

Grace Hills 101

Our Story, Vision, and Values

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The 8 Commitments
of Membership
at Grace Hills

The Grace Hills 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 at the Rogers Malco Town Cinema and in January of 2015, we moved to the Malco Pinnacle Hills Cinema. Now, close to 400 people gather with us each week, and then scatter into small groups.

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.

This class is all about what it means to **go all in** and be a **member** of Grace Hills.

Grace Hills Vision and Values

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

We are a **purpose driven** church, which means we're driven by God's eternal purposes rather than by tradition, buildings, budgets, or personalities.

**FOUND PEOPLE
FIND PEOPLE**
(Evangelism)

**WE DO LIFE
BETTER TOGETHER**
(Fellowship)

**SAVED PEOPLE
SERVE PEOPLE**
(Ministry)

**GROWING PEOPLE
CHANGE**
(Discipleship)

**WORSHIP IS
A LIFESTYLE**
(Worship)

Our Core Values

1. Jesus first! We trust his Word, follow his lead, and honor him above all.
2. We start small and think big. We go all in with a risk-taking faith.
3. We are driven by purpose, not by programs, personalities, buildings, or budgets.
4. We keep it real and fight against fake. We live and lead with authenticity.
5. We are broken people discovering healing together. We embrace messy ministry.
6. Everybody belongs. We care about the heart, not the skin, the clothes, or the body art.
7. We keep it simple and stay fast, fluid, and flexible. We get creative to reach more people.
8. We discover our gifts and grow from consumers into contributors. We refuse to use people.
9. We grow larger and smaller at the same time. We gather together and scatter together.
10. We plant churches, partner with the community, and go to the ends of the earth.

Grace Hills Statement of Faith

God is real. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and totally in charge of the direction history is moving. He is Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He created everything and everyone and every person matters deeply to him. Everyone has sinned, so everyone needs Jesus, who died for our sins, rose again from the dead, and is coming back. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, and once you're saved, you're always saved.

Heaven and hell are real, as are angels and demons, including Satan. 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 follow 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 tell the world about Him.

A more detailed version is available on our website at gracehillschurch.com/about.

How Grace Hills Works

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.

Answers to common questions:

- Our Lead Pastor casts the vision for where Grace Hills is headed and leads the staff.
- Our Pastors 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.
- We are affiliated with the Baptist Missionary Association of America (BMAA - bmalife.com) and the Association of Related Churches (ARC - arcchurches.org).

8 Commitments of a MEMBER of Grace Hills Church

Commitment #1:

I will follow Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Most people live their whole lives without every knowing **why**.

We believe God has made it clear what his **purpose** for our lives is.

- 1. God made you to love you!**
(Jeremiah 31:3, Ephesians 1:4-5)
- 2. God wants to have a personal relationship with you.** (John 10:10)
- 3. You have sinned and lived your life apart from God's rule.**
(Isaiah 53:6)
- 4. Jesus has paid for your sins with his death and resurrection.**
(Romans 5:8)

1 Timothy 2:5 MSG

God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.

What does God expect me to do in response to what he has done for me?

- 1. Admit that God has not been first place in your life.**
- 2. Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins and rose again.**
(Romans 10:9)
- 3. Accept God's free gift of salvation.** (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment.

Dear God, thank you for loving me even when I've ignored you and have gone my own way. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, into the world to die on the cross for me. I am sorry for my sins and I ask you to forgive me. Please help me to understand you more. I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life. I accept your free gift of salvation. - Amen!

Commitment #2:

I will be baptized by immersion in water as a believer, if I haven't already been.

The first big step of obedience every new believer in Jesus should take is being baptized by immersion in water.

Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow the example set by Jesus. (Mark 1:9)
2. Because Jesus commands it. (Matthew 28:19-20)
3. It demonstrates that I really am a believer. (Acts 18:8, 1 John 2:3)

What does baptism mean?

1. It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection. (Colossians 2:12)
2. It illustrates my new life as a Christian. (Romans 6:4)

Why baptism by immersion?

