|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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**](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org).

**Keep a copy for your records.**

**Congregation Name and Location**

Name St. Thomas Lutheran Church (STLC)

Mailing address 408 W. Second Street

City Trufant State/Province MI Zip/Postal Code 49347

Telephone 616.984.2811 Fax

Email address stlctrufant@gmail.com

Congregation website http://www.stlctrufant.com

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 Steven Poulsen Title President

Mailing address 13176 West Kimball Road

City Trufant State/Province MI Zip/Postal Code 49347

Home phone 616.984.2087 Cell phone

Email address poulsenjeanne@gmail.com

**Call Committee Chair**

Name Steven Poulsen

Mailing address 13176 West Kimball Road

City Trufant State/Province MI Zip/Postal Code 49347

Home phone 616.984.2087 Cell phone

Email address poulsenjeanne@gmail.com

**Congregational Demographics**

Number of **paid** staff (full- or part-time): Clergy vacant Lay professionals 2 Secretarial 1

Average worship attendance 52 (with pastor) Average Sunday school attendance 0

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

Trufant (troo’-funt) is a small town of between seven and eight hundred people, with an influx of residents during the summer season due to numerous recreational lakes in the area. Trufant Flea Market also draws hundreds of people into town on Thursdays from April through October.

**Describe the congregation’s ethnic composition and age distribution.**

The congregation is primarily ethnic European, with a Danish heritage. There is one large family that includes descendants of Asian Indian heritage. Age is distributed across the spectrum, with the majority at retirement age and older. While there are several infant baptisms each year, there is also a member over 100 years old. We celebrate those over 80 with a collective birthday party annually.

**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.**

Our mission statement: To know and share the grace of God in Jesus Christ by reaching out to the community and the world as the Holy Spirit guides us to love and care for one another. We speak this mission statement to begin Council and Congregational meetings to remind one another of the reason we exist. Many members know the mission statement by heart.

We understand the NALC discipleship initiative and try to remember that all our mission is an opportunity to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. The Church Council allocates 10% of the annual non-benevolence budget to local, national, and international missions. Council has also coordinated and supported travel for several mission trips, for example the NALC Disaster Relief Warehouse.

Women of the NALC (WNALC) recently sent personal care kits, school kits, baby care kits, and quilts to Lutheran Worlds Relief (LWR). The group is active in Bible study and fellowship. They distribute financial support to local and global missions at year's end.

Most of the people of STLC are actively engaged with a broad array of local missions, for example: Barrie's House, a local food and clothing ministry; a booth during the annual town festival where we talk to people and distribute Bibles and Thrivent t-shirts; a “Free Christmas Shopping” event for disadvantaged local families; and a semi-weekly meeting place for Alcoholics Anonymous.

**What are the primary goals of your congregation?**

To worship the triune God

To proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as His disciples

To serve the community and the world as the Holy Spirit guides us

To be a family of faith for all

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

St. Thomas Lutheran Church offers one traditional worship service at 9:30a.m. each Sunday, with seasonal vestments and organ accompaniment. We follow the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) and have used both Setting One and Setting Two. Holy Communion is normally celebrated on the first Sunday of each month as well as on festival Sundays, with a current target of twice monthly. Sunday worship is normally followed by an hour of coffee and fellowship.

We hold Wednesday evening services during Lent and Advent. Twice each year, we’ve held public worship services in a nearby park in partnership with other area churches. We’ve also held occasional healing and prayer services. There is an annual “Blessing of the Tractors” in the parking lot where you will encounter some good-natured banter about the virtues of red versus green tractors.

**Describe your congregation’s Christian education ministry.**

The Sunday morning Adult Bible Study is called “Bread Crumbs”; topics vary. There is also a Wednesday evening Bible study, which is usually done on a book-by-book basis. Two women’s circles participate in a monthly Bible study and fellowship time. A Boys & Men (BAM) ministry meets monthly for study and projects.

The Christian Education Committee continues to wrestle with viable options for younger children. Even though there aren’t enough children to offer normal Sunday School classes, we try and provide children’s messages and bulletins when children are present on Sunday mornings. Opinion remains divided on the question of whether children ought to be at worship or in Sunday School during worship.

A bequest has been established for Christian Education. There is an application process in place that makes scholarships available to youth.

We’ve tried a variety of formats for Discipleship groups, but haven’t yet found one that works well in our environment. We continue to pray.

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

While most of our outreach would be considered local, some have journeyed to the NALC Disaster warehouse both to work and to deliver material support. Some have traveled to other regions as well. There is an Outreach and Spiritual Leadership Committee, which could be compared to what might have been called an Evangelism Committee in earlier times. There is also a Prayer and Visitation Team.

WNALC prepares lunches for families after funeral services and packs care packages for area shut-ins during Advent.

Operation Warmth is an outreach to homeless people in which we make and deliver meals and clothing on the Saturday before Christmas.

We also have a program that supports our local Veteran’s Home (Grand Rapids) with various donations.

Our women's group distributes financial support to local and global missions each year.

**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

X 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. A fervent and infectious love of God
2. Biblically and ethically grounded
3. An effective preacher
4. Visits people and is sensitive to the needs of all ages
5. Personable, positive, well-organized, and collaborative

**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.**

The complete [STLC history](http://stlctrufant.blogspot.com/p/founding-fathers-plotted-town-of.html) is available on our website.

