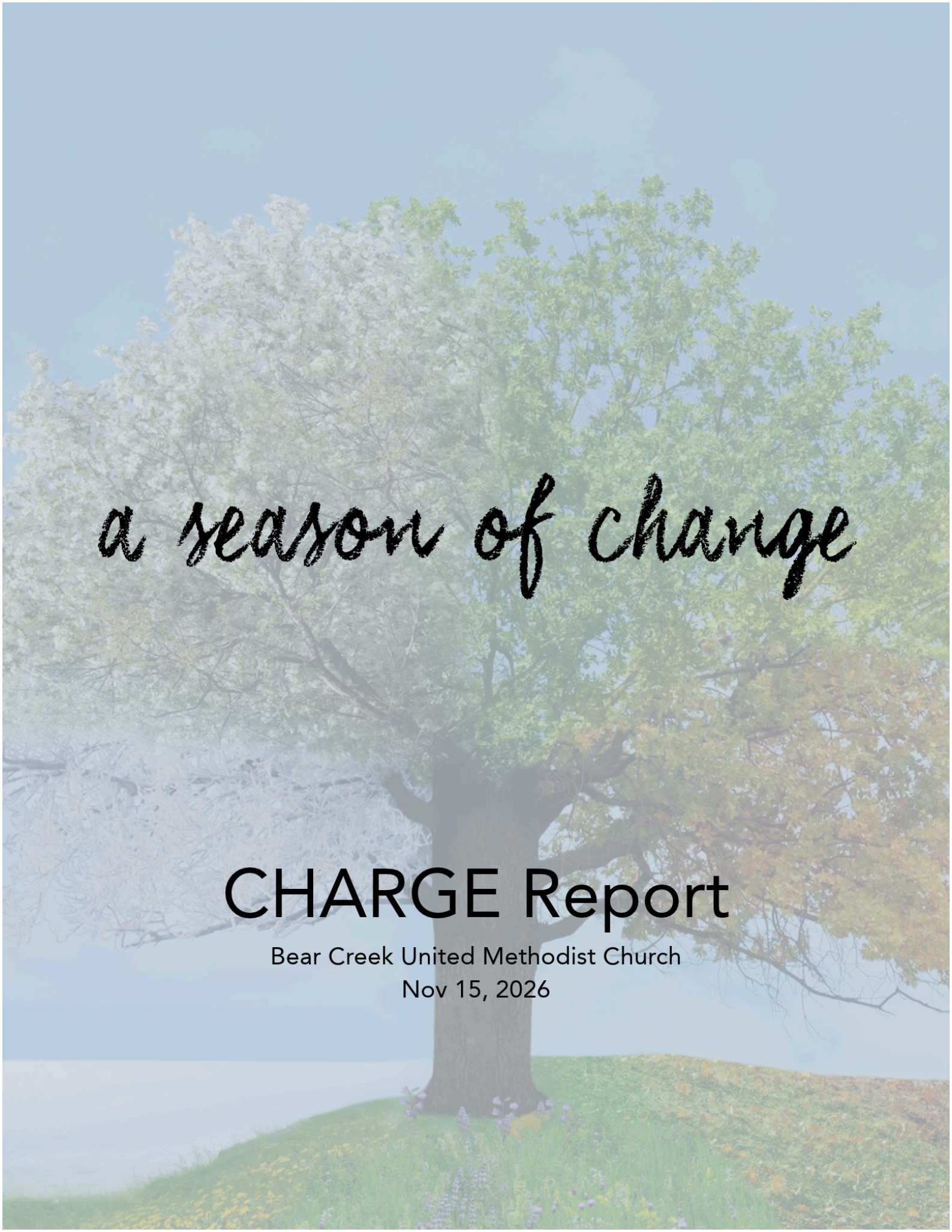


CHARGE Report

Bear Creek United Methodist Church

Nov 15, 2026

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2027 Nominations Report

Submitted by Pastor Mike & Sonya Garrett
These are roles that must be elected annually by the Charge or All-Church Conference

Officers List

Coordinating Board Chair	Lea Louder
Lay Leader	Sonya Garrett
SPRC Chair & Lay Member of Annual Conference	Doug Shirley
Finance Chair	Tracy Daugherty
Treasurer	Chuck Porter
Trustees Chair	Mark Louder

Coordinating Board
Lea Louder, *Chair*
Sonya Garrett, *Lay Leader*
Doug Shirley, *SPRC & Lay Member of AC*
Tracy Daugherty, *Finance*
Mark Louder, *Trustees*
Karen Smith, *God's Hands/Missions*
Connie Gagnon, *Welcome, Women's Ministry*
Susan Jackson, *Caregiving*
Andrew Walsh, *Stewardship, Men's Ministry*
Danielle Walsh, *Education*
Pastor Mike

Lay Leadership Committee
Pastor Mike, *Chair*
Sonya Garrett, *Lay Leader*
Darin Danner
Connie Gagnon
Audrey Lanzer
Denise Ritthaler
Danielle Walsh
Mona Chicks (*ex officio*)

Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)
Doug Shirley, *Chair & Lay Member of AC*
Sonya Garrett, *Lay Leader*
Connie Gagnon
Lois Koeber
Brook Self
Andrew Walsh

Trustees Committee
Mark Louder, *Chair*
Karin Danner
Matthew Hartman
Jeff Olmstead

Finance Committee
Tracy Daugherty, *Chair*
Chuck Porter, *Treasurer*
Marty DeLong, *Finance Secretary*
Doug Shirley, *SPRC Rep & Lay Member of AC*
Sonya Garret, *Lay Leader*
Pastor Mike
Jim Gordon
Scott Koeber
Danielle Walsh

Bear Creek Staff

Office Manager	Mona Chicks
Music Director	Bathsheba Marcus
Children & Family Ministries Coordinator	Estefanía Sensebe
Children's Assistants	Jack Perry, Grady Walsh

Lay Ministry Teams

Stewardship Team
Pastor Mike, *Chair*
Tracy Daugherty
Andrew Walsh

Planned Giving Team
Jim Gordon, *endowment*
Randy Garrett, *endowment*
Ellen Boyer, *endowment*
Chris Porter, *memorial garden*

God's Hands/Missions
Karen Smith, *Chair*
Chris Aakre
Sherrie Ferguson
Beth Harrington
Debby Heimfeld
Mimi Johnson
Marge Kuykendall
Betsy McClelland
Kelsey Morgan
Sherry Scott
Brook Self
Pam Talcott
Helen Tsang
Danielle Walsh
Barb Wilson

Children's Education Team
Estefania Sensabe, *Coordinator*
Jack Perry, *Assistant*
Grady Walsh, *Assistant*
1. Emily Hartman
2. Bri Jurca
3. Katie Mitchcell
4. Kari Graydon
5. Cheryl Olmstead

Subs: Sonya Garrett, Heather Nelson, Karen Smith, Danielle Walsh

Lay Caregiving Team
Susan Jackson, *Chair*
Sue Burkholder
Marcia Gordon
Denise Ritthaler
Brook Self

Welcome Team
Connie Gagnon, *Chair*
Joan Pierce

Fellowship Coffee Hour Leads
1. Tim Allen & Mark Louder
2. Heather Nelson & Sonya Garrett
3. Anne Salzer & Jan Becker
4. Stan & Sherrie Ferguson
5. Jody Chiles & Sue Burkholder

Sunday Serve Teams Leads
1. Danielle Walsh & Family
2. Darin Danner & Audrey Lanzer
3. Doug & Laura Wade Shirley
4. Devon Rooney & Tracy Daugherty

Fellowship Groups
Women at the Well - Sonya Garrett
Book Club - Connie Gagnon
Going Deeper - Sue Burkholder & Andrew Walsh, Mimi Johnson & Brad Shoup, Susan Jackson
Bear Creek Men - Andrew Walsh & Doug Shirley

bear creek united methodist church

From the Pastor

Submitted by Rev. Mike Conner

It is hard to believe that four and a half months have already gone by since I joined you as your new pastor on Sunday, July 5th. I'm grateful for all the hard work that you and Pastor Brook did to prepare for and then welcome our family to Woodinville. Loren (5) is in Kindergarten at Cottage Lake Elementary, and Adrienne (4) is in Pre-K at Rainbow Montessori on Avondale Road. Sus and I are continuing to settle into the parsonage and its lovely neighborhood, and we have already received several visits from out-of-town friends and family. As Randy Garrett told me one day in the church parking lot: "Mike, you'll find that, living in the Pacific Northwest, people will come to you." Amen, brother!

