



# **FTE 2019** ANNUAL REPORT

healing  
power of  
community



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healing  
power of  
community





compassion

reclaiming dignity

# healing lives

rebuilding

reconciliation

helping neighbors

thriving

bold steps

faithful leaders

transforming

breaking barriers

healing faith

connection

spiritual focus

This year, FTE is highlighting the stories of faithful leaders in our network who are committed to and passionate about healing lives and transforming communities. Each story is an integral part of the FTE community—a group of academic scholars, faith leaders, and world changers working together to see healing happen in the people and places where they live and lead.

communities

They are...

**Leaders** taking bold and brave steps to address the challenging issues and abundant needs in their communities.

**Congregations** offering up their gifts to others so that they might not just survive, but thrive in the communities they're in.

**Organizations** aware of the deep desires and abundant potential that exists within their communities.

**Innovators** working to find new approaches to healing not just for their own communities, but for the larger community of the world.

**Activists** striving to bring greater works of healing to all people in all places.

FTE is proud to support, equip, and come alongside the individuals, groups, and organizations of committed, passionate, and faithful people in our network who are working to heal the communities they love. Their work opens the doors for transformation and reconciliation in places and spaces where the need may be great, but the opportunity for healing is greater.

They are the hearts and hands bringing healing—one story at a time, one person after the other, one community after the next.



# The Power of Healing Communities

## We're all in search of healing.

Whether it's because of an addiction distancing us from loved ones, citizens devastated by natural disasters, another mass shooting taking the lives of innocent people, anxiety, depression, or suicide on the rise—we're all looking for a way to make sense of the 24-hour news cycle that bombards us. We're looking to find relief from the headlines, posts, and videos of all that breaks our heart in the world. And we're looking for the kind of deep and lasting healing that will change the communities in which we live. The question is: Where can we find it?

This year, my team and I have witnessed the powerful, healing role Christian communities are playing to right wrongs, welcome the disinherited and dispossessed, help mend broken hearts, and rebuild from devastating losses that have impacted many of us.

One of these communities is the Church of the Common Ground in Atlanta. The church does not own a building, and its members do not have homes; they live in shelters, parks, and on the streets. During this year's Lenten season, members of the church gathered to study Howard Thurman's book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Atlanta's disinherited created pop-up classrooms on park lawns in close proximity to the State Capitol—the seat of power—to read, discuss, and share Thurman's healing wisdom with dispossessed people in the city. Afterward, members washed the feet of their friends and neighbors also living in dire circumstances.

The Church of the Common Ground is a powerful example of a healing community working in the midst of a city with a long history of displacing people to shelters, parks, and the streets in the interest of progress and commerce. While there are many systemic evils and injustices that must be addressed, this healing community is a reflection of God's people helping each other and their neighbors reclaim their dignity, worth, and contribution to society in powerful ways.

These are people working tirelessly to bring lasting healing to their community, one life at a time.

One of the church's advisors wrote our team to say, "This urban street community is where FTE-supported pastoral interns—young adults discerning their next faithful steps—will serve this summer, thanks to FTE."

Her words are a reminder of the important role FTE plays in expanding our imagination and exposure to Christian communities that may not be in the bright lights but are still doing amazing Spirit inspired work in cities across the country.

They are also a reminder that FTE is a powerful, healing community to many young adults, doctoral students, and others longing to be seen and honored for who they are just as they are.

Take some time to learn more about the types of healing communities the next generation is inspired by in this report. See why I am inspired to cultivate emerging leaders who aspire to make a significant impact in their communities through Christian ministry, theological scholarship, and social entrepreneurship. And make the decision to join FTE with your support!

The world as we know it is changing right before our eyes. But what I know for sure is that there will always be a need for transformative, healing Christian communities and leaders who are called to serve them.

I'm grateful for the support of those of you who make it possible for FTE to be a powerful and consistent force for healing in a world in need of healing.



