

INVESTED  FAITH

2023 Impact Report

Building a Fund to
Seed the Future





At Invested Faith we recognize that faith institutions as we have known them are dying. And, we believe that the Church is being born again and again, sometimes in the most unlikely expressions.

Letter from Our Founder

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on 2023 at Invested Faith, it feels difficult to express adequately the tremendous progress this year has held. We awarded DOUBLE the amount of grants we gave in 2022, awarding 19 Fellowships as well as 2 supplemental grants in 2023. On pages 6–7 of this report you'll see a timeline of several significant milestones reached just in 2023. This timeline tells an amazing story:

- We awarded DOUBLE the number of grants we gave in 2022, welcoming a total of 26 new Fellows to our community of faith rooted social entrepreneurs in 2023.
- The first of a series of mini-documentaries about the work of our Fellows debuted in July.
- Fellows from different faith traditions have joined our ranks, reminding us that the work of God in this world is never contained or controlled by our own limited perspectives; we have seen that truly, where there is good there is God.
- 2023 saw tremendous administrative strides, including the securing of independent 501(c)3 status, the hiring of professional accounting support for transparency and accountability, and the laying of groundwork for a development program that meets highest industry standards.
- We've assembled and hired a staff team to support our Fellows, to scale our work, and to help us prepare for future growth.
- In addition to increased contributions from individuals, several churches have stepped up to contribute to the IF fund as part of their legacy planning, truly embodying the fundamental idea behind IF's founding!
- Our partnership with Good Faith Media continues to grow with the debut of a longer documentary slated for January 2024.

These are just a few of the milestones of 2023, and I feel a tremendous debt of gratitude for so many of you who believed in this idea from the beginning. Please now join us in celebrating this new idea come to life.

I look forward to nurturing the growth of Invested Faith as we move forward, and I'm excited you're with us on this journey.

With deep gratitude and hope,

Rev. Dr. Amy Butler
Founder, Invested Faith

P.S. 2023 was also the year my first book, *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, was published. I write about the birth of the Invested Faith idea in the book; thank you for accompanying me on that journey, too!



About Invested Faith

Invested Faith is a non-profit fund created to allow churches, institutions and individuals to reimagine the way faith communities can heal the world—even beyond their traditional institutional expressions. The contributed assets of these institutions and individuals are held in a growth fund and distributed in small, unrestricted grants to faith-rooted social entrepreneurs working to build businesses that become new models of faith, community and justice-making across the country. We call these generous contributors Invested Faith Partners.

Some Invested Faith Partners are organizations reaching the end of their formal institutional lives. Thriving congregations also participate in the work of Invested Faith because they are excited about the mission and vision of Invested Faith and want to join efforts supporting this future-looking and faithful work across the country. Every contributor to the Invested Faith Fund is helping to build a vast network of innovative world-changers whose work will take what we invest now long into the future.

That investment begins generating immediate, practical returns because Invested Faith connects these funds to the work of social entrepreneurs who are building businesses that are working to

dismantle unjust systems and heal communities. The funding and support Invested Faith Fellows receive become integral to their success and thriving. They are world changers, and Invested Faith is the bridge that connects your gifts to their work.

Invested Faith Partners honor the past, celebrate the present, and seed the future.

After three years of building Invested Faith, we are even more convinced of its powerful potential to offer a hopeful opportunity for both congregations in decline as well as those congregations who are still thriving but looking for an innovative path to creating impact beyond their own church walls. We've seen that impact over and over in the stories of Invested Faith Fellows bringing healing to local communities and building more just systems.

The Invested Faith idea of small, unrestricted grants to faith-rooted social entrepreneurs is based on the teachings of Jesus, who kept inviting those around him to see the world with new eyes filled with possibility, to scatter seeds of goodness and justice with abandon fueled by hope. Invested Faith has seen this model pay off over and over as we watch our Fellows thrive.

Our History

Invested Faith is founded and led by Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, an ordained American Baptist (ABCUSA) minister. Dr. Butler has worked for almost three decades as the leader of historic faith institutions. Currently pastor of the Community Church of Honolulu, Hawai'i (UCC), Butler's platform is influential across much of American Protestantism. This year Butler released her first book, *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, which ends with the story of Invested Faith's genesis.

