

The Visitor

@ HOME

Check out some upcoming events!

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E-Newsletter of Asbury First

June 17, 2021

Bearing Fruit

Despite a long history of planning, the Asbury Community Garden finally puts down roots.

By Diana Carter

It's hard to talk about the origins of the new Asbury Community Garden without talking about the shift in strategy for outreach at Asbury First over the last few years.

My journey to leadership of the Outreach Task Force began with reading a book I picked up at the New York University bookstore in 2013. *The Stop* described the origins of an anti-poverty non-profit organization in Toronto that focused much of its effort on food justice issues.

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Left: The Asbury Community Garden is beginning to flourish thanks to our incredible volunteers.

Above: The Youth Group helps create the pollination bed during the initial garden set up on April 25.

Photos by Sarah Brubaker, Diana Carter, Bob Castle, and James Flack

Bearing Fruit, ctd.

Like Asbury First, *The Stop* had a meals program and a grocery program. But *The Stop* went further, incorporating a community kitchen where participants could cook meals to consume at home, or share in group celebrations at the center. Further, they organized a community garden that supplemented the meals program, grocery bags, and individuals' larders.

As with many church committees, the Outreach Task Force had tons and tons of bright ideas about how to work more toward justice and away from simply giving stuff out. Discussions ran on month after month, but Rev. Katie O'Hearn (now Hamilton) kept returning to one idea—creating a community garden at Asbury First. It could supply fresh produce for our guests and perhaps pull neighbors from rental units in the neighborhood onto our campus. Having been a vegetable gardener in a community garden, I was thrilled with the idea. It seemed that everyone liked the idea but wasn't sure where to put it. So, it found its way into
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Seedlings



Raised Bed Prep Work



Bearing Fruit, ctd.

the task force's November 2016 culminating report, "A Way Forward," as a recommendation to pursue, but without much in the way of specifics. And there it sat until late 2019. Bob Castle, whose past Asbury First roles include being a member of the Outreach Task Force (and co-writer of its report,) chairman of the Outreach Committee, and a member of the Asbury Dining & Caring Center Board, heard about a grant program from the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation Service. That organization was looking for a group to start a community garden in the city and would supply start-up capital and expertise to get the garden going with raised beds. Bob brought the idea to the dining center board, which agreed he should pursue the grant. Approval of the grant seemed to take no time, and a dining-center subcommittee was formed to get the idea off the ground in the spring of 2020.

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Youth Group Soil Work



ASBURY FIRST COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRESS

FEBRUARY

- Trees were trimmed or cut, and turned into mulch.
- Engineers on our committee drew and redrew plans for laying out the raised beds.

MARCH

- Volunteers of the Dining & Caring Center, families in the Children's Ministry, and classrooms in the Asbury Day Care Center all stepped forward to begin seedlings to transplant into the gardens.

APRIL

- Garden beds and soil were delivered by the soil and conservation service.
- Asbury's Youth Group turned out in force to fill the beds.

MAY

- Individuals, the Dining & Caring Center and the Grocery Bag Ministry contributed dozens of corrugated cardboard boxes to create grass barriers under and between the beds.
- More volunteers from the United Way Day of Caring program helped to spread mulch around the beds, eliminating the need to mow between them, and creating smoother access.

JUNE

- Volunteers work to water, weed, and tend the garden.
- Blessing of the Garden

Bearing Fruit, ctd.

But then the pandemic hit, making a spring garden launch impossible. We hoped to at least get the garden beds constructed and filled with soil before fall so we wouldn't lose the grant, and so we'd be ready to start planting this spring. However, it became apparent that our chosen site was a bit too shady for a vegetable garden, so we would need to take down a few trees first. That raised the need to gain approval from the Rochester Preservation Board because of the protected historic status of the campus.

Thanks to our church staff and the efforts of Chuck Hanrahan, who has been communicating with the preservation board about the 1010 renovation and expansion, preservation approvals for cutting several trees came in February and we were on our way.

Judging from the number of people who keep coming forward to be on the community garden committee, this idea found in a New York City book store and nurtured by a young pastor who has since moved on, is an exciting one.

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Day of Caring Mulch Work



Planting and Trellis Work



Bearing Fruit, ctd.

As I write this, we're planting vegetables—both seeds and starter plants—in the beds. We also have a pollinator bed with flowers to encourage helpful insects to visit our garden and pollinate our vegetables. Six flowering shrubs will do the same. We have not harvested anything yet, but we've already established the "community" in the Asbury Community Garden. If you want to play a role in that community, contact Diana Carter at (585) 732-7224 or dianalouisecarter@gmail.com.

Blessing of the Garden

Sunday, June 27, 10 am



Join us on Sunday, June 27 after the 9 am service, as we dedicate the Asbury Community Garden. Relocate your lawn chair to the garden behind 1010 East Ave and help bless this new outreach ministry.

