Bothell Urban

A VISION FOR
BECOMING CHRIST IN THE DOWNTOWN BOTHELL COMMUNITY
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Bothell Urban Vision

Bothell United Methodist Church has been in the Bothell community for over 130 years and its roots have been in serving the community. Church members built the first school in Bothell and after a summer fire ravaged the town, the church raised money for the bell that served as the community's fire alarm. Bothell UMC continues to serve the community today in a myriad of ways and sees the increasing population in the downtown area as a positive sign of growth and an opportunity to serve a growing population. We aspire to continue and expand our work in ministry with the Bothell community by assuring that the needs of this increasingly urban population are met. Our commitment to this region and our purpose of becoming Christ in the Community are calling us to create a more physical presence in the downtown area in order to connect more directly with the community and serve people where they are.

This physical location will be designed to bring an open community gathering space, community service touch points, affordable housing and spiritual wellness to urban Bothell in partnership with other agencies. Bothell UMC’s under-utilized assets of real estate will be repurposed in order to invest those assets in a downtown property. We envision the implementation of a ground lease on the property to developers who share in our vision.

Bothell Urban will be located on the ground floor of a multistory building. Bothell Urban will provide a variety of activities and programs throughout the year for people of all ages and backgrounds to find a place of belonging, and specifically aimed at people looking for transformation, renewal and restoration. People desiring a place that is safe, inclusive and comfortable will feel at home here. The facility will feel modern, inviting and will be located in a convenient location near transit access. We envision an inclusive space that all will feel welcome and at the same time address those who are in need of human services (both mental and physical) as well as those seeking spiritual nourishment.

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Bothell United Methodist Church History

Bothell as we know it today started as a logging community in the wild, heavily forested lands north of Seattle. In the years following the US Civil War, enterprising settlers rushed to find new opportunities for their families.

On the first Sunday in November 1885, Alice Bothell, the wife of a local settler, organized a meeting of local families to read scripture and sing hymns together. They met in the parlor of her in-laws’ boarding house and by the end of the meeting, it was decided to start a Methodist Episcopal Church.

They broke ground on the first church building in 1889 on Main Street in Bothell. From the very beginning, The Bothell Methodist Episcopal Church looked outward into the community to address the needs of others. Church members built the first school. They asked the Methodists in Seattle for books when the community needed a lending library, and after a summer fire ravaged the town, the church raised money for a bell that served as the community’s fire alarm. That outward focus has continued over the years. Bothell United Methodist Church helped to organize the Bothell Area Overseas Relief Committee and sent donations to Germany following World War II. It began and housed the Neighbors in Need food bank which has since become Hopelink. In 2009 it was recognized that many in our community are in need of a reliable hot meal and fellowship. Bothell Community Kitchen served its first meal on November 22, 2009 and is today supported by dedicated volunteers serving our local community.

In addition to the community emphasis, worship and personal faith growth have always been important to us. Strong programs for children and youth began with Sunday School and ice cream socials back in Alice Bothell’s day. Those early programs evolved into choirs, vacation Bible schools, Christmas pageants, youth retreats, summer camps and more to foster faith development in our kids and youth. For adults, Bible study, prayer, congregational care, small groups and more have been and continue to be integral threads in the fabric of church life. And the congregation grew, it moved to a bigger building on West Hill. The current church was consecrated on May 11, 1958 and the education wing was completed and consecrated in 1965. When it became apparent that we were again busting at the seams, the church built a new sanctuary that was completed in 2001.

In more recent years, the church adopted its Welcome Statement, and it’s Purpose, Goals and Practices. Bothell United Methodist Church continues to grow and evolve, but the heart of caring and serving others remains. And of course, our purpose is clear: Becoming Christ in the Community.
Bothell Urban Project History

May 2019 was the first named and official meeting of the Bothell Urban Team. However, the discussions for this project really began after 2010 when Bothell United Methodist Church named our purpose as “Becoming Christ in the Community” and our goals as “Transformed People, Transformed Relationships and Transformed Conditions.” Hearing a call towards the community that is not yet a part of our congregation, the Staff Parish Relations committee hired Deacon Kristin Joyner to fill a realized gap in our outreach work in 2016.

Bothell UMC now had an active listener and participant in the conversations in our community, and various needs, solutions and opportunities surfaced. These were brought back into discussions with people in the congregation and various ministries and partnerships developed that helped us move towards our goals.

