

# KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Pastor at home at Clear Lake UMC

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

When Alyssa Baker was asked to give her first sermon, she laughed.

Baker, the new lead pastor of Keizer Clear Lake United Methodist Church, was a senior in high school and had only attended church regularly for a couple of years.

"I was a behind the scenes type of person, really introverted," Baker said.

But as she preached from Psalm 139 and spoke of how she was formed and loved by God, in that moment, something felt right.

However, Baker had no plans to become a pastor and went to Western Oregon University to begin working towards a business degree.

"I pushed it away for a while, thinking that's not really what I'm supposed to be doing," Baker said.

Baker remained involved in the church, leading worship during a Thursday night community meal service at Dallas United Methodist Church.

About a year into leading worship, Baker went to the pastor to tell him, "I think I'm supposed to be doing what you're doing."

"He just laughed and said, 'Yep, I was waiting for you to tell me,'" Baker recalled. "He already knew but wanted me to find that."

After finishing her business degree, Baker began looking at graduate school.

With only 13 accredited United Methodist seminaries

in the United States and none in Oregon and Washington, she decided to attend the Boston University School of Theology, located just three blocks from Fenway Park.

"I knew I would have to take a leap so why not leap across the country," Baker said.

Getting her master's of divinity, Baker spent three years in Boston, which included a two-year internship at Wilmington United Methodist Church.

Along with being on the other side of the country more than 3,000 miles from home, Baker got a different church experience as well.

Instead of maybe 100 people at Sunday morning worship, line in Albany, Wilmington had over 300 and three different services.

"It was something completely different than I had ever experienced," Baker said. "To be able to offer the different worship experiences and to recognize that people connect differently spiritually, that opened up my eyes."

Baker returned to Oregon after seminary and spent a year as the pastoral intern at The Dalles United Methodist Church, planning worship, conducting funerals, starting Sunday School programs and helping create a Columbia Gorge-wide youth group.

Baker said her favorite parts of ministry are "connecting with people on their spiritual journeys and building new relationships."

"I like connecting people



Alyssa Baker, the new lead pastor at Keizer Clear Lake United Methodist Church, is heading up the young adult ministry for the six Open Door Churches in Keizer and Salem. KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

together as they share their stories and find similar interests," she added.

In Keizer, Baker is focusing on the young adult program for all six Open Door

Churches in the area as well as taking care of the day-to-day tasks at Clear Lake.

Baker felt welcomed right away and then on a recent Sunday morning found out how giving the congregation is.

"With Hurricane Harvey going on, I just announced we're helping with this and we had jars and passed them

around and kids and parents and grandparents, everyone just put in whatever they had to help for that," Baker said. "It's nice. It's what church should be, I think. The peo-

ple here have such big hearts and so welcoming and opening. People turn away from church for so many different reasons. We're not a scary place. We're just people."

### Spirit Chorus



Submitted

Oregon Spirit Chorus will perform with Oregon SenateAires, GQ and Flipside in *A Cappella Spirit* at Willamette University's Smith Auditorium on Saturday, Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. Purchase tickets at oregonspirit.org.

**LifeSource Natural Foods**

2649 Commercial St SE  
503-361-7973  
LifeSourceNaturalFoods.com  
Open 8am-9pm, even Sundays!  
Eat Well Be Happy!

## What's for Dinner?

Local, Organic Zucchini

Spiral Slicer

All Organic & Natural Produce · Groceries  
Bulk Foods · Pasture Raised Meats · Deli  
Beer & Wine · Vitamins  
Herbs & Body Care

**CROWN**  
MEMORIAL CENTERS  
CREMATION & BURIAL  
*A New Tradition™*

**Salem**  
412 Lancaster Drive NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
(503) 581-6265

**Low Cost**  
Cremation & Burial  
Funerals & Memorials

Simple Direct Cremation \$595  
Simple Direct Burial \$710  
Traditional Funeral \$2,275

**Discount priced**  
Caskets, Urns and  
other Memorial items.

Privately owned  
cremation facility.  
Locally owned and operated  
by Oregon families.  
www.ANewTradition.com

## Fresh Fall Flowers and Foliage

**3-Season baskets and planters** give you fall, winter and spring color *all in one pot.*

Choose from **ready-made containers, or make your own** from our great selection of plants.

Join our class  
**Making Planters for Fall & Winter**  
Sat. Sept. 16, 2 pm

Charge for materials only,  
Please call to pre-register

**Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 10-5**

## Egan Gardens

GREENHOUSE GROWERS

**(503)393-2131**  
9805 River Rd NE Salem  
[EganGardens.com](http://EganGardens.com)

## FEEL OUR WARMTH

COME IN AND TALK WITH US

**The Springs Living®**

**THE SPRINGS at SUNNYVIEW**  
INDEPENDENT LIVING  
1950 45th Ave NE, Salem • 503-589-1200

**THE WOODS at WILLOWCREEK**  
ASSISTED LIVING & MEMORY CARE  
4398 Glencoe St NE, Salem • 503-581-4239

[TheSpringsLiving.com](http://TheSpringsLiving.com)