

First English Lutheran Church - Austin, TX
 MINISTRY SITE PROFILE - COPY
Adopted by unanimous vote by the Congregation Council on June 17, 2024

PART I: WHO WE ARE

Name and Location





Congregation Congregation/Multi Point Parish/Organization	First English Evangelical Lutheran Church Name	05880 Cong ID
Austin, TX, 78705 City, State, Zip	US Country	
Southwestern Texas (4E) Synod	Congregation - Organized Type of Ministry Site	1936 Year Organized
Large city (250,000 or more) Size of Community		

Contact Information

3001 Whitis Ave Address Line 1	Address Line 2	Austin, TX, 78705 City, State, Zip	USA Country
E-Mail	felcaustin.org Web Site	512-478-1933 Phone	Fax





Chairperson of Congregation

LaRu Woody
Name

 Address Line	Address Line 2	Austin, TX,  City, State, Zip	USA Country
Day Phone	Evening Phone	 Cell Phone	 Email

Chairperson of Call Committee

Erin McCracken
Name

 Address Line	Address Line 2	Austin, TX,  City, State, Zip	USA Country
Day Phone	Evening Phone	 Cell Phone	 Email

Demographics

Language Spoken

In the congregation	English Primary Language	Spanish Second Language	Third Language
In the surrounding Community	English Primary Language	Spanish Second Language	Third Language
Race/Ethnicity (in the Congregation)	White Largest	Latino/Hispanic Second	Black/African American Third
Race/Ethnicity (Surrounding Community)	White Largest	Latino/Hispanic Second	Asian Third

COMMENTS OR EXPLANATION: *Congregation data based on the FELC 2022 ELCA trend report. Community data pulled from an ARDA (Association of Religion Data Archives) 2-mile radius report with data from 2019.*

Gender Comparison		Age Distribution				
48% % Male	52% % Female	13% % 0-19	11% % 20-34	22% % 35-49	28% % 50-65	26% % Over 65

Number of Paid Staff

1 Clergy	Lay Rostered	1 (Cantor) Other Lay Professionals	2 Admin Support	2 Custodial Support	<i>First English Lutheran Child Development Center (FELCDC)*:</i> 1 Director; 1 Assistant Dir., 1 Chef, 7 Teachers 1 Bookkeeper <i>*Note: These staff members are not paid out of FELC budget. Other</i>
-------------	--------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Congregational Information

67* (onsite) + 42 (online) (*average includes attendance at special services) Ave Weekly Attendance	14 Ave Attendance in Christian Education	Single Site Parish Type
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	----------------------------

Distance members live from church facilities:

0% % .5 mile or less	5% % .5-1 mile	20% % 1-3 miles	75% % More than 3 miles
-------------------------	-------------------	--------------------	----------------------------

Community Type

- Inner City
- College or University

<u>Budget of the Congregation</u>	2023 Last Fiscal Year
\$367,240 Total Budget (actuals) for the last fiscal year Income	\$0 Total Debt of the congregation at end of last fiscal year
\$9,000 Mission Support to the ELCA/Synod for last fiscal year	\$566,072 Total savings, reserves, endowment at end of last fiscal year

PART II: OUR VISION FOR MISSION

Trends in the Community Context of the Congregation

Characteristics:

Write a description of your community in terms of socio-economic status, demographics, primary areas of employment and lifestyle.

First English Evangelical Lutheran Church (FELC) is located a few blocks north of the University of Texas at Austin. The community is a densely populated neighborhood with access to public bus transportation and close proximity to shops, restaurants, bars, museums, concert venues, university sports events, and performing arts centers. It should be noted that the vast majority of FELC congregation members live outside of the church's immediate neighborhood. FELC members represent communities all throughout greater Austin. The majority of residents in the immediate area hold at least a bachelor's degree and average household incomes fall in the middle- to upper-middle-income range. While the immediate neighborhood surrounding the church to the west and north reflects the middle- to upper-middle-income households, the area directly to the south, southwest, and east of the church is inclusive of a large transitory student population in addition to individuals experiencing homelessness. For this area, over 40% of individuals are classified as living in poverty (computed for individuals based on household size and community costs of living). The prevalent age group in the area is 18-24 (followed by 25-44) and the highest percentage of residents are non-families. The community is predominantly white, followed by Hispanic, Asian, and Black. The majority of workers in the area have occupations classified as White Collar with the highest representation in the fields of management, business, science, and arts. A typical commuter travels between 15 and 19 minutes to work. Of those in the labor force, 3.4% are unemployed. As a church, we continue to explore opportunities to live out the gospel alongside the fullness of our immediate community. *Our data source was the [ARDA zip code report](#), using a one-mile radius around FELC.*

Trends:

List three changes or trends within the congregation which have occurred in the last three to five years.

