

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE



Enter information directly into this document.
**SAVE the document on your computer with your congregation's name,
city, state and date completed as part of the file name.**

**EMAIL COMPLETED PROFILE TO callprocess@thenalc.org
Keep a copy for your records.**

Congregation Name and Location

Name Bethel Lutheran Church

Mailing address 20650 Cumberland Road

City Noblesville State/Province IN Zip/Postal Code 46062

Telephone (317) 773-4315 Fax _____

Email address Holly@bethellutheranchurch.com

Congregation website <http://www.bethellutheranchurch.com>

Congregation's Social Media Links: N/A (only one small facebook private group)

Seeking Full-time pastor Part-time pastor Either full-time or part-time

Call will be for Solo pastor Senior pastor Associate pastor

Current denominational affiliation:

NALC LCMC Other _____

Current NALC Mission District Heartland

Congregational President or Vice President

Name Jim Herr Title President

Mailing address 26440 Anthony Road

City Arcadia State/Province IN Zip/Postal Code 46030

Home phone _____ Cell phone 317-439-0911

Email address jherr@beckshybrids.com

Call Committee Chair

Name Kristen Wells

Mailing address 7175 E. 266th Street

City Arcadia State/Province IN Zip/Postal Code 46030

Home phone _____ Cell phone 317-695-0401

Email address wkljwells@comcast.net

Congregational Demographics

Number of paid staff (full- or part-time): Clergy 2 Lay professionals 3 Secretarial 0

Average worship attendance 160 Average Sunday school attendance 12

Describe the type of community in which your congregation is located (is it small town, small city, suburban, large city, farming, industrial, festivals, schools, industries, etc.).

Noblesville (the county seat of Hamilton County, population 370,000) is a medium-sized city of approximately 73,000 residents as of 2022. It is one of several "outer ring" suburbs surrounding Indianapolis, which has a metropolitan population of 2,111,040. Since 2000, the population of Noblesville has more than doubled, which has created both growing pains for the community and ministry opportunities for local churches. The city has retained its small town feel with its traditional downtown on the square, even as the overall footprint of the community has expanded west towards Westfield, and south and southeast towards Fishers, while commercial development has blossomed along the Highway 37 corridor and at Hamilton Town Center by Interstate 69. Although surrounded by farms along its northern and eastern edges, the character of both the city and county is shifting from a rural to mostly suburban feel. Both the city and county are projected to continue to grow at a similar pace through 2050.

Bethel itself is 29,000+ square feet on 35 acres, surrounded by farmland. It is 3.4 miles from downtown Noblesville, 4 miles south of Cicero (pop 5,500), and 2.5 miles east of Morse Lake, a reservoir covering 1,500 acres with a shoreline of over 32 miles. With over 600 homes on the water, it is a major recreational community.

More information about the city and County can be found online at:

[Hamilton County Quick Facts](#)

[Hamilton County City-Data](#)

[Noblesville City-Data](#)

<http://www.bestplaces.net/>

<https://www.bestplaces.net/religion/zip-code/indiana/noblesville/46060> shows that 55% of local residents do not declare a religion

Describe the congregation's ethnic composition and age distribution.

Bethel is primarily Caucasian, middle class, largely professional with a distribution of all ages. Many relocated to area due to job or family, while a significant number are long-time members. The church was founded in rural Hamilton County in 1856 and moved to downtown Cicero (4 miles north of its current location) in 1936. The congregation chose intentionally to move to its current site in 1994. We then worked with Mission Builders twice to build its sanctuary and office complex (1998) and education wing (2003). This succession of moves and new construction during difficult times, sustained by our willingness to "roll up our sleeves to get it done," demonstrate our culture of resilience and involvement when needed.

Does the congregation have a clear vision for mission — a clear and shared understanding of where God is leading you? If so, be as descriptive as possible.

"We will be a prevailing church for our community by engaging the curious (IN), encouraging the convinced (UP), and empowering the committed (OUT) to become fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples. We will provide ample opportunities for disciples to discover their giftedness and hone their skills, inspiring them to serve locally, nationally and internationally. We will continue to serve as a respite for weary souls and as a mission outpost, sending the restored out into service."

What are the primary goals of your congregation?

1. Growing disciples for Christ as we engage the congregation beyond weekly worship
2. Reaching out to our local, national, and international mission field
3. Developing our Sunday School and Youth Groups

Describe your congregation's worship practice (liturgy, hymns, vestments, music, hymnals, and frequency of Holy Communion).

