

This document outlines **the next five years of new planning and strategic work we envision for Hillcrest Church.** This focused list of 16 objectives happily assumes we will continue the good work we have been doing for 75 years, and takes into account the plan that guided our last three years: Hub of Hope: Invite, Include, Inspire. This is a prayed over, thoughtfully debated, and refined list of *the places we believe we can best focus our attention in the next five years* to participate with Jesus, accomplish our mission, and set-up Hillcrest for faithful service into the next 75 years.

This vision is summarized by the following words: **Hub of Hope: building bridges and setting tables that nurture relationships with Jesus and His community for the generations to come.** We will build bridges that connect Jesus and His people with our neighbors, and set tables as places of welcome hospitality, fellowship, care, and discussion.

A vision statement does two very important things: 1) it paints a picture of who we are striving to become. 2) It is a working expression of our mission statement to Love God, Grow Together, and Care for the World.

There are three sections ahead. The first section is called “Bases” and shares about the work we will do in the next five years to set the foundations for generations to come. The second and third sections detail the “Bridges and Tables” we intend to set first at program level, and then through our physical facilities.

We sincerely hope this document is the start of many good conversations and partnerships. These are huge, Jesus-centered ideas. We are excited to share them with you and to do this good work together.

Per Spiritum coram Deo,
The Hillcrest Staff Team



GUIDING SCRIPTURES:

LUKE 15:1-7 | Jesus is intentionally among those who have been separated – bridge and table.

MARK 2:13-17 | This bridge building and table setting extends to all kinds of unexpected people.

MATT. 22:1-10 | The Father likens it to a wedding banquet and underscores that He is calling everyone off the streets and only he can provide the “garments” that assure the guest they are welcome.

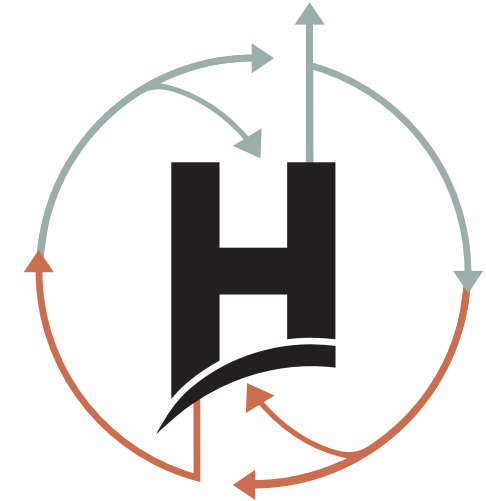
JOHN 4:1-26 | Jesus is gathering even among the most “different” and ostracized of the majority culture. This was hard for his contemporaries to imagine. Bridges!

ACTS 1:8 | The Holy Spirit sending us as bridge building witnesses to the ends of the earth – our city, our region, our enemies, and to the very centers of human culture!

ACTS 2:42-47 | The most compelling image of the early church is shared life and a shared tables.

ACTS 10:9-16 | The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mean to invite the whole, unexpected, and “unclean” world to their banquet table in fulfillment of Genesis 12:1-3. This was and is still a shock to many.

REV 19:6-9 | The culminating image of the Kingdom of God and this age, is a great big table with people from every tribe, tongue and nation; any who will surrender their rebellion and come home to God, will be made right in Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit. And in this way they are cleaned, dressed (garments of holiness), and prepared to take their invited place and the eternal celebration of God and His people.



OUR SHARED DIRECTION

A FIVE YEAR PLAN

FALL 2021 — FALL 2026

HILLCREST
C H U R C H

1400 Larrabee Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225
360.733.8400 www.HCBellingham.com

love God | grow together | care for the world

BASES

- 1 Open a Hillcrest Church Internship program. ✓**
 - a. As a partner and complement to our beloved University Christian Ministry partners.
 - b. Create a program that balances rigorous classroom learning with personal discipleship, and hands-on practical experience for high school graduates, college graduates, and people seeking training in ministry.
- 2 Open new digital doorways for people to meet Jesus and enter into face-to-face Christian community.**
 - a. Establish a young adult media team to help prepare and distribute engaging content for the next generation. ✓
 - b. Re-imagine and rebuild the Hillcrest Church website for a more crisp, clear, and accessible digital doorway, serving thousands of newcomers from all over the world every day. ✓
 - c. Create new kinds of content that introduce the online global community to Jesus.
For example:
 - i. 3MinuteSeminary.com
 - ii. IChooseJesusInstead.com: for men ✓ and women
- 3 Re-establish Hillcrest Church as a regional training center in Bellingham and Whatcom County.**
 - a. Evaluate current community-wide offerings for the possibility of including others and creating new ones.
 - b. Recent examples include Hope Restored conference, Regent guest lectures, Posture Shift and Mosaix Training. ✓
- 4 Expand short-term mission and learning opportunities. Hillcrest Church is a sending community with a long history of strategic partnerships all around the world. We'd like to see at least 10% of our population take a short term trip within 5 years to meet and partner with these friends.**