**Stephen Lewis**  
President,  
Forum for Theological Exploration





"Art in the Image is showing others that healing and transformation is possible. That you can express yourself and share your story in a way that can connect you with God."

Darci Jaret, Minister Artist-in-Residence at Park Avenue Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA



I want to help others experience healing and transformation through art. This ministry creates opportunities for people to tap into their identities as art-markers—creators made in the image of the Creator. By tapping into their God-given creativity, they're tapping into a part of their spirit and connection with God, and in that place, there is healing."

## A Healing Faith Community:

Darci Jaret, Art in the Image

I founded Art in the Image as a response to my own calling—one to lead people in creative, spiritual expression. I truly believe creating is a form of connecting, both with ourselves, others, and even with our Creator. Making meaning and finding connection through creative expression is, to me, a form of church—one I wanted to introduce and make accessible to others.

Art in the Image uses a model that I call visual narrative pastoral care. The goal is to help participants walk through the practice of speaking their stories in visual ways that are approachable for any level of creativity. The simple act of sharing their experience as a visual, creative expression has brought healing to those at workshops, conferences, church services, and more in so many beautiful ways.

I'd spent nearly a decade doing this sort of creative activism in the community before connecting with FTE. But throughout that time, the work was never sustainable for me. Why? Because there was a lack of spiritual focus. There was no belief in that something greater—that higher power—to bring it all together. Connecting with FTE changed all that for me. Since then, the work has meant so much more to me because it's opened up and poured in an element of faith to what I'm doing. It's opened my eyes to just how much my faith and my calling to be creative can work together.

I want to help others experience healing and transformation through art. This ministry creates opportunities for people to tap into their identities as art-markers—creators made in the image of the Creator. By tapping into their God-given

creativity, they're tapping into a part of their spirit and connection with God, and in that place, there is healing.

With Art in the Image, I've been able to facilitate healing projects in all kinds of places through so many mediums. I host a weekly spiritual art program at a long-term residential recovery center for women, walking residents through speaking their narratives and telling their stories through creative expression. I've held workshops, live paintings, small group activities, and even helped faith communities explore how to integrate this type of work into their worship and church services. One of our biggest undertakings in this ministry was an art installation designed to honor the victims of the Pulse massacre. This project, like so many others, allowed the community to process their grief and find healing through the collaborative arts.

That's what Art in the Image is all about. It's showing others that healing and transformation is possible. That you can express yourself and share your story in a way that can connect you with God. That your expression can be used to connect others to God in the same way.

FTE helped bring this vision to life for me. When I connected with their community, I realized that there was a place for me in ministry. I can do my work with confidence that what I'm doing is a work that's creating an avenue to bring healing to hearts and change to lives.



“It’s my calling, my passion, and my honor to bring strength to the community of survivors. Working together with these women and seeing the healing that is taking place daily affirms that this is exactly what God has called me to do. The transformation that’s happening in this community of women is changing their lives, their stories, and their futures. And it’s changing mine as well.”

## Meeting A Community’s Needs:

Dr. Kit Evans-Ford, Argrow’s House of Healing and Hope

Every nine seconds a woman is assaulted. Domestic violence accounts for 20 percent of violent crimes in America.

One out every six women has been the victim of an attempted or completed sexual assault.

These crimes leave the women who experience them with long-lasting PTSD and emotional trauma—the impacts of which they will deal with for years to come.

I know because I’m one of these statistics. I was one of these women.

It was out of that place of pain in my own life that Argrow’s House of Healing and Hope was born. Named after my grandmother, a survivor of domestic violence herself, Argrow’s House is a Christian social enterprise created to support women who have experienced domestic and sexual abuse. We provide a safe space for women to heal through programs like domestic violence support groups, Bible studies, yoga, art therapy, spiritual direction, and more. Our survivors also make and sell beautiful soaps and body products, creating a way to empower them not only in mind, body, and spirit, but also financially through employment.