At Bethel, we share the Holy Eucharist weekly at all services. We are blessed to offer three worship services every weekend, with a dedicated Discipleship Hour between the services on Sunday mornings. While each service has its own musical style and slightly different content, the underlying skeleton is identical. We typically follow the three-year lectionary from the first weekend in Advent through Trinity Sunday. During the Pentecost season, we will create sermon series based on lectionary readings or topical themes. We welcome lay leaders, including families and younger children/youth, to serve in every area of worship. For example, the "Prayers of the People" are written each week by a different person, family, small group or Sunday School class.

- **Casual Service** (Saturday, 5:30p) includes two alternating worship groups – an acoustical guitar-based group and a piano-based group. They both provide a light "Country Gospel" experience. Worship leaders and clergy wear casual clothes (no clerics or vestments).
- **Classic Service** (Sunday, 8:45a) is led by our organist / music director utilizing both the organ and piano. The service alternates between a sung liturgy (ELW setting 4) the first and third week of each month and a spoken liturgy crafted by the pastor the second and fourth (and fifth) week of the month. Songs for this service come from one of our classic hymnals (ELW, LBW, WOV) or The Other Song Book. Special music is occasionally provided by youth and adult musicians (instrumental and singers). Worship leaders wear street clothes and clergy wear traditional vestments.
- **Contemporary Service** (Sunday, 11:11a) is led by our Praise Band consisting of guitars, bass, keyboard, drums and vocalists. The spoken liturgy is the same as the one used on Saturday; the music selection is from contemporary Christian music. Worship leaders wear casual clothes, clergy wear clerics but no vestments.

Describe your congregation's Christian education ministry.

We offer spiritual formation for children/youth and adults. Much of it takes place during the Discipleship Hour on Sunday mornings (10a-10:55a). Additional classes are scheduled throughout the week, during the daytime and evening hours. Bethel is also a satellite host site for a women's Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) group, a weekly non-denominational community run Bible study. We have hosted Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University, and we support a neighboring congregation with their GriefShare Ministry. We recently completed a multiple-week, Thursday evening bible study called Life to Life Discipleship.

In 2023, our Christian preschool merged with the preschool of Legacy Christian School in Noblesville, and is housed in our education wing. This is a great opportunity that gets more families coming through our doors. We pray for future expansion into more grades and related activities, as the Lord directs.

Prior to covid, Bethel has had vibrant Sunday School, Confirmation and Youth ministries. Unfortunately, we have had two youth directors resign within the last 3 years, followed by many families who transitioned to other congregations with more active youth ministries.

Our Council recognizes the importance of rebuilding our youth ministries, and has started revitalizing the junior high and high school youth groups. We currently offer our Sunday School in a multi-generational setting. We believe a key to the success of future youth discipleship will be strong support and guidance from our new senior pastor.

Describe the congregation's current activities for mission and outreach.

Bethel enthusiastically supports a rich variety of 30 local, national, and international missions. Individually, our members and pastors have served on international mission trips to Jamaica, Latvia, Ethiopia, and Malawi. We are beginning the planning process for Bethel's first congregation-wide mission trip. We also support several new church plants (Warrenton, VA; Robbins, IA; Miami, FL; Wabash, IN) in various stages of mission development.

Our Missions Committee often highlights one of their many initiatives at the weekend services. On occasion, our mission partners will preach or otherwise be present in worship services. A new initiative is a men's small group that meets every other Thursday night. They work on vehicles, sometimes of church members and many times those in the community. They even offer a "two-step" guarantee. The services are gratuitous. Our most recent property addition was the acquisition of a farmhouse and outbuildings on 3 acres adjacent to the church building. A local organization, Marilyn's Place, was looking for a new location to run a non-food pantry for household goods and clothing, so we converted the house for that purpose. It pairs well with the Food and Baby Pantry we operate in our church building 4 days every month.

Our mission brochure gives an overview of our mission efforts, and is posted on our website: [Bethel Missions Brochure](#).

At our November congregation meeting we shared how Bethel is continuing to reach out through new activities, including:

- Engagement cards for people to express their interest in joining more activities and missions
- Each One Reach One meals (bring a friend)
- Circle of Sisters arts and crafts
- Pastor letters to those we miss...and we are seeing some responses
- Momentum going into Advent with midweek gatherings
- Youth meetings reenergized
- Legacy Christian School – more kids in the building and on playground
- Dinner Groups and other new and current small groups
- Planned new activities include picnic, movie night, raffle gala

The NALC is committed to moving away from an institutional understanding of the Church, to the biblical commission to be a community of followers of Jesus who focus on being disciples and making disciples. Which best describes your congregation's understanding of this movement? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- Totally unaware
- Have heard about it
- Have been involved personally
- Some in the congregation are involved, some aren't
- Congregation understands, is on-board and involved

(Page break inserted)

List the *Top Five Things* your congregation hopes for in its next Pastor

1. Biblically-Grounded Visionary

Inspired by God and the Word to help us discern and move toward His plans for us.