In the process of leading churches to new expressions of faith in a modern world, Butler realized how many of us cling to a crippling imagination of the past. She has watched too many faith communities become victims of a theology of scarcity, unable to harness and live into a new imagination for what God is doing in the world.

In 2019, Butler believed the time was ripe to build a bridge between institutional Christianity and social innovation and to seed the conversation within the Church about how best to steward our individual and collective resources.

In February of 2020, the Baugh Foundation provided seed money to begin turning the Invested Faith idea into reality. The philanthropic investment fund Impact Assets served as fiscal sponsor for the fledgling Invested Faith fund. After building a Board of Advisors and adding part time staff support, Invested Faith named the first class of Invested Faith Fellows—faith-rooted social entrepreneurs—in September of 2021. Steady growth has continued with support from a variety of individuals and institutions.

2023 has been a pivotal year for Invested Faith. With the stories of Fellows and their work providing a compelling backdrop, the Invested Faith Fund received several anchor gifts from religious institutions. These gifts came from closing churches and from thriving congregations, enabling faithful witness to continue long into the future. Individuals and private foundations also caught the Invested Faith vision and provided additional support and funding. As a result, Invested Faith was able to expand capacity and continue to build and support our Fellows program. Most critically, Invested Faith continues to identify and tangibly support faith-rooted social entrepreneurs innovatively building businesses addressing injustice in their communities.

Invested Faith Fellows receive a \$5000 unrestricted grant to further their work in whatever way they deem most necessary. This grant is often vital to the survival and success of Fellows' early work. Fellows are also invited to join Invested Faith RESOURCED gatherings which meet regularly online throughout the year. Fellows share peer support, learn from each other and from experts in the field, and find community to help them keep at their very difficult work.

By the close of 2023, Invested Faith had awarded 41 Fellowships to Fellows working in 21 states and the District of Columbia and had received over \$800,000 in grants, legacy gifts, and other contributions.



Our Invested Faith Fellows

Invested Faith Fellows are booksellers, gardeners, jewelry makers, kitchen managers, preschool operators, grocery store owners, filmmakers, t-shirt purveyors, hair salon owners, and so many more. Through their work they are pushing back at unjust systems and changing their communities.

Our Board of Advisors selects Fellows based on three criteria:

Rooted in Faith.

We believe: “where there is good, there is God.” We have funded not only Fellows rooted in the Christian tradition, but other faith traditions as well.

Changing unjust systems.

Impactful justice-making goes far beyond social band-aids or even acts of compassion. Creative businesses are changing the systems that undergird injustice by applying the pressure of competition to create opportunity and address inequity.

Building sustainable financial models.

The traditional donation-seeking model for non-profits is shifting and we are living in an era of discovering new models to build sustainable social enterprise. We fund Fellows who, through innovative business efforts and entrepreneurial philanthropy, are building long-term, sustainable, justice-making enterprises.

