The U.S. Congregational Life Survey

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Responses
Frequencies (N = 22,989 attendees from 141 fast growing congregations)
October, 2001

You and Your Congregation

1. How often do you go to worship services at this congregation?
   - 2.4% This is my first time
   - 1.6 Hardly ever/special occasions only
   - 1.8 Less than once a month
   - 3.0 Once a month
   - 19.2 Two or three times a month
   - 66.8 Usually every week
   - 5.1 More than once a week

2. How long have you been going to worship services or activities at this congregation?
   - 9.0% Less than 1 year
   - 12.5 1-2 years
   - 20.3 3-5 years
   - 16.9 6-10 years
   - 16.5 11-20 years
   - 21.4 More than 20 years
   - 2.2 I am visiting from another congregation
   - 1.1 I am visiting and do not regularly go anywhere else

3. Are you regularly involved in any ***group*** activities here? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
   - 25.5% Yes, in Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school
   - 23.3 Yes, in prayer, discussion, or Bible study groups
   - 34.2 Yes, in fellowships, clubs, or other social groups
   - 6.0 No, we have no group activities
   - 37.4 No, I am not regularly involved in group activities

4. Do you regularly take part in any activities of this congregation that reach out to the wider community (e.g., visitation, evangelism, outreach, community service, social justice)? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
   - 13.8% Yes, in evangelism or outreach activities
   - 22.7 Yes, in community service, social justice, or advocacy activities of this congregation
   - 4.0 No, we don't have such activities
   - 61.3 No, I am not regularly involved

5. Do you currently have any of the following roles here? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
   - 5.6% Member of the governing board
   - 14.9 Member of a congregational committee or task force
   - 14.5 Leading or assisting in worship
   - 6.6 Officer or leader of men's, women's, youth, or other small group
   - 13.3 Choir member, musician, or choir director
   - 10.3 Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school teacher
   - 13.6 Other role not listed here (specify):
   - 46.2 None

About Your Faith

6. Over the last year, how much have you grown in your faith?
   - 5.5% No real growth
   - 42.0 Some growth
   - 38.1 Much growth, mainly through this congregation
   - 5.5 Much growth, mainly through other groups or congregations
   - 8.9 Much growth, mainly through my own private activities

7. How often do you spend time in private devotional activities (e.g., prayer, meditation, reading the Bible alone)?
   - 43.3% Every day/most days
   - 21.2 A few times a week
   - 4.6 Once a week
   - 20.6 Occasionally
   - 8.0 Hardly ever
   - 2.1 Never

8. Which statement comes closest to your view of the Bible? (Mark ***one*** only.)
   - 19.9% The Bible is the word of God, to be taken literally word for word
   - 29.7 The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical and cultural context
   - 43.2 The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical context and the Church's teachings
   - 4.3 The Bible is not the word of God, but contains God's word to us
   - 0.6 The Bible is not the word of God but is a valuable book
   - 0.2 The Bible is an ancient book with little value today
   - 2.2 Don't know

9. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "All the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth"?
   - 11.9% Strongly agree
   - 38.6 Agree
   - 22.1 Neutral or unsure
   - 19.5 Disagree
   - 7.8 Strongly disagree

10. Do you agree or disagree: "My spiritual needs are being met in this congregation or parish"?
    - 37.7% Strongly agree
    - 49.5 Agree
    - 10.1 Neutral or unsure
    - 2.3 Disagree
    - 0.4 Strongly disagree

11. Some people feel they came to faith gradually. For others, it began at a definite moment of commitment. Have you ever experienced such a moment of decisive faith commitment or conversion?
    - 47.7% No, I've had faith for as long as I can remember
    - 28.0 No, I came to faith through a gradual process
    - 3.8 Yes, at one specific moment in the last 5 years
    - 6.5 Yes, at one specific moment more than 5 years ago
    - 9.5 Yes, a number of specific moments of commitment or re-commitment
    - 4.5 Not sure or not applicable

12. Are you currently a member of this congregation?
    - 84.3% Yes
    - 2.9 No
    - 6.7 No, but I'm in the process of becoming a member
    - 6.0 No, but I regularly participate here