Throughout these first months, I have focused on getting to know *you*. I've done this through one-to-one conversations, small group gatherings, pastoral care visits, kid playdates, Men's Group, VBS, Trunk or Treat, and more. My sadness in saying goodbye to my congregation in Pocatello has been met by my joy in learning your stories. I'm grateful for the strong leaders in the church who have received and blessed me with wisdom and encouragement.

At our summer meetings, the members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) worked with me to identify pastoral priorities for my first year. Those that rose to the surface were (1) worship leadership, preaching, and teaching and (2) community engagement.

Sunday's always comin', so that first priority has been a natural area of focus. I've enjoyed crafting services with Bathsheba and introducing a bit of traditional liturgy, poetry, contemplative prayer elements, and my own preaching style. I've also worked to diversify the voices in worship, with many of you offering scripture readings, prayers, announcements, and testimonies. (Preaching is next!) It's also been fun for Bathsheba and me to make space for our kids and young people to share their gifts in worship, too.

That second priority, community engagement, is near to my heart. The church does not exist as an end in itself but as the ongoing presence of Christ's in the world. Getting to know the church's wider community has proved both a joy and a challenge. I see so much potential at Bear Creek for connecting with our neighborhood, for partnering with other churches and nonprofits in the area, and for putting peace, generosity, and justice into practice.

In August, I attended a conference in Tacoma at First UMC on community organizing. Community Organizing is a specific framework for listening to your community, rallying neighbors around shared concerns, and pursuing winnable outcomes. At this Conference, I met many SeaTac colleagues, many of whom are also involved in various

forms of prison ministry, especially at the Northwest Detention Center, an ICE facility in Tacoma.

In October, I met with Principal Hagel from Cottage Lake Elementary. I asked her what she loves about her job and how our church can be a good neighbor to the school community. We brainstormed many different ideas. Last month I attended a volunteer training session at Monroe Correction Center. I'll be red-badged as a volunteer for a Catholic religious program, and from there will be able to get in and assess more specifically how Bear Creek can get involved. Along the way, I've been taking time to meet with Methodist and ecumenical colleagues on the East Side and build up those ministry connections. I have enjoyed working with Karen Smith and the God's Hands Team, and I will continue to invite us into an increasingly relational approach to missions.

At our October Town Hall event, I shared my preaching theme for the upcoming liturgical year: **Blessed to be a Blessing.** For a year, we will explore "blessing" as a biblical theme, theological concept, and spiritual practice. I'm really excited about this, and I hope you'll bring your most creative, curious, and courageous selves to the year ahead. Creative, because blessings must be *spoken*, *given*, and *enacted*, and this means we get to craft the words and the choreography. Curious, because any consideration of our own blessedness involves listening for how God is calling us to bless others. Courageous, because blessing orients us toward God's desires for creation, which are at odds with so much of our present systemic sin, global chaos, and estrangement from creation. It takes courage to bless, but blessing also strengthens our hearts.

Let me end very practically with some notes about my schedule. I think of Sunday as my "first day of the week," opening the conversation between God and our congregation for the week ahead. On Monday, I lay low for reading and writing. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays are when I'm most around the office, on pastoral care visits, or meeting with individuals and committees. Friday is a fluid personal day, and Saturday is for friends and family. Saturday night I write the bulk of the sermon manuscript.

I try to take a retreat for about 3-5 days once per quarter in order to care for my own soul. Sometimes these are solo retreats, sometimes they're with colleagues. I'll be up at Camp Indianola solo in mid-December. I'm excited to spend time in a place that many of you know and cherish. Plus, it'll allow me to finally get over to Whidbey Island to see Alredo Arreguin's (1935-2023) paintings at the Rob Schouten Gallery. Of course, birding's in the cards.

Thanks for a great start, Bear Creek.

In Christ,

Pastor Mike

bear creek united methodist church

Music Ministry

Submitted by Bathsheba Marcus

Music continued to serve an important role in the worship experience at Bear Creek United Methodist Church in 2026. Throughout the year close to 40 different church members participated in a musical activity at the Church.

The Choir and Praise Band are at the heart of the music community. The Choir has 20-25 members, a healthy number for the size of our congregation. The members are a diverse group in age and background, including retirees, working parents, and LGBTQ affiliated congregants. We place a focus on singing a variety of material and music of the last year including K-pop Demon Hunter songs, along with pieces by traditional church anthem writers such as Mark Miller, Craig Courtney and Karen Marolli. The annual CLIP Choirfest was held in March 2026 and had over 150 attendees (singers and audience members) from four local churches. We continue to invite neighboring groups and hope to have a few more organizations included this coming year. Two guest conductors have come in over the last year to work with the BCUMC choir, offering a chance for further musical development outside of their regular rehearsals.

Collaboration is at the core of the musical activities at the church and nowhere is this seen more than in the Praise Band. The Band has continued to invite youth to contribute and in addition to our HS saxophone player, this fall we had a middle schooler join the group as the drummer after our long-time drummer had family commitments that kept him from playing regularly. We are lucky to have a singer-guitarist congregation member in the group as well as five other singers. The band generally opens and closes the service and also sometimes sings the response song-the group is vital in leading the congregation to praise thru singing.

Kids are always welcome as part of the music at BCUMC. In addition to the yearly pageant and VBS music activities, we offered a “Kids Today Choir” in September which allowed kids to come for a brief 15-minute rehearsal before service to practice a song-”This Little Light of Mine”-which the group then opened service with. We hope to have more opportunities for this type of participation from kids in the coming year.

In June, a musically filled send-off for Pastor Brook was organized with over 10 songs included (in addition to the music for the service that day). With the arrival of Pastor Mike the congregation has been introduced to hymns and praise songs that are sometimes new and that has led to a rich variety of new musical and spiritual material for people to contemplate, listen to, and participate with.

Goals for the coming year include improvement to the audio quality of the live streaming services; continuing to integrate technology specifically with moving the band towards iPads and developing an online listening library; hosting a concert open to the

community; acquiring a few new basses and altos in the choir where there has been some attrition; and continuing to find opportunities to involve kids in the musical life at BCUMC.

bear creek united methodist church

Children & Family Ministries

Submitted by Estefanía Sensebe

This year, our Children's Ministry continued to focus on creating a welcoming, fun, and safe environment where children can learn about God's love, build friendships, and grow in their faith.

Throughout the year, we continued our weekly Sunday School program, welcoming approximately 10 children on a typical Sunday. Through Bible stories, crafts, games, and interactive activities, we encouraged children to learn about Jesus and discover how they can share God's love with others in their everyday lives.

