

Jesus loves you. Walk with him.



BETHELITE

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THIS ISSUE:

GOD AS GARDENER

Learn about God and God's kingdom through a look at the plants of the Bible.

PANTRY PRODUCE

Bethel's Food Pantry gets better and better, this time by calling for fresh produce from backyard gardens.

DISCOVERING ART IN NATURE

Explore the Prairie Trails at Bethel Horizons collecting wild flowers and turning them into art.

NEW MEMBER INVITE

Sarah Scheib says it plain and simple in this invitation for people to make Bethel their church home.

Dig In! It's Earth Day! April 22, 2021

Even though Earth Day has been around most of my life, I must admit that I was a late-bloomer to the caring for creation. Looking back, I would say that the reasons are embedded in the fact that I grew up in Odessa, Texas, which was not then, and is not now, what you would call lovely. There was really not much, if anything, in nature that would call to your heart or mind. There, the earth was something you poked a hole into to extract that sweet "Texas tea" — crude oil. When I was a boy, the world's largest inland petrochemical complex was ten miles from my home. It processed the region's oil 'round the clock and belched-out fumes that would settle over a population of 100,000 rednecks and oil-hands with the heavy odor of Sulphur. To this day, if driving by car I can tell you how close I am to Odessa by the odor in the air. People called it the "armpit" of the world. Other than tarantulas, scorpions, horny-toads, jack-rabbits, and an occasional sparrow there wasn't much wildlife. I don't remember ever seeing a robin or a cardinal in real life until I was twenty-two years old and living in Dubuque, Iowa. Getting grass or trees to grow took hundreds and hundreds of gallons of tap water because it wasn't just hot and windy all the time but dry, too. Massive windstorms would bring a wall of dirt and dust so thick that you could not see across the street. Nope.



Matthew Moen, 2nd grader and Bethel Earth Day baby holds the world in his hands



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Not a pretty place. Certainly not the sort of thing you cherish or give thanks for. Cursing it was more likely. It wasn't until I moved to the Upper Midwest that I began to feel any attraction to the earth. Really, it is here that I could say that I fell in love with the creation. It began in Dubuque where I saw my first cardinal, as red as red could be. Sitting in my seminary dorm room sipping on a cup of coffee looking out the window, I was mesmerized by the cardinal's deep red against the backdrop of a sugar maple tree that seemed to be on fire with Fall colors. I did my internship at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa where I hiked the woods, climbed limestone bluffs, and crawled through caves. Only a few years later as a pastor in Iowa, Karin and I began what would be the first of many trips to the North Shore to hike and collect rocks



Donna Ultieg, a long time Bethel member and avid gardener poses with her orange blooming Fritillaria from the Northern Hemisphere (left) and her Nanking Cherry tree, from China (right).

(agates, basalt, granite, you name it) near Lake Superior. What fascinated me about the rocks, which I still have in my Bethel office, is how much history each rock tells. When I served in Indiana, we spent many summers at a local ELCA camp a lot like Bethel Horizons. While there we discovered loads and loads of beautiful geodes. Of course, we scooped them up to cut, clean, and polish. Also, while in Indiana, I shared with my kids my love of fossils. We would go on expeditions around the state hunting, gathering, and cataloging hundreds of fossils. Again, it was the story each one of those specimens represented in the deep history of the earth that captured my fascination. Each step along the way, my appreciation and love for the earth and the cosmos grew. It grew so much that one of my most significant spiritual crises came from the realization that the earth and all the creation would not last forever. This fact really came home to me in 2005 when I read the book

I mean, I knew that already, sort of.

Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History, by David Christian. This history book was a history of the entire universe from the Big Bang all the way through the modern world. In reading this well-written and well-researched book, it really hit me that the earth, this little blue ball, third rock from the Sun, was going to

be vaporized—someday. At some point, the life cycle of our sun would complete itself, and, in the process consume the earth. I mean, I knew that already, sort of. But reading it in a history book instead of a science book hit me in a funny way. It made me deeply sad to think that all this history, the beauty, the wonder, the mystery of it all would be vaporized into nothingness. But then, after some reflection, God reminded me that God also loves the creation, that “God so loved the world [cosmos] that he sent the Son.” The creation is destined for redemption, and waits eagerly (Romans 8:21) with all of us for the new creation (Revelation 21:1). And my love for the creation grows even more. 🌈

GOD AS GARDENER

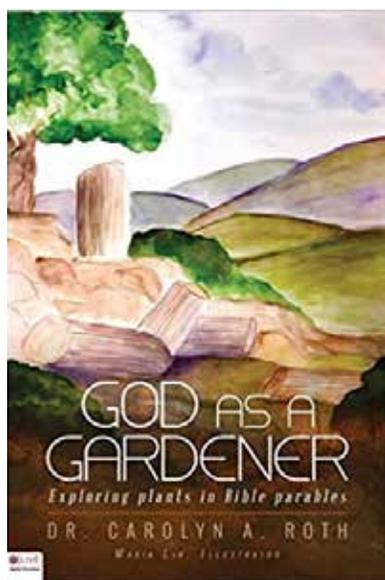
Exploring Plants in Bible Parables

By Dr. Carolyn A. Roth

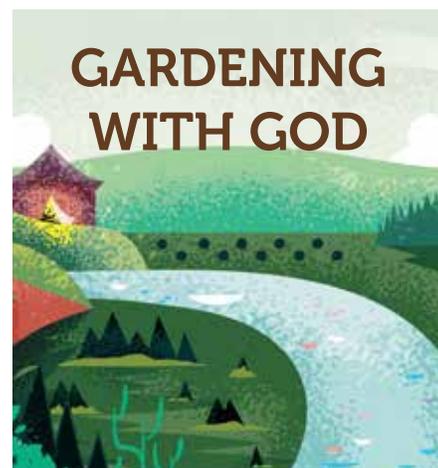
For some wonderful reason, God yearns to communicate with us. Throughout the scriptures, we see that God uses words to connect, as with Abraham. We see God part the Red Sea to make a point. We see God feed people to convey some truth. God even resorts to speaking through Balaam's "ass" (Numbers 22:28) to get someone's attention. There is really nothing God has not or will not do to communicate with us. Even the stars declare God's glory. One of the overlooked aspects of how God communicates can be seen in scores of Old and New Testament passages where God uses plants to reveal the divine nature. Using plants, God unveils spiritual truths about the kingdom and imparts lessons on how to live a life as someone chosen. In fact, there are more than one hundred twenty five specific plants mentioned in the Bible, including pomegranate, fig tree, coriander, white broom,, caper, common myrtle, onion, garlic, water melon, arugula, wild mint, dill, cumin, nigella sativa, durum wheat, barley, proso millet, sorghum, lentil, fava bean, leek, milk thistle, oleander, olive tree, bay laurel, citron, phoenician rose, dog rose, corn poppy, chamomile, mandrake, nettle, hemlock, aloe, myrrh, cistus/rock rose, and more. Because many of the plants mentioned in the Bible are common in another part of

the world, hearing what God is saying through them is not always easy. In the twenty-first-century we are far removed from the Bible's original audience. Add to that the fact that westernized individuals live in an industrial and technology-driven society. Coming into contact with plants grown for food is second- or third-hand at best. We can miss those "aha" moments where we understand God's truth by its comparison to some plant, e.g., a fig tree. In the book, *God as a Gardener*, Dr. Carolyn A. Roth, explains twenty-four parables illustrated by plants. There are twelve from the Old Testament and twelve from the New Testament. It is a Bible study written for the average church member who wants to understand the message in parables referring to plants, but lack the necessary perspective or basic knowledge about

the plants being mentioned. This book offers a nice description of the plant and its meaning and use in the Bible. Even more, each chapter contains a colored photograph of an original water-colored illustration of the parable's plant(s). As Spring continues to bud and bloom, consider purchasing this little book for your own enjoyment and edification. It is available in paperback for \$15 on Amazon. 🌈



