

STORIES OF FOOD + FARM MINISTRIES

The Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff

This is for my maternal grandfather, Ewart “Sink” Simpkinson, who valued the land because he knew that people love to gather in the simple beauty of the outdoors. Sink never turned down an ice cream cone from Graeters, never drove if he could walk, and never ate alone if he could find a friend for lunch. Cincinnati is indebted to his vision and advocacy to transform the riverfront from a back door scrap yard into a front porch gathering place that flourishes today as Sawyer Point Park. Like the Roman Cincinnatus, who was a farmer, Sink served his city without personal ambition. His spirit of gumption lives on as we pursue his same dreams.

We give thanks to The Rev. Thomas Brackett, who commissioned this study, and whose bold vision for a vibrant, healthy church inspires us. His calling to lend courage and inspiration so that God’s dreams may be birthed among us is motivating.



THE REVEREND ELIZABETH DERUFF, STUDY DIRECTOR

The Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff is an ordained Episcopal priest who worked for nearly a decade as a seminarian and as a staff member at St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco and later co-founded St. Macrina Episcopal Church, the first new Episcopal mission in Marin County in sixty years. She founded Larkspur Farm—a non-profit focused on land conservation and farm education—and has a business background. She is currently a social entrepreneur supporting food, farming education, and sustainability. The Rev. DeRuff is following in the footsteps of those who have brought community benefit to the land.



LIZ RANIERI, ARCHITECT FAIA, LEED AP

Elizabeth Ranieri FAIA holds degrees in fine arts and architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design. Together with her partner, Byron Kuth FAIA, she established Kuth/Ranieri Architects in 1990. The multi-disciplinary design firm has won numerous AIA awards at the regional, state, and national levels, The Architectural League's Young Architects and Emerging Voices awards as well as I.D. Magazine's 39th, 45th, and 47th annual awards. Princeton Architectural Press with the Graham Foundation published the monograph, KUTH/RANIERI Architects, released in 2010. The Firm's most recent interview on "ECO-Commons," a socially and environmentally sustainable community proposal for Levittown, New York, appears in ArchNewsNow.com.



prepared by:



ARCHITECTS, LLP.

THE REVEREND THOMAS L. BRACKETT

The Reverend Thomas L. Brackett serves as the Episcopal Church's Missioner for Church Planting, Ministry Redevelopment, and Fresh Expressions of Church. He commissioned this study.



EMILY MCADAMS, EDITOR

Emily McAdams graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Development Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She tutored inner-city adolescents to prepare for SAT exams in Oakland, California for several years and developed a passion for educational outreach, as well as community-building projects. She wishes to further her education with a Master's in Public Health in order to positively contribute to human well-being, the global food system, and their complex relationship.



*Additional thanks to Anne Simpkinson and Sister Barbara Green, O.P.,
whose careful read greatly improved this study.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning from Larkspur Farm

Land and the Church

Farm Studies

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND FARMING MINISTRIES WITH NOTABLE MODELS

Financial Sustainability: Abbaye de Lerins, Île Saint-Honorat, France

Environmental Justice: Bluestone Farm, Brewster, New York

Social Justice: Care Farming, Holland and United Kingdom

Civic Engagement: Lexington Interfaith Garden, Lexington, Massachusetts

CONCLUSION

The Modern Grange Hall

The Arthur Rank Centre, United Kingdom

CONTACT

elizabethderuff@gmail.com

second edition
spring 2013

LEARNING FROM LARKSPUR FARM



The Niven Nursery in the valley of Mt. Tamalpais

It happened by accident. I inadvertently sent an email containing the description of an organic farm project to the wrong Nancy. Nancy C. had popped up next to Nancy D. in my email address list and I had hit send without noticing that I had chosen the wrong name. About 45 minutes later, I received a phone call. It was Nancy C. I was surprised to hear from her; our children had gone to primary school together, but it had been at least four years since they had graduated. She told me that she was unsure why I had sent her the description of the farm project, but that she was pleased that I had included her in what struck her as an inspirational project and she was excited to be involved. Nancy then explained that she was calling from a hospital, where she was being treated for lymphoma. She could only leave her hospital bed for one week a month, but she wished to meet me the next day to introduce me to someone who might be able to help with the project.

Encounters such as this tell the story of Larkspur Farm. A community, made up of people like Nancy, confirms that getting

The Niven Nursery, Larkspur, CA

Free farm, San Francisco

Food to share

Now that's a carrot!



close to the land through food and farming energizes people, creates community and provides hope for a better future.

The Larkspur Farm project began because the land called me to action. It was early August 2010 and within six months of articulating a vision for the property, two hundred volunteers materialized. It was encouraging to hear so many people ask how they could help. Teenagers, lawyers, businesswomen, grandfathers, artists, community leaders and many others formed a passionate group centered on conserving land and creating an urban educational farm.

The project had two components that spoke to people. First, it was a tangible place: the Niven Nursery – an abandoned plant nursery on 16.8 acres in Larkspur, California. Second, the vision was bigger than any one person, so it necessitated cooperation. We could see how valuable each others' gifts were and we understood that we depended upon each other. We needed the attorney to create the 501c3, we needed the developer who could model economic viability, we needed the high school student who spoke passionately about why he cares about growing food locally and preserv-

ing land, we needed the soils engineer and the political consultant—we all needed each other. Together, we believed that our community would be greener, have greater access to locally grown organic food, and that the Larkspur Farm would be a beautiful place to gather and learn. This gave people purpose and a sense of hope about what the future would bring.

