

AGRARIAN MINISTRIES CREATION CARE TEAM VISITS A GOOD NEWS GARDEN THE COMMUNITY OF ST JOHN BAPTIST'S GARDEN OF HOPE

By Julie Crawford Associate of The Community of St John Baptist, Church of Messiah



Nestled in the hills of Morris County, The Community of St John Baptist's Garden of Hope was recently visited by a team of 5 members of the Creation Care Agrarian Ministries Team from the Office of the Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the Episcopal Church in the United States, The group celebrated evening prayer in the Chapel of [St Marguerite's Retreat House](#) and the Community hosted a meet and greet at the garden space including members from Messiah.

- [Jerusalem Greer](#) - Staff Officer for Evangelism for the Presiding Bishop
- Phoebe Chatfield, Program Officer for Creation Care and Justice - Office of the Presiding Bishop, Founder of Podcast [SpadeSpoonSoul](#)
- Sarah Alphin - Program Officer for Evangelism, Creation Care, and Reconciliation, Office of Presiding Bishop
- [Brian Sellers-Petersen](#) - Coordinator, Good News Gardens, Office of the Presiding Bishop, Founder of Podcast [SpadeSpoonSoul](#)
- [Charlotte Hand Greeson](#) - Consultant, Good News Gardens, Office of the Presiding Bishop and Member of LifeLong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary

The Garden of Hope has captured the attention of the Creation Care Team as a Good News Gardens model by working to create community connections. Through collective partnerships and resources, the Garden has been renovated with three primary goals: increase yield of fresh vegetables, creation of a pollinator plot, and creation of sacred space for community use. Partners and resources have included Brookside Community Church, St Marks, The Church of Messiah, The Sharing Project, Grow It Green, The Sisters of Charity, Flags of Gratitude, and members of Boy Scout Troop 1 including two Eagle Scout projects. Produce from the garden is

provided to local and regional food pantries, Chester Area Senior Housing, and is used for meals at Homeless Solutions.

The Good News Gardens program is part of Agrarian Ministries Creation Care initiative promoted by Michael Curry two years ago and has grown across North America.

Petersen, Geer, and Greeson are published authors who serve the Episcopal Church in many roles. In his book ***Harvesting Abundance: Local Initiatives of Food and Faith***, Brian Sellers Peterson reminds us that as Christians, we are called to be good stewards of the land and to share its produce. His book shares how congregations, schools, and organizations across the Episcopal Church are reaching out to their neighborhoods to share God's story of abundance through a variety of agricultural initiatives, offering inspiration to all of us to nurture our own relationship with our creator--and with each other--by planting a garden and feeding the hungry. Greeson is involved with [Building Faith](#) whose mission is to equip and inspire churches and individuals for the ministry of Christian education and faith formation. Geer's work focuses primarily on the Christian theology of place as it is expressed in both daily and congregational life including her work ***At Home in This Life: Finding Peace at the Crossroads of Unraveled Dreams and Beautiful Surprises***.

Since the tour, Peterson and Geer have reached out to CSJB Associate Julie Crawford and Superior Sr Monica Clare to do a podcast for SpadeSpoonSoul to share stories about the Garden. The Community is exploring how to create a sacred space next to the Garden of Hope to offer Sharing Circles

Any group or individuals interested in the Good News Garden movement or Agrarian Ministry opportunities can contact Sister Linda Clare at the Convent at srlc@csjb.org for more information about how you can transform your land to serve others and all of God's creation..

[View the Garden of Hope and Its in Action](#)

[View the Evening Prayer Program with The Creation Care Team](#)

[More Information on Creation Care Initiatives](#)

[More Information on Agrarian Ministries](#)

[More Information on Good News Gardens](#)

[Good News Garden Monthly Webinars](#)