1. Due to Covid we are expanding into an online community, adopting a hybrid format for meetings and worship.
2. A core group of older foundational members has passed, and the percentage of families with children has diminished.
3. Lay leaders have carried on with ministries and improvements within the church, infusing energy and shared knowledge into our community.

Context:

List three ways that the community in which you are located has been challenged by change and transition in the last three to five years.

1. Political climate in Texas: rise of Christian Nationalism challenges our mission to embrace and protect threatened groups
2. Rapid growth and development, resulting in rising housing prices, traffic congestion, gentrification, and income disparity
3. Climate change: extreme weather swings in Austin have become more pronounced, impacting the cost of utilities and other basic resources, as well as residents' preparedness for both summer & winter.

Programs:

Describe your congregation's current programs for mission and ministry.

Ongoing Ministries within the Church

- FELC offers rich and meaningful weekly (on-site and live-stream) worship experiences through:
 - Scripture readings and sermons that follow the lectionary and invite individual reflection as well as Biblical education
 - A dedicated Cantor, choir, and other musicians
 - Lay leadership roles such as assisting minister, usher, lector, altar service, special music offerings, post-worship hospitality, and technical assistance for live-streaming
- FELC ensures opportunities for faith formation through:
 - Children's weekly pre-worship gatherings and during worship children's sermons (Faith of a Child)
 - A variety of offerings for adult faith formation that include Adult Forums on current topics and regularly meeting book studies and Bible studies
 - Periodic multi-generational gatherings that focus on education and/or service
- Prayerful support is offered at FELC through a prayer circle that meets weekly and a Prayer Shawl Ministry
- FELC supports our aging and homebound members with weekly phone calls and visitation.
- There is a Caregiving Team that offers support when there are special needs
- There are also other small group ministries FELC supports

Outreach Ministries within the Neighborhood and Beyond

- Concern for our neighbors living with hunger and/or houselessness is expressed by FELC via:
 - Partnership with other area churches in the Micah 6 Food Pantry via volunteer and financial support
 - Support of University area street youth through home-cooked meals and volunteers
 - Care for immigrants in the area through financial and in-kind donations to Casa Marianella and Eagle Pass Frontera Ministries
- FELC partners with its Child Development Center Staff and Board to provide on-site quality and accredited child-care for pre-school children.
- FELC sponsors a Cub Scout Pack and has sponsored a Scout Troop (presently inactive) for more than five decades.
- FELC seeks to partner with the surrounding community by providing meeting space for other area groups, voting space, and worship space for another denomination.
- FELC supports the work of the ELCA, specifically World Hunger, Disaster Relief, and Global Refuge.
- With growing concern over the treatment of and rights of people of color, a Racial Justice Task Force is actively seeking greater understanding and acceptance among the races as well as governmental recognition of their needs and issues and inviting participants into classes, field trips, discussions, and other opportunities to share what is being learned and committed to.
- There are also other small group ministries in the neighborhood and beyond supported by FELC.

Goals:

What are the primary goals of your ministry site (please refer to any Strategic Plan that has been adopted).

1. Grow the membership/community of FELC
2. Grow and sustain children, youth, and young adult ministries

3. Live more fully into our RIC designation to include all who have been forced into society's margins
4. Continue to answer our call to push for racial justice and interrupt all forms of oppression
5. Strengthen the relationship, communication with, and support for the FELCDC to empower the child care center to continue growing and thriving as a ministry of this church.
6. Identify steps, in collaboration with our newly called pastor, to thoughtfully and purposefully reestablish our pastor internship program.

Energy:

What is your congregation really excited about right now?

During this time of transition, we have been reinvigorated and empowered. Congregation members are reenergizing learning ministry for both adults and children. We are working together to keep our robust worship, care, service, and learning experiences going. We are excited about the facility improvements that are planned and in progress: the landscaping, the newly refurbished doors, the organ renovation, and fellowship hall and CDC improvements. We anticipate working alongside our new pastor to continue progressing with our mission of acceptance and love.

