



2025 Shared Vision

Shared Vision (Work in Progress)

Vision is compelling and realistic when it evolves from a process of personal visions that are refined into a shared vision. In the final planning session, team members were to discuss their visions for Luther Crest. They described what Luther Crest would be doing five years from now, its focus areas, programs, facilities, and outcomes that would be realized.

Luther Crest Mission: To inspire faith, stewardship, and community in God's creation.

Luther Crest Purpose: To strengthen the faith of all people and equip them with spiritual armor and inspire them with new courage to live for Christ as stewards, in God's creation and community.

Luther Crest Values: Passionate. Authentic. Accommodating.

Luther Crest Five-year Shared Vision (2021 – 2025) (Draft)

Over the next five years, we see Luther Crest becoming “the place” in the region for faith formation and leadership development for youth, families, and young adults by leveraging direct experiences and outdoor ministry as key components. **Experiences** live long in our hearts and minds especially when we establish human connections in the process. Direct experience, informed with personal relationship, is a powerful combination in a world that has migrated to impersonal, digital experiences. Luther Crest will be increasingly relevant with unique faith-based value and eternal outcomes as we invest in youth.

Although Luther Crest currently serves a multitude of constituencies with our facilities and programs, we will become **laser-focused on ministering to youth and their families** during the next five years. Luther Crest will be known as the prominent place for the next generation to experience **faith formation and to grow as leaders**. Paired with our onsite and offsite summer ministry, our year-round programming and curriculum will provide the needed connections for youth, families, and young adults to faithfully follow Jesus' calling to live justly, love with kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Over the next five years, **our primary offering will remain “summer camp”** and the direct experience available onsite; however, we will also develop repeatable, programmed year-round youth retreats during the school year (non-camping season) to leverage Luther Crest's cross-season inherent assets. Luther Crest will become the “go to” place for youth to experience a Christ-centered retreat that spurs a lifelong commitment to faith. Things like youth retreats, family weekends and specific need camps for grieving families are examples of the **scheduled and repeatable programmed retreats** we imagine. We see these programmed retreats marketed in such a manner that **Luther Crest becomes fully occupied on the weekend calendar year-round**, ideally reaching 1500 youth and families during the off-season. As we fill our activity calendar, we will always give **priority to events that draw upon our faith, leadership, relational, and direct experiences** rather than facility occupancy and income alone.

As cultural trends and data indicate declining attendance in American churches, we will **expand our marketing and social media strategies** to reach well beyond our traditional ELCA network focus. We will continually ask “**who is not at camp?**” Who are we missing, and how can we reach them?” Our marketing will intentionally and significantly **reach outward to families who have no church affiliation**. Direct to the decision maker will be our goal, as parents still care about the faith formation in their kids' lives.

Our **programs** at Luther Crest will continue to focus on faith, leadership, and relationship in an inspiring outdoor setting. Exploration and “ditching the devices” will be important aspects of our **outdoor experience**. We will be careful not to over-program, being mindful of the need for “retreating” and reflection on our beautiful property. Luther Crest will remain **intent on delivering the gospel message** in clear ways to demonstrate how faith can impact life and leadership. Our entire whole offering at Luther Crest will be evaluated to ensure our programs become even more efficient, repeatable, and reusable across our camps, seasons, and additional locations. We will seek to **monetize our program**

offerings and pricing to ensure our annual operational costs are covered with camp and retreat income so that capital campaigns and planned giving donations will be used for scholarships, facility enhancements, camp expansion projects, and program development to reach many more youth in perpetuity.

With summer camps as a cornerstone, we will **develop and upgrade facilities to accommodate more campers**. Although the human and spiritual impact will be the main thing in our vision, facilities are important systems to support our mission and vision. Luther Crest facilities will continue to be improved in the central part of camp as we take risks with building projects – to upgrade the quality and capacity of our camp offering. We envision the current shop and maintenance buildings relocated to accommodate more campers in the central campus area. Our facilities will never reflect the metaphor of “an old hand-me-down couch in the youth group space”. Our facilities will be commensurate with our vision of Luther Crest becoming the well-known and prominent place for faith formation and leadership of our young people.

A new **comprehensive land use plan will be developed** in the next few years. We anticipate a **campus expansion on the southwest section** of the property. It may have weekend RV parking, camper cabins to rent or lease, paved paths, and a new beach area and pier. It may **incorporate innovative youth lodging** reflective of the Luther Crest environment, such as yurts, tree houses, and tiny house options. Consideration may also be given to a more modernized development of time-share-like lake villas funded by donors. These villas may be 75% rentable by Luther Crest for family retreats in the private, wooded lakeshore of Luther Crest, while offering faith, worship, and leadership programming on the primary campus with our interconnected walkways.

Guests from the extended campus areas will take in nightly worship services, Sunday services on the beach, or bible study, all while utilizing the gamut of lake resources such as fishing guides, Carlos State Park, and local restaurants accessible from the villa pier.

Our land use plan will **contemplate the primitive development of our property in the Brainerd area**. At the outset we see a unique opportunity to establish a primitive family experience that will preserve the land value and retain flexibility yet capitalize on the trend of remote and primitive camping experiences desired by many. This plan will require a capital investment, facility manager, scheduling system and various local service and cleaning resources. A remote, yet compelling environmental and faith programming element will accompany this development.

This vision will inspire substantial growth in the **Luther Crest partner and donor base** in the future. We will grow philanthropic contributions from less than 1,000 donors today to several thousand over five years – some becoming annual Luther Crest Camp Partners (membership) while others entrusting significant assets as planned-giving philanthropists in our **comprehensive advancement model**.

