

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 Abiding Word Lutheran Church

Mailing address 464 Oak Tree Crossing

City Brenham State/Province Texas Zip/Postal Code 77833

Telephone 979-836-5921 Fax NA

Email address admin@abidingword.org

Congregation website www.abidingword.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 Jan Kelm Title President

Mailing address 2921 Oakwood Drive

City Brenham State/Province Texas Zip/Postal Code 77833

Home phone _____ Cell phone 979-251-4066

Email address jankelm61@gmail.com

Call Committee Chair

Name Mike Swenson

Mailing address P O Box 253

City Round Top State/Province Texas Zip/Postal Code 78954

Home phone 979-249-4290 Cell phone 713-851-9084

Email address mikes75@att.net

Congregational Demographics

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

Average worship attendance 85 Pre-covid 70 Post-covid

Average Sunday School attendance Adults Pre-covid--25; Adults Post-covid-12

Children Pre-covid-- 8; Post-covid-- Sunday School is planned to resume the first Sunday of Advent

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

Brenham is located In Washington County, Texas which is the birthplace of Texas! It has a population of 17,369 and the county has a population of 35,805. (2020 census). The city has several industries including Blue Bell creameries as well as a State Supported Living Center for the disabled. (Website for more info on industries)-- <https://brenhamedf.com/>. The county has many working farms and ranches. Some families still own the same property from their ancestors who settled in this area in the mid-1800s. The real estate is highly sought after due to its beauty and its proximity to Houston (76 miles), Austin (90 miles) and College Station (40 miles). Our area has a large tourist attraction during the spring for its bluebonnets/wildflower displays, and the Bluebonnet, Scarecrow, and Cotton Gin Festivals. Brenham is well known for the charm of its downtown shopping and restaurants. The downtown area is also home to Unity Theatre, one of the best regional theatres in the country. We also have one of the state's largest antique shopping events twice a year.

The fall brings the Washington County Fair, the oldest county fair in Texas. Brenham ISD is known for its academic excellence, athletic programs and is classified as a 5A school in the Texas University Interscholastic League. Brenham is also home to Blinn College. The community college offers on-campus housing for students and programs such as competitive athletic teams (member of NJCAA Region XIV Athletic conference), music, theatre, agriculture and many other student activities and programs. See more about Washington County and Brenham at the Chamber of Commerce website: <https://www.brenhamtexas.com/>

Describe the congregation's ethnic composition and age distribution.

The ethnic composition of our church is primarily Caucasian and the age group is diverse with a higher percentage of middle age to retirement age adults.

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.

We are a Lutheran church joyfully standing on the Holy, Inspired, and Abiding Word of God equipping our members to know, love and serve as we look for opportunities in our own church, our community, our state and our world.

What are the primary goals of your congregation?

Minister to our current members' needs
To reach out to the community in service
Find ways to reach/minister to the missing generation*

*Millennials (those between the ages of 23 and 38) are now almost as likely to say they have no religion as they are to identify as Christian. Four in ten millennials now say they are religiously unaffiliated, according to the Pew Research Center.

This "missing" or "lost" generation has resulted in their children not being raised knowing the tradition of attending worship services Sunday mornings, participating in Sunday School or other Christian religious rites, such as baptism and confirmation. We want to be able, with the help of a spiritual leader, to show them how Lutheran theology can bring joy and peace to their lives.

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

We have a traditional church service each Sunday using the Lutheran liturgy, singing hymns with organ or piano accompaniment. We use video monitors with the words/songs projected to promote ease in congregational participation. We also have Reclaim hymnals for use at each chair. Holy Communion is served on the first and third Sundays. Our church services are streamed live and available on Facebook, YouTube and our website. Prior to Covid, we had a contemporary service on the first Sunday of each month.

Describe your congregation's Christian education ministry.

In addition to Sunday education opportunities, we have a Ladies Bible Study group, Vacation Bible School each summer, and Confirmation instruction.

