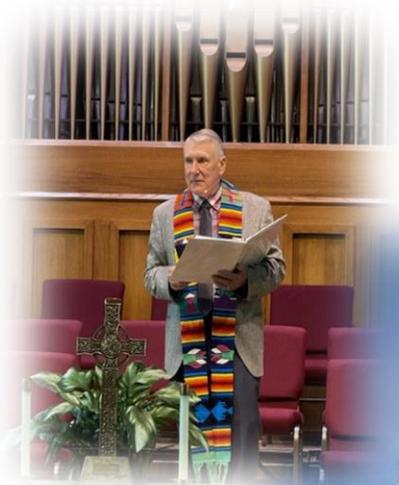


Connecting Forward Into The Future



First Presbyterian Church Medford
2025 Mission Study

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 22: 36-39

First Presbyterian Church of Medford, Oregon

Our Mission:

Nurturing people in body, mind, and soul for the glory of God.

Our Vision:

We are Faithful to God; Grounded in Love; Responsive to the World.

Preface

This report is based on data collected from congregational surveys and information obtained through in-person interactions.

Our purpose is to:

- Create a current picture of our church so we are equipped to call a pastor whose skills and experience align with our congregation.
- Discern the important core values of our congregation in calling a pastor whose values are similar.
- Determine who we are as a congregation and define our needs, both inside our building and out in our community, to call a pastor who will help us move forward in these important ministries.

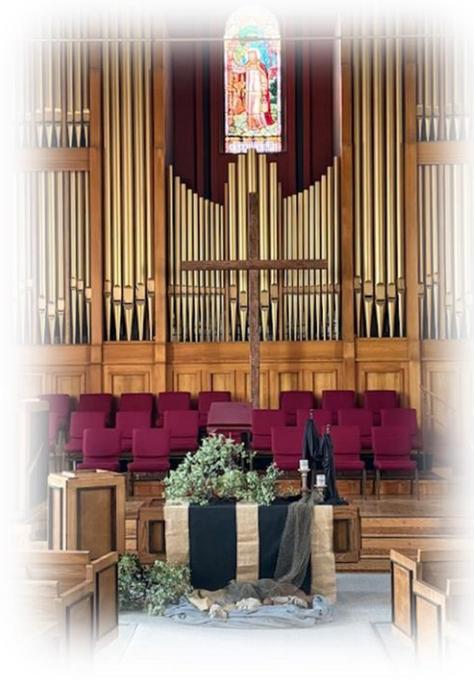
Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the hard work of our Transition Team: Dan Johnson, Al Densmore, Kristy Denman, Bob Frey, Jan Barrett, Cathy Ullrich, and Rev. Robin Garvin for utilizing their time and talents to complete this mission study.

We thank our congregation for their involvement in filling out surveys, attending our listening sessions and trusting and supporting us with their prayers.

We are grateful to God and the Holy Spirit for discernment and wisdom throughout this process.

Introduction



There comes a time in the life of a church when it is necessary to seek a new pastor to lead the congregation in the work God is calling them to do. The time came to Medford First Presbyterian Church in January 2025 with the retirement of their pastor who served them for the previous twelve years.

Upon learning of his retirement, the Session set to work of beginning the process to find the next pastor. They learned that there are very few Transition Pastors available to lead congregations during this time of change. In consultation with the Presbytery of the Cascades, it was decided to use a new process. This involved hiring a Transition Consultant, promoting the current part-time pastor for Congregational Support to be the full-time “bridge” pastor to lead the congregation during the transition and appointing a Transition Team to write the Mission Study and engage the congregation in the initial part of the search.

By the end of February 2025, the members of the Transition Team had been selected and were beginning their work with the guidance of the consultant. The Team learned that they had three main questions to answer:

- Who are we, now?
- Who is our neighbor, now?
- What is God calling us to do, now?

Following a series of Team meetings the Team sent out a survey to the congregation to be returned in late April 2025. A decision was made to mail it to the members and friends rather than use an electronic means. (See Appendix for Survey) Of the approximately 200 surveys sent out, 58 were returned (roughly 30%). Following an analysis of the responses by the Team (see Appendix), a Congregational Conversation to reflect on who we are now was facilitated by the Team on Saturday afternoon, May 10.

The Congregational Conversation was divided into three parts. Part One was a discussion of the survey response themes. In Part Two, the participants were divided into small groups of 5 to 8, with a member of the Transition Team facilitating discussion. Each group answered these three questions:

- As you think about our church, what causes you to smile – what do you love most about our church?
- As you reflect on the survey themes, what do we value most as a congregation?
- As you reflect on the survey themes, what are we most concerned about?

The final part of the conversation involved a large group discussion of the reflections/responses that surfaced during the small group time.

Following this Congregation Conversation, the Team turned their attention to the next question: “Who is our Neighbor Now?” The Team created a list of possible organizations and community leaders with whom we needed to talk. Contact was made with organizations inviting them into a discussion. Fifteen organizations have responded to the invitation at the time of this report. The Team, usually in pairs, interviewed people and

organizations on the list. A summation of these interviews can be found in the Appendix. Ongoing conversation with community organizations is a priority for our work.

The last three Sundays in June the Team held additional Congregational Conversations between the two morning worship services. The first conversation involved a discussion of the process for seeking a new pastor and exploring our DNA as a congregation. The second conversation focused on what we were learning from interviewing community leaders. The third conversation focused on the Pastor Nominating Committee, its function, how it would be established, and the need to get people to serve. See appendix for recorded responses.

While the community leaders were being interviewed, other members of the Team began the task of writing this document. Information from congregational and community conversations was synthesized to formulate conclusions and recommendations about where God is leading us in our future life and mission.

In addition to this Introduction, Preface, Acknowledgements, Context, and Appendix chapters were written to: 1) describe the history of our church, 2) reflect on who we are now, 3) provide a snapshot of who our neighbors are now, and 4) identify what we feel God is calling us to do in the next season of First Presbyterian Medford's life and ministry. They are as follows:

- Looking In the Rearview Mirror—What is our history?
- Looking In the Window—Who we are now?
- Looking Out the Window—Whom are we to serve now? What are the hurts and hopes of our community?
- Looking To the Future—What is God calling us to do and be?
- Conclusions and Recommendations

The document was presented to the Session for consideration and acceptance. Upon approval, it was then submitted to the Presbytery of the Cascades, Commission on Ministry-South/Central, for their review and authorization. Finally, it was given to the Pastor Nominating Committee to use in the development of our Mission Discernment Profile (MDP) and the search for the next pastor to lead this congregation into the future.

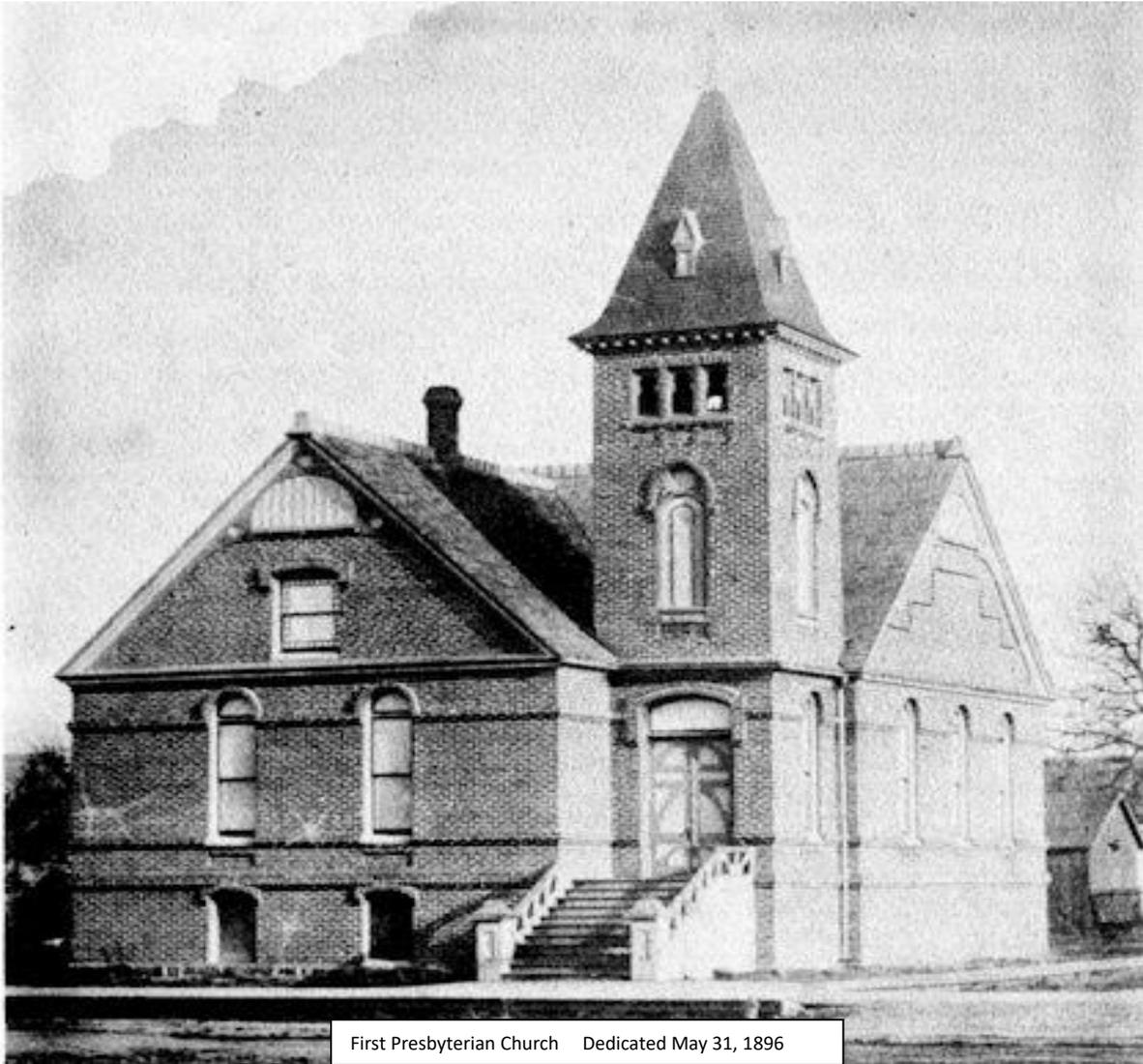
If you are a pastor looking for a new calling and reading this report, we pray that it gives a clear picture of who we are, where we live, and the work we want to do. If you feel the Spirit calling you after reading this, please listen to the gentle calling and respond.

Context: Medford, Oregon

From its inception, First Presbyterian Church has been rooted in downtown Medford, Oregon. Medford is a vibrant city nestled in the Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon, known for its beautiful scenery, outdoor recreation, cultural opportunities, and a thriving agricultural industry. It serves as the commercial and medical hub for Southern Oregon, offering a mix of urban amenities and small-town charm.

As of the 2020 United States census, the city had a total population of 85,824, making it the eighth-most populous city in Oregon. The Medford metropolitan area population was 223,259 in 2020.

Medford is strategically positioned along Interstate 5, approximately 27 miles north of the California border, and roughly midway between Portland and San Francisco.



Looking In the Rearview Mirror: What is our history?

In June 2025, we at First Presbyterian celebrated 140 years in the downtown community. We enjoyed opening a time capsule, reminiscing, and viewing photos and journals of early members and our founder, Rev. Moses Williams.

Rev. Williams of Jacksonville founded the First Presbyterian Church a month after Medford's incorporation in 1885. Nine charter members responded to his call, meeting in the town's only school, as no church structure existed at that point.

C. C. Beekman, an area banker, was instrumental in securing the dream of a sanctuary by donating land on the corner of Main and Holly to the church. There, Rev. Williams was able to direct the construction of a small church, completed and dedicated September 4, 1887.

An unfortunate and all too common fire destroyed the wooden church on October 15, 1895. A little over a year-and-a-half later, a brick replacement building was dedicated on May 31, 1896.

Rev. Williams' congregation grew under his leadership and that of his successors. A larger facility was needed. In 1927, on land used for years as a manse, a new building was constructed. First Presbyterian remains on that 8th and Holly Street corner today.

The congregation's growth continued. In 1952, a church education wing was added. This addition provided significant classroom and meeting spaces to meet the needs of the growing church.

In 1958, Rev. Kirkland West had the vision to plant a new church in East Medford. Associate Pastor John Reynolds became the organizing pastor. Land for the project was purchased on the east side of town. Pastor Reynolds along with several families from First Presbyterian chartered a new congregation and began worshiping in a nearby school while the building was constructed for Westminster Presbyterian Church. It is a vitally active church, now affiliated with ECO; a Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

An extensive remodeling effort of the sanctuary was taken on in 1972. The overall layout of the worship space was rotated 180 degrees. The chancel previously located on the east end was relocated to the west. A balcony that overlooked the sanctuary was enclosed, and office space was created in the former chancel area. The church entrance and narthex were also renovated to accommodate the Sanctuary's reversal. A bell tower was added in 1983. Carillon bells now welcome folks marking the hours of the day with hymns and Westminster chimes.

Our downtown presence increased in 1999 with the purchase of an adjacent building and parking lot. Using primarily donated labor, First Presbyterian celebrated the opening of the Sarah Corson Childcare and Learning Center in 2001. The center continues to be highly regarded, consistently operating at full capacity with an active waitlist. The building's second floor is leased to an independent client, Oregon Pacific Financial Advisers.

First Presbyterian has a long and enduring musical tradition. The original 1927 Reuter organ's inaugural concert on September 11, 1927, played to an audience of over 1000. Nineteen-sixty-one saw the Reuter organ rebuilt by Reid Organ of Santa Clara, California. A new console was added that was able to interface with the current Reuter pipes. When the sanctuary was reversed in 1972, the Reuter was dismantled and reassembled in the new chancel. By 1987, the aging hybrid unit was showing signs of failure. A new organ was needed. Schoenstein Organ of San Francisco was selected to construct First Presbyterian's new instrument. Dubbed the George and Agnes Flanagan organ, it was dedicated May 10, 1992. Over the years, the Flanagan organ has been used in worship and special community musical events.

We at the corner of 8th and Holly in downtown Medford have a long history in our community as a place of worship, music, and fellowship. As we look to the future, we pray, with new leadership, to continue growing these values.



Looking In the Window: Who Are We Now?

First Presbyterian of Medford, like most mainline Protestant churches today, is an aging congregation. However, we are a diverse and vital group. We offer perspectives from differing backgrounds and possess multiple talents.

Most members are retired or near-retirement from primarily professional careers. Our most recent General Assembly statistical report shows that approximately 65% of our congregation is over 71, 23% aged between 56 and 70, and 12% are between 41 and 55. Although we are maturing, our membership remains stable. A cleansing of the rolls in 2011 indicates the active membership at 160, with an average attendance of 110. The most recent statistical report shows a figure of 153, with an average attendance of 136. Comparative years of General Assembly statistics can be found in the appendix.

We are a welcoming church.

No matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here we welcome you. We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place, with its doors and its table open wide. If you are passing through, Godspeed. If you are looking for a home, stay here. If you need instruction, learn from us as we learn from you. We invite visitors to join us, but most of all to return often.

Medford First Presbyterian Church is a worshipping community.

We strive to follow the examples of Jesus in worshipping God and carrying God's love to our neighbors near and far. Our members enjoy the option of three Sunday worship experiences.

- An **Informal service** at 8:30 am occurs around tables in the Fellowship Hall. A small group of song leaders share hymns, and the pastoral message is given using a PowerPoint presentation to guide worship. This service observes Communion twice monthly, on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Dress is casual, and coffee, tea, and snacks are available to enjoy before, during, and after the service.
- A **traditional service** is held at 11 am. This option offers liturgical readings and choral and congregational hymns. A choir presents anthems and worship music, often accompanied by the Schoenstein organ. The pastor's message is the same for the informal and traditional services. Communion is celebrated on the 1st Sunday of each month in this service. A coffee fellowship also follows this service.
- **Online Worship.** During Covid, First Presbyterian started an online option, which we have continued. We reach members who are unable to attend in person, and others in the global community who are touched by our message. Edited live traditional services are posted to You Tube – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoYa2yAR3wQPfWN7cr3X4mv>.

In all worship experiences Scripture is central. We believe in the timelessness of the Bible and its teachings. We seek ways to apply that to our daily living and to the rapidly changing world in which we live.

We are a community that deeply values music and the arts to enhance our worship experience and our lives.

As our current pipe organ was installed in 1992, our pastor, Rev. J. D. Conrad, reminded us that, "Music opens the floodgates to the divine." We believe this. We strive to incorporate music and the arts in a meaningful way into the beautiful space God has provided for us.

We offer two Vesper services monthly. Jazz Vespers take place on the second Sunday of the month and a Classical Vespers on the fourth Sunday. Both primarily feature local musicians. During the service, a brief reading or message is offered by the pastor, but music is front and center. In addition, local visual artists display samples of their talent in our Hallway Gallery. The art gallery changes monthly featuring different artists and styles. Our church has hosted various special music events in our beautiful sanctuary that is known for its acoustics. We hope to continue and possibly expand the use of our amazing space for these programs.



First Presbyterian Church Medford supports active and vibrant Mission efforts. Many of our programs focus on feeding people in need.

- Brown Bag Café - Four days a week, Monday through Thursday, a sack lunch is provided for anyone who stops at the church and asks for one. Non-perishable items are packed by the congregation Sunday morning in assembly-line fashion. Sandwiches made by other churches are contributed and added as

lunches are distributed. Our Brown Bag Cafe ministry is funded by grants and donations and feeds up to 500 people per week.



As lunches are handed out on Wednesdays, we have partnered with the Southern Oregon University nursing program to provide foot care for people. Student nurses address minor health issues and build relationships with drop-in clients. A partner organization provides coffee, oatmeal and donuts. A wonderful energy, and the scent of lavender foot soak, permeates the air on these mornings.

- West Medford Food Pantry—This project began several years ago in our Fellowship Hall serving a few families a week. It has since grown exponentially. The pantry has now been moved to a larger space. We partner with Access (the area community action agency) and other churches in staffing a program that serves about 150 families a week. In addition to the volunteers, we do a special food drive each month in the church to collect specific food items needed at the pantry. This is known as the Food of the Month.

- Hawthorne Park Potluck - This program provides noon meals in a local park where several unhoused people gather. Our church works in collaboration with the organizers of this project by providing them with a place to store their food and work from in our building. We also provide a small stipend to pay for supplies.

