

Proposal for Mission Development Iglesia de Belén Exploration - Elgin, IL

Name of SAWC Exploration: Iglesia de Belén (Church of the Nativity)

City and State: Elgin, IL

Synod: Metropolitan Chicago

Duration of Exploration: 3 Years



Rational/Purpose

The vision of the LatinX Ministry in Elgin, IL is a diverse community of God, integrated with its neighborhood in order that God's Word be accessible to neighbors through the church's members.

The immediate neighborhood identifies as at least 50% Hispanic/Latinx, the proposal is creation of a new worshipping community that would be hosted by Bethlehem but operate independently to give complete freedom for its development.

This new community would worship in Spanish or Bilingual Spanish/English and preferably see themselves walking with the existing host congregation, Bethlehem, for mutual support and relationship building.

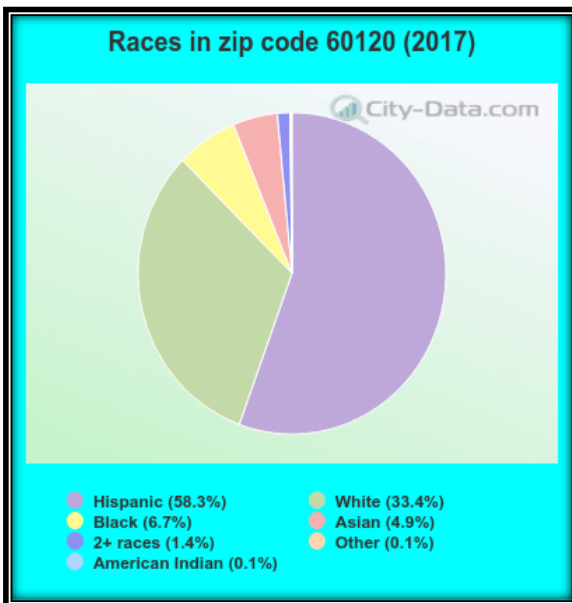
The Bethlehem congregation understands that hospitality is *gift and expectation* of God. Hebrews, Chapter 13 exhorts, *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for in doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."*

Karla Jimenez (who has been attending Bethlehem with her family for one year) shared,

"That more would come to feel the warmth and the welcome that I felt when I came here is what I would like to see. Now that we are here, I would like to see more people that look like me."

Ronnie Malave share that she would like to see the church grow and feels that we to sharpen our skills for evangelism in the context of our Latino neighborhood.

From all the members at Bethlehem, we don't want to be 2 groups of people sharing space who don't know each other. The existing church hopes to walk alongside the new worshipping community building relationships and sharing resources and ministry programs where it would be helpful while respecting the autonomy of the new community.



Community Demographics for Elgin, IL 60120:

Supporting demographics include the following:

- ✓ Population of Elgin is 108k
- ✓ Median household income was \$68K in 2008
- ✓ 1.7% living in poverty by the same statistics.
- ✓ 45% Latino or Hispanic
- ✓ 58% (zip code 60120) Hispanic/Latino¹
- ✓ 70% non-white with Hispanic/Latino being the fastest growing population within 1.5 mile radius² of the church as being

¹ Citadata.com

² Perceptgroup.com

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Objective(s) for this SAWC

The context of the pandemic, Bethlehem's available resources (human/spiritual, financial, and physical) along with potentially available Latinx leadership, create an opportunity to take the next step in neighborhood outreach.

With respect to **context**.

