

SALEM SPIRIT



Our Vision:

To be a congregation of disciples proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all.

Our Mission:

To Glorify God in all that we do, reflecting His love to our community and the world.

Greetings everyone!

Well I have phenomenal news for not only the Fellowship Committee, but for the entire congregation at Salem. Traci Hershberger, who with her husband Gary has recently begun attending worship at Salem, has volunteered to assume the responsibilities, duties and benefits of the Fellowship chair position at Salem! This is truly an answer to a lot of prayers over the past two months and I am just thrilled to pass the torch to someone who has the experience and desire to fulfill this great mission with the life of our congregation. I know that Traci will bring a fresh enthusiasm to Fellowship and in keeping with our DASH theme for 2009 - she has a real HEART for fellowship!

"Peace"

Tammy



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CHURCH

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WORSHIP SERVICES

8:00 A.M.

9:15 A.M.

10:30 A.M.

BIBLE SCHOOL

9:15 A.M.

FEBRUARY, 2009

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor Wayne Schmidt

Asst. Pastor Jefferson Cox

Organist/Senior Director of Choirs

Jim Kuzman

CW Team Leader Sara Holton

Secretary Linda Magnuson

Grounds Keeper Ron Vasak

Dearly Beloved Congregation,

As we conclude the celebration of the SILVER ANNIVERSARY I am so thankful for each member who God has called into the fellowship as the Church of Jesus Christ in this place over the past twenty-five years:

- * For those who lead and those who follow, both past and present; for officers, Mission Team members, councils, task forces and Standing Committee participants. For those who have taken on specialized ministries such as the Salem Spirit, mortgage negotiations, Stephen Ministries, Pictorial Directories organizers, the 25th Anniversary Committee, newsletter editors, Easter Breakfast coordinators, Fellowship event chefs and servers...*
- * For ushers and greeters, for assisting ministers and readers, for acolytes and Altar Guild servers, nursery attendants, child care attendants, for musicians, directors and choirs, young and old alike...*
- * For cleaners and mulchers, for maintainers and fixers, for those who plan and those who provide and prepare food for gathers. For administrator assistants and helpers, for counters and record keepers, for bulletin folders and envelope stuffers. For those who give and those who pray, for those who guide, for those with wisdom who inspire and support...*
- * For youth workers and youth, for those who advance the teaching ministry, for parents and grandparents chauffeur, for loving sisters and brothers who are Christian role models for the young...*
- * For the members of WELCA, for medical and construction missionaries, for Day Camp coordinators and staff, along with those who, though unseen and unnamed, have personally took upon themselves a variety of tasks for the betterment of the mission and ministry of this congregation....*
- * For each church staff member throughout the years, the clergy members past and present and for the two called pastors of this congregation of whom I have the honor of being associated with and share the joy of being known as your pastor...*

* For each dedicated and faithful worker who has served in this your vineyard, whether part of the Church Militant currently or now resting from their labors as your Church Triumphant...

Lord, I give you my heart-felt thanks!

It truly is a joy being your Pastor along side of my colleague, Pastor Cox. I can think of no other congregation that I would enjoy serving more.

As we enter into our 26th year as a congregation, let's "Go for the GOLD!" To do so, we must address our facility needs:

- 1) The lack of adequate spatial support for our current mission and ministry, let alone any future endeavors, i.e. replacement of "trailers" and the creation of a third annex.
- 2) the replacement of major equipment components which are aged and worn, i.e. air/heat units, roof, organ
- 3) the remodeling of existing space i.e. chancel and nave of the sanctuary

Our lack of adequate and quality facility space is a tremendous burden to us and our mission and ministry as a congregation of disciples. This issue needs to be addressed -- not tomorrow, not some day, not when it is we can get around to it.-- but TODAY. A PLAN must be developed, identifying the "final product" and the sequential steps needed to be taken to make it a living reality. This PLAN must be comprehensive in vision and coordinated in practice.