2. Spiritually-Guided Change Agent

Motivates us to introduce new ideas that work in harmony with established practices, creating stronger and more fruitful ministries.

3. Cultural Steward

Helps us remain grounded in and protecting of God's cultural truths, moving away from conflict and inspiring a culture of love, grace and forgiveness.

4. Gospel-Centered Preacher/Teacher

Nurtures Christian faith and discipleship in all generations through engaging, passionate, relevant Gospel-centered preaching and teaching.

5. Evangelistic Leader

Fosters growth from our community, inviting others to join, thereby better enabling our mission to "go and make disciples of all nations."

What were the three most significant events in your congregation's history? Provide the years in which these events happened and why they are important to your congregation.

1. Bethel's theological move to join the NALC (2010-2011)
2. Bethel's physical move from Cicero to Noblesville (1995)
3. Pastor Doug Gast retirement after 30+ years as our pastor

Has your congregation participated in the Congregational Workshop Preparatory to the Call Process? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

Yes No

What were the three most significant results of the workshop?

1. Increased awareness of the call process for those (45 participants) in attendance.
2. All, who actively participated, provided valuable insight re: nature of our current ministry as well as some qualities we're seeking in our next pastor. The discussions revealed more questions that should be explored in our call process.
3. Several people still had questions re: the most recent staff changes we've gone through (with pastor(s) as well as Youth/Family Ministry Director). Some explanations were given by our current lay leaders.

Describe the nature and extent of any significant current or recent conflict in the congregation. Is this conflict resolved, or ongoing? If resolved, how was it resolved?

In 2021, as Bethel was beginning to recover from the impact of COVID on worship services, ministries and even the health of the congregation, a division among some in our church family occurred with respect to the effectiveness and leadership being provided by our recently-assigned Senior Pastor. Over the ensuing months, the division persisted and ultimately led to inviting the NALC leadership to intervene. The Pastor Care team from the NALC focused their efforts first on identifying the sources of division and recommended the best way forward for not simply a resolution, but also a means for reunification among those who had different perspectives. With the help of the NALC leadership, Bethel held several congregational forums, conducted a congregational-wide survey, and embarked on a 90-day program which reviewed our collective performance on a range of leadership issues which included intra-congregational communication, request follow up, leadership structure and accountability.

During this process, we understood that if our pastor struggles the congregation must consider if we are doing our part in supporting the pastor's efforts. With much prayer, coupled with significant efforts by our pastors, the church council and the congregation, Bethel continued to provide impactful worship services and maintain and even expand our many ministries and missions without interruption. In fact, during this challenging period, new members were welcomed, and church leaders stepped up to provide new Bible studies, small groups and youth events. As just one example, during this period, we expanded our community outreach by raising funds to acquire an adjacent farm and farmhouse that has subsequently been renovated and repurposed as a Bethel community support center and a potential future site for youth and family activities.

At the end of this 90-day program, the church council provided a final report of the progress toward improvement and recommendations to the congregation. The objective of the report was both to address a way forward to unify the congregation, but also to create more clarity of the roles of pastors, paid staff, and lay leaders, producing a byproduct of better-defined job descriptions for all. The benefits of those efforts are being realized currently.

While the outcome of our conflict resolution did not heal every heart, it did provide a much-needed sense of resolution. Our Senior Pastor prayerfully and thoughtfully decided to leave last year. God quickly connected him to a new ministry in our community, where he now joyfully serves. Since his departure, our current Associate Pastor stepped up to assume many of the responsibilities of the Senior Pastor until which time we would be in position to call a permanent Senior Pastor.

Unfortunately, church conflict may not be totally avoidable, but Bethel has learned a great deal about the importance of scripture and God's hand in the healing process. We have witnessed as a church family that through prayer, conversation, forgiveness and grace, fences can be mended, and differences can even become an opportunity to truly connect to those with whom we differ.

How does your congregation handle conflict/tension? Which of the following do you think best describes your congregation? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- As a church, we respect and listen to each other and work things through without generating divisiveness.
- As a church, we try to respect and listen to each other, but it is not uncommon for differences of opinion to be a problem and for some people to choose sides. Some have left our church because of conflict.
- Conflict hurts our sense of unity, but we tend not to talk about it.
- Painful experience with conflict has been present, but it has been worked through, and we have learned from the experience.
- We have had some painful experiences with conflict, and they linger in the background.
- Open conflict is present, and we need a minister who can help us deal with it.
- Other (describe).....

Describe the nature of the relationship between your last pastor and the congregation? (positive? struggling? cooperative? tense?)