One of the highlights of the year was our **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**, where approximately 30 children participated in a week filled with learning, creativity, music, games, and friendship. This year's activities gave children opportunities to explore their faith while learning about kindness, helping others, and making a difference in their communities. It was wonderful to see the children having fun, making new friends, and participating in activities together.

We also continued creating opportunities for children and families to connect through seasonal celebrations and special events, including Easter activities, summer programs, and our annual **Trunk or Treat** celebration. These events are a great way to bring families together and help children feel connected to our church community.

I am especially thankful for the volunteers and church members who have supported Children's Ministry throughout the year. Their time, creativity, donations, and willingness to help have made these activities possible. Whether helping with Sunday School, preparing materials, organizing events, or simply offering encouragement, every contribution makes a difference.

Looking Ahead to 2027

As we look toward the coming year, I hope to continue growing our Children's Ministry by introducing new activities, encouraging more family participation, and creating opportunities for children to learn and serve together.

One of our biggest needs continues to be **volunteer support**, especially for Sunday School and special events. We would love to welcome more church members who are interested in helping with crafts, games, lessons, event preparation, or simply spending time with the children.

You don't need to be a teacher to make a difference. Even helping occasionally can have a meaningful impact on our program and the children we serve.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of Children's Ministry this year. I look forward to continuing to create a place where every child feels welcomed, valued, and loved.

bear creek united methodist church

Coordinating Board

Submitted by Board Chairperson Lea Louder

Bear Creek underwent a major transition as our pastor Brook McBride retired in June and we welcomed Mike Conner as the new pastor. This meant that many existing programs continued as Mike spent time getting to know the congregation and how existing engagement opportunities operated in the life of our church and in the community. I will share a few highlights in this report, while many more details can be found in the individual area reports from the various team leads.

A major focus of the first half of the year was on planning for and discerning the best path forward with the Parsonage. A decision was reached to not sell, and to invest in much needed, long postponed upgrades. The Trustees Report will include a lot more details about the remodel, but I would be remiss if I did not highlight the contributions of so many Bear Creek members dedicating time, talents and money towards the effort. From members of the congregation who were general contractors for the effort to individuals taking on specific projects such as installing a tile backsplash in the kitchen or purchasing a new dishwasher and refrigerator, to the dedicated crew who helped unload the Connor's Pods and make the house a home, the entire effort was a great testimony to the love found in the Bear Creek community!

For Lent 2026, a labyrinth was created on the center of the floor of the worship space allowing individuals to think deeply about others, including children living in war zones as we each drew closer to Christ. BCUMC also joined Northshore UCC Church for a combined Lenten study over Zoom. Going Deeper series after church continued with consistent attendance and a set rotation of leaders assigned for each Sunday of the month. Women at the Well continued to grow and a new Book Club started as well. Additionally, the Women's Group came together for such fun activities as a baby shower for Mackenzie, a Cooking Class & Dinner of fine Italian food and a Game Night!

Bear Creek's outreach outside our walls continued to grow in 2026. We hosted the Safe Parking participants in June while Lake Washington UMC (their normal home parking lot) was being re-paved. June also provided the opportunity for BCUMC to represent at the Snohomish Pride Parade and Seattle Pride, where our booth handed out over 1000 neck coolers, which were hand sewn and stuffed by a caring crew!

In the facility and worship space, unfortunately, the new partnership with Wonder Nest Daycare and Preschool dissolved and we are currently working with a realtor to assist in finding a new tenant for the space. Memorial Day and All Saints Day provided opportunities to recognize the Eagle Scout projects that helped to create the outdoor meditation area and Memorial Garden around the cross behind the building along with the dedication of several bricks for the Memorial Garden. Additionally, the front doors of the building were upgraded to include handicap access button and automatic locks.

Our Children's ministries continued to engage both within the congregation and with the community. The Sunday morning format grew a bit more structured with several parents and other adults stepping up to volunteer on a regular basis and allow the kids to split into two age-appropriate groups. Trunk or Treat and Vacation Bible Camp returned and allowed for great outreach into the community and Pastor Mike jumped in with both feet. My personal favorite is the Christmas Pageant, which continues to provide an opportunity for our kids with a passion for singing and acting to perform for the congregation.

Once again, I am thankful for the opportunity to be in this role as Coordinating Board Chair, and witness firsthand these and many more exciting activities, demonstrating continued growth and development of Bear Creek.

bear creek united methodist church

Lay Leader

Submitted by Sonya Garrett

"We at Bear Creek believe that God is love….and invites us into a loving relationship." As a church family and as the Body of Christ, we continue to seek and find ways to engage all ages in growing spiritually and restoring the fullness of our community through areas of Worship, Study, and Service.

As Lay Leader, I work with our pastor and the congregation to assist in communication, build connections, and guide ministry opportunities and involvement, to help fulfill the mission of Bear Creek and the church.

This past year, the Lay Leadership Team has been instrumental in working with our pastor(s) in reaching out to people to fulfill the service of different roles in the life of the church. We brainstorm ways we could help build up and strengthen Bear Creek both with physical participation and spiritual growth. These include Worship, Welcome, God's Hands (Missions), Children and Family Ministries, Staff Parish Relations Committee, Finance, Trustees, Fellowship Coffee Hour, Care Team, Small Groups, Special Events, Visual Arts, Stewardship, and the Coordinating Board. We look at identifying the spiritual gifts, talents, and passions people might have to help place them in roles of Christian service at Bear Creek. We continue to work on small group offerings to help in spiritual growth and community with one another.

These small group offerings include:
Going Deeper (adult class after Worship to discuss the scripture and the pastor's sermon)
Women at the Well – Tuesday morning fellowship for women 10:00-11:00
Women's Book Study – offered once a month
Men's Group – a "Fellow" ship together social gathering with food and light program once a month
Women's Group – Social activities that bring us together… once a month
Children and Families – Children's Church, Musicals, Vacation Bible Camp Special Events
Memorial Legacy Garden – Lay volunteers with special Boy Scout/Eagle Scout community projects partnership

Gratitude and thanks for the many volunteers who have helped to fulfill the roles of leadership and participation in the life of Bear Creek!

bear creek united methodist church

God's Hands

Submitted by Karen Smith

Bear Creek UMC's God's Hands Committee strives to help our entire congregation be the hands and feet of God in our community and around the world by reaching out to others in mercy, love and justice. Our mission work aligns with our goals of helping those who are hungry, houseless, and those who are different than ourselves.

Since our last report in early November 2025, we have been busy reaching out in multiple ways.

In November 2025, we provided **Thanksgiving food bags** to 100 families with Friends of Youth, a local organization that works with youth and families to provide resources and skills to help them achieve personal growth and success. Along with each food bag, we included 20 —25 Safeway gift cards. Friends of Youth had originally asked for 69 bags. Just a couple of days before everything was due to be at church, they mentioned that they had an additional 30 singles who could really use food too. We chose not to share that with the congregation due to the late notice. However, we had a huge response to this ask and when everyone showed up on Sunday, we miraculously had exactly 99 bags! God provided abundantly.

We provided two different opportunities for our congregation to share God's love with others over the Christmas holiday. We hosted a **Toy Drive** to benefit children through **Centro Cultural Mexicano** in Redmond, WA. We collected over 75 toys for young children (25 more toys than last year), and $525 in gift cards for teens to be given to kids in the underserved Hispanic community for Christmas. Committee members volunteered at their Toy Giveaway event. In addition, we hosted our **annual alternative giving market** and raised $3,000 (twice our goal!) for **Heifer International**. One of our congregants shared a personal story of the time her father had flown in a plane with the cows to help Heifer International deliver the livestock to families in need. We also raised an additional $1,432.57 for BCUMCs **Helping Hands fund** which supports those in our immediate community.