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

Our Basket Brigade collects baskets of food to give/deliver to senior citizens at Thanksgiving. In addition, we collect money/donations for the Brenham Pregnancy Center, Brenham Faith Mission, WNALC Disaster Relief Fund, Teen Challenge, and the Oromo Evangelical Church in Houston. Since we are in close proximity to the Blinn College-Brenham campus, prior to Covid, once a week we hosted a night for students to come to our church. We provided a meal, had a short meditation and offered a Bible study and a fun activity each time. We are planning to start again In Spring 2022. We also participate in a live nativity, "Bethlehem in Independence" each December. (It is held in nearby Independence, TX.)

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

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

1. Someone who is an effective communicator and approachable to the membership at large.
2. Someone who will find ways to reach and minister to the missing generations.
3. Someone who values visitation with homebound, hospitalized, ill and prospective members.
4. Someone who can offer counseling sessions as needed with congregational members.

- Someone who supports and grows outreach initiatives.

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.

Creation of our church and welcoming 59 charter members--first service in October 2011 & called our first full-time minister in Spring 2012.

Construction and completion of our church building- August 2017.

Celebrated our 10th anniversary on October 24, 2021.

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?

- Focus on Holy Spirit's guidance through prayer and meditation
- Recognized our church's strengths and weaknesses
- Strengthened congregation's purpose and promoted unity during the transition period

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?

We have not experienced any major conflicts. However, we have experienced minor issues with respect to how we handle/manage change of events and activities.

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).....As in any congregation or group, there will be times that total membership will not agree. However, we have never had an instance where our congregation has been divided to the detriment of our mission.

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

Positive. We were not looking to replace him. We are also discovering that since we have been placed in the position of finding a new pastor, many members are excited about the opportunity for change and growth.

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 *PLEASE see the 2 documents of church's budget attached with our Profile

Total budget for last fiscal year: \$ _____

Benevolence to the North American Lutheran Church: \$ _____

Other benevolence: \$ _____

Total debt of the congregation: \$ _____

Total savings, reserves, and endowments: \$ _____

Compensation of Last Pastor The church will work with candidate to structure their compensation package to maximize their benefit

Salary: _____ Parsonage/housing allowance: _____

Social security offset: _____ Pension: _____

Health Insurance: _____ Vacation: _____

Continuing education (time/funding): _____

Travel reimbursement: _____

Other: Total compensation was almost \$100,000.

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.

As disciples, we embrace a Christ-centered and Christ-led mission by reaching up to celebrate the love of Christ in worship, by reaching in to share the love of Christ in Bible Study and fellowship, and by reaching out to demonstrate the love of Christ in joyful service to our neighbors.

Consider filming a video to be included with your Congregational Profile on the [NALC website Vacancy List](#). We invite your call committee to make a 3-5 minute video introducing prospective pastoral candidates to your context and congregation. The video can be informal, explaining what your congregation is seeking in a pastor and showing images of the members of your congregation and your worship environment. Here are some sample videos: [Example One](#), [Example Two](#). These samples were not produced by the NALC. They are both simply examples of the type of content you could include in a 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.

[video link]

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

1. Pastor Job description attached.
2. You may submit your application by mail to:
Abiding Word Lutheran Church, 464 Oak Tree Crossing, Brenham, Texas or you may email to awlc21callcommittee@gmail.com or admin@abidingword.org
3. Please note that with the abundance of activities during the Christmas season, we will not disrupt this focus and will start the review and interview process in January 2022.

Completed by: Mike Swenson

Date: 11/15/2021

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

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

****Email** a copy of the completed profile to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry, dwendel@thenalc.org.

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

North American Lutheran Church
Attn: Pr. David Wendel
2655 Innsbruck Drive, Suite A

New Brighton, MN 55112-9304

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 Pr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry, at 719-650-8171 (cell).

