

THE BROAD BRANCHES

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Vision & Purpose

What is the Broad Branches Initiative?

The Broad Branches Initiative is a three-year, church-wide journey of generosity and discipleship. It funds both Hillcrest's ongoing ministries and the construction of a new Community Resource Center (CRC). Rather than separating "regular giving" and "campaign giving," this initiative invites the whole church to give together toward the full mission God has entrusted to Hillcrest.

Why is Hillcrest building a Community Resource Center now?

Over the last several years, Hillcrest has prayerfully discerned that our current facilities are no longer adequate for the needs we see—especially for the food bank, Hillcrest Kids, and campus ministry. After nearly two years of listening, planning, and congregational engagement, we believe now is the right moment to take a faithful step that will serve Bellingham for generations.

What is the Community Resource Center?

The Community Resource Center is a Gospel-centered ministry hub designed to meet real needs in the name of Jesus. It will bring together food distribution, community services, early childhood education, and campus ministry offices in one welcoming, accessible space. Everything that happens in the CRC flows from Hillcrest's mission to Love God, Grow Together, and Care for the World.

Is this just a community center, or is it explicitly Christian?

The CRC is explicitly Christian. We seek to meet tangible needs while openly operating as a faith-based, Gospel-centered ministry. Any partnerships or funding pursued will align with Hillcrest's values and will not compromise our Christian identity or witness.

Who will the Community Resource Center serve?

The CRC will serve both the Hillcrest community and our wider neighbors in Whatcom County. It is designed to be a place where Hillcrest volunteers and community members from many backgrounds can build relationships, receive care, and encounter the love of Jesus together.

The Community Resource Center

What ministries will be housed in the Community Resource Center?

The CRC will support three primary ministry areas:

- Hillcrest Community Services and the Southside Food Bank
- Hillcrest Kids Early Learning Center
- Bellingham Chi Alpha (Campus Christian Fellowship)

Each space is designed specifically to strengthen the long-term mission of these ministries.

How will the CRC improve the Southside Food Bank and Community Services?

The CRC will provide a larger, indoor, fully accessible space for food storage and distribution. It will also allow for a more thoughtful intake process, where guests can receive food, relational support, referrals, and access to support groups or classes. This moves us from crisis response toward long-term care and stability.

How will Hillcrest Kids be impacted?

The lower level of the CRC will expand Hillcrest Kids Early Learning Center with new classrooms, bathrooms, and outdoor play space. This allows Hillcrest Kids to better serve current families and expand access to Christ-centered childcare—one of the most pressing needs in our community.

What role will Bellingham Chi Alpha play in the CRC?

The top floor of the CRC will house long-term office space for Bellingham Chi Alpha. While most of their ministry happens on campus, this space provides a stable, accessible home base to support staff, interns, and decades of campus mission.

What kinds of programs or services will happen in the CRC?

In addition to food distribution and childcare, the CRC may host support groups, parenting classes, recovery ministries, financial literacy training, job coaching, ESL support, and partnerships with aligned local service providers. All services are designed to be relational, Gospel-centered, and rooted in dignity.

Building & Location

Where will the Community Resource Center be located?

The CRC will be built just east of the Hillcrest sanctuary on property already owned by the church. This location allows close connection to existing ministries without requiring additional parking.

How large will the building be?

The current design is approximately 15,000 square feet. Final size and features will depend on funds raised, with flexibility built into the design to scale responsibly while preserving core ministry priorities.

What will happen to existing buildings on the property?

Existing structures such as the food bank house and Chi Alpha house will be evaluated as part of construction planning. Some may be repurposed, relocated, or removed depending on final building needs and site constraints.

Is the building being constructed in one phase or multiple phases?

Hillcrest's preference is to build the CRC in one phase so that core ministry goals can be met fully. If funding requires it, phased options may be considered during final design and engineering.

How will construction affect current ministries?

Plans are being developed to ensure ministries can continue during construction with minimal disruption. Some temporary adjustments may be necessary, and Hillcrest will communicate clearly and early as timelines become more defined.

Financial Stewardship & Funding

What is the total cost of the Community Resource Center?

Based on updated pre-construction estimates, the CRC is projected to cost approximately \$6 million. We are seeking \$5.5 million in the pledge campaign and the other \$500k is planned to be covered through savings, grants, and non-Hillcrest giving (for example, HK and BXA are approaching key donors to support the project). This reflects clearer design and cost information, not an expansion of the original ministry vision.

How is the Broad Branches Initiative funded?

The initiative combines regular giving over three years, commitments specifically toward the CRC, and select grants that align with Hillcrest's values. Together, Hillcrest is seeking to raise \$11.25 million over three years to support both ongoing ministry and the CRC.

Is Hillcrest taking on long-term debt?

Hillcrest is committed to not taking on long-term debt for this project. A short-term construction loan may be used temporarily to manage cash flow as pledges are fulfilled, but the goal is to complete the project debt-free.

Will grants or public funding be used?

Grants may be pursued when they clearly align with Hillcrest's mission and values. Hillcrest will not accept funding that restricts Gospel-centered ministry or compromises our faith-based identity.

