



THE DWELLING

where God and God's people meet



2025 IMPACT REPORT



502 N. Broad Street | WSNC | 27101



www.thedwellingws.org

WHAT IS THE DWELLING?

ED & ADVOCACY

RESTORATIVE WRITING

SHELTER

FEASTING

SHOWERS

WORSHIP

We are a faith community where everyone, regardless of housing status, mental health, past trauma, or substance use, are leaders in their church. Our community is rooted in five core theological values: housing doesn't equal worthiness, trauma doesn't equal shame, hunger doesn't equal emptiness, sobriety doesn't equal salvation, and wealth doesn't equal belovedness. By affirming and celebrating the inherent dignity of all people, we create a space where everyone is welcomed as they are.

At The Dwelling, worship is where our community takes shape. It's honest and unpolished, rooted in real life and real stories. We gather as we are. No pretending, no posturing. And we meet God in the middle of our complexity. Around scripture, song, prayer, and table, we practice healing together, holding one another's grief and joy as we grow into beloved community.

Every week, our mobile shower trailer becomes a small sanctuary on wheels. More than 60 neighbors step inside for hot water and privacy and step back out with fresh underwear, clean T-shirts, socks, and toiletries. It's a practical service, but it's also a quiet declaration: your body matters, your dignity matters, you matter.

At The Dwelling, we believe food is holy. From the very beginning of scripture to the last pages of Revelation, God meets people at a table. Feasting is not an afterthought; it is central to the story of redemption. When we gather to eat, we are participating in something ancient and sacred. Around the table, strangers become neighbors, scarcity gives way to abundance, and grace is tasted as surely as it is preached.

We believe God meets us in the most vulnerable places- and winter makes that vulnerability visible. Our shelter ministry spans multiple locations across the city, partnering with congregations to provide coordinated spaces of refuge for women, mothers and children, and men seeking warmth and safety. This work reflects our conviction that church is not only where we gather on Sundays, but how we respond when survival is at stake. To offer shelter is to declare, in the most tangible way, that no one is disposable and no one is meant to endure hardship alone.

Voices from The Dwelling is an eight-week restorative writing journey offered in partnership with Authoring Action. Designed as a space of trust and creativity, the program invites neighbors to explore and tell their stories with honesty and courage. Through guided prompts and shared reflection, participants cultivate voice, confidence, and healing. Each cycle concludes with a live storytelling event where these narratives are spoken into the room. The result is more than an engagement, it is a powerful act of visibility that deepens connection, confronts harmful assumptions, and highlights the wisdom and resilience woven throughout our community.

As a member of our local IAF, The Dwelling engages in collective organizing to address systemic challenges and advance justice. We work alongside neighbors to build power, strengthen relationships, and pursue meaningful change. Spark'Dwell, a partnership with SPARK, forms participants in advocacy rooted in proximity and shared experience. By connecting relationship-centered service with action, we equip people to engage issues like homelessness and housing insecurity with both compassion and courage, reflecting our commitment to lasting, systemic transformation.



BELOVEDS,

Another Year of Love to Celebrate

Five full years.

Five years of tables set and cleared.

Five years of prayers whispered and shouted.

Five years of names learned, stories held, tears wiped, meals shared, beds made, songs sung.

Five full years of becoming.

When The Dwelling began, survival was the question.

Would this work? Could it last? Was there really space for a church like this?

Now, moving into year six, the question has shifted.

Not will it survive?

But what is it becoming?

And that feels like holy ground.

Because what has taken root here is no longer fragile. It is alive. It is steady. It is deepening.

This past year, we watched that depth expand in ways both visible and quiet. We gathered hundreds of people each week around breakfast, worship, and lunch. We served thousands upon thousands of meals. We offered showers, shelter, advocacy, and loving presence. We welcomed young people eager to learn what beloved community looks like in real time.

But the truest impact cannot be measured in numbers alone.

It's found in the neighbor who now calls this place home.

In the volunteer who discovered their own healing while serving.

In the staff member who found their vocation sharpened in the middle of hard, beautiful work.

In the city beginning to recognize that love organized well can change systems.

The Dwelling is no longer simply responding to need.

We are shaping imagination.

We are proving that dignity is not a luxury.

That shared leadership is not naive.

That church can still be a place where people are restored to themselves and to one another.

And we are only just beginning.