For me, Argrow’s House isn’t just a job; it’s a calling. I stepped out of a full-time position as a professor to start this organization, and at the time, it certainly felt like a risk. But when you know something has been placed so deeply in your heart to do—something you feel so passionately about that it’s almost as if you were put on the planet just to do it—well, it’s worth the risk.

Of course, it takes courage to follow a calling. And things like social entrepreneurship and ministry require a lot of sacrifice. But when you know God has called you to do something—something you’ve always dreamed of doing—you don’t hesitate to take the steps of faith to make it happen.

And FTE has been a part of my journey every step of the way. FTE has helped me grow by providing opportunities to journey in a community of other ministries who believe in embracing a radical Christianity grounded in justice, compassion, love, and creativity. Though I am still growing, FTE has helped me become a compassionate Christian minister, willing to step out in faith and serve with boldness.

Starting Argrow’s House meant I had to say yes to what God was putting on my heart. Can you imagine the difference we could all make in the world if we simply said yes to what God was calling us to do? If we all worked together to improve our communities so that they could begin to heal?

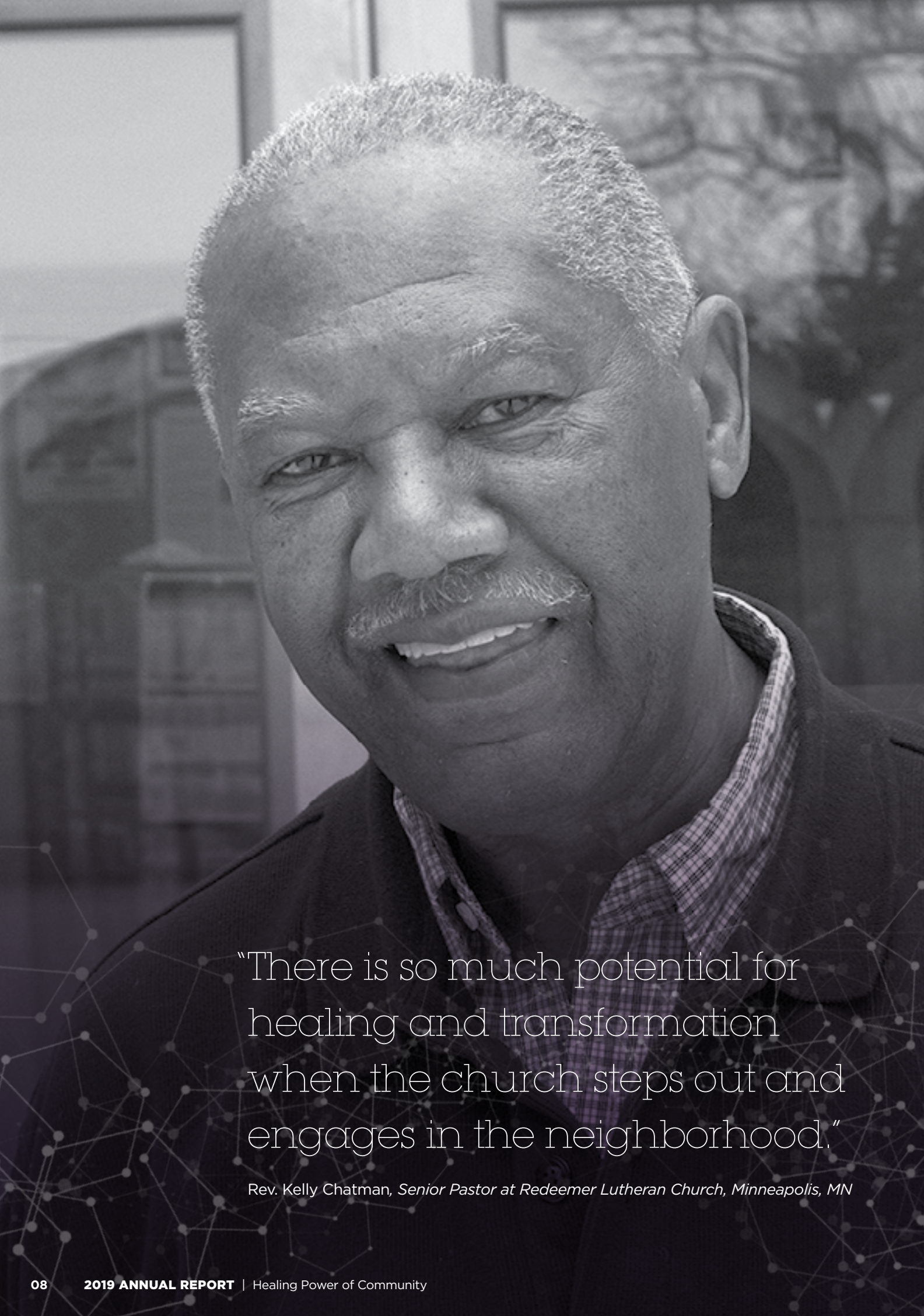
It’s my calling, my passion, and my honor to bring strength to the community of survivors. Working together with these women and seeing the healing that is taking place daily affirms that this is exactly what God has called me to do. The transformation that’s happening in this community of women is changing their lives, their stories, and their futures. And it’s changing mine as well.

