



THE FANCY NEWSLETTER

Advent 2009

SLF is an odd duck. We're a strong organization, but we don't own anything. We don't have our own programs (we collaborate with churches and other partners). We don't own a building. And our strategic plan directs us to promote the success of *other* causes and organizations. Odd. SLF's passionate dream is to see Salem-Keizer become the healthiest community in Oregon, truly the City of Shalom. People used to chuckle when we said this . . . but we're hearing fewer chuckles and more right-ons. Our official mission is to engage *people of faith* and *people of goodwill* to transform Salem-Keizer—neighborhood by neighborhood. That's catching on, too. But our mission-behind-the-mission is to encourage the Church do the work of the Church. To help the Body of Christ rediscover that 'sacred art of servanthood' which is outlined in both the Old and New Testaments. Not to mention the words and ministry of Jesus.

We love it when churches develop person-to-person ministries. Family-to-family services. It all started with Capital Park Church and their neighborhood center. Then Salem Alliance partnered with Grant School in a big way. John Knox Presbyterian founded the Keizer Community Food Bank. Then a team of churches decided to host homeless families by forming the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Our Savior's Lutheran created Foster Parents Night Out. First Methodist served as home base for Congregations Helping People. Christian Center adopted Royal Family Kids Camp, which led to more supports for foster kids. West Salem Foursquare launched the Salem Free Medical Clinic; two more churches joined in. First Baptist opened its gym (Upward Basketball) so hundreds of kids could play. First Nazarene birthed Hope Station (food and clothing for the working poor). Churches are hosting block parties and joining neighborhood associations. They're opening indoor parks and community gardens. They're partnering with schools for literacy, mentoring and after-school programs. Do you see the pattern? Instead of 'outsourcing' services to other agencies, churches are learning how to serve at home. Instead of sending 'needy people' away, churches are learning how to 'love their neighbor' personally.

The faith community in Salem-Keizer is highly valued, trusted and sought-after. Pretty odd for a capital city. In the 'great unchurched Northwest.' Why is this so? Because churches are learning to care. And to *provide* care. During this "Great Season of Charity" between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are thankful that churches are doing *so much more* than blankets and food. We are thankful that ministries like UGM, Habitat and Salvation Army are teaching churches how to serve people all year long. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us resolve to share Him through both word and deed. On Sundays and throughout the week.

What's Your Neighborhood?

CALLING ALL PASTORS AND MINISTRY LEADERS. The SalemNet 'Prayer Summit' is just around the corner. For 48 hours pastors and ministry leaders pray together. Dream together. And build fellowship. This year's gathering is January 25-27, from Monday afternoon to Wednesday morning. The location is the Christian Renewal Center, a serene hillside retreat near Silver Creek Falls. SalemNet is a ministerial fellowship that connects pastors through geographic prayer groups and a monthly breakfast (4th Thursdays). There are now weekly or monthly prayer groups in McKay, South Salem (2), Central, West Salem (2) and Keizer, plus the Salem House of Prayer downtown. More are in the works. If you are interested in attending the SalemNet Prayer Summit and/or learning about prayer groups, contact Gordon Bergman, (503) 510-7074, or bergman51@comcast.net. There is a movement afoot. It started with prayer, and it needs more prayer. Not to mention unity in Christ. We pray that January will work out for scores of pastors this year.

2010 FANCY DESSERT DATE—STAY TUNED. We are still looking at alternative spring dates to avoid conflicts with other non-profits and we'll have an announcement in January. We are very thankful to the Salem Conference Center for their understanding and flexibility. Our thanks, as well, to all of you who already had April 30 in your calendars. Please pray that our new date will be even better!

UPDATE: \$LF FANCY MATCHING CAMPAIGN. My favorite movie is the Frank Capra holiday classic, "It's a Wonderful Life." I like the entire movie—the love story of George and Mary Bailey—but it's the ending I truly treasure. You remember . . . George runs the Bedford Falls Building and Loan. He's helped the entire town survive the Great Depression and World War II. It's Christmas 1945 and things are looking up. But Uncle Billy misplaces the year-end bank deposit, and it couldn't come at a worse time: the federal bank examiner is in town to approve the B&L's books before New Year. After looking high and low for the missing \$8,000, George decides to jump off a bridge so his life insurance can cover the deficit. Instead he meets his guardian angel Clarence, who proceeds to show him how horrible Bedford Falls would have been without George Bailey around. George didn't find the \$8,000, but he had a renewed sense of joy and purpose.

Now my favorite part: George returns home to find the bank examiner, sheriff and reporters in his entry hall. Then Mary comes running in, followed by a mob. One by one, the people of Bedford Falls put a gift on the dining room table. Most are small—handfuls of dollars. Some are sacrificial. A few are significant. The amount doesn't matter. It's the fact that friend after friend has come from every corner of town to help George and Mary. Then a telegram from his old college buddy in London: "I heard you were in need, stop. My office authorized to advance up to \$25,000, stop. Yee Yaw and Merry Christmas!" Even Harry, George's war-hero brother, makes it through a snowstorm to join the merry throng for Auld Lang's Syne.

SLF is like George Bailey. We work hard to help the people of Bedford Fal—, er, Salem-Keizer. We strive to encourage and empower kids, families and neighborhoods. And yet, like George, we find ourselves in a tight spot. Don't worry, we didn't misplace any money. (Nor are we thinking of jumping off a bridge!) But we do need help. That's why we launched the \$60,000 Matching Campaign last month. **GOOD NEWS!** Like George and Mary, SLF has a lot of friends out there. One by one, you are stepping forward with donations large and small. Some are coming in the mail. Some in person (thanks!). And some from our website. In fact, we've received enough donations to complete Phase 1 of the campaign. We needed \$20,000 by November 30 to satisfy a matching requirement with the MJ Murdock Trust and—thanks to you—we made it! Now our sights are set on Phase 2: another \$40,000 by December 31. These dollars will match "seed money" pledged by SLF Board members and other private donors.

As Christmas approaches, we offer our profound gratitude for your partnership and, even more, for your servanthood in Salem-Keizer neighborhoods.

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YES—we'll help SLF "Make the \$60,000 Match!"

____ We'd like to help SLF meet Phase 2 of the matching goal by December 31. (Gift enclosed)

____ We'd like to catch up on our Fancy Dessert Pledge: _____ Gift enclosed _____ Please contact us

____ We'd like to make our gift by credit card: \$_____ Amount **MasterCard** **VISA** (circle one)

_____ Exp. Date _____

____ We'd like to make a gift from our IRA account or Stock/Equities. Please contact us. (SLF uses Citi/Smith-Barney)

Name/Signature

Phone or email address