Partnership:

How does this congregation see itself as a member and active participant in the ELCA and the Synod?

We are grateful for the support given to us by the churchwide organization and the synod. We value the opportunity to send voting members to the synod assembly each year and to participate in synod governance and activities.

We embrace the gospel values and goals of ethnic and racial diversity, racial justice, full inclusion and welcome, and witness and service to our community. We pursue those goals through funded ministries inside our congregation. We take seriously the guidance of the churchwide organization on these issues.

Our annual budget makes a commitment to synod and church-wide mission support. We also have a process for distributing funds from an operating surplus, on a quarterly basis, to increase our mission support when we are able, as well as community benevolence and engagement.

Ministry Site Characteristics

AS A COMMUNITY

	A LOT LIKE US	A LITTLE LIKE US	A LITTLE LIKE US	A LOT LIKE US	
We tend to be formal and programmatic.		X			We tend to be informal and spontaneous.
We have clearly defined goals and plans for our future.			X		We have no stated goals or plans.
We are racially and economically diverse.				X	We are demographically homogeneous.

OUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

We welcome ideas that are provoking and challenging.		X			We prefer ideas that are tried and true.
We rely on our leaders for direction.			X		We rely on group decision-making.
We have learned how to use conflict constructively		X			We tend to perceive conflict as something destructive.

OUR PROGRAMMING

Our facilities are often used by community groups.	X				Our facilities are only used for our activities.
We train people to minister outside our walls.			X		We train people to minister inside our walls.
We focus on ideas and beliefs.		X			We focus on skills and action.

OUR THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

We are obviously Lutheran in identity and practice.	X				We are less obvious about our Lutheran heritage.
We participate in synod and ELCA activities.		X			We are not very active in the synod and ELCA.
We focus on Biblical studies and doctrine.			X		We focus on contemporary issues and topics.

Purpose, Giftedness, and Mission

Purpose

How does this congregation understand its reason for being in the light of God's call to mission and service? Who are you? Why are you here?

1. How does this congregation or organization understand its reason for being in the light of God's call to mission and service?

First English lives in the light of God's call to mission and service because we believe in fulfilling by word and deed the prophet Micah's call (in Micah 6:8), ". . . to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God," and Christ's summary of the commandments from Matthew 22:37-38, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

2. Who are you?

We are children of God and siblings in Christ.

We are a Lutheran community of young, old, and in-between that comes together to share life trusting in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that gathers all people to be one body. We openly welcome persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions to full participation in the church and society.

We are committed to the work of racial equity, justice, and advocating for marginalized groups. We welcome people in all places on the journey of faith and life. We celebrate differences in age, appearance, economic status, ethnic origin, nationality, race, family configuration, marital or relationship status, political leaning, religious background, and those who are differently-abled physically or mentally. We acknowledge that we lack the diversity we seek, but we strive toward and hope for a greater diversity within our congregation.

We have been blessed by excellent preaching and outstanding music for all of our 88 years. It is our hope to be able to continue that tradition. And we like to sing. We have eclectic musical tastes, ranging from classical to Romani, offered by a variety of instruments, ranging from organ to drums. We relish making a joyful noise unto the Lord! We are serious about the sacramental and liturgical life of the whole church, but we don't take ourselves too seriously.

3. Why are you here?

God has created us to live in community. It is here that we can thrive with a sense of belonging and of feeling valued. We live into God's will for us through worship, learning, relationship building, personal spiritual growth, deepening our awareness of the oneness of all humankind, and loving service to God's people in need, as expressed through our motto: God loves. We love. Everyone!

Giftedness

What are your gifts and resources for fulfilling this purpose? What are the congregation's top three assets and how are they being used? Are there obstacles that must be overcome to be able to use these gifts and accomplish the mission?