You and Your Local Community

13. Are you involved in any community service, social service, or advocacy groups ***not*** connected to this congregation? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 29.5% Yes, social service or charity groups
    - 5.0 Yes, advocacy, justice, or lobbying groups
    - 63.0 No, I'm not involved with such groups

14. Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your faith?
    - 0.6% I do not have faith, so the question is not applicable
    - 11.0 I do not talk about my faith; my life and actions are sufficient
    - 17.3 I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language
    - 60.6 I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up
    - 10.5 I feel at ease talking about my faith and seek opportunities to do so

15. Would you be prepared to invite to a worship service here any of your friends and relatives who do not now attend a congregation?
    - 47.1% Yes, and I have done so in the past 12 months
    - 39.2 Yes, but I have not done so in the past 12 months
    - 9.2 Don't know
    - 4.0 No, probably not
    - 0.5 No, definitely not

16. In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 23.4% Loaned money to someone outside your family
    - 17.7 Cared for someone outside your family who was very sick
    - 18.7 Helped someone outside your family find a job
    - 51.8 Donated or prepared food for someone outside your family or congregation
    - 77.4 Voted in the last presidential election
    - 78.9 Donated money to a charitable organization (other than this congregation)
    - 21.0 Worked with others to try to solve a community problem
    - 17.3 Contacted an elected official about a public issue

More About Your Involvement Here

17. How satisfied are you with what is offered here for children and youth (less than 19 years of age)?
    - 36.9% Very satisfied
    - 35.8 Satisfied
    - 11.4 Mixed feelings
    - 1.9 Dissatisfied
    - 0.6 Very dissatisfied
    - 13.4 Not sure or not applicable

18. Which best describes your involvement in the making of important decisions in this congregation?
    - 18.8% I have been given the opportunity and often participate in decision-making
    - 27.2 I have been given the opportunity and occasionally get involved in decision-making
    - 38.4 I have been given the opportunity but don't usually get involved in decision-making
    - 13.3 I have ***not*** been given an opportunity to be involved and this is fine with me
    - 2.4 I have ***not*** been given an opportunity to be involved and I am not happy about this

19. Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation?
    - 50.0% Yes, a strong sense of belonging that is growing
    - 26.1 Yes, a strong sense—about the same as last year
    - 8.4 Yes, but perhaps not as strong as in the past
    - 5.5 No, but I am new here
    - 2.6 No, and I wish I did by now
    - 3.4 No, but I am happy as I am
    - 3.9 Don't know/not applicable

20. While you may value many different styles of music, which of the following do you prefer in congregational worship? (Mark up to ***two***.)
    - 65.2% Traditional hymns
    - 29.7 Praise music or choruses
    - 36.1 Contemporary hymns
    - 15.7 Other contemporary music or songs (not hymns)
    - 3.7 Sung responsorial psalms
    - 9.1 Classical music or chorales
    - 1.0 Contemplative chants (Taizé, Iona)
    - 5.6 Music or songs from a variety of cultures
    - 3.0 African-American gospel music
    - 0.4 No music or songs
    - 2.0 Don't know

21. To what extent do the worship services or activities of this congregation help you with everyday living?
    - 44.9% A great extent
    - 44.3 Some extent
    - 9.0 A small extent
    - 1.8 Not at all

22. Which of the following aspects of this congregation do you personally most value? (Mark up to ***three*** options.)
    - 11.4% Wider community care or social justice emphasis
    - 9.9 Reaching those who do not attend church
    - 31.5 Traditional style of worship or music
    - 22.2 Contemporary style of worship or music
    - 50.8 Sharing in Holy Communion, Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper
    - 14.1 Social activities or meeting new people
    - 45.1 Sermons, preaching, or homilies
    - 12.9 Bible study or prayer groups, other discussion groups
    - 21.4 Ministry for children or youth
    - 8.5 Prayer ministry for one another
    - 12.0 Practical care for one another in times of need
    - 3.3 The congregation's school or pre-school
    - 7.9 Openness to social diversity
    - 2.4 Adult church-school or Sabbath-school class

23. Do you have any close friends in this congregation?
    - 12.7% No, I have little contact with others from this congregation outside of activities here
    - 21.1 No, I have some friends in this congregation, but my closest friends are not involved here
    - 56.0 Yes, I have some close friends here as well as other close friends who are not part of this congregation
    - 10.3 Yes, all of my closest friends are part of this congregation

