

2026 Annual Salem Ministry Reports

Seth Dunham, Senior Pastor

Celebrations: Each year brings new and unique challenges and celebrations. But one consistent celebration is always baptisms. Seeing people of all ages make such a bold proclamation about who Jesus is, what he has done for them, and their desire to follow him, brings me so much joy and gives me hope for the future! God is at work in people's lives, calling them to himself and sending them out on mission. I love it!

It's also been a joy to see the Young Adult Ministry take off this past year. I know this has always been a desire of our church, and this age group is a particular passion of mine. It's a humbling statistic to know that we have about 50 who regularly attend. Incredibly, much of it is student-led, with a special thank you to all who feed them each week!

Another highlight was Kent's celebration. Nearly 300 people turned out to support and encourage him, and rightly so. Kent faithfully served Salem in so many ways for so many years. He was a true galvanizer, doing everything with excellence and fostering a welcoming environment. But more than that, he loved the Lord and loved people. His investment in people had a huge impact. He literally leaves "big shoes" to fill!

We continue to see slow growth this past year, including many new immigrant families. I'm not sure what percentage of our church is non-Caucasian, but when a church hits the 20% mark, it is generally considered a truly multiethnic church. Wouldn't it be great if God continued to do this at Salem? If you combine all the new people with the faces and stories of all those who have been here for 5, 10, 20, 30, or 40 years, it is a beautiful thing to see! What a joy to see God growing our church into a fuller representation of God's multigenerational, multiethnic, and multicultural body!

Lastly, a personal celebration for me was my sabbatical. After 15 years of ministry without a real sabbatical, it was such a blessing and joy to get quality time with the Lord and my family. A special thank you to everyone for this opportunity! I began with a trip by myself to disconnect. Halfway through, Nikki and I took a trip, without kids, to strengthen our marriage. And near the end, we did a short trip as an entire family. Everything in between was filled with a great time with our kids. I also did a lot of reading and journaling. My biggest takeaways were leaning into my identity as God's son, not as a Senior Pastor, and the importance of quality rhythms that support a healthy lifestyle and ministry.

Things I'm excited for: They say it takes five years to start to see the fruit of a new culture, and ten years to see it really function. I feel like we're just starting to see the fruit of the Vision coming to light, and I'm excited to see how our church can continue to grow through things like training and equipping. I also want to thank our staff and all the volunteers who serve so faithfully. May God continue to align all our hearts around Jesus.

How you can pray: First, please pray for my Cave, Table, & Road time: that I find deep rest in my sonship, that I get quality time with my family, and personal evangelism. Second, please pray for our team that we would love and support each other through the challenges of ministry. Pray also for our Student Ministry Pastor search - that God would bring the right candidate to lead such an amazing group of volunteers and students. Third, please pray against Satan as the Spirit continues to work in and through Salem. Lastly, pray for me as I continue to discern how to best battle anxiety and stress, and that I would lead with a humble but courageous posture.

Ken Bohney, Connections & Care Pastor

This is the one opportunity each year where I get to publicly thank the volunteer leaders who head up teams and do so much by sacrificially serving and extending extravagant love to the people of our church through their teams. The following people are serving in leadership roles and are a huge blessing! Jamie Snead, (Gathering Grounds), Lewie LaChance and Beth Jones (Greeters), Vicki Bohney (The Hub), Josh Hawkins & Darren Kallod (Security), Dan Cushing (Encore), Jodi Harrington (Library), Dave Engstrom (Living Free & Men's groups), Allen Nelson (Prayer Group), Shari Wagner (Grief Share), Judy Hannestad (Dinners for Nine, Care Team & Wednesday Night Meals) and all of our Life Group leaders and coaches who shepherd and care for many in our church family. Each one of them represents and leads a group of people who are helping to build a disciple-making culture. Thank you!

Staff: I am blessed to have Mariah Grigorenko – Connections & Care Administrator, Brady Heuberger – Worship Director, Nikki Dunham – Local and Global Outreach Director, Christian Thompson – Equipping Coordinator, Liz Jost – Connections Coordinator all directly reporting to me. This is a great team of people, and I am so grateful for the gifts and strengths they bring and the multitude of ways they lovingly serve our church family.

Life Groups: It has been so encouraging to hear how people are being known, loved, and cared for through our groups. People have found a sense of belonging and are struggling well together through extravagant love. Many of the groups are thriving and developing

genuine, loving relationships. I am also grateful for the care provided by our Life Group Coaches – Kim Kaul, Laurie Lind, Craig Jasperse, and Dennis & Ruth Gladen. We would love to see four more leaders start groups for the upcoming year and identify one or two more coaches.