Congregational focus sessions on our increasing awareness of homelessness created partnerships with New Ground Bothell, Lake City Partners and the North King County Winter Shelter in order to transform conditions of homelessness.

A relationship developed between Bothell High School and the Northshore School District so that we now participate in the Threads & Treads clothing bank and the Brown Bag program as a way to be in relationship with our neighbors, our community and to assist in transforming the conditions for students.

Awareness for the lack of access to information about Human Services, in partnership with the City of Bothell and Cascadia College created a pilot program of Community Resource Days – a temporary way for people to learn about local Human Services, which transformed relationships between Human Services agencies and those who need them. People are transformed and move towards health when they can access the services that are available to them.

A Community Assistance Team was formed in conversations with the Bothell Police Department and our neighbors to implement policy, structure and a Community Assistance Fund to help people in our community with one-time financial needs, groceries, gasoline and safe temporary overnight parking. This has strengthened our relationship with our neighbors, our police department and emphasizes our desire to create relationships that offer love and belonging to all people.

Bothell Community Kitchen (BCK) team leadership determined that BCK is not just about food, it’s about offering a place of community building. The community resource knowledge, computer access and sense of belonging was intentionally increased in order to participate in transforming relationships and conditions.

A partnership with Riverton Park UMC developed as team members from Bothell UMC determined to not only help them in their work transitioning people from homelessness, but to learn how their ideas could transform how we do our work here at Bothell UMC.
We also now had a place at the table for regional discussions concerning the lack of affordable housing crisis at many meetings and workshops organized by the North Urban Human Services Alliance and King County agencies. Deacon Kristin was appointed as a Citizen Advisory Board member for A Regional Coalition for Housing.

In our church trainings and workshops in the broader connection of the United Methodist Church, staff and leadership was learning about the current generations reporting loneliness, disconnectedness and high rates of suicide. We were learning about the high numbers of churches that are closing because of lack of trust in institutions and religion. We were learning about the high rates of people who check the box “none” when asked what religion they follow. We as disciples of Christ need to participate in sharing the word of God in this tough environment, but the majority of people just aren’t coming to our doors. “Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors” is just not enough in our world today to reach those we are called to serve.

During this time of increasing awareness of how Bothell UMC could participate in the work of our larger community, people and ideas came forward. The biggest crisis surfacing in our area has been the lack of housing that is affordable. Many of the passionate disciples at Bothell UMC wondered if we could do anything on our excess property to build affordable housing, offer more safe parking spaces for people living in their cars or host a tent encampment. These ideas, while probably do-able, were met with barriers including lack of transit, neighborhood compatibility, and the desire to do something more permanent.

As so often happens in the mysteries of God’s work, a group of people came together with an idea.

This group of people had experience in working at Riverton Park UMC’s program, Habitat for Humanity, city development, creating and sustaining programs, buying and selling real estate, working with city and governmental regulations and ordinances, and all had passion and years of dedicated experience working for community, people and following the teachings of Jesus to “go into the world.”

This group wanted to help build community, wanted to create an opportunity for people to access a sense of belonging and the care they need in a place that people could easily access, walk by, walk in. If our church could go into the Downtown Bothell area, where the population is growing by leaps and bounds, we could participate with them in building the kind of community where all people are valued, loved and know they belong. The people that wouldn’t walk into a traditional church, but still are seeking a place of connection, and a relationship with Jesus, could find it with us, and they could help build that community that they are seeking. If we could only offer the space.

**Right now**, the Downtown Bothell area is under a lot of renovation and restructuring due to a major fire, environmental cleanups, city budget issues, transit access, the Growth Management Act (GMA) and more. University of Washington Bothell, Cascadia College, housing for seniors,
community activists desiring people-oriented places are all vibrant and increasing concurrent downtown issues. Housing numbers and density are dramatically increasing, but none of it is Affordable Housing at this time. There is a regional housing crisis and there are real estate opportunities in downtown Bothell at this time. This is why we feel it is necessary to instigate this vision at this time.

In workshops, news, and discussions in the region, we have learned that the Faith Community is a very large contributor to Affordable Housing. Many faith communities have sold their property or gifted their property to Affordable Housing developers. But the vision for Bothell Urban UMC is that there is another way to achieve this AND continue to expand our ministry and service.

