

CHURCH and VISION PROFILE

Northern Lakes Church

Cumberland, Wisconsin



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CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY



European settlers first started coming to the Cumberland area in the 1870's. They settled on the "island" surrounded by water at the lower part of Beaver Dam Lake. The railroad was laid through Cumberland in 1878. Around that time, a large contingent of Italian immigrants settled in Cumberland to work on the extension of the railroad north of Cumberland. In the early 1880's, Swedish immigrants came and started settling on farms in the Cumberland area. The timber industry became an important part of Cumberland with the establishment of several sawmills in the 1880's. As the timber industry declined in the early 1900's, other industries moved in.

Today, the main industries are the 3M Company, Ardisam, Inc. and Seneca/Libby's Canning. Cumberland has a vibrant downtown with a grocery store, hardware store, other varied shopping, restaurants, gas stations, and library. The city also includes a hospital, swimming beach and a beautiful public campground on the lake.

The City of over 2,000 people is a family-oriented community with great emphasis on schools. It is evident with the great attention paid to school sports and other school activities. Community activities include ice fishing contests, 4th of July fireworks celebration, Rutabaga Festival and parade (annual town celebration), tractor pull, Taste of Cumberland, and Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Today, Cumberland and the surrounding area is a unique Northwoods environment. The population includes third or fourth generation Swedish and Italian immigrant families. Since Beaver Dam Lake and other 50 lakes in the area are a big attraction, this area also includes summer lake home visitors principally from the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. In the last few years, a large number of lake home owners have decided to retire in the Cumberland area permanently due to the friendly small-town atmosphere, slower pace of life and the beauty of the area.

Cumberland is located in Northwestern Wisconsin less than two hours northeast of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. It is called the "Island City" because it is nearly surrounded by Beaver Dam Lake. The city is located at the crossroads of STH 48 & USH 63. Unique to the area Cumberland has a fairly large Hispanic migrant population that comes up from south Texas every year to work at the green bean factory (Seneca/Libby's Canning).

For more information, visit the City of Cumberland Website (<https://cityofcumberland.net/>), Cumberland Chamber of Commerce website (<http://www.cumberland-wisconsin.com/>) or Cumberland Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumberland,_Wisconsin).

WHERE WE CAME FROM

In 2001, Red Cedar Community Church (a Wesleyan church) in Rice Lake had a vision to plant (to begin) new churches in Northwest Wisconsin. A team of volunteers from Red Cedar formed around Pastor Kevin O'Conner and committed themselves to help in the startup of a new church in Cumberland. They desired to reach out to the un-churched in the community with a style of church that was both meaningful and relevant.

In January 2002, the first preview church service was held at the Senior Citizen's Center in Cumberland. After a couple of months, the church meetings moved to the Cumberland Middle School building and in September 2002, Northern Lakes Community Church (NLCC) "officially launched" with about 45 adults and children attending.

Meeting at the Cumberland Middle School had limitations such as the weekly "set up" and "tear down" of equipment and limited access (only weekends). The church wanted to develop children and youth ministry on Wednesday evenings, but did not have a meeting place available. However, in June of 2004, another congregation approached NLCC and offered to sell them their downtown church building. Following extensive repair and remodeling, the storefront church at 1295 2nd Avenue became the home of NLCC. A Saturday evening worship service was added, and the church continued to grow with approximately 90-95 persons attending the two weekend services.

After being in Cumberland for 8 years and seeing NLCC come to life, Pastor Kevin and his wife Carol moved to another new church plant in North Carolina. In October 2009, Dennis and Lois Wright moved to Cumberland to begin as pastor at NLCC. Soon, the building at 2nd Avenue was too small for the number of children coming to attend Sunday School and Awana. The worship services also continued to grow and a second Sunday morning service was added to give space for those attending the three worship services each weekend. However, the space for children's ministries was simply not available.

God's answer was to provide significant gifts to enable the church to both fix the leaking roof as well as to completely pay out the mortgage. Suddenly, the future looked different and NLCC began to examine different options to expand their building. However, God's plan was a move to our present home at 825 8th Avenue, Cumberland. The Dome Church had been carefully and lovingly built by the previous congregation and they were willing to discuss, pray and eventually sell their building to NLCC. In fact, several people from the original Dome Church joined the NLCC church community. The sale of the old building on 2nd Avenue provided enough income to do some repairs to the new church, to expand the parking lot and to pay off the short-term mortgage. God is good and we are thankful. However, once again the space became tight. Through tons of prayer, God called NLCC, also known as NLC (Northern Lakes Church), to build another ministry center, this time from the ground up.

When it became time to start construction of the new church building in 2015, the congregation decided to build the new building with church labor. One of the church members had previously constructed a metal frame building and volunteered to construct the pre-engineered metal building shell. He had always dreamed of constructing a church building. Many other church members had some construction experience in various trades. So, the decision was made to retain subcontractors to do the electrical, HVAC and plumbing work and do the rest of the work with church membership.