Tiffany Terrell

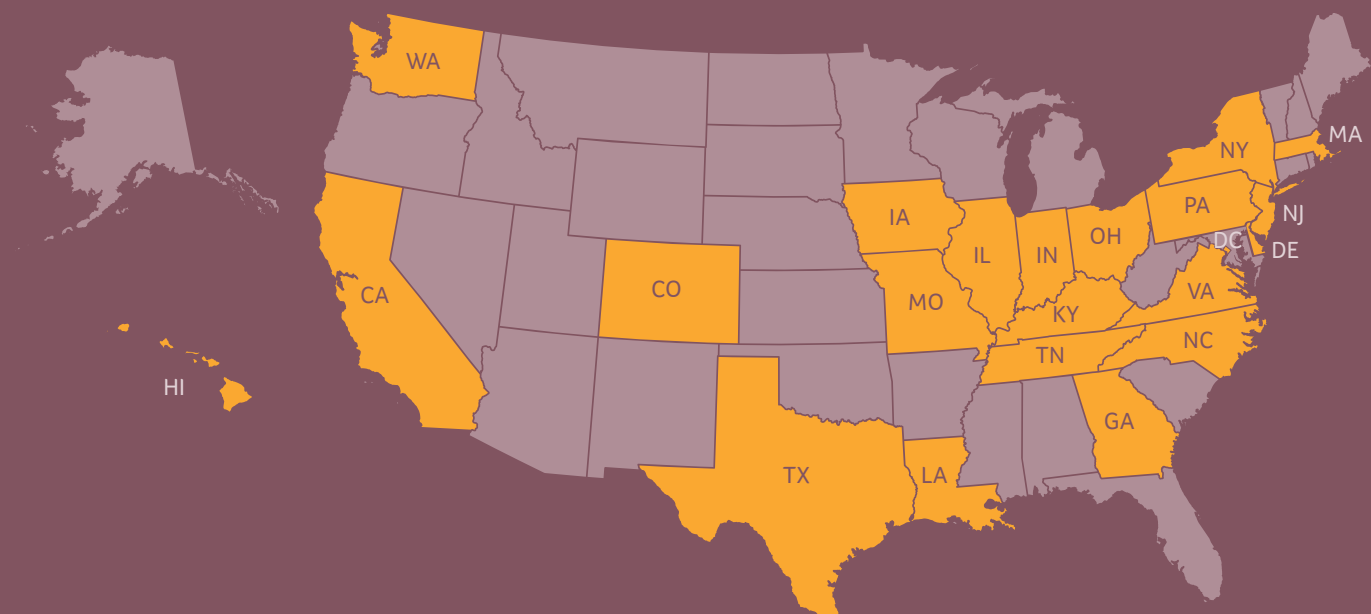
Kerry Brodie

Calvin Lee and Marisa Prince

Kamaile Pahukoa

Olatunji Oboi Reed

Invested Faith Fellows 2021-2023



Nikole Lim
Berkeley, CA
FREELY IN HOPE
Faith-based safe touch children's book

Andre Brown
Los Angeles, CA
A SOUL CLEANSING DOCUMENTARY
LGBTQ in the Black Church

Lizzy Case
San Diego, CA
ARRAYED
Socially and environmentally conscious apparel

Anna Clark
Colorado Springs, CO
LADY 280
Hair care for victims of sexual trafficking

Biff Chaplow
Denver, CO
EEQUAL
Student homelessness

Heather McDuffee and Prynness Favors
Colorado Springs, CO
CREATIONS @ THE EDGE
Economic justice for women

Chelsea Spyres
Wilmington, DE
WILMINGTON KITCHEN COLLECTIVE
Utilizing church kitchens for the community

Tiffany Terrell
Albany, GA
A BETTER WAY GROCERS
Healthy food accessibility

Leah Lonsbury
Atlanta, GA
JUST BAKERY OF ATLANTA
Fair employment for new Americans

Kamaile Pahukoa
Maui, HI
KE'ANAE MARKET
Rebuilding community through a farmers market

Nelson Crabbe and Nikola Rodriguez
Hilo, HI
'AWA BIRD NURSERY
Growing ancestral crops

Josh Hayashi
Honolulu, HI
MISSION MANAGEMENT COMPANY
Unlocking church potential

Kit Evans-Ford
Davenport, IA
ARGROW'S HOUSE OF HEALING AND HOPE
Resources for survivors of domestic violence

Olatunji Oboi Reed
Chicago, IL
EQUITICITY
Racial equity and community building

Ronnie Farmer
Marion, IN
I HAVE A DREAM PRESCHOOL
Building racial reconciliation in children

Alisha Madden
Indianapolis, IN
SPOLKS
Restoring community through bicycles

Johnetta Roberts
Louisville, KY
BLAK KOFFEE
Building community and business through coffee

Emanuel "Boo" Milton
Baton Rouge, LA
CURE WITH LOVE STRATEGIES
Creating spaces of hope and equity

Marisa Prince and Calvin Lee
Boston, MA
[GOSPEL]
Creating campaigns for church and social justice

Eugene Kim
Boston, MA
NEW WINE COLLECTIVE
Online spiritual community

Mina Aria and Antajuan Adams
St. Louis, MO
NEW ROOTS URBAN FARM
Food and land justice

Jen Owens
St. Louis, MO
FORAI
Empowering refugee women

Sanctified Art Creative Team
Black Mountain, NC
SANCTIFIED ART
Progressive creative resources for liturgical worship

Dustin Mailman
Asheville, NC
DEEP TIME COFFEE
Employment for recently incarcerated

Victoria Scott- Miller
Raleigh, NC
LIBERATION STATION
Offering positive Black narratives for children

Carmelle Beaugelin
Princeton, NJ
BEAUFOLIO STUDIO
Intersecting sacred art and restorative equity

