

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE



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Congregation Name and Location

Name Immanuel Lutheran Church, Fresno
Mailing address 5955 S. Elm Ave.
City Fresno State/Province CA Zip/Postal Code 93706
Telephone 559-237-7909 Fax _____
Email address immanueleaston@sbcglobal.com
Congregation website www.immanueleaston.com

Seeking Full-time pastor Part-time pastor Either full-time or part-time

Congregational President or Vice President

Name Fred Cogan Title Congregational President
Mailing address 2407 E. Katherine Ave.
City Fowler State/Province CA Zip/Postal Code 93625
Home phone None Cell phone 559-903-2338
Email address fcogan.fc@gmail.com

Call Committee Chair

Name Mark Salwasser
Mailing address 464 W. American Ave.
City Fresno State/Province CA Zip/Postal Code 93706
Home phone None Cell phone 559-906-5015
Email address marksa@csufresno.edu

Congregational Demographics

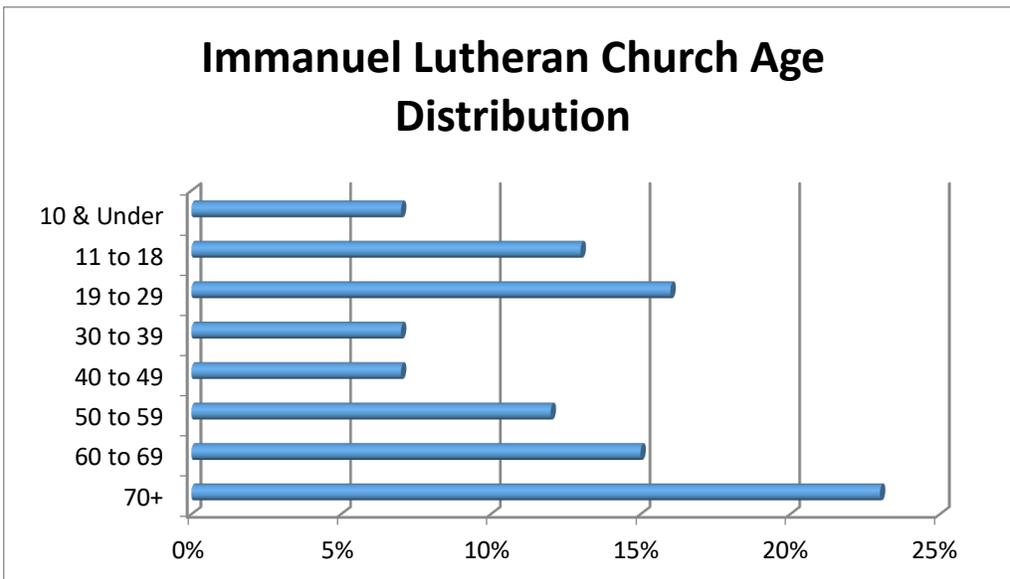
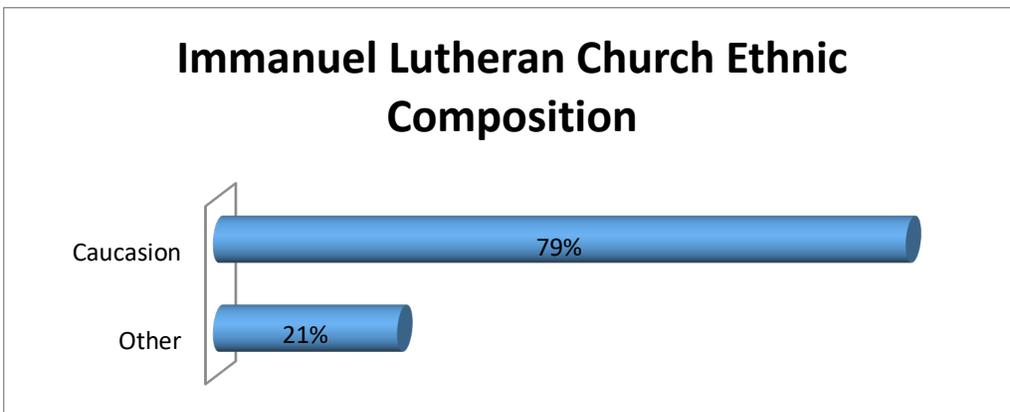
Number of **paid** staff (full- or part-time): Clergy 1 Lay professionals 5 Secretarial 1

Average worship attendance 109 Average Sunday school attendance 45

Indicate the type of community in which your congregation is located (is it small town, small city, suburban, large city, farming, industrial, etc.).

Immanuel Lutheran Church was established in 1888, and is located in the small town of Easton. Easton is located about seven miles south of downtown Fresno, CA. It is a bedroom community to Fresno which has a population of 500,000. Fresno County is in the center of the San Joaquin Valley and annually produces over 400 commodities of agricultural products. Immanuel enjoys a high school campus located directly across the street, and junior high and elementary campuses located within a short walking distance. The church also owns the corner park due east of our campus, which we share with the community, especially on Easter where we host an ecumenical Sunrise Service.

Describe the congregation's ethnic composition and age distribution.



Does the congregation have a clear vision for mission — a clear and shared understanding of where God is leading you? If so, state it as succinctly as possible.

Our clear and shared mission is one of making Christ known in our immediate community, beyond Immanuel Lutheran Church. We accomplish this by enabling individuals and groups to follow God's leading for their particular outreach or mission. Over the years we have intentionally sought to create an atmosphere where a church member with a passion, that seeks to further the kingdom, is supported and appreciated.

What are the primary goals of your congregation?

The goals for Immanuel Lutheran Church are both broad and specific. Our congregation is working to the following:

1. As a congregation, grow Immanuel Lutheran Church to meet the next 50:

The next 50 visitors through the door: Our goal is that they become members of our church family and disciples of Jesus Christ.

The next 50 years: Our goal is to boldly envision the future of Immanuel Lutheran Church, and its place serving the community at large.

The next 50 service projects: Our goal is to be servants of our community brothers and sisters, using the next 50 service projects to serve Christ by loving each other.

2. Find our next pastor, who endeavors to be a true partner in the visioning, leadership, and work needed to grow our church outreach.

3. Offer ministries at Immanuel Lutheran Church that create disciples of Easton, Fresno County, California, and the world at large.

4. While Easton is not an incorporated city, our church sits in a prominent location across the street from the largest school in Easton. Our goal is to be a light for the people of this community including a partnership with the local high school and the youth of Easton.

5. Enhance the programs offered through our church to grow the spiritual awareness and awakenings of our congregants, present and future.

6. Completing physical campus improvements begun in early 2018. The last of which, is our Social Hall remodeling project.

Describe your congregation's worship practice (liturgy, hymns, vestments, music, hymnals, and frequency of Holy Communion).

Immanuel uses a blended worship experience, combining traditional hymnody and contemporary praise music. The pastor is generally in albs and preaches from the pulpit, but is free to wear a collar and preach from the stage. We offer a children's sermon every Sunday, which is mostly lead by lay people of the church. Immanuel welcomes the opportunity for infants and small children to worship with our congregation.

Hymns are generally from the "green hymnal" however, other appropriate music is also used. Immanuel enjoys both pipe organ and grand piano accompaniment, and our service includes a praise band that utilizes electric instruments. Communion is served twice a month; the first Sunday of the month, it is served at the altar rail with kneeling, and third Sunday of the month it is served by intinction. Our entire service is printed in the bulletin, as well as projected onto a video screen. We have a brand new sound system which enables us to use Power Point for sermons and video clips for worship.

Describe your congregation's Christian education ministry.

Our Sunday School is held the hour before Sunday morning worship. Classes currently offered include; one class for children in grades K-5, one class for children in grades 6-8 (confirmation), one high school class, one young adults class, and two classes for adults. All lessons are biblically based and life applicable. As of today, church leadership is interested in new, innovative ideas about the best practices for Sunday School.

Our youth group (grades 6-12) meets on Wednesday nights from 6-8 pm. The youth are offered dinner, games, and a biblically based message applicable to their lives.

Other opportunities for Christian education at Immanuel include: Men's Bible study and breakfast on Thursday mornings, Woman's Bible study on Thursday mornings, as well as Dorcas and Faith Women's Bible study which both meet monthly.

Describe the congregation's current activities for mission and outreach.