Thus, construction started with some site preparation in August 2015. Concrete footings were constructed in the fall. Since fall was extremely wet, we were constantly pumping out the footing trenches to install rebar and eventually pour the concrete footings. We had previously started calling

the project the Ark Ministry Center because we felt called, like Noah, to build something even though we were ordinary unskilled people. We questioned our decision to call it the Ark when all it did that autumn was rain!

The steel framework of the building was constructed over the winter and completed in the spring of 2016. The congregation got busy installing the outside walls and roof during the summer. The building was enclosed by fall. A crew of church members installed flexible water pipe tubing for in-floor heat before the concrete floor was poured.



From the fall of 2016 to September 2018, crews of up to 30 church members spent Tuesday and Thursday evenings as well as Saturdays to work on the interior of the building. This work included wall construction, drywall installation, painting, carpet square laying, tile installation, wrapping of ductwork with insulation, and hanging doors. The Volunteer Christian Builders came from Texas and other states to work on the wall construction and drywall installation for two months during the summer of 2017. A crew also came from the Reeves Evangelical Free Church to help us several Saturdays as well. Approximately 30 to 40 thousand hours of free labor were supplied by church members as well as other volunteers to construct the ARK. Countless very tasty meals were supplied to the work crews by the ladies of the congregation.



Other cost savings were realized when four used air handling units became available and were purchased for the church building. An elementary school was scheduled for demolition, so the maple hardwood flooring in the gym was purchased for \$2,000. A crew from our church went there to remove the flooring and haul it to our construction site. The flooring was laid, refinished and relined for our new building for savings of about \$200,000.



The ARK, as the new building is still called, was completed for occupancy in September 2018 at a total cost of approximately \$1,450,000. If a contractor had been hired to construct the entire structure, the estimated cost would have been close to \$3,000,000. The grand opening of the ARK was held October 7, 2018. By God's grace, the entire project was completed without any major injuries or accidents!



The new facility includes a gym with a basketball court and markings for pickleball and volleyball as well. The gym acts as worship center for weekend services, with a stage set up off the gym for services as well as for concerts. The ARK also includes a great hall, six classrooms, a nursery, a mother room, kitchen, three offices and a conference room. Once the ARK became available for services, the Dome building was converted to a youth center. See photos next page.

With a main sanctuary capacity of up to 548 chairs, the decision was made to combine all three weekend services into one single Sunday morning service. In the 2+ years since, we have at times added a Saturday night service.

Due to the thriftiness and resourcefulness of the church community, as well as the generosity in time and treasures, improvements to the ARK continue to this day. Though we have dreams and visions for more, we know that God will provide and direct us to that which is important, in His time.



OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Though the COVID-19 crisis was unexpected, it did not catch NLC off-guard. Looking back over the last few months it is easy to see that God was preparing us as a church. NLC has a strong extended family culture which quickly responds to the needs of the community as events and situations present themselves. During the pandemic, a critical mission of the NLC congregation has been to ensure that no one becomes isolated from God and community. And God has protected us.

The Wisconsin Governor issued a "Safer at Home" order in March and the church closed as we were asked to do, but the office remained open. One-on-one contact with social distancing protocol was encouraged. The Compassion and Care Ministry made more phone calls, sent more cards and emails, and had already planned a phone chain ministry which was immediately implemented. Though all in-person activities were cancelled, personal phone contact was made with Awana children, our youth, and the Oasis group. Bible Study groups met via Zoom or other online venues. We distributed a link to RightNow Media (with their permission) to the whole congregation for Christian support and resources.

We had spent time updating our website, and the staff had begun discussion about online services, so when we had to use these means, we were prepared. The first Sunday after closing we began very simply, using smart phone technology, with worship songs, Bible readings and messages from our pastors, as well as a mid-week 'message of encouragement' from the lead pastor. This is done in a more intimate 'in your living room' format and the response has been extremely positive with significant on-line hits for these communications - often with more views on-line than we have members of NLC. God has since blessed NLC with a new worship director skilled in media technology and the equipment to enhance our online programming.

After conversations with local officials, monitoring of state policies and protocols, and a growing desire in the NLC community, we reopened our Sunday services the first weekend in June even though the Governor's order was still in effect. We felt we must live by faith instead of fear. We had an almost normal attendance number. COVID-19 social distancing and cleaning protocols were instituted. Masks were suggested, but not required (as per the state mandate). We changed the way we took communion and tithing, but carried on with both.

By September we had re-started most children, youth and adult activities, in a more cautious capacity. We began our Saturday night service again as a mask-required service; which addressed those who felt the need for extra care and protections. We had the opportunity to hold services and worship concerts outdoors, which drew neighbors and friends in, as well as met the needs of the congregation. We have continued our more personal online service. Even though the online service is a pre-recorded sermon it is the same sermon that is preached at the in-person services.