On Thursday evening, January 15th, during Mission Team 2009's first meeting of the year, a motion was presented and seconded. It may have been without much "to-do". It didn't solicit a lot of conversation or dialogue. Approved was a creation of a "future plans" committee, whose focus is to develop a comprehensive plan for the coordinated physical development of our site in order to support the current and future needs of the mission and ministry of Salem Lutheran Church. I believe this action will prove to be the pivotal hinge which opens the door to our future.

May God be glorified!

Pastor Schmidt

Dear Members and Friends of Salem Lutheran Church,

(The following letter served as my 2008 Annual Report to the congregation, reprinted here for your edification, with a few minor adjustments.)

2008 was a tremendous year for Salem Lutheran Church. We celebrated for a whole year the 25th Anniversary of the charter of our congregation. We received many new members through baptism and transfers, and we continue to impact our community with the Gospel. Thanks be to God!

One of our main goals in 2008 was to increase our worship attendance 5 % from that of 2007. I am happy to report that not only did we meet this goal, we came within a half-percentage point of doubling this goal. Our average attendance for 2008 was 217, which is 9.5% more than our attendance in 2007. In addition to this, our attendance on Easter was the 2nd highest in our history, and our attendance on Christmas Eve was the highest ever. Numbers by themselves are not important, but as attendance figures they can tell us a lot about the health of our congregation, just as 98.6 and 104.5 are only numbers, but those numbers as degrees of temperature can tell us a lot about a persons health. Thus these attendance figures indicate that there is a lot that is right with our congregation's emphasis on the mission and ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of those areas that is right with our mission and ministry is that we are becoming a place where people who have had a bad experience at another congregation can go to for healing. Right now we're a relatively healthy congregation, with a positive, forward-looking vision to impact our world with the Gospel. Unfortunately, there's a lot of congregations in our area that are struggling financially, spiritually, numerically, faithfully, etc. When a congregation struggles significantly in one or more ways, it tends to become inwardly focused, which encourages infighting and acts of selfishness. In cases like this, people get hurt, and when they get hurt often they leave the congregation, and frequently don't go to another congregation out of fear of getting hurt again. What is needed is a healthy congregation that they can go to, a congregation that is warm and joy-filled, that allows people to use their God-given gifts and talents, and that has a strong sense of its purpose and vision. At this time, Salem seems to fit that description, and so we have had the privilege to serve as a healing place for many people from many different congregations. This is not the

same thing as "sheep stealing" which is the practice of recruiting people to switch congregations to increase a congregation's prestige or glory; part of being a healing congregation in this way is being willing to let the healed person return to their old congregation or move into a new congregation, with a positive attitude and empowered with the Spirit. So it's up to us to remain a positive, courageous, and forward-thinking congregation, so that we can continue to be a positive place for healing.

On Friday, January 23rd, we concluded our 25th Anniversary year of celebration. The event was a great one in the life of our congregation, but it also had the effect of revealing some growth areas for Salem Lutheran Church. Obviously one growth area needs to be that of property. We've been talking for years about replacing the portable classrooms on the west side of our property with a permanent structure. This is a vital need for increasing our ability to train our children in lives of faith. But as the dinner Friday showed, in addition to more classroom space we need more fellowship space. And not just that, but according to ELCA guidelines based on the size of our sanctuary, we also need more office and workroom space, narthex space, storage space, music space, youth space, meeting space, and restroom space, and especially classroom space for adults!

Finally, the way that our property is arranged is not the most hospitable as it could be; it's hard for first-time visitors who come in through the door by the Eckhardt Fellowship Hall (the most common used entrance) to figure out where the sanctuary is without help. This is a subtle but vitally important issue to address in order to be a more welcoming place. Thus as we look towards the future we need to do the things today that need to be done in order to make the most of our future opportunities. Having great buildings does not guarantee having a healthy and vibrant mission and ministry of the Gospel, but having inadequate buildings and space can certainly hamper the Gospel mission.

We have challenges ahead of us as a congregation, but as long as we stay focused on making a positive difference in the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as individuals, as families, and as a congregation, and not waiting for tomorrow to do what we can do today to make things better, we will remain a bright shining beacon of faith, hope and love in our community and in our world.

In Christ,
Pastor Jeff