Gifts and Resources:

- 25 years of Reconciling in Christ [RIC] – accepting, loving, living into it - a significant portion of our leadership comes from the LGBTQIA+ community

- Strong lay leadership for worship and all other ministries - during our year without a pastor, none of our ministries has faltered
- Outstanding Cantor and devoted, gifted choir, and other musicians - the musical quality and reverential quality of our worship services are ensured by our Cantor and musicians and are often what bring new people into the congregation
- Members with professional backgrounds in education, finance, law, architecture, construction, engineering, science, medicine, administration, spirituality
- Established live-stream equipment and technicians
- Racial Justice group active since George Floyd's death, relationship with Vision of Hope, an AME congregation
- Volunteering presence and financial support to those experiencing homelessness and/or migrant status
- Strong sense of family and connectedness and strive to purposefully welcome everyone
- Fine old pipe organ, outstanding acoustics in sanctuary - the pipe organ needs significant maintenance, which is in planning at this time

Obstacles:

- Covid quarantine affected on-site worship attendance
- Membership scattered across the large Austin area and beyond
- Aging congregation – affecting availability for worship and service and ability to give

Mission

In light of the ways you have described your ministry context in this Ministry Site Profile, what are the top three mission priorities which, if accomplished, hold the most promise for the continued development of this ministry?

- 1: Further developing and nurturing of our faith family with special attention to our children, youth, and young adult ministries.
- 2: Weaving inclusion and a sense of belonging for all into everything we do at FELC
- 3: Establishing a sustained presence outside of our church walls, reflecting God's love in ways that help address our community's needs.

References

Synodical Bishop

Rev. Susan J. Briner
Name

Southwestern Texas
Synod

[Redacted]
Email

[Redacted]
Day Phone

Evening Phone

[Redacted]
Cell

Inside Congregation

Joe Cain
Name

Attorney, *retired*
Organization and Title

[Redacted]
Email

Day Phone

Evening Phone

[Redacted]
Cell

Outside Congregation

Jennifer Biggs
Name

Chef
Organization and Title

[Redacted]
Email

Day Phone

Evening Phone

[Redacted]
Cell

Member of the ELCA Clergy roster

Rev. Kelsey Kresse
Name

Abiding Presence Lutheran
Church, Burke, VA, Associate
Pastor
Organization and Title

[Redacted]
Email

Day Phone

Evening Phone

[Redacted]
Cell

Anyone else who knows your setting well

Rev. Gretchen Olson Kopp
Name

St. Mark's Lutheran Church,
Spokane, WA; Senior Pastor
Organization and Title

[Redacted]
Email

Day Phone

Evening Phone

[Redacted]
Cell

PART III: LEADERSHIP NEEDS

The Leader we Seek

Roster Type:

- Minister of Word and Sacrament

Senior Pastor Position Type:	Master of Divinity Minimum Degree Required:	Full Time Full Time/Part Time:
---------------------------------	------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Language Proficiencies

English Primary Language	Spanish preferred Second Language	
-----------------------------	--------------------------------------	--

Experience:

4-9 years

Top Five Ministry Tasks

1. Preaching / Worship
2. Building a Sense of Community
3. Pastoral Care and Visitation
4. Administration
5. Music / Worship / Arts

Gifts for Ministry

The five gifts essential in this position, and the five that are very helpful in this position.

Top Priority	Very Helpful
1. Be an effective communicator	1. Be able to use technology and media
2. Be able to share leadership and work in a team	2. Be an effective administrator
3. Help people develop their spiritual life	3. Provide care and nurture
4. Bring joy and good humor to relationships	4. Be effective in working with children
5. Build a sense of community among the people with whom he/she/they works	5. Be effective in working with youth

Mutual Expectations

Please list the five primary areas of activity or focus that you wish your newly-called leader to give special attention to during the first year of their ministry at this congregation:

- A. Building relationships with members of the church community
- B. Fostering leadership throughout congregation via open communication and partnership
- C. Intentionally advocating for inclusion, diversity, and equity
- D. Welcoming and supporting children, families, and youth in innovative ways
- E. Encouraging and fostering intentional engagement with the neighborhood and community

Please list the five ways that this congregation will support and encourage the rostered leader during the first year in order to help them accomplish these responsibilities:

- A. Invite our pastor to join us in our various groups and programs while respecting their time; share our congregational history, background, and dynamics
- B. Introduce our pastor to existing teams and maintain our willingness to volunteer our time and energy; Offer a Mutual Ministry Team to assist in transition and provide ongoing support
- C. Continue expanding our understanding of and relationship with others through education initiatives and engagement in the wider community
- D. Share in the teaching, care, and support of our young families
- E. Make introductions and coordinate meetings with community leaders

Compensation

Parsonage: **None**

Social Security tax offset: **Yes**

Maximum amount available for defined compensation: **\$95k**

Benefits

Pension: **Yes**

Medical: **Yes**

Vacation weeks: **Yes**

Sabbatical policy: **Negotiable**

Parental leave policy: **Negotiable**

Are background checks required: **Yes**

Professional Expenses

Auto/travel reimbursement: **Yes**

Professional expense account: **Yes**

First call theological education: **Negotiable**

Continuing education: **Yes**

Comments:

Please offer any comment or explanation regarding the compensation package, especially as it compares to synodical recommendations or guidelines.

