

2025: Year in Review



The Washington Gladden Social Justice Park exists as a space for reflection, education, and action — honoring the legacy of Rev. Washington Gladden while responding to the urgent social justice questions of our time. Founded in 2018, the Park continued to serve as a physical gathering space, educational resource, and platform for dialogue rooted in community, history, and justice during 2025. Key accomplishments included:

- Activated new governance structure with both legacy and new board members, all involved in five active board committees.
- Expanded storytelling and outreach through social media and communications, including the launch of a newsletter, *The Park Bench*, sent to 1,507 recipients via print and e-mail with a 61% open rate and a 159% increase in web traffic the week of the launch.
- Co-hosted biblical scholar and theologian Pete Enns as the 2025 Gladden Lecturer in partnership with First Congregational Church and First Community with >200 attendees.
- Hosted key public programs to celebrate MLK Day and Earth Day with combined attendance of ~150.
- Launched a national art solicitation under the leadership of the Ohio Arts Council to select art to replace the vinyl murals of the park.
- Received approval from Ohio History Connection for an historical marker honoring Washington Gladden to be located adjacent to both church and park.
- Engaged external consultation to plan for long term sustainability with clear goals and objectives that align with 5-year strategic plan.
- Prepared for a future capital campaign to enhance the park and strengthen organizational capacity.
- Installed dedication signage for the Encova garden area and two new guide stones for a total of 44.

What was the Park unable to accomplish in 2025?

- Programming and community engagement took a back seat to our foundational work.

What have we learned this year as a Park?

- We need to build a strong and enduring foundation to support our ambitious vision for the park's physical presence, our community engagement and robust programming.

Looking ahead, what needs additional work/improvement?

- Continue to build our volunteer base to ensure we have diverse participation (age, gender, race, gender identity, interfaith, disability, etc.) and the skills, expertise, and talent we need to implement our vision and strategic plan.
- Continue to strengthen our partnership with First Congregational Church.

BY THE NUMBERS

25%

growth in followers

61%

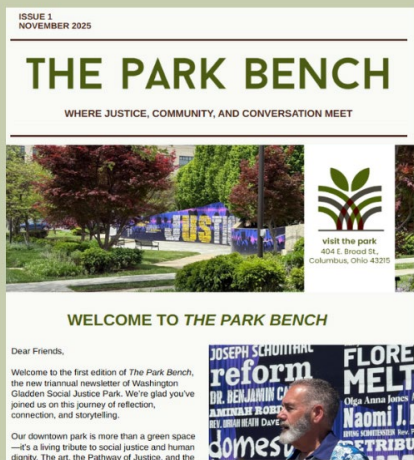
email open rate

11,372

total reach

9%

average
engagement rate



In 2025, the Park launched its newsletter, creating a new way to share updates, events, and reflections with supporters beyond social media.