

## Major Themes from Small Group Meetings

Question 1: If you were telling a new person or friend about Elim, what are 1-3 words you might use to describe Elim?

- Welcoming, friendly, sense of family, fellowship, inclusive, positive
- Open to ideas, accepting, innovative
- Wonderful music
- Meaningful traditional and non-traditional worship services
- Great pastoral leadership with Pastor Kathryn/sermons
- Caring for and about others
- Long history of outreach, service, and support in the community (food pantry and local nonprofits) and the the world (e.g. NOLA, NLB, etc.), generous
- Multi-generational: kid-friendly, youth, families, older adults
- Something for everyone: Bible study, music, men's/women's groups, crafting, etc.
- Little Shepherd Preschool strong presence in community
- Lutheran tradition/heritage in the community, aging congregation

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### Question 2: What is God Calling Elim to do NOW?

- Grow our faith, teach and deepen our faith, grow closer to God, focus on Bible study
- Share God's love with others
- Bring stability by calling a permanent pastor. Pastor Kathryn is perfect for Elim.
- Invite others, be intentional about welcoming, following up, and expanding opportunities for the engagement of a diverse demographic of people so all can feel and be a part of Elim.
- Reassess and re-imagine Elim's mission and ministry and be open to change and transformation in this time. Use social media.
- Continue focus on outreach in the community and world
- Grow & continue: all youth and family programs, music & worship, opportunities for fellowship to deepen our connections with each other especially after Covid and streamed worship.
- Involve youth and kids in life of faith community to build their church ownership, build a church where families can stay and grow with their families
- Focus on aging members: what support is needed, what new partnerships can be built e.g. with youth
- Reassess Elim's church property and plan action steps for improvements that will support and grow Elim's identified ministries.
- Strengthen connection with Little Shepherd Preschool staff, students, and families.

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Question 3: What is God calling Elim to do in the next 5 years?

- Invite all and reach out to ALL (e.g.: members who have not reengaged, the disenfranchised, Elim neighborhood, younger families, seniors, Hispanic population and more), be disciples, use our talents to get out the Good News, use Livestream, social media, follow up, engage.
- Call a permanent pastor for Elim. Pastor Kathryn is doing a great job.
- Focus on a creative and comprehensive youth and family ministry, invite and engage youth and teens. Seek new and relevant ways.
- Focus on spiritual growth at Elim. Deepen our faith.
- Continue and grow service, support, and outreach in our community and in the world. Continue support of local non-profits. Reach out to those who are in need.
- Show and model God's love to others - outreach and service activities, and in the ways we interact with each other at Elim, and through our presence in Petaluma.
- Engage with social issues- what are the problems of today? Take a leadership role in partnering with other faith communities and non-profits to address social issues.
- Assess Elim's buildings and property and implement project improvements that will support Elim's ministries including Little Shepherd Preschool.
- Build a presence for this time. Be a church where families and individuals want to stay and where a pastor has an opportunity to grow with us through leading and serving.

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### Question 4: What are Elim's main assets?

- Congregants who are
  - Dedicated, talented, and willing volunteers
  - Active in community outside of church
  - Friendly, loving and caring
  - Strong through upheaval of pastor changes, covid, etc.
  - Support each other
  - Generous
- Elim's outreach programs - Food pantry, Mexico Housebuilding, NOLA, BSA, Relay for Life, NLB, PEP, COTS, VBS, Festival Choir, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Pop-up Sale donations, Groups that meet at Elim (AA, Alanon, etc.)
- Elim Facilities - Building and Sanctuary
  - Facilities for groups (AA, Alanon, etc.)
  - Beautiful and Historic Sanctuary
  - Centrally located with parking
  - No mortgage
- Little Shepherd Preschool which is a Christian environment for small children
- Elim's music program and music director

- Pastor Kathryn who is a God-send during pastoral and covid upheaval and is a really great pastor  
- Sermons, educator, leader, etc.
- Elim's Lutheran Theology and Ecumenical activities
- Elim is inclusive
- Elim has a good reputation in the community
- Elim has great staff

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### Question 5: What qualities make an effective Pastor?

There were an overwhelming number of requests outright for Pastor Kathryn to be hired by Elim during this question. Also an overwhelming number that wanted a good or a strong leader.

- **A good strong leader** that
  - Encourages us and pushes us beyond our comfort level
  - Is innovative
  - Is organized / has administrative talents
  - Is a visionary
  - Is experienced
  - Is open minded
  - Is a team player
- Connects well with youth, aged, and people in need
- Thorough knowledge of the bible and theology and understands other religions
- Great sermons
- Has good communication skills which include listening
- Is concerned with the community and the world
- Is inclusive
- And has a personality that includes being

- Compassionate and empathetic
- Funny - a sense of humor
- Relatable
- Dynamic and magnetic
- Engaging
- Passionate
- Enthusiastic
- Approachable
- Vulnerable
- An extrovert
- Optimistic
- Faithful

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Question 6: Who are our neighbors and what is our vision for ministry?

- Petaluma - invite new residents to Elim. Be a bridge for shared conversation to mend divisiveness.
- Neighbors - hold events / activities and invite neighbors, ring the bell before service, invite them to use the community garden.
- Little Shepherd Preschool - hold events, reunions, children perform at services, parents become members.
- Other churches / Religious Organizations - share activities / youth director? Learn from each other. Combine congregations?
- Youth - **We NEED to attract youth**
- Parents - parenting classes, parent night out nights
- On site groups (Alanon, AA, etc.) - interact more. Invite them to church services.
- Food Pantry / Hungry
- NOLA
- Mexico
- Sonoma County
- Disaster relief
- Immigrants / Spanish



- NLB
- Homeless
- Mental Support
- Boy Scouts
- Native Americans
- Aging / Housebound
- Health Issues
- Disabilities
- Everyone

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Question 7: Out of the box thinking about Elim:

If Elim could do anything, what would that be?

- Sponsor and publicize great events to introduce Elim to the community more
- Address homelessness
- Build a preschool and we can use the Fellowship Hall more for rentals and activities
- Provide Day-care
- Market Elim rental space
- Update and Maintain Facilities
  - Remodel kitchen
  - Remodel or something with 506 Baker
  - Replace carpet in Sanctuary
  - Replace seat covers in Sanctuary
  - Fix hall floor upstairs
  - Elevator to 2nd floor
- Grow congregation - reach out to youth - utilize social media, tools of the times
- Partner with other congregations / religious entities
- Utilize upstairs and the apartment
- Bring Elim music out to the community

- Find / Fund parsonage
- Create dedicated area for Food Pantry
- Climate Change ministry
- Adult day school for lonely members of our community
- Have a Youth Director
- Build a new church and use Sanctuary as a Chapel
- Partner with non-profits
- Hire Pastor Kathryn