

HILL CITY
CULTURE GUIDE





A NOTE FROM PASTOR ZACK

In 1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark had been sent by Thomas Jefferson to find a water route to the Pacific Ocean everyone thought existed. They had spent the winter with the Mandan Tribe, who told them they could get to the Pacific Ocean, but they would have to climb some mountains. Lewis and Clark anticipated the Appalachians but found the Rockies. Because of this misjudgment, they found themselves grossly underprepared for the journey to reach the Pacific. They had to decide to change everything.

Most pastors face a similar issue. We prepared ourselves for pastoral care, preaching, and programs as taught. We wrongfully assumed the need for these skills would match the desire of those who needed them, and whoever was best at these three strategies would reach the most people to the glory of God. Like Lewis and Clark, churches now face a crossroads. “Do we ride our canoes to the wrong spot and pretend we made it? Do we retreat? Or do we change our approach?”

In 2006, God blessed me with a ministry position of discovery. Those days, in many ways, felt like “going West.” We were well-funded, serving in an established church at the height of the “Church Growth Movement,” the playbook worked, and we had undetermined expectations from the leaders above us. The ease of leading people to Christ, the passion we saw on college campuses for Jesus, and the openness to the Word in schools amazed us as we trekked West. We felt we had our finger on the pulse of what God was doing on the Earth.

But then, something shifted. We had always known we would encounter a mountain, but we, like Lewis and Clark, expected it to be much less significant. As we approached the first foothill of the Rockies in 2012, we mistakenly assumed we should stick to the playbook. Eventually, we’d cross the rugged terrain only to find a stream to ride downhill again.” As we reached the top of the first foothill in 2015, I realized how grossly underprepared I was on our journey to navigate the proverbial Rockies of ministry.

“Do we ride our canoes to the wrong spot and pretend we made it? Do we retreat? Or do we change our approach?” The harsh reality is over the past 20 years, more people have left the church in the United States than those who came to Christ over the last three great awakenings combined. Like Lewis and Clark, Lauren and I have decided to drop the canoes, retool, and continue West.

Amid this shift in church culture, something profoundly shifted in me. A burden for the “one” began to shape my prayers, my study focus, and my decisions as a leader. While I still desired to reach the masses, I began to feel an intense burden for discipleship, relationship, and empowerment. This burden became so deep it fundamentally shifted how I view success in ministry to this day.

When encountering the Rockies, Lewis and Clark ditched their canoes to change their approach, and they continued West. I pray as you read the contents of this Culture Guide, God inspires you to ditch your canoes, change your approach, and keep trekking to see the Great Commission fulfilled. Let’s Go West together.

Kind Regards,
PZ



OUR BELIEFS

OUR VISION AND MISSION MAY CHANGE, BUT OUR VALUES WILL NEVER CHANGE.

VISION

We are awakening our city to the goodness of God in the new digital era.

OUR APPROACH

We focus our efforts around five crucial drivers to maximize our effort.

1. DIGITAL MINISTRY

We are awakening our city to the goodness of God in the new digital era. Digital Ministry is the new frontier, bringing further potential reach than we could ever have thought possible, and we gladly face the discomfort of this shift for the greater joy of sharing the goodness of God to those who would never step foot in a church.

2. NEXT GENERATION

We are intentionally building a multi-cultural, multi-generational church. Whoever fights for the next generation the most is going to win them. We fight harder than Disney to see the next generation at the heart of our church with the heart of Jesus in them.

3. MISSIONS

We uncompromisingly send people out. We will reach people beyond the walls of our church because while we may be okay “in here” people are not okay “out there.”

4. DISCIPLESHIP

We build opportunities for deep, personal transformation for every person in our church. A call to Jesus isn't a one-time prayer but a call to discipleship — coming to Jesus, being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus did.