Rev. Emily Harkin



BY THE NUMBERS

 **2,807** showers

& 14,136 HYGIENE KITS & CLOTHING ITEMS GIVEN 



719 UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS SHELTERED IN 2025 SHELTER SEASON

36 partner congregations 



37,069 MEALS SERVED

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

185

18  BAPTISMS & AFFIRMATIONS

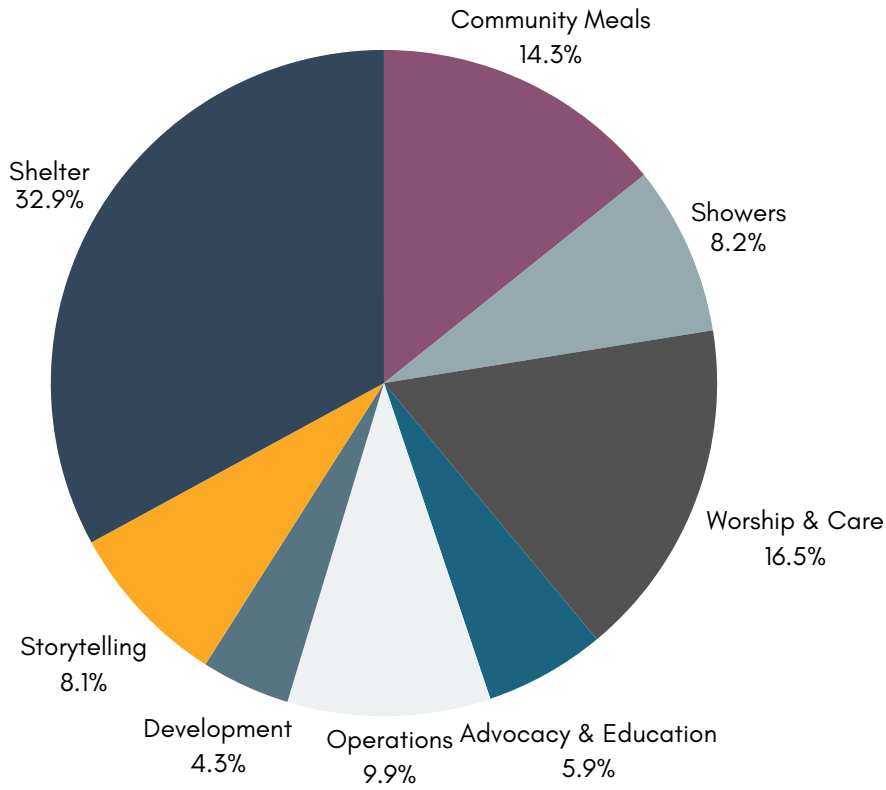
over **2,184** pantry visits

2200+ HOURS OF PASTORAL CARE & COMMUNITY 

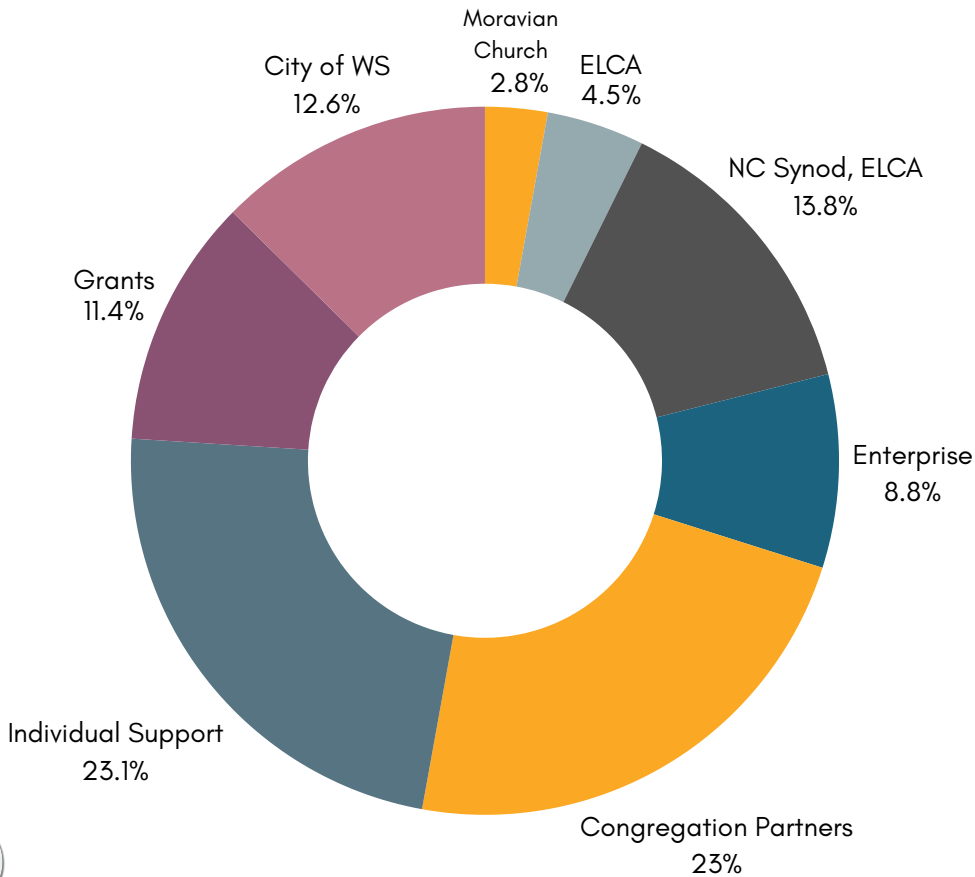


FINANCIALS

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



INCOME SOURCES



Friday, August 22, 2025

HONORING FIVE-YEARS OF THE DWELLING

DWELL *With Us* CELEBRATION



This year, nearly 200 people gathered at Augsburg Lutheran Church to mark The Dwelling's five-year milestone. The celebration was held in the very room that once operated as a winter shelter - the same space where Pastor Emily first began imagining what The Dwelling might become. What was once a place of overnight cots and temporary refuge became, for one evening, a space of reflection and gratitude.

The room was filled with volunteers, community partners, neighbors, staff, board members, and long-time supporters; many of whom have shaped The Dwelling in visible and unseen ways over the years. Conversations stretched across tables. Stories were shared about early mornings, long winters, shared meals, and unexpected friendships. A silent auction added energy to the evening, but the heart of the gathering was not transactional. It was relational.

This was our first large-scale event of this kind, and it felt less like a formal program and more like a snapshot of the community itself: diverse, committed, and deeply connected. People who first met through shelter shifts, worship services, meal teams, or advocacy efforts found themselves in the same room, now five years into a shared story.

Standing in that space, where the initial vision took shape, offered perspective. What began as an idea formed in the margins has grown into a steady, rooted ministry sustained by many hands. The evening served as a reminder that The Dwelling has always been built collectively, and that its strength continues to come from the people who show up, believe in the work, and choose to stay connected.





WORSHIP

Worship is at the heart of everything we do.
It is where we begin.