"For everything there is a season,
a time for every activity
under heaven...A time to plant
and a time to harvest."
—Ecclesiastes 3:1



GARDENING WITH GOD

Sermon Series

Scripture begins (Genesis 2) and ends (Revelation 22:1-5) in a garden. The story starts with the Garden of Eden, moves through the garden of the Promised Land (Genesis 13), reveals God's plan in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26), and breaks open with new life in the garden of the tomb (John 19-20). In all these gardens, we see how intimately God is involved in the world and in our lives. We also hear the joyful call of the Lord to thrust our hands in the dirt to help plant, tend, and care for ourselves, our families, and our communities. Join Bethel in May for a series of messages that will help you set deep roots in Jesus: "Grow out of him as a plant grows out of the soil it is planted in," —Colossians 2:7 (JB Phillips)."

May 9: How to Find Your Eden

May 16: Lush Living in the Desert

May 23: Creation to New Creation 🌈



Cheryl Frazier

Bethel Food Pantry

Food insecurity continues to weigh on thousands of people in Wisconsin and in Dane County. Recent statistics show that one in seven people are experiencing hunger in Wisconsin. For children, it is worse as one in four children live in a household that does not know where its next meal is going to come from. The total number of people in Wisconsin who need help getting food has increased about 58 percent during the pandemic. Bethel's Food Pantry provides crucial support to residents of Dane County each year. 🌈



PANTRY

Getting Your Hands Dirty For a Good Cause

Bethel's Food Pantry begins a new chapter this Spring with a major effort to secure garden fresh vegetables and fruit for Dane County residents living with food insecurity. Always looking for new ways to expand, improve, and collaborate with others, the Food Pantry issues a call to members and friends of the Food Pantry to share the bounty of their backyard gardens. Many people who maintain seasonal gardens are continually amazed at the abundance even a small plot of land can yield. Feeding close to 10,000 people a year, Bethel's Food Pantry has been on the leading edge of providing high quality food. Long gone are the days of food supplies dominated

by starches and sugars. Today, Bethel's Food Pantry provides support with quality meats, cereals, eggs, a variety of canned vegetables, and a smaller variety of fresh produce. You can help Bethel's Food Pantry take another step in closing the hunger gap in Dane County. All fresh produce is welcome. In your ongoing harvest this season, consider giving 10% of the yield to the work of the Lord. You may bring your bounty any day of the week. Simply leave it outside in the portico area off the parking lot. Food Pantry volunteers and staff will see it and move it where it needs to be. To help or ask questions, please email Kris Fansler at krisfansler@gmail.com. 🌈



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Bethel's Food Pantry continues to provide food to Dane County residents during the pandemic on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1-3pm with advance registration. Following Bethel's COVID-19 safety plan, individuals seeking food support receive it outside through pre-boxed food supplies. When the pandemic lifts and life returns to some sort of "normal," people seeking help will receive their food indoors through the Food Pantry window. 🌈

FRESH PRODUCE



Dave Coe and Kris Fansler of Bethel's Food Pantry

Why Fresh Produce? By Kris Fansler

I have always been interested in food, cooking, and nutrition. This led to my involvement in the Bethel Food Pantry soon after we retired to the area in 2012. Adding fruits and vegetables to one's daily diet strongly connects with good health. Second Harvest, the pantry's main food source, recommends that the pantries it supplies follow the USDA "My Plate" model which suggests eating a larger proportion of fruits and veggies each day.



