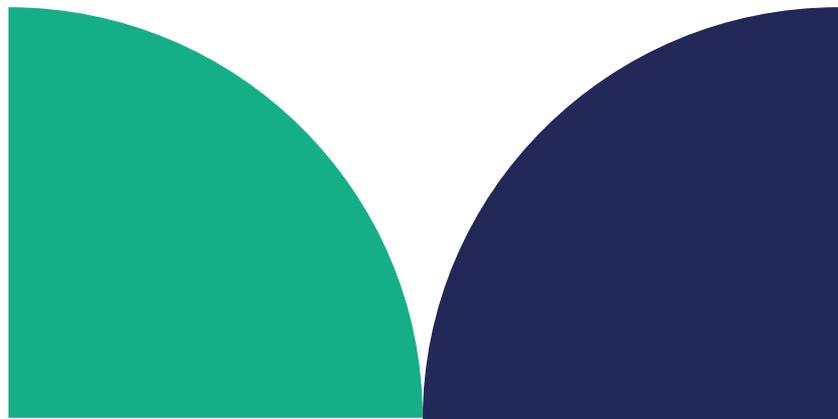


**2022**

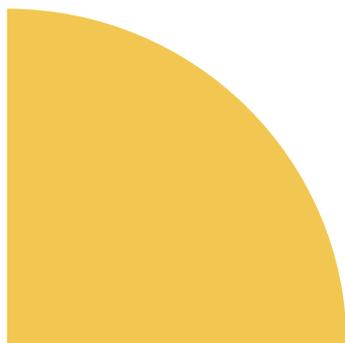
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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**STORYDWELLING:  
A WEB OF RELATIONSHIP,  
LIBERATION, AND CARE**

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# PASTOR'S NOTE

*Spiritual creatives.* As our Shameless womxn's circle read the profound reflections of Cole Arthur Riley in her book *This Here Flesh* this past autumn, I was struck by this beautiful turn of phrase: "spiritual creatives." Since our start in 2018, those who call Storydwelling "home" have danced around the questions that any reflective spiritual community encounters: who are we? What is our purpose? Are we a church, or something else? This year, we did the intentional work of encountering these questions. We crafted a whole lot of words: an identity statement, a series of commitments, and an affirmation statement that acknowledges the repair we want to engage in as people who know that dominant church has, too often, stifled creativity rather than encouraged it. This process gave us new grounding in who we are and are becoming and what convictions we hold dear. Trusting that the Spirit who hovers within and among us is, ultimately, *creative*, we are freed to continue to play with what it means to be Storydwelling and what it means to be "church" here and now in Central Oregon. What a delightful vocation for all of us- and especially for me, as I continue to be humbled by this precious work among you.

Peace, Pastor Erika



# RELATIONAL CIRCLES

When we imagine Storydwelling, we imagine not a house but a neighborhood; not a sun but a constellation; not a tree but the mycelium under the tree, connecting life together. We are a network made up of relational circles that thrived this year.

- **Story Brunch (Sunday gathering)**
- **Midweek Mindfulness**
- **Shameless Womxn's Circle**
- **Sacred Circle**
- **LGBTQIA+ Circle**
- **Open Table**
- **Lifeline**
- **Storykids**
- **Multifaith Youth Group**
- **Theology Table (New in January 2023!)**



## Weekly Gatherings

If you have gathered among us recently, you'll know that our Sunday gatherings are equal parts reflective and raucous! We gathered weekly this year around fire pits, for Land Learns in local natural habitats, in city parks, on our patios, at the Storydwelling offices and the Latino Community Center. Our sacraments are bread and wine, coffee and cookies, and—starting in 2022—they were shared monthly around Open Table, our new dinner-and-conversation gathering. We are intergenerational, playful, and prophetic when we are together, and this was more evident than ever before at our new, annual retreat as a full community at Suttle Lake, where 60 folks—from newborns to elders—came together for a rainy weekend of connection, reflection and square dancing. What joy!

Under CarolJoy's thoughtful and skilled leadership, we also deepened our commitment to spiritual practices this past year. Beginning with a one-day labyrinth retreat, circles of people practiced the *examen*—an ancient spiritual practice—during Lent and engaged in rounds of Midweek Mindfulness throughout the year. Midweek Mindfulness invites us to practice *lectio divina*—sacred reading—and reflect on our connections to the changing rhythms of the seasons and of our lives. With this practice, we are more and more becoming a community engaged in both action and reflection, and we are so grateful for CJ's leadership.

