

Health & Wellness
May 17th

Homegrown Tomatoes

Finding time for outdoor activities has many benefits. Our congregational garden has been underway for **over five years** now and we encourage anyone with curiosity or expertise, with the desire to dig or simply hold a water hose to come out to the Garden of Hope Community Garden at 1416 Persimmon Ridge Road on Wednesday afternoon at 5 pm. Here are some of the benefits of gardening that are non-quantitative, intangible and deeply personal.

- **Practicing Acceptance** Most of our suffering comes from trying to control things that we can't. The more we can accept the limits of our control and the unpredictability of life, the more peace of mind we can find—and gardening is a great way to practice. Acceptance in the garden or elsewhere doesn't mean giving up, of course. We bring our best efforts to what we *can* control, and we let go of the rest. With gardening that means preparing the best environment you can possibly make for your plants and allowing nature to take it from there. Your garden (like your life) is in bigger hands than yours.
- **Moving Beyond Perfectionism** If you're prone to perfectionism, you're probably well aware of the costs. Trying to make things perfect can lead to frustration, missed deadlines and opportunities, and strained relationships. It can also lead to not even trying to do something, with a mentality of "why bother if it can't be perfect?" No matter how carefully you plan and execute your garden, there are countless factors you can't predict— invasions by bugs, inclement weather, or hungry rodents!
- **Developing a Growth Mindset** The *inability* to garden perfectly is actually cause for celebration. Gardening is a great opportunity to cultivate a growth mindset, where we assume that we're constantly learning. When something doesn't work out the way we had hoped, we view it as a learning opportunity rather than as a "failure."

- **Connecting with Others** Few things boost our well being like good relationships, and gardening offers ample opportunities to connect with others. Gardening is one of the best ways to connect strangers" and quickly become friends because we have that gardening thing in common.
- **Connecting to Your World** Gardening provides a connection not just to other people but to our world. Many people feel that connection in a visceral way when they eat food they've just harvested. We all have an innate connection to the earth and that connection manifests itself when we consume what came from the ground—which is where we came from and where we all end up.
- **Bathing in Green** The Japanese expression "shinrin-yoku" can be translated as "forest bathing," which nicely captures the experience of being immersed in green. A growing body of research has found all kinds of benefits from being in natural landscapes. These studies have found evidence that being in green, or even being able to look out on a green landscape, is linked with better recovery from surgery, less anxiety and depression, better stress management.
- **Being Present** Mindful presence is tied to a long list of positive outcomes like relationship satisfaction and less emotional reactivity. The garden can be a protected place where we practice being where we are and actually doing what we're doing.
- **Physical Exercise** Moving your body regularly is an effective way to boost mood and lower anxiety, and gardening offers no shortage of opportunities for physical activity.
- **Eating Healthfully** Last but not least, a garden can yield the freshest and healthiest foods available—the types of food that can have a significant impact on our mental health. Studies have shown that dietary changes can be an effective treatment for depression. Benefits of the Mediterranean diet, which emphasizes consuming minimally processed whole foods—the types of food that your garden will yield. Plus there's the added benefit of knowing you played a role in growing the food.

~ Excerpted by Psychology Today from the Think Act Be Podcast, conversation with Joe Lamp'l, professional gardener and creator of joe gardener.

Faith Community Nurse CoVid-19 Update

As a member of the Worship Implementation Team for the past twelve months, I want to commend those individuals who have taken the safety and well being of our congregation to heart. Many hours have gone into the analysis of information, the distribution of masks and sanitizer, the planning of worship service and small group gatherings and so much more. "Pivot" has become a new word in our lexicon as we continue to process new information and directives on a daily basis. Thankfully, the Presbyterian Process, only by committee recommendation to the Session, do we make changes to our policies. Our Covid policies are designed to keep as many individuals as healthy as possible. We have had two in-person worship services where we were able to practice new policies that protect members from inadvertent Covid-19 exposure. At this time less than half that is 38%, of our community is vaccinated. Please continue to be considerate of others by wearing your mask in enclosed spaces, maintaining social distance, washing your hands and being vaccinated when possible. If you would like assistance in getting your vaccine, please contact your Faith Community Nurse, Carol Jernigan, at 788-3082.