



# 2019 Mission Study Report

## United Presbyterian Church at Whitinsville, MA



# Our Purpose

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The Mission Study Committee for the United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville was elected by Session in late August of 2018. The committee consisted of 7 members with the Reverend Susan DeHoff as our interim pastor. The committee members are Harriet Platt, Noah Redden, Leslie Reichert, Judy Salzberg, Matthew Stone and Mark Widner, with Gaye Shannon serving as the chair.

We began meeting in September of 2018 on Tuesday evenings and continued into May of 2019. At each meeting, we opened in prayer and reflected on devotional readings and closed in prayer.

We held a Congregational Forum to kick off the study in late September. Our church had begun utilizing forum to notify the congregation of happenings in our church and give them opportunities to express concerns and joys. This forum was designed specifically to explain to the congregation what the Mission Study is, how we were to gather input from the congregation, and to give them a chance to ask questions. We also asked that the congregation keep the committee and study in prayer.

Additionally, we encouraged our congregation to consider joining one or more of our Bible studies. Our Sunday morning adult/high school class had just started studying Ephesians, our Saturday morning bible study was beginning the Book of Genesis, and Pastor Susan was leading two groups on Wednesday afternoons—one studying the book of Mark and one studying the book of John. We also have a sermon discussion group on Wednesday evenings, a men's prayer group on Friday mornings and the monthly meetings of our women's mission group.

In December, the Worship Committee sponsored a weekend of fasting and prayer. Our Mission Study was one of the focus topics of prayer for the weekend. All throughout the process we asked the congregation to keep the study in prayer. The Worship Committee held another time of fasting during Lent and again, our Mission Study was one of the focus topics.

As committee chair, I want to express my deepest thanks to the committee members for their hard work, support, prayer, and commitment to this committee and to our church. It has been a pleasure working with all of them and their input has been valued! God is going to do great things for our congregation. He has plans for us that we have not yet even dreamed about!

In His Name,

Gaye Shannon

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# Our Vision Statement

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We are a Christ centered, biblically based, spiritually growing church family.

God is calling us to devoted prayer, inspiring worship, personal witness, diverse small groups and vital Christian education.

We commit ourselves to the development of our church family and the use of our gifts.

We love the Lord and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to love each other and to reach out in Word and deed as disciples in the local and global community.

All to the Glory of God!



# Our History

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**The United Presbyterian Church at Whitinsville** was first organized in 1871, and then officially under the Boston Presbytery on December 30, 1874. After holding meetings and worship at various sites throughout the town, the church purchased the land at the corner of Cottage and Spring Streets in 1878. The first building was completed in 1882 and later enlarged in 1895. That original building was torn down in 1914 to construct a larger one that would accommodate the voice of the Rev. Dr. Huston (our pastor from 1893 to 1935). This new building at Cottage and Spring Streets (which remains our church home to this day) was dedicated in March of 1915. In 1959 the church purchased an adjacent building on Spring Street to use as classrooms (now offices), and in 1988 the church kitchen was completely renovated. A handicap ramp was installed at the Spring Street entrance in 1992.



At what some members consider the height of our ministry, United Presbyterian boasted a membership of around 300 worshippers. The back of the sanctuary was opened, as well as the balcony, to accommodate our many worshippers. We enjoyed four choirs, a large Sunday School and church stage productions.

While any congregation has no end of stories, achievements and legends to share, we pay particular interest to the last decade or so of our congregation's history.



In 2003, our church decided to host a “soup kitchen” to provide hot meals for our neighbors in need. Known as “Peace of Bread,” one person took advantage of our free meal that first night. We currently serve up to 150 guests each Wednesday night, with the assistance of other area churches and organizations who have joined in our ministry. Additional services added over the years include a food pantry and a used clothing room.

In 2017, God called us to step out in faith and apply to become a Temporary Emergency Shelter to provide a warm place for the homeless in our town. We, along with two other churches in the Valley, have worked together to establish the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter. Our trustees have worked diligently

to create incredible space in our church for both Peace of Bread and the Shelter to work efficiently.

Two years ago, a group came together to create Friends of Peace of Bread, with the purpose of raising money to offset the expenses our church incurs to house the above ministries. This



past year Friends of Peace of Bread worked with the local Rotary to host a very successful Wine and Chocolate Tasting. The monies raised were donated to the annual giving fund. Our church choir also performed Jesus Christ Superstar and the proceeds from the last four years were donated to our varied outreach programs such as Peace of Bread, Friends of Peace of Bread and the Emergency Shelter



Another step recently taken was to start a worship service on Wednesday nights to reach out to those coming to Peace of Bread, hoping they might find a comfortable place in which to worship God. Our Minister of Music donated his time to lead a contemporary service of music and prayer. After five years, we have decided to step back and pray about where God is leading us next.

We currently have 60 to 70 worshippers participating in our Sunday morning service and another 12 to 15 on Wednesday nights. We have four well-attended Bible studies throughout the week, and there are several active small groups, including our women's book club, an ac-



tive women's mission group known as Kaythern M. Huston Mission Circle, our Wednesday men's work group and our choir. A recent addition is our children's choir (started by a young couple from our church) that has brought us much joy.



# Our Mission Study Process

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(Including Bible Study Review)

We kicked off our congregational gatherings and small group discussions on November 4 immediately following our worship services when we shared a meal together and then shared our favorite memories. This proved to be a welcome event as members were randomly chosen to be put into small groups, and we learned so much from each other. We started by asking the small groups to discuss Deuteronomy 6:10-12 and reflect on not forgetting what God has done through this church, and what it means to their lives in our church. We then asked the groups to share their memories. Memories such as: children being baptized, Sunday school, mission trips, fellowship, praying for family and friends with cancer and other illnesses, to choir, camping trips, Bible studies, Peace of Bread and the emergency shelter and more abounded from all six groups.

Our second congregational gathering was on December 9, 2018. After worship and after sharing homemade soups and fellowshiping together, we divided into small groups to study Scripture and look at the gifts from God, based on the Scriptures and then determine some of the gifts that have manifested in our church. Again, we randomly divided into small groups and realized that our congregation has truly accepted God's calling with our gifts. All five

groups discussed the following Scriptures: Romans 12:3-13, Ephesians 4: 1-7 and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4-13. After discussion, each small group listed all of the many different gifts that have manifested into our church. Everyone listed gifts of hospitality, prophecy, service, teaching, giving, encouragement, leadership, healing, and serving.

In late November, we also conducted a congregational survey. We encouraged each and every member and frequent attendee to participate in this survey.

When the deadline passed, we were disappointed in the number of surveys that came back, so we did a push in January for more surveys to be completed. The push allowed us to increase by almost half the amount of surveys completed (59). The results were shared with the congregation at our congregational gathering held on March 10.



The committee had several meetings in between the survey and congregational gatherings and decided in January that we would not try to have independent small group discussions. We were getting great participation in our after church luncheons (if you feed them they will come), and therefore, decided to continue having the gatherings.