Together, we are a community of survivors.

“FTE has helped me grow by providing opportunities to journey in a community of other ministries who believe in embracing a radical Christianity grounded in justice, compassion, love, and creativity.”

Dr. Kit Evans-Ford, Founder of Argrow’s House of Healing and Hope, Davenport, IA





“There is so much potential for healing and transformation when the church steps out and engages in the neighborhood.”

Rev. Kelly Chatman, Senior Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN



The people in FTE’s network? They’re painting a real picture of what the faith community looks like and lives like. And that inspires me to do the same in the community where I lead and love.”

## Engaging the Community Beyond the Church’s Walls:

Rev. Kelly Chatman, Redeemer Lutheran Church

I’ve been a part of FTE’s network of pastors and leaders for decades now. I first became aware of them in the ‘80s as a part of their former fellowship program during my years in seminary. After the completion of that program, I continued working in the space of youth programming and social ministry, taking on positions at boarding schools and community outreach organizations, becoming the dean of diversity at a college, and stepping in to serve as a youth ministry director. It wasn’t until I made the move to serve as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Minnesota some 20 years ago that I found myself once again a part of FTE’s community.

The support and resources that FTE provides have been an integral part of my ministry as a pastor, specifically in my leadership role as the director of the nonprofit community organization here at our church. Almost 21 years ago, our congregation started this outreach program and organization to respond to three major needs in our community: affordable housing, employment opportunities, and youth development programs. The goal of the program was simple: to be a beacon of hope to the neighborhood.

Over the past two decades, we’ve been blessed to do just that. After acquiring a block of property in the neighborhood, we converted it into 27 housing units. Today, about 18 young adults live there, with a portion of their rent coming not from their paychecks, but from the time they give back to volunteer in and serve the community. We’ve also opened a bike and coffee shop in the

neighborhood, using it as a place to employ our young people and provide them with the chance to develop the soft life skills that come in those entry level jobs. We’ve run after school programs and rented out abandoned shops and storefronts in the community to create a presence in the neighborhood beyond the walls of our church.

There is so much potential for healing and transformation when the church steps out and engages in the neighborhood. When we see our congregation as so much more than just the people in our pews, we are opening the doors not just for individual lives to change, but for communities to change. That’s the heart of this ministry, and it’s one that wouldn’t be able to be as successful without an organization like FTE.

