

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE



Enter information directly into this document.

SAVE the document on your computer with your congregation's name, city and date completed as part of the file name.

EMAIL COMPLETED PROFILE TO dwendel@thenalc.org.

Keep a copy for your records.

Congregation Name and Location

Name: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Vilmar

Mailing address: 16073 Keystone Ave.

City: Greene State/Province: IA Zip/Postal Code: 50636

Telephone: 1-319-267-2080 Fax: none

Email address: vilmarchurch@gmail.com

Congregation website: vilmarchurch.org

Seeking Full-time pastor Part-time pastor Either full-time or part-time
Call will be for Solo pastor Senior pastor Associate pastor

Congregational President or Vice President

Name: Ron Salge Title: Council President

Mailing address: 16587 Hickory Ave.

City: Bristow State/Province: IA Zip/Postal Code: 50611

Home phone: 1-641-775-3256 Cell phone: 1-641-330-0456

Email address: rsalge@netins.net

Call Committee Chair

Name: Diane Hummel

Mailing address: 21202 160th St.

City: Allison State/Province: IA Zip/Postal Code: 50602

Home phone: 1-319-267-2837 Cell phone: 1-319-429-4611

Email address: rhummel@netins.net

Congregational Demographics

Number of paid staff (full- or part-time): Clergy: 0 Lay professionals: 0 Secretarial: 1

Average worship attendance: Prior to COVID-19, average in-person attendance was 70
Following COVID-19, average in-person attendance is 40
We now offer live, online services that are viewed faithfully by many people

Average Sunday school attendance: 10-13 children ranging from age 3 to 18; 5-10 people in the adult class

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

St. John's is a country church. There property is located one mile on a gravel road off a state highway. We are located in a very rural, farming/agricultural community. There is a small town (Allison, pop. 1,100) located 5 miles south of the church, and another small town (Greene, pop. 1,000) located 5 miles north of the property. There are a handful of other small towns [Bristow (pop. 150); Aredale (pop. 46); Clarksville (pop. 1,350); Parkersburg (pop. 1,940); and Dumont (pop. 600)] located within a 20-25 mile radius of the church. The members come from all of these towns, plus a few more larger towns located a bit farther from the church, such as Hampton (pop. 4,200), Waverly (pop. 10,000), and Charles City (7,400).

Describe the congregation's ethnic composition and age distribution.

The congregation's ethnic composition is white.

The following is an estimated breakdown of the age distribution, *based on the church's average attendance*:

0-21 years: 10%

22-64 years: 30%

65+ years: 60%

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

The members of St. John's – Vilmar are hearers of the Gospel. We are a people, called and sent by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be a community of faith, hope, and love; who witness to Christ and His coming Kingdom before all the world.

What are the primary goals of your congregation?

The primary goals of the congregation are:

1. Ministry
2. Mission & Outreach
3. Stewardship
4. Education

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

• St. John's worships on Sunday mornings. The services are very traditional, and are held at 10 a.m. from September to May, with Sunday School classes from 8:45-9:45 a.m. before the service. During the summer months (June, July, and August), worship is held at 9 a.m., and there is no Sunday School.

• The liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship, Setting One. We also have two other hymnals (With One Voice and Sing to the Lord) that are used for hymn selections.

• Holy Communion is observed twice a month on the first and third Sundays. Pre-COVID-19, the first Sunday communion was distributed at the rail; on the third Sunday, communion was processional. Post-COVID-19, both the first and third Sundays are distributed through the processional line to help with social distancing.

• We also have an active senior choir that provides special music during the services from September through Easter. The Sunday school choir and other guests/groups provide special music on occasion as well.

• During Lent, we hold mid-week evening Lenten Services on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. [Traditionally, volunteers serve a light meal before the services (5:30-6:40 p.m.), however with COVID-19 restrictions, those meals had to be suspended for the time being.]

