

Sandra Graham

Immanuel Church-on-the Hill Vestry Candidate Survey

How long have you worshipped at Immanuel? Any other family members who worship here?

I have worshipped with my husband, Dr. Paul Lartey, at Immanuel since our arrival here from Chicago in August of 2016. I had accepted a 2-year Fellowship assignment with USAID and in seeking a temporary home in the Washington DC Metro area, I chose to first locate an Anglican/Episcopal Parish where we would worship and then look for an apartment within walking distance. So, before our move here, we researched on the Internet and decided that Immanuel had what we were looking for in our home church.

I was raised a Roman Catholic and Paul comes from a staunch Methodist family. Since we wanted to worship together as a family, the compromise we reached, soon after we got married 20 years ago, was to join the Anglican Church, which observes most of the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church – without the guilt! Prior to Immanuel, we attended St. James Cathedral in Chicago and Accra Ridge Church, Accra, Ghana.

What are some parish activities or ministries that have captured your time and talents?

Soon after we joined Immanuel, I was fascinated with the music ministry, featuring the talented leadership of Dr. Jane Tavernier. I thought the music was utterly inspiring, but I had not been in a choir for 45 years and was nervous about joining. I volunteered to practice and sing at the Christmas Lessons & Carols that year and received such a warm welcome that I not only stayed on, I convinced Paul to join me. I am happy and grateful for the opportunity to develop and contribute what little talent I have as a soprano to the glory of God.

In addition to that, I serve as Lay Reader, Intercessor and Chalice Bearer.

Please name something you find very valuable/something you love about Immanuel.

There are many things I love about Immanuel but number one is the diversity of experience and expertise of the people and their desire to make a difference in the world. There are people from all walks of life who have travelled to the ends of the earth and back who are willing to share their gifts of time, experience and resources. When I speak about Immanuel to friends and family, I always describe the service at Pentecost and the Bible reading in a dozen or more different languages.

Our original plan was to go back to Chicago, where most of our children and grandchildren reside, at the end of my Fellowship. We have decided to stay and the fellowship we have at Immanuel has played a major role in that decision.

What gifts, talents, interests and/or goals and objectives do you think you might bring to Vestry service?

I bring the totality of my experiences and expertise to Vestry service and commit to sharing valuable insights I may have from my background as a scientist, teacher and entrepreneur. I also look forward to learning from the diversity of other Vestry members.

How would you view serving on the Vestry as a ministry, as part of your Christian journey?

In considering the opportunity to serve on the Vestry, I spent several weeks in prayer and self-discernment. Over the last few years, I have grown spiritually and firmly believe that I am here, at this point in time, for a reason. I therefore answer this call for discipleship in faith. I thank God for this blessing to serve on the Vestry and believe this represents a path to another level of spiritual fulfillment on my Christian journey.