More than 100,000 campers have been affected by Luther Crest across the decades, and they will be enlisted to multiply the value they experienced many times over in future generations. We will offer alumni of any age demographic to partner with us in annual memberships, specific campaigns, endowments, donor-advised funds and planned giving opportunities. Over the next five years, we will become **exceptional at connecting and nurturing lifelong Luther Crest campers** – past and present – with great identification, preference profiling, membership programs, alumni communications, planned giving requests and campaigns.

Our focus on youth and family outcomes will create **compelling storytelling opportunities** to reach our future Luther Crest donors. These stories, told regularly in fascinating multi and social media fashion, will focus on the life-changing impact on youth. The **faith experience and impact will always be the centerpiece** with the Luther Crest staff, programs, facilities, and hospitality as the humble, yet unmistakable “best supporting actors” in the storyline. Donor contributions will flow from these life changes, connections, and camper testimonies. **Donor scholarships will become common** from Luther Crest partners who are paying forward to future generations. Luther Crest camp will be available for every child who wants to attend, and every parent or grandparent committed to that child’s faith formation.

We will **engage alumni base capability beyond financial contributions**. Each person is gifted by God and we will create opportunities and invite them to serve, volunteer and “return home” (to Luther Crest) for reunion retreats and service. A new Luther Crest Volunteer Coordinator will work to harness alumni and others to assist with projects, events, and programs. For the off-season programming, we envision a **“regional bench” of previous Luther Crest counselors** who may be inspired and equipped to step into a weekend retreat as we expand our ministry without adding considerable staff. While Luther Crest has an important physical asset in Alexandria, our staff and partnership assets across the country are formidable.

As we move forward with a priority on kids, youth, and families, we will realistically pursue an intentional **programmatic transition period at Luther Crest** over five years (possibly beginning with one programmed event each month during the school season). During this transition, retreats and special events like weddings, women’s retreats, quilting weekends and other events with limited Luther Crest faith content may be used as “fillers” for vacancy. But long-term we see **non-youth events as deemphasized** as we apply laser-like focus on reaching youth with our deep faith and relationship experiences. Even as non-youth events occur and fill beds during transition, we will be hearing an over-arching question in our mind, **“have we done everything in our means to reach kids who are not at camp?”**

The focus of Luther Crest has been – and will remain – **exposing youth to Christ’s love**. Youth face many challenges to this important truth. At Luther Crest, we will be known as **a positive advocate for youth** versus an entity that is fighting against the world. We will be their advocate as we bring them face-to-face with Christ through the authentic people and place of Luther Crest. We will be **for kids, for family, for faith, and for God’s work in their lives**. Luther Crest will be the standard bearer for a positive life in Christ as we deliver on our vision of radical love.

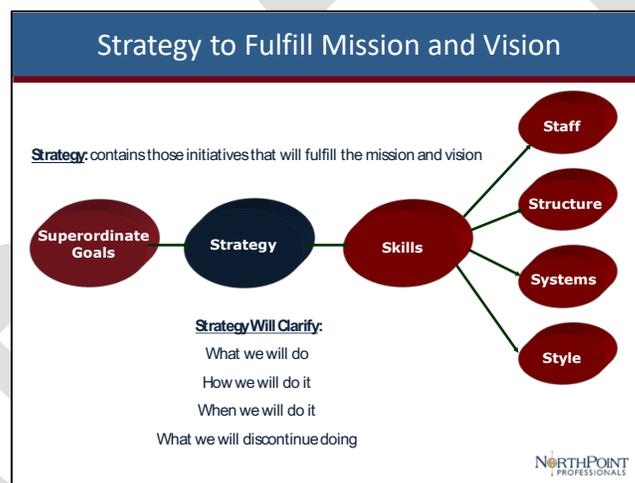
In five years, we will look back and marvel at “what we created together” as God’s stewards, but we won’t be surprised, for these things of greatness had been created once before in this theater of our mind.

Strategies to Accomplish the Five-year Vision

Identifying Strategic Initiatives Exercise (Future Strategy and Big Rock Ideation – Work in Progress)

With a preliminary consensus around Luther Crest’s future value proposition and target markets, the 7S strategic framework can be utilized to refine future vision and strategic detail. Although we have not solidified shared vision yet, the Mission, Values and Hedgehog are beginning to take shape. We also identified the makings of some strategies (the Big Rocks) that will deliver on the future vision. Strategy is all about “picking the right things” that bring the greatest value versus simply doing this in random or with equal measure.

Subsequently, tactics, programs, services, and resources will be fleshed out to support the prioritized strategies. Such refinement will drive efficiency, greater value for stakeholders and solidify differentiation from alternative organizations. In simple terms, this results in “delivering value and differentiation better than competition at the things important to customers”.



Strategic Initiatives to Realize the Vision

1. Emphasize the Kids Camp offering and expand the season and reach with creative programming.
2. Fill Luther Crest facilities during the off season (Oct through April) with programmed youth events.
3. Enhance facilities, programs, and whole offering weaknesses to address the primary youth markets.
4. Intentionally develop program offerings with an eye toward repeatability and efficiency.
5. Leverage “large” off-season conference center opportunities with limited content development.
6. Develop a land-use and expansion plan without negative impact to land value or future flexibility.
7. Position Luther Crest for sociological, religious, and denominational change with progressive marketing.
8. Develop a comprehensive Luther Crest Advancement Program.
9. Develop an effective social media and digital content development plan.
10. Assess the monetization of all programs and services to ensure value proposition and return.