



THE  
NOURISHING  
VOCATION  
PROJECT

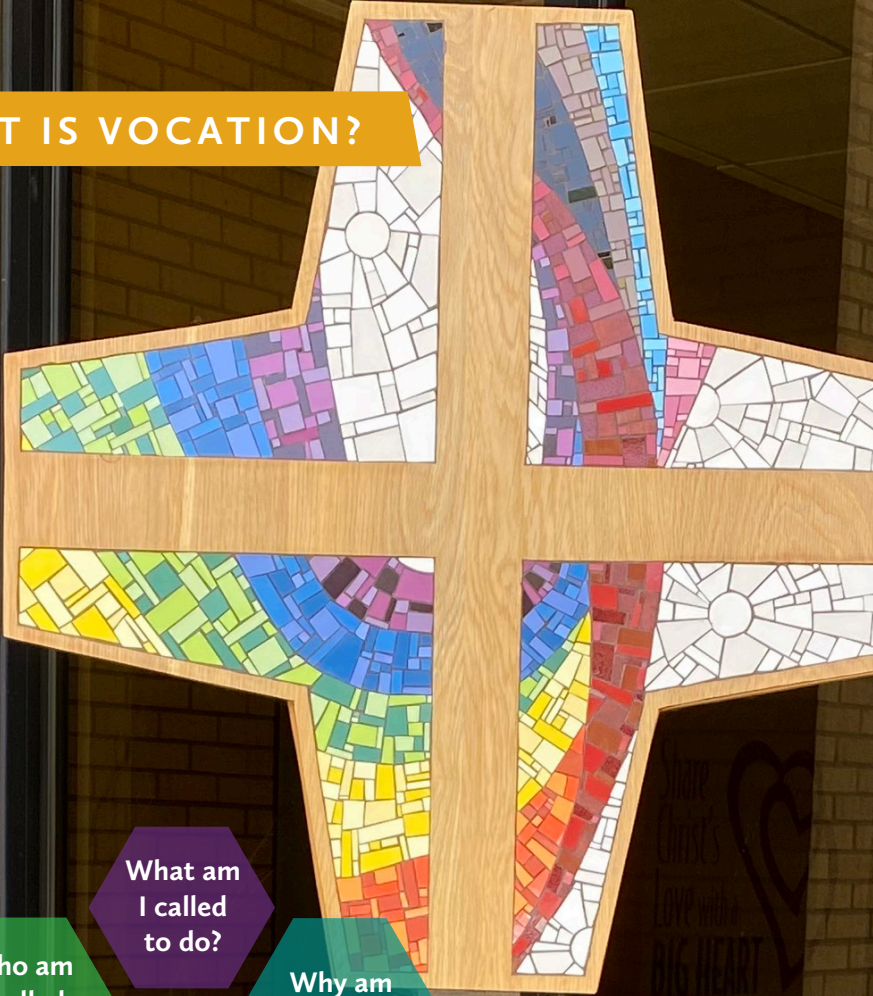
AT BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