As we discussed in our committee, the memories, the way our church uses its gifts, and the results of the survey, we realized that we had been living out much of our church's vision statement that was created in 2004 which is:

*We are a Christ centered, biblically based, spiritually growing church family. God is calling us to devoted prayer, inspiring worship, personal witness, diverse small groups, and vital Christian education. We commit ourselves to the development of our church family and the use of our gifts. We love the Lord and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to love each other and to reach out in Word and deed as disciples in the local and global community - all to the Glory of God.*

We have also strived to follow our New Beginnings commitment of living Upward in Worship, Outward in Service and Onward in Faith.

We decided that we would hold our next congregational gathering in February to focus on the second sentence of our Vision Statement: *God is calling us to devoted prayer, inspiring worship, personal witness, diverse small groups, and vital Christian education.*

At the gathering, we once again enjoyed lunch together, reflected on scripture from Philippians 4:6-7 on prayer, Isaiah 25:1 on inspiring worship, Mark 16:15 on personal witness, Galatians 3: 26-29 on diverse small groups and the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20 for Christian education. Again we did this in our randomly chosen small groups to discuss the vision statement using these prompts: How are we responding to God's call to devoted prayer, inspiring worship, personal witness, diverse small groups, and vital Christian education and then to answer the question of "what we are doing well" and "what we needed to improve on."

When the committee met again in late February, we felt that we were making great progress and were satisfied with our gatherings. We learned that our members really enjoyed the small group discussions and feel that we should recommend to Session that this format is a great way to get everyone talking.

As mentioned above, our final congregational gathering was held in March where we shared the results of the survey and then again divided into small groups to discuss the results by asking the groups to give us their "take away" from the survey results. This proved to be valuable to our committee in preparation of our goals.



So in late March, the committee started working on the goals and objectives gathered from our congregational gatherings and small group discussions to complete our Mission Study Report. We had several meetings focused on writing these goals, (not an easy process). We solicited advice and help from Jane Wilson, our Committee on Ministry liaison, who was invited to come to a meeting. We appreciated very much her input to our process.

Once the goals were done, we started compiling the other pieces of our report in late May/early June.

*\*The Mission Study Small Group Documentation is available in Appendix i*



# Summary of our Survey

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The Survey was conducted December 2018 - January 2019. A total of 59 paper surveys were collected and analyzed. The survey was divided into seven sections of mixed question types, including Likert scale, ranking, and open-ended questions. The results of the survey were first shared with the Mission Study Committee on February 26, 2019 and then with the broader congregation on March 10, 2019. The following is a summary of the most salient points gleaned from each section of the survey:

## CHURCH PARTICIPATION

The majority of survey respondents have been members of our congregation for 20 or more years. Most respondents live within a 15 minute drive to the church, attend church at least 2-3 times per month and consider religion very important in their lives. Respondents frequently pray and read the Bible, but fairly infrequently spend time seeking new members for the congregation.

A quarter of the respondents do not participate in any church committees or groups. Participation in the congregation over the last few years has remained the same or slightly increased for most respondents. For those for whom participation has increased, the majority indicated it is because they have accepted additional responsibilities. For those for whom participation has decreased, respondents indicated health problems, less time available, and a more negative attitude toward church as the reasons.

## TASKS OF THE CHURCH

Respondents were most satisfied with the congregations' emphasis on adult Christian education, engaging in acts of charity and providing fellowship opportunities. Correspondingly, respondents felt like the strongest tasks of the congregation are engaging in acts of charity and providing adult religious education. Respondents reported being least satisfied with the congregations' emphasis on children's Christian education, sharing the good news of the gospel, and encouraging member action on social, political and economic issues. Respondents indicated the task most in need of strengthening was helping members deepen their relationship with God. Written comments in this section indicated a desire to focus more on attracting families with young children and developing stronger programming in order to attract families and build membership.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents agreed most strongly that members help each other, there are equal opportunities for leadership, activities of committees are disseminated, and most major decisions are openly discussed. Respondents most strongly disagreed that our congregation has an effective member recruitment strategy, there is excitement about the future, there is adequate training for lay leadership and that disagreements among members are dealt with openly.

## CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY

Respondents feel our church is more influenced by history and tradition than contemporary ideas and that our church is very involved with the community. Our church is not considered one of the status churches in the area. Our church maintains an educational approach to social issues versus action-oriented and that our congregation emphasizes education and gradual growth in faith versus a born-again orientation. Finally, respondents indicated that our congregation gives fairly strong expression to denominational identity.

## SIZE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES

Respondents indicated overall satisfaction with the size and appeal of the sanctuary and the grounds, but there is dissatisfaction with the size and appeal of our educational and fellowship space. There were a number of comments related to parking. Parking is currently adequate, but without the spaces afforded by Unibank, parking would be a much larger challenge.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

Respondents indicated that Sunday mornings are by far the best times for adult education and fellowship. The least favorable times for education and fellowship were indicated to be weekday mornings, a weekend retreat, and weekday afternoons.

## TASKS OF THE PASTOR

Respondents indicated the most important priorities for the pastor should be leading sensitive worship, the spiritual development of members, visiting the sick, shut-in and bereaved and involving laity in planning. The lowest priorities for the pastor according to respondents were holding social justice issues before the congregation, regional and national denominational participation, visiting members at home, and supporting the world mission of the church.

*\*Documentation of the entire survey is available in Appendix iii*



# Our Goals & Objectives

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## GOAL 1

CALL A PASTOR who will support our shared vision and service.

### Objectives

- Hire a Pastor who will walk with us as we live out our Church Vision Statement, focusing on the second sentence, which is:  
*“God is calling us to devoted prayer, inspiring worship, personal witness, diverse small groups and vital Christian education.”*
- Work with our new Pastor to learn how to increase our efforts to reach out to our community, with the goal of bringing others into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

## GOAL 2

Continue to broaden and deepen our PRAYER LIFE

### Objectives

- Increase the number of prayer services for the overall congregation (Examples: Fasting, Healing, Commissioning services, as well as prayer times for and with the community.)
- Deepen our prayer lives by teaching different ways to pray.
- Provide daily prayer guides

## GOAL 3

Encounter God in our WORSHIP

### Objectives

- Increase the variety and quantity of music in our worship service. (Examples: Add musical choral responses, choral benedictions and more.)
- Maintain a blend in worship style by including contemporary, gospel and traditional elements in a way that glorifies God and feeds everyone. (Examples: Include contemporary songs and traditional hymns, dynamic preaching, have more fluidity in the content of the Sunday Service.)
- Share the love of God in our worship services with others in the community by inviting them, witnessing to them and fellowshiping with them.

## GOAL 4

Enable and Support PERSONAL WITNESS opportunities.

### Objectives

- With our new pastor's leading, explore how we can inspire our members to reach out to the community and invite others to join us in worship.
- Offer opportunities to share testimonies in worship. (Example: the "word on stars" (a word given for a year; then sharing your experience with the word)
- Grow members to be disciples in Christ, become more comfortable in sharing their faith testimony so they can reach out to others in the community and at their work place.