In January we hosted a house goods drive for **Move in Ministry**, an organization serving families moving from homelessness into housing by providing furniture and home goods to get them started. We collected and delivered two large loads of items to Move in Ministry.

Following a call for Prayer and Peace from the United Methodist Bishops after the escalation of attacks in Iran, we collected new children's shoes to honor the 168 lives lost when a missile hit a school in Iran. We donated 45 pairs of new shoes to **KidVantage** in Issaquah. KidVantage provides essential care and safety items for children experiencing economic insecurity. We collected an additional 24 pairs of used and adult sized shoes that were donated to help others in need.

We have a longstanding partnership with **Food Bank Farm**, an organization that grows and harvests fresh produce to provide to local foodbanks. In the spring, we planted 1700 blue corn seeds. Once harvested, the blue corn will be milled locally to be used to make homemade authentic tortillas.

For Mother's Day, with the help of generous contributions from the congregation, we assembled and delivered 45 spa and self-care **Mother's Day Baskets for single mothers at Friends of Youth**. This is an annual project that our congregation loves to be a part of.

We have partnered with the **Lake Washington UMC Safe Parking Program** quite a bit over the last few years. This year we served multiple dinners to those in the program throughout the year and provided $400 worth of shelf stable meals and snacks when the program urgently needed food for their clients. We also partnered with Lake Washington UMC to host up to ten Safe Parking cars in our lot for the month of June while their parking lot was being repaved. We provided the space, several extra dinners, and an on-call volunteer to help respond to any issues.

BCUMC has been active in the **immigrant community** since 2017. Through her connections, one of our committee members alerted us to a family of six in our community who were being deported to Mexico and had urgent needs for their four children. We provided a $500 gift card for them to shop for clothing, shoes, and items needed for travel. We also provided major support for the Amadzai family of 10 that BCUMC helped evacuate from Afghanistan to the US in 2025 when they were being pursued by the Taliban. With the help of a Mustard Seed Grant, in addition to $500 in rental assistance, committee members visited numerous times, enrolled the children in school under the McKinney-Vento Homeless program, and delivered donated furniture, computers, toys, bedding, kitchen items and food staples. **Riverton Park UMC** in Tukwila provides vital housing and support services for 150 asylum seekers awaiting processing of their cases. Responding to an urgent request, committee members shopped for and delivered $500 worth of shelf stable food, toiletries and cleaning supplies. They even delivered handknitted sweaters for babies currently living at the church.

We continued our support of the local LGBTQIA+ community in several ways this year. We hosted our annual booth at **Seattle PrideFest** where BCUMC members handed out over 750 handmade neck coolers! This labor of love which is lead by a few of our committee members, included many hours and months of measuring, cutting, sewing and filling. For the **Snohomish Pride Parade**, BCUMC had 14 members march while giving out handmade buttons and invitations to join us for worship.

Our congregation partnered with VBS to hold a back-to-school Backpack Drive for children in need through **Centro Cultural Mexicano**. Between our congregation and the families who joined us at VBS, we collected and donated 35 backpacks and large bags of school supplies to help these kids start their school year off right!

When devastating fires hit Spokane, WA, we collected $892 in a special offering to send to the **PNW UMC Conference relief fund**.

We are currently partnering with **Empower Youth Network** in Carnation, WA to provide and assemble 140 **weekend food Power Packs** for food insecure kids in the Riverview School District. Last time we assembled power packs we noticed how excited our youth were to participate. We look forward to including the entire congregation in the packing event in early November.

None of these ministries would be possible without our overly generous congregation, our devoted staff, and our dedicated committee members: Chris Aakre, Mike Connor, Sherrie Furguson, Beth Harrington, Debby Heimfeld, Mimi Johnson, Marge Kuyekendall, Brook McBride, Betsy McClelland, Sheryl Scott, Brook Self, Karen Smith, Pam Talcott, Helen Tsang, Danielle Walsh and Barb Wilson.

bear creek united methodist church

Welcome & Invite

Submitted by Connie Gagnon

Bear Creek UMC is a warm, welcoming place where everyone belongs - members, regular attendees, and guests.

We enjoy sharing our space and worship time with new people!

Goal: Welcome Guests.
All guests are welcomed at the door, encouraged to sign the guest book and make a nametag so the congregation can greet them by name. We continue for first time guests to give a welcome bag with a jar of honey, church related information, introduce guests to two or three church members, and invite them to coffee. Children always receive a Bear Creek bear on their first visit. Second time guests receive cookies with a welcoming note. Pastor Mike will follow up with a conversation.

New Members:
Pastor Mike is new to our church and is planning to hold New Member meetings and meet with couples / families individually to become members.

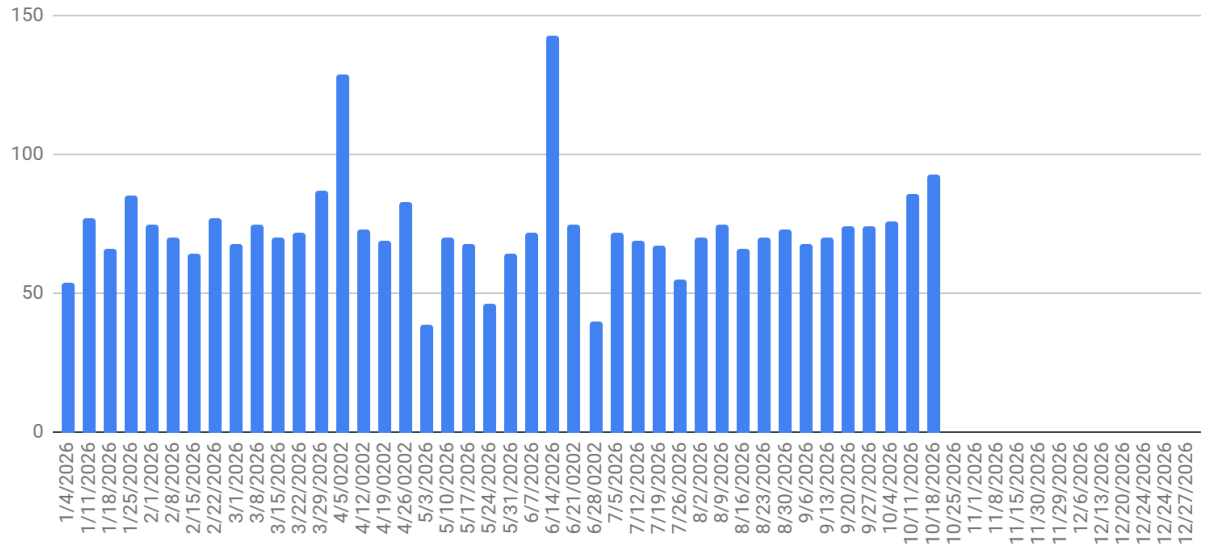
In-Person Attendance and Guests: Based on Information collected when Connie Gagnon is present and taking attendance. Guests returning sometimes a third time are then counted as a regular attendee. Some members and regular attendees attend online only now.