Adult Learning Groups & Sermon Booklets: Christian Thompson leads this effort, helping identify leaders and scheduling our Adult Learning Groups, and trying to help all our adults grow in their discipleship to Jesus. Additionally, he creates our sermon booklets, which serve as such a great Cave Time resource and Life Group discussion tool. We are so grateful that God has brought us so many qualified and passionate teachers to lead these groups.

Women: Judy Hannestad stepped in this last year to organize the women's event. She is surrounded by a team that includes Becca Herman, Cindy Buchanan, Erica Lindahl, Ilene Adnerson, Mary Townsend, Nancy Johnson, and Tammy Jasperse. Events have included Quarterly Gatherings, Karaoke Nights, Bunko Nights, Bible Studies, and Pop-up Events! Tirzah Lundberg has been doing a wonderful job leading our Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Studies. These studies continue to be a place where many women from our church family are growing in their relationship with Christ and one another, while being prayed for and loved on! Evening studies led by Heidi Dauser and Nancy Aikens continue growing as well!

Men: Pastor Kent oversaw *That Men's Group*, focusing on truth, hoopla, and accountability. This has been a great way for guys to get plugged in, grow, and have some fun together. We continue to see fruit from the friendships being built through those gatherings. The future of this is TBD.

Encore: Dan and Puffi Cushing continue to shepherd and care for this group well with monthly gatherings that include lots of fun and fellowship. Salem is a good place to be a senior!

Discover Salem: Held biannually, this continues to be a great place for people to discover the ethos of Salem and get to know our ministries, leadership, and other new people in our church.

Discover You: Led by Liz Jost and held periodically, this class continues to equip people for ministry by helping them discover their spiritual gifts, strengths, passions, and personality.

Discover Community: A taste of Life Groups and a great on-ramp for new people to get connected. The group is lovingly and caringly led by Dennis and Ruth Gladen, who do a wonderful job of welcoming people and helping them to connect to meaningful ministry.

Care Team: Judy Hannestad and the care team are doing a wonderful job of helping people feel loved and served through prayer, visitations, cards, meals, and celebrations.

Visitation Team: A little over a year ago, we established a visitation team that would be empowered and equipped to meet with those going through tough times, such as illness, surgeries, death, or transitioning to some form of assisted living that limits their ability to be present here at church. This team is guided by Joyce Dunham, Craig Jasperse, and Rhonda King and includes a loving group of people willing to serve our church family in this way.

Wednesday Night Meals: Judy Hannestad organized and galvanized a great team that provided meals all school year! This ministry was a huge blessing to families and volunteers!

Sports Groups (Gym): Pickleball and volleyball are all thriving with weekly gatherings for fun, exercise, and building relationships.

Receptionists: We have an incredible team of people led by Liz Jost, who serve either one morning or afternoon a week as a volunteer receptionist. These folks are welcoming guests, answering phones, ministering to people, providing information, and freeing up our staff to remain focused on their ministry areas. We are so grateful for the receptionist team!

Hospitality Teams: Our Greeters, Gathering Grounds, Ushers, and Hub Teams have done so much to connect new people and help our church family feel welcomed, seen, and loved this past year! I regularly hear that many new people have felt incredibly welcome at our church.

J-Team (AKA – Jesus’ Team): Most Sundays during the school year at 10:30 am, this ministry serves about 10 individuals with special needs, and one cool aspect is that there is close to one volunteer serving for every student. Thank you to Mandy Johnson and Karen Swanson for ministering to the students and volunteers with the love of Jesus. If you want to get involved in a very impactful and fulfilling way, they’d love to have you join the team!

Veronica James, Kids Director

We have amazing Kids’ Ministry staff and leaders! Jordan Nepstad and her husband, Bryce, welcomed their new son, Jack, this spring. Haley Heinen and her husband, Josh, will have their second baby in June. Amanda Millar, who joined our team to fill in while Jordan is on maternity leave, will welcome their new baby in June as well. It is an absolute joy to serve together!

God has provided our ministry with leaders and volunteers who diligently show up each week to impact kids' lives. I praise God for the men and women who serve in Salem Kids.

Training Leaders

We have set out to equip leaders to teach the Bible! Four of us took an online course on Bible exposition and then went to a three-day intensive through Simeon Trust in Seattle, Washington. We have developed a teaching team for Wednesday nights, and kids are seeing their leaders teach the Bible! We already have another team excited to do the training in 2026! God is so good!

Sunday mornings

About 8:45 am on Sunday mornings, you can begin to hear the sound of little voices entering the kids' wing of our church. Kids come excited to see leaders who know and love them. We love having kids join us at 9 am in the classroom and then at 10:30 am in the church service. Kids are learning so much by experiencing church with adults. It has been a joy to watch kids grow in their faith through Sunday School and worshipping alongside adults in our church services.