- ***The first objective is to plant a seed of the Gospel by exploring a new worshipping community.***
 - The pandemic, as any crises, brings hearts to actively seek God, new meaning in life, and/or spiritual support. Rather than to sit back and wait this out, would like to partner with the synod to take the opportunity to seek new relationships and share faith. Even during time of social distancing, it is possible to reach out electronically, meet with community leaders to determine needs, and to prepare ourselves as hosts. We imagine 40% of our neighbors not affiliated with a worshipping community creates an opportunity for witness.
- ***The second objective is that extending their gift of hospitality, Bethlehem will share its worship and ministry space.***
 - Bethlehem Lutheran's beautiful property sits adjacent to Lord's Park in Elgin, IL, and includes a beautiful 1970's era church building that sits atop the hill overlooking the park. A large sanctuary that seats 200 plus. In addition to the sanctuary, the facility includes a social hall seating over 100, classroom and playground space, youth loft, parking lot and great lawn facing Lord's Park. The facility also provides ample Sunday School, Youth and Bible Study/Education space
- ***The third objective is to identify mutually beneficial outreach and community engagement opportunities for the new worshipping community and the Bethlehem Child Development Center.***
 - The CDC is 25-year-old ministry that operates in the facility Monday through Friday from 6am until 6pm. The CDC, which under a pre-Covid19 business model hosted up to 65 children at one time, will be restructured as it reopens to serve fewer families, but has been a connection to our neighborhood and folks to invite to our events such as Posada, Holy Week Procession of Palms, etc. Over the years the CDC has grown more by word of mouth and maybe only 50% of the children currently live in the neighborhood. The current director has committed to exploring ways work with a new worshipping community to be mutually supportive including to advertise more within the neighborhood.
- ***The fourth objective is to develop 1) a Launch Team and 2) a steering/visioning team.***
 - Bethlehem Latinx leaders plan to participate on the Launch Team. Others may serve on the Launch Team that would help the new start as well as facilitate ongoing relationships Bethlehem.
 - These are some of our strongest worship leaders, lectors and assisting ministers. Two have served on or are serving on the church council and one of those has attended numerous synod assemblies.

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- ***The fifth objective is to develop strategic partnerships.***
 - Bethlehem leadership would identify community leaders such as, leaders in the schools, local business leaders, the local Lutheran and inter-faith leaders, Centro de Información, for the purpose of doing one on one relational meetings.

With respect to **Worship**

- The developer and their leadership team will discern the style and optimal time of worship, including Spanish or bilingual language, style of music, music leader, as well as the programs that support the worshipping community such as youth and family, bible study, service of the community, etc. We have a desire to worship in time proximity for our children to “grow up together” sharing some youth and family programs for example. However, the developer and leaders would be free to make decisions that are best for the development of new worshipping community.

With respect to **What We Hope to Learn**

- We hope to learn the feasibility of our local Elgin community to support a Lutheran Latinx worshipping community.
- We hope to learn even more about how to be a good host for this new church and the new folks it brings.
- We are sure to learn how to share space, work toward community, seek common goals and support each other’s ministries.

With respect to **Sharing the Learnings**

This SAWC will share the successes and any challenges

Strategy for this SAWC Exploration

- The Metro Chicago Synod, and Bethlehem LC and ELCA Domestic Mission will collaborate to call a developer to explore a Spanish or bilingual worshipping community.
- Bethlehem pastor will facilitate a relationship between the Child Development Center director and the Mission Developer to support the exploration process in any way that she can.
- Additional key partners will be the new worshipping community, along with the developer, neighborhood headers, local schools, ESL network, the Bethlehem Child Development Center (if desired by the developer), etc.

How will leaders be identified?

- Ronnie Malave, Karin Jones, Karla Jimenez, Dario Depaz, Jorge Sanchez, Kristen Anderson have initially been identified to serve on the Launch Team.

Evaluation process to be used in assessing this SAWC Exploration

How will we know you have reached our goals?

The Mission Developer will also serve at Nueva Esperanza (Aurora, IL). Seventy percent (70%) of the Mission Developers time will be spent on the Elgin LatinX exploration. To facilitate the smooth transition and promote relationship building the Mission Developer may be requested to support the Bethlehem congregation by:

- Periodically preaching and other areas

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The Mission Developer will meet periodically with the MCS Director of Evangelical Mission to create an implementation plan, review completion of milestones, analyze key metrics (e.g., attendance, budget, one on ones, performance to ministry plan). Additionally, to provide support periodic meetings with the MCS LatinX strategy team will be planned.

Projected Budget

Income	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
LatinX	\$ 10,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 7,000
Metro Chicago Synod	\$ 10,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 7,000
Bethlehem	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Domestic Mission ELCA	\$ 20,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 14,000
New Congregation	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ 12,000
Total	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000

These funds will be used to support the Mission Developer.

Names of potential participants/community leaders to be contacted include:

- Bethlehem Child Development Center
- U-46 Interfaith Advisory Council
- Centro de Información
- Gail Bordon Library and other churches who are doing ESL.
- Leaders of CERL, Coalition of Elgin Religious Leaders

Designated Leader	Date signed
Director for Evangelical Mission	Date signed
Bishop Metropolitan Chicago Synod	Date signed