

SOMA

A Church of the Christ

A Story of Promise, Hope, & Revolutionary Love

Welcome to our "Merry Christmas" edition of our monthly newsletter! We hope and pray that you had a blessed Advent season with your family, friends, and church community. By now, you've heard us talk about our participation in [Advent Conspiracy](#) this past November and December, and even though the weather threw some unexpected surprises our way, God opened up some amazing doors as we sought to make the story of Christ's birth a community-changing event.



Through November... Soma's LiFE groups participated in a friendly competition to collect and distribute over 2,700 pounds of food to the [Marion-Polk Food Shares](#) located here in West Salem.

On December 7... we kicked off our Advent Conspiracy series with an emphasis on "Spending Less" on Christmas this year. We encouraged everyone at Soma to think about giving gifts to friends and family that involved relationship-building and in exchange, to redistribute money to people that were in need of some basic elements of life (food, shelter, etc.).



On December 14... we lived out our theme of "Giving More" by cancelling our regular Sunday night worship gathering and instead moved worship out into the community. One group (led by Trish Sells) and composed of many of our Soma kids and their parents spent part of the afternoon singing at Orchard Heights Senior Community. Another group collected and distributed blankets, socks, and coats (along with a hot meal) to many of the people who are in a "housing transition" and live down at Wallace Marine Park. There was also a strong sense of God's timing as snow began pouring down just as we got to the park.

On December 21... we weren't really sure if we should go ahead with worship or not that evening. Snow and ice had covered the roads, and most of Salem was essentially shut down (this happens in the Pacific Northwest since we're not really used to freezing temperatures). What ended up was awesome as 35 people celebrated Christmas together, many of which walked to church from around the neighborhood.



On December 22... just 3 days before Christmas, Polk County contacted Soma asking if we would want to distribute extra gifts that they had not been able to deliver the week before. We gladly accepted them and quickly began contacting people at Soma to see if they wanted to help distribute surprise Christmas gifts. The next day Soma was able to give 16 families (20 adults, 30 kids) in our local area a little Christmas surprise.

Needless to say, our first Christmas at Soma included a number of unexpected surprises, but that's what made it so amazing! One of the marks of a healthy community of Christ-Followers is the ability to let God be active and alive in what they do (in other words, following a "living" God rather than one that we attempt to box up). And in some very simple, but powerful ways, God revealed himself in us and our local community as we celebrated God's revolutionary love during the Advent season.



Thanks for a Great Year!

Where do we begin in an end-of-the-year recap? How about with **Thank You!** Thanks for your constant prayers, loving encouragement, and ongoing financial support of the mission that God has called us to here in West Salem.

The past year has been one wild ride after another beginning with [Cascade Hills Church of Christ](#) sending us and Trevor and Jacque Elliott at the end of 2007. And in that one year, God has taken the vision for a new church in West Salem and has brought that to a reality with Soma alive and active in our local community. We've had a number of surprising opportunities (not to mention our fair share of challenges) and, yet, here we are exactly 1 year later...a community of Christ-Followers being Jesus to an emerging generation of people in Salem, Oregon.



What's to come in 2009? We will continue to be about God's mission of **being Jesus to an emerging generation**, living out our community's values of **missional living, authentic community, creative dignity, and spiritual formation**. And this means we will continue to look for creative ways to engage our surrounding culture with the Gospel, connecting the truth of God to our everyday lives.

We will continue to live out the Kingdom of God in such a way

as to invite those who are "missing" into transformation through Jesus, scattering ourselves around the city of *shalom* (Salem=peace) to bring about God's *shalom* in broken lives.

May the God of mercy and amazing surprises continue to send us out into the world to bring the good news of Jesus Christ.

Thank You for helping to make 2008 an amazing year!



By the Numbers...

a few stats...

Dec 7.....	59
Dec 14.....	—
Dec 21.....	35
Dec 28.....	77
Average.....	57
Giving Total.....	\$2,586.26

Please Pray for...

- **New Life.** A new year brings new commitments. Please pray for a number of people who are exploring Jesus and considering making him Lord and Savior of their life.
- **Momentum.** Please pray for a growing excitement and energy for Soma as we look at gaining momentum and breaking some growth barriers. Please pray that those who have been "attending" worship will make Soma "their" church and get plugged into a LiFE group.
- **Postcard Mailer.** On January 7, we'll be sending another mailer into over 11,000 homes in our community. Please pray that this would be a successful way of connecting people to new life in Jesus Christ.
- **LiFE Group Leaders.** As we continue to grow, our leaders are learning new things all the time. Please pray for their growth as well as the next generation of leaders that are being developed.
- **Mission.** Please pray for a revived sense of mission within the Soma community and that God would open up relational doors with those who are "missing" from the table. May we be focused on God's mission to redeem his creation.

New Online Options...



And just in case you haven't visited Soma's website in a while...make sure to make www.somasalem.org a regular part of your web experience with an updated calendar, newsletters, and podcasts.

Also, if you want to stay up to date on church planting experiences on a week-to-week basis, go to [Soma's Online Newsletter](#) as well as Dwayne Hilty's blog, [Reformata...Reformanda](#).

SOMA

A Church of the Christ

PO Box 5554
Salem, OR 97304
503.689.1995
www.somasalem.org



Being Jesus to an Emerging Generation

by

**Creating Authentic Community,
Practicing Missional Living,
Engaging in Creative Dignity,
& Nurturing Spiritual Formation**