Breaking Grounds Café: Wednesday Mornings from 8:00-10:00AM Immanuel hosts Breaking Grounds Café. This is an ecumenical event in Immanuel's Social Hall where we open the doors to high school students that attend Washington Union High School. Students are greeted with a smile and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Immanuel's volunteers, along with those from Easton Presbyterian Church and Saint Jude Catholic Church, serve students refreshments for those with no place to go before school on Wednesday's due to school site staff development. This mission project is meant to connect students who need a safe place to stay, while being an example of Christ. We offer a safe place with positive interactions for the 150 high school students we serve weekly.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: Throughout the school year, Immanuel takes turns with 3 other churches, providing free lunches for students who attend Washington Union High School. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes organization survives on donations from the community to provide a free lunch while praying, reading scripture and sharing the gospel to high school students and teachers. The FCA lunch and program, which typically features an inspirational guest speaker, is held at Immanuel's Social Hall every Thursday.

English Conversation Circles: Wednesday evenings, volunteers from Immanuel lead informal English classes. The program is guided by the Fresno County Library. Each week, different leaders work with those who are learning English as a second language. Classes are held in Grace Hall.

The Caruthers Fair Food Booth: Every September, Immanuel works together at our local fair, selling rib dinners and pulled-pork sandwiches to raise money for the Fresno Rescue Mission. This four-day venture involves 65 different volunteers from our church. This outreach project has generated over \$145,000 for the Mission over the past 15 years. The Caruthers Fair Food Booth has also united our church family by sharing our love for Christ through serving our community with this mission opportunity.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Service: This is an annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Service held at Immanuel in conjunction with the Fresno Rescue Mission. Several churches in our community take part in leading the worship service, and members of the Fresno Rescue Mission Recovery Program give their testimony. Donations received that night are given to the Mission. Hosting this ecumenical event involves five churches in our community, and together, we help the mission spread the word of our Lord and Savior.

Immanuel Quilters: Monthly volunteers gather to sew quilts in order to sell them. Profits are donated to various charitable organizations. Quilts are also donated to people in need, either in this country or abroad.

Easton Food Distribution-Neighborhood Market: Immanuel manages the ‘Neighborhood Market’ which is a community-involved event in which volunteers gather monthly to distribute food donated by the Central California Food Bank.

Fellowship Luncheons: Immanuel sponsors lunches for senior citizens four to five times per year. Volunteers prepare a meal, along with devotional time and provide entertainment for a wonderful afternoon of fellowship for senior citizens from our local community.

Musical Concerts: Foreign missionary concerts are held at Immanuel once or twice per year where a free-will offering is taken to aid the specific cause represented by the group performing. Most recently, we hosted groups from Russia and Tanzania at two separate events. These concerts are always open to our community.

Russ Dunbar Memorial Blood Drive: Every eight weeks, the Central California Blood Center comes to Immanuel and the community is invited to donate blood. This encourages outreach to our community and blesses those recipients of the donations. Blood donors, and those who attempt but cannot donate, are treated to a hosted lunch. Meals are also available for sale to those who do not donate, but wish to support the drive itself.

Care Bears: Immanuel maintains a designated fund for those in need of gasoline, food, or general help. The fund is supported by donations and distributed to those that express any of these needs.

Ummata: Twice a year, an inter-generational Bible School is held where church volunteers lead devotions, music, and cook a meal for all to enjoy together along with enrichment activities. This one-day event on the first Sunday of Advent, and three-day summer evening event is for all ages, and everyone in our community is encouraged to attend. This is a great outreach event for non-Christians and those new to the faith.

The NALC is committed to moving away from an institutional understanding of the Church, to the biblical commission to be a community of followers of Jesus who focus on being disciples and making disciples. Which best describes your congregation’s understanding of this movement? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- Totally unaware
- Have heard about it
- Have been involved personally
- Some in the congregation are involved, some aren’t
- Congregation understands, is on-board and involved

List the *Top Five Things* your congregations hopes for in its next Pastor

1. We want a pastor who gives sermons that connect to the heart, teaches us more about scripture, inspires us to follow God’s purpose for our lives, and teaches us how to be Christ to the world.
2. We want a pastor who connects with all generations and works to connect them to each other.
3. We want a pastor who motivates and empowers congregants to use the gifts God gave them to serve the Lord.
4. We want a pastor who is actively involved in caring about the congregation, the local community, and the global mission field.
5. We want a pastor who has a strong appreciation for both traditional hymns and contemporary music and will incorporate both into every service.

