

Saint John's Episcopal Church

New England Meadow Plans (Phase One)

Creation of a New England Meadow: careful stewardship of our 15 acre campus

Reasons for meadow plans: The large field behind the rectory needs to be cut frequently which raises the cost for maintenance of the property. On the environmental side, lawnmowers create a large amount of pollution, and the parish is trying to be more cognizant of how we can support a better environment. This space is ideal for supporting the local bird and pollinator population and currently does so at a minimal level. The field area is underutilized by the parish and local community except for the fire pit.

Investigated Options: A committee was formed with members from the Vestry, the Green Team, and the Property Committee to consider ideas for the field and other areas of the property. A landscape architect was hired to generate ideas to give the committee ideas and focus.

Recommendations sent to appropriate committees and approved by the Vestry:

- a. Establish set grass paths around the perimeter of the field and paths that intersect and divide the field into thirds. The paths would be mowed on a regular basis when the rest of the church property is mowed. The property committee experimented with using wood chips to "pave" paths but found out that the Canadian thistle could sprout through at least six inches of chips. Paths would be at least the width of a vehicle.
- b. Continue to mow around the rectory and fire pit area as has been done in the past.
- c. Mark the path with wooden poles so that the lawn care team clearly knows what to mow. The poles will have solar lights or bird houses to be a useful component. Once the paths are established then other plantings can be installed.
- d. Support the current work of the St John's Green Team as they plant additional trees along the perimeter of the property. Currently the young trees that were planted have been at no cost to the parish except for fencing and stakes to keep the deer from destroying the plants. Long range goal is for these trees to provide shade for those walking the path and by using a variety of tree species the trees will provide food and shelter for wildlife. Currently we have planted seven varieties along the Penn's Grant side of the property. Outside research shows that young trees adjust more quickly to a new location than larger/mature specimens.
- e. Decide on the number of ornamental trees needed to add pops of color to enhance the mostly green space. Example would be flowering cherry trees along one path for spring interest. With proper placement some of these areas could be considered photo ready for special events such as weddings. Some shrubs will be considered to add interest especially where the paths curve.
- f. The Green Team has investigated various types of meadows and has suggested the parish go with what is being called a "New England Meadow". This meadow would be mowed either once or twice a year to stop invasive weeds from overtaking the meadow and to prevent trees from taking over the space as the parish still wants to maintain open space. This choice of meadow (rather than wild flowers) eliminates the need of using "Round Up" twice to kill the existing plants with both the cost and the use of chemicals being negative factors. The Green Team has settled on the idea of allowing the space to grow naturally with the mowing as mentioned earlier. The Green

Team will also experiment using solar methods at killing small patches of weeds to allow for wildflower seed sowing to add pollinator friendly borders. Native bulbs are already being planted in the field as well.

- g. The Green Team provided the parish with six bird houses that were built by the Youth Group and recently placed on posts around the field's edge in time for this spring's nesting season.
- h. Future additions will include benches for meditation (and rest) and possible story boards that could offer prayer prompts or the stations of the cross.

Long range plan would be to put in a gradual entrance to the meadow near the garage as it is a steep incline. Pavers are to be considered on the ramp to allow vehicles to move up into the meadow when needed as well as making it easier for walkers/hikers to gain access to the meadow. The current recommended access will be at the edge of the cemetery past the bell tower.

What the Phase One Plan does do:

- a. Consider this a master plan so that all the committees that function on behalf of the parish are on the same page. This saves on making multiple changes or duplication of work.
- b. Supports our local environment and the planet. If every community takes positive steps we will all benefit.

What the Phase One Plan does not do:

- a. This does not change the way we cut the grass in front of the property. It is important that the front looks manicured and inviting.

The Ask:

The goal is to collect \$3500 for Phase One.