



# NAVIGATE:

*Congregational Coordinates for Elmbrook Church's Next Chapter*

**March 2026**

# OUR TEXT:

## 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

<sup>11</sup> Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. <sup>12</sup> We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. <sup>13</sup> If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. <sup>14</sup> For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

<sup>16</sup> So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



# OUR TESTIMONY:

*God has made us His ambassadors in this generation.*

*We are called to share the love of Jesus with people from Lake Michigan to Lake Country and beyond, pressing onward into God's grand story of reconciliation and hope.*

## OUR TARGETS:

*Toward the FLAG*

*Over the next five years, our desire is to grow increasingly:*

**FUTURE-FOCUSED:** We believe that our best days are not over and that God is building on Elmbrook's ministry heritage in new ways to face the new challenges of a new era.

### THE BIBLE SAYS:

*In Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*  
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

Because we believe that all-persons have an eternal destiny, we will emphasize spiritual formation and vocational call in the ongoing work of God's redemptive arc.

Because we believe that all things are held together by Jesus, we will express a culture of learning, discerning the political, economic, social, and technological changes in our society from the firm foundation of the Bible.

Because of the pressures on families and young people, we will increase our investments into children's' and youth ministries and provide more practical tools to parents and spouses.

Because there is an ongoing need for trained ministry personnel, we will develop leadership classes for members, increase connections with businesspersons, invest in young adults, and explore residency partnerships with a college or seminary.

By September 2026, we will launch a reset of our digital communications, on-lining a new website, marketing campaign, and social media presence designed to reintroduce Elmbrook to our community. Many know who we once were; fewer know who we are today. This fresh approach will help us forge new relationships, reconnect with our neighbors, and present a clear picture of the church God is calling us to be. While we honor the legacy that has brought us this far, we step forward in faith, following God's leading into the next chapter of our story.

**LOVE-DIRECTED:** We understand that motives underlie all actions, and that God's desire is that we align our intents – and mark our successes – in ways that reflect Christ's love for the world.

#### THE BIBLE SAYS:

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all.*  
-2 Corinthians 5:14

#### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

With grace and courage, we aspire to a culture that is grounded in humility and community of the New Testament Church.

We will try to deepen connections and re-size the Elmbrook experience within geographic neighborhoods by creating an interactive map that shows the proximity of members to members.

Because we believe that God's attention is upon the overlooked, we aim to expand James Place offerings, add support to Celebrate Recovery, and integrate whole-life wellness into ministry.

We will strive to provide greater access to prepared, grace-filled care by fortifying our chaplaincy program with chaplains with specific competencies over the next five years.

We long to act as agents of reconciliation and will address the issues of isolation and absenteeism through a new ministry division called Outreach and First Experiences.

**APOLOGETICALLY-PREPARED:** The word "apologetic" means "to be ready to tell your story." We believe that narrating the beautiful ways in which the Bible's worldview allows us to center our lives meets the curiosity of the age and opens to pathways to Christian witness.

#### THE BIBLE SAYS:

*Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.*  
-2 Corinthians 5:11

#### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

We will equip our members and will engage our community by actively identifying Elmbrook as "the place to go with your questions," leaning into the increased spiritual openness of the age with faithful presentations of Christian perspective.

We will explore the viability of an evening worship service, designing the experiences to be more curious and conversational than the Sunday AM gatherings.

We will explore Storytelling Seminars, Alpha Classes, and other doctrinal training modes that invite people into – or back into – the beauty and hope of Christian belief.

We will endeavor to make a ratio of less than 5 to 1 mentoring relationships possible for every person who desires to grow in interpersonal formation.

**GLOBALY-INTEGRATED:** We're convinced that God has a heart for the whole world, and that diversity, humility, and interconnection across national and ethnic lines for the sake of learning – not just resourcing – is key identifier of the Elmbrook family.