The work also brought new appreciation for the land. We came to understand that the land is a minister; it helps people dream and brings about healing. One day, I sat outside of Peet's Coffee with two businesswomen and discussed the potential for Larkspur Farm. Without any prompting from me, the priest, I heard two important longings. One woman shared her vision to create a place for disaffected teens to learn in an environment that might suit them better than a classroom. The other woman spoke about her hope to grow food for hungry people in order to bake and break bread with them. Both women spoke of how the Niven property has a calm and healing presence—how beautiful it is as the afternoon sun casts long shadows off of the greenhouses.

The vision of Larkspur Farm continues today, even though a developer purchased the property in September of 2011. The property is currently being developed to hold close to one hundred new homes. Despite our significant disappointment, our concluding luncheon was oddly hopeful. More people attended than had replied and each person gave voice to their love of the land. We realized that together we share the seeds of a vision that may still happen. A cohort is now looking for a new piece of land.

The spirit of teamwork among the Larkspur Farm working group



LAND AND THE CHURCH

***THIS IS A STORY
ABOUT THE POWER
OF THE LAND: THE
DISCOVERY THAT
THE LAND CAN
MINISTER TO US.***

If the land can have such an effect on people—to minister to all those who work with it—certainly, it should be possible for the land owned by Episcopal entities to minister to the church. This challenge invites us to enlarge our thinking. For the most part, we've viewed our buildings as a means to facilitate community gatherings and worship, provide compassion and mercy and initiate acts of justice – to be a church. This utilization of buildings has served the church well, but new opportunities exist as we reconsider our relationship with our land.

Land is something the church has in abundance: over 7,000 parishes nationwide, not including camp and conference centers, schools, monasteries and other facilities. Even though we have significant holdings, land is precious and rare and will become even more so as the world's population grows.

At a recent conference in Vancouver, British Columbia a wonderful question was asked: 'What time is it in the world right now?' This question really proposes a re-evaluation of daily assumptions and pri-

orities. It is asking us what it is the world is most in need of. It is our responsibility to recognize how precious and rare undeveloped land is, and to actively discover how the land can be a minister. This has never been more important as dioceses across the country are considering selling parish properties. By employing the maxim that ‘within the problem lies the solution,’ this study explores the opportunities and benefits of conserving land for food and farm ministries.

Developing a vision of conservation is important because as Episcopal properties are sold, the buyers may not share our values. For example, as a church, we value environmental, social and food justice—breaking bread and serving all people. We explicitly articulate these values in our support of the Millennium Development Goals, two of which are directly relevant to food and farming: to eradicate extreme hunger and ensure environmental sustainability. Developers are not always motivated to look beyond single bottom-line profits— that often exploit land, air and water— or to serve the common good. As a church, we have the op-

portunity to cultivate an ethic of land use and a way to sustain life, both spirituality and physically, for future generations.

***“THE GARDEN SHAPES THE GARDENER AND THE
FARM SHAPES THE FARMER.”***

-ALAN CHADWICK

FARM STUDIES

I've spent the past several months discovering the growing interest within the Episcopal Church to not only consider our buildings, but also our land as a place of community building and a place where matters of justice are being addressed. There are 250 documented, and likely thousands of undocumented models in practice. These range from a handful of raised beds in suburban contexts, like Church of the Redeemer in Lexington, Massachusetts, to the transformation of vacant lots in urban environments, like the Free Farm in San Francisco. There are seminaries that offer new courses in food and faith such as Yale and Sewanee, camp and conference centers like the Proctor Center in Ohio, which uses food grown on their land to feed guests. There are entire monastic communities, like Bluestone Farm in Brewster, New York, where the Sisters from the Community of the Holy Spirit are dedicating their land and their lives to sustainable farm practices, teaching living arts and following their rule of life.

I have also researched models outside of the Episcopal Church, such as the

*The Proctor Center
London, Ohio*



*Sowing seeds at the Free
Farm in San Francisco*



*Volunteers at Bluestone Farm
Brewster, New York*



Incredible Edible group in Todmorden, England whose motto is “if you eat, you’re in.” This is a succinct reference to the inclusive nature of the experimental community project that recently became a standard-bearer for successful community farming, after beginning as a small-scale neighborhood project to convert an abandoned lot into a garden. Pam Warhurst describes the logic of reintegrating people with their food: “What should a community do with its unused land? Plant food, of course.” She explains the growth of the edible community gardens as a natural snowballing of interest in alternative, creative farming, as information was made available to neighbors, and an increasing willingness to invest in kindness and the environment. The Incredible Edible group is exceptional because it utilized the interest drummed up from its innovative farming practices to promote local products of all kinds. As a result, 49% of merchants in the area reported that their profits had increased.

Site visits were conducted in the United Kingdom, where I stayed on the grounds of the Royal Agricultural Society in

Stoneleigh Park, the location of the Arthur Rank Centre. I participated in a retreat day with agricultural chaplains, shared food at the tables of Care Farmers in the Midlands area of England, stayed for a retreat with the Sisters at Bluestone Farm, spoke with influential people in the church and at universities, and met with farm experts.

