



About Our Garden Ministry

Summer has been good to us! Our summer student gardener, Lance Cabacungan, whom we hired with a Canada Summer Jobs grant, completed his 9-week contract in midsummer.

We thank him for leaving the garden healthy and well-cared for.



We have also been fortunate in attracting Jude Black, a Grade 9 student who chose to contribute some of his required volunteer hours to the ongoing maintenance of the St. Gabriel's Garden.

The Garden Ministry is pleased to welcome Eileen Prasad.

We are also grateful to three additional garden workers: Agnes Gaughan, Elizabeth Quilliam and Marie Deans. And while we are expressing our gratitude, we must acknowledge our neighbourhood "Garden Guardians". These three women, early morning walkers not of the parish, admonish dog walkers who ignore the signs clearly saying "No Dogs Allowed", as well as those who dare to harvest the north garden berries!

Thanks to the design and carpentry skills of Rory DeBoer, Heather Bennett's grandson, we have installed a "Guide House" in the garden; we are grateful to Rory for his fine work. Ultimately, the house will hold three garden walk guides. Now, we have the Sensory Reflective Garden Walk, and a companion to the Walk of the Stations of the Cosmic Earth.



We hope you will avail yourself of either or both guides, as the Spirit calls, and time permits. The third guide, to accompany a Scripture-Based Reflective Walk, will be introduced next year.

The Sensory Reflective Garden Walk was officially introduced as part of our first Garden Retreat on Sept. 18th, "Gateway to Earth Spirituality", with Guest Speakers Fr. Stephen Dunn, Dr. Dennis O'Hara, and Maria Montejo, manager of Dodem Kenonhsa. We are very pleased that this first retreat was so well-attended, despite the pandemic restrictions. We hope to offer more Garden Retreat Days in the future.

Spotlight on the Garden

All the garden areas are lush, given this summer's generous rainfall. Wildlife continues to make the garden home: a bunny was encountered several times in the blueberry patch and a chipmunk scampered between Lance's legs while he was harvesting comfrey leaves (which were used to make comfrey tea and applied to all the fruit trees as a tonic/fertilizer). Both animals seemed unfazed by human presence. The young rabbit was, each time, within arm's reach. The chipmunk



seemed to be saying "Bet you can't catch me!", as it clearly could have taken a different route to its destination. We seem to be an accepted part of their garden landscape, as they are in ours.

Moving the community garden boxes has proven wise—we have enjoyed bountiful vegetable harvests of beans, onions, yellow squash, zucchini, carrots, beets, radish, chives, lettuce, chard, kale and snow peas, as well as herbs—thyme and parsley. All our harvests are delivered weekly to the Good Shepherd Ministry kitchen.

Unfortunately, a thief removed all our garlic, half the peaches, and half the cabbage until apprehended by Fr. Brando very early one morning. Hopefully, theft will not be repeated. Our urban orchard has also rendered bountiful fruit harvests of haskap berries, cherries, red and black currants, blueberries and peaches.



Meanwhile in the south garden, our perennial blooming plants continue to provide sustenance to insect pollinators. The Pearly Everlasting and Virginia Mountain Mint are buzzing with wasps, and the Hairy Beardtongue is alive with fluttering white butterflies. Indeed, the meadow of indigenous wildflowers maintains an important constant welcome for bees and butterflies.

We extend our thanks to Dian Laycock for the aerial photo of our St. Gabe's Garden.

A Thanksgiving to All Our Garden Relations and Teachers

Inspired by the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving

To the bees, butterflies and other insects that teach reciprocity, gathering nectar and spreading pollen

We give our thanks

To the birds like the cardinals who teach constancy in their relationships and diligence and commitment to raising their young

We give our thanks

To predators like fox, and prey like rabbit, who teach the balance between taking life to live and giving life so others may live

We give our thanks

To all the creatures, above ground, under the ground and in the air who welcome us as belonging in their garden home

We give our thanks

To the trees and other flowering plants that respond to care by sharing their fruit

We give our thanks

To breeze and wind that make the grasses and foliage sway, providing entertainment to the garden surroundings

We give our thanks

To rain and snow that give life in summer and a protective blanket in winter

We give our thanks

To the garden which teaches that the intense, beautiful life force that flourishes so energetically there, in the tangle of plants, trees and shrubs, is the same life force that we humans share

We give our thanks

To the garden for the experience of finding an enlightened peace that cannot be easily found in our challenging world

We give our thanks

To the garden, where we encounter our Greater Self

We give our thanks

To nature which, not bound by any written word or lecture, manifests itself in distinct ways, and with universal appeal

We give our thanks

To Sun and Moon cycles that order life on Earth and teach impermanence and renewal

We give our thanks

To Creator, who set us in the garden among the other Earth communities that through them we might, in awe and wonder, learn humility and understand our place in creation

We give our thanks



Autumn Equinox Reflection

Father Paul Cusack, CP

Today, we celebrated the Fall Equinox; the days are shorter and the nights get longer. The busy harvest season is over and the land and the harvester get to rest. Birds get



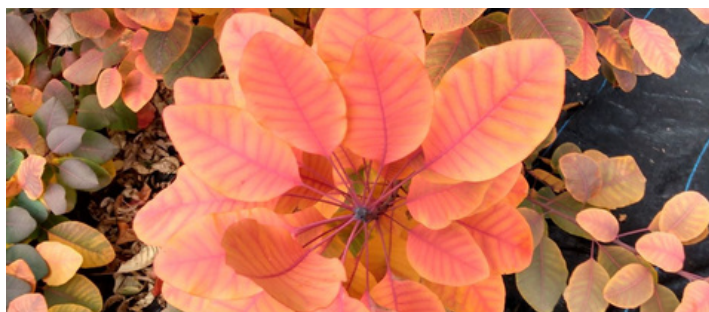
themselves ready for their long migrations, carried by the season's prevailing winds. Hibernating animals put on more fat so as to survive winter's fast. Squirrels gather acorns and then forget where they buried them. Nature is in a sense closing down. The members of the animal kingdom prepare for the winter season by reason of what scientists call their "genetic coding"—it is in their very genes to do what they do. It is in their very survival as a species, to do what they do.

The question for us members of the human species is, what is our genetic coding? What will help us survive as a species? Going back to the primal stories in our scriptures, might the answer be found in God's musing? "It is not good for man to be alone." We need companions and companionship. The present reality of global warming and the results of climate change which are in our face in print and TV specials bring us to another sad conclusion: we've ignored, abused and so lost our companionship with the other life systems on our common home, Planet Earth.



Maybe our genetic coding springs the primal question of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Self-survival, look out for number one. Both these answers bring our human species to loneliness and isolation, and a rift in relationships. Remember: we did not weave the web of life, and what we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

Maybe our guide at this time in our existence as a species might be the Prodigal Son of the gospel. He left home and was estranged from his family. He squandered his possession and became destitute. He eventually came to his senses, went back to his family house and asked for forgiveness, and forgiveness was gladly given.



Will the harsh realities of the Coronavirus and Global Warming bring us to our senses and help us realize we've squandered our possessions, the bounty and the beauty of Earth? Will we, the human factor of all the life species on Earth, come to our senses and return to our family?

Only time will tell—and time is running out.

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