Before there are programs, partnerships, or plans, there is worship. It grounds us, shapes us, and reminds us who we are and whose we are. Every meal we serve, every shower offered, every young person welcomed through Spark'Dwell, every act of advocacy or care flows from that center. We don't gather to fuel our work; our work flows from our gathering.

Worship is not one ministry among many. It is the well we draw from. It is where we are re-oriented to grace, re-rooted in love, and sent back out to embody what we have received.



**"WORSHIP, TO ME, IS REMEMBERING THAT I WAS BORN INTO CHRIST AND THAT THROUGH MY BAPTISM, I CHOSE TO PUT GOD FIRST IN MY LIFE. AND NOT JUST ONCE, BUT EVERY DAY, PUTTING HIM FIRST EVEN MORE. WORSHIP IS DEDICATING MY LIFE AND EVERYTHING I HAVE TO GOD AND PRAISING HIM ALWAYS. WORSHIP IS LIVING LIKE I BELONG TO HIM."
- FELICIA**

SHOWERS



Q: Why showers? Why make that a ministry?

Because being clean changes how you move through the world. You stand a little straighter. You feel human again. You can apply for a job. You can sit in a room without worrying about how you smell. A shower seems small, until you don't have one.

Q: What's something people misunderstand about the shower ministry?

That it's just about hygiene. It's actually about consistency. We're here every week. Same place. Same faces. When everything else in someone's life is unstable, that matters. Also, it's not chaotic like people imagine. It's structured. Respectful. Calm. Our neighbors take care of the space because they know it's theirs too.

Q: What do you wish people understood about our neighbors who use the showers?

They're not projects. They're not statistics. They're people navigating systems that weren't built for them. And they're funny. Creative. Smart. Resilient. If you spend one hour here, your stereotypes won't survive it.

Q: Last question. What has this ministry done to your own faith?

It's simplified it. Jesus washed feet. We hand out soap and towels. It turns out the gospel doesn't have to be complicated.

ORGANIZING

Through our partnership with Forsyth IAF, this year was about moving from listening to action. After last year's community-wide listening and issue selection, we launched Research Action Teams focused on affordable housing, homelessness, mental health, and education. Community members serve on every team. Deacon Brooke stepped into leadership as co-chair of the Mental Health team, and Nick Childress serves as co-chair of the Homelessness team. We also invested in leadership development, sending two staff members and two community members to an intensive three-day organizing training so that those most impacted continue to shape the work.