BRIDGES & TABLES

- 1 Provide discipleship and training that prepares our community to have a Biblical, thoughtful, and missional footing in the critical conversations that are currently driving the cultural discourse.**
 - a. Identity, gender, and sexuality. ✓
 - b. Race and ethnicity. ✓
- 2 Make it easier to find the bridges into and places at the table within Christian community.**
 - a. Start Alpha small groups where anyone can explore conversations about Jesus and Christian community. ✓
 - b. Open the "Discovery Trail" for seekers, skeptics, and new believers.
 - i. Provide resources, training, feedback loops, Trail Guide cadres, and online content that will support these journeys. ✓
 - c. Launch short-term, community-based small groups that go into our neighborhood and "love the block." ✓
 - d. Open pre-engagement and pre-marriage preparation programs to the public. ✓
 - e. Update the baptism and membership processes to make them more accessible, with a higher degree of connections to others, and celebrations that invite others to come to the table.
- 3 Begin a ministry focused on the leading edge of the next generation – 20-somethings and young adults. ✓**
- 4 Encourage and equip the right leaders to build a bridge into the recovery community by starting a Celebrate Recovery group.**
- 5 Convene a working team of ministries that serve kids and families from hard places: Royal Family, TRAC, Hillcrest Kids, Foodbank, Hope Restored, Grads, The Resilient Project, and Skookum, to look for bridge building and table setting partnership opportunities.**
- 6 Reinforce our relationships with Hillcrest Kids staff, kids and families. ✓**
 - a. Provide greater support for Hillcrest Kids staff events.
 - b. Regularly greet and treat Hillcrest kids and their families.
 - c. Include Hillcrest Kids in Hillcrest events, and participate in theirs.
- 7 Re-imagine and relaunch our Sunday morning gatherings to better align with our historic mission, convey our deeply rooted culture, and that clearly make a place at the table for those curious about Jesus and Christian community. ✓**
 - a. Shape the language; the values conveyed in use of time, the approach to discipleship, and the content for both mature Christians and to engage those who have just joined us at the table.
 - b. Pay attention to the make-up of our planning and Sunday morning teams so we continue to represent a richly diverse community.

BRIDGES & TABLES AT OUR FACILITY

- 1 Make sure our facilities are welcoming and accessible for those with a variety of physical abilities.**
 - a. Fix major cracks in the cement at the front door.
 - b. Improve wheelchair access at all primary facility access doors.
 - i. This requires major cement work at the office entrance used all week by employees and guests.
 - c. Ensure entrance key-fob and security panels are within reach and accessible to everyone.
- 2 Build a new Southside Foodbank with better storage, distribution, and community meeting space. Include temporary housing on the top floor for missionaries and members of our community. ✓**
- 3 Complete the remodel of our core common spaces. Our facility is in nearly constant use by a wide range of community groups. These changes will allow us to better facilitate community life in Hillcrest and continue to be a great resource in Bellingham. ✓**
 - a. Finish the Fireside Café and improve the Commons to make it much easier to host groups.
 - i. Move the coffee and Fireside hospitality into a wall mounted cabinetry system which will result in more usable, beautiful, and accommodating space.
 - ii. Add three new closets in the Commons to provide closed secure storage for tables and chairs, hospitality, and youth programs, as well as create an entirely new and accessible prep space for events.
 - b. Complete the remodel of the large and small classrooms upstairs – tables, tech, seating, and décor.
- 4 Complete interior signage began in 2018 to make it easier for newcomers to find their way around Hillcrest, including Treasureland direction from the lobby, Fireside Café direction from the sanctuary, Office directions and room numbers. ✓**
- 5 In conjunction with necessary and planned major repairs, examine the possibility of a large deck to expand meeting space adjacent to the Fireside Café, provide access from the sanctuary, and create a covered play space below for Hillcrest Kids.**