



## Faithful Discernment for a Beloved Community

Beloved Bend Church,

Over the past few months, a Discernment Team has been meeting weekly on your behalf praying, studying scripture, listening deeply, and asking hard and holy questions about our shared future. We want you to know first and foremost: **this work is an honor**, and it is being done with great care, humility, and love for this church.

From those conversations, a clear challenge statement has emerged:

**Knowing that church attendance and finances have declined nationally and locally, Bend Church is struggling to adapt to a structure that sustains and supports the ministries we currently love, and the beloved community we are building.**

This is not a failure. It is a moment of truth—and of faith.

### Why This Moment Matters

Much of church life in the past could be sustained by what leadership experts call technical solutions: adjusting a budget line, changing a worship format, adding programs. But the world has changed. Culture has changed. Patterns of participation and support have changed.

**We cannot survive, or be faithful, by relying only on solutions designed for a different time.**

As leadership scholar Ronald Heifetz writes:

“The most common cause of failure in leadership is treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems... Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people’s priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties.”

This is where we are. And this is why we must do this work now. Not out of fear, we are thankfully ending 2025 in the black, but out of faithfulness. We do not have the luxury of waiting.

We do, however, have the gift of one another.

### Rooted in Prayer, Not Panic

The Apostle Paul’s prayer in Colossians speaks directly into this season:

“We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives... so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord... bearing fruit in every good work... strengthened with all power... so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks.” (Col. 1:9–14)

This is our prayer for you and we earnestly ask for your prayers for us.

Discernment is not fast. It requires patience, wisdom, endurance, and trust in the Spirit’s leading. The fruit we are seeking is not merely financial stability or organizational efficiency.

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**Good fruit is a spiritually alive community** connected to God and one another, fueled by prayer, courage, and love for our neighbors.

### **This Is Connectional Work**

As United Methodists, we believe in *connectionalism*: that we are not meant to discern, decide, or act alone. This work belongs to all of us. The Discernment Team cannot and should not carry it by itself. We need the prayers, voices, questions, and hopes of the whole congregation. That is why we are inviting you, *all of you*, to join us:

### **Church-Wide Potluck & Conversation on Sunday, January 18**

Following worship we will gather to share a meal, hear more about the discernment work underway, and engage in faithful conversation together. This is not a presentation with predetermined answers. It is an invitation into shared listening, prayerful reflection, and holy imagination.

### **Walking Forward Together**

We need you to pray for this process. We promise to pray for you. We trust that God is already at work among us calling us not backward into nostalgia, but forward into faithfulness.

This is adaptive work. It is sacred work. And it is work we must do **together** for the sake of the beloved community God is still calling into being.

With gratitude, hope, and deep trust in the Spirit,  
Rev. Jen Stuart on behalf of the Discernment Team

### ***Comments from the Council***

Dear Friends,

As many of you are aware, a Discernment Team has been formed to listen prayerfully for where God is leading our congregation, so that we can continue to faithfully and sustainably fulfill our purpose. The process is being led by Rev. Jackie Ryan and myself. The Team includes: Larry Herrmann, Michelle Adams, Erin and Samuel Henderson, Terry Leggett, Dory King, Wes Wilson, Pam Davee, Rev. Dave Beckett, Rev. Jen Stuart, and Beth Brandstetter.

One important thing we want the congregation to understand—beyond our financial trials—is the kind of challenge we are facing. Some challenges are **technical**: they have clear solutions, experts know how to fix them, and once addressed, the problem is resolved. For example, replacing a roof, updating a sound system, or adjusting budget line items are technical challenges. They are important—but they are not our core issue.

What we are facing now is primarily an **adaptive challenge**. Adaptive challenges do not have quick fixes. They require us to learn, change behaviors, rethink assumptions, and sometimes let go of traditions that once worked well but no longer fit our current context. The culture in which we live is changing rapidly, and we must find new ways to meet our community's spiritual needs. The serious financial challenges we have faced over the past few years have made it clear that adaptive change is necessary.