WNK (Wednesday Night Kids) Preschool

Marcia Hellevang and her amazing team of volunteers continue to minister to our preschool kids in Cubbies. They spend time singing songs, learning Bible stories, and memorizing scripture each week. The kids who come to Cubbies get such a strong foundation of Bible truths to grow into. I am so amazed by how much they learn every year!

WNK (Wednesday Night Kids) Elementary

This year, we have been asking the question, "Who is Jesus?" as we study Matthew. Kids are so excited to come each night to learn. Foundations for learning to study the Bible, reading the Bible to know God first, and finding ways to apply scripture to daily life are all being developed each week.

Dedications

We continue to be blessed by parents of young children who want to make a commitment to raising their children in the fear, knowledge, and joy of the Lord.

Baptisms

A number of kids declared their faith in Jesus through baptism this year. We praise God for the many ways He is moving in the lives of so many of the kids here at Salem.

Prayer

Pray that the seeds planted this year will be protected and will grow and bear fruit.

Pray for Summer Blast in June. That we could reach kids in our neighborhood with the life-giving message of the Gospel.

Pray for our Kids' Ministry staff. That the light of the Gospel would grow even brighter and even more precious in our hearts, as we seek to continue the work He has called us to.

I love to tell the story, 'Twill be my theme in glory, To tell the old, old story, of Jesus and His love.

Angela Hawkins, Youth Administrator

This year, our Youth Leadership Team decided our theme would be STAND from 1 Corinthians 15:58, which states,

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let

nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” This theme has been threaded throughout all the teachings on Wednesday nights. Now four verses are repeated each week:



- Jesus came to give us an abundant life (Jn. 10:10).
- God’s ways are much higher than our ways, so he can be trusted always (Is. 55:8-9).
- We are to grow in knowledge and application of God’s word (2 Pt. 1:3-8).
- We are to stand firm in our faith (1 Cor. 15:58).

It’s been a busy and encouraging year as the youth come to engage in God’s Word and bring new friends each week. It’s fun to see the excitement of youth sharing the Gospel where they live, study, work, and play!

Our year started with the Greater US Missions Experience trip. We returned to partner with Grace Bible Church in Laredo, TX. It was a hot and challenging week of serving around the area, but the team persevered with joyful hearts. Work ranged from making beds, sewing pillowcases, leading VBS, and fellowshiping with the people down there. We hope to continue growing our relationship with GBC in future GUSME trips.

We had our 32nd Annual Dinner Theater & Silent Auction. With the help of many volunteers and our community, the youth were able to raise over \$47,000! This helps youth attend future mission trips, conferences, and retreats. One of those trips was the annual NPD Youth Districts Conference held in Aberdeen, SD. Our group was spiritually filled and then went out into the community to share the Gospel and collect goods for a food drive. This was a good and stretching experience!

We close out the year with our annual Variety Show, Youth Sunday, celebrate and send off the graduating seniors, and the End-of-Year party. We’re also getting ready to head to Kansas City, MO, for the EFCA National Youth Conference – Challenge.

We’ve also seen change come our way as Pastor Kent accepted a new position at Camp Lebanon. We will miss him and appreciate how much he poured into the youth and other ministries at Salem. Please pray for Brian Windingland and Matt Snead as they help lead in the interim, and please be praying for our search for a youth pastor.

Please also continue to pray for all our amazing youth and leaders, that they continue to seek and grow in their relationship with the Lord!

Brady Heuberger, Worship Director

Celebrations: In September, during our worship team's midweek rehearsal, I began setting aside a short time for a devotional before practice. This came from a growing realization that it was easy for me to lead rehearsal and sing worship songs without truly engaging with the God we were singing about. So, to re-center our hearts on the purpose behind musical worship, I introduced a time to pause and be reminded of the goodness of the God we are about to worship. Through the teaching from both myself and others, the meaningful dialogue sparked by good questions, and even the extended times of prayer, the Lord has used them to grow me. My biggest takeaway from all of this is that the Salem worship team is FULL of mature, God-honoring men and women. Every Sunday, you are being led by faithful servants of God, and I am truly honored to be a part of this team.

I also want to celebrate Luke Johnson as he ends his service at Salem. He has been a joy to work with! He has not only made my job easier, but he has also made wonderful improvements behind the scenes that help make our church tech thrive. Luke's eye for detail, understanding of technology, and care for Salem has glorified God and he will be extremely missed.

Lastly, the prayer team has been a joy to serve with, and I think that's something to celebrate! I am so thankful for all the time and effort they put forward in planning the prayer nights and the sunrise service this year. All those events went smoothly and helped create worship in its attenders!