1. Jesus was baptized that way. (Matthew 3:16)
2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion. (Acts 8:38-39)
3. The Greek word *baptizo* means to dip under water.
4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

We believe that everyone who has personally received Christ should be baptized after receiving him. We speak honorably of the commitment parents make when they have their children baptized, but we see it as similar to child dedication. So we ask that those who were baptized only as infants to be baptized as believers.

We baptize every four to six weeks, or as often as we can. We invite people to decide spontaneously to be baptized, but we also believe in the value of inviting loved ones. We provide clothes for people who are baptized spontaneously.

We invite believing friends and family members to participate in baptisms, especially when a parent has helped their child receive Jesus.

People who are baptized at Grace Hills are not required to share their faith story, but we would love to capture your story in writing, and possibly also on video to show later.

Our next baptism date is _____.

Special Topic: Communion (aka, The Lord's Supper)

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

According to 1 Corinthians 11:23-26...

What is the Lord's Supper?

1. It is a simple act. (v. 23)
2. It is a reminder. (v. 24)
3. It is a symbol. (v. 25)
4. It is a statement of faith. (v. 26)

Who should take the Lord's Supper?

All believers. (v. 29)

How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

1. Self-examination. (v. 27)
2. Recommitment. (Romans 12:1)
3. Confession of sin. (1 John 1:9)
4. Restoring relationships.
(Matthew 5:23-24)

When and how often should we observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper.

At Grace Hills, our desire is that the Lord's Supper be a teaching and learning moment in addition to being a worship moment. So, we observe communion about once per sermon series, whenever the message best sets it up.

Commitment #3

I will join (or start) a small group.

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 house to house.

"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.**
(1 Corinthians 9:22)
2. **A place to protect.**
(1 John 3:16)
3. **A place to grow.**
(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!

How to Join a Group

Visit gracehillschurch.com/groups!

You can START a Group!

We believe that everyone has areas of strength and gifting that could benefit others. You'll discover that it's easier than you think.

To talk about starting your own group, start a conversation with Pastor Danny, Danny@gracehillschurch.com.

Commitment #4

I will grow in grace (by being Spirit-filled) and knowledge (by having a quiet time).

Attending worship services and being part of a small group are a great start, but there are at least two personal habits you need to develop in your daily life.

1. Developing a quiet time for prayer and Bible reading.

- Hearing God's Word.
(Romans 10:17)
- Reading God's Word.
(Revelation 1:3)
- Studying God's Word.
(Acts 17:11)
- Memorizing God's Word.
(Proverbs 7:2-3)
- Meditating on God's Word.
(Psalm 1:2-3)

In my daily prayer time, I am:

- Giving devotion to God.
(2 Chronicles 31:21)
- Getting direction from God.
(Psalm 25:4-5)

2. Living under the influence of the Holy Spirit continually.

The Holy Spirit isn't a substance or a mystical, cosmic force. The Holy Spirit is God - our personal God. He's the third member of the Trinity.

The New Testament talks about believers being "filled with" the Holy Spirit, which has to do with being under his influence.

How do we live under the Spirit's influence?

- Remove all the barriers.
(Acts 2:38)
- Relate to Him daily.
(2 Corinthians 13:14)
- Remain under his influence.
(Ephesians 5:18)

At the next Growth Track, you can take **Class 201**, which is all about the four habits of spiritual maturity. Get ready to go deep!

Commitment #5

I will develop my gifts and serve alongside a team.

Did you know that God **SHAPEd** you for significance? He has gifted you and made you uniquely *you* so that you can serve him according to his purposes.

In fact, we say that
saved people serve people.

And the greatest way to serve God on earth is to serve *people*, whom God loves.

SHAPE stands for...

- **S**piritual Gifts.
- **H**earth
- **A**bilities
- **P**ersonality
- **E**xperiences

God has given you a unique mix of these characteristics. When you decided to follow Jesus, you were given **spiritual gifts** to use to serve others within the body of Christ. Your **heart** is passionate about certain things. You have some natural **abilities** – areas you're just good at. You have a unique **personality** that was given to

you by God. And you've been through a unique set of **experiences**.