In November, we hosted Mark Schultz in concert at the ARK, following COVID-19 protocol. Despite icy winter driving conditions, we had over 200 in attendance, drawing from a 70-mile radius. Eau Claire Christian radio station WWIB supported and encouraged the concert. The response from those who attended was positive and many thanked us!

As a church we will continue to pray, listen, and adjust as God directs us.



WHO WE ARE

Church Culture/Characteristics

NLC's church culture is that of a radically born-again church family. God's transformation has brought us to a culture characterized by the qualities of friendliness, welcoming, loving, serving, committed, obeying and following the authority of the Bible, seeking God and the fullness of His Holy Spirit, and reaching out to our community. Our church culture is evangelical in worship music, communication style, and language. We strive to be obedient to, while enjoying, God. We are a culture of 'learners' who together trust God for more than the sum of our own abilities. We desire His leading in our own lives, in our families, and in our community. We are not afraid to step out in faith if we believe God calls us to. We know that God is big.

NLC's church culture is formed out of three major aspects as described below:

1. First, the history and originating vision for the "church plant in Cumberland", that we now know as Northern Lakes Church (NLC), established certain main "support beams" of NLC's present church culture. Three of these would be "evangelical worship in a contemporary style", "practical, understandable Bible teaching", and a "come as you are environment". They were a part of NLC's culture on day one and continue today.
2. Secondly, NLC's Core Values provide a framework within which NLC's culture lives, grows and develops. The Core Values are listed later in this document.
3. And, thirdly, growth and development of ministries and the growth in size of the church family have also deeply influenced the church culture of NLC. Examples of these influencers would be:

- a. As NLC began the Awana ministry, this ministry started a focus upon “family” that also is now deep within our church culture. In the same way, beginning a Middle School & Youth program was a step that also expanded the church culture to include this important group. These programs led to NLC being called the “Awana Church” by community members. Family focus became and remains a key part of our church culture.
- b. The growth in size of the church family has also impacted the church culture as it necessitated moving from the original, down-town, store-front church building to the Dome, and again in building the ARK ministry center. The growth in size and facility available provided opportunities for the church family to become involved in more ministry/service roles, opening doors to active service opportunities. A church family who serves continues as part of NLC church culture. NLC has regular attendees from a minimum of 30-mile radius which includes the communities of Luck, Frederic, Barron, Almena, Turtle Lake, Barronett, Shell Lake, Spooner, Cameron, and Rice Lake.

The “Is / Is not” views of the NLC church by the community are as follows:

1. Is not a ‘main-line’ type of church
2. Is considered ‘radical’
3. Is seen to be family/children/youth church of community (locally called the “Awana church”)
4. Is considered growing
5. Is considered as ‘everyone welcome’
6. Is known to have an evangelical worship...with non-liturgical style...
7. Is not fully understood, and is noted to be ‘different’ in style of Christianity. Previously identified as some type of cult group, but, slowly in the past years, NLC has become “more accepted” and a valid part of the church community of Cumberland (as it has grown and now with the ARK). However, NLC is sometimes seen as a ‘competitor’ to the other churches in Cumberland and surrounding area.

In summary, we liken our church culture to deer camp Christianity, as written about by our current pastor Dennis Wright:

“You see, deer camp is much more than just being about deer. It’s the lives of friends, relatives, or neighbors being shared with one and another. It’s learning from one another. It’s sharing the workload to make everything function as needed without being asked. It’s telling those special stories that ears of true friends simply need to hear. It’s giving up some of the complexities of life, the kind of stuff we daily enjoy or use without thinking, or the stuff that so easily raises our stress level. These are consciously set aside to provide one the time to enjoy the truly important things of life.

Our experience of church should be like a ‘True Christian Deer Camp’. Church should be a place where God is truly at the center, met, and experienced regularly. It should be a place where lives are shared. Stories are told and people are loved, accepted and know that they belong. Everyone is welcome. No one is perfect. God works miracles. He starts at the exact point He

finds us. But, He does not leave us where He found us. He begins a change process. He makes us ready for heaven, but also ready to live as true Christians. He starts by forgiving us and putting His Holy Spirit into our hearts”.

Church Logo

Over the years, as our church has grown and developed, our logo has changed to reflect our ministry and calling. In order to communicate the story and vision of our church, we have expanded it to include three parts:

Our name: Though we are still officially “Northern Lakes Community Church”, we are often called simply, “Northern Lakes Church”, and have decided to embrace that. (We also have moved from the initials “NLCC” to “NLC”.)

Our emblem: We have gone from using a sailboat to relate to our name, to an anchor, to an anchor containing a cross, and a rope. The idea of the anchor is rooted in Hebrews 6, which describes the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, with the rope symbolizing the hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain (as the priests were tied before they entered); and Jesus, who has gone as a forerunner on our behalf.

