



Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Grounded in God's Word,
Confident in God's grace,
Committed to sharing God's love.

Feasibility Study Executive Summary

Dear Emmanuel Family,

It continues to be a blessing to partner with you on this journey. We cannot thank all of you enough for completing the survey with your heartfelt feedback, giving up your time to chat with us by phone, Zoom or in person for an interview and, most importantly, praying for your church through this process. The information below is an executive summary of the feasibility study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Emmanuel Lutheran Church is a special place because you understand that you are a family. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this incredible family!

Yours in Christ,
Richie Musser & Logan Kane



BY THE NUMBERS

- 23 households completed a survey (68% of all households) and 18 participated in an interview (53% off all households). In our experience, this is a very strong response rate for a feasibility study survey.
- 100% of those surveyed hold a superior (26%) or very good (74%) overall view of Emmanuel.
- 91% of households marked that they are at least somewhat involved with the church.
- 22% of those completing a survey are founding members, 57% have been attending for 5-10 Years. An additional 9% started attending 4-5 years ago with 13% marking 0-3 Years.
- 48% of households marked they were very supportive of the vision to construct a church building. An additional 43% indicated they were supportive. One household marked they were somewhat supportive, and another household marked they were not supportive.

THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision Support

There is incredible support for the overall vision that was laid out by leadership. Many participants noted that they recognized the significance of raising the funds for Emmanuel to have their own church home and the generational impact it could have. Some wanted to know whether this would be occurring 'sooner rather than later'.

Kirby-Smith Recommendation

As the church moves forward with its vision, it is important to build upon the support and enthusiasm generated during the study. It is recommended that leadership decide quickly on the campaign to continue this momentum. They should also create a communication plan to keep the congregation informed about the progress being made. This can include regular updates in the bulletin or newsletter, social media posts, and community events.



THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Building

As expected, there was a lot of discussion around what the new church building would look like (e.g., layout, specific rooms) and what is needed on the campus to get started. Many members acknowledged that any building would likely need to be done in phases, due to budget, resources and time.

Some of the most discussed details on building specifics was multiple classrooms, a family life center as well as a separate worship space. Other discussion was surrounding what ministries may look like on a new campus that is able to be used by Emmanuel throughout the entire week. A consistent need that members brought up was for after-school childcare and leveraging the space for ministries such as this.

Kirby-Smith Recommendation

While it would be wonderful to immediately have classrooms, a family life center and a separate worship space (or even more), ultimately church leadership will need to look at what can be raised and how much they are able, and willing, to borrow. Once this has been decided, leadership should work with architects and contractors to create a master plan. A campaign will detail out when and how funding from members will come in. In our experience, being able to strategically add to a church's campus over the years and even decades allows for intentional growth, but immediate results.

Also be sure to consider the ministries that Emmanuel would want to offer, especially in this new location. It is recommended that leadership research what is already in the community (what needs are already being filled) and what needs may still need to be met.

Be mindful that whatever ministry or ministries that the church decides on will be supported by their members (time, talent, and/or treasure). For example, consider a childcare program. Who will be overseeing this? Will it be member run, will the church be hiring or working with a third-party? The church does not want to start, or expand, a ministry that will not be manned or successful.

Budget & Giving

There is strong financial support of the campaign vision, with 20 of 23 households participating in the study identifying a financial contribution range. There are still approximately 11 households (32%) that did not participate in the feasibility study that may also contribute or pledge to a campaign. While supportive, some members were cautious about the expense of not only building the church, but also the ongoing expenses associated with upkeep.

Kirby-Smith Recommendation

Having a well-developed plan in place can help address concerns about the campaign. This could include outlining specific fundraising goals, timelines, and strategies for reaching out to potential donors. A clear plan can also help ensure that resources are being used effectively and efficiently with little time being wasted. Time wasted in the construction world means increased costs.

Through the campaign, leadership should be prepared to share how the funds will be raised - through church contributions over a three-year capital campaign, community support and involvement, and potentially even grants. Another recommendation is that the campaign covers creative ways of giving, outside of strictly cash gifts. For example, members can give their Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to the church to benefit the campaign as well as save money on their personal taxes.

Legacy Giving, or planned giving, is also a consideration for the long-term. As these are future gifts, the campaign needs to initially focus on what members can give in the next 1-3 years.

THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Church Growth

Emmanuel has a very active congregation, with 86% of households participating in the feasibility study (this is usually around 25-40%). When asked in the survey how involved they considered themselves to be in the church, 65% said they are very involved or involved in the church.

During the feasibility study, several members raised concerns about the church's growth and its long-term strategic plan to address membership. They noted that they felt membership had 'plateaued' and that there was not a current emphasis placed on bringing on new members. During conversations, members expressed that they wanted to see concentrated efforts to increase membership to justify spending money on constructing a building.

Kirby-Smith Recommendation

Increasing church membership is a multifaceted task that requires strategic planning, community engagement, and a genuine focus on fostering relationships. Emmanuel will need to develop a comprehensive plan that outlines the specific steps the church will take to achieve its short-term and long-term goals regarding membership. This plan should include a timeline, measurable objectives, and a budget.

It is our recommendation to involve key stakeholders in the planning process, including church leaders, members, and staff, to ensure that everyone has a voice and a stake in the plan's success. Make sure to communicate the strategic plan to all members of the church and ensure that everyone understands their role in achieving the plan's objectives.

As the land for the church campus is in a different location, consider what this new area may bring - both strengths and challenges. Focus on this new community and how Emmanuel may be called to serve those within it as well as stay connected with those in the area they have been in since the church's beginning. Some considerations for increasing membership: community outreach and engagement, enhance worship services, engage in marketing, and effectively use digital platforms. Also consider how Emmanuel having their own building would allow them to increase their ability to promote membership through events, rentals, etc.

Communication

Church leadership has received overwhelming support from its members on the outlined vision. Members were pleased that the entire congregation was included in the process. They were also pleased to be included in discussions with the architects to collaborate and to talk about their own aspirations, programming goals, and building design ideas for the proposed building project. That said, there is the desire for continued and enhanced communication with what each step of the process will look like - from the campaign, to the planning, construction and beyond.

Kirby-Smith Recommendation

During the preparation phase of the campaign, Kirby-Smith will work alongside the committee to develop campaign literature, including frequently asked questions (FAQ), a brochure with more detailed information, updates for the Weekly Word and more. A campaign gathering will be held to directly answer any questions once members receive the literature in the mail. It will also be important to designate a place to find updated information (online and in person) through the campaign as well as the building process.

Overall, communication is an important value for the Emmanuel community. By continuing to prioritize open communication and sharing information with members, the church can build even greater support for its vision.