- Special services that are held at Vilmar include: Maundy Thursday, Thursday at 7 p.m.; Good Friday, Friday at 7 p.m.; Easter Sunrise Service, Easter Sunday at 7 a.m. (this is a special service held by the Luther Leaguers); Easter Morning Regular Service, Easter Sunday, 9 or 9:15 a.m., varies from year to year (this is the regular service that the pastor will lead) *there is an Easter Dawn Breakfast that is served by the Luther Leaguers in-between the services; Thanksgiving Eve Service, Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 6:30 p.m. (this is a combination service of the Sunday School youth program followed by a candlelight service led by the pastor); Christmas Day Service, Dec. 25 at 9 a.m.
- Other special services that vary from year to year: Sunday in the Park (random summer Sunday with a worship service at Wilder Park in Allison, followed by a potluck in the shelter house); Gospel Sunday (usually the first Sunday after Labor Day where we invite a gospel group to come and lead the morning worship service)
- Pre-COVID-19, Sunday Morning Fellowship of coffee, lemonade, and goodies was served by volunteers in the fellowship hall following the service. Since COVID-19, this has been suspended.
- Each Service at Vilmar is live-streamed on our Facebook Page for those who cannot attend, or are not comfortable returning to worship with the pandemic yet. The service is also linked to our website for a month, with the archive of all the videos available on our Facebook Page. Live-streaming will continue for all services into the future.
- All adjustments for COVID-19 were made to accommodate social distancing and are simply precautionary measures. We are hopeful that we can return to a “more normal” routine in the future.

Describe your congregation’s Christian education ministry.

We have many areas of education ministry at Vilmar:

1. Sunday School (Youth and Adult)
2. Little Lutherans (4th to 6th grade youth group)
3. Confirmation (7th and 8th grade)
4. Luther League (9th to 12th grade youth group)
5. Women’s Fellowship Bible Studies
6. Community-wide Bible Study group that meets in Allison; some members participate
7. Parish Ed. holds occasional youth camps and other outings for the kids
8. Kids are encouraged to participate in Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp in Story City, Iowa
9. Children’s Choir and Senior Choir

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

- Vilmar seeks to live out one of the Core Values of the NALC by being a Mission-Driven church. Each month the Mission and Outreach Committee, in consultation with the Church Council, selects a mission that is featured and lifted up to the congregation for their prayerful support. Funds that are donated for missions that month go to that specific mission. We try to choose different organizations that are local, national, and international throughout the year.
- Vilmar provides a one-time, \$500 scholarship to a boy and girl from the graduating class of North Butler each year.
- The Sewing Group makes numerous quilts and blankets each year that are donated to the NALC Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief
- The Women’s Fellowship group also collects and prepares school kits and personal care kits that are donated to the NALC Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief
- Members participate in mission trips, most recently with GoServ Global to Les Cayes, Haiti.
- Vilmar has prepared flood buckets for the NALC Disaster Response.
- Vilmar participates in Samaritan’s Purse, Operation Christmas Child by filling shoeboxes around Christmastime.
- We collect items for the food banks in Allison and Greene, and school supplies for the North Butler Elementary.
- The Luther Leaguers lead the Easter Sunrise Service and serve the Easter Dawn Breakfast on Easter Sunday.
- The youth groups serve fellowship following the Thanksgiving Eve service.
- The youth prepare fruit baskets for Vilmar shut-ins around Christmastime.
- The youth groups also work on various mission projects (putting together care baskets for the hospitals; tying blankets for children in the hospital; writing cards/coloring pictures for the shut-ins; collecting supplies to send to soldiers; etc.)
- Vilmar “adopts” a local family each year and purchases Christmas gifts for the children in need
- Each year, “Christmas Sacks” are made and passed out to the children and young adults attending the Christmas Eve Service
- We provide quarterly devotional books (Portals of Prayer) to our members
- Members, the youth, and the mission team send cards to our homebound members and others in need
- Our “Sunshine Visitors” make monthly visits (when allowed due to COVID-19 restrictions) and phone calls to homebound members

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?

- 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

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

1. The pastor must be able to communicate with and relate to all ages, with an emphasis on involvement with the youth and growing those programs for the future ministry of the church.
2. The pastor must make regular contact/visitation with members and shut-ins, as well as provide positive guidance and counseling to anyone who is in need in the congregation.
3. The pastor must preach the Gospel according to the Bible.
4. The pastor must be fully committed to the Vilmar family and the communities in which Vilmar is a part of, so that he/she has a good understanding of our demographics to help grow our flock.
5. The pastor must be strong in teaching all ages and be good with administration tasks.

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.

1879 – The Founding Fathers of St. John's were a dedicated, courageous and a foresighted group. They worshipping in the rural, so-called Prange schoolhouse for four years, ministered by a neighboring pastor. Then on Nov. 29, 1879, Rev. Heinrich Schutz of Pleasant Valley and 24 men founded the German Evangelical Lutheran St. Johannes Congregation of West Point and Goldwater Townships. The church was built on land given by a member, Conrad Wiegmann, from his farm and by Henry Wiegmann from Grundy County. They built the church (the back portion of the present building) and a parsonage with an addition for confirmation school. (More history can be found on our website: <https://www.vilmarchurch.org/history>)

1979 – The church celebrated their centennial year in 1979. The congregation held many events and spent a lot of time looking back and celebrating the church's accomplishments from the past 100 years, as well as looking to the future ministry of the church. A memorial book was designed and printed, detailing much of this information.

