

Hillcrest Encouragement

Elders

- John Barton
- Terry Brown
- Neal Coates
- Malcolm Coco
- David Copeland
- Ray Ferguson
- Duwain Houston
- Robert Marion
- Charles Perkins
- Don Pope
- C. D. Pruett
- Jack Stewart
- Phil Vardiman
- Cleddy Varner
- Gary Varner
- Jim Watts
- Odies Wright

Chairman of the Elders

Jim Watts
wattsabilene@gmail.com

Ministers

Alan Clute, *Involvement/Seniors*
aclute@hillcrestonline.com

Cynthia Coates, *Children's*
cynthia@hillcrestonline.com

Taylor Cockrell, *Youth*
taylor@hillcrestonline.com

Brian Davis, *Missionary*
briandavis@hillcrestonline.com

Jack Hardcastle, *Family*
familyman@hillcrestonline.com

Justin Hatfield, *University*
justinhat@gmail.com

A Christmas Wrap

Christmas is upon us. It would be easy to write an article about how we need to “keep Christ in Christmas” or about the “true meaning of Christmas.” These topics have merit and deserve our introspective thought; however, something else has been weighing upon my mind: wrapping presents.

I know, that sounds rather petty for a church bulletin article – hear me out on this one. When I was a kid, I loved to wrap presents. It wasn't just the fact that we had presents under the tree, it was the excitement of the whole process. I was taking an object that I thought would bring great joy to someone else, and turning it into an enigmatic object that would be the source (so I imagined) of great anticipation and wonder... “What is that in the box?” is the question that would be prompted by my masterful wrapping job. The box, rather dull and insignificant (often a repurposed cereal box or brown parcel), would be transformed into a dazzling, tantalizing object which would engender awe in the beholder. The ribbons, the bows, the shiny paper... at once concealed that which was within while drawing all eyes to it. What a paradox there was under the tree! It was of great importance for me to wrap it perfectly. All the angles had to be precise, the edges had to be straight, the bow placed either symmetrically center or artfully to one side, and the paper had to match the personality of the recipient. That's a lot of trouble to attend to for mere covering of a gift. What strikes me about the whole thing is how out of step the process is with how God came into the world.

There really was nothing that would draw awe-filled eyes to Jesus. There was no glitter or perfect packaging, and yet the paradox remains even more poignant: complete omnipotence wrapped in complete and utter helplessness. Jesus came into the world in comparatively dull wrapping. Not that babies aren't cute and all, but let's be honest, there was really nothing unusual about a baby being born into a poor family. The wise men were, no doubt, impressed as were the shepherds, but they had the advantage of knowing who the baby was. Remove this advantage and they would likely have passed right on by with scarce a cursory glance at this ordinary baby. I guess God's not really into the impressive wrapping thing. Perhaps it's because he wanted us to know who He really is. To really know Jesus, you have to look past the ordinary to see the exceptional. God wrapped himself in the ordinary – indeed, the helpless – in order to call attention to his paradoxical love. God's love is paradoxical in that through Jesus' obedience we may be forgiven for our rebellion.

“Jesus: the reason for the season.” Well, I guess that's nice inasmuch as it rhymes. I like things that rhyme. But to be honest, I am not terribly awestruck by the phrase. Jesus loving me enough to risk being helpless for a while is awe-inspiring. The Creator placing himself into the hands and power of the created is awe-inspiring. Abject omnipotence becoming vulnerable for the sake of love is pretty impressive. The wrapping wasn't too eye-catching, but oh what a gift he is!

Merry Christmas! James McGee

Hillcrest Today

Welcome Guests

We are glad you are here! Please fill out a Welcome Visitor card and place in the collection plate. Go by our Information Area on the right side of the Worship Center for materials that will better acquaint you with Hillcrest.

For your convenience, the staffed nursery for children 2 months to 24 months is available. Check-in is in the foyer. The parents' nursery & training area is available to parents and children. Enter at the back of the Worship Center.