The intention behind the research for this project was threefold: to raise awareness concerning alternatives to selling precious Church holdings, to open a forum for discussion of activities at the local level, and to encourage the creation of a digital network to connect and support these activities at the national level. To aid the research, I developed an interview questionnaire, along with a neat list of farms to investigate. The first interview shattered this illusion spectacularly when I realized that my questionnaire—which I had naively anticipated would aid in the seamless categorization of information—was hopelessly insufficient to make sense of the outpouring of enthusiasm for farm ministries. It was clear that it would be necessary to deviate from the formal

Images from the Incredible Edible group in Todmorden, UK. “If you eat, you’re in.”



interview process to do justice to the subject. The most prudent way to uncover effective ministries followed a simple principle: “finding out what God is doing and joining in.” This led to tracking the places where the spirit, enthusiasm and energy to act were high, and where compassion and the belief in justice for all people abounded. The next step was to identify the underlying factors in these places. As a result, four guiding principles emerged that have been included in the study with examples of land use that reflect our values. If we envision the land as calling us toward financially sustainable projects that promote environmental and social justice, as well as civic engagement, the conservation of church holdings might be simpler than we had imagined. It is essential to continue to consider the question of how the land ministers to the Episcopal Church in fruitful ways.

It would be impossible for this study to be exhaustive, with new ministries appearing and disappearing every day, nor was that my intention. The practices I witnessed are inspiring, but we are just scratching the surface of what is possible

***“WHAT SHOULD A COMMUNITY DO WITH UNUSED LAND?
PLANT FOOD, OF COURSE.”***

-PAM WARHURST

for the Church. I hope to persuade decision-makers in parishes and dioceses to reconsider selling their land. It is essential to investigate other possibilities for land use that create viable communities modeled after Jesus. The revenue generated from the sale of church holdings simply does not match the potential revenue from years of productive land use. Absorbing some opportunity cost now by choosing not to sell is a necessary investment for the future, so that subsequent generations may continue to benefit from this powerful truth: tending to the land helps us grasp the realities of our faith. It is these same practices that make our faith real; we sow seeds in order to produce new crops that yield not only conventional produce but also crops of justice, healing and compassion.

I also hope to cultivate new venues for conversation where ideas can be shared, challenged and expanded upon; places where we are invited into work that is larger than any one single person. In these new places, we will value each others' gifts and be stronger, as well as more intelligent and sensitive, than we would be

individually. I imagine this place to look like a modern grange hall.

I pray that as we come to know the land as a minister, our growing awareness will stimulate new ideas, draw real resources and quicken action for a brighter, greener future—"a doorway of hope" (Hosea 2:15).





FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Brother Marie-Paques and the chef of La Tonnelle

“LAND IS ACCESS TO CAPITAL.”

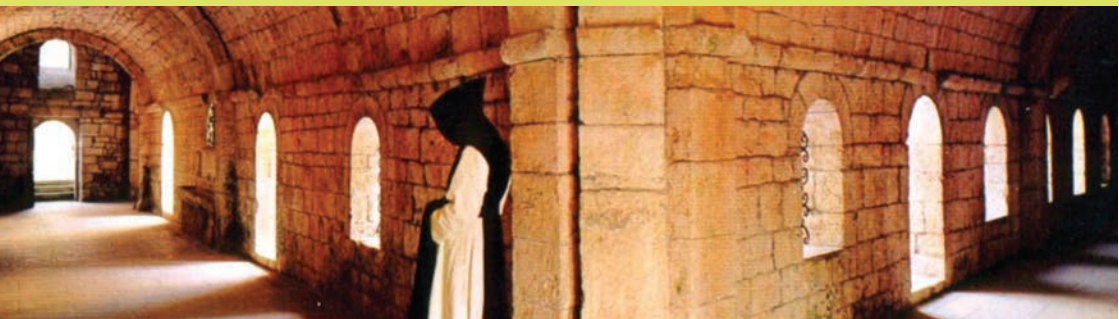
-AMIGO BOB CANTISANO

ABBAYE DE LERINS

Île Saint-Honorat, France

The quest to discover vibrant and transformative farm ministries revealed encouraging and innovative practices. Food is beginning to be grown all over the country for food pantries that feed hungry people. It is also grown for community supported agriculture [CSA] boxes. The Abundant Table in Ventura County, California delivers 150 organic CSA boxes each week. Organic farming is sweeping the news, but Amigo Bob Cantisano, an organic farm expert, estimates that organic farming makes up only 1.0% of all farming in the United States. This tiny fraction accounts for thousands of very small farms, while 80% of all food produced in the United States is done so by a concentrated number of commercial growers.

Given that there are many local models sprouting up all over the country, both within and outside of our church, the condition that proved most difficult to find was financial sustainability. Paul Clever from The Common Friars/Good Earth Farm in Athens, Ohio commented, "The number one reason that causes good ideas to fail is lack of financial sustainability."



Financial sustainability in this sense is, of course, not about making an individual or organization wealthy, but is about establishing resources to provide a sustainable future and organizational health. Without economic viability, it is challenging for ministries to survive, let alone thrive and endure. If the enterprise isn't sustainable it won't be around long enough to realize its mission, no matter how inspiring and noble. Therefore, we must view financial sustainability as a necessary precondition to values-based farming. The ultimate requirement for financial sustainability motivated the family that leased land to the Abundant Table to reclaim and reincorporate their land back into their farm enterprise. They understood the economies of scale necessary to maintain viability on their family farm. This realization necessitated a relocation of The Abundant Table Ministry to a new property.