For us to have space downtown, we could rent a building, buy a building, or buy land and build. Each of those would take a lot of funding. In discussions about the various aspects, the team realized that we have the financial ability to buy a piece of property in downtown Bothell if we sell the unused portion of our property, the property west of our parking lot.

The land was purchased when Bothell UMC moved to West Hill in the early 1950’s. The 48,000 square foot parcel west of the parking lot has mostly sat unused for over 60 years. We feel that allowing that land to remain vacant is not the best use of that land, nor does it show us to be good stewards of that legacy. It is zoned for residential use, and there is a robust market for vacant land at this time. Selling this land to a housing developer that shares a vision of being a good neighbor would allow us the financial wherewithal to purchase land in downtown.

But to build a building, that is another financial need.

A generous percentage of the cost for a developer to build a multi-story building is in the purchase of land. If a developer doesn’t need to pay for land, this greatly decreases their cost. If we, Bothell UMC, owns the land, and a developer owns the building, it seems like a win-win. This is called a ground lease – Bothell UMC could buy land, own that land, and rent the space to the developer to build their building. However, we could decrease, or forfeit renting it to them if they build the building and give us the ground floor, retail space.

The team has worked diligently to realize this and put together a plan that is realistic, creative and a viable vision. Here is an outline of the work so far.
Research, Education and Development of the Vision

Between 2016 – 2019, our Deacon has been developing relationships and knowledge of local community assets and issues, as a bridge between our church and our region. This networking is an important part of Becoming Christ in the Community as a way to both listen to and respond to all that God is doing in our world. Regular attendance and participation in the Bothell Kenmore Chamber of Commerce, The Kenmore Bothell Interfaith Group, The Northshore School District Human Services Consortium, The North Urban Human Services Alliance, Providence Institutes for Healthier Communities, Lake City Partners Ending Homelessness, Northshore Schools Foundation and meeting with our local elected officials and city staff have all been a source of increasing our knowledge and engagement. Regional meetings with All Home, King County leaders and interfaith gatherings that include the Church Council of Greater Seattle have validated the need for faith communities to have a voice in the conversation about community building for all people. Lay people, staff and Bothell Urban team members all attended these community meetings and partnerships at various times as well.

In 2017, Alan Jacobsen and Jim O’Farrell led our partnership with Riverton Park UMC in order to glean lessons learned from their experience in excess land use. We learned how this church was able to expand on their vision of supporting affordable housing, helping people experiencing homelessness, and building community. While their model is different from the one we are recommending, our team gathered valuable insights and lessons from RPUMC.

April 2019
- Deacon Kristin met with SPR (Staff Parish Relations) to discuss the development of this ministry, time commitment and general process ideas.
- CBRE real estate services offered advice on comparable sales and appraisals

May 2019
- Team discussed formalizing our goals and process
- PNW UMC Conference treasurer heard vision and offered advice on appraisals and Book of Discipline rules on property
- Conversation with City Manager of Bothell, discussed opportunities in Bothell for property.
- Met with executives at Hopelink to discuss potential interest in partnering

June 2019
- Team discussed presentation of vision to Governing Board
- Conversation with development company about vision
- Met with Governing Board for approval to move forward
- Conversation with development company and King County Housing Authority for assistance and advice.
- Learned about land trust from Riverton Park UMC
- Sought appraisal companies
- Conversation with commercial property expert contact at Redmond UMC, referred by PNW UMC about appraisal process and interpretation
- Team discussed process, sale of land, communication efforts
July 2019
- Communicated to congregation an opportunity for an open forum discussion on vision
- All church meeting with PowerPoint and video presentation outlining the vision
- Team meetings
- Set up September focus sessions
- Met with Governing Board
- Met with representative from Edmonds UMC regarding the process they used to sell their excess land
- Met with District Superintendent

August 2019
- Met with Executive Manager of A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) for recommendations
- Met with North Urban Human Services Alliance and Wellspring, recorded video statements
- Conversation with HDC (Housing Development Consortium) for recommended developers
- Team meetings

September 2019
- Met with Real Estate attorney recommended by Edmonds UMC
- Met with affordable housing developer recommended by HDC
- Met with PNW UMC Committee on Building and Land regarding process and advice
- Held focus sessions for congregation and neighbors, day, weekend, evening