Other ways we reach out to our neighbors in need:

- We have four Narcotic's Anonymous groups that use our building throughout the week. The larger two groups average around a hundred people attending each week. We are looking for ways to incorporate them more fully into the life of the church.
- Kiva Loans - Our church makes use of a bequest designated for world missions to take part in the Kiva Loan Program. It offers short term low-interest loans for people in need – often in third world countries. Our mission team has chosen to focus on support to Latin American countries. Since beginning 5 years ago, we have made 94 loans in 9 countries totaling over \$38,000.
- General Assembly Special Offerings—Our church also takes part in the four special offerings taken by the Presbyterian Church USA each year. These are, One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

Organizational Structure

Session - Our Session is made up of nine ruling elders. The work of the church is divided into the following committees:

- Worship and Music
- Mission
- Christian Education
- Church Vitality

- Fellowship
- Building and Grounds
- Finance
- Personnel

Deacons - First Presbyterian has a board of twelve Deacons who are the pastor's eyes and ears for the congregation. Each is assigned a group of congregants to watch over. They also prepare a Christmas gift basket for shut-ins and people who have lost someone the prior year. When asked, Deacons provide a reception when memorial services are held at the church.

Personnel - The current staffing of the church consists of the Pastor (who acts as head of staff), a church administrator, a part-time music director, an accompanist, and part-time building security/maintenance person. In addition, the Sarah Corson Childcare Center has a director and 13 teachers and assistants.

Christian Education - Our church offers in-person and online adult classes. The in-person classes are held between services on Sunday morning and during weekday evenings.

Fellowship - The church has an active Fellowship Committee which tries to have an activity each month. These activities are in addition to the "5th Sunday". On months that have five Sundays, the church combines the two worship services into a single 10 a.m. service with a potluck following the service. There are usually four such Sundays a year. Some of the activities the Fellowship Committee has sponsored in the past are bowling, a fall colors hike, dinner out, miniature golf, a chocolate desert contest, and a Bunko night.

Finance - The Covid pandemic was a major blow to the church's finances. As all of us were requested to isolate and distance ourselves many of our church activities were altered and/or ground to a halt. We lost several giving members and friends. The church is currently running a deficit budget when not considering our investment income. Investment income has allowed us to cover the deficit. For 2025 we will be able to add to our investments. One of the things that has financially helped us is using grants to fund some of our local mission projects.

Church Building - The church building is basically in three parts.

The first part holds the sanctuary, narthex, fellowship hall, and church offices. This historic section was built in 1927 and was significantly renovated in 1972. The sanctuary is a place where many sense God's presence, with its beautiful stained-glass windows, complimentary color palette, high vaulted beams, and amazing acoustics. It is further enhanced by the pipe display for the Schoenstein organ. This building section is in constant use throughout the week.

The second part is the education wing. This two-story addition was completed in 1952. The first floor houses the Brown Bag Café, a nursery, a library, and two meeting rooms. These rooms are used most days of the week. The second floor contains former classrooms. Today these spaces are used for music, bell choir, a large general-purpose room, and a few other rooms that are used predominately for storage and occasional meetings. Access to this floor is through an elevator that is not conveniently located. For the most part, this floor currently does not see a lot of activity.

The third part is the Urban Center II Building. This is a separate building that is connected to the main building on the second floor. It houses the Sarah Corson Child Care Center on the first floor. The second floor is leased to Oregon Pacific Financial Advisors.

Despite the ways we currently share our church building, we have a large, under-utilized facility that could offer space for non-profits or other ministries in a downtown area.

We are a friendly and caring congregation, and value connectivity among ourselves and within the community. However, we seek a balance between reaching out and growing inward. As an aging congregation, we are striving to do more with less, both in body and financially, though our spirits are still strong! **We desire growth**, and while young families are desirable, we seem to serve a more mature demographic. A pastor able to bridge the generations would serve us well.

For more detailed information about the Medford community go to:

<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US32780-medford-or-metro-area/>



Looking Out the Window—Whom Are We to Serve Now?

From its start, First Presbyterian was destined to become a downtown church. Shortly after a site was provided for its first home, the town civic center began to grow around it. When the church moved to its current space in 1927, Medford became the designated seat for Jackson County. A post office, federal courthouse, Carnegie library and city hall were sited within two blocks of the church. The county courthouse was completed in the same neighborhood in 1932. Businesses began to set themselves up within proximity to the railway which is about two blocks away. The civic center continued to expand around FPC as the town grew. God has given us the opportunity to interact and serve all within our community.

The economic base and population of Medford and surrounding areas has shifted dramatically over time. Once known for its pears, agriculture and timber products the Medford area has now become a medical mecca with an increasing retirement base. Current job markets align with these trades as well as workers in the various

retail and service industries. Hispanics, our area's largest minority group, once dominated a migrant agricultural work force. They are now increasingly making the Rogue Valley their home and infusing their language and culture into our schools and social structure.

The year 1967 saw the completion of Interstate 5. It significantly increased traffic and transportation of goods in and out of the area. Medford is the half-way point between major Pacific Northwest cities. (San Francisco, Sacramento and Portland) The freeway construction also effectively split the growing town into east and west neighborhoods. Access to the I-5 corridor has also likely had a major impact on the number of transient and unhoused people we see daily. Their presence and the issues they are confronted with have a serious impact on the social service community. Ongoing changes in local laws and ordinances related to these issues have also affected the lives and livability of our Southern Oregon neighbors.

Church records show that throughout time our members have been highly involved with community issues. Several members served in key civic positions that help guide growth and address problems with a Christian mindset. Our church membership has taken on projects to help and serve in times of war, civic hurt and strife. We are proud of that history. We continue to seek ways to best serve our neighbor's needs in partnership with others in our community.

To effectively assess the current pressing needs and hurt being experienced in our community the Transition Team elected to personally interview community partners from a variety of local service agencies and businesses. An effort was made to gain a broad perspective of viewpoints on the issues. We also looked to speak with the partners who were close to the decisions being made within their organization. Presumably, those people would have a fuller perspective of the local needs and work being done to address them. Three main questions were posed during these conversations:

- 1) What are the major concerns, hurts and challenges facing the population you serve?
- 2) What challenges is your organization having in addressing these issues?
- 3) How might we best partner with you to address these concerns?

As can be expected we heard about some amazing work being done by these partners. We also heard of significant challenges and frustrations from these good folks.

A common challenge voiced is that of **uncertainty**. Given our current economic and political climate, it is hard for agencies to get a secure handle on available funds and resources. For some, uncertainty around changes in policy issues may be at stake. In simple terms, the needs are great, yet the resources needed to address them are few. Under these conditions the need is essential for **enhanced community partnerships** addressing common concerns. This is a viewpoint shared by many.

Though each organization held a specific perspective on community needs based on the population they serve, the following general areas of need ran through the interviews.