Given these examples, the monks at Abbaye de Lerins are a valuable example. Incorporated into their ministry is a viable economic strategy. Their unconventional model of offering hospitality to the wealthy in order to feed the poor provides

us with something to contemplate.

The following are Excerpts from Marketplace August 2, 2012 by John Laurenson:

John Laurenson: “Just off the coast from the French movie festival town of Cannes there's a little island that's been occupied by monks since the Fifth Century. They're an interesting bunch. During the film festival they hold a Silence Festival at the monastery for stressed-out Hollywood types. The monks are making money -- with wine and a luxury restaurant. After all, the more you earn, the more you can give away.”

Night prayers are sung by the twenty monks of the abbey here on the island of Saint Honorat. They live by strict rules -- poverty, silence, prayer... and wealth creation. Brother Vladimir is the abbot. He admits that Saint Benedict, who drew up the monastic rules, didn't have this last one in mind back in the Sixth Century. But, he insists, this monastery obeys his teaching in spirit.”

Brother Marie-Paques: “In the Medi-

The vineyards and the wine of Abbaye de Lerins



Brother Marie-Paques



eval period, monks were growing food necessary for the people to live. With our wine it's a completely different problem. Our wine is not necessary. And, if we sell our wine at a good price, we can live without asking money of other people and we can give some money."

John Laurenson: "The abbey's wine sales produced \$490,000 last year. The wine was even served to world leaders at the G-20 summit in Cannes. And now the brothers have opened this restaurant - La Tonnelle it's called, where patrons eat seared duck foie-gras with confit of violets under the shade of the Mediterranean pines, overlooking the sea. The man in charge of the monastery's finances is very proud of La Tonnelle. He's a broad-chested monk with a sound head for business who goes by the name of Frère Marie-Paques -- Brother Mary-Easter."

Brother Marie-Paques: "We are targeting a relatively rich clientele. People who really love good food and wine and can pay for the best. But we have a policy which is to welcome everyone in the same way. Rich and poor, educated

and ignorant. We have to receive them -- Saint Benedict tells us -- as if they were Jesus Christ."

John Laurenson: "In the monastery dining room, dinner is in silence. Here, indeed, all comers can take simple meals for very little money. One of them is Father Dominique Aubert, rector of Chartres Cathedral, who's on a week's retreat. He approves of the monks' initiative and says it will bring a new crowd to this ancient, holy place.

Behind the abbey is a walled vineyard called the Clos de la Charité, where grapes ripen in the sun. Donors pay a minimum of \$1,300 to sponsor a vine here. A little plaque bearing their name is put in front of it. And when its wine is auctioned each year, the proceeds -- \$100,000 last year -- go to ten charities in France and abroad. 'Giving,' says Brother Marie-Paques, 'is the greatest luxury you can buy.'"

The brothers provide a hopeful model of financial sustainability. The development and utilization of models of financial sustainability is a guiding principle for healthy food and farm ministries. This same principle of financial viability was at the core of the Larkspur Farm model and would be recreated in any future projects by the Church. The Larkspur Farm proposal includes three business enterprises that function as the economic center of the farm. After a start-up period of between three and five years, profits generated are then turned back into the organization to support food programs—as well as give access to a broad range of community members—and educational opportunities for citizens unable to afford fresh produce.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

BLUESTONE FARM

Brewster, New York



Nine years ago, the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Spirit began to actively address the issues of environmental, social and food justice by organically farming their 26-acre retreat

property, Bluestone Farm. Today, it is an inspiring example of how paying attention to the land, learning from her wisdom and practicing responsible farming can transform both people and the church.

At Bluestone, work is divided among the Sisters, companions, interns and visitors. From the fresh cows' milk, the Sisters make cheeses, butter and cream. Nothing is wasted: the curds make cheese and the whey is incorporated into breads and other baked goods. The garden is meticulously tended, bees are kept, fabrics are woven, bread is baked, food is skillfully prepared into mouth-watering meals—as well as preserved and canned for future consumption. Seeds are saved,

*Biodynamic farming with
Sister Helena Marie*

Cheese making

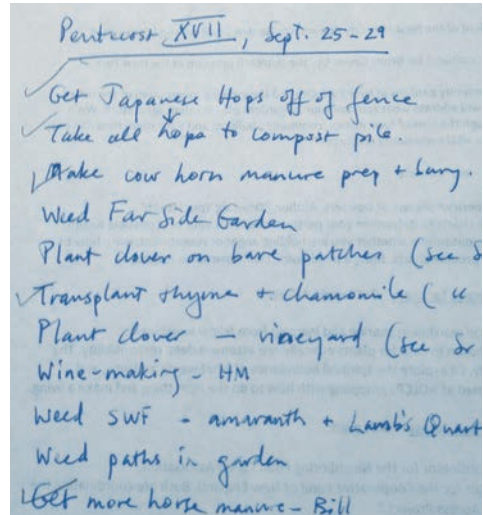
Praying over the bread



classes are taught and prayers are said. Each day, they embody the values of environmental justice.

The Sisters describe their work in this way: "Our call to heal the soil, live sustainably, reskill, and worship on this our plot of land is upheld by friends, neighbors, and Church in an ever-widening and deepening social geography. We find that our Community's desire to live in ever-increasing appreciation of the wonder of creation is shared widely, beyond the church, by small farmers, local food advocates, and environmentalists. It gives us great joy to share our understanding of the spirituality of farming with this growing network: our farm is at once a gift, a work, an invitation, and a prayer."