Our invitation: “Find Hope...Experience God”. Our invitation also comes from Hebrews 6, especially verses 11 and 18 & 19. These verses reveal God as the full assurance of hope until the end, and that we might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We desire through this invitation to share God and the hope found in Jesus Christ with others.



Church Statistics

1. **Attendance:** Since 2015, the attendance has been fairly steady as shown in the table on the next page. The attendance appears to be a little higher in 2015 to 2017. However, there were a number of people attending both the Saturday night and Sunday morning services. So, some people were counted twice. In 2018, the Saturday night service was dropped so that everyone attended the Sunday service. Therefore, the number of attendees is more realistic in 2018 through March 2020.

The table above shows that the on-site attendance dropped to zero between March 21st and May 31st of 2020 due to COVID-19 state mandated closures. On-line services were started the first weekend of the mandated closures. The number of views of the on-line services were very high. According to GLR, people tend to look at more than one service per weekend. They said to divide the number of views by two to get a more realistic number of people that actually see the whole service.

On-site services were resumed June 7th of 2020. The table shows the total attendees and the viewers of the on-line services. As the numbers indicate, a number of church members are still not attending weekend services due to concerns with COVID-19.

There are currently 110 members at NLC. This number includes a growth of young families, and the blessing of a large number of active men.

NLC AVERAGE WEEKEND CHURCH ATTENDANCE SINCE 2015								
	Calendar Year 2015	Calendar Year 2016	Calendar Year 2017	Calendar Year 2018	Calendar Year 2019	2020		
						Jan 1 to Mar 15	Mar 21 to May 31	June 7 to Dec 31
Nursery	9	9	11	12	15	11		13
Sunday School (Youth)	18	12	10	14	19	16		16
Services	165	167	161	150	138	148		102
Total Attendance at Church	192	188	182	176	172	175		131
On-Line Service Views							564	293

2. **Giving:** The below shows that total giving to NLC has ranged from \$242,508 to \$430,640 with a significant portion slated for construction of the ARK. As our congregation grows, we anticipate the tithing to increase proportionately.

NLC Annual Giving							
	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Tithing		\$233,636	\$238,549	\$291,669	\$259,635	\$295,790	\$198,574
Building Fund / Debt Retirement		\$8,872	\$110,691	\$50,571	\$171,005	\$22,449	\$209,480
Total	\$333,302	\$242,508	\$349,240	\$342,240	\$430,640	\$318,239	\$408,054
Notes:							
1. The 2018-19 Fiscal Year was 13 months long to adjust to a new fiscal year period.							
2. The 2020-21 Fiscal Year column includes the months of June through December.							

Debt: The debt for the construction of the ARK was just over half for the total cost of construction. If a contractor had been hired to construct the entire structure, the estimated cost would have been close to \$3,000,000.

When the ARK was substantially completed in September 2018, NLC had two construction loans. The first loan totaled \$520,000 including interest accrued during construction. In the beginning of 2021, the total outstanding debt for this loan has been reduced to \$501,800. The amount of the second construction loan at the end of construction was \$300,000. In the beginning of 2021, the remaining principal of the second loan was reduced to \$45,500 due to substantial donations for loan principal reduction.

Church Governance and Staff

NLC has a seven-member governance board, with elected members serving three-year terms. The senior pastor serves as chairman of the board. Our fiscal year is June 1 to May 31.

NLC is a part of the Wesleyan denomination. For more information visit www.wesleyan.org.

In addition to the senior pastor, NLC currently has a fulltime assistant pastor and part-time staff consisting of administrative assistant, treasurer and worship director.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our Mission

Northern Lakes Church exists to become a vibrant community of Jesus followers who are experiencing God and living out His kingdom in our personal lives., in our families and in our community.

Our Vision

We believe God loves us so much that He accepts us just as He finds us. However, He loves us too much to leave us where He found us. Therefore, our vision for every person at Northern Lakes Church is summarized in these three words: “Learn, Love, Serve”.

Our Core Values

Northern Lakes Church has six core values that express what’s important to us. They are:

1. **A transformational relationship with Jesus.** Men and women are saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10, “if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus as Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”
2. **The Bible’s place of authority in our church and in our personal lives.** The Bible is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2Timothy 3:16 NLT)
3. **Authentic heartfelt worship.** Contemporary worship celebrates God, builds the believer, and speaks to the spiritually seeking.
4. **Come as you are.** Everyone is welcome, wanted, and needed, and there is a specific place of ministry for all.
5. **Being a missionary to the community and the world.** Jesus commands His followers to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20) and “and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). This process begins in our homes, continues to our local community, and reaches out to the entire world.
6. **Commitment to family.** We believe family is God’s plan and design for relationships and is the foundation upon which community is built.

For more information please see our website at <http://northernlakeschurch.com/>, and our Facebook page.

WHAT WE DO

Teach and Preach the Gospel

Currently, we are preaching for the main Sunday morning service, for a Saturday night service, and for an online service. The Bible is at the core of our preaching and teaching ministries. We find that teaching through a book of the Bible helps us understand the context and depth of a Scripture passage, rather than using Scripture to support a pre-conceived point. The Bible is believed and taught to be the authoritative Word of God - to be infallible and inerrant. In teaching and preaching from Scripture, we seek to understand deeply in order to obey completely what God desires of us today.

We teach and preach from the Bible at Northern Lakes Church. We acknowledge the Bible as the prime authority, calling people to repentance, to faithfulness, to maturity, to evangelism, and to discipleship. Our preaching and teaching should not just call people to grow in their knowledge, but also in love, in obedience, and in hope.

Evangelical Worship

Our evangelical worship includes a worship team which provides mostly contemporary Christian music during our weekend services, a first impressions team that meet attendees at the door, Sunday school and a decorative arts team that enhance the weekend services.

- 1. First Impressions:** As the title of this ministry reveals, the First Impressions team is the first to smile at and welcome existing and new guests to our services and events. Currently, two greeters are positioned at the front entrance to open the door (also to reduce number of hands touching the doors), welcome, assist guests when needed, hand out bulletins, and answer general questions and/or direct guests to the Welcome Desk. One or two volunteers covers the parking lot to direct guests to convenient parking. At this time, we have one or two usher volunteers at the Worship Center doors to point out collection boxes, hand out communion cups and The Newsletter, as well as explain seating and help guests to safely social distance from other parties. The team currently in place is flexible on where they are positioned and are only committed to Sunday service (not Saturday). They are also requested to work at concerts and special events. New guests are directed to the Welcome Desk for additional information on NLC, to answer any questions, and offer first-timers a gift. This is also where sign-up sheets and a prayer and praise box are located.

In the future, the first impression ministry should be a vibrant ministry of well-trained volunteers who stand out as THE go-to people; about 30+ strong so they can be rotated to volunteer once/month as well as rotate during special events. Their main focus should be on giving new guests a very welcoming experience - concentrating on them and their needs. They would gather information from new guests so that friendly outreach/connection would continue to ensure all of their questions are answered, they are informed of "happenings" and invited to join in, and that they could see the heart of NLC. The leadership of this ministry needs to be present and provide helpful guidance to their team at all times. It would be impactful to see staff and their spouses/families, as well as board members and families serving on this team.

- 2. Sunday School and Children's Church:** Before COVID-19, Sunday school classes were offered for the whole family before the Sunday service. There were classes for nursery-aged kids, preschool and kindergarten, elementary, youth, and various adult classes. The children and youth classes

used the Gospel Project curriculum to teach the Bible over a three-year period. Adult courses on Sunday mornings included a women's study, a men's study, one for the Worship Team, and one to review last week's sermon. During the church service, children were released to children's church for a lesson that extended what they had learned in Sunday school. Since COVID-19, we have continued with children's church and only two adult classes have restarted.

In the next five years, we should once again be offering Sunday school classes for the whole family. The adult studies should include a class for new believers, a course for an in-depth Bible study, and a course for Christian living (parenting from a Christian perspective, etc.).

- 3. Worship Team:** NLC offers Christian contemporary worship music at our services and events; this includes a more up-to-date music selection and less traditional services. Currently, the worship team consists of 12 full-time members and the worship director. Recent auditions have brought three more potential members. On any given Sunday the worship team consists of an electric keyboard, drums, electric guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, harmonica, and several vocalists. The goal is to prepare the congregation for our pastors' weekly service. The worship team also participate in a small group bible study. They also represent NLC at the annual Rutabaga service and parade in Cumberland.

Future goals would be to expand the worship team into two primary teams, and a youth worship team. The worship team is planning to present three concerts per year.

- 4. Decorative Arts:** The Decorative Arts Team is a support ministry for all aspects of church life at NLC. The team began in response to interior design needs during construction of the ARK center, and has evolved into decorative support for Sunday's lessons, seasonal church calendar decoration, special events held at the church, church logo and signage, and assisting the Board Trustees in completion of the building, furnishings and accessories; anywhere that decorative or design skills are desired. At the present time, the team has one coordinator, and fluctuates in size according to project need. A larger, more consistent team would be a blessing.

Outreach

Outreach is a very important ministry of our church. The major outreach ministries are listed below.

- 1. Jail Ministry:** Currently, NLC's Jail Ministry is offered at Barron County Jail. Due to COVID-19 cutbacks, NLC has one (non-pastoral) representative who plans and delivers a virtual Friday Bible study with inmates, supplies a weekly written sermon for inmates, and is available to meet with post inmates once a week at the church. Once able to return to the "normal" Jail Ministry schedule, that would include the above-mentioned ministries, plus a rotating team of 4-5 NLC members offering a church service at the Barron County Jail the first Sunday of every month (1:00 PM), and the fifth Sunday of every month.

