

Vision for Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church

Our Advent theme this year has been one of my favorites of all time. “Those Who Dream” makes me think of cozy nights, fireplaces, snow sparkling, while I drink a cup of tea, read a book and fall into a deep sleep. This theme gives me (and you, and all of us) permission to get out of our heads for just a minute – where we tend to ruminate and worry about the events of the world. I don’t know about you, but when I get into that space, I can spiral down pretty quickly and come to the conclusion that there is no hope for the world.

“Those Who Dream” points us toward possibilities beyond our wildest imagination. It frees our mind to imagine, along with God, how we can participate in Jesus’ movement of love and life in our community and all around the world.

Almost two years ago, Nokomis Heights set out on a journey that was all about dreaming when we began working with the consulting organization “LEAD” and its Executive Director Peggy Hahn. At that time, we formed a Vision Team, whose task was to listen to our congregation and the surrounding community – and then to dream. We presented some of the Vision Team’s work in the Spring of 2023 at a congregational meeting where we unveiled three core areas of focus for Nokomis Heights in the coming years.

As a refresher, those three core areas are:

- **ACCOMPANYING IMMIGRANTS**
- **SHARING FOOD**
- **CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PEOPLE**

(at the time we called this fostering connections, but we have since landed on this language that seems much clearer)

After a summer of writing, editing, receiving feedback from Church Council, more praying, and more editing, (whew!) we have at long last produced a Vision Document which will serve as a compass and guide for our congregation in the coming years. Those of you who are familiar with the language of “Strategic Plan” might consider this document a three-year strategic plan, which it is. But it is much more than that as well. It is intended to be a living, breathing document for all of us to interact with as we follow God into the future. We hold it tightly, knowing that we have faithfully discerned the needs of our congregation and community. And at the same time, we hold it loosely, knowing that the Spirit can blow in unpredictable ways, surprising us far beyond our wildest dreams. In the world of the church, we always listen to the movement of the Spirit – even when we have the best laid plans.

So it is in that spirit that I present to you a three-year vision for Nokomis Heights, with enormous thanks to those who dreamed this into being. Our Vision Team has put countless hours and even more heart into crafting this beautiful document. THANK YOU!

There will be two opportunities to interact with members of the Vision Team and dig into this document together on January 7 and January 14 during the Adult Forum. Before that time, I want to encourage you to read through it so you come with some knowledge, excitement, questions, and ideas.

IN THE MEANTIME – Please think and pray about how you can serve. The first step we are taking is to form three teams around our three core focus areas. Because the need has been so pressing, and Yesenia’s time is limited, the Accompanying Immigrants Team has already started to take shape. If you are interested in serving on that team, please contact yesenia@nokomisheights.org.

This is such an exciting and important time in the life of our church. We have experienced growth in spirit, in numbers, in faith, and in engagement, and we look forward to growing deeper in God’s love. I’m confident that this plan will help us live out God’s dream for welcome, safety, and belonging for all people in our congregation and our surrounding community. Enjoy reading – and I’ll see you in church!

– Pastor Kristen