

The Values That Will Carry This Decision

Before we choose what to do with the land, we name what we believe about how we choose. Our Welcome Statement, the things we’ve already shown up for, and the witness of our Methodist tradition together shape how we discern. *How we discern is itself a witness.*

A Church Who Welcomes

FUMC Bentonville welcomes all. Because we believe the Communion Table is God’s table, we invite everyone into our church family. This includes people of every race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ability, national origin, economic station, and political ideology. We come together in action and outreach, aspiring to follow Jesus’ example of radical hospitality, love, and grace as a transformative movement in our community.

A Track Record of Showing Up

- **Helping Hands.** Our church and members founded Helping Hands to address growing community needs.
- **Legacy Village.** Members of our church helped found NWASSI, which created Legacy Village, an independent and assisted senior housing in our area.
- **Second Street Pantry.** Our church houses the Pantry and provides its primary volunteers. In the first half of 2026, the number of households served increased by 13% and the number of members in those families 17% over those in 2025, showing that the need continues to grow.

What Our People Already Tell Us

Five years of Pastor Michelle’s *Four Questions* conversations point to a clear top pillar of our shared values: **care for the vulnerable**. Safe and reliable housing, neighbors able to meet basic needs are answers that come up, time and again. It is core to who we are.

Where Our Methodist Tradition Points Us

The 2024 United Methodist Social Principles affirm housing as a basic human right and frame it as a justice issue intertwined with health, aging, disability, and migration:

- **Basic rights.** Shelter named alongside food, education, and liberty.
- **Decent living conditions.** “Everyone has a right to … safe housing and a healthy environment.”
- **Elders, disability, refugees.** Calls for accessible elder housing, housing for people with disabilities, and concrete support for migrants and refugees.

Scripture That Steadies Us

- **The heart of our faith.** Love of God and love of neighbor is the lens through which we read every other text.
- **James 2:14-17.** “What good is it … if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? … Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”
- **1 John 4:18a.** “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.” We need to remember that while it is important to be prayerful, discerning, and careful, we cannot let fear serve as the deciding factor.
- **Parable of the Talents · Esther 4:14.** The land entrusted to us is, in effect, a five-talent gift; and we may be people called to faithfulness “for such a time as this.”

A question to carry in prayer · YIGBY or NIMBY?

A growing movement of churches asks whether they will be YIGBY (Yes in God’s Backyard) or NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) about using land for community benefit. Selling and developing are both faithful options but they communicate different values to different audiences. As Pastor Michelle prayed: “Let me dream your dreams and let me see your visions, so that I might do my part to stop the nightmares of many.” How might we help our neighbors turn nightmares into dreams come true?