Attendance:

Date	Total Attendance	# Guests
1/4/2026	54	4
1/11/2026	77	5
1/18/2026	66	6
1/25/2026	85	6
2/1/2026	75	1
2/8/2026	70	2
2/15/2026	64	3
2/22/2026	77	4
3/1/2026	68	6

3/8/2026	75	4
3/15/2026	70	2
3/22/2026	72	2
3/29/2026	87	1
4/5/0202	129	25
4/12/0202	73	
4/19/0202	69	4
4/26/0202	83	11
5/3/2026	39	
5/10/2026	70	9
5/17/2026	68	3
5/24/2026	46	
5/31/2026	64	4
6/7/2026	72	1
6/14/2026	143	21
6/21/0202	75	2
6/28/0202	40	
7/5/2026	72	2
7/12/2026	69	2
7/19/2026	67	6
7/26/2026	55	2
8/2/2026	70	4
8/9/2026	75	3
8/16/2026	66	1
8/23/2026	70	4
8/30/2026	73	6
9/6/2026	68	2
9/13/2026	70	5

9/20/2026	74	1
9/27/2026	74	2
10/4/2026	76	6
10/11/2026	86	12
10/18/2026	93	4
Average Attendance	**73.1**	



bear creek united methodist church

Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

Submitted by Sue Burkholder

Our focus for 2026 began a few months before the new year began, after learning of the impending retirement of Pastor Brook. We were asked what we wanted in a new pastor, and the stealthy gathering of that information among the congregation was a challenge. We came up with a list of characteristics we wanted in a new pastor, as well as some open-ended questions we hoped the Conference would be able to answer. We sent the list to our District Superintendent, Mark Galang, with prayers, hope, and the knowledge we were venturing into the unknown.

In January we welcomed new members to Staff Parish--Connie Gagnon, Andrew Walsh, and Mackenzie Twaddell. Connie and Andrew are long-time members of Bear Creek, bringing their knowledge of our church and our traditions to the committee. Mackenzie is a relatively new member, a younger adult who can and will bring her perspective from both those positions.

The first week of January, Pastor Brook announced his impending retirement to the congregation, effective June 30, 2026. A “What to Expect” in a new pastor was provided to SPRC members via zoom from the PNW Conference, giving us a heads up of what came next between our church and the PNW.

D.S. Galang scheduled a zoom meet-and-greet for late February, at which time the committee was introduced to Pastor Mike Conner. After a lengthy question-and-answer period on both sides, we agreed (unanimously) that he was what we were looking for. We were extremely pleased that Pastor Mike also agreed that we were what he was looking for, and willing to relocate to Bear Creek UMC from his current church in Pocatello, Idaho. Pastor Mike’s first service with BCUMC would be July 5. 2026.

The Conference required that the parsonage be made available for the new pastor. Trustees, headed by Randy Garrett, developed the plans and secured the contractors for the much-needed renovation. The Finance Committee, headed by Tracy Daugherty and assisted by Chuck Porter and Danielle Walsh, worked to secure the loan needed to pay for the renovations. Many people in our church provided money, donated appliances, and gave of themselves through physical work to make the parsonage ready for the new family.

After considerable deliberation, SPRC developed a new employee evaluation form, enabling a more uniform opportunity for the paid employee and the church to discern areas of strength and areas in need of strengthening, providing Bear Creek with the best possible support.

SPRC was primary in planning the farewell party for Pastor Brook. Church staff, and the many members of the congregation who provided messages, photos, money, and hard work created a memorable farewell for him. Although the Conference requires no contact with our church by Pastor Brook for one year, his imprint of a decade will live on in our community.

Two weeks after Pastor Brook's farewell, we welcomed Pastor Mike Connor to our congregation. SPRC has worked with Pastor Mike to make the transition as seamless as possible for him and for the church.

The Children and Youth Program is under review for renovation. When the new program is in place, the Committee will work with Estefania to update the job description for the position.

Other job descriptions have been reviewed and will stand for the present.

Two (possibly three) members of the committee will be stepping away at the end of this year. Doug Shirley will begin as Chair in January 2027. The Lay Committee will be searching for replacement members.

As of this writing, the SPRC budget for 2027 has not been submitted. A working meeting will be held to provide Finance with our requests prior to October 27, 2026.
The balance of 2026 will be devoted to working with Pastor Mike as he continues to become fully acquainted with Bear Creek, helping him to facilitate the changes that best serve his vision and the vision of Bear Creek United Methodist Church.

bear creek united methodist church

2027 Pastoral Support Worksheet

PNW 2027 Pastoral Support Worksheet

For all appointments Clergy/Lay

(Complete this form using computer)

Local Church: Bear Creek UMC Pastor: Michael Connor

Date: 10/27/26 MM/DD/YY

Full or Part-Time (Select one): Full Time **Reset**

Status (Select one)*: Elder UMC

Total Cash Salary

Cash Salary

Cash paid to clergy person by church. Cash salary consists of base pay, cash bonuses, equitable compensation, cash to clergy person for benefit programs, before-tax, after-tax and Roth deferrals to United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP), other 403(b) programs, section 125 health flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care) and health savings account.

$ 64,477 Box 1

Housing Exclusion

(Internal Revenue Code Section 107-Utilities and Furnishing exclusion)

$ 12,000 Box 2

Total Cash Salary (Box **1** + Box **2**)

$ 76,477 Box 3

(For reference 2027 minimum compensation for full-time appointment is $54,391)

Housing

Is a parsonage provided (Yes or No)? Yes

35% of Total Cash Salary or minimum of $10,000/ maximum of $65,215.

$ 26,767 Box 4

Housing Allowance (when no parsonage is provided)

$ 0 Box 5

Plan Compensation

Plan Compensation – Total Cash Salary (Box **3**) + Housing (Box **4** or Box **5**)

(Use the amount on this line on the next three pages to determine the retirement contributions (Compass or UMPIP) and disability/ death benefit contributions (CPP or UMLife Options)

$ 103,244 Box 6

Professional Expenses – not part of plan compensation

Accountable Reimbursement Plan budget amount

$ 6,000

Return this page to your District Superintendent and keep a copy at Local Church

-1-

bear creek united methodist church

2027 PNW Pastoral Support Worksheet for all appointments

Full Time Clergy Appointment Page cost

Local Church Bear Creek UMC Pastor Michael Connor

Local Church Contribution to Pension and Benefits
Compass Retirement Plan – 2027

A. Pay-dependent contribution - 3% of plan compensation

Plan Compensation (Box **6**)		103,244
Times 3%	X	.03
Annual 3% of plan compensation	$	3,097.32

B. Flat-dollar contribution $1,800 annually

The conference board of pensions is covering 75% of the cost or $1,350 for full-time pastors.

$ 450.00

C. Matching Contribution - 4% of plan compensation

The church will be responsible for paying 4% even if pastor does not contribute 4% to UMPIP

$ 4,129.76

Comprehensive Protection Plan - Full-Time; 2027

Lesser of Plan Compensation (Box **6**) or 2 times DAC (2 X $83,541 = $167,082 Times **3% or $5,012.46)**

$ 3,097.32

2027 Health Insurance Direct Bill for Full-Time Appointments

The health insurance program is through HealthFlex Exchange where pastors have choice between six medical/pharmacy, three dental and three vision plans. The health rates are going up 14.8% in 2027 but the conference board of pensions is absorbing more of the cost increase so the increase to church is up 7.5%.

With a budget of $725,000 the board provides each eligible full-time pastor a premium credit in 2027 of $14,748 or $25,248 if insure 3 or more to help with the cost of health plans chosen.