God wants to use a mix of all of these characteristics to help you know how and where to serve him within the body.

At **Class 301** class, you will go through a spiritual gifts inventory, a personality test, and a volunteer will help you to know where to plug in more deeply.

For now, we hope you'll **try out** one of these ministry teams:

- First impressions and greeting.
- Security.
- Preparing coffee and the café.
- GH Kids: Babies and toddlers.
- GH Kids: Preschoolers.
- GH Kids: Elementary kids.
- GH Students: Jr. & Sr. High
- Sound, video, audio tech.
- Music, instrumental, vocal, etc.
- Social media, communications.
- Special events.
- Building maintenance.
- Hosting a small group.
- Prayer ministry.
- Lay counseling.

Commitment #6

I will practice generosity and give regularly.

The Bible says in Matthew 6:24 that the top competitor for our commitment to Jesus is money. Giving allows us to demonstrate that He is more important to us than material things. Not having cash or check on hand doesn't have to hold you back from giving, you can be obedient today by giving online. There is no organization with more potential to change the world than the local church!

GENEROSITY changes lives - ours and the people to whom we give. At Grace Hills, taking action on your generosity is simple.

The Bible teaches us about a baseline standard for giving: the **tithe** (a word that literally means a "tenth"). When we give the first 10% of our income through the local church, we put God first in our lives. Tithing is an act of worship that expresses our gratitude, faith, and love for others.

God also encourages us to give offerings beyond our tithe to specific

projects at our local church and to other organizations and causes that we personally believe in.

Whether you'd like to give a single gift, schedule recurring donations, or view your giving history, you can do it all online at gracehillchurch.com/give.

What happens with your gift?

We honor your gifts with faithful stewardship, ethical business practices, and full accountability so that the financial integrity of Grace Hills Church remains beyond reproach.

We outsource all bookkeeping to [Belay Solutions](#), whose records are in turn audited by another third party. Grace Hills is officially a 501(c)3 status nonprofit organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service.

Commitment #7

I will own the mission, living out the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

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

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

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

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

LOCAL: Northwest Arkansas

- Grace Hill Elementary School
- LOVE WEEK
- Small groups help nonprofits
- Random acts of helping

NATIONAL: North America

- Journey Church, Siloam Springs
- Grace Harbor Church, OKC
- Refuge Church, Nixa, MO
- MANY more to come!

GLOBAL: The Whole World

- Sanders and Crabtrees in Papua New Guinea
- Brito-Semedos in Thailand
- Children's Cup and Belize

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Pray**. (Matthew 9:37-38)
- **Go**. (Isaiah 6:8-9)
- **Give**. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Start by **writing out your story** and emailing it to us at b@ghills.com. Share your story with others. Share Grace Hills' social media updates. And invite people to join you on Sunday

Commitment #8

I will sign the membership covenant and commit to the vision, values, and beliefs.

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)

If you are ready to become an official member of Grace Hills, complete the MEMBERSHIP COVENANT form and leave it with one of the pastors!

(If you're completing this online, use the form on the website.)

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:

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Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Have you been saved? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus? _____

Have you been baptized by immersion since becoming a follower of Jesus? _____

If so, do you know the date? ____ / ____ / ____

And the place/church? _____

If you have not yet been immersed as a believer, are you willing to do so at Grace Hills? _____

Do you need help finding a small group? _____

I'm interested in trying out at serving on one (or more) of the following teams:

_____ Greeting and first impressions

_____ Coffee and lobby/café prep

_____ Security

_____ Prayer ministry

_____ Worship, music, sound, tech

_____ Kids: Nursery and toddlers

_____ Kids: Preschoolers

_____ Kids: Elementary

_____ Students: Jr. & Sr. High

_____ Hosting a small group

_____ Lay counseling or support groups

If you have a relationship with Jesus, have been baptized, and are ready to commit to membership at Grace Hills, please sign below.

Signed

Date