Being connected to FTE has provided us with so many opportunities to learn from and hear about a diverse group of nonprofits, churches, and ministries doing similar work in their own communities. That has been incredible for me not just as a pastor and leader, but specifically as an African-American pastor and leader. They lift up the diversity of the faith community, and that in turn lifts me up as a diverse faith leader. The people in FTE’s network? They’re painting a real picture of what the faith community looks like and lives like.

And that inspires me to do the same in the community where I lead and love.





Rachelle Green, Assistant Professor of  
Practical Theology and Religious Education  
at Fordham University, New York, NY

Three words on a seminary billboard changed my life: "We need you."

It was a call for volunteers to bring theological education to incarcerated women in our community. And seeing them reset the course and compass of my life's work. This calling opened the doors for me to not only bring healing and transformation to a unique community, but for me to experience it alongside them as well.

This program creates a community within the walls of the prison that affirms who these women are right where they are. Their gifts and identities aren't limited by their circumstances. It has given them a place where they can come and find other people who are just like them—people who want to ask questions, set goals, share dreams, understand what they're capable of and be listened to and valued for who they are.

I understand, because being part of FTE's network has done something similar for me. FTE created a space that shows me just how easily the barriers between the spiritual, the academic, and the activist within me can be removed. All these facets of who I am can come together to do life-changing work.

FTE helped open my eyes to that.



Rev. Carrilea Potter, Associate Pastor at  
Broad Street United Methodist Church,  
Statesville, NC

I received some great advice from a mentor at DO GOOD X, an FTE-affiliated program that catalyzes a diverse group of Christian social entrepreneurs to launch ventures that address their community's greatest problems. The advice?

Pay attention to what's most life giving to you. Find the place where you see the most transformation happening in your own heart and community. That's where real healing can begin.

For me, that place is Camp Barnabas, a camp for those with emotional and intellectual disabilities that I started with a colleague four years ago. This camp is rooted in our community, as we found a network of people to serve and be served right where we are. Our next goal is to open a café in the community that employs persons with disabilities. My hope is to create a space where people can interact with each other, break down walls, and create relationships that will bring healing and transformation.

I didn't know if this vision to bring healing to a community so close to my heart would ever be more than that, but DO GOOD X gave me the confidence to make it happen. They saw potential in my idea and have helped me take the next steps to keep going on this journey.

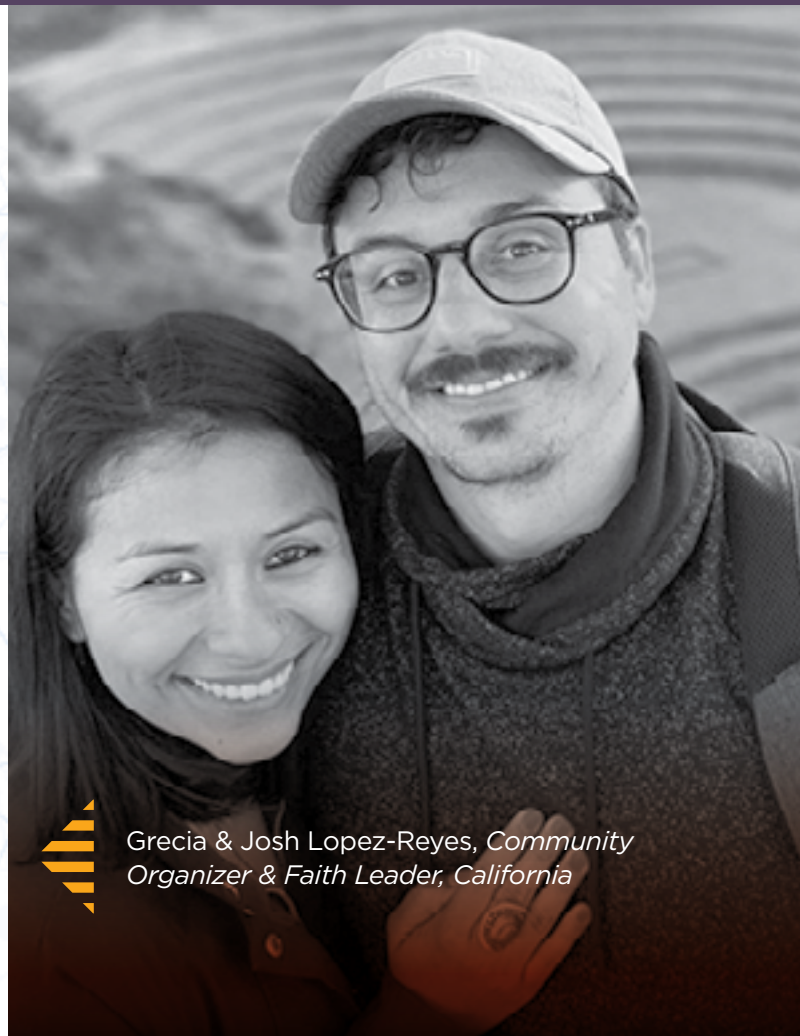
Now, I believe it doesn't just have to be a dream; it can really become a reality.