## GOAL 5

Provide community-building DIVERSE SMALL GROUPS

### Objectives

- Identify similar interests and create small groups that would attract members as well as the unchurched.
- Train small group leaders.
- Provide group leaders with encouragement and accountability.
- Develop opportunities for focused small groups where we could invite others. (Examples: Women's Retreats, Promise Keepers, Concerts, Youth Retreats, etc.)

## GOAL 6

Continue and expand VITAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Objectives

- Strengthen the attendance of members at our current Bible studies (children, youth & adult) and invite people from the outside to join us.
- Increase the options for new Bible studies by identifying , assessing ,and training more Bible study teachers.,
- Work with leaders to develop programs for youth & children from our church and the surrounding community..

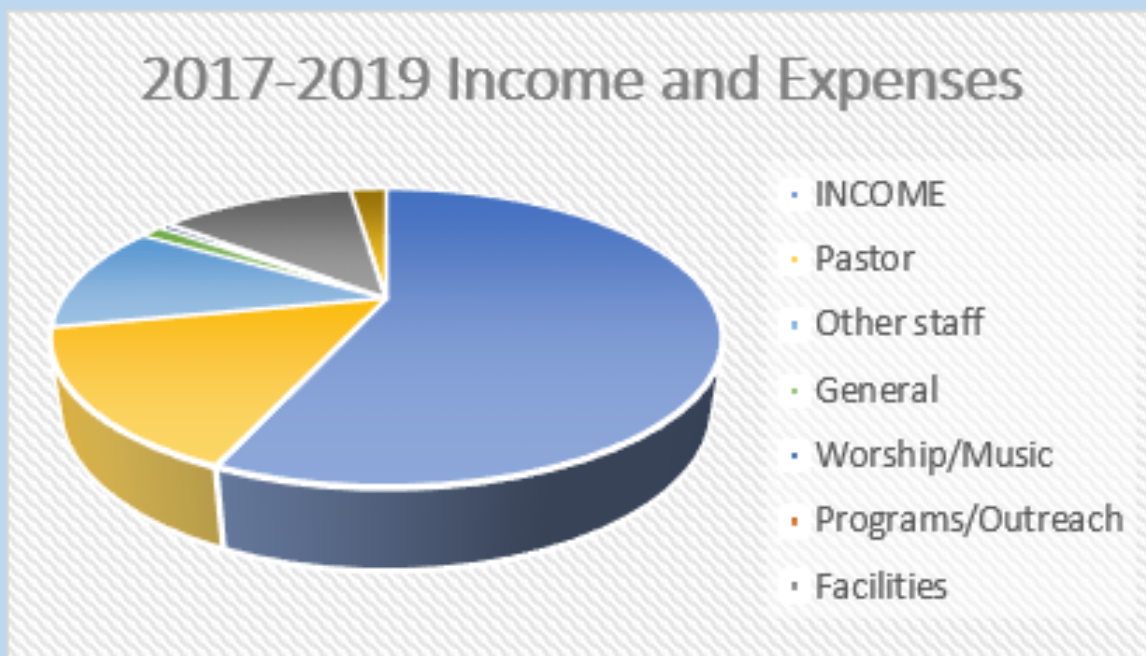
## GOAL 7

GET THE WORD OUT

### Objectives

- Market & promote Christian Education programs, church experiences, Bible studies, sermons, photos & services through social media and personal sharing.
- Share our experiences by using live streaming, Facebook Live, Instagram and other media.
- Consider hiring a person to help with engagement. (Part time position for someone with marketing and social media experience.)
- Engage community participation in our small groups by using social media and personal invitation.

# Our Financial Review



2017-2019	
INCOME	333294
EXPENSE	
Pastor	90308
Other staff	69712
General	8197
Worship/Music	3410
Programs/Outreach	1018
Facilities	70636
Treasurers Expense	13319
TOTAL EXPENSE	256600

Audited financials available upon request



# Our Results of the Congregational Gatherings

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We held four congregational gatherings and small group discussions, each following a Sunday worship service. We had great participation and our members really enjoyed not only the social aspect of our meetings but also working together to learn more about each other and our dreams for the church. We shared memories, dreams, gifts and preferences. Every gathering was a learning experience for all involved. Below are the details of each gathering. You will see the focus of the gathering and then the specific details of the work done in our small groups.

## Congregational Gathering - November 4, 2018 - Small Group Discussions

### FAVORITE MEMORIES

#### GROUP 1

- God showing his mercy & grace thru a cancer diagnosis
- How important the community of faith is to our lives
- Mission trips and Snow Camps and seeing our kids connect with God
- Having the church & Pastor surround me with love and care on loss of husband.
- Bible studies and being a Deacon
- Being best friends with Todd over Trustee work for many months while working on church manse
- Love, grace and mercy shown over a lifetime here at church

#### GROUP 2

- Waffle Ministry with adults & children at Sunday School
- Good fellowship
- Room full of people loving & learning about God
- Devoted volunteers
- Warm welcome (35 years ago); room filled with kids/people; invited to return.
- Friendly faces
- Kind souls
- Claire Lachapelle Bible class
- Kind people during grandson's illness, good support
- Youth club – Pastor Cook started it
- Former pastors – Hubert Reinholdt, Jerry Hazard, Lou Mitchell
- Many Bible studies
- Excellent elders/teachers brought me back to God
- This church is the “Acts” church

- Tapestries of Life Ministry – Mexico – 14 years to build orphanage
- Stephen Ministries

### GROUP 3

- Baptism of children - Ava baptized – Andrea joined - Ron baptized
- Mexico Mission trip reports – Mr. Spratt – availability to go on mission trip
- “Family” support
- Choir
- Sunrise Services
- Church camping experience
- Christmas services
- Second Sunday Socials
- Church Fair
- Wednesday Peace of Bread
- Sunday School
- Youth Group – Snow camp
- Stick to the Gospel
- Bible School
- Youth Club
- 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary

### GROUP 4

- Women’s Bible study
- Great friendship
- Spiritual growth
- Barb Mitchell with childcare
- Eileen Stanley
- Trip Adventures with kids - NYC, Boston, Albany
- Teaching Sunday School with Claire LaChapelle – taught games, rotation crafts, advent wreath
- Sue married here.
- Mission trip to Atlanta with the kids – great excitement, worshipping God
- Women’s Bible study – connected – Michelle Thompson
- Big memory: The Easter Play
- Pastor Eckelman, Pastor Hazzard, Pastor Mitchell, Pastor Reinholdt (suffered from cancer)
- 2003 Peace of Bread
- Renovations
- Bible studies

### GROUP 5

- Family events – my baptism, married here, children baptized, parents buried
- Morning of the fair, taking in all dedicated people, praying before opening, amazing. That God brings whole church together to pull this off every year is a blessing.
- Eight to ten years ago we renovated church office, was a joyful time.

