



Blaine and Kathleen Newhouse

A glimpse at what your support made possible

Because of your generosity and our growth as a congregation, The English Language Congregation of The National Evangelical church initiated a process of strategic planning in the year 2025. The process included both positional and influential leaders and began with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of our current ministries.

Strategic Planning Task Force members were then divided into two groups—Dreamers and Doers. The Dreamers group prayed and discussed what it would look like for the ELC to lean into risk and embrace missional imagination during the next decade of our ministry. The Doers group wrestled with more practical questions related to the implementation of these ideas while also supporting our current ministries—training, funding, accountability, assimilation, and multiplication.

Our process also included the creation of a Vision Document intended to sharpen focus and make clear both what we will and will not become as a congregation. While space does not allow us to share the entire Vision Document, we pray you are uplifted in the knowledge of what the ELC feels called to pursue in the next season of our life together in community!

The ELC has incredible missional imagination and is eager to lean into the kind of risk whereby we would trust God to do what seems impossible in a predominantly Muslim nation—to plant churches, begin new ministries, train pastors, and continue to scatter seed—expanding the loving embrace of Jesus and the message of the gospel not only to the beautiful citizens and residents of the Kingdom of Bahrain, but to the very ends of the earth!

- Concluding message of the ELC Vision Document 2025

Our challenges in 2025

One of the challenges we have faced in 2025 relates directly to our work in strategic planning. While the prospect of crossing cultural and religious boundaries to plant churches and engage in ministry with local residents is inspiring for some, for others the sense of risk and uncertainty can be unsettling. At a recent ELC Leaders Retreat in the fall of 2025, we witnessed how a majority of leaders were amped up and energized by the work of the Strategic Planning Task Force. At the same time, we could not miss the emotional resistance and fear on the part of a much smaller group of ELC leaders.

Our response to such resistance has been twofold. First, resistance reminds us that we each respond to risk and the prospect of change differently. Second, resistance provides an opportunity for us to better clarify and amplify our messaging—to educate when doing so is helpful AND to listen if there are areas where our process or hoped for outcomes could be improved.

The second challenge faced by the ELC in 2025—and will no doubt continue in 2026—is the ‘Bahrainization’ of the workforce. For decades, Bahrain has needed highly skilled expatriate workers to fill various professional positions in the oil, refining, construction, and finance sectors. With an increasing value placed on education over the last 50 years, many Bahrainis are now able to fill roles traditionally occupied by expats (non Bahrainis). As a result, the ELC had at least a dozen key families leave Bahrain after termination of employment in 2025.

While we understand the reasons why the Bahraini government encourages the hiring of its own citizens, the practice does create a deep sense of sadness and loss for the families affected as well as congregational members who are asked to release those we love to live and serve elsewhere.





Above: ELC Needs Ministry labor camp food distribution with RCA group led by Grace Newhouse



Above: The Free Medical Clinic sponsored by ELC Embrace Ministry in partnership with the American Mission Hospital. Here is a testimony from one of our medical clinic participants:

"I want to seize this opportunity to thank all the ELC and Embrace ministry in collaboration with AMH for their immense support toward my health issues. At first it sounds to me as fairy tale and incredible that after the free test exercise that they can follow up to ensure that the fellow received treatment. To God be the glory it was sacrosanct and realistic. My unequivocal, unflinching, and unalloyed gratitude goes to our pastor, Pastor Blaine Newhouse. My prayer for the ELC, Embrace ministry, and AMH is that affliction, lack, and severe illnesses will never come their way in Jesus Christ's name _Amen."

Please pray

- 1) Please pray for the ELC Strategic Planning Process as we next begin work on our 'Operational Plan' for the implementation of the vision God has given us to pursue.
- 2) Please pray for ELC members who are losing employment and facing uncertainty related to the economic changes taking place in Bahrain.

P.S. [Check out this video](#) from the ELC that focuses on our local mission impact and what the church in North America can learn from our experiences,