# Young Leaders and Community Healers

We've always had a passion to connect the work we do together—one in the ministry and the other in the field of environmental justice. That's why we're working on a storytelling project focusing on communities of color and how these two things impact them directly.

We believe that Christ came to redeem all creation, including the very Earth where we stand. Together, we want to bring this interpretation of Scripture to the forefront of the conversation on faith and environmental justice by looking at the people who are actually practicing what they preach. The people who are setting an example of how to care for creation and the environment as a calling in their faith. The people who are bringing healing to their communities.

Being a part of FTE's network has helped us do this. Their community is so valuable to us because, oftentimes in faith circles, diversity can be lacking. At FTE, the diversity in terms of race, class, theological background, and orientation provides us with the opportunity to learn from and connect with other leaders doing similar work in a variety of contexts. They're helping us see and understand how we can do this important work in ministry together, as a couple.



Grecia & Josh Lopez-Reyes, Community  
Organizer & Faith Leader, California

FTE didn't just save my project; they saved me. I've spent the past few years as a scholar in the doctoral program at Vanderbilt University. Like any doctoral candidate, much of my time has been spent working specifically on my dissertation, a project that focuses on answering the larger question: *What is preaching and who gets to decide who does it?* To answer this question, I'm looking through the context of three historical black women who did most of their preaching outside of the pulpit.

The work was going well, until the advisor who championed my project suddenly passed away. I not only found myself stuck in grief, but struggling to get back to work.

It was the friends I met through FTE who made sure I stayed afloat. They didn't let me quit. They championed my work and spoke life into my gifts. They acted as a community of mirrors to my life, pushing me to see myself as the dope human I am when I couldn't see myself that way. They helped me get unstuck.

So much of the healing that's come from my studies and my time with FTE has been healing that's surprised me in delightful ways. It's helped me not only complete this project, but come back to my full self in the process.



Chelsea Yarborough, Doctoral candidate  
in Homiletics and Liturgics at  
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN



In today's world, the need for transformative faith, authentic connection, and true community is great. But where these needs are great, FTE's commitment to meeting them is greater. We're proud to provide opportunities, resources, and experiences for leaders to connect with their own callings and find a network of faithful mentors, scholars, and activists to work alongside them as they fight to bring lasting healing to their communities. These are much more than numbers; they represent real people doing real work to bring real change to the people and places they serve.

NOTE: All source citations can be found on the inside back cover.

The average high schooler spends **less than 2 minutes each day** on religious activities but over **4 hours in leisure** activities daily.

Almost **50% of parents** suggest that their neighborhood isn't supporting their high schoolers.<sup>1</sup>

91

**institutes reaching high schoolers in 32 states** gathered to strengthen programs that support youth and shape students' perspectives on their faith and purpose.