- At night, someone knocked on church office door – a stranger who was in a bad way – looking to hurt himself. David went right outside to talk with him – that they were in the right place at the right time was God’s purpose revealed.
- Cancer last year – the prayers that church folk offered friends of the church helped them through.
- Wife and I joined church.
- Laurie & Claire going through health challenge and despite that they still gave themselves to the church, volunteering, was really inspiring and gave me the inspiration to really get involved.
- Being in the shelter for the first time and being nervous about what kind of people might come and a little concerned for our safety. Then a man came with his girlfriend on a snowy night and almost in tears, thanking us for being open because he was concerned for his girlfriend’s wellbeing. It was really an eye-opener and a reminder that we are doing God’s work.

## GROUP 6

- Casting Crowns concert-fun times with others outside the church.
- Getting to know other things about people.
- Saturday morning Bible study with Kevin’s class-going in depth in the Old Testament.
- Came here in 1975-like sermon, kids get to be a part of the service.
- Saturday morning classes, as well as Renn’s sermons-spoke clear, felt loved, brought in, a part of this church.
- Mission trip to Atlanta-light in the woods worship-light candles in woods with 100 people-everyone did their own thing connecting/ worshipping God in this way.
- Kevin’s class very impactful for everyone.
- The openness of people and friendliness of people is so much different than other churches.
- Wednesday worship service, a midweek pick-me-up, its moving, touching, good time to reflect.



## Congregational Gathering - December 9, 2018 - Small Group Discussions

### GOD'S GIFTS

#### *Instructions*

*Read the following three scriptures and then discuss these two questions:*

*Romans 12-3-13*

*Ephesians 4:7-1*

*I Corinthians 12:4-11*

*What are the gifts that are mentioned in the passages?*

*How are some or all of these gifts manifested in our church?*

#### GROUP 1

##### Gifts Mentioned:

Cheerful, mercy, giving, congregation, hospitality, prophecy, serving, teaching, encouragement, contributing, giving, leadership

##### How Manifested:

- Hospitality: welcoming concerns, very giving, many years with NAC (Northbridge Association of Churches) and POB (Peace of Bread.)
- Prophecy: visions from members – the children's choir, POB, Shelter
- Service: too many to tell
- Teaching: Pastors, Elders, Sunday School, Aging with Grace Bible Study, Youth Group
- Giving: thrift store, NAC (Northbridge Association of Churches), Christmas & Easter baskets and so on and so on

#### GROUP 2

##### Gifts Mentioned:

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, speaking in tongues/interpretation, prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing, leadership, mercy, zeal/love, hospitality, joy, patience,

##### How Manifested:

- We have a Pastor
- Encouraging/Contributing: Peace of Bread
- Teaching: Bible studies, small groups, Prime Time (After-school program for kids from ages 5—12), Children's Church
- Leadership: Worship leader, session
- Serving: Deacons, Care, Trustees Volunteers
- Hospitality: Greeters, Mission Study Luncheons
- Healing/Encouraging/Contributing: those who share kind words, volunteer and spread cheer

### **GROUP 3**

#### **Gifts Mentioned:**

Hospitality, Encouragement, prophesy, serving, teaching, giving, leading, mercy

#### **How Manifested:**

- Hospitality: Shelter, Second Sunday Social, Coffee Fellowship, Peace of Bread, Friendly to Newcomers
- Encouragement: Prayer requests, compliments
- Prophesy: Sharing of God's leading
- Serving: We are exceptional! Food, POB, (Peace of Bread), Shelter, Deacons
- Teaching: Bible studies-Chris, Kevin, Leslie; Children's sermon
- Giving: Choir, cooking, singing music, praying, setting up, committees, tithes

### **GROUP 4**

#### **Gifts Mentioned:**

Leaders, evangelists, encourages, givers, teachers, serving, generosity, comforts/shows mercy, hospitality, faithful in prayers, working together as parts of a whole.

#### **How Manifested:**

- Comforting/caring/mercy: concerns built into the service
- Use people's gifts as needs/ideas arise
- Church is like a stage, where we are willing to encourage members to use their gifts; being a vehicle to use those gifts
- Being a church "of" the community instead of one "in" the community
- Adapting to talents and making use of the current members
- Known in the community as being welcoming
- Diversity, our disagreements allow gifts to shine
- What happens if this church just disappeared? (Litmus test)

### **GROUP 5**

#### **Gifts Mentioned:**

Prophesying, serving, teaching encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy, grace, apostles, prophesy, evangelists, pastors, teachers, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracle powers, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues & interpreting.

#### **How Manifested:**

- Encouraging: prayer, support, personal contact
- Teaching: Sunday School, Bible studies, Prime Time; financial peace, old & new testament classes, senior Bible study;
- Giving: People to donate roof, POB
- Hospitality: Good at Hospitality when people come to us, not so good to people outside the doors of the church; Evangelists: Peace of Music, Danielle to Africa
- Healing: Prayer.

## Congregational Gathering February 10 summary of responses to Mission Statement

### *How are we responding to God's call to devoted prayer?*

**Group 1:** Prayer chain, Friday am men's group, Session monthly prayer mtg, all committee meetings open and close in prayer, focused prayer time during church service,

**Group 2:** Bible study, prayer chain, encouragement, shut ins, prayers of the people, weekly scoop, PoB Bible study, Session prayer meeting

**Group 3:** Session prayer once a month, corporate prayer Sunday and Wed, open with prayer at committee meetings, KMHMC (Kathryn M Huston Mission Circle), prayer time during meetings, prayer chain

**Group 4:** Utilizing prayer chain, prayers of joys and concerns during worship service, weekly scoop lists of prayers, reaching out to those on the prayer lists

**Group 5:** Session prayer meeting, email prayer chain, prayers/concerns in the Scoop and church, we spread the Word, Deacons urgent prayer requests, start and end committee meetings in prayer, we have a pattern of praying

**Group 6:** As a church we pray together during the services and meetings

### *What are we doing well?*

**Group 1:** Leadership praying through the church, meeting individual needs, communicate prayer needs by bulletin, newsletter, email, good follow up more of that is good, know outcomes,

**Group 2:** Lots of choices of times to pray with different times throughout the week

**Group 3:** Session prayer, joys and concerns, scoop, prayer chain

**Group 4:** Reaching out to those in need by offering rides, providing meals, cards, and gifts, etc.

**Group 5:** Outreaching to others and spreading the word/need to pray, do well with intercessory prayer

**Group 6:** We have done fasting and prayer programs, pray at the PoB, active prayer chain and elders pray for others and our church once a month.

### *How can we improve?*

**Group 1:** More after church prayers as a service maybe annually, involve the community by having concerts of prayer with common ideas concerning town, state or nation, meeting individual needs, teaching how to pray with lessons or in a small group,

**Group 2:** More as a congregation, congregational prayer service, retreat off site, learning different types/kinds of prayer, written down, drawing, painting.

