

St. Thomas Becket Giving Garden

Our **Giving Garden** will allow us to live our mission *to love, to serve, and to be hope* when we regularly deliver our fresh and healthy produce to [The Open Door](#) Food Pantry, which serves the food insecure in our midst.

The garden is located behind our building, adjacent to the playground. It consists of raised bed boxes with a unique soil mix. In pandemic 2020, we piloted the project with two 4'x8' beds, then built, installed and "soiled" six more in the fall, so in 2021 there are now our full complement of eight. We are following the Square Foot Gardening (SFG) technique, which is a very intensive methodology that produces five times as much produce as a traditional raised bed plot. Each box is divided into 32 one-foot squares. The methodology uses succession plantings (most squares have three different crops in the same season), companion planting (coordinating neighboring plantings for complementary production), extended seasons (using plastic greenhouses, we will plant in early April and not shut down until November), and vertical growing (the boxes have trellises for vertical plants). An automatic watering system will help the process along.

Many people volunteered to help in 2020, for which we are grateful. We have established a ministry, including a leadership team of people that will be responsible for learning the modified SFG methodology in detail, then directing the work of volunteers (**all are welcome!**), who will be planting, weeding, harvesting, etc. All of this will occur with the oversight of a consultant experienced in the SFG technique and its application, to produce food for the needy.

We are also working to transform the area between the garden and the building into a community gathering site. Along with garden-specific items like a shed and compost bins, there will be seating for hospitality. We envision an environment where we can have after-Mass coffee and donuts when the weather permits, and where people can gather to watch children on the playground or just enjoy the green garden.

If you are interested in helping (**previous gardening experience is *not* required**), please contact Roy Hosek (roy.hosek@gmail.com or 651.895-9505) or Dez Sobiech (dezs@stbeagan.org).