71

**campus ministries** were convened to discover ways to inspire and support students to discover their calling.

**80% of all college students** say that finding meaning and purpose is "very important" for their overall well-being.

Graduates with a high sense of purpose are **10 times more likely** to have a healthy sense of well-being.<sup>2</sup>

college students

high school students

young adults & leaders in ministry

congregations, institutions & church-related partners

doctoral students

50

Doctoral students experience moderate or severe anxiety at more than **3 times the rate of the national average**. Most students claim **loneliness and isolation as major contributors** to their mental health concerns.<sup>5</sup>

**doctoral students gathered with access to 14 mentors** and a variety of networking and leadership development opportunities with 100% sharing the value of experiencing FTE's community.

**14 out of 15 students** working on their dissertations claimed the writing and publishing workshop provided a supportive community and affirmed their vocation.

**30 doctoral students** of color received fellowships, were connected with mentors, and joined FTE's esteemed network of Fellows and Alumni.

**75% of pastors** have thought about leaving ministry due to "clergy burnout," and about **40% of pastors** actually do leave their ministries after only five years.<sup>3</sup>

46

**pastors serving people** in 16 states were convened and provided leadership development resources and peer support to sustain them in service to their calling.

**41% of students serve** in fairly easy-to-categorize ministry roles within congregations while 59% serve in a wide array of ministry settings including community service, education, and health care. **This shows that young adults want to serve** and are finding new pathways to do so.<sup>4</sup>

**8 workshops**, guidance from **12 innovative Christian leaders** in ministry, and **8 peer support groups** were provided to **74 young adults** to help them explore how they can faithfully make an impact through service.

**20 grants totaling \$20,000 were awarded** to young adults to explore ministry with a mentor.

**6 Christian entrepreneurs** were equipped with over **11 resources** and a community to develop businesses that address social problems in their communities or the world around them.

A networked approach "improves performance of individual participants and makes it **more likely to have a more compelling impact** collectively."<sup>6</sup>

48

**grants awarded totaling \$518,000** to develop resources, pastoral internships, recruitment and mentoring opportunities, and the capacity to support young adults with a call to ministry.

**14 institutional leaders** gathered in Yosemite National Park to reflect and strategize on how to strengthen support for students and scholars of color.

**18 faith leaders** were equipped with **25 practices** to help young adults explore and discern their passion and purpose.

**24 leaders in 12 faith-based organizations** gathered to discover the connection between diverse and equitable communities and vocational exploration.



# 2019 Donors

## Empower leaders healing lives and transforming communities.

Give today and support hundreds of faithful, young leaders who are boldly addressing challenges and needs in communities across the country. These committed pastors, teachers, and healers are leading change for good and helping all of God's people to thrive.