For example, financial strain is not solved solely through fundraising, and declining attendance is not solved simply by better marketing. These are symptoms of deeper adaptive challenges: how people connect spiritually today, how communities regrouped after the pandemic, and how a church lives out its mission in a changing cultural landscape. Adaptive change asks not just, "What should we do?" but, "Who do we need to become?"

Because adaptive work involves hearts, habits, and shared identity, it takes time, patience, and trust in the Holy Spirit. It also requires listening—to one another, to our community, and to God’s ongoing call.

The Discernment Team is committed to this work with care, honesty, and hope. We will continue to keep the congregation informed as we listen, learn, and discern together.

Please hold this process, this team, and our church in prayer.

Grace and peace,  
 Kristin González - Bend Church Council Chair



Kristin González  
 Chairperson

## An Estimation of Deferred Maintenance Costs by Mark Gonzalez, Trustee

Bend Church is housed in a menagerie of parts of different ages, different architecture, and different construction materials. The oldest part of the church is the sanctuary, which is more than 100 years old. Poor drainage around the foundation is one of the biggest concerns. But even newer parts of the church have significant repair costs, such as replacement of defective windows.

This beloved structure is a source of comfort and pride. It is also a financial albatross as deferred maintenance costs have accumulated and will require greater attention if the building is going to continue to serve our needs.

Recently the trustees solicited the help of local contractor and church member, Tom Malace, to gather estimates on the deferred maintenance costs for our church property. A summary of the main expenses is provided in Table 1. These are crude estimates as true costs may not be known until walls are opened up and the foundation and support structures are exposed.

**Table 1. Coarse Estimates of Maintenance and Repair Costs for Bend Church**

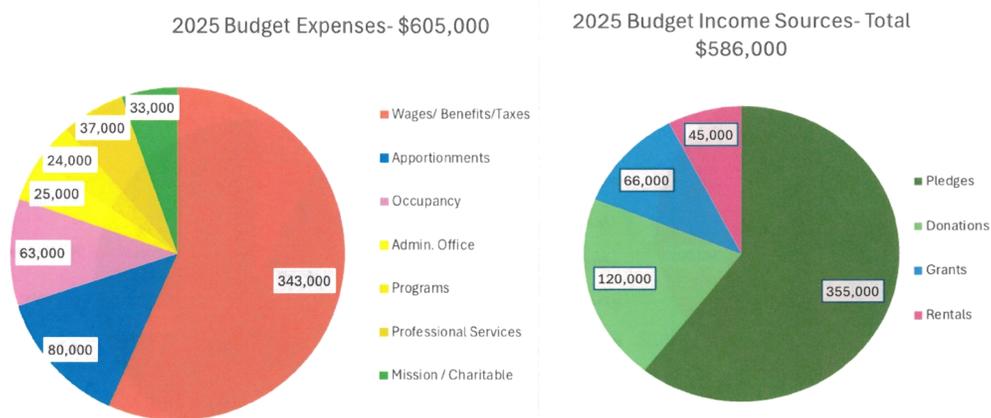
Description	Price Estimate	Priority
Installation of new downspouts off gymnasium	\$10,000	High
Exterior grading along Kansas Street	\$25,000	High
Inspect sump pump/repair drainpipes	\$3500	High
Inspection of foundation and sources of water intrusion	\$2500	High
Repair and repaint ceiling and walls of entire sanctuary -Repair and repaint just the damaged parts of sanctuary	\$30,000 (\$12,000)	Moderate (High)
Replacement of hot water heater	\$8,500	Moderate
Installation of chimney cap	\$2,500	Moderate
Repair of HVAC cooling equipment	\$20,000	Moderate
Replacement of defective windows	\$60,000	Moderate
Belltower demolition and reconstruction -Architectural plans -Guano/mold pretreatment remediation	\$65,000 \$7500 \$1000	Moderate
Repair of IEFS exterior siding	\$25,000	Low
Replacement of aging furnace	\$40,000	Low
Repair of foundation	?	?
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,500</b>	

## Recap of Income and Expenses for 2025

The Finance Team on Church Council is diligently working on a budget for the 2026 fiscal year. I thought many of you would be interested in understanding the income sources and expenses we face. It will look very similar to that of 2025, which I have included below.

