



The Fentress Giving Garden

A collaborative, interdenominational food ministry
Issue 2026-2, August 2026

Around the Garden

Wow! Summer landed like a branding iron. Many of us sought the comfort of an air-conditioned space. Our garden mostly enjoyed the heat and benefitted greatly from our irrigation system. The amazing group of volunteers who make our garden wonderful and productive endured the heat, humidity, and bugs to maintain the garden and harvest its produce. Look at page five to see what we have harvested and donated so far this year.

With the exception of garlic, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, the produce is delivered immediately to our supported food pantries. From there it goes directly into the hands of our neighbors and guests who genuinely appreciate the wonderful fresh produce.

Again this year, we were offered the opportunity to glean sweet corn from two local growers and gave over two thousand ears of corn to our guests and neighbors. We extend heartfelt thanks to Mike Boron and to the Bergey family for providing this wonderful crop.

Though the garden is nearing the end of the busiest part of the harvest season, there is still much produce to be harvested. Daily pickings of tomatoes, peppers, and butternut squash continue, and we are eagerly anticipating a late crop of cucumbers. It won't be long until the sweet potatoes are ready to harvest. We typically do that as a special one-morning (usually Saturday) event that is fun for the whole family. Watch for notices of when that harvest is planned.

Fall and winter crops are being readied. Carrot, beet, and turnip seeds were sowed this week, and others will soon follow. The Fentress Giving Garden doesn't rest.

The need for your garden continues to increase. One of our supported food pantries supports over 1,000 people per month. At another, the number of guests hovers near 90 to over 100 per week, supporting some 300 individuals. Anecdotally, they all love the fresh produce – commenting on its goodness, asking if we have specific items and even crafting and sending a thank you card to the garden.

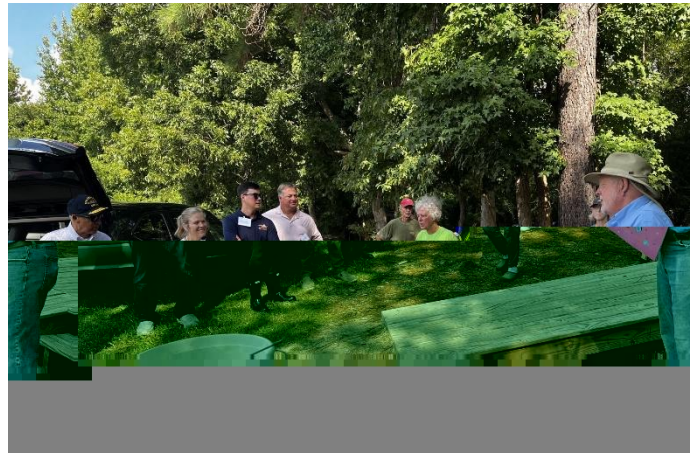
My friends, this garden exists for a reason, and it is appreciated.



Distinguished Visitors

On a recent morning, a group of elected officials, local Farm Bureau leaders, and our Chesapeake Agricultural Extension Agent / Chesapeake Master Gardeners staff visited the Fentress Giving Garden. Included among our guests were Congressman Bobby Scott, Delegate Kacey Carnagie and members of both their staffs, as well as a member of Delegate Willett's staff; VCE-Horticulture Agent Mike Andruczyk, and Farm Bureau leaders Bryan Johnson, Olivia Gyapo, Rachel Henley, Roxanne Stonecypher, and Byron Stonecypher.

While there, they toured the garden and learned of the garden's origin, a bit of its history, who we are, who we serve, and how we operate. In addition, they learned of some of the challenges we face as a volunteer supported, natural resource dependent activity. We thank them for their time and interest in this faith-based community supported ministry. Our hope is they gained additional appreciation of our part in the struggle against food insecurity.



Congressman Bobby Scott, Delegate Kacey Carnagie visit FGG with staff members and members Chesapeake Horticulture Agent and Farm Bureau members.

Scenes from around the garden

Harvesting corn the day after a hard rain has its challenges. Harvesting potatoes in a dry field is much easier. Both result in wonderful fresh food.



Cantaloupe and butternut squash. Beautiful zinnias and spraying fungicide.



Who We Support

We currently support these local faith-based food pantries:

- Agape Food Pantry – Great Bridge United Methodist Church
- Impact Community Food Pantry – True Way Church
- Father Romeo D. Jazmin Food Pantry – Prince of Peace Catholic Church
- House of Blessing – Harvest VA, Assembly of God, via Plant a Row for the Hungry, a Chesapeake Master Gardeners activity.

How You Can be Part of This Ministry

You can help:

- Assist with projects to enhance the infrastructure of the garden
- Maintain the garden by planting, harvesting, weeding, and mulching
- Produce mulch from dried leaves
- Spray organic/organic-like pesticides on crops when needed
- Maintain and operate the irrigation system
- Maintain the electric fence
- Keep garden tools sharp and ready to use
- Deliver produce by driving to various food banks we serve
- Look for and write grant requests to help fund this ministry

We would love to have your participation.

To get involved, contact Judy Speas (judithspeas@gmail.com) at Centerville Baptist Church, or Janet Grubbs (jdgrubbs72@gmail.com) at Great Bridge United Methodist Church

We Have Harvested this Year

We're off to a great start. Look at the table below to see what we harvested and donated so far. All numbers are harvested weight in pounds:

Vegetable	2026 Total
Basil	1
Butternut Squash	77
Cabbage	360
Cantaloupe	1,705
Carrots	227
Collards	875
Cucumber	1,272
Eggplant	188
Garlic	34
Green Beans	109
Kale	174
Lettuce	663
Onions	1,623
Peas, sugar snap	172
Peppers	1,102
White Potatoes	2,275
Summer Squash	618
Tomatoes	2,672
Turnips	168
Zucchini	100
TOTAL	14,415

The Fentress Giving Garden

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