

FOOD BANK,

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Any new site must also come with an ample parking lot. One side effect of the pandemic is that KCFB has streamlined the process of getting people food. Whereas clients were once brought into the church to “shop” for what they needed, food is now delivered to cars after clients make selections from a menu of offerings.

“That’s been one bright spot. Using the old methods, we might struggle to get through 25 people in the hour and a half that we’re open. Now we can do 35 in the same amount of time. It’s easier on volunteers and the clients prefer it,” Johnson said.

KCFB doesn’t plan to revert to the old methods when the pandemic is over, so any new spot will need to come with space to stack vehicles for service.

“We would love to find a place for free, but I’m expecting the food bank will need to contribute something,” Johnson said.

The economic upheavals brought on by the pandemic disrupted the food supply at the same time as it drove up need. KCFB could once rely on a certain amount of food to be funneled its way through Marion Polk Food Share and the Oregon Food Bank, and even order specific foods. That is no longer the case.

“We get shipments on Monday and Wednesday, find out what we won’t have and then go shopping,” Johnson said. It’s costing the food bank about \$1,000 per week to supplement the food deliveries.

A dollar isn’t going as far as it once did either. Prior to the pandemic, KCFB could turn a single dollar into three



Volunteers pack supplemental food boxes at the Keizer Community Food Bank, currently located at Faith Lutheran Church of River Road North, in 2020. Director Jim Johnson said the food bank needs a new home as Faith Lutheran has chosen to use the current space for other purposes. FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

pounds of food by ordering through MPFS and the OFB. Without that supply, KCFB is shopping right alongside the rest of us with a 10% discount from one local grocer.

Donations of food are still welcome at the numerous food barrels around the community, but financial donations can be directed toward the items the food bank is lacking.

The food bank has been an integral part of the Keizer community since its inception as the John Knox Community Food Bank at John Knox Presbyterian Church.

Since 1991, the mostly volunteer organization has grown to meet increased demand, made a major move to Faith Lutheran Church and became an inter-faith ministry joining the congregations of Faith Lutheran, John Knox, St. Edward Catholic, Keizer Christian and Keizer Clearlake United Methodist. It opens twice a week, Monday evening and Thursday morning.

On average, KCFB serves 25 to 35 clients each Monday and 55 each Thursday.

“Within that group we are still seeing three to five new people every time we open,” Johnson said.

The food boxes given out, which include personal care items, are not meant to be a family’s sole source of sustenance. The boxes are intended to supplement what a family can obtain through other safety net programs such as SNAP. During the pandemic, St. Edward Catholic Church has been a conduit for additional food boxes being provided through a federal emergency program, but the two are not connected.

Volunteers are most needed for shifts on Mondays to receive food shipments and serve clients during the evening opening.

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