



# lovebaldly

Creating and developing spaces where LGBTQIA+ people can flourish in Christianity





## Mission

LOVEboldly exists to create and develop spaces where LGBTQIA+ people can flourish in Christianity.

## Vision

A world where all LGBTQIA+ people can feel safe, belong, and flourish.

# Our Team



**Rev. Dr. Ben Huelskamp**  
Executive Director



**Siobhan Boyd-Nelson**  
Board Chair



**Cass Helm**  
Interim Board  
Treasurer



**Rev. Brian Steele**  
Board Secretary



**NV Gay**  
Director



**Rev. Iva Joyce-  
Miesse**  
Director



**Mark Wesley**  
Director

# Advisory Group

*The LOVEboldly Advisory Group brings together a group of experts to advise the organization. While they hold no governance responsibility, they contribute based on their knowledge and lived experience. During 2025 we were blessed with five amazing advisors.*



**Dr. Kate Common**  
Associate Professor of Practical Theology  
Methodist Theological School in Ohio



**Rev. Dr. Caleb Lines**  
Co-Executive Director  
ProgressiveChristianity.org



**Rev. Brandan Robertson**  
Author and Activist



**Heidi Weaver-Smith**  
Founder, LOVEboldly



**Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan**  
Ohio Council of Churches (Retired)

# OUR YEAR

## Letter from our Executive Director



Dear LOVEboldly Community,

Y'all, 2025 was a rough year. What we thought *might* be a tough year quickly escalated into an all out assault on our rights and the soul of our nation. It was impossible to miss how important our work at LOVEboldly really is, but we did it in a landscape which targeted and defunded many programs impacting the LGBTQIA+ community.

But this year also brought some strong moments of joy. We brought on three new board members including Cass Helm, the Rev. Brian Steele, and the Rev. Iva Joyce-Miesse. Then on Easter Sunday we launched *Coming Out Christian*, a podcast exploring the dual experience of coming out as an LGBTQIA+ person in Christian spaces and “coming out” as a Christian in LGBTQIA+ spaces. The podcast released two seasons with 27 guests during 2025.

LOVEboldly sponsored or co-sponsored 11 programs and continued to engage with a dynamic group of partner coalitions and organizations.

LOVEboldly continued to be recognized as a voice for Queer Christians and Queer people of faith in general in 2025. We were once again called upon to lend expertise and our collective lived experience in more spaces, including at the Ohio Statehouse and in the media. We published op-eds, provided testimony before various Ohio House and Ohio Senate committees, and joined multiple organizational letters.

Yet for all our success, the work continues on all fronts. We give thanks to our gracious and empowering God for all the blessings of 2025 and we also thank you, our supporters, donors, volunteers, partners, and community for all that you brought to this movement. We know that the coming years will bring more challenges, but we're ready to tackle them with you.

Faithfully,

Rev. Dr. Ben Huelskamp +

# Programming

During 2025, we continued to offer programs both online and in person, including events cosponsored with Church Partners and other organizations.

**11**

Programs During  
2025

**100 & 5**

Attendance at the  
Interfaith Pride  
Prayer Service and  
the number of faiths  
represented.

**>500**

Number of  
people who  
attended all  
programs in  
2024



## Executive Director Stats

In addition to formal programs, LOVEboldly's executive director, Rev. Dr. Ben, spends a significant amount of time meeting one-on-one with people and working in groups. Ben estimates that he spent **more than 250 hours** during 2025 meeting with people. That's in addition to all the unscheduled meetings and phone calls which Ben and the Board respond to throughout the year.

# Programming - Expansion

During the second half of 2025, LOVEboldly began a concerted effort to renew our in-person, on-the-ground programming beyond Central Ohio. Through the efforts of volunteers in Cincinnati, particularly Ron Roark, we were able to begin offering substantive social and educational programs there. Our goal is to continue this push throughout Ohio in 2026.



# Coming Out Christian

Premiering on Easter 2025, Coming Out Christian is a new podcast from LOVEboldly exploring the dual experience of coming out as an LGBTQIA+ person in Christian spaces and “coming out” as a Christian in LGBTQIA+ spaces. Two seasons were released during 2025. You can find our episodes at [www.loveboldly.org/comingoutchristian](http://www.loveboldly.org/comingoutchristian) or wherever you get your podcasts.