Our recently departed Senior Pastor resigned in July of 2022 under the circumstances that were described in the above question regarding conflict resolution. Prior to his departure, there was a growing tension among a number of congregants who felt that as Senior Pastor, he was not being responsive to the needs of our ministries, following up on commitments, nor was he providing the needed leadership to grow Bethel's outreach and membership. Conversely, there was also a number of members who felt quite differently and even had a very special affection for him as a pastor and a person.

Since the Senior Pastor's resignation, some who left Bethel have returned, while others who supported him have left. Outreach to those members continues. It is heartening to report that our departed pastor is still very much welcomed and loved in our church. He and his family recently returned to join in the 25th anniversary celebration of our move to our current church home. While the tension and division has diminished with prayer, time and forgiveness, a feeling of uncertainty lingers among many that without a called Senior Pastor, Bethel is not fulfilling its potential or the plan God has for our church.

It is important to note that our departed pastor was elevated to Senior Pastor upon the retirement of his predecessor, who was with us for over 30 years. We did not go through a call process at the time, which was lamented by some congregants who were in previous leadership positions. The main reason was that the skill sets and responsibilities differ between those two roles, and they felt the Pastor's success in the role of Associate Pastor was not a guarantee that he would succeed as a Senior Pastor. When the retired/30-year Pastor moved into a Care Pastor role with our NALC district, he retained an office in our church, which he still uses today. During the vacancy, he is contributing as a part-time Pastor, which we preferred over having an interim pastor.

How did your council/congregational leaders work together with your last pastor? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- Leadership is shared, with shared decision-making
- Pastor makes important decisions
- Council makes decisions with pastoral input
- Council makes decisions without pastoral input

Is your pastor a member of council with: [Type an X by the appropriate response(s)]

Voice Vote

Congregational finances

Total budget for last fiscal year: \$ 707,854 (2023) _____

Benevolence to the North American Lutheran Church: \$ 3,000 _____

Other benevolence: \$ 22,000 _____

Total debt of the congregation: \$ 1,276,309 _____

Total savings, reserves, and endowments: \$ 494,718 (Oct 31, 2023) _____

Compensation of Last Pastor / Compensation for the Pastor

Salary: \$ 47,202 _____ Parsonage available No

Housing allowance: \$ 40,767 _____

Social security offset: \$6,003 _____ Pension: \$ 11,318 (12% of salary + housing +auto)

Health Insurance: \$ 2,238/month; \$26,856/yr. _____ Vacation: negotiable _____

Continuing education (time/funding): \$3,600 for Pastor Resources; \$2,000 for staff education _____

Travel reimbursement: Auto allowance \$6,348 _____

Other: _____

When the Congregational Vacancy List is updated, a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) is included announcing each congregation's ministry. This paragraph is the first contact with pastors being introduced to your congregation and community.

INDIANA, Noblesville, Bethel: av. att. 160. Bethel Lutheran Church is in the process of calling a senior pastor. We're praying for a welcoming, energized, Spirit-led, visionary with a passion to see Jesus' disciples realize authentic growth. With less than half the local residents in our steadily developing community committing to a religion, we're blessed with many assets to impact this awesome growth opportunity. Just 30 miles north of Indianapolis, our property comprises 30+ acres, with the main building spanning 29,000+ sq. ft., and an additional farmhouse/barn purposed for outreach ministry. Within just a few miles around our property, there are also riverfront residents, and a recreational lake community, adding another flair to the conglomerated culture in which we live and serve. If this sounds like something that piques your interest, we would love to explore ministry with you!

Video:

Video Submission Instructions:

Upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo. (Here are instructions on how to upload to YouTube: [wikihow.com/Upload-a-Video-to-YouTube](http://www.wikihow.com/Upload-a-Video-to-YouTube).) Include a link to the video below. Make sure the link allows for public access to the video.

<https://vimeo.com/899320070>

Provide any other information about your congregation that may be helpful in the call process.

Completed by: Susan Tobison, Call Committee Secretary

Date: March 4, 2024

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

SAVE A COPY OF THIS PROFILE TO YOUR COMPUTER. Use "Save As" and specify document file name as:
State, City, Congregation name, Date

****Email a copy of the completed profile to the NALC Call Process Coordinator, callprocess@thenalc.org**

Alternative submission method ONLY if you do not have email: Print and mail the complete profile to:

North American Lutheran Church
Attn: Pastor Shelly Schultz
PO Box 130455
Saint Paul, MN 55113

In addition, mail or email a copy of the completed profile to your mission district dean (can be found at thenalc.org/mission-districts/).

Should you have questions, call Pastor Shelly Schultz, NALC Call Process Coordinator, at 888-551-7254.

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS.