

Our Vision for Mission:

Our Conclusions are:

- First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn needs to continue to be faithful to the care, nurture and spiritual growth of it's congregation, but we also need to be more conscious of reaching out to the community and the world; *"to make disciples of all the nations, and to teach them"*.
- As we have come to understand our history and our mission as the church, we see an urgent need to transform, to be reborn.
- Change is inevitable. It will take a great deal of time and create possible conflict, but to fulfill each element of our mission statement, and to survive, we must change.

What is Needed:

- Understanding and support of the congregation and Presbytery.
- Spiritual support to guide us, comfort us, and make us aware and open to any and all opportunities the Lord provides.
- A pastor with leadership skills in the revitalization/redevelopment processes to guide us on our journey. (To be successful, we believe a full-time pastor will be required.)
- Full development of financial resources. (Approval for the sale of a portion of the church property would provide financing for the journey and for full-time leadership.
- The development of a plan to begin the transformation process. (How are we going to fulfill our mission as a church? What will we look like? We need everyone's input.)

We see a strong Presbyterian Church in Woodburn that takes care of the congregation and those in need around us. We need time and help to accomplish this. It will be a long process, but with God's help, and enthusiasm by us all, we can accomplish it.

Rationale

The impetus for this mission study began when the Session investigated the possibility of selling Church real estate. A committee appointed by Session researched options and contacted Presbytery about the requirements of selling Church real estate. The purpose was to insure the future financial stability of this congregation. The Presbytery responded by asking the Session how the sale of the property would contribute to the mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn. To answer that question the Session determined that a new mission study was necessary to consider the purpose of First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn. This mission study committee was appointed in July 2006.

When the mission study began, the majority of the committee members had preconceived notions as to both the objectives and purposes of the committee. Its members were focused on responding to Presbytery's question about the sale of church property. Our pastor at the time, Ryan Shrauner, channeled us into a mission study to determine our reason for existing in Woodburn at this time. (Why here, Why now, What for?)

Scott Lumsden, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA) was hired to facilitate our study. We first met with Scott in October of 2006. This meeting laid out the direction and purpose of the study, starting with a look at church history.

**MISSION STUDY
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WOODBURN**

**Historic and apostolic understanding of the Church through the scriptures and
the reformed tradition of the PCUSA:**

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

The great ends of the church are:

*the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
the maintenance of divine worship;
the preservation of the truth;
the promotion of social righteousness;
and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.*

Book of Order, G-1.0200 The Great Ends of the Church

Called to Risk and Trust:

The church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ.

Book of Order, G-3.0400 Called to Risk and Trust

Called to Openness:

*a. to a new openness to the presence of God in the Church and in the world, to more fundamental obedience, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;
b. to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity;
c. to a new openness to the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to insure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God's activity in the world;
d. to a new openness to God's continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world.*

Book of Order, G-3.0401 Called to Openness

Our Mission Statement:

The Mission of
First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn is...

To provide a warm, welcoming, Christian fellowship,
where all can worship and glorify God;

as we learn, grow, and are renewed and enriched in Christian faith;

and as we endeavor to minister to the needs of the congregation,
the community and the world.

We began with a review of the history of First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn and the surrounding community. Changes in each were thoroughly discussed.

We discovered that every ten years the membership of the Woodburn church has dropped by half.

- Many of our former members have left the community or died.
- Our young have grown and moved to other communities.
- We have had fewer and fewer people become members of our church.

We learned that it is normal for Churches to expand, reach a peak and then decline. In order "to make disciples of all nations" and stop the decline, there must be a change.

We considered the changing nature of churches throughout the United States and gained a new insight into the changing nature of religion in our community and in the state.

- The structure of service in many churches has changed while ours remains the same.
- Surveys have indicated that potential church members want a different form of worship and a variety of church programs.
- There are fewer people in Woodburn who are interested in mainline churches.

With knowledge of these historical changes, we gained a better understanding of our current condition. An adage to remember is: *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference."*

The review of this history led the mission study committee to the comprehension that First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn has reached a crossroad. The time is here when we must determine the future of our church.

To continue our study, we interviewed many members of the congregation individually for an understanding of their reason for remaining members. Three main points became clear while discussing the interviews.

- We were told that our primary mission is to provide a caring family atmosphere for the spiritual needs of our members, and newcomers, in a place where they can hear the word of God.
- The general feeling of the congregation is this has always been the purpose of this church and should continue to be the purpose in the future.
- We discovered no great sense of urgency or alarm on the part of members over our existing situation.

The committee, on numerous occasions has considered, *"the great ends of the church"* as presented in the Book of Order and the responsibility to *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"*. The committee was awakened to the realization that this is why we exist.