$ 8,700.00

Total Full Time Benefits $ 19,474.40

Return this page to your District Superintendent and keep a copy at Local Church

bear creek united methodist church

2027 PNW Pastoral Support Worksheet for all appointments

1/2 & 3/4 Time Clergy Appointment Page cost

Local Church Bear Creek UMC Pastor Michael Connor

Local Church Contribution to Pension and Benefits
Compass Retirement Plan – 2027

A. Pay-dependent contribution - 3% of plan compensation

Plan Compensation (Box **6**) 103,244

Times 3% X .03

Annual 3% of plan compensation $

B. Flat-dollar contribution $1,350 annually for 3/4 time or $900 annually 1/2 time $ 0.00

The conference board of pensions is covering 75% of the cost or $1,012.50 3/4 time and $675 for 1/2 time.

C. Matching Contribution - 4% of plan compensation $

The church will be responsible for paying 4% even if pastor does not contribute 4% to UMPIP

UMLife Options 1/2 & 3/4 time clergy fully insured through UNUM $

· 1/2 & 3/4 time appointed Elders, Provisional, Associate Member and Deacons. Not part-time local pastors or from another denomination. The cost is 2% of plan compensation.

Total 1/2 or 3/4 Time Benefits $ 0.00

bear creek united methodist church

Finance Committee

Submitted by Tracy Daugherty

- *Began the year with a sound, balanced budget that included monthly contributions to a Trustee Reserve fund for periodic expenses that do not occur every year*
    - *Unplanned Trustee expenses for furnace and stormwater repairs exceeded the budgeted reserves*
    - *Dedicated account balances and careful monitoring are covering the resulting cash-flow gap*
- *Prioritized parsonage renovations before the new pastor and family arrived, funded by congregational generosity, the Trustees' careful management of contractor rates, and a larger loan*
- *The unexpected loss of a new building tenant required us to lower the rental income budget for the second half of the year*
    - *Remaining Operating Reserves will cover the shortfall through year-end*
    - *Supporting the Trustees' efforts to find a new tenant as soon as possible*
- *The 2025 audit was conducted on March 22, 2026*

Financial Update

The information below includes actual results through September 30, 2026, and projections for Q4 activity.

Bear Creek United Methodist Church
Financial Report
Budget to Actual
As of Sept 30, 2026

		YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	2026 Proj.Actual	2026 Budget	Difference
Income							
	Offerings	228,002	223,458	4,544	319,274	314,730	4,544
	Rentals	35,197	53,782	(18,585)	37,651	71,236	(33,585)
	Other Income	88	8	80	93	12	81
	Total Income	**263,287**	**277,248**	(13,961)	**357,018**	**385,978**	(28,960)
Expense							
	Finance,Apportionments	36,481	36,482	(1)	48,621	48,622	(1)
	Programs	8,650	12,319	(3,669)	12,259	15,928	(3,669)
	SPRC	144,485	141,549	2,936	188,400	185,464	2,936
	Trustees	107,390	100,461	6,929	143,372	130,944	12,428
	Total Expense	**297,006**	**290,811**	6,195	**392,652**	**380,958**	11,694
Net Income		**(33,719)**	**(13,563)**	(20,156)	**(35,634)**	**5,020**	(40,654)

Finance Committee – Tracy Daugherty, Chair
Chuck Porter, Treasurer
Marty DeLong, Financial Secretary
Danielle Walsh, Co-Treasurer
Jim Gordon, Cheryl Olmstead
Regular participants: Pastor, Coordinating Board Chair, Chairs/reps of Trustees, SPRC, God's Hands, Stewardship, Endowment

bear creek united methodist church

Trustees

Submitted by Randy Garrett

It was a highly active year for the Trustees. With pastoral change coming in June, there were many things to address.

Here is a brief summary of our actions and contributions this year:

1. Aid and assist in financial matters to produce a plan to renovate the parsonage.
    a. Bring together cost estimates and donations.
    b. Help procure a loan with Faith Foundation
2. Manage and Inspect Parsonage Project to Completion
    a. Hired two contractors. Peak Homes and Seven Points
    b. Requested and received numerous congregational donations.
        i. Enormous amount of free labor
        ii. Refrigerator
        iii. Dishwasher
        iv. Countertops
        v. Bathroom shower doors and materials
        vi. Splash guards
        vii. Many materials provided at cost
    c. All new flooring in renovation
    d. All new paint in renovation
    e. Removed a wall for Kitchen/Dining Area
    f. Complete renovation of outdoor deck
3. Transition from Madrone School to Wonder Nest Childcare
    a. Painting of Education Wing
    b. Removal of old items around church building
4. Search for a new tenant as of September 2026.
5. Installed upgrades to Front Doors
    a. ADA access improved
    b. Higher level of security

Members of 2026 Trustees are Randy Garrett, Mark Louder, Karin Danner, Adrian Jurca, Jeff Olmstead, and Scott Palazzola

bear creek united methodist church

Parsonage Checklist

CHECKLIST

UNITED METHODIST LOSS CONTROL PROGRAM
Parsonage Self-Inspection Checklist

NAME OF CHURCH: Bear Creek United Methodist Church
ADDRESS: 16530 Avondale Rd NE, Woodinville, WA 98077

Answer each item with YES, NO, or NA (not applicable). Support all "NO" items in the "COMMENTS" section, and indicate the date when corrective action has been implemented.

FOLLOW-UP	YES/NO/NA	COMMENTS
HEATING EQUIPMENT		
1. Is all heating equipment including chimneys, flue connectors, hot air ducts and parsonage heating appliances:		
a. In good servicable condition and well maintained?	Yes	
b. Properly insulated and separated from all combustible material by a safe distance?	Yes	
c. Serviced by a qualified person within the past year?	Yes	
LIGHTING AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT		
1. Has the electrical system been inspected by a competent electrical contractor recently?	Yes	
2. Are alterations of electrical installations made only by a qualified electrician?	Yes	
3. If any fuse or circuit breakers require frequent replacement or restoration, have these circuits been checked by a competent electrician for overloading?	Yes	
4. Are all fixtures, outlets and extension cords in safe condition?	Yes	
5. Are extension cords used only for temporary situations?	Yes	

FOLLOW-UP	YES/NO/NA	COMMENTS
6. Are air conditioning units properly wired?	Yes	
7. Are computer systems properly wired and equipped with surge protection devices?	Yes	

APPLIANCES

1. Are kitchen range ventilating hoods, filters and ducts free of grease accumulation?	Yes	
2. Are refrigerators, freezers, stoves, microwaves, washers and dryers properly wired?	Yes	
3. Is manufacturer-recommended air space provided around all large appliances?	Yes	
4. Are appliance exhaust systems properly vented?	Yes	

PROTECTION

1. Is there a sufficient number of proper fire extinguishers provided?	Yes	
2. Have fire extinguishers been inspected or recharged within a period of one year?	Yes	
3. Is the date of inspection or recharge shown on a tag attached to each extinguisher?	Yes	
4. Are UL listed automatic fire and smoke detection devices installed and operational?	Yes	
5. Are smoke detector batteries checked semi-annually where warranted?	Yes	
6. Are spaces beneath stairs, in attics and basements free of combustible material?	Yes	

PUBLIC LIABILITY EXPOSURES

1. Are all walkways and floor surfaces safe (free of holes, uneven surfaces, cracks, carpet tears, etc.)?	Yes	
2. Are sidewalks kept free of snow and ice?	Yes	
3. Are all steps in good repair and provided with handrails?	Yes	

FOLLOW-UP	YES/NO/NA	COMMENTS
4. Has the parsonage been inspected for lead and asbestos, and proper safeguards taken?	N/A	

FURNISHINGS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Are all church-owned furnishings and equipment properly maintained and stored?	Yes	
2. Are mowers, snow throwers, hedge trimmers and combustibles safely stored?	Yes	
3. Are computer systems properly wired and equipped with surge protection devices?	Yes	

INSURANCE

1. Do the church and/or pastor maintain adequate property and liability insurance on the parsonage and furnishings?	Yes	
2. Is there a video or written inventory of all church-owned personal property in the parsonage stored off-site?	N/A	

COMMENTS (Use additional sheets as necessary):

COMPLETED BY: Scott Palazzola DATE: 10/28/2025

REVIEWED BY: _____ DATE: _____

bear creek united methodist church

Church MILE Assessment

Submitted by Sue Burkholder, SPRC Chair

PNW District

Puget Sound District

PNW Church Name

Select your church from the drop-down list.