Marcia Karl Wymer painted a special stone marker for the pollination bed at the corner of the garden.



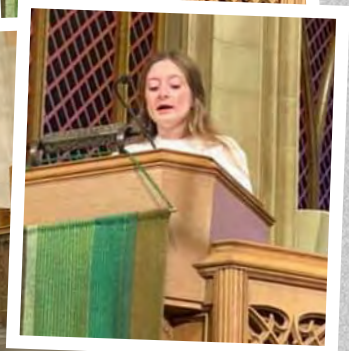
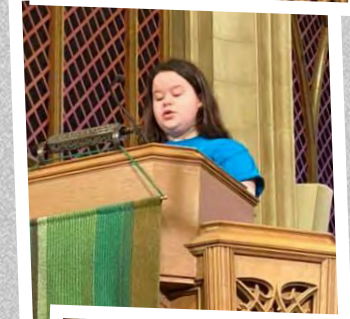
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YOUTH SUNDAY

Youth Sunday was a wonderful success! What better way to start the summer than to hear the voices of our youth. They delivered insightful sermons, prayers, beautiful music, and meaningful messages. Here are some behind the scenes pictures of the outdoor and live-streamed services.

Photos by Carol Lamica



Congratulations Confirmands of 2021!

Congratulations to Sophie Karpovich, Dele Doerner, Rosalie Stinehour, Ellie Cady, Allison Glaza, and Garrett Long.



OUTREACH



Left: The D&CC has enjoyed learning about Ethiopian traditions from one of our new volunteers, Ten Say Ragam. Here she is along with volunteers Dan Sherman and Anne-Marie Brogan.

Dining & Caring Center

The D&CC continues to fulfill Asbury First's mission to feed the hungry. Check out the latest!



Above: One way the D&CC will help with the new Asbury Community Garden is to collect food scraps for composting. Sylvester Norman, Ginnie Banks and Mary Lynn Vickers put food leftovers in a bucket for the compost pile.



The Storehouse Geranium Sale

Thanks to all the wonderful orders, the Storehouse Mother's Day Geranium Sale was a success. Here Cindy Dankert, Charlene Lajewski, Joan Smith, and Kay Cotton work on May 7 for order pick up. It was a cold, damp day, but it was good to see people and add some floral beauty to the world.



An early picture of the Grocery Bag Ministry Team (circa 2011).

Front Row: Ruth Mathews-Leubner, Fred Hamil, Carolyn Hamil, Beverly Schuman

Back Row: Wayne Zeches, Jim Quinn, Eugene Fisher, Joe Cygan, Jim Carter, Lynn Peck, Glenn Peck, Bob Schuman Jim Reed, Bill Lisi (Founder of the Ministry)



Carolyn Hamil with Jim Carter at the GBM. Carolyn was presented with a framed picture of her and her husband (see above left).

Honoring Carolyn and Fred Hamil

The Grocery Bag Ministry recently presented Carolyn Hamil with a framed picture recognizing her and her husband's faithful service from the beginning days of this important ministry. Fred, who passed away in 2020, will be remembered as an active member of the congregation and for his warm and friendly greetings as an usher at the Sunday morning worship services.

The Grocery Bag Ministry typically packs 80 to 100 bags of groceries — the equivalent of 1,000 to 1,250 meals — per month! Meals are delivered to hungry families in the Rochester area by partner churches and by the Keeping Our Promises Organization. Keeping Our Promises supports refugees and their families that were forced to flee from Afghanistan and Iraq because they supported our troops as translators and guides.

Want to learn more or find out how you can help? Email grocery@asburyfirst.org.



Saturday, June 26, 2-4 pm

Benefiting the Dining & Caring Center and the Grocery Bag Ministry

The world is starting to get back to normal, but a lot of people are still struggling due to the pandemic. We need your help to support the Dining & Caring Center and the Grocery Bag Ministry! As you do your own shopping in the coming days, please consider collecting items for donation that would be useful for these amazing ministries and those in need.

ITEMS NEEDED

DINING & CARING CENTER

- Granola bars
- Hot chocolate
- Paper towels
- Napkins
- Coffee
- Sugar

GROCERY BAG MINISTRY

- Peanut butter (plain)
- Jelly (grape, strawberry)
- Pasta (spaghetti or macaroni)
- Pasta Sauce (plastic jar preferred)
- Tuna
- Soup (chicken noodle or Tomato)
- Canned Vegetables (green beans, corn)
- Canned Fruit (peaches, cocktail)
- Mac-n-Cheese

HYGIENE ITEMS

- Toilet paper
- Tooth brushes
- Tooth paste
- Shampoos