**Group 3:** More corporate prayer time (meeting outside of the church), lessons on how to pray, encourage personal prayer

**Group 4:** Following up with those on the prayer list

**Group 5:** Improve and/or what shall we continue to do? Prayer means a lot to us, continue with the prayers of the people but get deeper, broaden our prayers, asking God for wisdom and guidance, walking in His will

**Group 6:** Make more opportunities for group prayer, maybe a designated prayer night

### *How are we responding to God's call to Inspiring worship?*

Group 1: Dynamic preaching, opening scripture, inspired sermons (minister from Roxbury), enthusiasm, \*two services,

Group 2: Peace of Music (all are welcome), Rev. Chase's inspiring sermons, children's worship, inspiring types of music

Group 3: People want to be here to worship, music is inspiring both contemporary and traditional, Chris, Joanne, Brandis and Jeff, choir, biblical preaching

Group 4: Incorporating both contemporary and traditional music in our service, various community outreach in our church, shelter, PoB and PoM, making sermons relatable to modern day living

Group 5: We are here. Is this question subjective?, is our worship a moving, life changing experience, and an encounter with God, what are we doing to make sure all of us are getting something out of worship, is it meeting the community needs?

Group 6: Left blank

### *What are we doing well?*

Group 1: Good music, variety of music, children's sermons, many people using their gifts, involving more people is good, determined focus on kids, Bible focus

Group 2: All of the above (Peace of Music (all are welcome), Rev. Chase's inspiring sermons, children's worship, inspiring types of music)

Group 3: Chris leading Sunday service, trying to inspire children's program

Group 4: Community outreach has branched into many areas

Group 5: We do music well but we need more, we focus on scripture, have shared leadership in worship

Group 6: Two services, music, children involved in the service, using lay people's gifts, and Bible based

### *How can we improve?*

Group 1: Keep introducing variety of new music, have more music in our church, choose more from requested songs, hear more organ music, variety of communions? i.e. making it more active participation, going up front? Have it less regimented, freedom to preach

Group 2: Connect better to the community, Jesus Christ Super Star concert helps, rotation of parsons, mix of worship leaders, energy to create, communicate better of what we are doing

Group 3: More dynamic preaching, children's program

Group 4: We need to find ways to bring local community into our church for services

Group 5: Slow down the calls to confession and corporate confession (maybe a training for worship leaders on this) encourage, love, share our love and get to know each other better, continue to focus on scripture but teach more on how to apply it to our everyday lives

Group 6: Less regimented, free flowing, preaching as the Spirit moves



## *How are we responding to God's call to personal witness?*

Group 1: Missed having the star words at the beginning of 2019 and the service that folks got to share their words and gifts, not just internal in our church, outside how are we doing? As a church?

Group 2: PoB, PoM (Peace of Music,) shelter, people know what we are doing, home communion

Group 3: Encourage people to share joys and concerns, encourage people to go to small groups and Christian education

Group 4: Introducing ourselves to visitors, offering one on one visits by deacons or pastor, home communion

Group 5: Church allows people to use their gifts in different areas, lay leaders, teaching, etc.

Group 6: Left blank

## *What are we doing well?*

Group 1: As a church: shelter, PoB, some NAC work, bringing in new town volunteers, Trustees are active and showing their love by creating new rooms and storage.

Personally: Hard to know? Do we invite others to church?

Group 2: Pray for others that don't necessarily believe

Group 3: Left blank

Group 4: Weekly and monthly home visits

Group 5: We are offering more Bible studies and attending more Bible studies and learning more about Christ

Group 6: Living out our faith thru involvement in the community, the fairs, yard sales, PoB, food pantry, concerts, active in the NAC

## *How can we improve?*

Group 1: More Facebook pictures, promotions, outside newsletters, get more comfortable in how to witness, need more folks inviting others to church. Need a ramp to office building

Group 2: Home communion, is it only Elders and Deacons that get to do this, allow others to do it, share testimonies, small groups to help others learn how to share testimonies, encourage folks outside of our church, more outreach.

Group 3: Left blank

Group 4: Asking visitors how they heard about us

Group 5: Work harder in getting people into small groups to learn and be more comfortable about preaching the gospel.

Group 6: Ask more folks to come to church, greet people visiting, personal Bible study so as to have an answer if someone asks you about God.

### *How are we responding to God's call to diverse small groups?*

**Group 1:** Bible studies, work groups, Wed evening sermon discussions, choir, session prayer meeting, second Sunday social, book club, KMHMC, Easter specials

**Group 2:** All of our studies, Prime Time, youth choir, and KMHMC

**Group 3:** We offer many small groups, Wed. night sermon discussion, trustees work group, men's prayer group, KMHMC, Saturday and Sunday Bible study, children's choir group, choir, Peace of Bread Bible study, Prime Time, and weekly Bible study

**Group 4:** Offering a variety of classes to suit all people

**Group 5:** We have several small groups

**Group 6:** Left blank

### *What are we doing well?*

**Group 1:** All of the above (Bible studies, work groups, Wed. evening sermon discussions, choir, session prayer meeting, second Sunday social, book club, KMHMC, Easter specials)

**Group 2:** All of the above (all of our studies, Prime Time, youth choir, and KMHMC)

**Group 3:** All of the above (we offer many small groups, Wed. night sermon discussion, trustees work group, men's prayer group, KMHMC, Saturday and Sunday Bible study, children's choir group, choir, Peace of Bread Bible study, Prime Time, and weekly Bible study)

**Group 4:** Men's prayer group. Women's book club, Sat. and Wed. Bible study, adult/kids Sunday school, kid's choir

**Group 5:** Providing opportunities for people to serve and attend

**Group 6:** Men's Bible study on Friday, Sat. Bible study, Wed. afternoon study, PoB, Women's book club, KHHMC, adult Sunday school children's choir, men's hikers

### *How can we improve?*

**Group 1:** Add a runners group as a small group, do more musicals, add more churches to them, more dramatic in our worship services, personal meetings, home Bible studies, more social gatherings like paint night, someone like Danielle teaching art appreciation, more prayer groups, invite Blackstone Valley Chorus to do concert in our church

**Group 2:** How do we reach the community about what we do, interfaith small groups, like book club

**Group 3:** Discussion group for teens about what is going on in the world, game night

**Group 4:** Invite others to join

**Group 5:** Focus on discipleship programs more, find out what would bring people to participate in small groups.

**Group 6:** Add more opportunities and invite others to join small groups

### ***How are we responding to God's call to vital Christian education?***

**Group 1:** Sat .morning Bible study with Kevin, Sun. morning study with Austin, Jr. church, Wed. afternoon Pastor's study

**Group 2:** All our studies, Peace of Music, Prime Time, Children's sermon, Jr. church

**Group 3:** Very well for the adults, working on children's programs

**Group 4:** We offer varying age groups programs that are suited to their age

**Group 5:** Sat. AM Bible study, Sun. AM Bible study, Prime Time and Junior church

**Group 6:** Left blank

### ***What are we doing well?***

**Group 1:** All good groups, ongoing, good teachers, kids' opportunity, children's choir, and Prime Time!

**Group 2:** All of the above (all our studies, PoM, prime time, Children's sermon, Jr. church)

**Group 3:** Adult Christian education

**Group 4:** Keep people informed of the new programs

**Group 5:** Thought everything above we do well (Sat AM Bible study, Sun AM Bible study, Prime Time and Junior church)

**Group 6:** Sunday school and Bible studies throughout the week

### ***How can we improve?***

**Group 1:** More home based fellowship, home groups, Bible studies, young married groups, college age group, bus for concert nights, dine out on Friday nights, Laura Joyce leads empty nesters,

**Group 2:** Outreach, through NAC, Bulletin boards, website, have a speaker for all faiths, communicate what we do through social media, etc.