Woodinville: Bear Creek

Name of Pastor or Lay Lead for your Church

First Name	Last Name
Michael	Conner

Date

2026-10-27

Please list the participants in this assessment process and conversation.

Mike Conner, Sonya Garrett, Sue Burkholder, Doug Shirley, Karen Smith, Bathsheba Marcus, Estefania Sensebe, Mona Chicks

M. Ministry that Matters Questions

Describe who you believe your neighbors are and tell us what God is currently doing with and through them (your neighbors) that is transforming your community.

Since our church members come from many towns on the Eastside, our neighborly connections extend into Woodinville, Redmond, Kirkland, Duvall, Carnation, Snohomish, Monroe, and more. Some of our recent regional partnerships include Lake Washington UMC's Safe Parking ministry, which is providing a safe home base for women and families living in their cars; Centro Cultural Mexicano, which empowers the Latino/Hispanic community in Redmond through education, services and programs that support art, culture, advocacy and community engagement; Pride Across the

Bridge and Eastside Pride, two organizations working to educate, advocate for, and celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community and provide safe and loving spaces for people of all genders. The church building itself is part of a residential neighborhood that includes several other faith communities, the Woodinville Public Library, Cottage Lake Elementary, and a handful of businesses.

Tell us about your new neighbors or the new connections you have made in your community in the last year.

In the last year, we have begun partnering with Empower Youth Network in Carnation to provide Food Power Packs that are given to children facing food insecurity in the Riverview School District. We also learned about the Move in Ministry, an organization that helps those transitioning from homelessness by providing household goods and furniture. On a more personal level, we provided financial support to a neighbor and their family who were being deported to Mexico. Our new pastor is meeting with ecumenical colleagues from around the Eastside to explore other opportunities for collaboration. He has also developed relationships with the staff and PTA members from Cottage Lake Elementary, and has made inroads at Monroe Correctional Center, a nearby Washington State men's facility.

As a congregation, where do you believe you have already been invited, or are now being invited, to be a partner with God in making an impact in this transformative work in your neighborhood/community?

This past June, Bear Creek hosted 10 families in the LWUMC Safe Parking Program while they were repaving their parking lot. They recently reached out to ask if we would be open to hosting an overflow Safe Parking lot in future summer months when their numbers are higher and they run out of space. As a church, board and congregation, we will prayerfully consider if this is something we could do for our community. We are also exploring potential ministries that would benefit the Cottage Lake Elementary community, residential neighbors, and Monroe Correctional Center.

What key partnerships (outside of your local church) do you currently have or would like to have? Describe the partnerships.

Our 3 main partnerships that we work with throughout the year include Friends of Youth, Centro Cultural Mexicano, and the Lake Washington UMC Safe Parking Program. Through these partnerships, we provide tangible goods like Thanksgiving food bags, backpacks and school supplies to families experiencing economic insecurity. We also bring Mother's Day spa baskets to single mothers at Friends of Youth. We support Safe Parking clients by cooking and serving meals and purchasing blankets and sleeping bags during the colder months.

Partnerships we would like to have:

- Cottage Lake Elementary

- a local/regional interfaith or ecumenical network

- Monroe Correctional Center

- a global expression of missions

If we were to ask for two letters of reference from those impacted by your ministries, who would we hear from, and what might they say?

A client of the LWUMC Safe Parking Program would tell you about how we provided a safe place her to park and live for a month while the Lake Washington parking lot was being repaved. She may mention the warm meals and kindness we showed while they were in our lot. You may also hear from a mom at Friends of Youth. She would talk about how the Mother's Day spa basket from Bear Creek made her feel loved, and how the Thanksgiving Food bag and gift card allowed her to make a Thanksgiving meal for her and her children.

What role has your pastoral leader played in enabling the congregation to see and speak into this invitation and your community partnerships?

Bear Creek has been blessed to be led by two wonderful Pastors over the last year. Both have been instrumental in our ability to plan, advertise and execute ministries in our community. They faithfully attend planning meetings, provide new ideas for partnership, welcome announcements during Sunday service, and step up to help with mission activities. Their support, dedication and encouragement is clear to the entire congregation.

What role(s) have the Laity played in your ministry that matters?

The laity of BCUMC have made every single outreach ministry possible. We are always surprised at how financially generous our congregation is when a need arises. Through their generous hearts, time and financial contributions, we have been able to bless many in our community and around the world with food, shelter, safety and hope.

I. Itineracy and Location Questions

This section aims to identify two things: the fit of the pastor's gifts to this particular ministry and what supports the pastor needs in order to deepen their vocation. Lay Led Congregations can skip this section (please write "lay led" in any required fields).

Describe your pastoral leader's current ministry with your congregation.

Pastor Michael Conner began his ministry with Bear Creek UMC (BCUMC) on July 1, 2026. He has provided space for the congregation to participate more fully in the weekly worship. He has begun to teach church history. He utilizes the lectionary to some degree. As he learns the traditions of BCUMC, he has incorporated them in his spiritual leadership of our congregation, while introducing us to new, and sometimes more traditional, worship. One of the ways Mike has gotten to know BCUMC has been to spend a significant portion of this summer meeting with church families in various contexts (individual families, small groups). He has also visited various ministry groups, including the men’s group, where he has started to attend regularly. Children’s Christian education is important, and Pastor Mike is supportive of the efforts to create a strong foundation for the children that will support them throughout their lives. Mike has also initiated volunteer training at the Monroe Correctional Complex, which may eventually become a ministry opportunity he shares with other BCUMC families.

How has your pastoral leader intentionally helped to lead the M.I.L.E.?

Although our congregation, representative of the area, is not very diverse racially, Pastor Mike has brought themes related to social justice and diversities of need and experience to the congregation through his messages and worship experience. His deep spiritual connection to Jesus, to the Creator, is evident in his messages and in his desire to truly know where each of the congregants are in their spiritual life. He is utilizing the lay members of the church more fully in the weekly worship.

What are the gifts in your pastoral leader that best serves the mission of the congregation? The needs of the community? Why? How?

As Pastor Mike learns the workings of BCUMC, the focus of the church and its missions, the make-up of the current congregation, nothing has been discarded. He is focused on building on what we have, not tearing down and rebuilding. Moreover, a strength he carries is wisdom and discernment around melding old and new, making changes while also maintaining familiar practices and traditions. His relative youth is an asset to Bear Creek UMC, as he encourages the younger members of the church to become involved in the lay ministries. He is innovative, and seems to give us space to feel the Spirit through his prayers and his messages. His contemplative focus also offers new (renewed) practice(s) for church members to follow.

Indicate your agreement with this statement: Our church's ministry priorities and the pastoral leader's gifts fit well.

Strongly Agree

Tell us more about your choice for the previous question.

Although he has been our church leader for only four months at this time, there is no doubt he is well liked and appreciated. There is no doubt that as we go forward, BCUMC and its community will benefit from his spiritual leadership and the work of continuing to build the congregation and community of Bear Creek UMC.