NLC would look at opportunities to expand the jail ministry outside of Barron County to the surrounding counties in the future.

- 2. Missionaries:** Romans 10:14-15: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of these who bring good news!"

NLC Missions Board is a group of approximately six people who desire to advance, support, educate, and promote missions at NLC. We hope to bring the good news by supporting missions financially, promoting them through October Missions Month speaking opportunities, corresponding with our missionaries—through email and social media, cards and/or gifts for birthdays and holidays—and conveying prayer requests to our congregation.

At the present time, we sponsor five missions around the world, as well as support members of our congregation who are serving in the military.

In the future we would like to encourage congregants of NLC to get more involved in the ministry through mission trips with organizations such as Samaritan's Purse disaster relief, join in short-term mission trips through the Wesleyan church at large, and by reaching out to our military families through correspondence, care packages and inspirational material. Our longer-term goal is to be financially and physically able to add more missions to our list.

3. **Concerts:** Currently, NLC has had to postpone several scheduled concerts due to COVID-19. The NLC Worship Team held a Fall Worship Fun Night and Concert and a Christmas concert. Mark Schultz, Christian Contemporary music artist (Dove Award Recipient) was here in concert on November 15, 2020. The Blackwood Brothers, an American southern gospel quartet, plan on returning to NLC for their second concert in 2021. We will be hosting Jason Gray in March 2021, and are being considered for other Christian artists in the future.

Future concert goals include having our Worship Team perform three to four concerts annually. We would like to expand our external artist concerts to three to four times per year and possibly being in a larger Christian music world circuit. This was not something we pursued, but we believe this is an outreach ministry that God has called us to.

4. **Hospitality:** Romans 12:12-13: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." The Hospitality Ministry is currently comprised of three parts: The Kitchen, Compassion/Care Ministry, and Ruby's Pantry.

The Kitchen - the kitchen is used for serving the congregation and community. It requires a team of 20-25 volunteers to shop, set up, cook serve food, take down, and clean up for events. Meals are provided for the Awana program once a week, serving 90-110 people per week. Coffee and snacks are provided for before, during, and after Sunday services (this has been adjusted due to COVID-19). The kitchen also hosts breakfasts and snacks or meals for many of the small group ministry events held at the church. We have an amazing gifting of bakers and cooks in our congregation. The kitchen ministry coordinates with them to provide for any and all events.

In the future, the kitchen ministry would like to return to hosting potlucks, Easter breakfast, Thanksgiving meals, VBS, concert refreshments, funerals, seminars and retreats.

Compassion/Care Ministry - This branch reaches out to the elderly that do not have access to internet, by mailing them bulletins, and doing wellness calls, and seeing that they get help if any is needed. They mail cards to those who are ill and/or need prayer, as well as the whole congregation at special times (such as Christmas and COVID-19). They see that meals are arranged for anyone who is in need, such as new mothers, those having surgery or are bedridden. They are also in charge of, and coordinate with the church administrator, the church prayer chains and links.

The compassion ministry would like to expand by adding hospital and shut-in visits.

Ruby's Pantry - NLC sponsors Ruby's Pantry for Cumberland and the surrounding area. This is a ministry that meets on the first Saturday of every month and distributes food, preferably for a small donation, though no money is required. It is open to everyone. There are volunteers from all around the community for the ministry. We also have several people from NLC who help with the unloading and setting up distribution. NLC has already committed to helping Ruby's Pantry further by provided a venue for their distributions.

We would like to additionally assist them with storage space for their equipment and supplies; and possible assist other food programs in the community, along-side the current local food pantry.

All of these ministries require many volunteers. In the process we build relationships, in and outside of the church, as we serve side-by-side. And we have fun doing it.

5. **Buildings are Venue for Community:** The community is using NLC for Ruby's Pantry, pickleball, open gym on Fridays and volleyball. Peterson Wrestling Camp will be back for their third year starting in 2021. We have also held Taekwondo tournaments, community 'talks', weddings, funerals, the Community Christmas Concert, and private parties in both buildings.

Future goals are to welcome more community usage in our Christian environment (i.e. children's programs, aging-well programs for older adults).

Children's/Youth Ministries

1. **Awana:** Our current Awana ministry includes children ranging in age from 4 years old through 4th grade. We are averaging around 35 kids each Wednesday night, including families outside of our church family. A meal is provided for the clubbers and parents before evening activities. At the end of each Awana year the children are recognized for their accomplishments during Sunday service, and family and friends are encouraged to attend. We currently have around 15 adults serving directly with the clubbers. We also have at least 10 adults serving as the kitchen staff to serve/set up and tear down crew.

