

Hillcrest CHURCH

Today's Gathering
December 20th, 2015

View from the Hill
Pastor Doug Bartel

Singing
Tarina Stroh and Jesse VanderWeide



The Ritual of Gift Giving
Pastor Brian Stroh

For the Kids

Parents can go to the Children's Check-In to find out about our Sunday morning options and check their children in. The Children's Check-In is located on the north 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.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 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

Baptism

Our next baptism service will be on January 31st. Christ asked all of his followers to be baptized, in fact the Apostle Paul said, "Why wait? Get up and be baptized." Baptism is available for any person that has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. If you are interested in baptism, contact Pastor Doug or Pastor Brian to reserve a spot.

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.

Hillcrest at Tut Hill

On January 13th Hillcrest will be meeting at Tuthill Park for some winter fun. There is a sledding hill and a skating rink with a warming house. Cost of skate rentals is \$1 for youth (2-15) and \$3 for adults (16-54). No need to sign up; just meet at Tuthill Park at 6pm. Bring your own sled and warm gear.

180 New Year's Eve Bash

December 31st from 8pm to 12:30am in the Family Life Center. There will be board games, food, prizes, and bubbling grape juice to ring in the New Year! 180 Students and their families are welcome to join in the fun! Let Meriah know if you plan to attend.

Family Movie Night

On January 17th at 6pm, Children's Ministries invites all families to join us as we watch the movie "Inside Out"! We'll provide popcorn, cocoa, and other snacks, as well as the photo booth! It's a great movie and a good opportunity to connect with your family and other families! Sign up at the Children's Ministry table in the back foyer or mark your connection card if you plan to attend.

Serve

Packing Backpacks for Feeding South Dakota

Hillcrest will be packing backpacks at Feeding South Dakota on Tuesday, January 12th, beginning at 6pm. Volunteers need to be 13 years and older. Sign up at the Welcome Center or mark the back of your Connection Card if you are interested in volunteering.

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.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

Baby Owl House: 0-4 year olds
(pre-schoolers will break off into a small learning group)

10:30 AM Children's Program

Baby Owl House: Infants & 1 yr olds
Bird House: 2 year olds
Tree House: 3 year olds
Dog House: 4 year olds
Club House: K-5th Grade

Family Movie Night

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Student Ministry

180 Sunday Classes

Students meet upstairs in the Youth Room at 10:30am for snacks and games, then break up into small groups for lessons and discussion time.

180 Wednesday Nights

Middle School meets at Hillcrest from 6-7:30pm and High School meets from 7:30-9pm. Includes lesson, small group time, snack, & games!

✓ *Reminder that there will be no 180 on December 23rd or December 30th.*

180 Events

Minute to Win It Christmas Party - TODAY during 10:30 service. Meet in the Youth Room. We will break into teams and have a contest to see who can dominate the Christmas edition challenges. Prizes will be awarded.

New Year's Eve Bash - December 31st from 8pm to 12:30am in the Family Life Center. There will be board games, food, prizes, and bubbling grape juice to ring in the New Year! 180 Students and their families are welcome to join in the fun! Let Meriah know if you plan to attend.

Winter Camp - Feb 11th-14th We will head to Minneapolis and stay at Riverview Baptist Church while we ski, shop, and grow together. For more information, pick up a brochure and registration form at the Welcome Center. Deadline for early registration is January 10th.

Message Notes:

Title: The Ritual of Gift Giving
Scripture: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11;
2 Corinthians 9:7; James 1:17

For those going deeper:

This week's memory verse

Matthew 2:11 (NLT) They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

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. 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. 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. Isn't it great that God ultimately helps those who can't possibly help themselves?

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. Most importantly though, He changes our eternal address from a place called hell to a place called heaven.

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. 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 for the Gift 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. 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. 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: Faith – A Gift that keeps on Giving

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. 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. In fact, his words to the Roman were rather shocking, "Go, your son will live." John says "The man believes 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.

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: Say it with Grace

Scripture: Ephesians 4:29-32

Commentary:

How are your relationships doing? These verses hold some keys to improving and maintaining those relationships in your life. It seems that it has a lot to do with the words that come out of our mouths. Ephesians 4:29 talks about "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Corrupt means to break down; cause decay. Don't say what tears people down. The question we should ask is, Will this thing I'm saying build this person up? God is working on every believer growing and changing them in some form or fashion. When we insert our critical words into that plan, we obstruct what God is working on in that person. We may be tearing down what God is trying to accomplish in their life. Instead, "say what is good" speaking words that are helpful to God's construction program in their life. Why should we build others up? Because we all need grace and God has given this gift to each believer in amazing measure. Shouldn't we be willing to do the same to others?

Questions for further thought:

1. When I evaluate my conversations, what % of my words build people up?
2. Who can I find to encourage today?

Challenge:

Make a conscious effort to be an encourager today.

Saturday

(Looking to Sunday)

Message Series: Take Comfort in Ritual
Message Title: The Ritual of Story Telling
Scripture: Deut 26:5-9; Neh 8:1-3; Acts 2:36
Speaker: Doug Bartel

What do these passages say to you?

Staff Contact Information



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Bill Lewis
Custodian

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**

My next step today is to:

- Read and study the scriptures and devotionals, provided on pages 6-12.
- Send me an invitation to Right Now Media.
- Attend Christmas Eve service at 5:30pm on December 24th.
- Help pack back packs at Feeding South Dakota on January 12th.
- Attend Family Movie Night on January 17th.

Additional Comments:



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

605-371-0546

www.sioxfordschurch.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 Hillcrest? _____
- 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 Hillcrest Informational E-mail.
- joining a small group becoming a member of Hillcrest
- volunteering praying for my Hillcrest 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
