

St. James's Memorial Garden Playbook

Description of the Ministry:

Purpose:

The St. James's Memorial Garden Ministry is comprised of a group of people whose call is to heighten awareness of the St. James's Memorial Garden, to establish support for the Garden, and to ensure that the Garden is maintained in a pristine condition as is befitting of those parishioners who are buried there.

Activities/Events:

There are regular landscaping projects that this group undertakes: replanting, garden clean-up, and maintenance. We take charge of maintaining not only the plant life, but also the surrounding environs including the slate walk, benches, the fountain, the planters, the irrigation, the lighting, and the memorial stones.

Additionally, we have established the Memorial Book of Remembrance, which is located in the Atrium of the Parish House. Part of the role of this Committee in the future will be to ensure that the Memorial Book is current and maintained in an appropriate and honorable manner.

There is also a brochure of the Garden, which will need to be updated periodically and kept current.

Impact Observations:

This Garden was beautifully executed, and as a parish, we should be extremely proud of having such a sacred space on our premises. It is an honor to work in the Garden, assisting with seasonal plantings, cleanings, and maintenance. The reward of seeing the transformation in the garden – via the work the Committee does and the changes of the seasons – is meaningful.

Whenever services are conducted in the Garden, it is truly inspiring to witness the emotional impact this beautiful place of burial has on attendees. Having our deceased parishioners interred in the Garden is a testament to their devotion to St. James's and their desire to be ever present. Being involved in something that honors others in this way is a gift.

Roles in the Ministry:

Chairperson(s):

Current Chairs are Bill Gregory and Mary Watt New, Vestry members.

The role of the chairperson is to ensure that the care of the Garden is ongoing and appropriately managed, which may mean encouraging volunteer participation, and it may mean doing some of the work him/herself. The chairperson also needs to be thoughtful about ways to potentially raise awareness within the congregation regarding the Garden. An example would be reminding family and friends of interred parishioners of the opportunity to make memorial contributions to The Memorial Garden Fund.

The current chairperson works with family members of deceased parishioners and the memorial stone vendor, Booth Memorials, to ensure that the memorial stone engraving is accomplished. (If the chairperson did not do this, the Parish Coordinator would manage this function.) There is a set fee for burial/engraving, which the chairperson reviews periodically and discusses with clergy to ensure for appropriateness.

Staff involvement:

There is coordination required between the Memorial Garden committee and the Facilities Manager to ensure that the work in the Garden is being done appropriately. The chairperson of the Committee typically manages this communication.

Committee members/Opportunities for involvement:

While there is no committee per se, there are Garden volunteers who work periodically in the Garden, and there is plenty of additional opportunity for more volunteer involvement. All that is required is a sincere love for and appreciation of the Garden. An interest in gardening and an understanding of the commitment required to keeping a garden in good condition are important as well. There are approximately 5-7 people who currently volunteer their time in the Garden.

Time Commitment by Chair(s) and Committee Members:

The Chair of the Committee spends several hours per month on logistics/leadership and potentially additional hours actually working in the Garden as time permits and as the Garden needs dictate.

Garden volunteers work when they can and when the Garden needs their attention. If these volunteers wanted to create a more organized committee, which met periodically, that would be welcomed.

Involvement by Other St. James's Groups:

None.

Resources Required:

Financial:

Currently, the Rector has a Memorial Garden fund to which parishioners may contribute. Funds are also raised through memorial contributions from friends and family in honor of their deceased loved ones, as well as burial fees.

Space:

None needed inside the church.

Staff:

The Facilities Manager routinely inspects the Garden and makes repairs on the hardscape features as required. The Garden's walkways are swept and the leaves collected via the church's routine maintenance effort.

Advertising/Publicity:

None to date. Educating the parish about the opportunity to make memorial contributions in honor of a loved one to the Memorial Garden Fund would be beneficial.

Manpower:

The chairperson would welcome any parishioners who may want to donate some of their time and elbow grease to working in the Garden (cleaning, weeding, pruning, planting, sweeping, mulching, etc.).

Community Impact/Partners:

None.

(February 2011)