

For Immediate Release

Community Garden Project Enjoys First Year of Growth

HAMDEN, Conn.—The idea for a community garden at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was planted many months ago. But the idea came to fruition this year, producing an impressive bounty of fresh produce to feed the hungry and paving the way for continued growth.

Under the leadership of Rob Hansen, Christ the Good Shepherd’s community garden began in May as a collaborative effort with the Town of Hamden and Grace & St. John’s Episcopal Church, Hamden. “The garden came together slowly, but by the end of June, it was up and running – thanks to support from the Town of Hamden and this congregation,” Hansen said. “Volunteers from the community and this congregation stepped in throughout the season to help weed, water, harvest and deliver produce to the Hamden Food Bank.”

By Oct. 29, the community garden – comprised of three raised gardening beds provided by the Town of Hamden – had yielded 111 pounds of produce. This included 15 yellow squash, 13 zucchini, nine butternut squash, five cucumbers, 29 bell peppers, 18 banana peppers, 54 grape tomatoes, 38 full-size tomatoes, and two bunches of chard and parsley.

“This is not a bad start for the first year,” said Hansen, who had previously participated in a community garden project run by a church congregation. “I would like to extend enthusiastic thanks to everyone who helped out with this garden this year.”

A Community Effort

According to Hansen, the community garden was a “community” effort in every sense of the word. In addition to support from the Hamden Food Task Force and faith partners at Grace & St. John’s, Girl Scout Troop 60875 was one of the groups that helped with the garden. In mid-September, the troop spent their meeting time weeding and clearing beds, spreading mulch and filling beds with soil.

“The girls enjoyed themselves and were fascinated by the insects and worms in the garden,” Hansen said. “The troop was also kind enough to donate mulch and soil for the garden.”

Grace & St. John’s recently received a \$10,000 grant for their collaborative effort with Christ the Good Shepherd from Yale Divinity School’s Reimagining Church initiative, which was funded by the Thriving Congregations Grant of the Lilly Foundation. This new initiative invites congregations to consider their present ministry, the needs of vital churches in the post-pandemic world, and the options that are before them for envisioning new directions in ministry. Of that \$10,000 grant, Christ the Good Shepherd will receive \$4,250 to expand its garden as well as develop a pollinator garden at the church, located at 600 Shepard Ave.

“For us, this garden is just one example of how God is at work in our community,” said the Rev. Joshua Sullivan, pastor of Christ the Good Shepherd. “We believe that the Holy Spirit of God is not buzzing around somewhere up on a cloud, but takes on flesh here as we collaborate with our community, with

other denominations and congregations, with each other. God becomes real in each plant and vegetable that is grown for the well-being of our neighbors.”

For more information about Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, visit our website at www.christgoodshepherdlutheran.org.

Photo(s)



Members of Girl Scout Troop 60875 helped tend the community garden in its first year at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 600 Shepard Ave., Hamden.