



State of the Church 2018

Each year, in assessing the state of Salem, we take a look at some benchmark statistics. 2017 has been another fruitful year! Our membership now includes 242 professing adults. We also have 45 baptized infants and children—so 287 total.

This past year we lost 17 members as 5 died, 3 transferred to other congregations, and 9 were withdrawn. We received 5 new members. That means we have now received 114 new members since arriving at our current location a little over seven years ago!

Additionally, we have about 100 active non-members. That means we actually have closer to 400 people who are a part of Salem.

As part of our mission to make disciples of Jesus who transform the world, we essentially carry out four actions: reaching out, connecting, forming, and sending.



Reach. Our Outreach Team leads us to reach out to others with activities such as our Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, Cleaning Up Cancer Carnival, Valentines Project, and many more. Many of us continue to reach out, inviting others to “come and see” as Jesus did (John 1:39). Reaching out to the vast majority of people who are outside the church building is one of the most important things we do.



Connect. We will continue to tweak Connecting Point and Connect, the process we created to assimilate

newcomers, by leading new people to commit their lives to Jesus through baptism and profession of faith. Last year we celebrated 8 baptisms, including 6 infants, 1 child, and 1 adult. Of our 5 new members, 1 was by profession of faith. Baptisms and professions of faith are key indicators, showing us how many new Christians we are reaching and connecting to the church.



Form. We nurture people through worship and spiritual disciplines to form them like Jesus. In worship our attendance averaged 203 this past year, a slight decrease from 210 the previous year. This is the first time in five years that we have experienced a downturn in worship participation. Even if we don’t account for our active non-members but do account for those who might be sick or out of town any given week, Salem should still have 240-250 people in worship regularly—even more with our active non-members and guests! Let us not neglect to meet together for worship in 2018, this central act of Jesus’ followers (Hebrews 10:25).

A little over 200 children, youth, and adults participated in some kind of small group, knowing God’s love and grace, experiencing forgiveness and healing, and becoming more like Jesus. This relationship with others in community is vital for our formation and growth.

Our giving continues to increase, including the use of electronic giving through our website and now the mobile app, Give+, and by sending a text. Giving income was \$300,000 in 2017 while our expenses were \$280,000. We ended the year with a surplus of \$20,000! That is a growth of \$50,000 in the last two years. Thanks for your faithful generosity!

Because of this, we were able to pay 100% of our general church apportionments, supporting the ministry and

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mission of The United Methodist Church beyond the local church here and around the world. We have been working our way back to fully paying our apportionments since recovering from the flood in 2008.

We continue paying the debt (about \$1 million) on our wonderful facility that will be three years old in March. Toward that end, we received another \$134,000 for our building fund from our Generation to Generation campaign. Our growth in giving has truly been fruitful.

Furthermore, we also gave tens of thousands of dollars for mission as well as tangible items such as blessing bags for shelters, school and health kits, hats and mittens, and children's books!



Send. While reaching, connecting, and forming are vitally important, our true health cannot be measured without knowing how many of us are out serving in the world. We need to know our sending capacity rather than simply our seating capacity. We reach out to new people, connect them to Jesus, and form them as disciples, all so we can send them into the world to live lives of love, justice, beauty, and service, making a difference in this world that God so loves. We also start the process all over again when, out serving in the world, we reach out to others and engage them and invite them to “come and see.”

The truth is we don't know this number. Certainly, many of us serve in the world, but we need to work on this. We thought a Participation Team could help us discover our spiritual gifts and unleash us to serve in the church and in the world, but we've come to realize we need a Staff position to direct this. A “Volunteer Coordinator” or “Ministry Coordinator” would lead systems and people that send each of us to serve in the church and especially in the world.

This new Staff position is part of Salem's first goal for 2018, to finalize and implement the Staff re-organizational structure. We have quite a bit of an excellent director-level team: Administrative Assistant (Melinda Gipple), Communication (Julie Lefebure), Care (Deb Black), Treasurer (Linda Curson), and Building Superintendent (Kory Thomas). Of course, we have other excellent paid Staff, as well, but we're creating a director

-level Staff team that will lead and oversee people (including other Staff) and ministries.

In addition to the team we already have in place, we are looking to bring on board: a Worship Producer, overseeing all aspects of Sunday morning worship; a Discipleship Director, helping us become like Jesus; a Ministry Coordinator, helping us serve in the church and world; and a Community Ambassador, helping us reach the people outside the church building in our community.

This is probably one of the most important things I'm working on now for Salem. To truly break through the “200 barrier” (see our worship attendance), the pastor has to get out of the way. That is, the pastor can't do too much or be directly in charge of too many things, or the church can only grow as much as the pastor can get his or her arms around. The pastor must focus more on those few areas in which he or she is gifted and then share responsibility with others so they can use their gifts, creativity, and leadership.

Equipping and releasing more leaders allows the congregation to multiply, be healthy, grow, and accomplish our mission.

I am blessed to be a part of this faithful and fruitful congregation. Things are going very well, and we have some specific things to work on in order to move us forward.

Thank you for being a part of Salem. Please take some time to consider how you are worshiping the Lord, growing like Jesus, and serving like Jesus in the world. How are you engaged with Salem? This is a grand adventure!

Grace and peace to you,

John Louk