The defining moment of 2026 was the county-wide leaders meeting. We brought 12 Dwelling leaders to the gathering, offering both presence and leadership alongside more than 30 congregations and partner organizations. Ron and Cheryl represented The Dwelling and the Homelessness Team, sharing courageous and deeply personal stories about the cost of housing insecurity and the urgent need for community-driven solutions. As a direct result, our network is now organizing to create a \$1 million Housing Stability Fund designed to prevent homelessness before it happens. This year, The Dwelling did not just show up—we helped lead, shape proposals, and build momentum toward real, systemic change in our community.



FEASTING

QUICK FACTS:

10,482 LBS OF PRODUCE EATEN
27,976 LBS OF TOTAL FOOD EATEN
34.93% OF FOOD EATEN WAS DONATED

\$750: THE AVG. WEEKLY COST OF BREAKFAST & LUNCH



This was our largest year of feasting yet: over 37,000 meals eaten together!

It was also a difficult year, marked by rising food costs and the realities of federal funding cuts that stretched every dollar further than we thought possible. Grocery bills climbed week after week, food banks ran bare, and the safety nets many of our neighbors rely on grew thinner. We felt the tension of wanting to expand while simultaneously navigating real financial pressure.

And still, the tables kept filling.

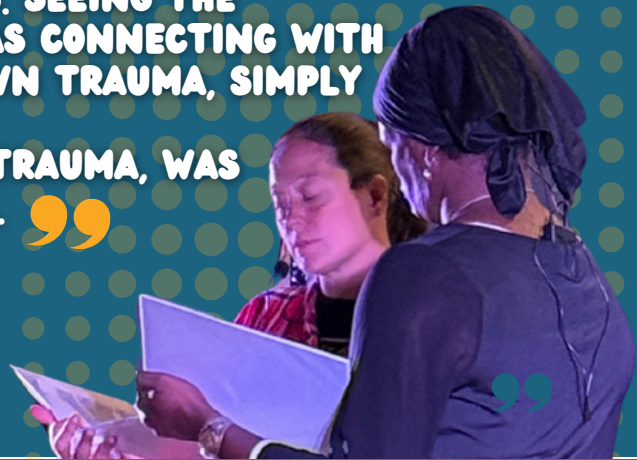
As we look ahead, we're not scaling back the dream, we're asking an even bigger question: how do we continue to eat together as God's people, no matter what?

Voices FROM THE DWELLING

This fall, Voices from The Dwelling went to the WOMEN!



“ AT THE BEGINNING, I WAS AFRAID. BUT THROUGH BUILDING A BOND WITH THE WOMEN I WAS HEALING ALONGSIDE, I FELT POWERFUL STANDING UP AND TELLING MY STORY- WHILE MY SISTERS TOLD THEIRS. SEEING THE WONDERFUL WOMEN I WAS CONNECTING WITH GROW THROUGH THEIR OWN TRAUMA, SIMPLY BECAUSE I OPENED UP ABOUT MY TRUTHS AND TRAUMA, WAS INCREDIBLY MEANINGFUL. ”
- MICHELLE



SPARK'DWELL



Spark'Dwell 2025 centered on the theme: (Un)Rest. Together, we explored what it means to live in a restless world while being rooted in God's sustaining presence; learning how holy disruption and sacred rest can exist side by side.



A collaboration between SPARK and The Dwelling, Spark'Dwell offers Spirit and Service Learning Experiences that engage justice issues like homelessness, hunger, poverty, and racism through both action and reflection.



In Summer 2025, we welcomed 214 youth and 86 adults from 14 states and 11 North Carolina cities and towns, completing 28 service projects focused on food insecurity, affordable housing, intergenerational connection, and inclusive community.



Dreaming Forward...



Many of our neighbors, whether unhoused or housed but living on the financial edge, simply cannot afford to do laundry. Sometimes it's the cost of quarters and detergent. Sometimes it's an overdue power bill, a broken washer, or transportation barriers that make a laundromat impossible to reach. Clean clothes become a luxury instead of a given. And right now, laundry access is not a resource offered anywhere in our city.

The absence of this basic service has ripple effects. Without clean clothing, it's harder to secure employment, maintain housing, attend school, access healthcare, or simply move through the world with confidence. What looks like "just laundry" is often directly connected to health, stability, and dignity.

Launching a mobile laundry trailer is a practical and compassionate response to that gap. This initiative is designed to:

- Provide free, accessible laundry services alongside our existing shower ministry, creating a more holistic hygiene hub
- Meet neighbors where they are, including known encampments and underserved areas across the city, reducing transportation barriers
- Decrease health risks associated with prolonged wear of soiled clothing, while restoring dignity through access to clean garments
- Strengthen our stewardship of donated clothing by allowing people to wash and reuse items rather than discarding them, reducing waste and environmental impact

Clean clothes are not a luxury. They are foundational to well-being and belonging.

What It'll Take: \$96,000

