

My name is Rev Jennifer Creswell and I am the vicar of St Andrew's Episcopal Church in N Portland. I am also a part of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition - an interfaith collective of more than 50 faith communities across Oregon devoted to using our land to build diverse affordable housing. One hundred percent of our congregations additionally serve unhoused and unstably housed people as core parts of our outreach services, from food pantries to rental support to advocacy.

Two Sundays ago, a member of the congregation and I greeted a fellow who had spent the night outside the doors of our church. His name was Sean. We got Sean some breakfast and wished him well, then helped clear away the belongings he left in the doorway before the service started. Sean is one of many unsheltered neighbors we encounter daily in N Portland. The structures are simply not in place to meet the needs of the people who live here. St Andrew's has committed to erecting a tiny home microvillage in the church parking lot to provide transitional housing for folks living on the street. Faith communities are often the safety net under the safety net. There is simply not enough we can do to save our communities and neighbors - many of them employed full-time - from houselessness, hunger, and mental health crises for which there are simply not enough resources.

This is clearly an enormous systemic gap that needs an immediate systemic bridge. The Governor's budget is one such bridge, and we are strongly in support of this important and immediate solution to our crisis and encourage you to do so as well.