## Guests During 2025

### Season One

- **Raphael Davis-Williams**
- **Erin Upchurch**
- **NV Gay**
- **Z Boyer**
- **Br. Ian Boden, OLF**
- **Pastor Hank Osmundson**
- **Bishop Tim Wolfe**
- **Rev. Brandan Robertson**
- **Rev. Dr. Joelle Henneman**
- **José Rosario**

### Season Two

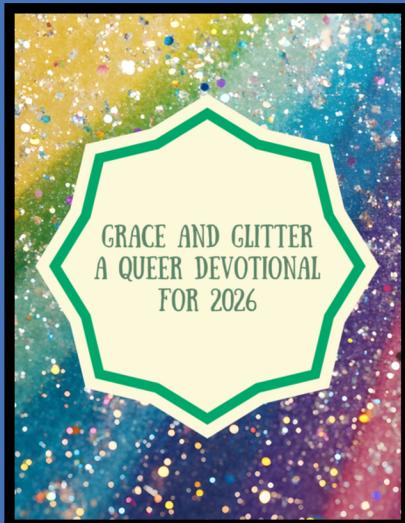
- **Rev. Dr. Charles L. A. Watterson**
- **Cass Helm**
- **Bishop Vanessa Brown**
- **Dr. Kate Common**
- **Jon Carl Lewis**
- **Pastor Lesley Jones**
- **Rev. Cn. Ryan Currie**
- **Bishop Alex Bryd**
- **Rev. Melinda Garza Moran**
- **Maritza “Shay” Nelson**
- **Rev. Iva Joyce-Miesse**
- **Rev. Dr. Marshaun D. Simon**
- **Kevin Marsh**
- **Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart**

# Resource Development

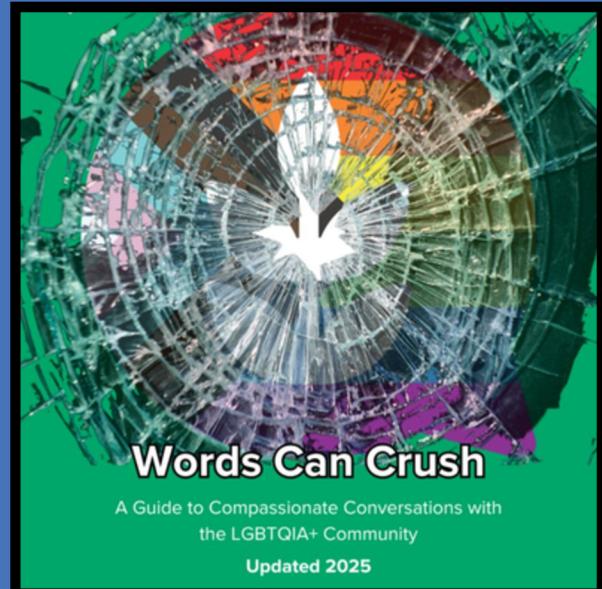
LOVEboldly spent significant time during 2024 revising and creating new resources for LGBTQIA+ people of faith and their allies.

## *Grace and Glitter: A Queer Devotional for 2026*

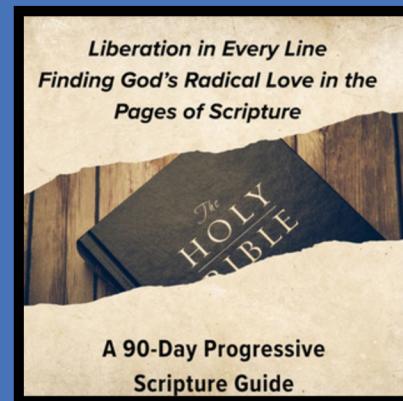
Written by more than 50 authors (LGBTQIA+ and allies), *Grace and Glitter* offers 52 Sundays of reflections and several additional special days. The devotional is available purchase on the LOVEboldly website.



## **Words Can Crush 2026**



## **Liberation in Every Line**



# Pride 2025

**loveboldly**

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What lie did the church tell you that you no longer believe?

## Graffiti Walls

**loveboldly**

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Where have you found "church" (fellowship, spirituality, pastoral care, etc.)?



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# Organizing and Advocacy

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## Op-Eds and Commentary

Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Ben Huelskamp published seven op-eds and commentary pieces with *Red Letter Christians*, *The Buckeye Flame*, *The Columbus Dispatch*, *Baptist News Global*, and *The Good Men Project*.

- “Ohio Republicans just dropped a bill to insert Christianity into public schools. LGBTQ+ communities should be alarmed.” *The Buckeye Flame*. September 30, 2025.
- “An invitation to speak prophetically but not endorse candidates.” *Baptist News Global*. July 16, 2025.
- “LifeWise Academy claims to be a religious denomination. Is it? I have questions.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. June 26, 2025.
- “Poorly written bill will ban trans pastors, church leaders. That's anti-Christian.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. June 4, 2025.
- “Empathy and Pride Are Blessings and We Need to Bless Extravagantly.” *Red Letter Christians*. June 2, 2025.
- “On Accountability: The Art of Encouraging Your Friends' Integrity.” *The Good Men Project*. April 9, 2025.
- “Dear Exhausted Ohio LGBTQ+ Community: Rest is resistance. Rest is action.” *The Buckeye Flame*. February 9, 2025.