Currently we maintain the congregation, the building, and the grounds to achieve these objectives, but we recognize all too well that we lose sight of the ultimate goal, making disciples, in the minutia of daily living. *(Its difficult to remember the objective is to drain the swamp when you're up to your neck in alligators!)* When Session and the congregation are spending time worrying about finances we cannot focus on programs for our members or developing programs to meet needs in the community. The Session and the congregation must choose a direction. The committee has included some possible options in the conclusion of this report. If we decide which road to take, then the decision about the property should be obvious.

We realize that because of the nature and number of our membership, the mission to the community may be limited to making the church more open and available to agencies in the community, and perhaps to individual members of the community. We can become involved in those activities.

This Mission Study should provide Session and the Congregation a basis on which to make some realistic and practical decisions for the future of our Church.

MISSION REPORT

Congregational Image & Identity

In the Beginning

Our first endeavor as a Mission Study Committee was to find out who we (the congregations of First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn) were. We started back at the very beginnings of the Christian church, when the disciples were traveling around the Mediterranean spreading the Good News to small groups of people. Because these new churches were struggling to learn about their new faith and because they were persecuted by outsiders, they did not openly spread the Good News. When Christianity was finally accepted as a legitimate religion and churches began to grow in size they sent "missionaries" out to spread the Good News beyond the boundaries of the "civilized" world. In more recent times Christians have begun to recognize the needs of missionaries in our own backyard.

Local Roots

We then studied our own local roots, which can be summarized as follows.

- We started with the Cumberland Church at Belle Passi (1851) which moved to First and Harrison in Woodburn (1872) and later (1884) merged with another Presbyterian church already in Woodburn.
- In 1904 a new church (and manse) was built at Third and Garfield.
- In 1960 the Bethel Church, a small rural church east of town, closed and some of the members joined the Woodburn Church.
- In 1950 the Fairfield Church merged with the Gervais Church which merged with the Woodburn Church in 1970.
- The sanctuary portion of our present building was completed in 1964, with the wings surrounding the courtyard being completed one at a time as funds became available.

The Growth & Decline of the Church, 1964-2007

In the years between 1964 and 1982 the membership of the church grew.

- We had an active youth program with Sunday church school, summer bible school, and offered scholarships for students to go to summer church camps.
- We had an active Presbyterian Women's organization (PW) that held various fund raising events and did some major indoor and outdoor cleaning projects each year. Their activities included preparing for weekly coffee hours as well as preparing receptions for weddings, anniversaries, and funerals. PW was divided into "circles" which held monthly study sessions and provided flowers for the sanctuary.
- We hired a church secretary and janitor in the 1970's.
- In the 1970's there were two adult fellowship groups (The Mariners and The Pudding River Yacht Club).

- We had a youth minister for several years during the 1980's.
- Also during the 1980's, the Deacons were replaced by Parish Leaders. The members of the congregation were divided into parishes, each with its own leader.
- During the 1980's, a men's fellowship group called the Men's Lunch Bunch started meeting and still meets once a week for lunch.
- The choir was around 25 persons and took part in various community events with choirs from other churches.
- In the mid 1980's we hired an organist/choir director.
- In 1982 the average church attendance for the year was 200.

Since 1982 there has been a steady decline in attendance and membership.

- When the church secretary resigned in the 1990's, office volunteers replaced her.
- Adult education programs and church school continued until the late 1990's.
- The deacons were reinstated.
- PW and circles stopped meeting in 2001.
- A new church secretary was hired in 2005.
- Our membership now consists mostly of people who are retired.
- Church attendance in 2006 averaged 49 people.

Mission

Our congregation has contributed to many world wide mission projects as well as contributing to the General Mission Fund and One Great Hour of Sharing. We have also had some local mission projects. For example:

- During the 1970's St. Luke's School had a fire that caused considerable damage. We invited them to use our Sunday school rooms for several months until their classrooms were repaired.
- Also during this time, our pastor became aware of the number of hungry people in Woodburn and was the driving force that created the Aware Food Bank. Our church still donates food, money, and time to this organization which provides free food for the needy.
- For several summers we also sponsored free classes for those people who wanted to learn to can vegetables and fruits that could be gleaned from the various farms in the area.

Pastors and Presbytery

- From 1964 to early 2007 we have had six full time pastors whose leadership skills varied from taking care of all church business, both religious and corporate, to expecting the session to take care of corporate business while the pastor took care of religious needs.
- Through the years we have been regularly represented by session members at Presbytery meetings and several of our members have served on Presbytery committees.
- One of our pastors served as moderator of Presbytery.
- There have been times when we have not agreed with the decisions that Presbytery has made and have expressed our disagreement.

Financial

- Over the years we have rented space to Chemeketa Community College, Happy Face School (a private kindergarten), a Russian relief program, Head Start programs, a county program for educationally challenged young children, the Meals on Wheels program, and the Iglesia del Dios Bethel Church. All of this has helped to support us financially.
- From 1995 to 2002 the congregational giving averaged around \$100,000 per year.
- From 2003 to 2006 the average donations were \$60,000 (2003) to \$70,000 (2006).

