

A KINGDOM TREE

HILLCREST CHURCH

IN 2030

Jesus often used images to describe the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 13, he spoke of the Kingdom as a mustard seed: something small and easily overlooked, that grows into a large and flourishing tree where birds find safety and rest.

Last year as a church, we spent months in prayer, conversation, listening, and discernment about God's dream for this community. We shared ideas and prayed together at Worship Nights, offered feedback in online surveys, had meetings over coffee, and sent emails in moments of inspiration. Then, in the winter of 2025, our staff leadership team spent time away and in prayer over the future direction of our church. During that time we were led to the image of Hillcrest Church as a vibrant tree of the Kingdom with deep roots, a strong trunk, and broad branches. This tree and the Kingdom of God are a place of shelter and welcome for all who come near.

When we look ahead at the church Hillcrest will grow to be we see:

- **Deep Roots** - where people of all ages are significantly formed into the image of Jesus.
- **A Strong Trunk** - where our shared mission and witness goes beyond what we could achieve individually.
- **Broad Branches** - extending to all of Whatcom County to meet real needs by the love of Christ and to welcome people to find life in Christ themselves.

This image is not just aspirational; it reflects who we are as a church family. Since 1946, Hillcrest has been faithfully living out our mission to Love God, Grow Together, and Care for the World. Our mission and values shape everything we do, and they're the foundation from which our vision for Hillcrest in 2030 has grown, guided by our desire to follow the Spirit's lead for the future of our community.

We pray this vision isn't merely a set of goals for a few people to implement but our shared direction for the whole Hillcrest community to participate in together. May this be your invitation to enter deeper into the work of the Kingdom as expressed in the world through Hillcrest Church.



HILLCREST
C H U R C H

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love God | grow together | care for the world

OUR SHARED DIRECTION

FIVE YEAR VISION
FALL 2025 — FALL 2030

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32



DEEP ROOTS

VISION:

WE DREAM of a flourishing community of deep roots where people of all ages are significantly formed into the image of Christ.

GOAL:

By 2030, **WE ENVISION** every person at Hillcrest will have a clear sense of where they are on their journey with Jesus and know their next steps for growing deeper.

INITIATIVES:

- ☐ Create an avenue for each person at Hillcrest to be able to assess where they are at on their spiritual journey, and discern next steps for growth.
- ☒ Strengthen our discipleship pathways for new and growing believers.
 - Facilitate mentor relationships between those newly growing in their faith and mature followers of Jesus.
 - ✓ Examples: Practicing the Way and Deep Dive podcast
- ☐ Review and evaluate our current spiritual formation pathways with.
 - Survey the overall picture of spiritual formation at Hillcrest, how ministries and programs fit together, and what may be missing and needed for holistic, community-wide discipleship.
 - Evaluate how people can identify where they are at in their spiritual journey and their next steps for growth.
 - Consider and evaluate life stage ministries such as pre-marriage, marriage, and parenting.
 - Continue to grow how we are equipping the community to engage the complex issues of our day, such as:
 - Gender and sexuality
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Faith and politics
 - Addiction and recovery
- ✓ Onboard a new Children's Ministry Director
- ☒ Renewed emphasis on whole family discipleship.

STRONG TRUNK

VISION:

WE DREAM of a strong community where our shared work and collective witness extend our impact far beyond what we could achieve on our own.

GOAL:

By 2030, **WE AIM** for 50% of those who call Hillcrest home to be regularly serving, whether inside or outside the church, in ways that align with their unique gifts and passions.

INITIATIVES:

- ☒ Expand our newcomer welcome, creating new entryways into belonging and service.
- ☒ Initiate staff training and practices that shepherd, prepare, and equip more community members for ministry leadership.
 - Create and empower more congregants for significant leadership roles, especially in plans for the Community Resource Center and with our missional community partners.
- ☒ Transition to a new church management system to make serving, giving and getting connected at Hillcrest easy and clear.
- ✓ Invest increased resources and time for staff to receive theological and practical training in their areas of ministry.
- ☒ Grow together as a church family in the area of financial discipleship, in conjunction with the Community Resource Center Capital Campaign.
- ☐ Launch a one-year leadership development ministry to cultivate and commission new leaders within Hillcrest.

BROAD BRANCHES

VISION:

WE DREAM of a community of rest and refuge, where people in Bellingham and Whatcom County experience real needs met by the love of Christ, and find themselves welcomed into life with him.

GOAL:

By 2030, **WE INTEND** for more than 40% of newcomers at Hillcrest to be people who have not been connected to any church community in the past two years.

INITIATIVES:

- ☒ Continue to grow Hillcrest into a community that is shaped by a missional mindset, through purposeful Sunday teaching and training opportunities for those serving outside our walls.
- ☐ Increase opportunities for community members to pursue baptism and recommitment.
- ☐ Create new and improved infrastructure to enhance the welcome we extend in Bellingham and Whatcom County.
 - ☒ Launch a new website to expand and improve our digital front door for the community.
 - Create wheelchair accessibility to our main office by redesigning the exterior entrance.
 - ☒ Build a Community Resource Center as a new missional space for Chi Alpha, Hillcrest Church, and Hillcrest Kids.
 - Improve physical space for the Southside Food Bank and its guests.
 - Initiate programming for low income families with kids under age 5.
 - Create an indoor recreation and gathering space for the broader community.
- ☐ Increase opportunities for Hillcrest congregants to be on mission both locally and globally.
 - ✓ Launch our new Community Outreach and Connections role to deepen partnerships with local schools and other community organizations, mobilizing Hillcrest members in these outside-the-building ministry areas.
 - ☒ Intentionally engage families in our Early Learning Center through an increased partnership between Hillcrest Kids and Hillcrest Church.
 - ☒ Begin a regular rhythm of adult mission trips both locally and globally to engage congregants in meaningful missional experiences.
 - Launch the Community Resource Center as a place where practical needs are met and meaningful relationships are formed between neighbors and Hillcrest members, all in the name of Jesus.