


# Reaching Out to the Community!!!

**By: Terry Risse – Consistory President**

Salem has been presented with an exciting opportunity to reach out to the community, be a good neighbor and potentially connect with individuals and families in the Plymouth area! The Plymouth School District approached the consistory this past winter to ask whether part of our facility would be available for school use during the demolition, expansion and remodeling of Fairview Elementary School, our neighbor to the north.

A portion of the school was planned to be demolished as a part of a construction project scheduled for the fall semester of the 2019 school year. Because of this, the school would lose the area used for lunch, physical activities and some classrooms affecting the art and music program. They wondered if part of the church could be used during the school week to provide lunch and classroom activities. Salem has helped the school in the past in a similar way by sharing classrooms when other renovation or addition projects were undertaken at the school.

Throughout the spring and early summer we met with school officials and staff to understand equipment needs, schedules, procedures and coordination between Salem's activities and the school.

Throughout the process the representatives of the school expressed their appreciation of our willingness to consider helping them and a desire to make the process a positive one with the least impact on our members. They also strived to minimize any physical changes to the church and offered to provide any temporary or permanent changes at no cost to the church. The church will also receive monthly rent for the use of the leased areas and to cover any additional costs such as utilities.

Beginning in September they would hold music classes in one of our Sunday school rooms, serve lunch in the fellowship hall each day, hold morning and afternoon physical activities in the fellowship hall when weather does not allow outside activities and store a limited amount of furniture and equipment in the classroom behind the fellowship hall. The school custodial staff would set up and take down their own portable tables for lunch each day and clean the fellowship hall, classroom, bathrooms and hallway the same as they would in their own facility. They already run their lunch program in this way and we have more room than they currently do, so the transition should not be difficult. They will also provide commercial rug/mats at the north and east hallways to minimize dirt, salt or snow from foot traffic. At the completion of the lease they will clean and wax the floors if necessary.

The school would lease the areas involved Mon-Fri, 7am to 5pm. The church can use the areas any time needed and the school will make other arrangements as long as 48 hr notice is provided by the church. This will allow our use of the fellowship hall for activities such as the salad luncheon, funerals, etc. Nights and weekends would function as they do now for church activities. The construction is planned for completion at the end of January but the use agreement was written for the entire school year in case the construction is delayed. We do not anticipate use of the church for the entire school year and the agreement can end any time the school project is completed.

The only physical changes to our building would be installation of a new keyed lock on the north door, which will be used by all school students and staff and a remote camera/doorbell at our east entrance. At the end of the lease the key to the north door will be changed to one of our keys from the school master. We will be allowed to keep the remote camera/doorbell for the east entrance, should we choose, or it will be removed, at no cost to the church. The purpose of the remote entrance feature is to allow our members access to the church *during school hours* when the building must be secured (locked) for the safety of everyone (students, staff, and our members). During the lease period, the west (main entrance) will be locked with a sign directing visitors to use the east parking lot and entrance with remote doorbell access. The locked west entrance and the remote doorbell access to the east entrance will only affect us during school hours. ***Access to the church will remain the same as normal for all evening and weekend activities.***



The consistory has voted to approve the agreement of understanding between the school district and Salem and I am happy to announce this unique opportunity to share in the nurture and learning of young children and families in our community. Many of Salem's members have a direct connection to Fairview. Some may have attended school there, had children or grandchildren who attended or are enrolled and several of our members taught there or in the Plymouth School District. This is an experience that will benefit the community, the school and our church. We look forward to the excitement of this cooperative venture.

The consistory is planning to be available to discuss details and answer questions after church services on the weekend of Aug 17-18. Please join us this fall in providing an enthusiastic welcome to our neighbors from Fairview School.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST