

Dominguez chosen as parade Grand Marshal



La Luz de Valle pastor Jose Dominguez will be the Grand Marshal for the Keizer Holiday of Lights Parade next month. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Jose Dominguez has been a stalwart in Keizer for many years.

The pastor of La Luz del Valle Church, off River Rd. and Dearborn, has lived in Keizer for 28 years and was one of the founding members of the Latino Action Committee — whose vision is to manifest Latino participation and representation with the goal of informing, encouraging and supporting Latinos at all levels and educational affairs, particularly in increasing graduation.

Dominguez's service to the community has been on display in many different ways, which is why the Keizer Chamber of Commerce named him the Grand Marshal for the Keizer Holiday of Lights parade, which takes place on Saturday, Dec. 11 and starts at 7 p.m.

"I really didn't expect it when they called me. It's really a great feeling," Dominguez said.

In 2018, Dominguez and the Latino Action Committee started the Latino Scholarship Fund for graduating seniors at McNary High School — the committee awarded \$400 scholarships to 18 students in the spring.

When Dominguez graduated Woodburn High School in 1978, he

received a \$75 scholarship. Even though it wasn't much, the gesture had a profound impact on him and was one of his main motivations for starting the scholarship fund.

"It wasn't about the amount. It really was about what was behind it. For me, it was a motivational factor that said to me 'You can do it. You have the capability and the qualifications to go out and make a difference in the community,'" Dominguez said.

Dominguez's devotion to helping kids was one of the key reasons behind starting the Latino Acton Committee.

"The beauty of it is when you invest in young people, you're investing in a future and you're investing in a generation," Dominguez said. "They were designed by God to go out and be fruitful in the community. Our goal of the Latino Action Committee is basically finding those students that want to go to the next level of higher education, but letting them know that we would like for them to come back into the community and we would like for them to invest in the community that they came from."

But the Latino Action Committee goes beyond providing assistance to students. On multiple occasions, the committee has invited Keizer Police Chief John

Teague to speak at La Luz de Valle in an effort to bridge the seeming divides that permeate relations between Latino communities and public safety organizations.

"It was very healthy for our community," Dominguez said. "Our role is to be bridge builders."

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Dominguez's goal was to have his church be a light during dark times. People at the church would safely gather to make food boxes with those in need and connect people who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic with congregants who worked at employment agencies.

"We asked ourselves as a church what we could do to help the community during tough times," Dominguez said.

Additionally, La Luz De Valle has been a site that provides COVID vaccinations

and testing.

"We always want to play a part to help others in that area," Dominguez said.

Dominguez believes running a church is so much more than gathering on Sundays, which is why he is passionate about serving people in a multitude of different capacities.

"We believe the church isn't a ministry in four walls, it's really in the community. We are salt and we are light," he said. "People have to see that your faith is practical. Faith is not something you hide in the four walls of a church, it's literally loving God and loving your neighbor."

"If you really want to make a difference, make a difference in your neighbor's life, make a difference in your workplace, make a difference wherever you go."

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