Things I am looking forward to: I am looking forward to God being faithful! In ministry there are always gaps, areas that need to be filled, or situations that need to be resolved. Yet, God has been faithful! He has provided volunteers; he brought reconciliation; he answers prayer. I am just excited to see how he will continue to be faithful!

Prayer: Please be in prayer for a replacement for Luke, pray for more camera operators and video switchers, and pray for new members to join the worship band.

Nikki Dunham, Local & Global Outreach Director

It has been exciting to see how, through our Local Outreach initiatives, Salem is building a reputation within the community as a church that cares about the flourishing of our community. All our initiatives—Ellen Hopkins, the Salem Community Garden, Boaz Bike Ministry, and our monthly food distribution—work together to deepen our impact. We provide food to nearly 100 households at each of our monthly food distributions, and some

individuals have started coming to church or watching online. Ellen Hopkins came to us asking Salem to host events for their families, so we partnered with them for our first combined Bike Distribution and gave away about 80 kids' bikes. Over the course of the summer, approximately 230 bikes were given away, providing transportation to those who did not have it. People prayed together across faiths in the community garden and shared meals together. A group of Salem women went to the airport to say goodbye to a Ukrainian family leaving the country that had been gardening with us for a couple of years. An Immigrant Hope Northern Plains Launch Team has worked hard to get established as a non-profit and now has a few people being trained to eventually be able to provide legal guidance to our immigrant neighbors. With each of these outreach opportunities, we get the opportunity to be the peacemakers Jesus calls us to be, bringing Kingdom hope and restoration.

Globally, we have continued to support roughly 30 missionaries, the majority in unreached places, as well as 6 one-time gifts to support others. This last year, a few of these families faced incredibly difficult situations, needing extra support for physical, mental, and spiritual care, which Salem was able to help provide. When Nicaragua shut down operations of Feed My Starving Children, which provides food to the feeding center in El Chonco, Salem collectively raised \$13,703 to continue to provide food and sustain the feeding center. This abundant generosity allowed us to help them repair the center's fridge and provide supplemental food bags to families.

As we look forward to next year, we are excited to see the fruit of our faithful investment in these initiatives and the continued deepening of our relationships within the community. God is at work through Salem both locally and globally, building His Kingdom in a world that is desperately lost without Him. Pray that as relationships deepen and trust builds, God would draw people to Him as they witness His love for them through the people of Salem. Pray that the Department of Justice would re-establish a process of accreditation they recently shut down, for organizations seeking to provide affordable legal aid to immigrants, so that Immigrant Hope can be launched. Pray for opportunities to engage in spiritual conversations with the community. Pray for protection, encouragement, and open doors for the gospel for our global partners.

Sarah Hanson, Communications Director & Administration

Highlights: Almost one year ago, we began transitioning our website and database to the Subsplash platform. Most excitingly, we now have our very own church app! Transitioning

to Subsplash has been a long, hard process for the staff to learn a new system and communications platform. It hasn't been without challenges, but it's been worth it. Our email communications are better looking, more efficient to create, and easier for the end user to read and find more information with the button links.

One of the pieces I'm most excited about in the app is the ability for church members to contact other church members directly through messaging. I had heard from many people who wished there were an online or printed directory. Now, people can connect with others to get the contact information they're looking for, and the recipient can control their own privacy. The other element I'm most excited about on both the app and the website is the online church calendar. Event information and sign-ups are now in one easy-to-remember location!

On the facilities front, the building was painted, and landscaping was added. It's going to look great this summer when the corner bushes and new trees start filling out. We added some new soft seating to the foyer, which is not only aesthetically pleasing but also provides better seating for families and individuals with physical limitations.

There were also several technology improvements done this last year, but the only reason you probably didn't notice it is because it was such a seamless transition. New and better wifi routers were installed throughout the building, the somewhat unpredictable LOFT computer was replaced, the youth room had new screens installed, and the staff have gotten more and more comfortable with the transition to Microsoft Teams.

Upcoming: I continue to look forward to more people getting comfortable using the app to find events and information. Our culture has shifted to one where most people will read a short list or skim an email, and you are probably one of the few people who have read this far into the annual reports! Communications will continue to adapt as I balance the wide range of needs, wants, and what is realistic. So, I look forward to learning new processes!

We've already ended or downgraded many of our subscriptions to platforms that were replaced by Subsplash. As the remaining platform contracts expire and we finish a full transition out of those, we will begin to see a greater reduction in communications and technology expenses this next year.

As the Elders continue to update policies and procedures, we'll be working together to create a more user-friendly digital file system for both Elders and staff. This system will also streamline document updates and personnel transitions.