24. Before you started coming to this congregation, were you participating in another congregation?
    - 10.4% No, I've come here for most/all of my life
    - 19.3 No, before coming here I had not been attending any congregation for several years
    - 5.9 No, before coming here I had never regularly attended
    - 64.5 Yes, immediately prior to coming here, I was participating in another congregation

25. Before you started coming here, what type of congregation did you attend? (Mark only ***one***.)

0.4%	Assembly of God	0.2	Pentecostal
2.8	Baptist	2.1	Non-denominational
8.1	Catholic	0.2	Nazarene
2.1	Episcopal	3.6	Presbyterian
59.7	Lutheran	0.2	Seventh-day Adventist
5.7	Methodist	1.7	United Church of Christ
4.2	Other		
9.1	I did not attend another congregation before coming here		

26. Over the last two years, has there been any conflict in this congregation? (Mark only ***one***.)
49.4% No conflict that I am aware of
29.5 Some minor conflict
2.7 Major conflict
4.3 Major conflict, with leaders or people leaving
14.1 Don't know

This Congregation's Leadership

27. Have this congregation's leaders encouraged you to find and use your gifts and skills here?
39.0% Yes, to a great extent
34.9 Yes, to some extent
12.9 Yes, to a small extent
5.0 Not at all
8.3 Don't know

About You

28. In what year were you born? Please complete the year.

Median Age = 49

29. Are you:
39.6% Male
60.4 Female

30. What is your employment status? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
57.4% Employed full time, part time, or self-employed
2.7 Unemployed
24.3 Retired
8.9 Full-time homemaker
7.6 Student
4.4 Other (please specify)

31. What is the ***highest*** educational level you have completed?
0.2% No formal schooling
2.2 Primary school through 8th grade (K-8)
6.5 Some high school
30.7 Completed high school
6.5 Trade certificate
10.9 Associate degree
26.9 Bachelors degree from a university or college
16.2 Master's, Doctorate, or other graduate degree

32. What is your present marital status?

10.5%	Never married	0.8	Separated
59.8	In first marriage	5.2	Divorced
13.7	Remarried after divorce	6.6	Widowed
1.9	Remarried after death of spouse		
1.5	Living in a committed relationship		

33. Do you have a spouse or partner who is also completing a survey here?
58.6% Yes
41.4 No

34. What is your race or origin? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
0.8% Asian or Pacific Islander
1.3 Black or African American
1.0 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
0.8 Indian (American) or Alaska Native
91.2 White or Caucasian
2.4 Some other race (please specify):_____

35. Where were you born?
96.8% In the United States
1.1 In another English-speaking country
2.1 In a non-English speaking country

36. Is English your first language?
98.0% Yes
2.0 No

37. Which statement ***best*** describes the people who ***currently*** live in your household?
10.4% I live alone
5.9 Adults only in the same household
33.2 A couple without children
4.4 One adult with child/children
46.1 Two or more adults with child/children

38. What is the ZIP Code where you live?

39. About how much do you give financially to this congregation?
13.9% I give 10% or more of net income regularly
35.8 I give about 5% to 9% of net income regularly
31.1 I give less than 5% of net income regularly
13.8 I give a small amount whenever I am here
5.4 I do not contribute financially here

40. Which of the following describes your total annual household income before taxes?

5.3%	less than $10,000	24.2	$50,000 to $74,999
12.1	$10,000 to $24,999	15.8	$75,000 to $99,999
24.6	$25,000 to $49,999	17.9	$100,000 or more

41. How many children of any age do you have, whether they live at home or elsewhere? Please write the number:

14.2%	none	12.2	one
37.5	two	21.7	three
8.7	four	3.3	five
1.3	six	0.7	seven
0.3	eight	0.2	nine or more

42. Do you have any children ***living at home***? (Please provide the ages of your children living at home starting with the eldest.)
40.6% None at home ➜ Please skip to the next page
Age data was not coded properly.