- Over half of our church budget (57%) goes to wages, benefits, and payroll taxes, reflecting the cost of staffing our ministries.
- Apportionments account for 13% of the budget, supporting the wider work of the United Methodist Church. It will decrease by about \$20,000 in 2026.
- Building occupancy was budgeted at 10%, (\$63,000) but actual costs are closer to \$70,000 due to unexpected repairs, and this does not include at least \$300,000 in known deferred maintenance. Nationally, churches typically spend 20–30% of their budgets on facilities, compared to our current level, of 10%. Currently, we simply do not have the resources to address our deferred maintenance needs.
- Administrative, professional services, and programs together make up about 15% of the budget.
- Finally, while national averages show churches devote 10–15% to mission and charitable giving, our current spending in this area is 5%, highlighting a gap between our aspirations and our financial reality.

Grace and peace,  
 Kristin González  
 Bend Church Council Chair



### ***A Message from Music Ministries***

Dear Church Family,

I need to express my deep gratitude for the support, care and grace shown by so many of you during my health challenges. I have felt surrounded by prayer and love during this scary and frustrating time. Someone made reference to the "nurse angels in our congregation who surrounded me after my loss of consciousness during service. I remember opening my eyes, feeling confused, but aware that I was being cared for. That is a gift beyond compare.

I'm also grateful and honored to be leading the beautiful souls who grace our music ministries with their talent, integrity, and hard work.

I look forward to this coming season of Music and worship. I have great hope that as our dedicated musicians continue, more of will join us. I've spoken with several of you, and again extend the offer to help in any way possible to make it possible for you to join in. We can be very flexible.

Wishing you a blessed and joyous New Year.

Blessings of the season,  
 Karen Sipes  
 Director of Music and Arts



Karen Sipes

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

WOW! UWF had a wonderful year in 2025. We had a spring bazaar and raised money for 50 Feminine Hygiene Kits and for Reconciling Ministries. Under the expert organization skills of Bobbie Bourne we packed 50 kits for UMCOR and they are stored in our church for emergencies in the NW, such as fires. We had \$143 dollars left after buying the supplies and we voted to donate that to Open Door. We raised \$1,220.86 for Reconciling Ministries which serves the LBGT community.

This was followed by a collection for Kits for Kids. We work with the Presbyterian Church on this project. Our congregation was very generous in supporting the effort.

Circle of Friends provided coffee hour the first Sunday of every month for the congregation. Many of our members serve in the post office, the free store, and Compassionate Care.

We had a summer picnic planned for Chris Frey's lovely backyard, but held it in our wonderful Fellowship Hall due to rain.

Members attended the Conference Soul Caring Retreat in September and that was followed by our own Bend UMC Retreat at Suttle Lake. This creative and relaxing weekend was led by Pastor Jen Stuart.

The Holiday Bazaar, Bake Sale, and Grandma's Attic brought in record sales. All profits will be distributed to non-profits in Bend including our own Compassionate Care. We keep just enough seed money to start our crafts for next year.

The delightful Christmas Tea was our final Joy for the UWF year. Music, fancy tables, good tea sandwiches and cookies created a Merry Christmas occasion.

All year our circles met monthly for fellowship and compassionate care of one another. Inspiring programs led to our personal growth. Crafters met many Mondays preparing items for the Holiday Bazaar. We sincerely appreciate the support of our entire congregation. We also appreciate the space in the church to store our craft supplies, the Fellowship Hall for parties and work space and the rooms our circles meet in.

We welcome new members as we look ahead to serving and loving our neighbors in 2026.

