

What Our Neighbors Are Facing Just Outside Our Doors

Bentonville is one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, and Northwest Arkansas is in an acute affordability crunch. Our church is already responding through the Second Street Pantry but those numbers tell us the pressure is rising. *Loving our neighbors begins with seeing them, and their needs, clearly.*

Our Neighborhood by the Numbers

~65,000	170,000+	50.4%	45%
Bentonville residents (54,819 in 2020)	New NWA homes needed by 2050	Bentonville homeownership rate (US: 65.6%)	Benton County housing + transportation burden

A Workforce Housing Crisis at Our Doorstep

- Homes are out of reach for working families.** Average home price in Benton County is \$471,427; a household needs ~\$100K to qualify for a \$300K mortgage. Area median family income is \$101,800; many working families are priced out of the average home.
- Housing plus transportation eats household budgets.** In Benton County, combined housing and transportation costs consume 45% of household income which is higher than Manhattan (36%), Austin (42%), or Nashville (43%). Sprawl continues to push workers far from jobs.
- Workforce housing is in short supply.** Teachers, nurses, first responders, and service workers increasingly cannot afford to live near where they work.
- Lack of a parsonage limits our church.** FUMC Bentonville is limited in Pastor placements to those who do not need housing or have supplemental income to afford the Benton County market.

Our Pantry Is Telling Us the Story

- Demand has doubled.** The Second Street Pantry, hosted in our building, served 47,000 individuals in 2024 — a 100%+ increase from the prior year, and rising with an average year on year increase exceeding 10%. 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.
- Food insecurity follows housing cost.** When 45% of a household’s income goes to housing and transportation, food becomes the budget line that gives. Our pantry is responding to the downstream effect of rising housing costs.
- We are already a 7-days-a-week community hub.** Master Gardeners, Benton County Literacy tutoring, Ozark Mission Project, Wee Friends Day Care, Beer & Hymns, Moms Demand Action, Gateway Alternative Learning – our neighbors find welcome in our building every day of the week.

A question to carry with you this week

Northwest Arkansas churches together hold over 7 square miles of undeveloped land. Whatever we choose to do with ours says something to our neighbors about who we believe this church is for. What do we want to say?

How can you take part?

Come to a Land Learning Lunch to learn about the work the church has done to date, to hear about the pressures facing our church and our community, and to reflect on our centering values. Join a small-group conversation to share your perspectives and hear the perspectives of others. Submit an online question, concern, or prayer.

Share what you hope, what you fear, and what you sense God is doing among us. Every voice helps shape what comes next.