Bible Classes for All Ages

Baby Bunch in Nursery

Age 2.....Room 100	Gr 1.....Room 121
Age 3.....Room 106	Gr 2.....Room 117
Age 4.....Room 107	Gr 3.....Room 120
Pre-K.....Room 110	Gr 4.....Room 213
K.....Room 118	Gr 5.....Room 209

Young Adult Classes

Middle School	Room 204
High School	Room 200
University	Room 17

Adult Classes

Sonrise (all ages) (8:00)	Room 14
Y/O (all ages)	Room 10/11
Welcome (all ages)	Room 12
Families for Christ (all ages)	Room 14
Common Ground (30s & 40s)	Room 16
H.O.P.E. (all ages)	Room 21
Travelers (all ages)	Room 30
Christ in Action (all ages)	Room 52
Young Professionals (20s)	Room 212
F.U.N. (all ages)	Room 219
Generations (all ages)	Chapel

Worship Times

Morning Worship	9 a.m.
Bible Classes	10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship	6 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Classes	7 p.m.

Glorifying God

December 13, 2015

Worship Leader..... Josh Snead
Hymn: #23..... Our God, He Is Alive
Welcome.....Phil Vardiman
Hymn: #153..... Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down

Jesus Is the Hope of All Nations

Isaiah 60:1-5..... Lucas McNeill
Matthew 2:1-12; 28:18-20..... Sean McNeill
Prayer..... Matt Steele
Hymn: #221..... Jesus, Name Above All Names

The Lord's Supper

Hymn: #354..... I Gave My Life for Thee
Communion Meditation..... Ryan Jessup

Offering

Prayer..... Ryan Jessup

Songs of Praise

Hymn: #396..... No Not One
Hymn: #718..... We Shall Assemble
Hymn: #1018..... Joy to the World

Welcoming Jesus: “Jesus is the Hope of All Nations”

Hymn: #414..... Anywhere with Jesus
Message..... Phil Ware
Hymn: #416..... Footsteps of Jesus

Responses

Hillcrest News..... Justin Harrison
Hymn: #412..... Jesus, Hold My Hand
Family Blessing..... Charles Perkins

The Hillcrest family is led by the Holy Spirit to glorify God, proclaim the truth of Christ which transforms lives, and encourage one another toward faithful service and maturity.

Hillcrest Church of Christ
650 E Ambler Ave - Abilene, Texas 79601 - 325-691-4200 - office@hillcrestonline.com - www.hillcrestonline.com

Hillcrest Family News

Today's Speaker

A.M. – Phil Ware

P.M. – Care Group. The Christ In Action class will lead the service in Rm 10/11 at 6 p.m.

Sympathy

Sympathy to Cam & Joan Hurst on the loss of Joan's mother Jona Caddell.

New Automatic Doors

Hillcrest has installed two sets of automatic ADA doors located at the Southwest foyer and Chapel entrances.

Which Entrance for Sunday Evenings?

On Sunday evenings, please enter through the Southwest Foyer entrance. We are limiting entrance to one door so that we can better monitor safety for the evening service group that meets in room 10/11, children's Bible Hour, and one life group that meets in the building. On Care Group Sundays, the evening service will also be in Room 10/11 from now on. Please help us out by not propping open other doors or leaving them unlocked.

Congregational Meeting – Rm 10/11 – Today, 4 p.m.

All members are invited to join the elders for a congregational meeting. We will go over the preacher search process in detail and introduce the search team. We hope to see you there.

Wedding Shower – Sun., Dec. 20, 2-3:30 p.m.

Honoring Kimberly Clements (daughter of Curtis & Pam Clements) at the home of Donna Wilson, 1949 Benz Dr. Selections at Bed Bath & Beyond, Dillards, and Target.

Single Seniors (& Hilltoppers) Christmas Dinner

Thank you We express a big thank you to everyone who helped make the Single Seniors (& Hilltoppers) Christmas Dinner a wonderfully enjoyable evening. The decorators worked their magic to transform the MPR into a beautiful setting. The cooks prepared a delicious meal. Greeters, servers, photographer, and Santa welcomed everyone with smiles. Tyler Burton lightened our hearts and got us in the Christmas mood with songs of the season. Most of all, thank you to everyone who attended and made it worth the effort. We hope you were blessed! If you had your picture made, look for them in your Bible class.

Breakfast with Santa Thank You

Thank you to all who participated with hosting this community event! Your time and service of flipping pancakes, supervising crafts, cleaning up, and being hospitable to our guests reflected the love of God. Merry Christmas to you all!

Babysitter for Ladies' Class Needed

A babysitter is needed for Tuesday morning ladies' class, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., January 12 to May 10. The class will not meet the Tuesday of Spring Break. This is a paid job. If you are interested, please contact the church office (691-4200).

Teacher Appreciation Lunch - Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016

Make plans to attend the Teacher Appreciation Lunch. This event is open to the entire congregation and is free. RSVP's will begin in January.