Blessings,  
Melanie Cottam  
UWF President



United  
Women  
in Faith

## Health Ministry Team Information

After much prayer and thought, your Health Ministry Team has been disbanded. This has not been an easy decision, but it will be OK. This will be a transitional time. We have been brainstorming, to cover options for our activities. You saw one at coffee hour on 12/7. There were Christmas cards for our shut ins, for congregation members to sign. You can sign up to staff the door at a Blood Bank. You can visit our shut ins. Look for opportunities as they arise. I have been honored to serve you on this team, and as our former Parish Nurse. I will be around and you can always ask me questions.

Sandy Clausen



## Pat and Leslie are stepping down. . . New leadership opportunities in Open Door Ministries

Open Door Ministries is a heart-felt, faith-based program operated by volunteers at Bend Church to serve the most vulnerable members of our community. For the past three years or so, the two of us (Pat and Leslie) have volunteered as co-coordinators of Open Door. We have loved doing it—it's been a wonderful, rewarding experience—but we are running out of steam. We have decided to step down at the first of the year and make way for someone new to take the reins. We think Open Door is ready for new leadership by someone with fresh ideas and energy.

For those of you who are not familiar with the program, Open Door Ministries has three main components:

- The mailroom where approximately 300 people use our church address to get their letters and packages on Monday through Friday, 1-3 p.m. Guests also have access to water, snacks, canned food, and personal care items.
- The Clothing Closet which provides free clothing that has been donated, such as winter jackets, sweaters, shoes and boots.
- The financial aid ministry, Compassionate Care (Lisa Radford Compassionate Care Ministry) run by former pastor Thom Larson.

Wednesday is our biggest day, when everything is open including Compassionate Care, which provides financial aid such as \$20 gas cards to those in need. Currently Mosaic Medical and the Deschutes County Harm Reduction program also provide services on Wednesday, making the church a pretty busy place for a few hours.

Open Door Ministries is supported mainly by donations from our incredibly generous congregation. In addition, we have been grateful to receive three grants in the time we have been co-coordinators: two grants from the City of Bend totaling \$15,000 for sleeping bags and tents, and one grant of \$6,000 from United Way for rent assistance. Hopefully grant money will continue to be available in the future.

As co-coordinators, we have enjoyed working with our amazing team of volunteers, as well as the hundreds of people we serve who are so appreciative of our help. We have found it to be a deeply meaningful experience and would encourage everyone to consider volunteering with Open Door Ministries in some capacity, whether as coordinator, mailroom volunteer, or in the clothing closet. We always need substitutes too. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know.

Although we are stepping down as co-coordinators, both of us will continue to be involved in Open Door Ministries and will be available to train and support our new leadership.

In Christian love,  
Pat and Leslie, Co-coordinators



Listen with **Love**. Speak with **Grace**. Act for **Justice**.

### January 20, 2026 Zoom Workshop: “Listen with Love: A Deep Dive into Bias” Registration closes on Friday, Jan 16th

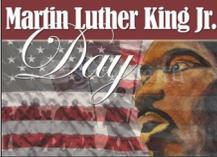
In this webinar, participants will learn how to recognize explicit (expressed) and implicit (unexpressed) biases and how they influence daily life, relationships, congregational life, how people relate to the Divine, and the way laity act for justice alongside targeted and vulnerable neighbors. Participants will come away with tools for practical application in their ministry context. They will also be equipped with shared language and understanding to engage in deeper exploration within the Act for Justice series planned for 2026

Registration info:

<https://www.umoi.org/newsdetail/listen-with-love-a-deep-dive-into-bias-zoom-workshop-19395997>

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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# JANUARY