We have in the past paid higher than recommended guidelines as they seem low for the Austin area. We will negotiate an equitable compensation package.

Other Supporting Resources

Are we able to supply the following items, if requested? (y/n)

Mission and Vision statement of the congregation	Yes (we can offer our motto & welcome statement)
Printed history of the congregation or organization	Yes (there is a website link for this)
Strategic Plan: Goals and Objectives	Yes (we can offer that our last strategic plan was to focus on the areas of Outreach, Music, [etc.] but that it was intended to launch in 2020 before the pandemic.
Budget	Yes
Annual Report	Yes
Position description: Duties and Responsibilities	Available from synod

PART IV: COMMENTARY

You are encouraged to offer information or commentary that will help the reader appreciate the vision, opportunities, challenges and nature of your ministry site. Use this opportunity to creatively promote and commend your ministry possibilities.

We are very excited to welcome our next pastor and begin a new chapter of church life together. As a community we have, in the past, settled into a routine of relying on pastoral and staff leadership rather than a culture of group decision-making. We look forward to shifting out of this mode and supporting our new pastor in efforts to embolden and empower lay leadership and collaborative decision-making processes. We are also aware that, while we have a deep sense of pride in our openness and welcome of all people, there is also room for our community to grow with respect to lovingly embracing people whose ideas may be perceived as provoking or challenging, thus living more fully into our vision of “God loves. We love. Everyone!”

This transition process has revealed to us the deep love that we all share for this church community. New leaders emerged in times of need, bringing forth necessary skill sets that enabled our church life to continue together during this time of uncertainty. We look forward to channeling this energy and excitement, alongside our newly called pastor, to strengthen our relationship with the First English Lutheran Child Development Center, sustain, adapt & evolve our existing ministries inside this church, establish a deeper presence outside in the community, and begin to explore yet undiscovered ways we can live out the gospel in this place and time.

PART V: COMPLETION OF PROFILE

Discernment Process and Adoption

*Please describe the process used to gather information, formulate responses, and officially adopt this Ministry Site Profile.
(Approx. 100 words max)*

Demographic data was collected using our 2022 ELCA trend report and membership records, as well as an ARDA report using a 2-mile radius around FELC. Other information was gathered via an on-site congregational meeting, a survey, and in-home small group discussions. After each input-gathering effort, we summarized responses and

discussed them during team meetings. To formulate responses, the transition team divided up MSP questions and drafted answers in pairs, incorporating shared understandings of congregational feedback. We met weekly to go over each drafted answer, rewording as necessary. Once completed, we presented the draft MSP to the Congregation Council.

Enter the date on which this Ministry Site Profile was adopted by vote of the Congregation Council: June 17, 2024

CALL PROCESS ADMINISTRATOR

The name of the person on the synod staff that the bishop has designated as the Call Process Administrator for this call process:

Name: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt

Title: Bishop's Associate for Leadership & Lifelong Faith Formation

Office Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Reference's Recommendation

Name: Joe Cain

Email: [REDACTED]

Day Phone: [REDACTED]

Evening Phone: [REDACTED]

Cell: [REDACTED]

SEVEN REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY AND CONTEXT

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

Adopted by unanimous vote by the Congregation Council on June 17, 2024

1. What key issues or concerns of our church and society are reflected in the ministry that is centered in your congregation?

Three issues that feel centrally reflected in our ministry together include: 1) addressing hunger and food insecurity, 2) meeting a need for affordable, quality childcare, and 3) continuing to challenge systems of oppression, specifically racism and powers seeking to diminish the rights of the LGBTQIA+2S community.

