

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES of OREGON

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership



Liv Nevin Gifford, *project coordinator*
Saint Mary's Catholic Church ■ 501 NW 25th St. ■ Corvallis, OR 97330
phone (541) 757-1988, ext. 107 ■ *e-mail* lgifford@emoregon.org

CSA Member Profile: Linda and Tom Berkemeier, Lincoln Street United Methodist Church

By Sarah Pruett



Tom and Linda carry home their CSA box, filled with local lettuce, rainbow chard, carrots,

Linda and Tom Berkemeier found out about the Lincoln Street United Methodist Church Community Supported Agriculture project through the church, of which Linda is a member. They both enjoy the abundance of greens, herbs and lettuce that characterizes a typical weekly share that feeds both of them for a week. The two live nearby, at 55th and Division, and find that the community project has served to be a very fulfilling partnership between Alex Velikoretskikh, the farmer, and the congregation of the small church.

“I joined to further the mission of helping Alex get started,” Linda says, “and through participating, our church has been able to do that.” She also notes that eating seasonally and locally is important.

like to waste, so she works to use everything—even the beet greens. She incorporates all her leftover produce into tasty new recipes, which the congregation shares with one another.

Linda and Tom think the CSA is great! “It’s on time, fun to cook the food, and we’ve been able to eat more seasonally,” Linda says. One week of greens is a lot for just the two of them, but Linda doesn’t

Linda recommends CSA shares without any reservations. She says, “If you are in town most of the summer, the CSA share is a great way to buy produce.” What happens if you can’t pick up your share? The church will donate the unclaimed produce to local food banks, who are always in need of fresh food.

The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) strives to increase access to fresh, local food for all—especially people with low incomes—and encourages congregations to support small, new and immigrant farmers through innovative market relationships. In the process, we are developing and sharing models for congregations across Oregon and beyond. For more information about IFFP, go to www.emoregon.org/food_and_farms.php.

In 2007, IFFP began exploring possibilities for establishing a pilot Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) based in a congregation to provide marketing opportunities for new and immigrant farmers while creating avenues to affordable fresh produce for people with low-incomes. Through a partnership with Mercy Corps Northwest’s New American Agricultural Project, IFFP and Alexander formed a relationship and created the CSA at Lincoln Street United Methodist Church, a growing, vibrant congregation in SE Portland.