The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. —Genesis 1:12



Since joining the food pantry board, I've thought that offering fresh produce, in addition to the canned we're already providing, to our food pantry guests would be a wonderful addition. In a former congregation, gardeners brought in extra produce to share with other parishioners. That experience led to the Bethel Food Pantry Board asking Bethel gardeners to grow extra produce for our food pantry guests this year. What a wonderful way to share with our neighbors! 🌈

30 Years Strong

Bethel's Food Pantry has been in existence for almost 30 years, providing food to those in our Dane County community that are food insecure. The Pantry is staffed and led by a dedicated group of volunteers. Its operating budget is entirely supported by monetary, product and in-kind donations. Food is sourced primarily through partnerships with Second Harvest and Community Action Coalition (CAC). 🌈



Wildflowers
A-Plenty

WILDCRAFT DINING

FORAGING AND
PREPARING A MEAL
at Bethel Horizons

**May 16 from 9am-4pm, Workshop
Fee: \$75**

Enjoy a wilderness walk with experienced wildcrafters to gather the essentials for a wonderful dining experience. Discover the wide assortment of edible fungi and plants in our forests and the importance of sustainable harvesting. We will prepare a meal together in the Barn Retreat Center kitchen at Bethel Horizons. Leave with the empowerment and knowledge of reliable practices and resources to bring truly local foods into your own home kitchen.

Emily and Christopher Appelman run a homestead in the Driftless Region with their two girls Sparrow and Esmee. The Appelmans have more than five years of experience in hardwood log and mulch mushroom cultivation. During these 5 years

DISCOVERING ART IN NATURE

WILD FLOWER PRESS April 24, 9am-4pm

Spend the day exploring the Prairie Trails at Bethel Horizons Camp learning about the unique native Wisconsin flora. Collect samples of common and plentiful species and preserve them to take home with a ready-made flower press. Once you have completed your workshop, all flowers and the press are available to take home from the Adamah Clay Studio.

Participants will gather at the Nature Center starting at 9am. A Nature hike begins at 9:30am and moves through the Prairie Trails, and returning to the Nature Center by 11:30am. Lunch is scheduled from 12-1pm.

Wildflower pressing begins at 1pm at the Adamah Clay Studio and concludes by 4pm.

Adult: \$70 Young Adult: \$55
Lunch and materials included

REGISTER ONLINE:
<https://tinyurl.com/kuzmfch9>

**For questions, please contact
Jennifer Mally:**

Jennifer@bethelhorizons.org
Phone: 608.574.8100 🌈



Christopher and Emily Appelman

of growing they have also utilized their knowledge of mycoremediation to its full revitalizing potential by using mycoactive compost in their soil to better the health of their crops and the surrounding ecosystem. Outside of this they enjoy teaching many Mycorrhizal related workshops throughout Iowa and Wisconsin. For more information: bethelhorizons@bethelhorizons.org. 🌈



The Secrets and the Mysteries of the Gospel of Mark

7 Weeks, April 29–June 10, 6:30pm

The Gospel of Mark was written for people harassed and persecuted, failing and flagging in their faith. To them Mark offered his story of Jesus, a suffering messiah for a suffering people – a messiah to whom we ourselves might ache to draw more closely today.

Much about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection made no sense to those first-century people. Jesus was a mystery then, just as he can be today. And

Mark's gospel – called a book “of secrets, of

veils, and of mysteries” – only adds to the confusion! In this study, together we'll search out those secrets and puzzle out its paradoxes. We'll peer through Mark's veils for encouragement in our own times of confusion, suffering, and sometimes flagging faith. This course will be a deeper dive into Mark's gospel with weekly readings and preparations for each session. A book of readings, exercises, video links, and reflections will be provided to you. For more information, contact

Pam at pam@bethel-madison.org. 🌈



Dr. Pam Shellberg
New Testament
Bethel Director of
Lifelong Faith Formation

Extra! Extra! Copies

If you did not get a copy of the Bethel Lent Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark, Oh, the Things We See!, there are 50 copies remaining. Call or email the church office to request as many copies as you would like for yourself, your friends, or your family. This Bible study is useful for group or for individual study. The study includes six key passages, helpful notes from different perspectives, and questions for discussion or to ponder on your own. There is no charge for these Bible study booklets. To request one or multiple copies, speak to Jeff Bittner at 608.257.3577. Or email Jeff at receptionist@bethel-madison.org. 🌈

Zoom Link: <https://tinyurl.com/4sdabf8y>