- 1) FELC is part of a collective ministry with other churches called Micah 6 and the collective mission is to work together to identify and meet the needs of the homeless and the impoverished in the University of Texas campus area. Lay leaders from our church organize FELC members to volunteer regularly for service with the youth drop-in center (preparing and serving meals) and also the food pantry, offered twice-a-week.
- 2) Since 1972, through the First English Lutheran Child Development Center (CDC), FELC has responded to the need for affordable, accredited, quality, preschool child care. The center uses most of the parish hall during the week. The CDC provides full-day, year-round care in a safe and nurturing environment for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, and snack) are also lovingly provided for the children.
- 3) FELC is proud of our church's history as a Reconciling in Christ congregation to fully welcome our LGBTQIA+2S siblings. We also recognize our need to continue examining how (and if) we are being intentionally inclusive in all we do. We want to be a place where people feel a true sense of belonging.

Our FELC Racial Justice Ministry works to educate itself and the church community about the many challenges that face people of color (including African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos/Hispanics and all groups facing the legacies of historic and current racism) and to engage with other organizations with similar concerns to become educated and active voters that support the rights of people of color. A resolution detailing the work of the ministry was adopted by the congregation in June 2020 and continues to involve 40 members via the FELC Racial Justice Grapevine, a periodical supporting voting rights, legislative action, community engagement and partnerships with others.

A small subset team of the Racial Justice Ministry was formed in January 2022 to complete a focused evaluation of the whiteness of First English Lutheran Church and seek meaningful ways in which this church can strive for and embody both strategic and authentic diversity. The report of and recommendations of this team were published as the [FELC Diversity Report](https://www.felcaustin.org/wp-content/uploads/08-15-22-FELC-Diversity-Development-Team-Report-w-Strategic-Authentic-Diversity-Doc.pdf).

<https://www.felcaustin.org/wp-content/uploads/08-15-22-FELC-Diversity-Development-Team-Report-w-Strategic-Authentic-Diversity-Doc.pdf>

2. How do the stewardship practices and allocation of financial resources of the congregation or organization reflect your priorities for mission?

In addition to our budgeted benevolence, we strive to minimize expenses and give any remaining surplus to benevolence. Half of the surplus goes to the synod and half to groups chosen yearly. This year's recipients are LuMin (Lutheran Campus Ministry at UT), Global Refuge, and our own Child Development Center.

See attached report from the Benevolence Task Force describing these organizations.

3. In what ways is the membership of your congregation similar or different from the people of the neighborhood in which you are located?

Our church neighborhood represents a unique and diverse cross section of the city. There are ways in which our congregation is similar and ways in which we are different from the immediate community around the church. A large portion of our neighborhood is inclusive of the University of Texas at Austin campus which is home to a large, diverse, and ever-changing student and faculty population. Our neighborhood also includes a number of people living below the poverty level as well as those experiencing homelessness. Our church community, while spread across the entire city of Austin, trends toward a highly educated, middle to upper-income, mostly white population. We share these general traits with the section of the neighborhood just north of the church. While our building and liturgy are historic and traditional, our congregational character is progressive and quirky; we match our neighborhood's "Keep Austin Weird" ethos.

4. Identify the three most significant or formative events in the history of your congregation or organization.

- Establishing a pastor internship/vicar program in 1958
 - First English has provided internships and pastoral mentorship and education for 50 seminary students. Besides providing them a rich parish experience, our vicars in turn enriched our own lives and have become lifelong friends.
- Establishing the First English Lutheran Child Development Center in 1972.
 - Over 50 years ago, this ministry was created to meet a great need in the community to provide quality childcare for working families. The child care center has made a deep imprint on the church as we strive to sustain this ministry by providing ongoing support and partnership.
- Becoming a Reconciling in Christ designated church in 1989.
 - This designation set the tone for the kind of church FELC desires to be, one that welcomes all people as reflections of God's abundant and beautiful creation. It's a designation that we have to continually, and with intent, care for and sustain.

5. Describe the way the congregation is currently involved in community and ecumenical partnerships.

A primary way FELC is involved in community and ecumenical partnership is through the Micah 6 ministry, which is also mentioned above. Included in that partnership are university-area Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Catholic, Church of Christ, Baptist, Methodist, and University Christian Church. We serve alongside these partners on the Micah 6 Board and in our service to those experiencing hunger and/or homelessness in our area.