# REPARATIONS

In 2022, we began the process of becoming intentional about how we steward the resources and access we have as a spiritual community descended from churches with immense privilege. While we are just beginning this journey, it feels important to offer a brief report. Our Sacred Circle for Immigrant + Racial Justice designated 2% of the community gifts Storydwelling received in 2022—*our people's money*—to three local organizations: The Father's Group, Latino Community Association, and the Cuush Fund for Warm Springs water infrastructure. We are exploring this dimension of our vocation as an act of repair because we believe that our liberation is inextricably bound with the liberation of communities historically and presently oppressed. We need these local organizations to survive and thrive if we are to all be free. Expect to hear more next year about the evolution of this reflection process.



# PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

One of our core commitments is to publicly partner and share resources with other aligned communities in Central Oregon. It has been a joy to leverage our large office space at Sunlight Solar in the Bend Central District to offer space to some other fabulous small nonprofits, including Rural Organizing Project, Central Oregon FUSE, and the Peaceful Presence Project. And, of course, one of our most dear public partnerships is with ReVillage— the nonprofit childcare co-op and advocacy organization we birthed in 2020 alongside Bend First Presbyterian Church. In 2022, we continued to support our pilot center that facilitates high-quality, affordable care for 15 local families; brought on our first full-time center director; began renovations at our second site; and launched conversations with partners in Sisters and Sunriver as potential third and fourth sites. This work continues to be driven by the heart and vision of a few key Storydwelling and other faith-community leaders who know in their guts that early childhood education is one of the biggest gaps in infrastructure in our region—one of the biggest economic injustices for a generation—and that families truly can build the power to address it.

# SPIRITUALLY ACCOMPANYING OUR CHILDREN & TEENS



As more and more children and teens begin to root themselves in Storydwelling, we realized we needed to get intentional in 2022 about how we are spiritually accompanying them. We engaged in multiple listening lunches and learning sessions together, and we kept coming back to some core tenets: we want our children to know the belonging, justice, creativity and love of God.



The medium—the spaces we create alongside our youngest ones—communicates more than any beliefs, content or doctrine ever could. A relational circle for elementary-aged kids—Storykids—continues to emerge into 2023.



At the same time, it became clear to us that our teens and pre-teens needed community more than ever after two years of pandemic isolation. We are partnering with Bend Church, Nativity Lutheran, the Unity Community of Central Oregon, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Oregon to create spaces of connection and belonging for our teenagers. Thanks to some grant funding from the state, and pastors from each community lending their time and love, we launched this work in the summer of 2022 and the season culminated in a retreat to Suttle Lake in November. We look forward to deepening this work this year.

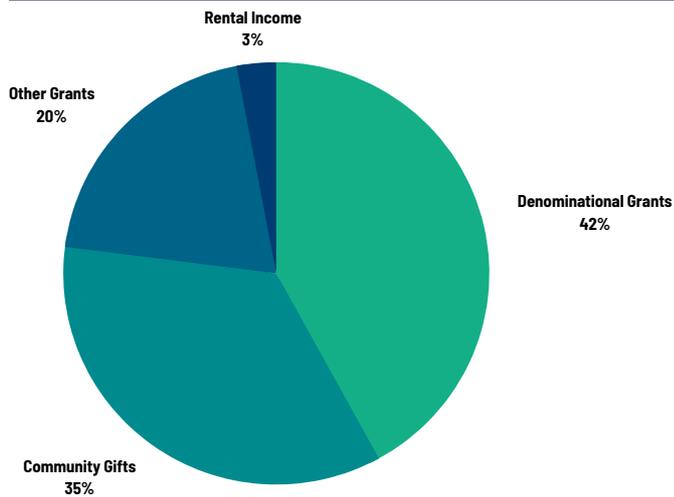
# STORYDWELLING BY THE NUMBERS



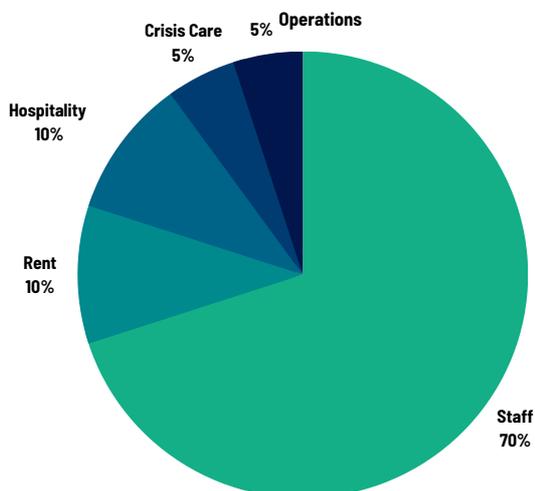
60+ families and individuals call Storydwelling "home":  
their spiritual home, movement home,  
or community home.

37 monthly gifters helped sustain our work,  
plus 35 generous one-time gifts in 2022.

## STORYDWELLING INCOME



## STORYDWELLING EXPENSES



# How to Connect



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**Phone:**  
541-566-6064



**How to send a gift:**  
[www.bendstorydwelling.org/invest](http://www.bendstorydwelling.org/invest)

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