

Grace Hills Growth Track

OVERVIEW

Grace Hills exists to **help broken people know God, find freedom, discover their purpose, and make a difference for God's glory**. One of the ways we do that is to offer Next Steps, a series of four classes designed to help you take simple, intentional steps toward spiritual maturity.

stepONE: FOLLOW (Know God)

Become better acquainted with the story, vision and values of Grace Hills. Come to connect with others and have the opportunity to become a church member.

stepTWO: GROW (Find Freedom)

Explore the essential tools and beliefs that produce a more meaningful relationship with Christ.

stepTHREE: DISCOVER (Discover Your Purpose)

Discover how God uniquely shaped you to serve others using your spiritual gifts, your passions, your natural abilities, your personality, and your life experiences.

stepFOUR: SERVE (Make a Difference)

Find out more about the community, growth, and fulfillment that comes from serving others and being on mission with Grace Hills.

stepONE: FOLLOW

Know God

- Video 1** **Introduction (Our Story)**
Brandon and Angie Cox
- Video 2** **Our Purpose Statement (Why We Exist)**
Danny Kirk
- Video 3** **Our Core Values (What We Value)**
Neil Greenhaw
- Video 4** **Our Faith Statement (What We Believe)**
Our Structure (How We Operate)
Meredith Chapuis & Sean Campbell
- Video 5** **Our Hope for You (What's Next?)**
The Membership Covenant
Brandon Cox

INTRODUCTION

At **stepONE**, our hope is to give you a basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class is designed to clearly explain who we are and what we believe. We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Grace Hills Church.

OUR STORY

Grace Hills was started by Brandon and Angie Cox in the summer of 2011 with a handful of people meeting in a rented office in Bentonville. Our grand opening to the public was January 12, 2012 in a local movie theater. After six years meeting in two movie theaters and a leased building, we moved to our current location at 805 SE 22nd Street in Bentonville. In that time, we've planted several daughter churches, sent missionaries around the world, partnered with an impoverished community in Belize, Grace Hill Elementary School in Rogers, and other local community organizations.

We dream of being a home for spiritually homeless people. We envision a place where people can begin and build a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and with fellow believers, where people do life together in genuine community, and where people grow spiritually in an atmosphere where the grace of God is highly celebrated.

We dream of a church where real problems are solved and real needs are met as people are drawn closer to God, where people recover from hurts, habits, and hang-ups that prevent them from enjoying meaningful relationships with God and each other.

We dream of a church where God's Word is honored as our highest authority on earth and as the source of real and abundant life.

We dream of a church where people serve one another according to the way that God has shaped them, where spiritual gifts, passion, talents, and experiences are a part of how we meet the needs of others inside and outside of our church family.

We dream of a church that matters to its community, that makes a visible, noticeable, and tangible difference on behalf of Christ in the real problems that exist.

We dream of a church that celebrates changed lives, that cultivates an atmosphere of freedom to grow and serve, and that empowers people with the confidence to do so.

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT: WHY WE EXIST AS A CHURCH

Grace Hills Church exists to help broken people know God, find freedom, discover their purpose, and make a difference for God's glory.

Grace Hills is a **purpose driven** church. We believe the church exists to do five things.

1. Evangelism - We believe found people find people.

Our primary way of helping people come to know God is by creating **Weekend Worship Experiences** that unchurched people love to attend so that people can confidently bring friends. Our worship services are created to be:

- Truth-teaching (we present biblical truth in a simple and relevant way).
- Jesus-honoring (we saturate our services with the message of the gospel).
- Life-giving (we welcome people to a vibrant celebration of Jesus).

HOW TO TELL EVERYONE YOU'VE BEEN FOUND

"For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives." - Romans 6:4 NLT

- Baptism doesn't **save** anyone, but it's a powerful step of obedience. It's the *outward sign* of an *inward change* of the heart.
- We believe that baptism is by immersion, for believers.
- When someone was baptized as an infant, we *celebrate* the decision their parents made to bring them up to know Jesus, but we still believe that everyone who makes their own decision to follow Jesus should follow that decision with baptism.

2. Discipleship - We believe growing people change.

Our primary way of helping people find freedom and grow spiritually is through **Grace Groups**.

Andy Stanley says, "Life change happens in circles, not in rows." Real life change happens in the context of relationships – small groups. In the Bible, they worshipped in the temple but ministry happened in homes.

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." Acts 20:20

GRACE GROUPS PROVIDE THREE THINGS:

1. A place to connect.

"...yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him." 1 Corinthians 9:22 (LB)

2. A place to protect.

"We know what real love is because Christ gave up His life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters." 1 John 3:16 (NLT)

3. A place to grow.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17

HOW GRACE GROUPS WORK

Our small groups meet weekly or bi-weekly in places all around Northwest Arkansas and provide a place for you to connect, grow, and discuss the issues and challenges of life. Grace Groups are also where we pray, care for one another, and are missed if we don't show up! If you would like to join a Grace Group, simply visit our website and check out the online directory of groups.

