in a state of shock. Some may have gone looking for Jesus sometime later, but were unable to find him. It turns out, ingratitude is not always calloused or premeditated. Sometimes it is just fourth, fifth, or tenth on a list we really never get around to following through on. However, for one of the healed lepers gratitude was his first, immediate reaction to grace. Before doing all the other trivial things, he returned to say thank you to his Rescuer. Before anything else, "Thank You, Lord!"

## Questions for further thought:

1. How often do I only think my gratitude and never express it? Why would that be?
2. It is easy to feel gratitude yet never express it. Do I believe that this is not a big deal and how could the atmosphere been different with a display of thankfulness?

## Challenge:

Meditate on God's word and think back on times in your life when an expression of gratitude may have not been your first response. Try to make thankfulness a priority going forward.

# Thursday

Subject: A Faith Worth Emulating

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-3

## Commentary:

Faith is defined as sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1 NIV) These two words, sure and certain, are paramount in this definition. They describe a secure beginning and ending point. The beginning of faith is believing in God's character – He is who He says. The end point is believing in God's promises – He will do what He says. We demonstrate true faith when we believe that God will fulfill His promises even though we don't see any way or evidence for those promises materializing yet. Faith is easy when things are going well, but how quickly can that faith disappear when life gets hard and the chips are down. In John 4, we find an amazing example of a man of faith. John tells of a Roman military official whose son was very sick, likely at the point of death. This situation was so grave that he was begging Jesus for a miracle and Jesus did not disappoint. In fact, his words to the Roman were rather shocking, "Go, your son will live." John says "The man believed Jesus and went on his way" He left and walked home believing his son will be healed. What faith this man had, but that is not all. Here is the key. He trusted Jesus at His word and he acted on it. Many of us would be tempted to want proof from Jesus or want him to accompany us back to our house. But not this Roman, for Jesus' word was enough for him as he had assurance of things hoped for and certainty of things not seen. Now, that is a faith to emulate.

## Questions for further thought:

1. How would others describe my faith?
2. Do I trust in the promises God makes or do I trust in my emotions?

## Challenge:

Pray for God's will to be done in your life as you seek opportunities for Him to strengthen your faith in assurance and conviction in the person and word of Jesus.

# Friday

Subject: Self Righteousness

Scripture: Luke 11:37-52

## Commentary:

In this passage, Jesus is speaking with the Pharisees and criticizing their blatant self-righteous practices. These "experts of the law" were very adept at making themselves appear religious on the outside while having less than honorable intentions in their temple dealings. It brings to mind a story from Luke 18 when Jesus told about the two men that went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee, knowing all the laws of God, stood up and prayed about himself, saying "Thank you, God that I am not like other men, or even like that tax collector." He went on to recite his laundry list of good deeds that he had accomplished including fasting and tithing of all that he gets. The tax collector, on the other hand, was considered to be the worst of the worst. A lot of them were considered thieves and even the New Testament gives them a category all their own. There were sinners and "tax collectors." One of the biggest impediments to spiritual growth is a lack of true repentance. The Pharisee modeled this very eloquently as he smugly ran down his checklist before God expecting some kind of door prize for his effort. However, the tax collector saw himself as he truly was. A sinner guilty of every kind of depravity needing a gracious savior for forgiveness of sin saying "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Which of these men went home justified? Jesus says, "The tax collector went home justified. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

## Questions for further thought:

1. Have I ever made a kind of mental checklist with God such as I've prayed today, I've read my Bible today, etc.? Did God take notice? Was He pleased?
2. OR do I say Thank you Lord for enabling me to do these things and please continue your good work in me? How is this different?

## Challenge:

Pray and meditate on this passage and ask God for humbleness of spirit as you seek His will for your life.

# Saturday

(Looking to Sunday)

Message Series: Spies Like Us

Message Title: I Spy Giants

Scripture: Numbers 13

Speaker: Doug Bartel

What do these passages say to you?

## 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.

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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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# 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**

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My next step today is to:

- Read and study the scriptures and devotionals, provided on pages 6-12.
- Attend picnic at Newton Hills on June 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Attend Family Night at Thunder Road on June 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Volunteer to help with the Neighborhood Rummage Sale on June 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Participate in Urban Plunge mission July 17-19.

Additional Comments:

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4301 E. 26<sup>th</sup> St. Sioux Falls, SD 57103

605-371-0546

[www.siouxfallschurch.com](http://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:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Visit --- How did you hear about Hilcrest? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_