				<p><b>1</b></p> <p>12:00pm - Yoga 7pm - 50/50 Bible Study via Zoom</p> <p><b>Office Closed for New Year's Day</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00 - Jazzercise 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise</p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>10am Worship Service</p> <p> 11:30 Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:30 - Guy Talk 12:00 - The Chosen</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>9:00 - Jazzercise 12pm: Lectionary Study 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail &amp; Free Store 4:30pm - Jazzercise 4:30am - Bells of Praise</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 11:30am All Staff Mtg 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>12pm - Jazzercise 1pm-3pm Open Door: Mail, Free Store, Harm Reduction Services &amp; Compassionate Care 4pm Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm - Choir</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise 7pm - 50/50 Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00 - Jazzercise 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise</p>
<p><b>11</b></p> <p>10am Worship Service</p> <p> 11:30 Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:30 - Guy Talk 12:00 - The Chosen</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>9:00 - Jazzercise 12pm: Lectionary Study 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail &amp; Free Store 4:30pm - Jazzercise 4:30am - Bells of Praise</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 11am Worship Team 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>10am Shalom Circle 12pm - Jazzercise 1pm-3pm Open Door: Mail, Free Store, Harm Reduction Services &amp; Compassionate Care 4pm Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm - Choir</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 10am Circle of Friends 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise 7pm - 50/50 Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00 - Jazzercise 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise</p>
<p><b>18</b></p> <p>10am Worship Service 11:30 - Guy Talk 12:00 - The Chosen</p> <p><b>Church-Wide Potluck and Conversation</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>9:00 - Jazzercise 12pm: Lectionary Study 4:30pm - Jazzercise 4:30am - Bells of Praise</p> <p><b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b></p> 	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise 5:30pm - Foundation</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>12pm - Jazzercise 1pm-3pm Open Door: Mail, Free Store, Harm Reduction Services &amp; Compassionate Care 4pm Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm - Choir</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise 7pm - 50/50 Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00 - Jazzercise 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise</p> <p><b>Outside Event 4pm—8pm Japanese American Society of Central Oregon</b></p> 
<p><b>25</b></p> <p>10am Worship Service</p> <p> 11:30 Coffee Hour</p> <p>11:30 - Guy Talk 12:00 - The Chosen</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>9:00 - Jazzercise 12pm: Lectionary Study 1pm Council Mtg 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail &amp; Free Store 4:30pm - Jazzercise 4:30am - Bells of Praise</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>10am UWF Board Mtg 12pm - Jazzercise 1pm-3pm Open Door: Mail, Free Store, Harm Reduction Services &amp; Compassionate Care 4pm Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm - Choir</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00pm - Yoga 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail 4:30pm - Jazzercise 7pm - 50/50 Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise 12:00 - Jazzercise 1:00pm - 3:00pm Open Door Mail</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>9:00am - Jazzercise</p>

**Please note:** Calendar items are church related. There are many more events occurring in the building that are not on this calendar. We are blessed to be a busy building seven days a week! **If you are not scheduled to meet at the church we ask that you respect those using our building by checking in at the office first as you enter the church.**

Thank you!

## The Chimes

680 NW Bond Street  
Bend, Oregon 97703  
[www.bendumc.org](http://www.bendumc.org)



*The Chimes* is a monthly newsletter published for the members and friends of Bend Church.  
Send correspondence and address changes to 680 NW Bond St., Bend, Oregon 97703; or email: [communications@bendumc.org](mailto:communications@bendumc.org)



## CHURCH STAFF

**Lead Pastor:** Rev. Jen Stuart  
**Certified Lay Minister:** Larry Herrmann

**Director of Operations:** Erin Buckley-Noonan  
**Bookkeeper:** Tyler Macdonald  
**Custodian:** Mari Vega

**Music Ministries:** Karen Sipes  
**Bells of Praise Director:** Shelley Giaier  
**Children & Family Ministries:** Brent Tyler

**Bishop of the Oregon-Idaho Conference:**  
Rev. Dr. Cedrick Bridgeforth  
Greater Northwest Area Website: [greaternw.org](http://greaternw.org)

**Cascadia District Superintendent:**  
Rev. Wendy Woodworth  
Oregon-Idaho Conference Website: [umoi.org](http://umoi.org)

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