Kerry Brodie
Brooklyn, NY and Washington, DC
EMMA'S TORCH
Providing refugees with culinary training

Stephanie Mayer
New York, NY
NARY
Ethical and sustainable Fashion

Naz Georgas
New York, NY
CORDOBA HOUSE SUNDAY SCHOOL
Muslim children's program

Alisha Gordon
Harlem, NY
THE CURRENT PROJECT
Social empowerment for Black single mothers

Alexander Clemetson
Franklin, OH
TOGETHER WE COMPOST
Compost services for BIPOC community

Safronia Perry
Carlisle, PA
BLACK ECONOMIC GROWTH ALLIANCE
Strengthening black businesses

Simone Jenkins
Nashville, TN
LIPSTICK CULT
Building a brand honoring diversity

Robert Rueda
Edinburgh, TX
GLOBAL BLENDS COFFEE SHOP AND DELI
Addressing student hunger on college campus

Managerie Winston
Houston, TX
THE KIT PROJECT
Social Emotional Learning for Black and Brown teens

Alysia Nicole Harris
Corsicana, TX
MEETING HOUSE REVIVAL
Restoring church and community

Drew Nagy
Richmond, VA
LIVING WATER COMMUNITY CENTER
Environmentally sustainable community on a church campus

Dorian Hollinsworth
Virginia Beach, VA
TEEN CARE NETWORK
Teen mental health

My'Kal Lofton
Charlottesville, VA
GREEN WALL STREET
Environmental and economic justice

Katie Kenyon
Richmond, VA
VILLAGE GREEN RVA
Food and support for families on the margins

Cote Soerens
Seattle, WA
CULTIVATE SOUTH PARK
Community activism in a coffee shop



In February, Invested Faith announced our 6th Class of Invested Faith Fellows: Chelsea Spyles, Robert Rueda, Sanctified Art Creative Team, Johnetta Roberts, and Alexander Clemetson



Invested Faith Fellow Dorian Hollingsworth, Jr. of The Teen Care Network was named a McDonald's Black and Positively Golden Change Leader.



Invested Faith Fellow and now Invested Faith team member Alisha Gordon was presented the prestigious 2022 Tom Locke Innovative Leader Award by Wesleyan Impact Partners in an online ceremony.



Our first Fellow video featuring Tiffany Terrell of A Better Way Grocers was filmed in partnership with Good Faith Media.



The Invested Faith Team visited a local enterprise, the New Roots Urban Farm, in St. Louis, Missouri and visited with the congregation of St. Peter's United Church of Christ, where Pastor Amy preached in Sunday worship.



The Baugh Foundation awarded Invested Faith a supplemental grant for 2023.



The Legacy Board of Bethel United Church of Christ in Arlington, VA awarded Invested Faith a legacy gift from their permanently closed church.

St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Ferguson, Missouri presented Invested Faith with a large, anchor investment for the Invested Faith Fund.



In November, Invested Faith announced a 9th class of Fellows: Josh Hayashi, Nelson Crabbe and Nikola Rodriguez, Jen Owens, Katie Kenyon, Victoria Scott Miller. In less than 3 years, Invested Faith has awarded 41 Fellowships to support projects in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER



New additions to the Invested Faith team included Anna Meyer (Generosity) and Alisha Gordon (Connection)

We launched a storytelling partnership with Good Faith Media with a promotional video which featured Founder Amy Butler discussing the genesis of Invested Faith and talking about our work.



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

The American Baptist Home Mission Board awarded Invested Faith an OGHS Development Grant which offered supplemental funds to four Invested Faith Fellows: Tiffany Terrell, Kit Evans-Ford, Olatunji Oboi Reed, and Dorian Hollingsworth, Jr.



Invested Faith announced our 7th Class of Fellows: Carmelle Beaugelin, Nikole Lim, Anna Clark, Dustin Mailman, Kamaile Pahukoa



Pastor Amy visited Invested Faith Fellow Kamaile Pahukoa and her project, the Ke'anae Market on the Road to Hana on Maui, Hawai'i.



In August, Invested Faith announced an 8th class of Fellows: Kerry Brodie, Mina Aria and Antajuan Adams, Boo Milton, Calvin Lee and Marisa Prince

The Texas Methodist Foundation Awarded Invested Faith a grant to fund a gathering of Invested Faith Fellows in January of 2024.

