

The Current State of Things
(numbered/lettered only for convenience of reference, not to imply priority)

Section A: WHAT WE ARE DOING

1. **The First United Methodist Church of Eugene (FUMC) has a posture of openness that is very much a ministry of the church. Our concern is that this posture is no longer sustainable.** Tuesday-Thursday, our building is very open and accessible to the public, from approximately 9am until approximately 9pm. Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays, access is more limited, though those days we can be in varying states of openness. Sundays we are generally accessible to the public from 8am until 2pm (later when there are concerts or other special events.)
2. That posture of openness allows unhoused members of our community to warm up, cool down, escape smoky air conditions, or dry off. They are welcome to use our: restrooms; electrical outlets to charge electronic devices; drinking fountains; and lobby telephone. There are times when our library is also available to them. They are free to engage with our staff to ask about getting a lunch, getting assistance with meeting immediate needs, and/or access to services provided by our many community partners.
3. **This describes almost exactly the work of a day-shelter.**
4. Our posture of openness is a ministry consistent with the teachings of Jesus and our mission to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world; and is consistent with the values and mission of our church, as articulated at Joel's Cafe I and II.
5. All of our guests and neighbors are expected to abide by the rules of the building that are clearly posted in the lobby. When those rules are broken, staff try their best to take consistent, firm, and kind action. It has been increasingly necessary to ban certain individuals from our building for various lengths of time, given their persistent inability to follow the rules we have established for our space. When needed, our staff contacts Cahoots and the Eugene Police Department for support.
6. **FUMC is one of the few open and accessible facilities for the un-housed members of our downtown community.** Most other churches in the area are secured. The library does provide some respite for the un-housed members of our community, but in some

respects the library cannot be as forgiving and welcoming as we have chosen to be. The city is close to opening its own day-shelter, but that is not yet confirmed.

7. While we have always gotten many visits from our unhoused neighbors throughout the week, the numbers of those visits have dramatically increased over the past year. **Our current posture of openness is unsustainable.**

Section B: THE CHALLENGE

1. The increase in the number of visits from our unhoused neighbors has resulted in significant wear-and-tear on the building, wear-and-tear on our staff, and ultimately **today our building is not as safe as it needs to be.**
2. The length of wait-times for Cahoots services, and the severity of some transgressions, has resulted in **a remarkable increase in the frequency that the Eugene Police Department has officers in and around our building.**
3. Seven-days-a-week, our building has **an incredible number of children using our space**, including: girl scouts; boy scouts (now just called “scouts”); Rose Children’s Theatre; Oregon Children’s Choir; FUMC children and youth programs; the Eugene-Parent Coop Preschool; 4J students with disabilities life-skills experience; individual music lessons; and other programs. **The significant presence of children in our space every day comes with a special responsibility to ensure our space is safe.**
4. We currently lack the staff to adequately enforce the rules of the building, including the prohibition on backpacks/bags in the restrooms. We are increasingly finding our unhoused neighbors in spaces of the church where they do not have permission to be, including our kitchen. This has furthered the impression that our building is currently not as safe as it needs to be.
5. **Today we have no way to reasonably, selectively permit entry to the building.** The doors are either unlocked, or locked. If they are unlocked, there is no way for us to prevent a dangerous person, or a person who has been banned from the building, from entering the building. This then puts our staff in the position of having to “evict” the person - which can escalate the encounter in an unsafe way.

Section C: HOW WE ARE STAFFED TODAY

1. Church staff are usually (but not always) present at the church anytime the church is unlocked. The number of staff present at any particular day and time varies considerably. All staff, but especially Bene, Ernesto, Colin, Toni, Jan, Jessie and Adam, regularly engage with our un-housed neighbors throughout the week.
2. Our staff alignment today is different from years past. When both Bene and Thomas were on our team they accounted for a combined 70 hours (or more) of staff time for our building every week. When Thomas moved to Australia, we made the decision to reduce the number of staff hours dedicated to our building. Today, our building operations staff includes Bene (full time), Ernesto (part time), and Colin (part time), totaling approximately 60 hours of staff time per week, for our building. This team is supervised by Toni (full time).
3. Fewer staff hours for the building has had consequences for the safety of our space, given our current posture of openness. For example, it is increasingly difficult to monitor individuals who enter our building, and may move into areas where they do not have permission to be.
4. Fewer staff hours has reduced our ability to care for the exterior of our building, where we are experiencing a significant increase in over-night camping. This reflects a lack of safe camping spaces in the downtown neighborhood.
5. A reminder that our service as the youth site for the Egan Hypothermia network is made possible largely by Egan volunteers and St. Vincent DePaul staff. FUMC staff and volunteers could not sustain our service as a youth hypothermia shelter.