"Our study and our prayers have moved us toward living more sustainably. Our work to cultivate Bluestone Farm has given us farmers' hearts, which resonate and rejoice in the Scriptures' charge to tend the land, to give thanks for the harvest, and to see God's hand in every living thing."



Ora et labora- work and pray

Farming and praying have a playful and practical relationship at Bluestone. For example, I arrived a few weeks after the Fall Equinox and Lauds, the early morning service of the day had just been rescheduled from 6:00am to 7:00am because of the simple, practical need to milk the cows. In the summer months, when the light is plentiful in the morning, the cows need to be milked early. In autumn, the first light doesn't appear until close to 7:00am, so corporate prayer and milking

From left to right: Sil, Jiffy, Mercy



the cows can come later. This subtle, yet profound one-hour shift in daily practice stands as a witness to how the Sisters live in harmony with nature. They adapt their practices with the changing light and the needs of animals.

This sensitivity to nature brings deeper awareness and respect to all aspects of life. This can be contrasted against the consumer culture in which 24-hour convenience teaches the unintended consequence of a disconnection with nature. The less we are in touch with nature, the less we understand her ways. This fosters ignorance, which encourages carelessness. In 2011 alone, the USDA estimates that Americans wasted \$165 billion worth of food, which translates into 40% of all food produced in the United States. Think of all the water, land, fertilizers and fuel squandered only to produce this waste. These are not the values of the Church, and we can help be part of the solution to address the misuse of the earth's resources.

We are all “co-creators of the food systems that feed us.” What we choose

everyday determines what is stocked on the shelves and what is grown from our earth. Wendell Barry astutely points out, “How we eat determines how the earth is used.” We either support ignorance, convenience and poor quality or we chose to promote a healthy respect of the land and resources that nourish our food system.

The more I meet farmers like the Sisters and work in my own garden, the more I become aware that the foods I buy and eat from typical high-volume grocery stores or restaurants taste less and less like food. For example, I notice that my sandwiches are often filled with light-pink watery tomato and whitish lettuce that tastes more like tissue paper than food.



Industrially-farmed



Locally-grown

“WITH THE PASSING OF EACH SEASON, ON THE FARM AND THROUGH THE CHURCH CALENDAR, WE ARE COMING TO KNOW HOW AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES ARE TRULY INTERTWINED.”

-BLUESTONE FARM

By comparison, the food from my garden is so incredibly tasty and fresh that it begs the question about where our food comes from, how far it's traveled and how it was grown. There's increasing awareness that much of the food grown on conventional, industrial farms may be inexpensive, but has hidden costs. These hidden costs relate to matters of environmental, social and food justice. Many large-scale farms rely on pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, pre-ripe picking and distribution systems that ship food all over the world. These practices not only contribute to bland, tasteless foods that contain unhealthy pesticides, but they deplete the soil, contaminate the water, pollute the air, and expose farm workers to pesticides. This barrage of problems originates from only the beginning of one conversation about how a small bite of a sandwich connects us to the entire web of creation. Wendell Berry describes this well: "Eating is an agricultural act." Of course, we know it's even bigger than that – food is life. Just consider going without it for a while.

If one bite of sandwich raises concerns about environmental and social justice,

similar questions ought to be asked about the bread and wine of Eucharist. It is important to know who harvested the wheat and tended the grapes, if pesticides were used, and how many miles the wheat and wine traveled to arrive at the altar.

Sharing food is one of the central signs Jesus left for us, so concerns about food and farming are innately concerns of the Church. If Jesus knew that the bread he was sharing would make the people who grew it sick, make the land sick, and, finally, make the people who eat it sick, would he have encouraged us to remember him in this way?

***“EATING IS AN
AGRICULTURAL
ACT.”***

-WENDELL BERRY



Honey

Hundreds of Bluestone bees labored their whole lives to bring you this taste of our farm's fruit trees and wildflowers. Enjoy the aroma and taste.

Maple Syrup

Bluestone Farm grandmother maple trees spend the summer eating the sun. Photosynthesis creates the sugars we harvest in early spring and boil down to this tasty syrup. Enjoy.

Bluestone honey



Grandmother maple with moustache



Bill tending the bees



Sister Catherine Grace



A photograph of two men working in a garden. The man on the left, with blonde hair and sunglasses, is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and dark trousers, and is using a shovel to dig in a raised garden bed. The man on the right, with short dark hair, is wearing a grey and black plaid jacket over a blue shirt and blue trousers. Both are wearing green rubber boots. The background shows a lush green field and a line of trees under a clear sky. The text "SOCIAL JUSTICE" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

CARE FARMING

Holland and the United Kingdom



From the church's perspective, Care farming is built on the idea that mud and saliva are healing.

In Holland, the vibrant movement of Care farming—founded in the 1990s—utilizes the whole or part of a farm to provide health, social or educational care services for one or a range of vulnerable groups of people, including: people with mental health problems, people suffering from mild to moderate depression, adults and children with learning disabilities, children with autism, those with a history of drug or alcohol addiction, disaffected young people, and people on probation. The care is provided in a supervised, structured program of farm-related activities, such as: animal husbandry— which includes livestock, small animals, and poultry—crop and vegetable production, and woodland management. Participants attend the farm regularly as part of a structured care, rehabilitation, therapeutic, or educational program. Social services, health care trusts, community mental health teams, education authorities, or probation services

Care farming leaders at Top Barn



Learning kitchen at Top Barn



Learning and healing on the farm



often refer participants to Care farms. Clients can also be self-referred as part of the direct payments system, or referred by family members.

