Green Corner NWPA Synod Green Team

IN THE GARDEN

Genesis 2:8, the Bible begins in a garden created by God. Revelation 22:2 ends the Bible with the Tree of Life lined upon each side of the street in New Jerusalem with the River of Life flowing between them and the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. Ezekiel 28:13 and 31:9 speaks of Eden, the garden of God. God is a gardener. In John 15:1, Jesus says "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Gardener." Jesus was buried for three days in a garden and was even mistaken for a gardener by Mary Magdalene after he had risen.

Get out and spend time in or near a garden soon. Research has shown positive results. Therapeutic horticulture was used in a study in Norway and was found to be beneficial. Interacting with green space can limit adverse mental health outcomes, cardiovascular disease, and mortality, according to another study. Studies from the USA, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East show reduced depression and anxiety levels, and even improved Body Mass Index. Quality of life and life satisfaction were improved.

From an article by Seth J. Gillihan in Psychology Today, entitled *10 Mental Health Benefits of Gardening*, dated 6/19/19, is this list:

1. *Practicing acceptance.* I realize I'm not in control. I'm in the garden to help the plants and the environment that God has made available to me.
2. *Moving beyond perfectionism.* My garden is ALWAYS far from perfect! But it makes me and the birds, the insects, and other animals happy and I appreciate that.
3. *Developing a growth mindset*. In my case, I'm always amazed at how quickly things grow while I'm just doing life, especially the plants I don't want-the weeds!
4. *Connecting with others*. I want my garden to make others happy. Sharing the produce from my vegetable and fruit garden is another benefit of gardening.
5. *Connecting to your world*. And to the world God has made. I'm always grateful to be able to try to make God's world better.
6. *Bathing in green*. "Studies have found that being in green or even being able to look at a green landscape is linked with better recovery from surgery, less anxiety and depression, better stress management, and many other positive effects."
7. *Mindful presence.* I'm conscious of being with old friends-trees and shrubs, vines, perennials, and annuals that I've planted in past years. They are all growing at their own rates and it's a wonderful feeling to know that I was able to help them and to provide a safe space for my garden plants as time has gone on.
8. *Physical exercise.* I can come out of the garden tired, hot, and sweaty, but inevitably I feel better about myself.
9. *Reducing stress.* Take time to feel the life around you that you are blessed to enjoy and to help to thrive. Feel the sun, the breeze, and the soil, realizing that all are blessings to you and to the garden.
10. *Eating healthfully.* From Asparagus to Zucchini, your garden can help you to grow and stay healthy.

The Green Team's purpose is to "raise awareness of and advocate for the care of creation." Our mission is to support and encourage creation care ministries, raise awareness, model creation care advocacy consistent with ELCA teachings in our faith communities and public life.

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