Going forward, we would love to see some younger leaders taking the lead and aggressively recruiting more leaders but also actively going outside the church and bringing more non churched kids/adults into the ministry. We feel the ministry should attend more Awana training sessions and more leader meetings to meet the changing times in ministries. bridging the Awana kids into the youth group should be a priority somehow. Doubling the ministry of kids is very doable for Awana under the right leadership in the next three to five years.

2. **Vacation Bible School (VBS):** Our VBS has typically served from 50 to 75 children each year and has been a five day, roughly 3-hour evangelistic outreach program, held in mid-July. We have worked very hard to make sure that our content is very Gospel-centered and the purpose of the program has been to present the Gospel every night in a way that will engage the children and that is easy to understand. Scripture memorization and connecting the kids that attend to our weekend children's ministries and mid-week Awana clubs for continued discipleship has also been a key component.

In the future, we would love to increase the number of children we are able to minister to through VBS. It would be wonderful to establish a team of dedicated volunteers to coordinate and plan, and even write our own VBS curriculum together.

3. **Middle and High School Youth:** On Wednesday evenings, middle school and high school students come together for a joint time of worship and then a lesson. Worship is led by a small team (3-4 people). This year, Pastor Tim is teaching through the book of Matthew with the hope that students would discover who Jesus is and what He taught. Then, students are broken into small groups, based on their grades, during which they discuss the lesson with study questions and spend time in prayer. The evenings finish with games. About once a month, a fun activity is held on site. About once every four months, we embark upon a larger adventure, such as skiing, completing a high ropes course, or going rock wall climbing. The two stated objectives of our youth ministry are for 1) an opportunity for students to be encouraged in their walk with God and 2) an opportunity for students to build relationships with Christians in a safe and fun environment.

We are seeking to raise up a team of adult leaders who will continue to build into these students' lives in the years to come. In the next five years, we would like the ministry to double in size. We would also like to see the students participate in summer mission trips, in a 3-year cycle which includes local, national, and international trips.

4. **Nursery:** The nursery takes care of children ages three and under. It provides an entry point for children into the children's program, as they can then move on to Children's Church, Sunday school, and Awana. This ministry is enabling parents to participate more fully in the church service and is one of the reasons that we have so many young families in our church. We are averaging thirteen children in the nursery per Sunday.

The nursery ministry needs to continue to be a blessing to young families, providing a safe and loving environment for the children while their parents participate in the worship service.

Young Families

Six years ago, the church began praying in earnest for NLC to be a home for young families. This group was started as an answer to that prayer. It is for young married couples with small children to get together, study God's Word and fellowship together. We have also enjoyed having engaged and newlywed couples attend our group. Our group has had four couples who consistently attend.

In the future we would love to see young families small group grow and even multiply, having several groups that are intentional about studying topics that are relevant to the issues young families face in today's world.

Moms' Group (Play and Pray)

This mom's group currently meets in the leader's home in the morning on the first and third Tuesday of each month. The leader has been very encouraged by the response. There were 10 moms and 17 kids in one of the recent meetings. Young moms are craving connection and encouragement. The leader wanted to incorporate a time where they could pray together. The leader realized before starting this group that their times of prayer would be spread throughout the morning as they had pockets of time where kids were happily settled. It has also been a time to slowly introduce why they pray and to whom they pray as not all of the moms are believers.

Looking ahead, we would love to see moms regularly meeting together, focusing on Biblical encouragement and prayer. We would also love to see the moms and the families they represent come to know Jesus as their Savior and to see them get connected to a local church.

Empty Nesters (OASIS)

As a ministry, OASIS, Older Adults Sharing In Service, is an opportunity to join others who are beyond the years of infant child rearing, to help each other in spiritual need, physical need, and social need. This is done through a monthly social time, which includes a meal, devotion and entertainment. The members have assisted others with projects around their homes and also reached out to others through a dinner for younger church attendees and raised funds to donate to the Pregnancy Help Center (a local charity). Everyone in the group is fully capable of the social aspects of OASIS, however, only a few find themselves able to do service projects that require strength and service abilities.

The future vision of the OASIS group is to continue providing an organization for this age group that would provide an outlet for fellowship and spiritual growth through getting together in a social setting as well as in helpful projects for others.

Bible Studies/Small Groups

1. **Men's Ministries:** NLC has a relatively significant number of active men in the church. The men's ministry exists to provide a place and forum where men can develop as biblically minded humble servant leaders. The goal of the NLC men's ministry is to glorify God by growing in our relationship and knowledge of God, by becoming better servant leaders and by becoming better men of God. Currently, the men's ministry has been limited to a once-a-week men's bible study due to the COVID-19. In the past, the men's ministry has been involved with various outreaches.

Hopefully, through small group spin offs, development of meaningful friendships, and through community minded groups of men, the ministry will further serve our church and community.