# Organizing and Advocacy

## Testimony

During 2025, LOVEboldly submitted seven pieces of testimony on seven bills to Ohio House and Senate committees, in addition to multiple public statements and press releases.

## Strategic Partnerships

Having joined and cultivated multiple strategic partnerships during 2022/2023, we continued to strengthen these bonds and explore new opportunities.



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# Regular Emails and Publications

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During 2024, LOVEboldly regularly published three resources which were shared via email, on our website, and via SubStack. See one below which you'd like to sign up for? Visit [www.loveboldly.net/contact](http://www.loveboldly.net/contact).

## Monthly Newsletter



1,004  
subscribers



35 states  
13 countries



Consistent  
42% open  
rate\*

## Monday Moments



123  
subscribers



Consistent  
51% open  
rate\*



Published  
almost every  
week since  
November 1,  
2021.

## Action Alerts



166  
subscribers



Consistent  
50% open  
rate\*



Read in 13  
states and  
3 countries.

\*In 2025, the average open rate for nonprofits was 30%.

# Church Partnership Program

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In 2022 we launched a formal church partnership, solidifying our relationship with some of our collaborators while continuing to work with others informally. Our Church Partners during 2025 included:

- Westerville Community United Church of Christ  
Westerville, OH
- North Broadway United Methodist Church  
Columbus, OH
- Legend Community Church  
Madisonville, Cincinnati, OH
- United Methodist Church for All People  
Columbus, OH
- Short North Church (United Methodist)  
Columbus, OH
- St. Stephen Episcopal Church  
Columbus, OH
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Columbus, OH
- Trinity Episcopal Church  
Columbus, OH
- Blue Ocean Faith Columbus  
Columbus, OH
- St. Matthew Episcopal Church  
Westerville, OH



# Our Investors

We rely on our grassroots donors and investors for LOVEboldly's primary support. Each year, we are so moved by your generosity, and 2024 was no exception.

**\$40,718.92**

from all sources

**Slight increase in the number of monthly donors during 2025.**

## Important Context

2025 was a tough year for philanthropy in general and particularly in the LGBTQIA+ community. Changes in funding at the state and federal level pulled funds away from direct service providers which in turn pulled private funding away from organizations like LOVEboldly. It is that private funding, from individuals and foundations, which typically fuels the work of LOVEboldly.

# 2026 - Our 15<sup>th</sup> Year

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Founded by Heidi Weaver-Smith in 2011, LOVEboldly celebrates our 15<sup>th</sup> year in 2026. You will see a new edition of our logo (below) throughout the year and we're working on special programs to celebrate this significant milestone.



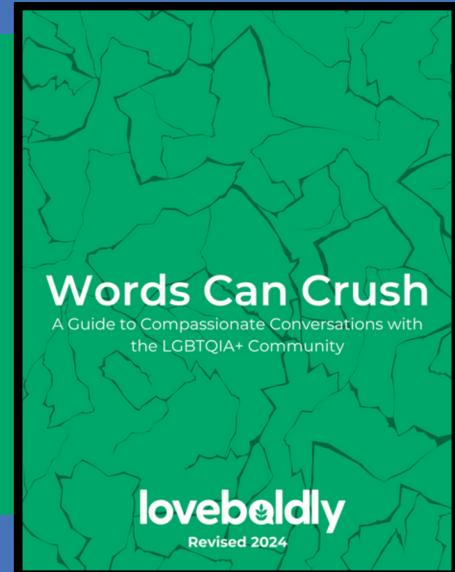
# Looking Ahead into 2026

## The Trans Faith Collective

A new signature program from LOVEboldly, the Trans Faith Collective aims to center the experiences of Transgender People of Faith and respond to the unprecedented assaults on Trans rights.

### New Content and Resources

During 2025, LOVEboldly will be focusing time on developing more resources for LGBTQIA+ people of faith and their allies. The 2025 Devotional is available in several formats now and the 2026 Devotional will be a project this year.



Platinum  
Transparency  
2026

Candid.

### Platinum Level of Nonprofit Transparency

LOVEboldly has been certified, for the fifth year, by Candid for transparency regarding our financial and governance practices. This is our second year receiving certification at the Platinum level (highest level).

### An Invitation

Do you want to connect with LOVEboldly more or find ways to be more involved? Our Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Ben Huelskamp (call him Dr. Ben or Ben) LOVES to meet with people in-person, via Zoom, or over the phone. Please reach out to him!

Email: [bhuelskamp@loveboldly.net](mailto:bhuelskamp@loveboldly.net)

Calendar: <https://calendly.com/benhuelskamp>