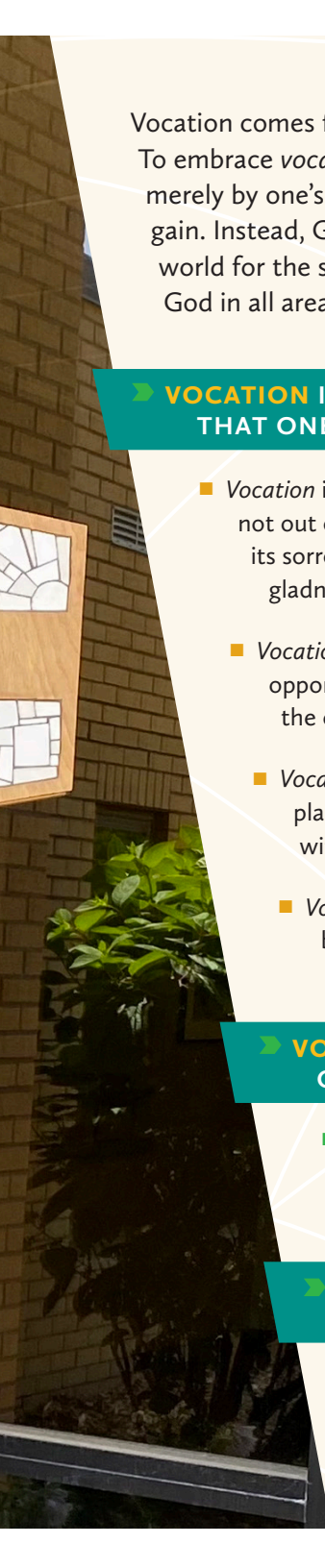


 ST. OLAF | THE LUTHERAN CENTER  
FOR FAITH, VALUES, AND COMMUNITY

*with generous support from Lilly Endowment Inc.*

# WHAT IS VOCATION?





Vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means “to call.” To embrace *vocation* is to recognize that what one does in life is not merely by one’s personal choice or for one’s personal fulfillment or gain. Instead, God calls people to be a part of God’s purposes in this world for the sake of the common good. Leaning into the call of God in all areas of life is to live attentive to *vocation*.

### ➤ VOCATION IS MUCH MORE THAN THE JOB THAT ONE HAS OR THE WORK THAT ONE DOES

- *Vocation* is the belief that all human beings are called by God, not out of but into the world, with all of its beauty and all of its sorrow, all of its joy and all of its suffering, all of its gladness and all of its sadness.
- *Vocation* means understanding daily life and work as ongoing opportunities where the call of God is heard for service to the community and the whole creation.
- *Vocation* means listening for the call of God in a specific place at a specific time, deeply engaging *where* one is with all that *who* one is, for the sake of the greater good.
- *Vocation* is the belief that all human beings are called by God — especially where there is need, oppression, or suffering — *to love and serve the neighbor*.

### ➤ VOCATION ASKS THREE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS IN ALL AREAS OF ONE’S LIFE

- Who am I called to be?
- What am I called to do?
- Why am I here?

### ➤ WE ASK THESE SAME QUESTIONS AS A CONGREGATION

- Who is Bethel called to be?
- What is Bethel called to do?
- Why is Bethel here?



# WHAT IS THE NOURISHING VOCATION

I Discern

We Discern

We Act

We Reflect

# PROJECT?

St. Olaf's Nourishing Vocation Project is an experience that invites us as individuals and as a congregation to deepen our understanding of God's call in our lives so that we might more intentionally live life and engage in ministry on purpose.

## What will NVP look like here at Bethel?

### ► PHASE 1

**GETTING TO KNOW YOU (deeper or for the first time)** Using the **vocare** spiritual practice tool, we will explore and share our personal values, the voices we listen to and why, where we give our attention, and how we experience God in our daily lives.

### ► PHASE 2

**WHO WE ARE TOGETHER** As we continue our personal vocational discernment, we will expand our reflection and begin thinking about God's call to Bethel today. Who is Bethel called to be? What is Bethel called to do? Why is Bethel here? What is the relationship between our individual values and the congregational values?

Through worship, fellowship, and learning we will explore the same **vocare** questions: what are our congregation's values, which voices do we listen to and why, where do we give our attention, and how are we experiencing God's presence together?

### ► PHASE 3

**LIVING ON PURPOSE** As individuals, we will continue to engage the **vocare** spiritual practice. As members of the congregation, we will articulate the links between our various ministries and the congregation's stated values for 2024-2025, and work to align all congregational groups, committees and activities with these values.

### ► PHASE 4

**REFLECTING ON THE NOURISHING VOCATION PROJECT** We will reflect on the project and look to what comes next. Perhaps we unveil core values to guide Bethel in 2025-2026!





WHY



# THE NOURISHING VOCATION PROJECT?

We live in unprecedented times. The pandemic changed patterns and perspectives. And Bethel, after enjoying decades with the same leaders, has a lot of new staff members. We have also welcomed new members that we don't know very well yet! The Nourishing Vocation Project will encourage us to pay attention to what God is up to now. It will help us reclaim and deepen old connections, and form new ones. Then, together as a community, we can be intentional about how we share Christ's love with a big heart.