**Group 3:** Have more child care at different times for group Bible study, mom's group, teach creeds and catechism

**Group 4:** By offering others to join us

**Group 5:** Teach discipleship and need more children for Sunday school

**Group 6:** Reach people where they are at, appeal to youth and younger folks by offering things they are interested in, concerts, sporting events, etc.

## Congregational Gathering - March 10, 2019 - Small Group Discussions

### COMMENTS AFTER VIEWING RESULTS OF CONGREGATIONAL STUDY

#### GROUP 1

- Surprised to consider that we probably need to think about refreshing the facilities for kids/education and fellowship – along with upgrading worship space.
- Peace of Bread/Shelter—Renovation of fellowship hall helpful, moving to support the outside factors/people, but a change from the “mostly educational spaces”.
- What are things we can do to uplift the available space for kids’ education.
- Not much recruiting going on: We’ve learned that people coming for meals and shelter, do not come to become members and are not. Can we do more by inviting others: neighbors, friends.
- Activities/game night for teens.
- Surprising that we were not doing more outreach.
- Make space easier to change space is here; just needs effort & motivation; class space can be found and segmented.
- Membership is everyone’s responsibility we all share in blame and praise equip others for that mission many of same comments over the years.
- More fellowship times for an invitation opportunity more kids activities to draw people in social events.
- Discussion groups about God but not a religious experience time/place to have a safe conversation about God, life issues could make a space for that.
- Creative use of “Catholic Charities” house.
- Rehab a place for someone in community.
- Church “plants” – how do they grow?

#### GROUP 2

- Children’s education program improvements.
- We should work to be better at handling disagreements; forgiveness should increase.
- We should work on more community outreach as opposed to community services that people come into our church for.

#### GROUP 3

- Recruitment needs to be emphasized.
- Need to attract families with children.
- Stronger outreach and purposeful evangelism.

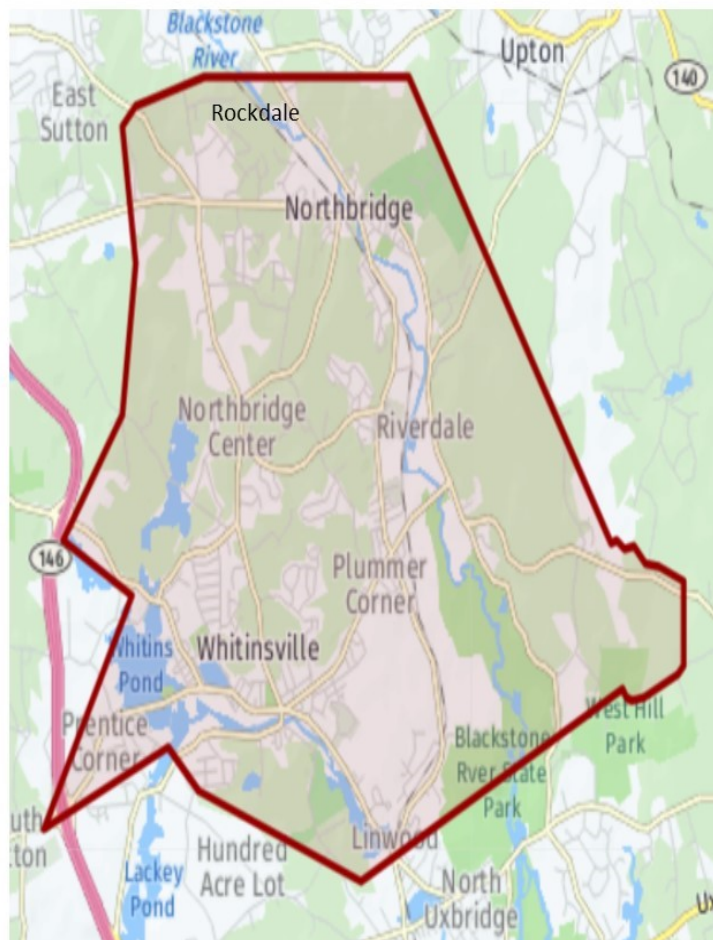


#### GROUP 4

- Strange to want more educational opportunities.
- We aren't inviting people.
- Peace of Music not really working.
- Do we really like ourselves as much as we think?
- Number of people doing major work; we can't add more programs.
- Look at what other churches are doing?
- What would you do differently to invite people?
- Tone of service
- Dynamic speaking or relational speaking
- Pastor expectations
- The experience in the Sanctuary is the most important thing.
- If we follow the survey, we will get what we have had.
- Survey the youth

# Community Demographics

Map Outlining Area Used for Demographic Study



Town of Northbridge is composed of several villages Linwood, Northbridge, Riverdale, Rockdale and Whitinsville

**Area Used for Demographic Study:** Northbridge is a growing suburban town made up of several villages, including Linwood, Northbridge, Riverdale, Rockdale and Whitinsville. It is located in the Blackstone River Valley of south-central Massachusetts. The area played a major role in early American industrial development, due to its natural resources and strategic location to Worcester and Providence.

This suburban community has a rich manufacturing heritage centered around the textile industry. Many of the textile mills along the river have now been converted into other businesses or residential living centers, with much of the original architecture retained throughout the town.

The area is demographically influenced by the large numbers of immigrants from the Netherlands, Canada and Armenia who were brought in to provide labor in the mills, and many of the single-family houses in the area were originally “shop homes” built by the mills for their workers to live in. Whitinsville and the Whitin family’s industrial operations continued to dominate Northbridge in the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915). By the beginning of the 20th century, Northbridge was a thoroughly industrial town with parts of it densely populated, where 78% of the men were employed in the factories.

The Whitin family’s factories continued to prosper until a depression hit the textile industry in 1923. This economic downturn forced the closure of cotton mills throughout the region, including the Whitinsville Cotton Company, the Linwood Cotton Company, and mills in Rockdale and Riverdale. The Whitin Machine Works put most of the buildings to use for some part of their continuing operation, and carried the business through to a brief spike in activity during World War II, when the company manufactured magnetos for American aircraft. In the 1960’s the Whitin family sold their business interests in Northbridge and today Northbridge is no longer a company town, but memories of that long era remain.

**Other Presbyterian Churches in the area:** In planning outreach to its community, a church does well to be aware of the other churches, especially its sister Presbyterians. The map below shows the location of other Presbyterian churches within an hour of our church.