What happens if the full amount is not raised?

If needed, the building size or features would be adjusted to align with available funds. Any significant changes would be communicated clearly and, if necessary, brought back to the congregation for affirmation.

What happens if more than the goal is raised?

Additional funds would strengthen the project, reduce future financial pressure, or allow for added ministry features aligned with approved priorities. Giving beyond the goal expands long-term ministry impact.

Giving & Participation

What is a comprehensive campaign?

A comprehensive campaign invites everyone to give toward the whole mission of the church. Rather than separating ministry budgets and building projects, every gift supports Hillcrest's shared vision over the next three years. Our comprehensive campaign combines CRC pledges and pledges for the general fund for the next 3 years. It does NOT include Faith Promise, Hunger Project, and Youth Missions giving. Those will continue to be funded separately.

Why is participation emphasized over dollar amounts?

Because this is a spiritual journey, not a fundraising thermometer. God invites every household to pray, listen, and respond—regardless of gift size. We believe similar sacrifice, different sized gifts reflects biblical generosity.

Why is everyone encouraged to submit a pledge card?

There are three reasons we want everyone to submit a card.

First, this is a spiritual formation moment for our church. We desire this to be something the entire church community does together, each person supporting as we are able. We want every person's heart connected to this mission.

Second, because we are committed to doing this with no long term debt, we can only build based on what is pledged. If someone is planning on giving to the CRC, we need to know at the beginning of the project so we can budget properly.

Third, the CRC pledge campaign has caused us to need to change over our church database system. Everyone who supports Hillcrest financially through automatic payments will need to be switching over to this new giving platform.

What if I'm new to Hillcrest or have never given before?

You are invited to participate at whatever level God leads. This initiative is about faith and obedience, not pressure. New participants are welcome to start small and grow over time.

What if my income is variable or changes?

Your commitment is a faith estimate, not a contract. You can adjust it at any time if circumstances change. Hillcrest trusts God's provision and encourages wise, prayerful generosity.

Can I give in non-cash ways?

Yes. Gifts can be made through stock, donor-advised funds, or other charitable vehicles. The finance team is happy to help explore options.

Who will see my pledge?

Only two key members of the Capital Campaign team and our Hillcrest Finance Director will see your individual pledge. The two members are our Campaign Chair and Campaign Data Leader, both who signed confidentiality agreements, and who are responsible for inputting and tracking pledges. Our Campaign Consultant and Executive Pastor will be tracking overall campaign progress but not people's personal pledge amounts. Everyone involved is committed to the utmost confidentiality. Our commitment is to keep your giving private and confidential.

Can my gift remain anonymous?

Yes. Giving confidentiality is a high priority and is handled with the same care and discretion as all Hillcrest financial practices. If you desire to give with complete anonymity, that can be done through cash.

Spiritual Framing & Church Culture

Is this campaign about money or discipleship?

This season is about discipleship. Giving is one way God forms our hearts in trust and obedience. The building is important, but the deeper work is what God is doing in us and through us.

How does generosity fit into following Jesus?

Jesus consistently taught that generosity shapes our hearts and aligns us with God's Kingdom. This initiative invites us to trust God together and participate in His work in Bellingham.

How will we know if the initiative is successful?

Success will be measured spiritually and missionally: growing generosity, deepening unity, broad participation, and a CRC that serves people faithfully for decades. Ultimately, transformed lives are the true measure.

How is Hillcrest guarding against becoming a “secular” social service organization?

Everything in the CRC is rooted in prayer, relationships, and Gospel hope. Meeting physical needs and sharing the love of Jesus are not competing goals—they belong together in the life of the church.

Leadership & Accountability

Who is overseeing the Community Resource Center project?

The project is overseen by Hillcrest leadership in partnership with the Church Council, along with dedicated teams for finance, building advisory, grants, and campaign leadership. More specifically, we have formed a Project Executive Team to oversee the building side of the project and a Capital Campaign team to oversee the pledge process.

How are financial decisions reviewed?

Financial oversight includes staff leadership, a financial oversight team, and Council review. Major decisions are guided by approved priorities and financial principles.

What authority does leadership have to make adjustments?

Leadership is authorized to make necessary project adjustments as long as they remain within the approved ministry priorities and financial framework of the original congregational vote. This allows flexibility without repeated special meetings.

How will the congregation be kept informed?

Hillcrest will provide regular updates through services, emails, Q&A sessions, and online resources as the project progresses.

Serving & Next Steps

How can I serve in the Community Resource Center?

As the CRC opens, there will be opportunities to serve through food distribution, hospitality, service navigation, mentoring, and more. Everyone will be invited to discern how God may be calling them to serve.

Will there be volunteer opportunities during construction?

Yes. As construction begins, volunteer opportunities may be available for specific tasks. Details will be shared when appropriate.

What if I still have questions?

We welcome your questions. You can submit them anytime to broadbranches@hcbellingham.com, attend scheduled Q&A gatherings (January 25th after both services, February 15th after second service, or March 15 after both services), or reach out to Hillcrest staff for conversation. Additionally, there will be a campaign representative in the Fireside room each week throughout the Campaign for questions.