- Our expenses during this time have exceeded our income by many thousands of dollars each year (\$29,000 in 2006 with a full time pastor).
- Fortunately, a deceased member left us a sizable monetary gift that has kept us solvent. However, this money will be used up within the next two or three years.

Community

“Percept”, a program that uses census information, gave the committee a better understanding of the Woodburn area. We studied the 2006 ministry areas profile information describing people and place, community issues, faces of diversity, and faith preferences.

Using a fifteen mile radius:

Population segments:

- 76% anglo, 18% hispanic, 6% other racial/ethnic groups.
- The largest of the 5 population groups in the study area is the “Middle American Family” (classic Middle America). It represents 53.3% of the households. Within the “Middle American Family” group we found the following.
 - a. The largest segment is “Working Urban Families” (income somewhat above average, education somewhat below average). They make up 16.3% of the households in this “Middle American Family” group.
 - b. One of the younger segments “Young Suburban Families” makes up 3.1% of the households in this group.
- The “Mature and Established” segment (high in number of adults in their 60s) is comparable to the “Young Suburban Families” segment in that it is 2.9% of the households in the study. This segment is included in the “Senior Life” population group (senior & mature adults in or near retirement).
- In the “Affluent Families” population group, the “Professional Affluent Families” segment (affluent city-dwellers, age 35-44) has almost as many households (0.8%) as there are households (0.9%) in the “Struggling Hispanic” segment (35 or younger with income / property values below national average). The “Struggling Hispanic” segment is part of the “Ethnic And Urban Diversity” population group.

Faith involvement:

- Most people are not involved with their faith.
- Faith involvement has decreased in the last ten years.
- Most people are not interested or have no religious preference.
- The most common faith involvement is non-denominational/independent.

Primary concerns:

- The basic primary concern is maintaining personal health.
- Most family problems are related to dealing with teen / child problems, followed by dealing with alcohol / drug abuse.
- Community problems include neighborhood crime and safety, and finding / providing good schools.
- Achieving long-term financial security rated highest in the hopes and dreams category, however achieving a fulfilling marriage, developing parenting skills and achieving educational objectives were all higher than the national average.
- Finally under spiritual / personal, dealing with stress and finding a companion were at the top with finding a good church right in the middle.

Zip Code 97071 area:

When the study area was narrowed down to just include the zip 97071 the results change a little bit from the wider area.

Population segments:

- While the 15 mile radius has 76% anglos and 18% hispanic, the area within just 97071 has a hispanic population of 51% and 45% anglo.
- The hispanic/latino ethnic group is the most rapidly growing.
- The majority of the population is the "Millenials" (5-24 years old) followed closely by the "Survivors" (25-45 years old).
- The family structure in this area is still somewhat traditional due to the above average presence of married persons and two-parent families.
- There is a low percentage of college graduates compared to the national averages.

Faith involvement:

The faith preferences are very similar to the larger radius area with a very low level of faith involvement.

Primary concerns:

This area is somewhat above average in the characteristics known to contribute to community problems such as:

- households below poverty line,
- adults without a high school diploma,
- households with a single mother,
- unusually high concerns about issues such as community problems, family problems, and/or basic necessities such as food, housing and jobs.

Observations & Lessons Learned

- We have limited resources. Without changes, we will not be able to operate with a full-time pastor for more than 2-3 years.
- We must be open to change in whatever forms change occurs. This may lead to conflict, which must then be resolved for the benefit of all involved.
- We must reach out and serve others in the Woodburn area as well as ourselves even though:
 - a. The community is less interested in faith involvement today than it was 20 years ago.
 - b. The people who would be interested in the presbyterian church today are different in many ways than those interested 20 years ago.
- We are responsible as a congregation to make the needed changes work. It can not be done by a pastor alone. We can not just leave it for someone else, or God, to do. We must walk hand in hand, and work side by side with God and our pastor to fulfill the mission of First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn.

Options to consider

We don't have a solution. We do know there must be changes to make First Presbyterian Church of Woodburn a thriving church and it will require expert leadership and guidance. Below are options which have been presented by various members of the congregation. Whether any are viable will require additional study and contact with all parties involved.

They are here for you to consider. If you have others, please contact a member of session.

- Change our expectation from having a full-time Pastor to having a part -time Pastor.
- Become involved with Meals on Wheels or the food bank.
- Sell a portion of the property. Put the funds into an account to be used to make repairs and hire a full time Pastor.
- Sell all the property and buy or rent a smaller church. Place excess funds into an account to be used for financial security.
- Sell all the property and combine with another church. The funds could allow for growth benefiting both congregations.

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