- **Lack of Available and Affordable Housing**
- **Hunger/ Food Insecurity**
- **Support services for Children and Families**

- **Support for Senior Population**
- **Mental Health issues**

Given the resources available and the specific assets we have at FPC, it is unrealistic to presume that our congregation can effectively partner to address many of the pressing needs in our community. However, our congregation is committed to living out our Mission and Vision as our Lord has instructed us. We have several programs in place to help **feed the hungry**. Information gained through congregational surveys and conversations shows the desire and ability to enhance our service to **children and families** and lend compassionate **support to seniors** both inside and outside our church.

Looking To the Future—What is God Calling Us to Do and Be

First Presbyterian Church of Medford has been a cornerstone of the downtown community for 140 years. After our humble origins under Rev. Moses Williams, we’ve gone through many changes and adjustments. Through it all, we remain a Christ-centered congregation of strong faith, with a variety of beliefs and worship styles. We are united in our quest to serve God through worship, music, and service to one another and our community.

We are seeking a pastoral leader who can partner with us moving forward. Dynamic, well-planned, and executed sermons are a must. We value Biblical messages that help us think, messages that are timeless and yet relevant to the world we live in. We are open to different styles of presentation and would welcome creative worship incorporating items such as visual aids, interpretive elements, music, or dance. We enjoy two services, an informal worship in the fellowship hall at 8:30 a.m. and a traditional service at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

We seek a pastor who can engage the congregation in adaptive change. We are looking for a leader who will guide us on a path to the future, one who will partner with us as we make the journey forward while keeping the best of our past.

We desire a greater connection with God and with one another. Since Covid, we have felt “distanced.” Members and friends have strayed and left the fold. A pastor who can engage and re-engage with congregants is a quality we welcome. Our role as Christians in today’s political and economic climate is confusing and changing, and we need assistance in understanding how and where we are needed and relevant. We value a pastor who will call upon us when we are ill or grieving.



We seek a pastor who values beauty and supports our musical tradition. It is critically important to us and to the community. Music is a key part in each worship service. Additionally, Sunday night Vespers services are held twice a month. They offer attendees a variety of arrangements and genres. A short meditation is given at both these services. It is different from the morning sermon.

First Presbyterian is looking for a leader who will support our mission and outreach. We currently serve four to six hundred sack lunches to the needy each week through our Brown Bag Cafe. We help staff a large food pantry for the community. We host a unique program of student “street” nurses - the only one in the country - who offer foot soaks and minor medical interventions with our unhoused neighbors twice a week. We need a person who is eager to support, uplift, and grow these crucial ministries.

We seek a pastor who will build community bridges. Our congregational surveys show a passion to support children and families. We feel our first steps might be reaching out to an area school with supplies, which we’ve done in the past, with ideas such as homework help or family time. We want to engage our lonely seniors inside and outside of the church. A pastor who can connect with organizations helping youth and older adults is desired.

We desire a leader who can see our facility with new eyes and creativity. We have a large historic building that is full of potential. We want someone who can envision ways to use this space to support us and our neighbors and the community.

Mostly, however, we seek a fellow traveler, a friend, a partner, and a spiritual leader. We at the corner of 8th and Holly, with our history, are eager to welcome you to join us in God’s journey forward. Our doors, hearts, and hands are open and ready. All we need is a step of faith.



Conclusions and Recommendations: What we learned and Where we go from here

First Presbyterian Church, Medford enjoys a rich tradition as a downtown church. Its members are solid in their commitment to live their **mission** of

Nurturing people in body, mind, and soul for the glory of God
through their stated **vision** of
Being Faithful to God; Grounded in Love; Responsive to the World.

Congregational surveys and discussions show that church members appreciate the shared gifts God has provided. Our worship experience, our beautiful historic building, music and art are mentioned as highly valued gifts. We feel it is extremely important to share these gifts with the community.

People are cherished at First Presbyterian Church. We care about each other, and relationships are valued. We see ourselves as friendly, accepting and welcoming to **all** – inviting them to enter God’s journey with us. Hard lessons gained from the Covid pandemic show the need to deepen our **connections to God, each other, and our community.**

Like many churches we have concerns and challenges. We are concerned about our aging membership and their needs. We are concerned about the lack of generational diversity in our midst. We are concerned about decreasing membership. We are concerned about having sufficient finances to sustain staff and programs. We are challenged in maintaining our aging building. We are challenged to recruit volunteers to do the work. We are impatient for growth. At times we are challenged to hold on to our faith. We need to remember we worship a God of abundance and unconditional love. If we are faithful, God will provide.

Conversations with partners in our community also show the need for increased connections. The primary community issues raised in our interviews were: 1) Lack of Available and Affordable Housing, 2) Hunger and Food Insecurity, 3) Support services for Children and Families, 4) Support for Senior Population, and 5) Mental Health issues. There are not enough resources for any organization or agency to tackle these issues alone – particularly in these times when previous resources appear to be dwindling. **To improve effectiveness, it is imperative to work together and strengthen partnerships.** Our church has seen the benefit of connected partnerships in our mission work – Brown Bag Café, Food Pantry, Hawthorne Park Potluck, etc. **As we look to the future, we should stay actively engaged with our community, understand its needs, and build partnerships to meet them.**

First Presbyterian Church, Medford needs a pastor skilled in building connectional relationships.

- **Connecting people into a deeper relationship with God**
- **Connecting people more closely with each other**
- **Connecting and partnering with the community in which we serve**

Recommendations

To deepen our connections with God, each other, and the world and to continue in our vision of being Faithful to God, Grounded in Love, and Responsive to the World at this time and in the future, we recommend:

1. **Develop a Worship + 2 (Worship + Spiritual Growth + Service to Others) stewardship initiative in the fall of 2025.** This would provide an initial next step for our members to prioritize their connection with God, each other, and the community we seek to serve.
 - a. Worship: This is the primary focus of a church. God deserves to be worshipped. As Christians we are called to do so. **Communal worship** needs to be shared as a given.