Missions & Faith Sharing

Brian Davis to Serve as Officer at World Bible School

The WBS Board has appointed Brian Davis as the chief operating officer of World Bible School. Board members, including Howard Norton, former editor of the Christian Chronicle, and David Burks, Chancellor of Harding University, express their gratitude for the ongoing partnership with Hillcrest. Brian will continue to serve Hillcrest as a missionary two months of the year.

Packing Crayons and Band Aids for Zambia Medical Mission

5-10 volunteers are needed the next two Wednesday nights in Rm. 12 to help prepare two types of items for this July's Zambia Medical Mission. We will bag and box 10,000 crayons for the Children's Ministry area and 20,000 band aids for the Wound Care stations.

Calendar of Events

December 13Congregational Meeting
 December 13 Care Group
 December 23 Devotional in Chapel
 December 25-Jan 1.....Office Closed/Holiday
 December 27 Worship at 10 a.m. ONLY
 January 10 Care Group
 January 17Remembrance of Lives Lived
 January 24Teacher Appreciation Lunch
 January 26 Hilltoppers Luncheon
 January 28“What You Didn't Know About Mom & Dad” Seminar, Hosted by Hilltoppers
 January 31 Faith at Home

Hillcrest Ministries

Children's Corner

Nursery: 2-24 Months (TEAM #2)

Training and Learning for Children: (Ages 2-4)

Parents may escort their children to the Children's Wing during the song before the sermon.

Bible Hour – No Bible Hour Tonight.

Enjoy your Care Group.
M.A.G.I. Boxes – Make A Godly Impact! Pick up a M.A.G.I. box in the children's wing to fill with items for a needy child in Namwianga, Zambia. The directions are on the box. Please deposit the box to the red receptacle no later than Sunday, December 20.

HYG – Youth

Today – Last Huddle of the semester for all High School groups. Freshman Huddle, 6-7:30 p.m. A meal will be served. Bring canned goods to donate and dress in your favorite Christmas attire! Sophomore Huddle, Christmas party from 6-8!!

Wednesday – 7 p.m. – Class - Come and experience the gift of the stories that God has given us.

Thursday – Last Prayer Breakfast of the semester, 7 a.m. at Chick-fil-A (north).

Friday – Last Southside Prayer Breakfast of the semester at 7 a.m. (Chick-fil-A on Southwest)

Hillcrest - U

Tonight – 7 p.m.

Christmas Movie Night at the Hatfield's 5333 CR 103N - Bring holiday snacks and goodies to share!

Happy Holidays everyone! We are praying for safe travels for you over the break! Looking forward to next semester!

Wednesday – Holiday Schedule

- 16th - Class
- 23rd and 30th - No Class

Sunday – Holiday Schedule

- 20th - Class, no evening event
- 27th - Worship at 10a.m. - No Class or evening event.
- Jan 3rd - Class, no evening event

Adult Education Corner

Sunday Morning Adult Classes – The series on the “Spiritual Responsibilities of the Individual and the Church” continues.

Wednesday Night Large Class - Rm 10-11 – Rodney Ashlock continues his series on 1 Peter. Each Wednesday night during January, Cliff Barbarick will lead a study of “The Christian and Homosexuality.”

Wednesday Women's Bible Class – Rm 219 – Continues a study of Walking by Faith by Jennifer Rothschild. Women of all ages are invited.

Wednesday Worship in Song – Rm 16 – Join Odies Wright for a time of worship in song.

Wednesday ESL – Class Rm 30 - If you have an interest in helping as a tutor, please contact Phil Palmer.

Tuesday Women's Bible Study – Christmas Break

Classes will resume January 12.

Family Ministry

Wednesday Night Series – 7 p.m. – Room 14/15

The Advent Conspiracy - Are you tired of how consumerism has stolen the soul of Christmas? This year, take a stand! Join the groundswell of Christ-followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be - a joyous celebration that enriches our hearts and the world around us, not a retail circus that depletes our pocketbooks and defeats our spirit. This series shows you how to substitute consumption with compassion by practicing four simple but powerful, countercultural concepts. Find out how to have a Christmas worth remembering, not dreading! Christmas can still change the world when you, like Jesus, give what matters most - your presence.

Divorce Care – Wednesday Night – Rm 52

Russell & Cene' Gould facilitating.

For the Record

Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening
A.M. Assembly..... 658	Rm 10/11..... 50
Classes..... 632	
Membership..... 915	Wed..... 345
Nov. Offering \$117,273	