The closest Presbyterian churches are:

- First Presbyterian Church – 125 Holden St, Worcester, MA 01606
- Clinton Presbyterian Church - 175 Chestnut St, Clinton, MA 01510
- Calvin Presbyterian Church - 126 Angell Rd, Cumberland, RI 02864

## ***Town of Northbridge Data & Demographics (As of July 1, 2018 Est.)***

### **POPULATION**

Total Population	17,089
Population in Households	16,779
Population in Families	13,981
Population in Group Qtrs.	310
Population Density <sup>1</sup>	990
Diversity Index <sup>2</sup>	19

1) Population Density = Total Population per square mile.

(2) The Diversity Index is a scale of 0 to 100 that represents the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. If an area's entire population belongs to one race AND one ethnic group, then the area has zero diversity. An area's diversity index increases to 100 when the population is evenly divided into two or more race/ethnic groups.

## HOUSEHOLDS

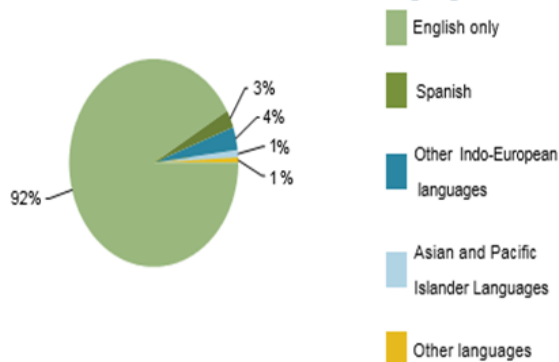
Total Households	6,384
Average Household Size	2.63
Family Households	4,415
Average Family Size	3

HOUSING	NORTHBRIDGE	US
Total Housing Units	6,646 (100%)	
Owner Occupied Housing Units	4,249 (63.9%)	64.2%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	2,242 (32.1%)	36.6%
Vacant Housing Units	262 (3.9%)	N/A
Median Home Value	\$333,798	\$226,700
Average Home Value	\$364,221	\$227,318
Average Monthly Owner Cost (mortgage)	\$1,138	\$1,707
Average Rent (housing)	\$835	\$954
Home Ownership Rate	61.3%	63.8%

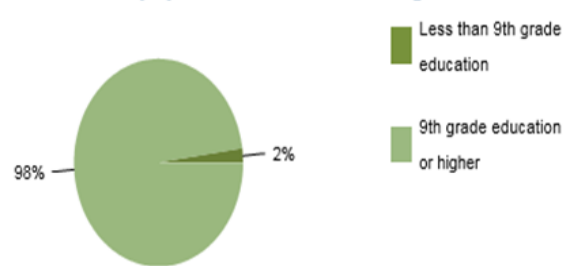
## INCOME

Median Household Income	\$77,621
Average Household Income	\$101,231
Per Capita Income	\$38,192

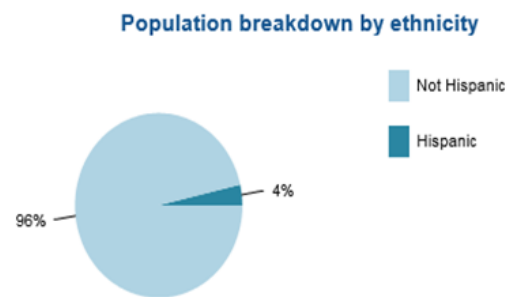
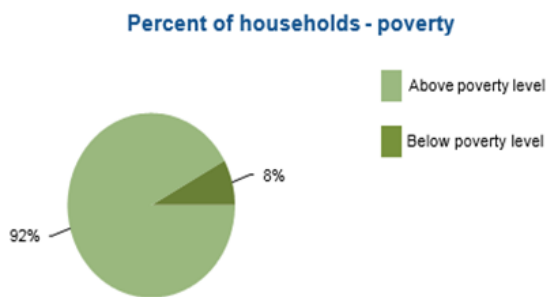
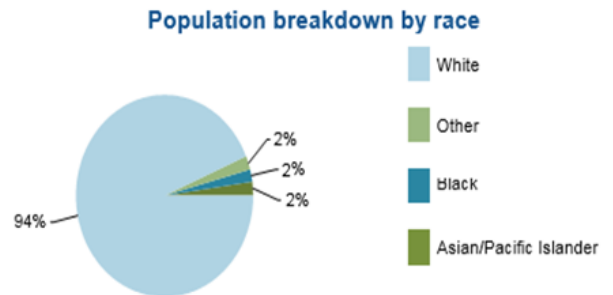
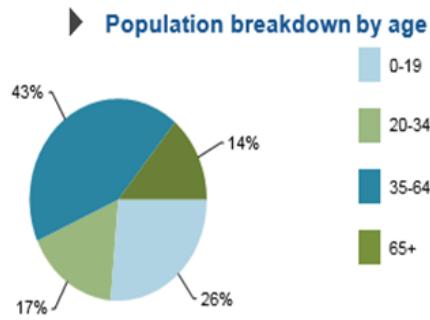
► Percent of households - Language



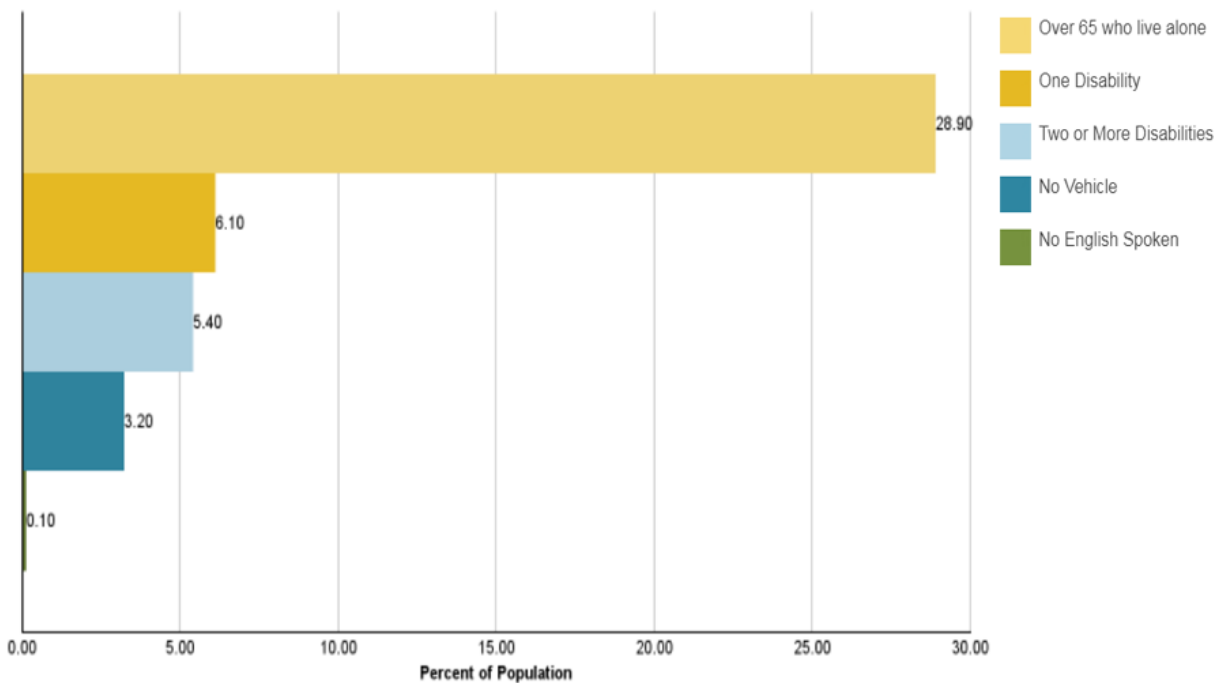
Percent of population - less than 9th grade education