Invested Faith gained independent 501(c)(3) status after 3 years of fiscal sponsorship. We are so grateful to Impact Assets for incubating the Invested Faith idea and helping us build to this point!



On October 3, Pastor Amy's book, *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, launched to widespread acclaim and Pastor Amy spent October on the road, sharing book readings and meeting with Invested Faith partners and supporters.

2023

Church Partnerships

In 2023, two faith communities—**St. Peter’s United Church of Christ and Bethel United Church of Christ**—chose to make significant gifts to Invested Faith, anchoring our Fund for the future. These communities represent the full spectrum of those who invest in this vision—from congregations reaching the end of their institutional lives together to those who are today faithfully stewarding endowments given by those who came before. These anchor gifts will provide countless opportunities for our Fellows and will ensure the communities’ witness to live on in the new and exciting work of these world-changers.



BETHEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

For over 80 years, Bethel United Church of Christ was a part of the life and community of Arlington, Virginia. From Strawberry Festivals in the summer to Halloween ones in the fall, Bethel believed in engaging with their neighbors in Arlington.

Over the years, Bethel saw declining membership and made the difficult decision that it would be best to close the church. Bethel celebrated their last worship service together in person on November 20, 2022; their spirit and work lives on through the work of their Legacy Board. The Legacy Board directed gifts to various organizations as a reflection of their values as a community. Their \$75,000 gift to Invested Faith ensures that Bethel’s legacy does live on through the work of Invested Faith Fellows in Virginia and all over the country.

ST. PETER’S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

St. Peter’s has a heart for mission and a history of outreach. St. Peter’s United Church of Christ has been a part of the St. Louis community for decades and at their current location in Ferguson since the 1950s. Although the membership of St. Peter’s has declined in recent years, the congregation is deeply committed to the local community where they worship and live. As part of their life together, St. Peter’s has become a gathering place, especially through the Community Resource Center they built and began operating on their campus in 2016. The Community Resource Center offers space to nonprofit organizations serving the Ferguson area, and this work in Ferguson reflects the church’s deep commitment to justice work and to their continued dedication to racial healing and reparations.

St. Peter’s ongoing partnership with Invested Faith reflects their commitment ensuring their witness leaves the doors of the church building and lives into the future. In November of 2023, the congregation voted to give \$200,000 to the Invested Faith Fund, opening their ministry and mission to social entrepreneurs across the US and jumpstarting their role as an Invested Faith anchor church.



PHOTO: CLIFF VAUGHN

Johnetta Roberts

BLAK KOFFEE



Johnetta Roberts

When is a coffee shop more than just a coffee shop? When it's a hub of culture, community, business, entrepreneurship, a space of hope and healing, and of course, a place to enjoy great coffee and food. That's what Blak Koffee, co-founded by Invested Faith Fellow Johnetta Roberts and her partner Ronyale Smith, brings to the Russell neighborhood, a red-lined, low-income area in Louisville, Kentucky's West End. Blak Koffee's mission is to "offer a safe & vibrant atmosphere that is welcoming, culturally conscious & conducive for business, relaxation, socialization & networking, all while offering exceptional coffee, & service."

Blak Koffee was born when Roberts, trying to schedule a business meeting, couldn't find a coffee shop with internet access in the neighborhood. The Village at West Jefferson was being created to bring services and amenities to the neighborhood which were lacking because of a history of disinvestment. She took a chance on the newly renovated building and signed a lease. While the coffee shop space was being built out, Johnetta and Ronyale operated Blak Koffee out of a cart under the stairs at The Village at West Jefferson, serving the community in just 100 square feet!



"Over the years I have seen coffee shops be transformational in neighborhoods."

Blak Koffee moved into their own space and celebrated their soft opening in the building in April of 2023, on the same day five people were killed just down the street in a bank building. The coffee shop immediately became a place of safety for people to gather for comfort and support.

As people drink delicious coffee and connect, Johnetta hopes that Blak Koffee continues to grow as a community hub. "One of my dreams is that businesses are born at Blak Koffee Cafe," she says, "and that there are economic ripple effects. Over the years I have seen coffee shops be transformational in neighborhoods."

Chelsea Spyres

THE WILMINGTON KITCHEN COLLECTIVE



Pastor Chelsea Spyres

Large church kitchens sit unused and empty most days of the week.

