

# Hendricks plans purchase of downtown church

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BELOIT — The former First United Methodist Church property in downtown Beloit is being acquired by Hendricks Commercial Properties.

Owner Diane Hendricks confirmed her organization had signed a contract to buy the property at 511 Public Ave., though the sale has not yet closed. The building is planned to be demolished, she said, and the property will be redeveloped.

"We all have special feelings for churches," Hendricks said, but she added the building needs to come down.

While plans are not finalized, Hendricks said the redevelopment likely will include a combination of parking along with a structure suitable for retail and office space.

As downtown Beloit has become a busier place with more business enterprises and dining and entertainment options, she observed, parking has grown tighter creating the need.

She added there are no plans for including any residential space at the former church site.

The 42,000-square-foot building was listed for sale for \$375,000, according to the real estate website [www.shorewest.com](http://www.shorewest.com). Mary Gilbank Peterson was listed as the broker associate for the listing.

According to the listing, approximately 9,000 vehicles pass by the church per day, according to the real estate listing.

The church, which can hold more than 300 people, was built in the 1960s. When the previous church was razed at the corner of Public Avenue and Pleasant Street, a new church was constructed. At the time there were about 1,400 members in the church, according to previous interviews with Pastor David Carlson.

In 2013, membership was listed at 450 and the downtown church was vacated in favor of a smaller and more affordable site. In the 2013 interview Carlson said the building had already been for sale for six years. In the interview he noted the late Ken Hendricks had expressed interest in buying the site



## Church for sale

Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News  
The former First United Methodist Church property at 511 Public Ave. is being acquired by Hendricks Commercial Properties. The building will be demolished and the property will be redeveloped.

and using it for other purposes before he passed away.

In the spring of 2013, church members learned it would take about \$1.5 million to make all the needed repairs or improvements on the downtown church, and they decided to move worship services to their Prairie Avenue location, also owned by the congregation, during the following summer.

On Aug. 4, after two months of worship services at the smaller church, the congregation voted 113 to 36 with one abstention to remain at the 2293 Prairie Ave. church.