5. GATHERINGS

We create unforgettable gatherings to glorify God and enjoy Him together. The power of God is found when the people of God gather. But even in our gatherings we intentionally create room for relationship. Most of our gatherings follow a 4D structure where we Delight in the Lord in worship, Discover more of Him through a sermon, Discuss in groups for a few minutes, and Deploy into the world.



OUR VALUES

ABIDING > STRIVING

Jesus said, "Abide in me and I in you and you will bear much fruit." We believe that if we avoid God's work in us, He will rarely work through us. We value environments that draw us closer to God and inspire our efforts rather than those that drive our efforts but pull us further from God. We are at our most creative when we are closest to the creator. And we are our most productive when striving with God's grace. Accomplishing a task and losing our souls gains us nothing. Anything we build in our strength will ultimately fail, while anything made in God's strength will be eternal.

PRESENCE > PROCESS

God's presence always leads us to the right process. While we value intelligence, planning, and strategy highly, we value the presence of God even higher. We surround ourselves with people with whom we can chase the presence of God. We embrace the moments God leads us outside of what is logical, because we acknowledge that while God's ways may not make sense, they always work. We will accomplish the impossible because God's presence empowers us to think, take risks, embrace difficulty and innovate.

RELATIONAL > TRANSACTIONAL

Ministry is spelled R-E-L-A-T-I-O-N-S-H-I-P. We value being pastors more than preachers, and servants more than leaders. While we have goals, people are never a means to our end. We purposefully go against the transactional grain of culture to love others like Jesus — embracing difficulty, forgiving quickly, serving humbly, with no expectation of return. We follow the example of Jesus and invite people into our lives because more is caught than taught.

BIG PEOPLE > BIG CHURCH

We don't count heads we shape hearts. We believe that building big people will ultimately lead us to help more people. We reach people where they are and lead them to where God wants them to be, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. It's everyone's responsibility to build people by delegating authority, not just tasks, by leading with prayer, not instructions, and by bringing out the gold in every person we lead. Big people starts with each person embracing a culture of growth personally first — we cannot have "I see in you" conversations until we first have "I see in me" realizations.

EXCELLENCE > EXTRAVAGANCE

We value excellence. While there is no win in comparison, we are constantly improving to be the best we can be. From a world class guest experience, to reaching people in a new digital era, to our memorization of messages and music, being committed to excellence means being able to see it in every detail of our organization.



OUR THEOLOGY

OUR BELIEFS BASED UPON OUR INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WE AFFIRM THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten not made, one in being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE HOLY BIBLE

We Believe the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible and inerrant. (I Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 16:25-26)

THE TRINITY

We Believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and co-eternal. (I John 5:7; Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 3:7-11)

JESUS CHRIST

We Believe Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. On earth, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. He is the only man ever to have lived a sinless life. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died on the cross for mankind and, atoned for our sins through the shedding of His blood. He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return again in power and glory. (John 1:1,14, 20:28; I Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 2:5-6; I Timothy 2:5)

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We Believe Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Trinity) in the virgin Mary's womb; therefore, He is the Son of God. (Matthew 1:18, 25; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:27-35)

REDEMPTION

We Believe man was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression he fell; his only hope of redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21)

SALVATION

We Believe we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ: His death, burial, and resurrection. Salvation is a gift from God, not a result of our good works or of any human efforts. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16, 3:8; Titus 3:5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 9:22)



JUSTIFICATION

We Believe justification is being made perfect in the sight of God when we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and confess Him as Lord. Justification means that sin will not keep us from the presence of God, but it will keep us from a fulfilled and fruitful life. (Romans 3:8, Romans 5:1, Romans 6:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17; 21)

SANCTIFICATION

We Believe sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit in order to complete the development of Christ's character in us. It is through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life. (I Thessalonians 4:3, 5:23; II Corinthians 3:18, 6:14-18, II Thessalonians 2:1-3, Romans 8:29, 12:1-2, Hebrews 2:11)