New cooks and bakers, caterers, and food truck operators find that access to commercial kitchen space is difficult to find—not to mention prohibitively expensive. This struggle often stops these budding entrepreneurs before their business even has a chance to launch.

The Wilmington Kitchen Collective and Pastor Chelsea Spyres put two and two together and created a new way for churches to live out their mission of feeding the community while offering new businesses a chance to thrive.

The Wilmington Kitchen Collective is a community-based project dedicated to serving food industry entrepreneurs from marginalized local communities. By providing affordable, high-quality commercial kitchen space, found in local churches, the Collective offers small food-based businesses a chance to flourish. Churches benefit from the additional income along with increased foot traffic and new connections in the community. It's a win-win for everyone.

The WKC provides more than just space for baking bread and chopping vegetables. Along with low-cost shared kitchen facilities that meet all Health Department requirements, the Collective offers entrepreneurs the chance to participate in business training and mentoring, increasing their access to capital and start up grants, as well as increased media exposure and collaboration with a number of business partners. And more importantly, the Collective provides a community of like-minded entrepreneurs, offering each small business owner support and encouragement in a world that is often competitive and isolating.

Invested Faith Fellow Chelsea Spyres serves as the Executive Director of this growing enterprise and as Pastor of Riverfront Ministries. After working with people experiencing homelessness in Detroit, the Delaware native returned home to begin serving at Riverfront Ministries, a church that gathers outdoors for services much of the year. Chelsea loves gathering community around food and fellowship, telling stories of the food vendors and making local connections.



"Offering kitchen space to others allows churches to truly feed the community."

Mina Aria and Antajuan Adams

NEW ROOTS URBAN FARM



Mina Aria and Antajuan Adams



Mina Aria and Antajuan Adams have transformed what was once a vacant and abandoned city lot into a hub for community gathering, agriculture, and change.

New Roots Urban Farm straddles the geographic border of two neighborhoods in North City, St. Louis and serves as a meeting ground for neighbors, ideas, growing methods and an innovative approach to agriculture and sustainable food. The farm site, less than 1/3 an acre in size, efficiently utilizes every square foot and includes raised garden beds, a covered meeting and educational space, an outdoor kitchen, chickens, rabbits, bees, and more.

A key provider of healthy food for North St. Louis community members facing food insecurity, the farm also offers home farming resources to low-income Black and Brown community members and works with individuals to counteract the effects of economic disinvestment, food apartheid, and environmental racism. Local inner-city youth are often found at the farm, pulling weeds and learning about urban farming and healthy cooking.

The farm recently suffered devastating damage when the church-turned-skatepark next door burned, contaminating the farm soil with toxic run-off from the fire and with chemicals used by fire fighters. The greenhouse was also damaged in the fire. However, the farm has bounced back with raised beds and a new open wooden structure that serves as a community meeting and education space.

Adams and Aria describe New Roots Urban Farm as an anti-profit collective. Recently offered another abandoned city lot in need of reclamation, New Roots continues to challenge current inequitable food systems as they create a model of community-based urban agriculture and education.

“We don’t talk about food deserts—we talk about food apartheid.”

Thank you to our Partners

Invested Faith is grateful for our network of supporters and partners who share our vision of seeding the future through faith-rooted social entrepreneurs. We deeply appreciate the support of our many individual donors and these organizations who have made our work possible:

- American Baptist Home Mission Societies
- Baugh Family Foundation
- Bethel United Church of Christ in Arlington, Virginia
- The CoCreators Network
- DoGoodX
- First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia
- Glean Network
- Good Faith Media

- NBA Cares
- The Sholar Foundation
- St. Peter’s United Church of Christ in Ferguson, Missouri
- Texas Methodist Foundation
- Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, NC
- Wesleyan Impact Partners

Countless volunteers and voices who have contributed to the work of Invested Faith and our Fellows through financial gifts, supportive connections, and other greatly appreciated service.

Thank you to our Advisors

Meet our 2023 Board of Advisors, an amazing group that guides and encourages this important work:



Kevin Kim Wright
Chair



Jane Campbell



De’Amon Harges

Join the Invested Faith Community

If you would like to become a supporter of Invested Faith, are interested in becoming a Fellow, or simply want to know more, we would love to have a conversation in the coming year. It's an exciting time to get involved!

Contact us at info@investedfaith.org.



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