## ➤ BETHEL'S VISION

- Connect to God, to each other, and our community
- Act with purpose and deeper sense of intention

## ➤ WHO WE ARE TOGETHER TIMELINE 2023-2024

**V**ALUES in November

**O**PENNESS in Advent

**C**ALL in Advent

**A**TTENTIVENESS in Christmas — Time After Epiphany

**R**EGRET in Lent

**E**XPERIENCES OF GOD'S PRESENCE in Lent

*...and revisiting our Values in Eastertide (discerning our top Bethel Values for the next year of ministry — the top five will be announced at Pentecost!)*







## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE NOURISHING VOCATION PROJECT?

- We hope the whole congregation will engage in the project! Look for opportunities in worship, education, online and in small groups. Reach out to a team member if you have any questions.
- Bethel's NVP team:
  - Barb Farmer
  - Juley Jenkinson
  - Cindy Kreis
  - Pastor Inger
  - Pastor Ben
- Bethel is joining a small ecumenical cohort of other congregations – we will walk through this experience together, sharing notes and resources with the wider church.
  - Our Savior's, Faribault, MN
  - Trinity, Valparaiso, IN
  - First, Galesburg, IL
  - First Immanuel, Chicago, IL
  - First United Methodist, Normal, IL
  - Augustana Lutheran, Omaha, NE





## HOW DO I START? PRACTICE VOCARE BASICS



**V**ALUES: What do I value, and how am I living my values?

**O**PENNESS: To what am I being asked to be open? How do I respond?

**C**ALL: What voices are calling to me? Which ones do I listen to, and why?

**A**TENTIVENESS: Where am I giving my attention? Does my attention align with my values?

**R**EGRET: What are my regrets? What insight do I gain from them?

**E**XPERIENCES OF GOD'S PRESENCE: When, where, and how have I encountered the presence of the holy in my everyday life?

### » WHAT DO YOU NEED?

In light of your reflection today, name what you need to more intentionally live into your vocations in the future.

## THE CALLED LIFE

The call of God is **personal** for each individual. There is not another you. God calls you to be yourself and to live out your unique **gifts** and **passions**. God calls you in and through your **life experiences**, both joyful and sorrowful, extraordinary and mundane. God calls you in particular **places** and through particular **relationships**. Through Holy Baptism, God claims and names you, gifts you with the Holy Spirit, and **calls you** for a life of purpose for the common good.

Write the gifts, passions, life experiences, places and relationships that uniquely mark your life around the figure below.



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The call of God is discerned and lived **within community**. None of us discern or live out our vocations in solitude or isolation. We need one another to accompany us on the journey, test our ideas and thoughts, and help us understand things from a variety of perspectives. It is within the company of others that we both wrestle with and lean into our multiple vocations. What voices surround you? Which voices are most critical to you?

Write all of the voices that influence you around the figure below, identifying the five most influential ones. Note that these five may be positive, negative, or neutral.



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The call of God is interwoven with and **lived out through all of human life** – all its relationships and dimensions. Each of us has multiple vocations. Sometimes our different vocations can support each other; other times they are in conflict. At still other times, our various vocations can co-exist without a lot of intersection.

Think of your **various vocations**. Write one vocation by each of the raindrops below. Reflect upon how your various vocations relate to and impact one another.

Examples of vocations: child, sibling, parent, neighbor, church member, employee, volunteer, etc.



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The personal call of God is interconnected with everything else so that we might **live life on purpose for the common good**.

We are called to be persons of good in the world, to contribute to the building up of our common life through love and service to our neighbors.

What critical questions impact your personal call to live life on purpose for the common good in this unique time? Write one by each of the hands below. Your personal critical questions may be matters of global concern (i.e. climate change), local concern (i.e. affordable housing in your neighborhood), or personal concern (i.e. the health and well-being of a loved one.)







## THE NOURISHING VOCATION PROJECT

[stolaf.edu/nourishing-vocation](http://stolaf.edu/nourishing-vocation)

### PRAYER OF GOOD COURAGE — by Rev. Erik Milner-White

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### OUR ST. OLAF SUPPORT

Emily King-Nobles '25,  
*NVP Fellow (left)*

Rev. Dr. Char Cox, *Director of  
Programming, Engagement & Innovation  
for Congregational Thriving through the  
St. Olaf College Lutheran Center (right)*



### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT?

There is NO COST to participate in The Nourishing Vocation Project.

*The project is brought to you through the St. Olaf College Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community with generous support from Lilly Endowment Inc.*



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