



St. Luke's Methodist Church Garden and Wading Pool Garden Project

Spring is approaching, robins are returning, and gardens are calling! Mary Purdy, a member of St. Luke's Methodist in Dubuque has her fingers in the soil of two amazing garden projects to benefit the food insecure that are worth emulating. One is the church garden and one is the Wading Pool project.

Church Garden

St. Luke's Methodist in Dubuque sponsors a large church garden on Mary's rural acreage near Galena, Illinois. "Purdy Produce Plot" is 5,000 square feet in size. It has produced 2,000 to 3,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables every year since 2010.

Each year, approximately 30-40 people are involved, at some time, in the planting, mulching, weeding and tending of the garden, and the harvesting, transporting and preparation of produce. Students from The University of Wisconsin Platteville, residents of the Dubuque Rescue Mission and members of clubs and organizations have volunteered their help.

The mission of the garden is to provide fresh vegetables and fruits for the free meal served every Saturday night at St. Luke's Church, to



provide any additional produce to meal guests to take home, and to provide excess produce to Dubuque Food Pantry and homeless shelters.



The garden has been funded by grants received from The United Methodist Church and also by The Dubuque Rotary Club and through donation and collaboration with other community gardens plus donations of funds, seeds and labor.

Contact Mary Purdy anytime April through October if interested in volunteering. Mary says, “We always need more and consistent help and creative ideas of how to improve the garden. Volunteers do not need to be experienced gardeners as each task is explained. Children are welcome and encouraged to participate.”

To volunteer, contact Mary Purdy at mary_purdy@hotmail.com

Read more [here](#).

Wading Pool Gardens

St. Luke’s Methodist also hosts the “Wading Pool” Garden Project facilitated by Mary Purdy and Jennifer Crow.

A “Wading Pool” garden is a plastic wading pool that is filled with soil for growing vegetables in.

The idea for a wading pool garden project originated with a St. Luke’s parishioner who viewed the concept on www.technologyforthe poor.com. It was adopted as a community-wide outreach ministry for St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in 2011.



Wading Pool Garden

St. Luke’s sponsors the garden with support from grants from the United Methodist Church, The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, The Virgil and Norma Denlinger Family Foundation and the Neighborhood Small Grant Program, as well as private donations and collaborative help from community partners.

Recipients are selected based on economic need, opportunities to teach, and potential to maintain the wading pool garden.

Each garden consists of a 60-inch plastic wading pool, soil materials, seeds, plants and a trowel located at the recipient's residence. The recipient is responsible for care, watering and maintenance of the pool garden, which can be used for several years.

The mission of these gardens is to provide an opportunity for children and adults to grow some of their own food and to instill an interest in eating nutritious food

The wading pool gardens promote self-sufficiency, community pride, and promote healthier lifestyles. Participants receive garden materials and are mentored by a garden guide throughout the season.

There are approximately 70 gardens actively used by individual, family or group home and homeless shelter residents, students, children and their teachers or care providers, parishioners in churches and employees and staff at Jule Transit Center and E B Lyons Interpretive Center. Beyond gardeners there are many volunteers and community partners who support the success of this wading pool garden project.



[Read more and download a brochure here.](#)

Contact Mary Purdy if your group would like an education presentation about the Wading Pool Project.

Contact Mary Purdy mary_purdy@hotmail.com or Jennifer Crow at Jcrow24@aol.com for more information or to volunteer.