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Abiding Word Lutheran Church

Job Summary – Pastor

The Pastor is the leader of a community that exists for others; therefore, the Pastor is a servant to the servants of God in the world. Shaped by Scripture and Confessional theology, Abiding Word expects the Pastor to be diligent in the study of the Holy Scriptures and in the use of the means of grace. The Pastor will pray for God's people, nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, and lead them by being an example of faithful service and holy living. The Pastor will also be diligent in the equipping and care of souls, giving primary leadership in the ministries of worship, spiritual formation, administration and outreach.

Compensation: The compensation package will be established by the Call Committee in consultation with the Church Council. It will be reviewed annually or as circumstances warrant by the Church Council.

Working Conditions: The position requires great flexibility in hours available for work, including evenings and weekends. The Pastor should use godly wisdom in finding the proper balance between the congregation, the community and their family.

Responsibility: Subject to review and adjustment in consultation with the Church Council, the following constitute the pastor's major responsibilities:

- 1. Preaching and Teaching:** The Pastor shall spend adequate and appropriate time during the week to prayerfully prepare and teach in accordance with Biblical and Confessional principles. As Luther wrote, "Faithful preachers should teach only the Word of God and seek only His honor and praise." Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Pastor will place the highest priority in bringing the un-churched to belief in God, constantly teaching and nurturing them into successively higher levels of discipleship in their faith, teaching them to be witnesses in the community, to be supportive of each other, and also in the development of spiritually well-equipped leaders for the church. The Pastor's preaching and teaching should seek to instill in the congregation the constant ideals and means of fulfilling Christ's directives in His Great Commission and His Great Commandment, without burdening the conscience.
- 2. Administer the Sacraments:** God's final word is experienced through the grace and mercy in the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. These means of grace are the centerpiece of Lutheran worship and it is the Pastor's divinely ordained, joyful, and humble privilege to preside over these for the good order of the congregation.

- 3. Conduct Public Worship:** The Pastor is to preside over the worship services and is responsible for all aspects of the worship service; including the grateful use of worship assistants, encouraging all to participate. The Pastor is also responsible for appropriate and inspirational music under the direction of the music minister, when applicable. The Pastor is to be an active member of the worship committee.
- 4. Administration:** The Pastor is responsible for providing the day-to-day leadership and oversight of the church. With God's help, the Pastor will serve as the chief visionary to lead the church forward in participating in the mission of God. When in place, the Pastor shall directly supervise all provisional and permanent staff, and assist others in providing spiritual accountability and leadership to all our volunteers. This includes regular meetings with staff to deepen discipleship and promote effective ministry. The Pastor shall interact with the church leadership to assure competent, efficient job performance by staff in accordance with constitutional directives and leadership expectations.
- 5. Provide Pastoral Care and Spiritual Leadership:** The Pastor shall oversee spiritual needs in all areas of the congregation. These include: hospital visitation, homebound visits, counseling (either directly or through referrals to competent counselors in the area), marriages and funerals. Premarital counseling and family counseling before and after marriages and funerals are essential when possible. Spiritual leadership includes pastoral modeling, instruction and encouragement in private and congregational prayer. The Pastor shall seek to create a safe and healthy church environment by promoting peace and concord among congregational members. When necessary, the Pastor shall engage in discipline of individuals in the congregation, in close consultation with church leadership officers and in accordance with Scriptural principles as reflected in the constitution and by-laws.
- 6. Church Youth:** The Pastor will oversee the development and implementation of a discipleship-oriented youth education program, including Confirmation. Such oversight will include responsibility for placing well qualified, discipleship-oriented teachers as youth educators and mentors.
- 7. Outreach:** The Pastor shall develop ministry initiatives that reach out to the un-churched, the inactive, as well as new residents of our community, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Pastor will also direct the assimilation of new members into the life and mission of the congregation by working closely with the boards and committees of Abiding Word as well as appropriate entities within the community.
- 8. Other Responsibilities:** Additional responsibilities may be added at the discretion of the Church Council. These responsibilities are not limited to, but include everything from office visits by members of the congregation and community, to meetings with other pastors and LCMC and NALC interactions. The Pastor shall attend to daily administrative duties as needed to provide good communication between the staff and congregation.