REPENTANCE

We Believe that repentance is the commitment to turn away from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ. When we first believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and confess Him as Lord, repentance allows us to receive His redemption and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. From that point forward, repentance is still necessary to align our hearts and lives with the Father. (Acts 2:21, 3:19; I John 1:9; Revelation 2:5)

JESUS' BLOOD

We Believe the Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross of Calvary was sinless and is 100% sufficient to cleanse mankind of all sin. Jesus allowed Himself to be punished for both our sinfulness and our sins, enabling all those who believe to be free from the penalty of sin, which is death. (I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5, 5:9; Colossians 1:20; Romans 3:10-12, 23, 5:9; John 1:29)

JESUS INDWELLS ALL BELIEVERS

We Believe Christians are people who have invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come and live inside them by His Holy Spirit. They relinquish the authority of their lives over to him, making Jesus the Lord of their life as well as their Savior. They put their trust in what Jesus accomplished for them when He died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. (John 1:12; John 14:17, 23; John 15:4; Romans 8:11; Revelation 3:20)

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

We Believe that Jesus sent the Baptism with the Holy Spirit after His Ascension as promised by the Father. The purpose of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is to empower the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the whole earth and is confirmed by spiritual evidences such as tongues, boldness, and a deeper revelation of the scriptures.

(Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5,2:1-4, 17, 38-39, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 11:15-17, 19:1-6)

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We Believe the Holy Spirit is manifested through a variety of spiritual gifts to build and sanctify the church, demonstrate the validity of the resurrection, and confirm the power of the Gospel. The Bible's lists of these gifts are not necessarily exhaustive, and the gifts may occur in various combinations. All believers are commanded to earnestly desire the manifestation of the gifts in their lives. These gifts always operate in harmony with the Scriptures and should never be used in violation of Biblical parameters. (Hebrews 2:4; Romans 1:11, 12 :4-8; Ephesians 4:16; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6-7; I Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; I Peter 4:10)

THE CHURCH

We Believe the church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. Every person who is born of the Spirit is an integral part of the church as a member of the body of believers. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23; John 17:11, 20-23)



WATER BAPTISM

We Believe that following faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the new believer is commanded by the Word of God to be baptized in water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 10:47-48)

THE LORDS SUPPER

We Believe the Lord's Supper was a unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and grape juice (the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) are taken in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-25)

HEALING OF THE SICK

We Believe the healing of the sick is illustrated in the life and ministry of Jesus, and included in the commission of Jesus to His disciples. It is given as a sign, which is to follow believers. It is also a part of Jesus' work on the Cross and one of the gifts of the Spirit. (Psalm 103:2-3; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 8:6-7; James 5:14-16; I Corinthians 12:9, 28; Romans 11:29)

THE RESURRECTION

We Believe Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the cross. In addition, both the saved and the lost will be resurrected; they that are saved to the resurrection of life and they that are lost to the resurrection of eternal damnation. (Luke 24:16, 36, 39; John 2:19-21, 20:26-28, 21:4; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:42, 44; Philippians 1:21-23, 3:21)

HEAVEN

We Believe Heaven is the eternal dwelling place for all believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is now spiritual, but in the age to come, God will recreate heaven and earth, he will wipe away every tear, along with all sickness, pain, and death and we will enjoy Him eternally. (Matthew 5:3, 12, 20, 6:20, 19:21, 25:34; John 17:24; II Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 11:16; I Peter 1:4)

HELL

We Believe after living one life on earth, the unbelievers will be judged by God and sent to Hell where they will be eternally separated from God. (Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:9-11, 20:12-15, 21:8)

THE SECOND COMING

We Believe Jesus Christ will physically and visibly return to earth for the second time to establish His Kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures. (Matthew 24:30, 26:63-64; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Revelation 1:7)

GOD'S WILL FOR PROVISION

We Believe it is the Father's will for believers to become whole, healthy and successful in all areas of life. But because of the fall, many may not receive the full benefits of God's will while on Earth. That fact, though, should never prevent all believers from seeking the full benefits of Christ's provision in order to better serve others. Spiritual (John 3:3-11; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 10:9-10) Mental and Emotional (II Timothy 1:7, 2:11; Philippians 4:7-8; Romans 12:2; Isaiah 26:3). Physical (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24). Financial (Joshua 1:8; Malachi 3:10-11; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 34:10, 84:11; Philippians 4:19).



