

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Endowment Grant Request

GSLC Member Name Sandi Bahr Date grant needed ASAP
Contact email sandi-bahr@hotmail.com Phone 636-236-1737
Is this a new or existing ministry? Existing How much is requested \$1000.00
Name of Ministry/Organization/Person to receive funds Mission Garden

One of the Core Concepts of the Endowment is that it should be used to further the church's Vision Statement, which is "Guided by God's Grace, and with a longing to grow our faith, we will be a church that helps people make a difference in our local communities, in the world and in our congregation."

Please tell us why this grant is being requested and how it furthers the mission of Christ and the Vision Statement of GSLC.

Attached

Attach additional page(s), if you wish. Please deliver to the church office in a sealed envelope addressed to the Endowment Committee. You should have an answer within four weeks.

Approved _____ if approved, date and check number _____
Not approved _____ If not approved, why _____

The Church Mission Garden began in the spring of 2014 with the following stated purposes:

1. To be good stewards of God's resources
2. To bring nourishment to the people of Good Shepherd and eventually, to the greatest in need in our community at large.
3. To teach people how to grow their own food.
4. To encourage children and youth involvement and education and
5. To give the congregation a communal sense of ownership and responsibility.

Our 2014 garden design was a straw bale garden consisting of 25 bales in which we grew beans, peppers, tomatoes and zucchinis. We distributed ~215 pounds of produce to Circle of Concern, STL Food Outreach and Otis Woodard/Peace Park in 2014.

The 2015 garden was still a straw bale design but consisted of 50 bales in which we grew beans, tomatoes, cucumbers and zucchinis. We distributed ~ 520 pounds of produce to Circle of Concern, STL Food Outreach, and Powell Terrace Food Pantry.

The 2016 garden was a straw bale design of 70 bales along with 3 small raised beds in which we grew beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis and peppers. We distributed ~800 pounds of produce to STL Food Outreach, Agape House and to the GSLC congregation in 2 donation events benefitting Feed My Starving Children funds and Start-a-Family garden program in Madagascar through "with God's Little Ones".

As described above, the straw bale garden design has been a successful design for the mission garden. But has it allowed us to meet **all** our stated purposes, or could we do more to "grow our faith and be a church that helps people make a difference in our local communities, in the world and in our congregation"? There are limitations and restrictions associated with the straw bale garden design. I will illuminate a few of these below.

1. Every year there is a new start-up cost to the operation of the garden. Straw bale cost has increased from \$3/bale in 2014 to \$4.76/bale in 2016. Along with this cost there is the physical event of locating a source of bales and then the obtaining of the bales and transporting them to the church garden location.

2. Additional garden start-up costs include purchase of fertilizer and soil for the bale decomposition process and seed planting.

3. Bale gardening requires more regular watering which has resulted in purchasing of hoses each year.

4. The decomposition process required to prepare the bales for planting is a 2 week process requiring daily watering. Considering the "average" last frost is the middle of April, garden planting is typically not available until early May.

These illuminate a few of the restrictions of the bale garden design as applied to our mission garden. So could we overcome these restrictions with a different garden design and have that garden design allow us to meet more of our stated purposes. I believe that could happen with a raised bed garden design.

Benefits of a raised bed garden design could include:

1. After the initial costs of building the raised beds there wouldn't be the annual start-up costs to the garden for its "construction". Therefore we would be better stewards of our resources both environmentally and financially.
2. With a raised bed design there wouldn't be the time limitation in when planting began in the spring. There could be multi-season crops starting with early planting of cool season crops, followed by hot season crops with cool season crops to finish the garden year. Again we would be better stewards of our resources with multi season crops and it could allow us to be an outreach garden to our pre-school/Sunday school children having their participation in the gardening process.
3. Having a raised bed garden design could allow for the "selling" of a bed or portion of a bed to congregation members for their own personal use through collaboration with the garden committee resulting in teaching people how to grow their own food and giving the congregation a communal sense of ownership and responsibility.

If the church mission garden were to receive an Endowment grant the monies would be spent to buy supplies, lumber and soil, to construct raised beds. A \$1000.00 grant would allow us to move in the direction of having a garden design of all raised beds.

Please prayerfully consider our request and I will be waiting for your positive response on this proposal to share God's love and grow in God's faith.