What were the three most significant events in your congregation's history? Provide the years in which these events happened and why they are important to your congregation.

Approximately three years ago, our church conducted a survey to see what keeps our young adults in the church, and why those that left had chosen to leave. The results found that those who stayed, chose to stay because of the personal connections they had with people in our church of *all* ages. This realization led us to form an Intergenerational Committee. The committee's goal was to envision ways to foster these relationships.

Thus, Ummata was born. The name Ummata was selected for two main reasons. First, Ummata means *community* in Ethiopian, which is what we are trying to foster. Second, Ummata sounds like *you matter*, which is the feeling we hope to convey by holding this event. Ummata is held for three days each summer and one day at the beginning of Advent. Each day we have a meal, a devotion, music, and a break-out group session. We offer a variety of break-out groups with various activities. Past sessions have included cooking, wood working, outdoor games, painting, and many other activities.

The break-out groups serve two main purposes. The first is to bring people together based on common interests, no matter their age. This allows people to interact with those they ordinarily would not. Second, it gives people in the church an opportunity to share the talents God gave them. Who knew we had such talent! Ummata has had a significant impact on the relationships in our church by providing a biannual event to expand our horizons in a fun, creative way. This event has led to stronger interactions between all ages throughout the rest of the year.

In 2010, our Pastor chose to leave us in order to be closer to his aging parents. Pastor Paul had shepherded our congregation for an amazing 27 years. Because of his extended tenure and strong leadership style, Immanuel felt a large void upon his departure. Soon after, we voted to leave the ELCA. This was due to dogma more than practical worship experience. As members of the NALC, there is more of a sense of being in line with the authority of scripture.

In 2013, construction was completed on our new, two-story educational building, named Grace Hall. Within Grace Hall we conduct two adult bible studies, the youth ministries, children's Sunday School, English conversation circles, mid-week summer worship, confirmation classes, a weekly 12 step program, and Ummata. We would love to expand its use with new ministry opportunities as they present themselves.

Has your congregation participated in the Congregational Workshop Preparatory to the Call Process?

[Type an X by the appropriate response]

Yes

No

What were the three most significant results of the workshop

1. The first, and most significant result, was that the workshop gave the congregation an understanding and unity about the departure of our last pastor, and united our thinking moving forward with the calling of our next pastor.
2. Secondly, was seeing the intergenerational participation. We had congregants from ages 14 to age 72 actively participating in the workshop.
3. The third significant result was the workshop gave us a deeper understanding of NALC core values.

Describe the nature and extent of any significant current or recent conflict in the congregation. Is this conflict resolved, or ongoing? If resolved, how was it resolved?

We are not aware of any current conflict at Immanuel Lutheran Church. That said, the past 35 years have significantly impacted where we are now. For approximately 27 years we had a pastor who was a very strong leader. He believed in the power of people working together, both inside, and out, of the congregation, to spread the word of God and make Disciples of Christ. He could easily be described as a “lightening rod” for action...and for 27 years our congregation acted in both big and small ways. When he retired to Northern California eight years ago, our congregational leadership worked hard to continue programs with all that entailed. We hired an interim pastor to guide us as we searched.

After three years, we began a relationship with a new pastor, who had a heart for teaching the bible, the history of the bible, the church, and Martin Luther in particular. He had an affable personality and people fell in love with his youthful “old school” approach to church. What we learned along the way was his “old school” approach neither helped our congregation move at the pace we were used to, nor did it resonate well with all congregants.

Approximately a year ago, we entered into dialogue with him about growing our congregation and our congregation’s participation in programs. After reflection and discernment, he decided to pursue other opportunities outside of Immanuel, and ultimately left the position March 1, 2018. We immediately entered into an interim pastor relationship with Pastor John Saethre, and have been working on our approach to this call ever since.

Some congregants were not happy to see our last pastor leave, as they very much appreciated his style of leadership and preaching. Other congregants were okay with this change, as they sought a different experience from our church’s leadership. That said, our church family has been working well together to meet the challenges as we search for our new pastor. Immanuel continues to enhance its programs, and has undertaken several new projects to modernize our church facilities. All of this has been incredibly positive for a variety of reasons.