- b. Spiritual Growth: God desires us to be in relationship with God. Members should be encouraged towards spiritual disciplines that match who they uniquely are allowing them to grow in their relationship with God as well as with others. Some suggestions:
 - i. Share the primary scripture passage for Sunday in advance of worship. This could be done in the Rogue Connections. As the passage is studied, each person would be invited to reflect on three basic questions: What is God saying to me through this passage? What is God saying to our congregation? What is God saying about our involvement with others in our community? This practice should be modeled as a devotional discussion at the start of each committee meeting.
 - ii. Provide increased opportunity for communal prayer.
 - iii. Form various Bible study groups that meet throughout the week at convenient times and places. A common book or chapter would be offered for study. Volunteer group leaders could receive brief training on how to facilitate those discussions.
 - c. Service: As Christians we are called to act and serve. We have several opportunities in our church where members can provide time in service to others. In the future more opportunities will no doubt become available. Specific information should be shared and individuals recruited personally to join in service activities.
2. **Partner with a local school.** In the past members have supplied school supplies to children. This is a good beginning. However, this effort should go beyond that. The goal is for the church to become a relational partner and vested stakeholder in the life of the school- its children, staff and families. This may lead to volunteering, mentoring, support groups, and more.
 3. **Continue to support and enhance current mission and ministry programs** – We invest our resources in highly effective and respected programs such as the Brown Bag Café and Vespers. These were favorably mentioned by our congregation in our surveys and conversations. Current effective programs should be prioritized and supported.
 4. **Support and enhance community building use.** Space is a valuable asset that we have available to us to share. Efforts need to be made to ensure we can do so in a manner that matches the community’s needs and protects the best interests of our building. This would require updating facility use fees, policies/procedures and exploring ways to provide oversight.
 5. **Session assigns the Congregational Vitality Committee to temporarily oversee progress of activities and programs related to the stated vision.**
 The charge of this committee is to promote vitality health to the entire congregation – existing members, new members, and visitors alike. Overseeing forward motion towards our vision during this transitional period in the life of our church would be a chief function of this committee. Encouraging communication and collaboration among all committees and groups would be the mode of operation.

First Presbyterian Church, Medford is in the position to *connect forward into the future on the foundation of our faithful past* to effectively follow Christ’s great commandment:

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'



Matthew 22: 36-39

APPENDIX

1. 2024 Church Statistical Report	19
2. Year At a Glance Membership Diversity (2022 & 2023)	20 - 21
3. Congregational Survey	22
4. Congregational Survey Responses	23
5. Shared Thoughts from Congregational Conversation - May 10, 2025.....	24 - 25
6. Notes from Congregational Conversation 1 – June 15, 2025	26

7. Notes from Congregational Conversation 2 – June 22, 2025	27
8. Notes from Congregational Conversation 3 – June 29, 2025	28
9. Community Partner Interview Summaries	29 - 33

2024 Church Statistical Report



Church First PIN 7129
Presbytery Cascades
Address 85 S Holly St, Medford, OR 97501-3157
Phone 541-779-1711 Fax 541-779-5091
Email fpcm@firstpresmedford.org
Web Site www.firstpreschurchmedford.com

Membership			
Prior Active Members	153	Adjusted membership	153
Gains		Losses	
Certificate	2	Certificate	0
Youth Professions	0	Deaths	8
Professions & Reaffirmations	4	Deleted for any Other Reason	5
Total Gains	6	Total Losses	13
Total Ending Active Members	146		

Baptisms		Average Weekly Worship Attendance	157
Presented by Others	0	Friends of the Congregation	45
At Confirmation	0	Ruling Elders on Session	11
All Other	0	Do you have Deacons?	Yes

Age Distribution of Active Members		People with Disabilities	
17 & Under	0	Hearing impairment	45
18 - 25	5	Sight impairment	2
26 - 40	5	Mobility impairment	20
41 - 55	9	Other impairment	15
56 - 70	28		
Over 70	99	Gender Distribution	
Total Age Distribution	146	Women	98
		Men	48
		Non-Binary	0

Youth in Congregation			
Age 4 and under	3	Middle School (6th – 8th grade)	1
Elementary School (K-5th grade)	1	High School (9th – 12th grade)	2
		Total Youth	7

Racial Ethnic			
Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	2	Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	
Black/African American/African		White	142
Middle Eastern/North African		Multiracial	
Hispanic/Latino-a	2		
		Total Racial Ethnic	146

Budgeted Income	862,070		
Budgeted Expense	1,043,858		

Receipts			
Regular Contributions	253,982	Bequests	26,181
Capital Building Fund	6,394	Other Income	566,693
Investment Income	15,795	Subsidy or Aid	0

Expenditures			
Local Program	903,932	Investment Expenditures	8,020
Local Mission	35,957	Per Capita Apprt	7,114
Capital Expenditures	86,532	Other Mission	10,651

PIN: 7129 Presbytery: Cascades (220100) Synod: The Pacific (220)

Year At A Glance: OVERVIEW		
July 7, 2025		
Membership	2023	2022
Membership as of 12-31-2023	153	156
Attendance	136	138
Gender		
Females	100	96
Males	53	60
Racial Ethnic		
Asian / Pacific Islander / South Asian	2	2
Black / African American / African	0	0
Latino	2	2
Middle Eastern / North African	0	0
Multiracial	0	0
Native American / Alaska / Native Indigenous	0	0
White	149	152
Income		
Regular Contribution	\$762,926	\$0
Bequests	\$122,701	\$0
Investment Income	\$24,642	\$0
Capital Building Funds	\$1,849	\$0
Subsidy Aid	\$0	\$0
Other Income	\$60,332	\$0
Total Income	\$972,450	\$0
Expenditures		
Local Program	\$885,879	\$0
Local Mission	\$31,006	\$0
Other Mission	\$5,574	\$0
Per Capita	\$7,114	\$0
Capital Expenditures	\$22,377	\$0
Investment Expense	\$6,937	\$0
Total Expenses	\$958,887	\$0
Leadership		
Deacons	1	1
Ruling Elders	13	14

First 85 S Holly St
Medford, OR 97501-3157 Web: www.firstpreschurchmedford.com

PIN: 7129 Presbytery: Cascades (220100) Synod: The Pacific (220)

Year At A Glance: Leadership		
July 7, 2025		
Membership	2023	2022
Membership as of 12-31-2023	153	156
Attendance	136	138
Leadership		
Deacons	1	1
Ruling Elders	13	14

PC(USA) does not have sufficient information to make an accurate interpretation for all "zero" responses. Here are some of the uses for "zero" in the Church Trends tables.

- Zero is the valid response for this question. There are no members in this group, no finances to report, etc.
- The information was not available at the time that the report is filed.
- The question was missed or skipped.
- No Session Annual Statistical Report was filed.