2018 – In 2018, St. John's – Vilmar held a Feed My Starving Children MobilePack event. The event brought together numerous individuals, families, churches, and organizations from the surrounding communities and throughout the state. People from all walks of life, from ages 5-90 participated during the weekend, packing a total of 101,088 meals that were later sent to Guatemala. In order to complete the event, a goal of \$23,239 needed to be raised, which was met and surpassed thanks to many generous donations. The event also created interest from other local churches in the area, one of whom planned and held their own event the following year, in which members of St. John's–Vilmar participated. (A video of the event can be viewed on our website or at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvqkOfSCDuE&t=1s>)

Has your congregation participated in the Congregational Workshop Preparatory to the Call Process?

Yes No

What were the three most significant results of the workshop?

The most significant results from the workshop were:

1. The members shared their priorities of what we were looking for in the next pastor of St. John's–Vilmar.
2. The members studied scripture together, which helped understand what God is saying about His call, our call, and an ordained pastor's call to mission and ministry, and how we can grow in Christ.
3. The congregation was able to have a meaningful discussion about the past, present, and future ministry of Vilmar.

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?

There is currently no significant conflict in the congregation. Vilmar is very much like a family, and we understand that from time to time people are going to have differences of opinion. When this happens, we discuss it and move on. Much like brothers and sisters have the occasional argument, in the end, they are still family and love one another. The same can be said about Vilmar. In the end we simply forgive and forget.

How does your congregation handle conflict/tension? Which of the following do you think best describes your congregation?

- 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...)

What was the nature of the relationship between your last pastor and the congregation? Positive? Struggling? Cooperative? Tense?

The nature of the relationship between the previous pastor and the congregation of St. John's-Vilmar evolved quickly in the two short years the pastor was with us. There was a lot of positive, productive work in the beginning of the call, which included cleaning up many administration tasks. However, as time went on, when members of the congregation and church council brought issues forward, there was struggle of cooperation from the pastor that resulted in the lack of important pastoral duties.

How did your council/congregational leaders work together with your last pastor?

- 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:

Voice Vote

Congregational finances

Total budget for last fiscal year: \$128,938.96

Benevolence to the North American Lutheran Church: \$6,446.95

Other benevolence: \$11,102.00

Total debt of the congregation: \$0.00

Total savings, reserves, and endowments: \$28,000.00

Compensation of Last Pastor: *Numbers are from 2019, to reflect the last full year the congregation had a pastor

Salary: \$41,997.00 Parsonage/housing allowance: Parsonage furnished

Social security offset: \$3,212.00 Pension: \$5,915.00

Health Insurance: \$21,274.00 Vacation: 4 weeks, 4 Sundays

Continuing education (time/funding): \$0.00

Travel reimbursement: \$0.56/mile

Other: Parsonage utilities and appliances are furnished; a landline telephone and internet are provided

When the Congregational Vacancy List is updated, a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) is included announcing each congregation's ministry. If you wish, your call committee may compose that summary, realizing it may be edited/formatted as needed.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Vilmar is a small, country church located in the heartland of a very rural, farming/agricultural community. We have a strong German history and, by the grace of God, the church has flourished for the past 141 years. We value and find richness in traditional liturgical worship services each week. The members of the church are a close-knit, family-oriented congregation, who are supportive of each other and their pastor. We are a congregation that loves Jesus and wants to share that love with the community. We are praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit as we seek a pastor for our congregation. We are looking forward to welcoming a pastor into our church family, and working with him or her in serving the Lord through education, mission and worship. Seeking God's will is our prayer as we call a pastor who will relay God's word and promote God's will to us, so we can live lives pleasing to the Lord, and thus be a beacon of truth and light to each other and the communities around us. We are looking for a pastor who will guide us, encourage us, and walk with us by going forth and making disciples. We trust the Lord will work all things for the good as we wait patiently for His will to unfold.

Congregational Profile Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqDt9MOkFAc>

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

Completed by:

Monica Edeker, Diane Hummel, Ron Salge, Doug Schueler, Julie Eberline, Marc Seehusen, and Barb Wagner

Date: March 18, 2021