There are Two things you should know about small groups:

1. They are "Free market" groups.

Our groups are as varied as we are; group leaders use their gifts and passions to create a group that allows others to join with them in serving God. Whatever the age, interest, or location, or night of the week that works best for you, there is a group that is just right for you.

2. You can host a group.

We believe that everyone has areas of strength and gifting that could benefit others. The first step in becoming a small group leader is to attend the next Grace Group Host Training. These classes are offered before each semester begins to give you an overview of what it takes to start a group. You'll discover that it's easier than you think.

3. Ministry - We believe saved people serve people.

All of us were created by God to make a difference in the life of another person. God has a place for you where your unique abilities and passions can touch the lives of others. We believe that your life will never make sense until you find, develop, and fulfill that purpose.

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." - Ephesians 2:10

We believe that every member is a minister, everyone has a gift to use to serve others, and that the body is only truly healthy and growing when all of its members are functioning according to their God-given purpose.

HOW TO PLUG INTO A MINISTRY TEAM

We believe that everyone who has been attending Grace Hills for more than a few weeks is ready to serve others on the ministry team where they are passionate and gifted. We ask people to:

- "Try out" a ministry once or twice, then join a regular rotation.
- Keep going through Next Steps! StepTHREE: DISCOVER will help you to assess your gifts.
- Invite others to serve alongside you.

Some of our teams include:

- Guest Experiences (greeting, parking, ushering, etc.)
- Security
- Childcare & Kids Ministry
- Student Ministry
- Worship & Creative Arts
- Media & Communications
- Small Groups

4. Missions - We help people make a difference.

Every one of us can be part of the mission by following these four principles:

- 1. Accept the personal responsibility.**
- 2. Build a personal relationships.**
- 3. Share your personal story.**
- 4. Give a personal invitation.**

POINTS OF PASSION (Local, National, and International Outreach)

*"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Acts 1:8*

1. "In Jerusalem" - Northwest Arkansas.

We partner with local organizations to serve our community such as Grace Hill Elementary School. Each year, we celebrate **LOVE WEEK**, in which we plug as many people as possible into as many community service opportunities as possible to make a difference and to help people experience volunteering first hand.

2. "In Judea and Samaria" - North America.

We plant churches via our relationships with The Baptist Missionary Association of America and The Association of Related Churches, both of whom provide support for church planters all across the United States and around the world.

3. "To the ends of the Earth" - Our World.

Grace Hills send people on mission trips as well as long term mission ventures to share the gospel, start churches, and serve people all around the world.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Pray.

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" - Matthew 9:37-38

2. Go.

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' He said, 'Go and tell this people.'" - Isaiah 6:8-9

3. Give.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV 1984)

5. Worship - We do it all for God's glory.

God planned you for his pleasure, and everything about God's creation should bring him praise, especially in the life of the church. So everything we do, we ultimately do for God's glory!

THE CODE: OUR CORE VALUES

Peter Drucker said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." In 2011, we put our core values down on paper, and while we've tweaked the wording, we've stuck by the values. This is our culture at Grace Hills...

1. Jesus first! We trust his Word, follow his lead, and honor him above all.

This is our first core value because it provides the foundation and framework for everything else we do and believe. The Bible says in Colossians 1:18, "He is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, the first to come back to life so that he would have first place in everything" (GW). We don't claim to have all the answers about the Bible, but we believe it from cover-to-cover and trust that it is God's perfect, infallible word to us.

2. We start small and think big. We go all in with a risk-taking faith.

We want to do what God leads us to do whether it seems to make sense or not. This means giving big to the community and to global missions, and it means always considering our next step before it's time to take it.

3. We are driven by purpose, not by programs, personalities, buildings, or budgets.

We believe God gave his church five purposes to pursue: worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry. Jesus echoed these in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). And a great commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a great church!

4. We keep it real and fight against fake. We live and lead with authenticity.

It's exhausting to try to be religious enough for God. And it's pointless to try to impress people. So we, including our Pastors and staff, are open about our faults and imperfections. We don't have it all together. We don't have it all figured out. And we haven't yet arrived. We're only as sick as our secrets.

5. We are broken people discovering healing together. We embrace messy ministry.

We highly value counseling, coaching, and recovery ministry knowing in advance that it's messy, requires time and involvement, and creates inconvenience. We love people who are hurting and want to do whatever we can to help. We're a community of broken people finding healing in Jesus together.

6. Everybody belongs. We care about the heart, not the skin, the clothes, or the body art.

We believe the church ought to be a home for people of every color, shape, personality, story, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. We ought to be able to befriend and do life with people who are unique and different than we are.

7. We keep it simple and stay fast, fluid, and flexible. We get creative to reach more people.

We avoid adding programs and focus on living out our purposes instead. We try to stay un-busy and uncluttered. We provide clear "next steps" for every person to take. And we trust our Pastors to lead us forward without red tape, committees, and business meetings. We vote as a church on only a few things, like buying land or building buildings.

