

Dear all,

I am writing to you because you have participated or shown interest in the St. Thomas Community Garden, St. Thomas landscaping, or the Locavore study/spiritual growth/action group.

**First, I want to say how wonderful it is to be a part of this unfolding adventure with you.**

We have our first growing season in the expanded garden under our belts and have seen amazing development. If you haven't been there lately, be sure to check out the garden! The labyrinth is complete, with maybe 50 beds ready for spring planting.

- The infrastructure of water hydrants and deer fencing served us well.
- Thanks to the construction dumpster, Lyle, and his trusty tractor, a lot of the junk around the garage has been cleared.
- Jerry and David chopped up and hauled away the big maple tree; Paul ground down the stump.
- Richard provided small-machine power for hauling and tilling.
- Thanks to Kathleen, there is a fresh pile of leaf mulch from Park Ridge East.
- Lyle designed and installed the Luther Rose patio at the center of the labyrinth.
- Several of us planted the circular herb and perennial garden surrounding it, and Carol and Gail kept it watered over the summer.
- Pamela is tending the website.

And this is just a partial list of what has been accomplished.

**There is still a lot to do**, such as adding seating and perhaps trellis to the central patio, planting a wildflower bed (Sonya is undertaking this project), adding beehives (Peter is arranging to house his hives at St. Thomas and will be responsible for their care), planting fruit trees, making a handicap-accessible path from the western gate, enhancing the altar-flower garden (John, Carol and Gail are on this one), creating a corner garden at the southwest fence corner (John, again). At the top of the list for 2016 is signage and a bed directory that can be posted at the entrance. This is something we promise in the Garden Covenant.

**Let's meet soon so we can debrief last season and discuss what's next.** Does a Sunday between services work for you, depending on the date?

Pamela has updating the website with 2016 registration and covenant forms. Visit <https://stlconline.wordpress.com/community-garden/> to reserve space for the 2016 growing season! If you are a returning gardener and want to have the same bed/s, just make a note on the form.

There are a couple of upcoming events that might interest you. Here's information on a **Seed-Saving Workshop** to be held February at St. Thomas. Presenter, Roger Hartwell, has been featured in an H-T article and is really engaging. I hope you can come!

### **What is seed-saving? How do I do it? Why does it matter?**

Learn the basics at *Seed-Saving 101*, a conversation and workshop led by local expert, Roger Hartwell. The event takes place Saturday, February 27 from 9 AM-Noon at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 3800 E. Third St., Bloomington. In this interactive workshop, participants will discuss the many benefits of home-based seed saving, from economics to ethics to flavor! They will leave with basic techniques for saving popular garden seeds such as tomatoes, peppers, beans and squash.

There is no charge for this event. Registration is appreciated but not required. For information and to register, contact Paula at [communityseeds474@gmail.com](mailto:communityseeds474@gmail.com) or call 812-935-7424.

***Seed-Saving 101*** is the first in a series of learning labs for 2016. Future topics include ***Small-Space Gardening*** and ***Food Preservation***. Peter will be leading an Adult Forum on ***Beekeeping*** in April. This series is sponsored by the St. Thomas Community Garden. Watch for details.

Please feel free to forward any or all of this information to friends and neighbors who you think might be interested.

Blessings for the day,

Marie F. Fleming