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**\$10,000+**

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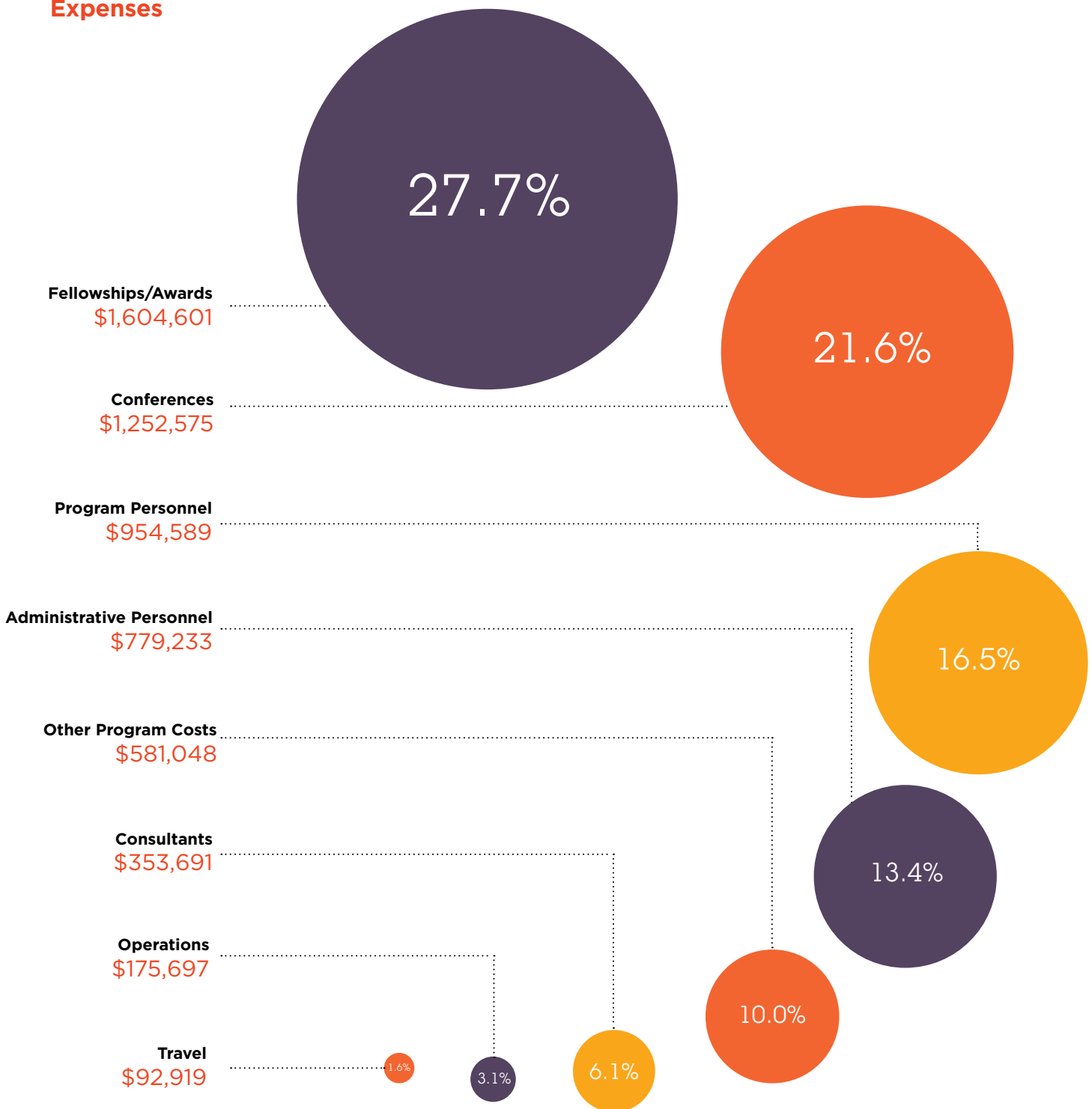
# Financial Highlights

2019 Statement of Financial Activities (Unaudited)

## Revenue

FTE is primarily funded through foundational grants, investment income from those grants, and contributions from the FTE community.

## Expenses





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<sup>1</sup> "A Picture of Adolescent Health," Department of Health and Human Services, October 3, 2019, <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/picture-of-adolescent-health/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Bates-Gallup National Study, *Forging Pathways to Purposeful Work: The Role of Higher Education*, (Gallup, Inc. 2019).

<sup>3</sup> The Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development, <https://network.crcna.org/leadership-development/francis-schaeffer-institute-church-leadership-development>, (2020).

<sup>4</sup> Jo Ann Deasy, "Where are graduates serving? New insights from the Educational Models Alums Workforce Survey," *ATS Colloquy Online*, (April 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Barreira, Matthew Basilico, Valentin Bolotnyy, "Graduate Student Mental Health: Lessons from American Economics Departments," (paper, Harvard University, November 4, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Chandler, Kristen Scott Kennedy, *A Network Approach to Capacity Building*, (National Council of Nonprofits, 2015), <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/a-network-approach-to-capacity-building.pdf>



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