L. Lay Ministry Enhancement Questions

Describe the ministries of the church that are lay-initiated and/or lay-led.

Going Deeper: An adult class offered after worship to discuss the worship experience, scripture(s) and pastor's sermon. We have 5 different facilitators that rotate their week each month.

Women at the Well: Women meet on Tuesdays for fellowship, prayer support, and topical discussion. Led by the current Lay Leader and other women in the group as substitutes.

Women's Book Study: Offered once a month for learning, fellowship, and a meal.

Men's Group: A monthly meal and social gathering with facilitated sharing about faith and life.

Women's Group: Once a month social activity, sometimes crafts, cooking, service, etc.

Memorial Legacy Garden: A lay person working with our resident Scouts troop and Eagle Scouts on their service/community and Eagle Scout to beautify a memorial garden where folks can order etched bricks.

Volunteers have stepped up to help with our Children's music and educational programs including the Christmas Musical, Vacation Bible School, and Sunday children's church.

Care Team: Stevens Ministers are available but not utilized often. Our Care Team offers a prayer station each Sunday during communion.

Worship/Serve Teams: Volunteers rotate their given week each month to serve as ushers and Communion stewards.

Fellowship Coffee Hour: Volunteers rotate their given week each month to set up and serve coffee/tea and snacks for after worship on Sunday mornings.

God's Hands/Missions: Lay Led with a large team who actively is involved with missional opportunities in the community and around the world.

Lay Leadership Team: Works with our pastor to discern peoples' gifts and call them into active service or leadership.

Tell us how your church is inviting and raising disciple who can either begin new or lead existing ministries of the church.

We are intentional about getting to know newer members and asking if they would like to serve in small roles initially. An example would be our Ushers/Communion Stewards and Fellowship Coffee Hour Hosts. They may serve one Sunday a month but enjoy in the serving and the small time commitment. We hope that serving may help lead to larger areas of leadership in time. This fall, our new pastor asked the Coordinating Board to host an Awareness Fair after worship one Sunday. Each of our administrative committees and leadership teams had a booth with information about their work and how folks can provide feedback or get involved.

How has your pastoral leader helped you in this work or raising disciples?

Our pastoral leader has helped us in this work of raising disciples by being a part of the Lay Leadership Team (see above). He has used his first few months to get to know a large swath of our membership, meeting people individually and in small group settings. He has included more voices in worship and is actively seeking to involve folks as preachers, scripture readers, intercessors, and more. As time goes on, the pastor will lead membership classes and provide other opportunities for people to grow in their faith.

Can you identify at least 1 to 2 laity that you want to invite to lead or participate in a particular ministry opportunity in the next year? Why them? Which ministry opportunity? How?

- Laura Wade Shirley

- Katie Powell Mitchell

What names did you lift last year, and how are those people involved in ministry areas at this time?

- Sam Tsang - lay preaching, subbing Going Deeper

- Mackenzie Twaddell - SPRC

- Denise Ritthaler - music, prayer, Women at the Well

- Devon Rooney - audit, maintenance, prayer leader

- Paul Graydon - music

Identify 2-3 laity who you believe are called and/or gifted to lead beyond the local church (perhaps at the district or conference level) as a means of participating in our connection. Where might these gifts be best used? Example: Disaster Response Ministries, Conference Board of Pensions, etc.)

We utilize this information in District and Conference nominations.

- Debby Heimfeld: Justice and/or connectional ministries

- Doug Shirley: Men's Ministry

- Andrew Walsh: Stewardship

E. Elimination of Racism Questions

Describe the efforts you have already made in the elimination of racism in your Congregation as well as areas you still need to work on.

Music: I (Bathsheba) seek to promote inclusivity and diversity, if not specifically racial diversity. I am fairly conscious of picking choir pieces that are written by men and women and people from the LGBTQ community. I also try to pick pieces that represent composers of color. As the choir director I have an open policy and all are welcome and I do believe feel welcome. I try to include people of all ages, from the youngest to the oldest, in musical activities at the church. These are ways I feel I can actively and positively affect diversity in the community at BCUMC. I could choose more songs that embrace multiculturism. Moving forward, I could be more active about making multicultural songs part of the choir repertoire especially if I am given that direction that this is important to the mission and work of BCUMC.

Children & Families: In Children's Ministry, I always try to create a welcoming environment where every child and family feels included, respected, and loved, no matter their background or culture. I

think we can continue improving by including more activities and conversations that help children learn about different cultures and the importance of treating everyone equally.

Office: I have personally tried to use media and graphics to normalize the presence of people of all ethnic, economic, and family-type backgrounds, particularly in a church community which is mostly white. Seeing faces which look different on the screen communicates that these are people who participate with us in the Kin-dom of God. Particularly in a community which doesn't have a lot of variation despite their willingness to embrace difference, I think it is helpful to have those visual touch-points to remind the congregation that God's invitation is for everyone.

How are you presently seeking to eliminate racism in your church and community?

In our work with children and youth, we teach about kindness, respect, and loving others, regardless of their differences.

How has your pastoral leader helped you in the work?

Our pastor has preached to us about our Wesleyan spiritual foundations, which include social holiness. We know that in the American context, social holiness includes the elimination of racism. Our pastor is including readings and versions of prayers from the First Nations Version of the New Testament and exploring involvement with the Circle of Indigenous Ministries, now that he is a member of the PNW Conference. He is also developing a relationship with Monroe Correctional Center, which has a significant Latinx population. He plans to have conversation with our incoming SPRC Chair about the ways that whiteness might be structuring some of our congregational systems and processes, and develop language for addressing this.

What partners (outside your local church) do you already have for this work?

We don't have any partnerships explicitly focused on the elimination of racism. However, this work impacts our relationships with:

- Centro Cultural Mexicano

- Safe Parking at Lake Washington UMC

- Friends of Youth

and more.

Resources

What resources does your faith community have that you might be able to share with others?

Examples: knowledge about a particular subject, lots of excellent curriculum to loan out, a beautiful space that's accessible to all and useful for small or large groups, strong leaders with a willingness to teach, a vibrant youth group that would love to collaborate with others, etc.

- Fully Accessible building w/ Green Space

- Pastor can teach Lay Preaching

- A few church members are professors of New Testament, Theology, Psychology with particular interest in men's work

We are in this work together and we are grateful for your contributions to our shared resource library.

Ministry Priority Areas

The Greater Northwest Area, the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference, and the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference claimed Ministry Priority Areas.

GNW Priorities: lessening *housing, hunger, and health disparities*, *young people's ministry development*, *training for lay leadership*, *securing preferred and in-common vendors*, and *supporting information technology and tech for local ministry teams*.

PNW Priorities: *climate care and combating climate change,* developing *ministries with youth and young people*, *addressing disparities in housing, hunger, and health, standing for equity, justice, and against racism,* and *centering spiritual formation and discipleship*.

OR-ID Priorities: climate care/climate change, discipleship and leadership development (*focused on laity), equity/justice/anti-racism, housing, hunger (and *health), youth and young people, *circle of indigenous ministries, *congregational development.

Which of the priority areas does your church excel and can offer leadership in?

- Housing, Hunger, and Health Disparities

- Training for Lay Leadership

Which of the priority areas does your church struggle with and need some assistance in?

- Developing Ministries with Youth and Young People

Which of the priority areas does your church want to learn more about?

- Climate Care / Combating Climate Change

Which of the priority areas does your church have questions about?

- In-Common Vendors / Tech Support