The movement has grown quickly in the last five years and there are now hundreds of farms in the Netherlands and “more than 170 Care farms in the UK with more being set up all the time.”

Agricultural settings that offer therapeutic care for vulnerable members of society are not a new idea, nor are they new to the United States. However, the concept of Care farming in America is still new and many existing Care farms lack a network to connect them.

A critical principle of Care farming is that the farms are not like zoos or natural museums which people visit. They are working farms that rely on the labor of their clients for production. The holistic nature of working farms where real needs are met contributes to the clients’ feeling of accomplishment that their work is valuable and contributes to the overall function of the farm.

The inclusion of Care farming is to suggest how land can be utilized to address matters of social justice. However, Care farming does not have to be mutually exclusive with other farm practices. Food for food pantries and CSA boxes can be grown in addition to the operation of Care farming. Once a farm is operational and sustainable, Care farming can be layered onto the other activities of the farm.



One farmer’s story illustrates the dramatic impact of Care farming on Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans. He explained that when veterans begin their rehabilitation program on his farm, he has a simple diagnostic to measure their

mental health; he asks them to fetch two eggs from the hen house. In the most severe cases, the soldiers often return with two broken eggs because their level of stress is such that they can’t carry an egg

“THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF FARMING IS NOT THE GROWING OF CROPS, BUT THE CULTIVATION AND PERFECTION OF HUMAN BEINGS.”

-MASANOBU FUKUOKA

without breaking their shells. After several months on the farm, under skillful supervision, they can carry eggs gently due to the therapeutic effects of farm life as well as the support of working with others.

Thistle Farms in Tennessee, although not technically a Care farm, has the characteristics of one. They have built a social enterprise run by women who have survived prostitution, trafficking, addiction, and life on the streets. As part of their rehabilitation and therapy, they create hand-made natural body care products.



Working and healing at Thistle Farms

Raised beds for children at Top Barn



*below: Increasing well being at Apricot Centre
bottom: Learning to sow seeds and label them*



A photograph of a community garden. In the foreground, two people are bent over, working in a raised garden bed filled with large-leafed green plants. One person is wearing a red shirt, and the other is wearing an orange shirt. In the middle ground, a man in a white shirt and a straw hat stands near a woman in a purple shirt. To the left, there are tall corn stalks. In the background, there are more people and a dense line of trees. A wooden structure, possibly a greenhouse or a shed, is visible on the right side. The overall scene is lush and green, suggesting a healthy and active garden.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD KIN."

-JOHN MUIR

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Lexington, Massachusetts

Churches that incorporate food and farming ministries are experiencing greater civic engagement. There are three primary reasons why people are getting involved and more partnerships are being formed. First, there is a ready-made alignment between faith-based and values-based organizations concerning food and farming. Second, food and farming ministries take place outdoors and are therefore more visible than ministries that take place inside the walls of the church. Third, farming and gardening require daily tending, making these ministries more active.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Shori recently underscored the importance of civic engagement as a metric of church vitality when addressing the decline in church membership, “We don’t count the right way. How many lives has the work of a congregation touched this year?” she said. “That’s a more important question than counting who came to church on a Sunday.”

There is a built-in partnership between values-based individuals and organizations

left: Lexington Interfaith Garden

below: Teacher extraordinaire, Wendy Johnson at Indian Valley Farm

St. Brigid's Day, the best day of the year to plant seeds

Teach our children well. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Delray Beach, FL.



“GROWING FOOD IS OPENING NEW DOORS INTO THE CHURCH.”

-ELIZABETH DERUFF

involved in the local food movement, such as environmental stewardship—efforts to become greener and support environmental sustainability—a passion for gardening and farming, and faith-based organizations. There is increasing interest in these efforts taking place in urban, suburban and rural settings that is shared by individuals and organizations. People are excited about food and farming because it's primarily about sharing.

For example, Paul Clever of the Good Earth Farm observes, “We are serving populations that would never walk into a parish door. By and large, people have little or no church background. Approximately 500 people come to the farm every year and half are not connected to a faith community.”

Kate Scow, a soil scientist at a renowned secular university, the University of California at Davis, was eager to meet with me at her desk in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources to explain some of her dreams:

“I think a lot about the spirituality of the

soil and land. It's where everything flows; water and nutrients comingle with everything around. [As humans] we own them for a bit. The nutrients are ours for a while. In a sense, we borrow them.”

At the Church of the Redeemer in Lexington, Massachusetts, near the historic battle green, church members jointly farm land with five other faith communities. This is my birthplace, so I asked my godmother how it was going. Her response surprised me: “It's causing a lot of problems.” When I asked why, she replied, “It's so popular, no one can get a spot to volunteer.” Church of the Redeemer, which also has eight small planter boxes next to their church building, has connected with ‘The Grow Clinic’ in Boston that serves impoverished children who are malnourished. The Church also partners with the biology teacher at Lexington High School, who grows seeds with his students for the church planter boxes, lobbies the Capitol in Boston, and participates with El Hogar in Honduras—a program that teaches children about sustainable farming. Additionally, the rector said she is “amazed how many people

Growing food is opening new doors into the Church



don't know how to garden but want to learn."