October 2019
- Received budget from affordable housing developer as an educational and advisory draft
- Conversation with PNW UMC Treasure on updated information and advice
- Engaged Real Estate attorney
- Conversation with Senior Planner at the City of Bothell about working together to add affordable housing in the City and new ordinances about density, ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Unit) and potential downtown property availability
- Attended small groups, CORE groups, and other church member gatherings
- Team meetings

November 2019
- Team members attended small groups, CORE groups, and other church member gatherings
- Team members available in Narthex each week between services
Print and Other Communication to Congregation

July 2019 – E-news 7/12, and in-church 7/14 announcements about July 18th meeting.
July 18, 2019 - All Church Meeting - Introduction to vision and team with video, PowerPoint and Q&A
July 19, 2019 - Blog post with video and FAQs sent to subscribers and linked to E-News 8/2.
August 2019 - E-News 8/2, 8/9, 8/23 and in church announcements about upcoming September Focus Sessions
September 4th - Article in Witness, emailed and printed
September 7, 9-10am, September 12, 7-8pm, and September 17, 12-1pm - Congregational Focus Sessions
October 2019 - Team attends small groups, CORE groups, UMW, Elderfest, Bible Studies and more.
October 31, 2019 - Blog posted with downtown space visuals sent to subscribers and as an E-News article.
November 4, 2019 - Article in Witness, emailed and printed
November 2019 – Team attends small groups, CORE groups and more. 28 gatherings were attended.
November 3, 10, 17, and 24 - Bothell Urban Ministry Team in Narthex between all services with information handouts and answering questions.
November 24, 2019 – All church meeting for Q&A session

Groups attended in person:

Oct. 13 – Children’s Council
Oct. 14 – Stueckle Small Group
Oct. 15 – Facilities
Oct. 16 – Russell CORE Group
Oct. 16 – Wiley Small Group
Oct. 17 – Carley\Lohr CORE Group
Oct. 21 – Jacobsen Small Group
Oct. 24 – Elderfest
Oct. 24 – Choir
Oct 26 – Banks\Vahey Small Group
Oct. 28 – Deveney Small Group
Nov. 2 – Wilson Small Group
Nov. 3 – Youth and Youth Parents
Nov. 6 – Archive Divers

Nov. 8 – Snyder Small Group
Nov. 9 – Donovan Small Group
Nov. 9 – Chi Small Group
Nov. 9 – Cancilla\Fields Small Group
Nov. 10 – Digging Deeper
Nov. 13 – Preaching Preview
Nov. 14 – Susannah Wesley UMW
Nov. 16 – Penhallegon CORE Group
Nov. 16 – Cahill Small Group
Nov. 17 – Staley\Wong CORE Group
Nov. 17 – Digging Deeper
Nov. 19 – Smith Small Group
Nov. 19 – Kim/Pearson Small Group
Nov. 21 – Dibble Small Group
Bothell Urban Draft Timeline
July - December 2019

- All Church Intro Meeting
  July 18, 2019
- Engaged Real Estate Attorney
  October 2019
- Key Stakeholder Conversations (e.g., Gardeners)
  July-November 2019
- Congregational Q&A Meeting
  November 24, 2019
- Focus Sessions
  September 2019
- Small Group Visits
  November 2019
- Conceptual Financial Plan Draft
  November 2019
- Congregational Vote
  "Yes" Sell "Yes" Buy
  December 1, 2019

Ongoing communication, engagement, and meetings with congregation.
Bothell Urban Draft Timeline
December 2019 - Q2 2020

- Conference Approval: December 2019
- Accept Bid on Excess Land: Q1 2020
- Finalize Developer Choice: Q1 2020
- Search for Downtown Property: Q2 2020
- Seek Bids on Excess Land: December 2019
- Interview of Developers of Affordable Housing for Downtown: Q1 2020
- Develop Pro Forma for Property with Developer: Q1 2020
- Decide on Downtown Property: Q2 2020

Ongoing communication, engagement, and meetings with congregation.
Bothell Urban Draft Timeline
Q4 2020 - Q4 2023

Deposit Proceeds from Sale of Property
Q4 2020

Make Offer on Downtown Property & Purchase Property
Q4 2020

Complete Design of Downtown Space Plan
Q2 2021

Initial Downtown Location Programs Planning
Q2 2021

Begin Construction Downtown
Q1 2022

Open Doors at Downtown
Q4 2023

Ongoing communication, engagement, and meetings with congregation.
How Will This Become A Reality?