The source for Church Trends data is the Session Annual Statistical Report.

Transition Team 2025 Congregational Input

First Presbyterian Church, Medford

Please share your personal responses to these questions. Complete them by April 27th. Please write legibly. Your comments will be collected and analyzed by the Transition Team. The Transition Team will keep all names confidential. Thank you for your participation!

Name (*Optional*): _____ Are you a member? Yes No

1. What one word or phrase (positive or negative) best describes First Presbyterian Church's present situation?
2. In what two or three areas does First Presbyterian Church do well or very well?
3. In what two or three areas does First Presbyterian Church have opportunities for improvement?
4. What are the two or three most important needs and opportunities in our community?
5. To what two or three new efforts in ministry do you think God is calling First Presbyterian Church?
6. What obstacles does First Presbyterian Church need to address?
7. What do you find distinctive or special about First Presbyterian Church?
8. What other things would you like to add?

**Initial Summary of
Congregational Survey Responses**

Disclaimer: The following information identifies the most common responses to the questions posed on the congregational survey. (54 returned to date.) It should not be assumed that this summary is in any way all-inclusive of the thoughts shared by the members and friends of our church.

- 1) Defining word or phrase describing present situation?
 - Precarious
 - Dire
 - In Transition

- 2) What do we do well?
 - Music and worship
 - Food Ministries
 - Fellowship / Acting as a friendly, caring family

- 3) Areas with opportunity to improve?
 - Growing our membership
 - Financial stability
 - Advertising

- 4) Important needs to attend to in our community?
 - Housing – Available & affordable
 - Food insecurity
 - Social/Mental Wellness – Loneliness, access to services

- 5) Where might God be calling us?

Many varied responses

 - Programs that involve youth/younger families
 - Opportunities to connect to various aspects in community

- 6) What obstacles need to be addressed?
 - Financial situation
 - Aging congregation
 - Parking

- 7) What is distinctive and special about our church?
 - Music program – Organ, Vespers, Talent
 - Its People – Caring, Friendly, Accepting, Hard Working
 - Building – History, Beautiful sanctuary, Windows

Shared Thoughts from Congregational Conversation
May 10, 2025

SMILES

- * Relaxed Atmosphere +
- * Warmth of People
- * Beauty +
- * Liturgical Arts
- * Family Atmosphere – Caring
- * Organ
- * Musical Talent
- * Stained Glass Windows
- * Tony

VALUES

- * Openness
- * Connections
- * Workers/Volunteers
- * Music + +
- * Prayer Time
- * Prayer candles
- * Friendship +
- * “Beauty that open floodgates to the Holy”
- * Greeting and Interacting with the homeless – Treating everyone with dignity & respect
- * Mission outreach

CHALLENGES

- *Finances +
- * Shared knowledge of financial situation
- * Aging population +
- * Building Maintenance
- * Building Utilization +
- * Behavior of Homeless – Personal Safety +
- * Lack of Diversity (Singles, Young Married, Youth, Racial)
- * Activity in International Mission
- * Increasing connections between members
- * Parking
- * Transportation
- * No men’s groups

**Shared Thoughts from Congregational Conversation
May 10, 2025**

ASSETS to SHARE

- *Sarah Corson Center – Work with parents/families, explore their needs ++
- * Music – Attendance at Vespers ++
- * Unused / Underutilized space
- * Unique talents / gifts of our members – Renew interest survey ++
- * AA and NA group members – Increase contact, invite to participate in projects (Community Service?)
- +
- * Commitment to food ministry
- * Children’s Museum
- * Women’s group
- “GOD” – Utilize community prayer
- *Educators in membership
- * Oregon Financial – Share info about ways to give to reduce taxes

CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION 1

June 15, 2025 – Bob Frey

LOOKING IN THE WINDOW

What makes us come here?

- Choir
- Friends/inviting others
- Acceptance
- Heritage
- Presbyterian
- Tradition

- Comfort
- Theology
- Sanctuary
- Calling
- Feeling needed
- Downtown – heart of town
- Preaching
- Mission

What things did we have before Murray that are worth carrying on?

- Multiple services
- Mission
- ** Preschool
- **Sunday School
- **Young adult and other fellowships
- Dinner groups
- **Couples club /singles
- ** Potlucks
- Fellowship groups
- **Men’s group
- **Golf / Hiking
- Nurture relationships
- **Open Bible studies
- **Talent Show
- **Soup and Sound

What makes us special / unique?

- People
- Music
- Childcare center
- Pastoral sermon series
- Feeding hungry
- Community gathering
- Community use (NA, AA)
- Emergency shelter
- Fellowship groups
- Vespers
- Art / fine arts
- Choirs visiting
- Benefit concerts

CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION 2

June 22, 2025 – Dan Johnson

LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW

Who are some of the community partners you would like to see interviewed?

- Theater arts community

- SOU / RCC
- Government / Local
- Downtown schools
- Health and human services
- Police / Livability team
- Genesis Apartments
- CASA
- Athletics
- Social justice

What do you see as the major issues facing our community?

- ** Family Support
- ** Child Care
- Behavioral health
- Personal interactions]
- Loneliness
- Housing – Available & affordable
- Health care
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Sense of community
- **Seniors

What are the major issues facing our church community?

- Inability to fill the pews
- Outreach to community
- Being a connectional church
- Opportunities to connect / serve
- Small interest groups
- Welcome wagon

Observations:

- We work in isolation – doubling effort/missing things
- We need upgrades to the building to keep it vital
- Pay attention to community needs

CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION 3

June 29, 2025 – Rev. Robin Garvin

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - Pastor Nominating Committee

Special Nominating Committee established by Session to determine PNC slate

Al Densmore – Transition representative

Tam Moore – Session representative

Paulette Avery – Nominating Committee representative

Characteristics desired for PNC members

- Active member
- Spiritually mature
- Team player
- Confidential
- Good listener
- Able to prioritize time (commitment)
- Email / text communication – ZOOM proficiency

To Nominate – Fill out / Return forms available in narthex

- May self-nominate
- Check with person before recommending
- May recommend more than one person
- Select nominating committee members cannot serve

Special Considerations:

- Congregational meeting will be called to convene PNC once Transition Report is approved by Session and Presbytery (COM)
- May want to have alternates available and involved in communication loop
- May have Transition Team members on PNC – up to 2 people
- PNC should reflect the diversity of congregation – age, gender. Length of attendance. etc.