Following the June 17, 2015 shooting deaths of nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, our church leadership reached out to a neighboring church, Vision of Hope AME, here in Austin to offer support and begin a dialogue and explore ways we could partner together to promote shared healing. Over the years we participated in pulpit exchanges and invited each church community to participate in events, such as our annual chicken BBQ and Fall Fest celebrations. Vision of Hope reached out to us during a building transition they were having and we were able to share our space with them so they could hold worship services in our sanctuary. As both church communities experienced leadership changes, this relationship has waned in the last couple of years and is certainly a partnership that FELC would like to renew in ways that are mutually supportive and healing for both church communities.

FELC has an agreement with the Austin-Central Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) congregation for weekly use of our campus. We recognize that their ideology and theology diverge from our welcome statement and the theology and practice of the ELCA.

The FELC sanctuary enjoys beautiful acoustics and as a result, we frequently offer our sanctuary for community music groups to use as rehearsal or performance space.

FELC hopes to increase our presence in the community in new and imaginative ways and looks forward to exploring possibilities with our newly called pastor.

6. Has your congregation had significant conflict in recent history and, if so, what have you learned from that experience?

FELC has experienced formative events in recent history that involved degrees of isolated conflict and stress which illuminated for us the need to strengthen communication, support, evaluation, and operational structures in the church in order to better serve one another as a community.

In 2022, our Synod Bishop paused our pastoral internship program so that we could reevaluate the processes surrounding it. Alongside the challenging environment of COVID isolation and political oppression of the queer community in Texas, our openly non-binary and trans intern did not feel fully supported or heard in our community, a sad fact unknown to most of the congregation until they had left. This event deeply affected our community and has challenged us to learn new ways of proactively supporting each of our congregational partners. We consider hosting interns to be a vital part of our identity and are actively working on rebuilding our awareness and systems of communication and support so that we can resume our vicar program.

On reflection we learned:

- that the Pastor needs a mutual ministry team for support and evaluation.

- that the intern needs a communication path to the council executive committee with regular meetings to openly express concerns.
- that the intern be invited to choose a portion of their own vicar committee to ensure comfortable sharing of concerns
- that the congregation has room for growth and improvement with understanding the needs of non-binary and trans persons.

In the spring of 2023, the First English Lutheran Child Development Center (FELCDC or CDC) faced sudden closure. Due to loss of leadership, the center could not remain operational. Families scrambled to secure alternate sources of care for their children. Confusion and anger was felt by both the parent and congregation communities. The Council reconstituted a new CDC board with the goal of resuming operations as soon as practicable. The center began taking students in September of 2023 after the hiring of a new director and the completion of repairs and physical improvements to the education wing. The sudden suspension of operations of the CDC revealed what had become a weakened relationship, over many years, between the church and the child development center. As a result, many in the church community expressed a renewed commitment to support this long-standing ministry of our church. It is important to us that our next called pastor shares this value of providing quality childcare for our community through this ministry of the church. We hope an entry-point into bolstering this relationship will be through the CDC Director Support Committee, outlined in the center's bylaws, which brings together the CDC board, the center director, and the pastor to provide as-needed support and guidance for the CDC Director. It is our hope that our next called pastor, alongside church staff, lay leadership, and church community, develop and sustain a positive and supportive relationship with the CDC leadership, staff, teachers, students, and families.

In the spring of 2023, we entered into a covenant relationship with a transitional pastor to provide pastoral leadership and support during this important transitional ministry time. In January 2024, our congregational council determined that the relationship was not working well and voted not to extend the covenant, which would have ended on March 19, 2024. Our transitional pastor subsequently resigned, effective January 31, 2024. This impacted members of our church community deeply, and we are still learning from this experience in hopes of fostering a church culture that offers mutuality and grace-filled accountability.

7. Describe your physical facilities: construction date, purpose, capacity, date of last renovation, any deferred maintenance, and any plans for upgrading.

The sanctuary was built in 1939. Reminiscent of Spanish mission architecture, it has a cut limestone exterior with a clay tile gable roof. It has a capacity of 242 worshipers in the nave and chancel, plus 45 additional if chairs are placed in the chapel and north transept. The fellowship (parish) hall was added in 1953 and houses the child development center and church offices. A detached 875 sq. ft. Scout hut for our Troop 28 and other uses was built in 1968.

A property team maintains and improves our facilities. Projects in 2023/2024 include:

- Landscape improvements
- Fellowship Hall ceiling and lighting replacement
- Sanctuary door refurbishment
- Sanctuary lighting modernizing and painting

Necessary organ repair and refurbishing is in the planning stage. Early work for a capital campaign also is in progress.