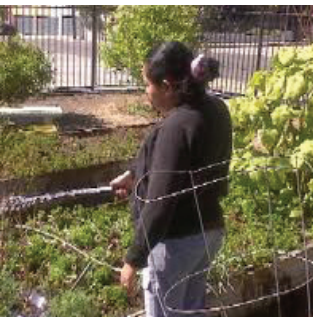
Growing food on church land is more visible than ministries that take place inside the church walls. As growing happens in plain sight of a community, churches find that the garden opens new doors into their communities. In many cases, these doors are garden gates. For example, in Los Angeles—just a block from LAX—I joined the Holy Nativity Episcopal Church, entering through the large wooden doors of the church for worship. Afterwards, the priest led me through a different set of doors: a lovely arbor with table grapes climbing up the sides, which led to their organic vegetable garden. Here, on Saturdays, a completely different community gathers to grow food for the local food pantry.

The Yamazaki Memorial Community Garden at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Los Angeles has a visible plot next to their church that is tended by neighborhood women who don't attend services. The women grow food for their families who might not otherwise be able to afford fresh produce.

Gardening and farming requires active participation, particularly if animals such as chickens or cows are involved. In the busy summer months, watering, weeding and harvesting can't wait until Sunday. People can see the need and make time to get involved. This generates an opportunity for more active and productive communities, especially as churches come to recognize the wisdom that people will support what they have an active hand in creating.

Amigo Bob Cantisano, who has been consulting with organic farmers for thirty years and who wrote the organic farm bill with California Governor Jerry Brown the first time he was in office back in 1975, notices that, "There's growing interest in farming by young people who don't have access to land." The Episcopal Church has both the land and the opportunity to consider using it differently.

Tending the garden at Yamazaki Memorial Community Garden



Tree-planting at Calvary Episcopal Church Richmond, Texas



Amigo Bob Cantisano standing in front of the Niven Nursery



THE MODERN GRANGE HALL

The impulse of this study began with an outpouring of enthusiasm for Larkspur Farm and our recognition that the land can minister to us; it can lead us forward. I hope these stories of justice and healing, as well as examples of financial sustainability, will encourage the reader to ask “what time is it in the world right now?” This question really proposes a reevaluation of daily assumptions and priorities. It is asking us what the world is most in need of.

As we respond with “the deepest *why*, and the simplest *how*,” we can help birth God’s dreams. When I imagine one way the Church could reply, I see us effectively employing our existing resources of land and polity toward food and farming. Part of our Episcopal identity is to form networks of support for greater influence and cooperation. There is an opportunity to create a web presence as well as networking among the thousands of food and farm ministries. I also dream of a modern grange hall; where buildings might be reconsidered not just in terms

of worship, but also as places of learning and action, where farming practices are shared.

THE ARTHUR RANK CENTRE

An excellent example of a viable modern grange hall exists in England. The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC) brings together a unique set of services to support farmers and rural churches. They shape public policy, staff a rural stress hotline, provide education and technology for rural farmers, bring together stakeholders to create economically beneficial partnerships, and support and train agricultural chaplains.

ARC employs a priest from the Church of England, the Canon Dr. Jill Hopkinson, who is a highly trained scientist. The Rev. Hopkinson advises bishops in the House of Lords, members of the United Nations, and speaks at local parishes on subjects such as sustainable farm practices, world hunger and genetic modification.

The Rev. Hopkinson shares my interest in utilizing church holdings for broader

The modern Grange Hall



The Grange Redding, CT.



community benefit.

“Empty sites could be turned into market gardens that sell produce locally, to encourage the consumption of nutritious food. These ought to be run on a break-even budget as a minimum, so that the facility has a sustainable future—even if it is a social enterprise relying on volunteer labour. Work and skills training programmes could be provided for volunteers [and] workers on minimum wage along with cooking and diet classes for the local population. The social enterprise model [in which] local people have a small stake in the site could have much to offer.”

The Rev. Hopkinson reminds us of some of the most pressing food issues today: “the over-consumption of foods high in calories, fat and sugar, nutrition security of poorer households – enough calories but the absence of the right vitamins and minerals in the diet, hunger in low income households, and finally, the increasing reliance on food banks as a long term solution rather than an emergency stop-gap.”

As the Church's investment in food and farming grows and healthy coordination is facilitated, we can better address these issues. There is also an opportunity to impact public policy. Food is political because when we talk about food, we talk about the land where it is grown and the labor that produces it. These are the simple building blocks of our economy: land, labor and trade.

ARC creates networks in places where farmers would otherwise work indepen-

dently and without the benefit of shared practices and resources. For example, ARC brought together stakeholders such as farmers and a farm insurance company to negotiate specific insurance for Care farming practices on existing farms. The farmers received a better rate because they were networked.

ARC also supports and trains lay and ordained agricultural chaplains. The chaplains offer pastoral care to small farmers, respond to calls from a rural stress hotline, attend weekly cattle auctions, and even do the work of lambing when an extra pair of hands is needed.



Spring lambs at Top Barn

If we envision the land as calling us toward financially sustainable projects that promote environmental and social justice, as well as civic engagement, the conservation of church holdings might be simpler than we had imagined. Whether we're at the altar table, dinner table or on the farm, Jesus is present as we break bread together. Sharing food is sharing life.



