

Dear Salem Family,

It's always amazes me how quickly summer seems to slip by. As a kid that was always hard for me because it meant school was back in session. But as an adult fall is my favorite season! The leaves changing color as the heat dwindles and cooler air sets. It also means you get to sit outside next to fire pit with friends, talk about football, hunting, etc. It also brings college students back into town which seems to bring the city to life. There is so much to celebrate about the fall season because it entails so much fun!

But one "fun" thing I love about fall more than anything else is seeing everyone back together after summer. At Salem we've been so blessed to have such a wonderful and caring community. In addition, we continue to see an increasing number of new faces coming and being added to our community. I love that Jesus after his resurrection brought his core people back to a table where they ate together. Maybe you've never realized it, but our Salem logo is two sets of people – kids and adults – holding hands in a circle. To me that symbolizes our desire to be a multigenerational church who needs each other. We come together around the person of Jesus, worshiping – connecting – and investing. One generation passing the gospel off to the next!

But our logo (and thus Salem) is more than fellowship. It signifies a linking of the arms of people who are doing life together on mission. Acts 1:8 sets up the pattern and pathway for the entire book: ***"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*** In essence what Jesus is saying, is that through the power of the Holy Spirit what starts here can go there, then there, and eventually everywhere. As we dive into the book of Acts this fall, we'll get to see God's heart for the nations – both locally and globally. The early church was a portrait of God's church – a group of people so incredibly diverse and yet united! Why? Because of the gospel.

What we'll see in Acts is as the gospel crosses boundary lines the church begins to grow. Exponentially in fact. While that kind of growth is not our goal or motive, it begs the question, what if our interdependence (fellowship) and mission collided together with synergy? What if our logo was also a symbol for being and becoming something more? A church that brings people of all cultures and stories together under the banner of Jesus! That's pretty powerful, not to mention inspiring. Why? Because it's how Jesus lived and what He planned for His church all along. It hopefully goes without saying, but I'm tremendously excited to be on this journey with you!

As we head into the fall ministry season, here are a few new things of note:

- **Being connected** into a group is a big step, but vital for our sense of growth and belonging. If you haven't gotten connected yet, we'd love to connect you into one of our groups!
- Life Groups Link: <https://salemeffc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/171/responses/new>
- Adult Classes Link: <https://salemeffc.org/adult-sunday-school> (Check out this great video!)
- Serving Link: <https://salemeffc.org/volunteer-at-salem>
- We have a new **resource wall** with Witnesses booklets, recommended reading, fliers, handouts, etc. It's right next to the Hub so be sure to check it out!
- We are continuing to grow our friendship and partnership with **Ellen Hopkins**. You'll be seeing a variety of ways you can support both the teachers and the kids!
- Plans are underway to get the **Community Gardens** project started on site this fall. It's planned that the fence will be up and the space prepped for planting in the spring. We'll be gathering those interested during the winter to build our team. This will be an amazing opportunity to connect with New Americans in our surrounding community.
- Be sure to mark your calendar for our upcoming all-church **Evangelism is Relationship** training on Saturday Nov. 5th! More details to come.
- **Spoiler Alert!!!!** We're starting an **Israel trip!!!** Look to see a video released next week!

Please be praying for these needs:

- Those who are suffering. We have so many people in our congregation who are in deep need of prayer (Ann Dahl, Chuck Mullins, and more).
- Our Finances. As always, we are trusting God with our church finances. We've been good stewards of the giving that's come in. Our YTD expenses are below budget which is encouraging, but we are asking God to continue to raise up more faithful givers who are giving their first fruits to God. As of 9/8/22 here is where we're at:
 - YTD Giving: \$743,361.95
 - YTD Budget: \$958,196.22
 - Short/Over: \$-214,834.27
- Our Fargo location. We have two possible renters right now. Please pray God leads us to a suitable fit.
- Our Vision. Please pray God would lead us as elders and grant us deep wisdom as we continue to seek the direction He would want us to go.

Excited for what lays ahead,

Seth Dunham – Senior Pastor