



## Welcoming In, Reaching Out

Keizer Clear Lake ♦ Las Naciones ♦ Morningside ♦ Salem First ♦ Trinity

United Methodists of Salem-Keizer

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July 28, 2020

Dear Family and Friends of the Open Door Churches:

Hard to believe, is it not? Less than a month has passed since Pastors Dan Pitney and Sandra Kimbrow retired from the Open Door Churches and Pastor Wendy Woodworth became Superintendent of Cascadia District of the Oregon-Idaho Conference. In this time of transition, we want to bring you some words of encouragement and some important information about how we are building on the foundation that was established over the past five years.

**Open Door Churches of Salem-Keizer remains strong.** As many of you know, Open Door Churches of Salem-Keizer is a formal partnership of five local faith communities of the United Methodist Church: First Salem UMC, Keizer Clear Lake UMC, Las Naciones UMC, Morningside UMC, and Trinity UMC. By creating an umbrella organization that is comprised of five unique and independent churches, we are forging a new path for efficiency, collaboration, and cohesion. In many ways we can do far more together than we can as individual congregations. We celebrate the great success we have all seen with our Open Door Churches Youth Ministry and our solar power project, not to mention the ways our collaborative structure allowed us to share resources for worship when the pandemic required us to do things differently. We also look forward to exploring new opportunities for ministry together: As the Open Door Churches receive the properties of the former Jason Lee and Englewood UMCs, doors open for us to provide transformative ministries; and though the West Salem UMC prepares to bring its ministry as a congregation to a close, we continue to see community development work happen in that space and see new ministry opportunities arise.

**Your New Pastoral Team is now in place.** Collectively, we are all serving in ministry among all five faith communities. Individually, we are each focusing in areas of ministry, rather than specific congregations:

- Rev. John Fleming will be leading the Pastoral Team and providing support and guidance for Administrative Committees
- Rev. Alyssa Baker will continue working with our Young Adult ministry and be working with the Worship & Music Staff and lay leadership to coordinate weekly worship
- Rev. Kalina Malua Katoa will be working with existing staff and lay care teams to provide pastoral care, as well as supporting the work of staff and laity in Age-Level ministries like children and youth
- Pastora Zaida Huereca will continue leading the ministries of Las Naciones UMC and other efforts to provide ministry with Spanish-speaking members of the community

With the help and guidance of the Open Door Churches Board, we will continue to develop more clarity on our roles and look forward to sharing more about our work in the next few weeks.

**Coronavirus has only shut down our buildings, not our ministries.** On March 13, 2020 the Bishop of the Greater Northwest Area UMC suspended all in-person worship and other gatherings. Our buildings are still closed except for essential personnel doing essential tasks. However, our online services with music,

messages, and ministry provide opportunities for everyone to be together in fellowship. We continue to see members, family, and friends attend our services from around the region and beyond, and we have also found that new people, who have never worshiped in one of our physical spaces, are joining us, as well. What we have discovered, to our surprise and delight, is that virtual ministry is authentic ministry. Often, our greatest ministry opportunities come in times of challenge, when innovation becomes a necessity, and this is clearly one of those times.

**Your generosity continues and we are still on solid financial ground.** Thank you! From the depths of our hearts, we say again, Thank You. Your online and mailed-in contributions have never stopped during the pandemic. Additionally, we received nearly \$131,000 through the federal Paycheck Protection Plan, which is being shared among all five faith communities. Your gifts are being received through the Open Door Churches Website (<https://opendoorchurches.org/giving/>) and by postal service mailed to your home churches.

**The power of Open Doors Churches working together—solar is coming.** After two years of working as a five-church team, the first Open Door Churches collaborative project is now being installed. Ours will be Oregon's first multi-church solar project and, when completed, will be the equivalent of having solar panels on 40 typical residential homes. Over the 25-year life of the solar panels, the project will dramatically reduce carbon emissions and solar-generated electricity will save the Open Door Churches over \$25,000 in lower electric bills each year. The total cost for the project is approximately \$390,000 of which about 60 percent is grant-funded. This means that roughly 40 percent of the project—\$156,000—came from generous donations from you, the members of Open Doors Churches.

**There are many ways to stay in touch.** All the Open Door Churches are working hard to share information and to help us all stay connected. The Pastoral Team understands that not everyone uses social media, not everyone checks their email, not everyone answers their phone when it rings, and not everyone reads the material received in the mail. So, we try to share news and provide updates using a variety of means. This letter, for example, is being mailed, placed on our websites, and posted on Facebook. Below are some ways for you to get news about your church and the Open Door Churches:

Online:

Open Door Churches: [https://www.facebook.com/OpenDoorChurches/?tn-str=k\\*F](https://www.facebook.com/OpenDoorChurches/?tn-str=k*F)

First UMC of Salem: <http://salemfirstumc.org/>

Keizer Clearlake UMC: <http://www.kclumc.org/>

Las Naciones UMC: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1867674096824285/>

Morningside UMC: <http://morningsideumc.net/>

Trinity UMC: <http://www.trinityumcsalem.org>

Email:

First UMC of Salem: [salem1st@wvi.com](mailto:salem1st@wvi.com)

Keizer Clearlake UMC: [office@kclumc.org](mailto:office@kclumc.org)

Morningside UMC: [umcmorningside@gmail.com](mailto:umcmorningside@gmail.com)

Trinity UMCJ: [tumcatsalem@gmail.com](mailto:tumcatsalem@gmail.com)

If you are not receiving the information you need, please email or call the office of your church. You will find mailing addresses and phone numbers of all the churches on the website at the bottom of this letter.

**We are building a new kind of ministry with you.** History teaches us that the current worldwide pandemic will eventually come to an end. History also teaches us that the church must adjust and adapt if it is to remain relevant. We will continue to embrace and enhance our online worship. We will continue to share with each other. We will discover other ways to enjoy fellowship through phone calls, emails, postal service, and social media. And, as time and circumstances allow, we will begin gathering in small groups for ministry and service. One day—and this day will come—we will again have an opportunity to greet one another and worship together in person in our beloved sanctuaries. It is our vision that when we meet again it will be like we were never truly apart.

From all of us to all of you, peace.

*Vickie Plasker*, Chair of the Open Door Churches Board  
*Pastor John Fleming* ([pastorjohn@opendoorchurches.org](mailto:pastorjohn@opendoorchurches.org))  
*Pastor Alyssa Baker* ([pastoralyssa@opendoorchurches.org](mailto:pastoralyssa@opendoorchurches.org))  
*Pastor Kalina Malua Katoa* ([pastorkalina@opendoorchurches.org](mailto:pastorkalina@opendoorchurches.org))  
*Pastora Zaida Huereca* ([pastorazaida@opendoorchurches.org](mailto:pastorazaida@opendoorchurches.org))