On December 1, 2019, the members of the congregation will vote on a motion to sell land at our annual Church Conference. If that motion passes, there will be another motion to purchase land. The reason will do the second motion is so that we can begin the process towards purchasing land, knowing that we will have the realistic financial ability to do so.

The first motion will be:

“Trusting that God’s guidance and vision is leading us in our purpose and that our leadership and governance will move forward in the Bothell Urban project with due diligence, communication and financial responsibility, the Governing Board moves to sell the parcel of property west of our parking lot for a price that enables us to purchase land in downtown Bothell and preserve a percentage of the proceeds for the downtown Bothell ministries.”

That motion passing means that the team that has been working on this project, in concurrence with the Governing Board, will begin the process of selling the land.

After conversations with the PNW UMC Conference office, Edmonds UMC leadership and their recommended Real Estate attorney, we believe the best way to sell our land is through a closed bid process. This process allows us to stipulate conditions on the sale.

It is important for us to remain aligned with our values in this transaction, so our intentions are as follows:

- The buyer would need to be interested in creating housing commensurate with the housing in the neighborhood.
- Our preference is that a buyer would creatively employ the ordinances of the City of Bothell that allow for higher density in order to retain affordability for each residence.
- Our desire is to maintain space for the Children’s Garden, an active and positive community asset. We would stipulate that proposals either retain the garden in the parcel, perhaps as designated Open Space, or proposals to relocate the garden on a mutually agreeable location on our property.

The Real Estate Attorney will translate our intentions into contract language.

Bids will be received, studied and prayerfully considered and the team and Governing Board will choose the offer that best meets our values, intentions and goals.
Subsequent to the first motion passing, the second motion will be:

“Trusting that God’s guidance and vision is leading us in our purpose and that our leadership and governance will move forward in the Bothell Urban project with due diligence, communication and fiscal responsibility, the Governing Board moves that we be authorized to purchase appropriate property in downtown Bothell utilizing the proceeds from the sale of the parcel of property west of our parking lot.”

Upon approval of our members to purchase land, the team, in concurrence with Governing Board will seek interviews and proposals of interest from potential Affordable Housing developers. In partnership with the chosen developer, appropriate downtown Bothell property will be sought (see vision statement).

During this time, there will be increased congregational and community engagement to develop more details of the Bothell UMC Urban space plan.

Questions have been raised about the possibility that we are unable to purchase property in downtown Bothell for whatever reason. If this unlikely event were to occur after seeking creative solutions, the money from the sale of the land would then be available and used to expand other ministries of Bothell UMC after carefully discerning these options with the congregation, leadership and Governing Board. All uses of funds from sales of property in the United Methodist Church must be approved by the Conference Committee on Building and Land.
What Will the Downtown Bothell Urban Space look like?

- A physical space that:
  - Gives those looking for a safe, inclusive, and comfortable community gathering area a place to come in the downtown area
  - Serves as a touch point for those in need of human services as well as those looking for spiritual nourishment
  - Allows the Bothell UMC congregation to interact more directly with the greater Bothell community in the downtown area so that we can get more in touch with the community around us
  - Allows us to meet people where they are instead of hoping that they will show up at our door. Just having “Open hearts, open minds, and open doors” is no longer sufficient to meet our mission and purpose. Jesus didn’t just preach in synagogues, he went out into the surrounding communities and spoke with people where they were.

Specific programming and partners will be developed over time in conversation with congregation and community members. The many and varied ideas that have been suggested so far are:

- Bible Study and space for fellowship
- Music and Art workshops and performances
- Deli with training opportunities for people exiting homelessness or the justice system in partnership with a non-profit agency
- Access point for local human services in partnership with local agencies
- Community Meal or Community Kitchen
- Late night snacks and hang out for people waiting for busses or just off a shift at work, for those not wanting to be in a bar
- Woodworking classes or repair shop

A portion of the funds from the sale of the property on Westhill will be earmarked towards the development of the ministries in the new space. In addition, partnerships, grants, subleasing and other sources of income will be explored in order to create sustainable support of the space. The opportunities are endless and are more than we can imagine right now. Development of the space will take place over time and much conversation.
For additional documents, resources, articles, and videos, please go to

www.bothellumc.org/bothellurban