Food is life

WORKS CITED

Land and the Church

"Core Methods: From Vancouver, Canada," The Art of Hosting, accessed November, 2012, <http://www.artofhosting.org/home/>.

"Federal Ministries," The Episcopal Church, accessed June, 2012, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/>.

Farm Studies

Archbishop Rowan Williams "Hindus and Christians: Celebrating Friendship and Facing Challenges with Hope." Lambeth Inter-Faith Lecture, April 11, 2008. <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1122/archbishop-hosts-annual-inter-faith-lecture>.

Brian Sellers-Peterson, telephone interview by Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, July 2012.

"Food to Share." JPG. <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/>, accessed November 16, 2012.

"Greenhouse Gardening from the Proctor Center, Ohio." JPG. <http://www.procter.diosohio.org/>, accessed November 16, 2012.

"Images from the Incredible Edible group in Todmorden, UK." JPG. <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/>, accessed November 16, 2012.

New Revised Standard Version Bible (Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1989), Hosiah 2:17.

Pam Warhurst, "The Incredible Edibles." Speech. TED Talks. http://www.ted.com/talks/pam_warhurst_how_we_can_eat_our_landscapes.html.

"Volunteers at Bluestone Farm." JPG. <http://www.chssisters.org/melrose-bluestone-farm/>, accessed November 16, 2012.

Financial Sustainability

Amigo Bob Cantisano. "Land is access to capital." Telephone interview by Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, September 2012.

Amigo Bob Cantisano. Lecture. College of Marin, May 2011.

"Brother Marie-Paques and the chef of La Tonnelle." JPEG. <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/world/monks-feed-rich-so-they-can-give-poor>, accessed September 1, 2012.

John Laurenson. "Brother Marie-Paques." JPG. <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/world/monks-feed-rich-so-they-can-give-poor>, accessed September 1, 2012.

John Laurenson. "Monks Feed Rich So They Can Give to Poor." NPR: Marketplace, August 2, 2012. <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/world/monks-feed-rich-so-they-can-give-poor>.

"Monastery." JPEG. cistercensi.info, accessed October 1, 2012.

Paul Clever, telephone interview by Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, June 2012.

Sarah Nolan, telephone interview by Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, October 2012.

"The vineyards and the wine of Abbaye de Lerins 1." JPEG. <http://willwilltravel.wordpress.com/2012/06/17/abbaye-de-lerins/>, accessed October 1, 2012.

"The vineyards and the wine of Abbaye de Lerins 2." JPEG. <http://www.lafdv.fr/prd/2768-abbaye-de-lerins>, accessed October 1, 2012.

Environmental Justice

Bluestone Farm. <http://www.chssisters.org/melrose-bluestone-farm/>.

Excerpt from Michael Pollan, In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto. (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).
Quote attributed to Wendell Berry.

USDA, Food Policy 10/5/12 Vol. 37, Issue 5, pages 561-570.

Social Justice

"Effects of Care Farms." Scientific research on the benefits of care farms for clients. The Arthur Rank Centre.
http://www.carefarminguk.org/sites/carefarminguk.org/files/Effects_of_care_farms_Elings.pdf.

"Care farming from Care Farming UK." JPEG. URL, <http://www.carefarminguk.org/>, accessed October 1, 2012.

"Learning and healing on the farm." JPEG. URL, <http://www.carefarminguk.org/>, accessed November 10, 2012.

"Working and healing." JPEG. URL, http://thistlefarms.blogspot.com/2010_10_01_archive.html,
accessed November 2, 2012.

Civic Engagement

Amigo Bob Cantisano, telephone interview with Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, August 2012.

Jaweed Kaleem. "Katharine Jefferts Shori, Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop, Speaks About Gay Clergy And Birth Control," Huffington Post, March 27, 2012. *Quote attributed to Katharine Jefferts Shori.*

Jill Hopkinson, email message to Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, November 16, 2012.

Kate Scow, interview with Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, July 2012.

Paul Clever, telephone interview with Reverend Elizabeth DeRuff, June 2012.

"Increasing well being at Apricot Centre." JPG. URL, <http://www.apricotcentre.co.uk/2012/01/the-apricot-centre-becoming-a-care-farm-wellspring-project-for-community-wellbeing/>, accessed November 12, 2012.

"Learning to sow seeds and label them." JPG. URL, <http://dobiesofdevon.blogspot.com/2011/04/fantastic-countrytastic-and-malvern.html>, accessed November 10, 2012

"Garden Workers." JPG. URL, <http://interfaithgarden.org/photo-gallery/album/72157631128128490/photo/7808874254/summer-2012-garden-workers.html>, accessed September 15, 2012.

"Teach our children well." JPG, URL, <http://thecoastalstar.ning.com/profiles/blog/list?tag=religion>, accessed October 20, 2012.

"Tending the garden at Yamakazi Memorial Community Garden." JPG, URL, <http://blog.er-d.org/blog/engaging-the-church-to-reach-a-hurting-world/dying-to-self-bearing-fruit>, accessed November 10, 2012.

"Tree planting at Calvary Episcopal Church, Richmond, Texas." JPG, URL, http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/80263_130340_ENG_HTML.htm, accessed November 10, 2012.

"The Grange, Redding, CT." JPG. URL, <http://www.ct-muse.org/grange.htm>, accessed November 10, 2012.

prepared by:



ARCHITECTS, LLP.