Our love for each other is caring and respectful. We are human, and continue to come to the cross for everything. During our last six years, we have suffered some bumps and bruises, some wins, and some losses. Immanuel’s growing membership seeks to make the church a light of the word in Easton California and beyond. We are preparing the way for our next pastor to come to Immanuel, fully ready to “lead and feed” so that we all make disciples of Christ in any way we can.

How does your congregation handle conflict/tension? Which of the following do you think best describes your congregation? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- As a church, we respect and listen to each other and work things through without generating divisiveness.
- As a church, we try to respect and listen to each other, but it is not uncommon for differences of opinion to be a problem and for some people to choose sides. Some have left our church because of conflict.
- Conflict hurts our sense of unity, but we tend not to talk about it.
- Painful experience with conflict has been present, but it has been worked through, and we have learned from the experience.
- We have had some painful experiences with conflict, and they linger in the background.
- Open conflict is present, and we need a minister who can help us deal with it.
- Other (describe).....

What was the nature of the relationship between your last pastor and the congregation? Positive? Struggling? Cooperative? Tense?

The relationship with our previous pastor was positive for the first 18-24 months. The congregation was very excited to have finally found a permanent pastor, and had a wonderful time getting to know him

and his wife. As time passed, the worship style became more formal, and it did not seem to fit our congregational needs. There was little cooperation with church council suggestions, so the pastor requested a congregational survey to assess what Immanuel desired as a church body.

The survey concluded that changes in both the worship service and Immanuel's outreach were desired. Simple changes to the service were encouraged by the council, but not appreciated by the Pastor, which led to some tense and uncooperative times. Following this, the pastor and council struggled to make worship at Immanuel a positive experience. Immanuel learned a lot about who we want to be as a congregation. Through these difficult times, we were able to articulate what is most important to us moving forward. We are grateful for this experience and what we were able to learn during his tenure.

How did your council/congregational leaders work together with your last pastor? [Type an X by the appropriate response]

- Leadership is shared, with shared decision-making
- Pastor makes important decisions
- Council makes decisions with pastoral input
- Council makes decisions without pastoral input

Is your pastor a member of council with: [Type an X by the appropriate response(s)]

- Voice Vote

Congregational finances

Total budget for last fiscal year: \$ 288,434

Benevolence to the North American Lutheran Church: \$ 8,000

Other benevolence: \$ 17,600

Total debt of the congregation: \$ 53,000

Total savings, reserves, and endowments: \$ 157,100

Compensation of Last Pastor

Salary: \$ 43,500 Parsonage/housing allowance: Parsonage / \$20,000

Social security offset: \$ 4,667 Pension: \$ 4,350

Health Insurance: \$ 19,530 Vacation: 4 weeks

Continuing education (time/funding): Negotiable

Travel reimbursement: At IRS Rate

Other: _____

When the Congregational Vacancy List is updated, a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) is included announcing each congregation's ministry. If you wish, your call committee may compose that summary, realizing it may be edited/formatted as needed.

Immanuel Lutheran Church is located in the small, rural community of Easton, CA which is located

seven miles south of downtown Fresno. With an average of 109 worshipping on Sunday mornings, youth group, community outreach activities, and inter-generational gatherings throughout the week, the presence of God holds true to her name *Immanuel- God with us*. Immanuel Lutheran Church strives to be a church that motivates and empowers its congregants to use the gifts God has given them to serve the Lord. Immanuel is a church that connects our young to our old and all ages in-between, to share a common youthful spirit with a love for the Lord.

Completed by: Mark Salwasser

Date: October 30, 2018

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

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Congregation name, City, Date

****Email a copy of the completed profile to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry, dwendel@thenalc.org.**

Alternative submission method ONLY if you do not have email: Print and mail the complete profile to:

North American Lutheran Church
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry
3500 Mill Run Drive
Hilliard, OH 43026-777

In addition, mail or email a copy of the completed profile to your mission district dean (can be found at <http://thenalc.org/mission-districts/>).

Should you have questions, call Pr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry, at 614-777-5709 (Office), or 719-650-8171 (Cell).

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