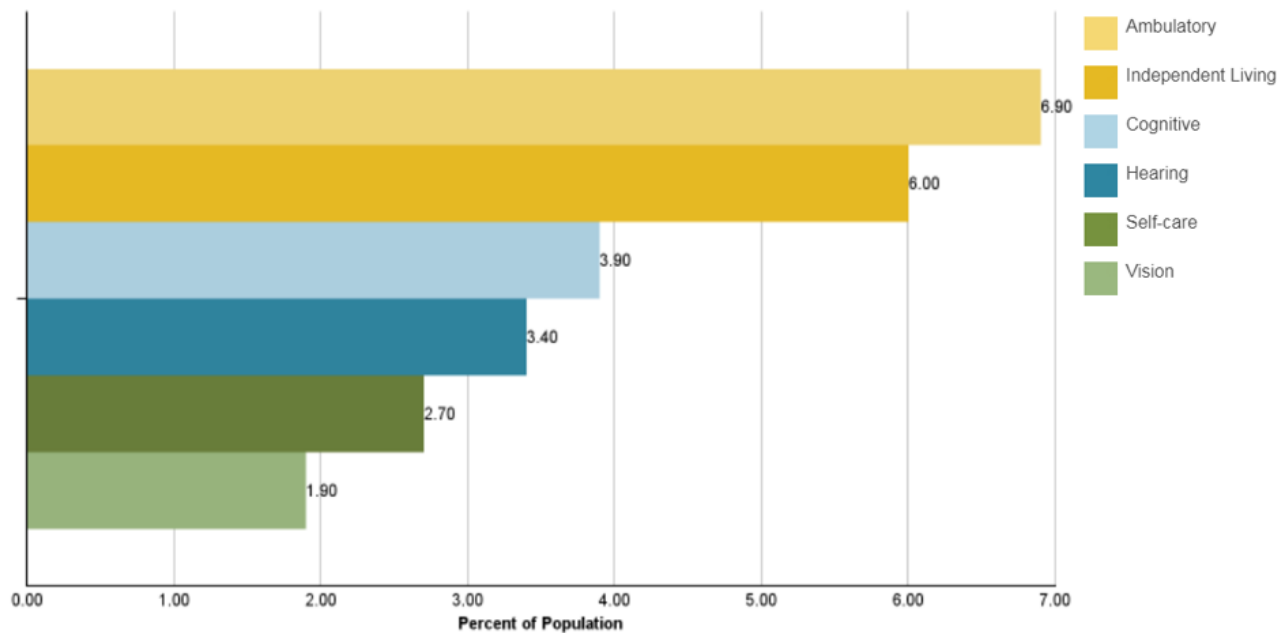




### Select Population Characteristics



## Percent of Population by Type of Disability



<b>%Inc/Dec</b>		<b>Proj.</b>		<b>Proj.</b>
<b>AGE TRENDS</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2013-2023</b>
Ages 0-4	6.2%	5.4%	5.0%	- 1.2%
Ages 5-17	18.8%	17.0%	15.0%	- 3.8%
Ages 18-24	8.8%	10.1%	10.0%	+1.2%
Ages 25-34	10.6%	11.3%	13.1%	+2.5%
Ages 35-54	29.6%	26.6%	23.4%	- 6.2%
Ages 55-64	12.4%	13.8%	14.9%	+ 2.5%
Ages 64 & over	13.6%	15.7%	18.6%	+ 5.0%

The age group that is expected to have the largest % of increase is 64 & over.

<b>SCHOOL-AGE</b>	<b>% to</b>	<b>Proj.</b>	<b>% to</b>		
<b>CHILDREN TRENDS</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Inc/Dec</b>
Early Elementary (ages 5-9)	655	36.9%	575	35.3%	-1.7%
Late Elementary (ages 10-14)	678	38.2%	630	38.6%	+0.4%
High School (ages 15-17)	441	24.9%	426	26.1%	+1.3%
Total (all school ages)	1,774	1,631			

Children are our future! Understand their specific population dynamics is critical. Overall the projected number of children in our area is decreasing; however, there are slight shifts in the percentage of age groups to the total.

<b>MARITAL STATUS TRENDS</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Inc/Dec</b>
Married	4,422	57.6%	4,689	57.6%	0%
Never Married	1,860	24.2%	1,971	24.2%	0%
Divorced	820	10.7%	876	10.8%	+1.1%
Widowed	328	4.3%	347	4.3%	0%
Separated	245	3.2%	256	3.1%	-1.1%

Overall, adults in our area are **more** likely to be married than the state average.

Divorce in our area is **higher** than the state average. Women are more likely to be divorced than men.

Women in our area are **less** likely to be single (never married) than men; women are **more** likely than men to be widowed.

**ADULT**

<b>EDUCATION ATTAINMENT</b>		<b>2013</b>	<b>Proj.2018</b>	<b>vs. State</b>
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	2.9%		3.0%	Higher
<b>Some High School</b>	7.7%		7.3%	Lower
<b>HS Diploma or GED</b>	32.6%		31.3%	Higher
<b>Some College</b>	<b>21.3%</b>		<b>22.1%</b>	Higher
<b>Associate Degree</b>	<b>10.0%</b>		<b>10.9%</b>	Higher
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	<b>17.5%</b>		<b>17.8%</b>	Lower
<b>Grad/Profess Degree</b>	<b>8.0%</b>		<b>7.6%</b>	Lower

<b>RELIGIOUS PRACTICES 2013 est.</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Pop.</b>	<b>vs. State</b>
Consider myself a spiritual person	4,188	59.1%	Higher
Conservative Evangelical Christian	2,084	29.4%	Lower
Enjoy Watching Religious TV Programs	1,409	19.9%	About average
Important to Attend Religious Services	1,369	19.3%	Lower
My Faith is Really Important to Me	908	12.8%	Lower

<b>CHARITABLE GIVING PRACTICES 2013 est.</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>vs. State</b>
<b>Charitable Contributions Last Year of \$200 or more:</b>			
Religious	847	23.7%	About average
Education	233	6.5%	Higher
Health	224	6.3%	Higher
Private Foundation	228	6.4%	Higher
Other	316	8.9%	Higher
Social Services/Welfare	181	5.1%	Lower
Public Television	14	0.4%	Lower
Political Organization	19	0.5%	Lower
Environmental	15	0.4%	Lower

This chart gives three perspectives of giving in our area: shows % of households that are likely to contribute \$200;  
Shows direction of giving; shows how area gives vs. the state.