8. We discover our gifts and grow from consumers into contributors. We refuse to use people.

When someone becomes part of the Grace Hills family, we're careful to never ask what we can get from them but instead to ask what we can get for them. How can we help them discover their God-given SHAPE and serve his purposes in the most fulfilling way.

9. We grow larger and smaller at the same time. We gather together and scatter together.

The earliest churches didn't have buildings. They met together in large groups on the weekends and then broke apart and met in each others' homes throughout the week. We believe this is how people really get connected, stay in the loop, and grow – by attending the large weekend gathering and then being part of a small group with a handful of close friends.

10. We plant churches, partner with the community, and go to the ends of the earth.

We're way more concerned about the growth of God's Kingdom than the success of our particular local church. So we multiply – as believers by sharing our faith story, as small groups to fill our community and make room for others, and as a church by planting more churches, campuses, and venues. We partner with community organizations rather than pioneering solutions for every problem ourselves. And we send missionaries all over the world.

OUR FAITH STATEMENT

A complete faith statement can be found at gracehillschurch.com/about/beliefs. Here is a brief overview:

God is real. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and is the Almighty Creator. Everyone has sinned, so everyone needs Jesus, who died for our sins, rose again and is coming back. Heaven and hell are real and eternal. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone, and once you're saved, you're always saved. The Holy Spirit lives in every believer and empowers and gifts us to live and serve.

The Bible, which is God's Word, is both true and powerful. Baptism is when believers are immersed in water, not for salvation but to tell the world we've become followers of Jesus. Communion is a memorial to Jesus' death. Jesus started the church before His death, protects it through every age, and commissioned the church to multiply and tell the world about Him.

And no matter what, there is always, always hope.

OUR STRUCTURE

*"For God is not a God of disorder; but of peace... Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."
1 Corinthians 14:33, 40*

HOW GRACE HILLS WORKS

Believers who invest their hearts, time, families, and finances in the building of a local church deserve to have confidence in church leadership. People are looking for leaders who conduct themselves with integrity and respect when making decisions that affect their lives. The New Testament uses several important words to describe the church...

- 1. We are a family, so we operate on the basis of relationships, not rules.**
- 2. We are a fellowship, so we focus on what unifies us.**
- 3. We are a body, not a business, so we serve each other according to our shape.**
- 4. We are a flock, so we are cared for and led by shepherds, called pastors.**

How does Grace Hills carry out ministry? Answers to some common questions.

- Our **Lead Pastor** casts the vision for where Grace Hills is headed and leads the staff.
- Our **Pastors** (elders) oversee the administration and operations of the church.
- We don't have committees. We have **teams** that do ministry.
- We empower people to lead **according to their gifts**.
- We don't have formal "deacons." We raise up servant-leaders in **small groups**.
- We only **vote** on a few, huge issues – calling a pastor, buying land, etc.
- Our bookkeeping is all outsourced and we have strict protocols for handling money.

CHURCH FINANCES

"A tithe of everything... belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord." Leviticus 27:30

At Grace Hills, we practice tithing for the support of Christ's Body, the church. We believe that giving 10% of our income is a Biblical standard or principle of giving. Many people love to give to God, but need to have confidence in the methods and purposes used by organizations to which they give. Therefore, there are a great number of people willing to give if they are able to see honesty, integrity, and genuine spiritual values reflected in the lifestyles of their church leaders.

The giving of tithes and offerings is worship to Jesus Christ and is an expression of the relationship between the individual giver and the Lord. That is why we don't have people fill out pledge cards or make faith promises. Funds are not "income only," they are worship, and must not be considered as a business transaction, but as an expression of gratitude toward God.

OUR HOPE FOR YOU

*"We hope that your faith will grow and that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended."
- 2 Corinthians 10:15 (NLT)*

THE NEXT STEPS

1. Become a member of Grace Hills.
2. Join a Grace Group.
3. Serve on a ministry team.
3. Complete the Next Steps.
4. Live life on mission.

THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Grace Hills' statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Grace Hills church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. **I will protect the unity of my church** by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and following those who lead me. (Romans 15:5, 19; 1 Peter 1:22, Hebrews 13:17)
2. **I will share the responsibility of my church** by praying for its growth, inviting the unchurched to attend, and warmly welcoming those who visit. (1 Thessalonians 1:2, Luke 14:23, Romans 15:7)
3. **I will serve the ministry of my church** by discovering my gifts and talents and developing a servant's heart. (1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:11-12, Philippians 2:3-4, 7)
4. **I will support the testimony of my church** by attending faithfully, living according to the teachings of my church, and giving regularly. (Hebrews 10:25, Philippians 1:27, 1 Corinthians 16:2)

Our hope is that you will prayerfully consider
becoming a member of Grace Hills
by "signing" the Membership Covenant found at
<https://gracehillchurch.com/join>