43. Of your children who ***live at home***, which ones participate at this congregation?

	Does She or He Participate Here?		
	Yes, Here	Yes, Elsewhere	No
Eldest child at home	83.2%	5.2	11.6
Child number 2 at home . .	89.2	3.5	7.3
Child number 3 at home . .	80.0	5.3	14.7
Child number 4 at home . .	73.5	5.0	21.5

Some Final Questions

44. How long does it usually take you to get here?
    29.5% 1-5 minutes
    32.1 6-10 minutes
    19.9 11-15 minutes
    10.5 16-20 minutes
    5.7 21-30 minutes
    2.2 More than 20 minutes

45. Compared to 2 years ago, do you think you participate in activities of the congregation more, less, or about the same amount as you did then?
    31.3% Participate more
    46.5 About the same participation
    12.7 Participate less
    9.5 Not applicable (been coming less than 2 years)

46. Do you identify with any of the following approaches to faith? (Mark up to ***two*** options.)

22.1	Catholic	1.5	Pentecostal	3.8	Liberal
27.1	Evangelical	1.4	Fundamentalist	1.7	New Age
3.0	Reformed	13.2	Traditionalist		
1.6	Charismatic	8.0	Moderate		

    27.7 I do not identify with such descriptions

47. Do you agree or disagree: "This congregation is strongly focused on serving the wider community beyond the congregation"?
    40.0% Strongly agree
    46.2 Agree
    11.7 Neutral or unsure
    1.8 Disagree
    0.3 Strongly disagree

48. How often do you experience the following during worship services at this congregation? (Mark ***one*** response in each row.)

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
A sense of God's presence	44.1	35.8	16.5	3.6
Inspiration	31.2	48.1	18.9	1.8
Boredom	0.9	2.4	24.9	71.8
Awe or mystery	4.2	16.0	52.9	26.9
Joy	29.5	48.7	19.6	2.2
Frustration	0.7	2.4	21.4	75.4
Spontaneity	6.3	21.1	50.2	22.4
A sense of fulfilling my obligation	17.9	47.8	25.5	8.8

49. Does this congregation have a clear vision, goals, or direction for its ministry and mission?
    10.7% I am not aware of such a vision, goals, or direction
    8.6 There are ideas but no clear vision, goals, or direction
    36.7 Yes, and I am strongly committed to them
    37.1 Yes, and I am partly committed to them
    7.0 Yes, but I am not committed to them

50. Do you agree or disagree: "I have a sense of excitement about our congregation's future"?
    34.1% Strongly agree
    47.4 Agree
    17.0 Neutral or unsure
    1.2 Disagree
    0.3 Strongly disagree

51. Of the following, which ***one*** best describes your opinion of the future directions of this congregation?
    2.1% We need to get back to the way we did things in the past
    8.6 We are faithfully maintaining past directions
    21.3 We are currently deciding on new directions
    46.6 We are currently moving in new directions
    4.3 We need to rethink where we are heading
    0.7 Our future is very unclear or doubtful
    16.3 Don't know

52. Do you agree or disagree: "This congregation is always ready to try something new"?
    15.8% Strongly agree
    54.9 Agree
    24.4 Neutral or unsure
    4.4 Disagree
    0.4 Strongly disagree

53. To what extent does the minister, pastor, or priest here take into account the ideas of those who worship here?
    54.8% A great extent
    28.3 Some extent
    3.7 A small extent
    0.6 Not at all
    12.5 Don't know
    0.2 There is currently no leader here

54. Which of the following is the best description of the style of leadership of your pastor, minister, or priest?
    15.7% Leadership that tends to take charge
    58.4 Leadership that inspires people to take action
    15.6 Leadership that acts on goals that people here have been involved in setting
    2.1 Leadership where the people start most things
    0.5 There is currently no leader here
    7.8 Don't know

55. What do you think are the main roles that your minister, pastor, or priest actually carries out here? (Mark up to ***three*** options.)
    72.7% Conducting worship or administering the sacraments
    56.2 Teaching people about the faith
    10.1 Training people for ministry and mission
    4.5 Converting others to the faith
    18.6 Administering the work of the congregation
    41.4 Visiting, counseling and helping people
    9.4 Confronting social injustices
    19.8 Providing a vision and goals for the future
    26.6 Offering prayer or being a spiritual role model
    3.8 Don't know

56. Do you agree or disagree: "In general, there is a good match between our congregation and our minister, pastor, or priest"?
    64.6% Strongly agree
    27.4 Agree
    6.4 Neutral or unsure
    0.9 Disagree
    0.3 Strongly disagree
    0.3 There is currently no leader here