2. **Women's Ministries:** Coffee Break at NLC is a vibrant women's ministry that meets every Friday morning for two hours during the school year since 2011. We welcome all women whether they attend our church or not. Currently we share fellowship with women from age 24-84 to delve into the Bible. Some women are young moms, singles, widows, or empty nesters. Free babysitting is provided. The mutual respect shown by all, with our varied backgrounds, has developed into the joy of deep friendships. We begin and end with confidential prayers as we apply scripture to our daily lives. We are sincerely sisters-in-Christ!

In the next 3-5 years we would love to multiply the formation of other women's Bible studies in the evenings. Many mothers drop off their children for our AWANA program and our middles school and high school teen programs. We would like to offer some classes or Bible studies for these women to stay at church during their children's programs.

3. **Couple's Ministries:** Couples home groups are a place for people to become comfortable with other people; being able to ask dumb questions and share personal needs, answers to prayer, and life's ups and downs with people that care. We don't see couples home groups as a place for a leader to expound on what he knows. The goal of a home group is to get people to talk, share and learn from one another.

Couples home groups are a like a leg on a three-legged stool, church-wise speaking. You have Sunday church services being one leg of the stool. Youth outreach is the second leg of the stool. Couples home groups are the third leg. People live very independent lives, have computer access to the world, and are dependent on no one. People lack a place to grow spiritually and become brothers and sisters in Christ. Home groups fill this need.

We would like to see more of these groups in the future.

4. **Age-Appropriate Ministries:** Our church vision, “Learn, Love, Serve”, can be expanded by the phrase: “Learning to love God and helping others learn to love God”. Part of the way we try to do that is by offering connection groups for all ages and stages of life, centered around Christ and community.

At the present time, we have been doing this through all of the ministries listed under our “Current Church Ministries”, as well as a “Crafts and Conversation” group, primarily for women that work during the day, and a new Young Adults Bible Study.

We continue to pray for the ability to see needs and gaps in our small groups, and for leaders to step up and serve these needs.

OUR HOPES, DREAMS & EXPECTATIONS (part of vision)

Once we moved into the new building, we realized that God was presenting us with an opportunity to grow once again. In anticipation of that, we held a number of planning sessions and seminars to guide us. They were remarkably well attended by a good cross-section of our congregation. A team was then established to combine the information and ideas gathered in these sessions and come up with a Strategic Framework to help guide us into the future. Much of what is in this document has evolved from that Framework. The list that follows may seem redundant to parts of this document, but it reveals the passion and heart of our NLC family, and we feel it's important enough to repeat.

We desire to:

- Be a place of life transformation through Christ
- Live authentic Christian lives
- Be a church of conversion/baptism
- Grow discipleship
- Have clarity of vision for church unity
- Discover God's gifts that we are given and use them as God leads
- Expand mentoring opportunities
- Grow leadership development
- Be Community: within the congregation
- Be Community: in the surrounding area
- Collaborate with other churches & groups
- Reach out through support groups
- Reach out through serving and supporting missions
- Plan for entering, belonging & discipleship within
- Encourage families through children/youth programs
- Reach/Involve all ages

WE HOPE TO GROW (part of vision)

Create Additional Space for Growth

The ARK has become a focal point for many community activities. The Cumberland schools have used the facility several times for events involving students. The facility has also been used by volleyball teams, adult pickle ball group, youth wrestling camps, etc. We would like to install outdoor venue which would include a fire pit.

Strengthen strategic Communications Plan

Within the last year, NLC has strengthened its communications within the congregation with a new communications flow chart and improvements to the website, email system and church bulletin. NLC is now looking at how to improve communications with the community with regard to church events, upcoming concerts, etc. that would benefit the community.

Initiate Leadership Training Process

As the church grows, new leaders need to be identified, trained and groomed for new positions. New leaders are in constant need for additional small group bible studies, worship team, VBS, Sunday school, church board, trustee board and other ministries within the church.

Improve Children/Youth Ministries (Pre-School Through Age 18)

NLC needs to be adaptable and flexible as well as creative to attract more children and youth to participate in these ministries, especially the unchurched. More adults would be encouraged to step forward to receive training and take an active part in leading and teaching the children and youth.

Enhance Stewardship

NLC would like to encourage church attendees the spiritual importance of giving of one's talents and tithing to God. This would enhance the operations of the church as well as enhance the various ministries.

Develop & Refine Small Group Ministries

Belonging to small groups is such a vital part of our spiritual lives. We encourage all adults to belong to one or more small groups. We need to look at opportunities for developing small groups in our congregation to get more adults involved in small groups that fit their interests, stage of life and/or personalities.

Expand Outreach Ministries

One example of recent expansion of outreach was the addition of Christian concerts to reach our congregation as well as the surrounding communities. Other outreach possibilities need to be researched such as banquets for hunters, fishermen, ladies' events, etc. We have such a beautiful facility for many kinds of outreach possibilities that need to be explored and pursued.