

June 14, 2024

Hello Salem friends,
I hope you are enjoying a slower pace and the beauty of God's summer creation.

In this month's Elder Corner, I hope to update you on some happenings at Salem. I also want to illustrate what our new Salem vision 2029 looks like through the actual events and ministries happening at Salem. First, a refresher, our *vision is to support a disciple-multiplying culture where our people are part of building God's kingdom wherever they are.*

Hundreds of people have been or will be involved in carrying out this vision in the recent and coming months. Consider some of the ministry activities.

During the week of June 3, 80 Salem volunteers served 90 children through **Summer Blast**. This year's theme was "God's truth is rock-solid and never changes." Many of the children were not from Salem, and do not regularly attend church. Through Bible teaching, worship, group discussion, and art projects, these children were blessed by the HUMBLE GUIDES who served them as volunteers. Please pray that these children will become GOSPEL BELIEVERS with a clear understanding of Christ in their lives.

During that same week, seventeen 7-12th grade youth and their six adult volunteers participated in a **Local Missions Experience (LME)**. The theme was based on Mark 10:43-45, "I serve, because He served." The group did service projects at Cooperstown Bible Camp, Camp Joy, Park Christian School, Salem Summer Blast, and at a family's home. Through these acts of service, the youth were demonstrating that they are GOSPEL BELIEVERS with a desire to grow in their faith, and they were supported by the HUMBLE GUIDE adult volunteers. Pray that these youth will remain actively involved in the youth group and grow to become FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS of Christ.

Jenna Kahly, **Salem Community Garden** coordinator, reported to the elders that the garden plants are thriving, as are the gardeners. 80% of the gardeners are not Salem attenders, some who represent diverse faith and ethnic backgrounds. The community garden is becoming an outreach and community-building opportunity more than just an internal Salem event. This allows Salem volunteers to be PEACE MAKERS and HUMBLE GUIDES for these volunteers who come together to work and fellowship. They work Monday evenings 6-8 pm, and all are welcome to pitch in.

Coming up July 9-16th, eleven Salem volunteers will travel to **Nicaragua** to support our sister church in El Chonco. These PEACE MAKERS from Salem will bring the love of God to the El Chonco community as they build an awning on the church, work in the feeding center, deliver food bags to homes, and connect with community members. Pray that they will connect personally with all whom they meet and demonstrate true love and unity in our Lord Jesus Christ with the brothers and sisters in El Chonco.

Facilities update: The elders have created a priority scheme for addressing some of our church maintenance needs. We approved repairing the elevator, and soundproofing the gym, which is extremely loud when activities are held. Jeff Edison, our facilities manager, is scheduling these repairs.

I hope this letter has updated you on some of Salem's ministry activities this summer and shown the direct ways we are living out our new vision. May you find time to refresh in body, mind and spirit; and to enjoy God's creation through outdoor activities.

Finally, please remain steadfast in prayer for the many individuals in our church family facing daunting health problems. May God's grace prove sufficient for each day.

Mark Strand
Salem Elder