#### THE BIBLE SAYS:

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*

-2 Corinthians 5:20

#### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

We will continue to place Missional Reciprocity center-stage by expanding Harvestfest and the International Center, by capturing the wisdom of our Field Workers in creative ways, and by consistently platforming Mission Moments on Sunday mornings.

We will reconsider the “whys” and “hows” of short-term mission trips, making it possible or both wider and deeper participation in non-local ministry environments.

# OUR TRAVEL:

## *The Four Ships of Navigate*

Arriving at this destination implies movement from one place to another. The vehicles that point us and port us to God's preferred future are timeless. They must be claimed in different settings and with renewed vigor:

**WORSHIP:** We want to evolve into a richly participatory encounter with the Living God each weekend, honoring the heart-conditions of all of the gathered family of God.

**STEWARDSHIP:** We hope to achieve a sustainable financial model by enculturing generosity and fiscal wisdom, allowing ministry to proceed ahead without economic restraint.

**RELATIONSHIP:** Because at its core, Christianity is a relational experience, we desire to deepen community and connection, rediscovering the one-anotherness that marks the New Testament Church.

**DISCIPLESHIP:** We are convinced that Jesus' adventurous, interdependent experience of life is the best, and so we look at life through the lens of followership, stressing the Gospels as we allow Jesus to set the agenda for our church and for our everyday lives.

# OUR TOOLS:

## *Anticipated Strategic Investments*

**LAKE COUNTRY OUTDOOR FACILITIES:** A defined canopy entrance at Lake Country would allow for an all-weather drop-off, and permanent installation in the north lawn will facilitate an expansion of Lake Country's outdoor worship ministry.

**SECURITY UPDATES:** New cameras and secure door access will be important at all campuses as our buildings become increasingly available to congregants, schools, and other community partners.

**BROOKFIELD TERRAFORMING:** The vast unbroken asphalt offers more parking spaces than are necessary. Outdoor Pickleball/Basketball courts and a new, larger green space for soccer are needed for Español's growing ministries, and more berms and islands with evergreens, signage and other vegetation will add to the appearance and hospitality of the approach to worship. Accessible play structure.

**A GLOBAL CHURCH PLANT:** Elmbrook's legacy of establishing new congregations in underserved areas can continue with the planting of the first-ever international church plant.

**ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF APOLOGETICS:** In a format similar to Harvestfest, 3-5 world-renowned Christian thinkers would meet in Southeast Wisconsin, address society's hot-burning questions in community forums, and embed with Elmbrook ministries.

**JAMES PLACE-LAKE COUNTRY:** With a particular emphasis on emerging mental health needs, the next venue for James Place would be in the western zone of our ministry footprint, serving holistically to the needs of residents in Hartland, Delafield, Oconomowoc, etc.

**COMPASSION FUND DRIVE:** Over the past number of years, the Compassion Fund - a line item specifically designated for meeting the benevolent needs of the community - has depleted significantly. Our hope would be to grow the fund back to \$100,000.

**ELMBROOK CENTER FOR GLOBAL CONVERSATION:** This new facility in Brookfield will accommodate visiting field worker families through 2 apartments, provide space for ongoing cross-cultural ministry innovation, house the operations of Telling the Truth and Just Between Us, and perhaps celebrate the legacy of Stuart and Jill Briscoe.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:** A comprehensive internship-residency program that prepares rising leaders for long-term ministry impact through immersive training, hands-on experience and intentional discipleship. This will require a significant investment in materials, compensation and training to successfully launch the first cohort.

**BROOKFIELD ROOM REFRESH:** High use areas like the Fellowship Hall and the Amphitheater are in need of new technology and tools; and more welcoming "living room" spaces are needed for Life Groups and prayer meetings.

**DEBT RETIREMENT AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:** In a desire to free up resources for additional future ministries, we will pay off the remaining debt on the Lake Country facility and assertively complete overdue capital improvements on both campuses.