CONGREGATION CAN

- PRAY
- Recommend and nominate

COMMUNITY PARTNER INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

Interviewer	Partner	Organization	Needs/Concerns	Networking Opportunities	Items of Note
Al Densmore	DeeAnn Everson	United Way	1.Care for families with children 2. Increased need for food supplies.	None defined	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Increasing isolation of seniors. 4. Need for trusted allies for undocumented people 		
Al Densmore	Erik Stark	2022 Providence Health Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder 2. Health Related Social Needs- Housing, Food insecurity, Transportation 3. Economic Security - Affordable childcare, Education, and Workforce development 4. Access to Care and Services - Chronic disease management and prevention, Oral health, and Virtual care 		
Jan Barrett	Celeste Woods	NW Seasonal Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency food 2. Clothing 3. Dental Care 4. Preventive medical care 5. Alcohol info 6. Legal advice 7. Childcare 8. Jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocacy 2. Door to door visitation in low-income neighborhoods 3. Office workers 4. Food and clothing distribution 5. Space for invitational events 6. Consultants 	
Jan Barrett	Kathy Keesee	Unete - Center for Farmworker Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing – hotel rooms, rental assist 2. Assist in signing up for Oregon Health Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Donations – food, etc. 2. English lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Serve Latino population since 1996 -Housed in United Methodist Church

			3. Medical, Dental and Mental Health appts. 4. Navigating asylum system		
Jan Barrett	Kathy Begley	St. Vincent DePaul	1. Housing – affordable 2. Food for those not able to go to food banks due to work, etc. 3. General service to unhoused individuals & families		- Operate family shelter w/ 38 beds - Outlet for social service requirements (ID, Drivers licenses, meds, etc.)
Jan Barrett		Asante Health Care Needs Assessment Review	1. Access to health care 2. Homelessness and housing instability 3. Mental Health – substance abuse 4. Affordable childcare & preschool	Themes – Needs 1. Social Connections and support 2. Resources to meet people’s needs 3. Diversity and Inclusion 4. Education and employment 5. Affordable housing 6. Safety	County Stats: -51.1% female -20.3% ages 65-84 -14.2% Hispanic -\$53,571 median income -27% severe housing burden (50% plus income spent on housing)
Al Densmore Dan Johnson	Bruce Van Zee, Trustee	Carpenter Foundation	1. Services for the homeless population 2. Children and family support 3. Health Care – loss of Medicaid coverage	Southern Oregon Success – Peter Buckley Rogue Retreat	
Al Densmore Dan Johnson	Tom Cole	Kids Unlimited – Charter School and Afterschool programs	1. Family support/parenting 2. Student over reliance on technology/ lack of emotional contact 3. Nutrition/food insecurity	1. Music and the arts 2. Food and cooking 3. Mentorships	1. Serve 1,500 meals @ day 2. 86% Hispanic 3. One of largest charter schools in state.

Al Densmore Kristy Denman	Bret Champion, Superintendent Marisa Poling, Asst. Dir. Family and Community	School District 549C	1.Children and Family Support – Special needs include medical/dental. haircuts 2.New teacher support	Become Elementary School Partner	
Al Densmore Dan Johnson	Patsy Smullin Bob Wise Kingsley Kelley	KOBI TV	Food ministry needs better coordination with other agencies	Oregon Community Foundation Rev. Les Ferguson – St. Mark’s Episcopal Church	
Al Densmore Kristy Denman	Kurt Hildebrand Amy Drake	Oregon Community Foundation	1.Chilcare – Especially for newborns 2.Housing 3.Behavioral Health 4.Small Business Startups (Hispanic community) 5.Commuity building 6.Family and children support t	1.SORED I – Microloans 2.SOESD – Rene Brandon 3.Southern Oregon Success - Peter Buckley 4.Hearth Program – Bethany Pres., Grants Pass	Eastwood Baptist Church closing?
Jan Barrett	Sharon Stepanie (Safe Families, Seniors) Brian (Youth)	Hearts With A Mission	1.At risk youth and families 2.Educational support 3.Family counseling 4.Senior services	1.Volunteer – meals, education, mentorship, clothing shed 2.Donations 3.Respite for families 4.Senior support – sit with, shop for, home chores, special activities	Non-denominational faith-based approach
Al Densmore Dan Johnson	Jamie Snider	Sarah Corson Center	1.Expansion needed for infants and toddlers 2.Opportunities for program grants 3.Family need for generational relationships, contacts and mentors	1.Readers and mentors from congregation 2.Establishment of a Family and Childcare roundtable forum to discuss needs – include Child and	-Center is at capacity -Area is significant “desert” for childcare providers particularly in infant & toddler age range -Center predominantly serves middle to upper income families.

			4. Respite time for families, that includes childcare and food	Family Therapist in the group	
Al Densmore Dan Johnson	Brenda Johnson – CEO, Maria Underwood – Chief Partnership Officer	La Clinica	1. Funding streams are drying up – Ex. Fed funds to Oregon Food Bank, SNAP, Free lunch, etc. 2. Resources are lacking in funding local recovery efforts = Compass House, Recovery Café 3. How to expand needed services in climate of increased need and declining resources 4. Fear in clients apply for services due to citizenship status	Host information sessions to gain understanding of current position and encourage creative networking toward problem solutions.	La Clinica has a host of services to meet client needs. The organization has continued to expand even in challenging times. Purchasing land for new site in west Medford. Very Mission driven organization.
Dan Johnson	Annie Jenkins	Downtown Medford Association - DMA	<u>Community Concerns</u> 1. Safety – Homeless issues create perceived insecurity 2. Downtown Blight 3. Lack of downtown vibrancy and welcome <u>Business Owners Concerns</u> 1. Issues of homeless population 2. Happy consumers and happy tenants 3. Sufficient and affordable rent	1. Host programs and events to bring people downtown 2. Coordinate planned events with downtown partners 3. Support the programs of downtown partners – share flyers, communications, etc. 4. Offer unused space to nonprofit organizations – ex. Rotary Blood Drive 5. Suggested exploring delivery of services to various areas in Medford vs.	DMA is involved in national downtown renewal/revitalization project. <u>Main Street America Project</u>

			<p><u>Property Owner Concerns</u></p> <p>1. Issues created by homeless population</p> <p>2. Property value</p> <p><u>Shared by all.</u></p> <p>1. Apparent disconnect between groups and government entities</p>	<p>centering services in one central area.</p>	
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