EVENTS

BAPTISM SUNDAY

We celebrate life change by water baptizing those who have made dedications to receive Jesus under our care.

CHILD DEDICATION SUNDAY

Around Mother's Day, we dedicate children to the care, protection, and purposes of Jesus.

GOOD FRIDAY AND RESURRECTION SUNDAY

We reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus in our Good Friday communion service, and celebrate Resurrection Sunday together.

GRITTY AWARD NIGHT

A yearly award ceremony for our Hill City team.

J.A.C.

Jesus Adventure Camp is a yearly youth camp for middle school and high school that we invest in. We receive a yearly offering to make JAC affordable for every teenager.

WORSHIP NIGHTS

Extended worship nights at HQ that allow us to pray, worship in a smaller setting, and experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit within the boundaries of 1 Corinthians 14.

TABLE TALK

Monthly conversations released on YouTube with Pastor Zack and Lauren.

THE POINT

A monthly class that lays out the vision, mission, values, direction, theology, and accountability of Hill City. Here, we point new guests to discipleship, involvement, or both.

VISION SUNDAY

A yearly service that points to our future theme, developments, and initiatives.

YOU'RE WORTH IT

A Hill City Girl event that focuses on dignity, value, and worth for those 5 years old and up.



NEXT FOR YOU

STEP 1 - ATTEND "THE POINT"

The point is offered on the first Sunday of every month at HQ directly after service. It's the first step to calling Hill City Church "home."

STEP 2 - BE A DISCIPLE

Our discipleship track is the first step to take from coming to church to being the Church. Our desire is that you 1. Come To Jesus. 2. Be With Jesus. 3. Become Like Jesus. 4. Do What Jesus Did. We're not concerned with how long this takes. We just want to see you "get moving."

STEP 3 - GET INVOLVED

We believe that everyone can make a difference, no matter how big or small of a commitment. Teams are how you find your place in our dream of awakening our city to the goodness of God in the new digital era.

MINISTRIES

DUDE STUFF

Our men gather in events and discipleship-oriented groups.

HILL CITY GIRL

A ministry for ladies 6th grade and up that focuses on dignity, value, relationships, discipleship, and godly womanhood. Our ladies focus on discipleship, games, relationship, food, worship, and an inspiring messages to keep their hearts in rhythm with His.

I AM MINISTRIES

We partner heavily with Angela and Nate Madden at AM Ministries for year four of our discipleship pathway. They also help us with our Kids Curriculum.

MISSION CO.

We partner heavily with Mike and Ari Rebich at The Mission Co both in Lima, Peru, and in Pittsburgh in education and food insecurities.

YOUTH

A ministry for grades 6-12 that meets at HQ and in groups called "crews" around our city.



LOCATIONS

CARLYNTON

435 Kings Highway, Carnegie, PA 15106

Carlynton High School is our temporary home for Church Together as we build on “The Hill.” We have an excellent relationship with the school, and we work to bless them in areas of need often.

CHURCH ANYWHERE

<https://live.hillcitypgh.com/>

In 2020, we established our online community and we quickly realized church online is not just a modern convenience, but a powerful tool to reach those who might never step foot in our church gatherings.

HILL CITY H.Q.

307 Merchant Lane, Pittsburgh - 15205

HQ is our home for anything outside of Sunday church gatherings. In the Summer of 2022, we renovated this space to fit our ministry needs.

“THE HILL”

40°25'18"N, 80°06'48"W

A God story, The Hill was graciously given and acquired in our merger with the Church of Grace and Glory in 2018. The design phase is almost complete, and we are wrapping up our plan for development. We can't wait to share more with you.