1892: Original Lutheran church built in Trufant. This is important because it marks the beginning of a long and valued tradition of faith.

1955: Built a parsonage, which we maintain.

2012: Took a step in faith to join the NALC and hire a full time pastor. This is important because we had endured a long period of part-time clergy. Through the experience we learned to place more trust in God’s plan for STLC and not to worry as much about the cost.

2019: Decision to call another full-time pastor. Because of our history as church with many part-time pastors, this gives us hope and momentum for the future of our ministry.

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

X Yes No

**What were the three most significant results of the workshop?**

1. Increased knowledge concerning the Call Process
2. A deeper acceptance that God is control of the process, even if we might experience disagreement
3. Identification of qualities we might seek in our next pastor

**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?**

First, this congregation values unity very highly. Most seem to understand that while it may be painful, a certain amount of conflict helps us to grow and improve both collectively and as individuals. The most recent significant conflict was the result of a misunderstanding about confidentiality requirements during the pastor evaluation process. Everyone made errors and feelings got hurt. The conflict took time and talk, but ended in reconciliation. This was one of the key outcomes reinforced in the workshop, as well.

**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.

X 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?**

Our last pastor was the first to be full-time after many years of sharing a pastor. It was a risk for the congregation, but ultimately successful. While appreciating the long history and traditions associated with this church, he introduced many new ideas and practices. He kept an ambitious visiting schedule for shut ins, hospitalized members, as well as every member of STLC. He was dedicated to praying with everyone. While there’s never universal agreement, the relationship with our last pastor must be characterized as both positive and cooperative. That was demonstrated by the fact that this was his first call and he stayed with us for nearly five years.

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

X 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)]**

X Voice X Vote

**Congregational finances**

Total budget for last fiscal year: $ 95,838.60

Benevolence to the North American Lutheran Church: $ 1,200.00, plus appeals

Other benevolence: $ 10% of non-benevolence budget, about 8,712.60

Total debt of the congregation: $ 0

Total savings, reserves, and endowments: $ 138,100.00

**Compensation of Last Pastor**

Salary: $ 32,832 Parsonage: $ parsonage (~8,400)

Social security offset: $ 2,036 Pension: $ 3,283 (10% of salary)

Health Insurance: $ 15,000 Vacation: 4 weeks and 4 Sundays

Continuing education (time/funding): time negotiated/$1,000

Travel reimbursement: $2,400

Other: parsonage gas & electric ($2,107), equity allowance ($1,313-about 4% of salary), Convocation ($1,500), total value is estimated at about $72,796 for a pastor with 5 years of experience.

**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.**

Everyone has a spiritual gift. As the church, it is part of our ministry to build up disciples locally and to bear witness to the universal love of God through Jesus Christ. God has a plan for us. We wait in hope and act in faith to live out His plan.

**Consider filming a video to be included with your Congregational Profile on the** [**NALC website Vacancy List**](http://thenalc.org/call-process)**. 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**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcXBhDNftvg&feature=youtu.be)**,** [**Example Two**](https://vimeo.com/242282875)**. 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](https://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.

[St. Thomas video introduction](https://youtu.be/N_cVgecy5r8)

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

The community includes a beautiful fishing/recreation lake, for which there is public access. Acres of rolling farmland and wooded areas surround the residential area. Businesses include a bank, post office, barbershop, hair salon, Mexican restaurant, farm elevator, hardware store, gas station/convenience store, woodworking shop, tavern, chiropractic office, and small grocery store. Our Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad is also located downtown. St. Thomas Lutheran Church is located on the main street.

A former elementary school provides the community with accommodations for events and is available for rental. The old DBS Hall (Danish Brotherhood Society), now known as the Trufant Community Center, hosts a church service, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and other events as well.

Several area parks offer softball diamonds, horseshoe pits, playground equipment, a pavilion, and picnic areas. There are also many public parks on the shores of Lake Michigan, about 50 miles west of Trufant. Hunting is also a popular pastime, and on opening day of rifle season, worship attendance drops.

The median age of the township is 36 and median income about $35,000. Greenville [pop. about 8,000] is about 15 minutes away. It is home to a Spectrum Health hospital, as well as a variety of shops and restaurants. Trufant is located between two large metropolitan areas, Big Rapids to the north and Grand Rapids to the south. Montcalm County Community College is about 15 miles from Trufant, Grand Valley State University is in Grand Rapids/Allendale, and Ferris State University is situated in Big Rapids. Aquinas College, Calvin College, and Cornerstone University, all in Grand Rapids, have good theological libraries.

We hold a weekly Bible study on Wednesday evenings, a men's prayer breakfast one Saturday each month, and 2 women's circle Bible studies monthly. Several members of the congregation are trained to bring Holy Communion to shut ins. In May, we offer a Spring Festival in the church basement—the annual "talent" show. The community is invited for an evening of fun and fellowship. There is also a community event for aebleskiver and bake sale.

Completed by: Steven Poulsen, Ron Porter, William Rexius, Penny Therkildsen, Carol Jensen, Pat Ingersoll

Date: December 15, 2019

**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**](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org?subject=Congregational%20profile)**.**

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

2299 Palmer Dr., Suite 220

New Brighton, MN 55112-2202

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