

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

Ministry Spotlight: Grounds Crew

The next time you walk into church, look around and take notice of the beautiful flowers, the well-manicured shrubs and the stately trees around St. Sebastian's. Thank God for these blessings, but also thank the Grounds Crew volunteers who give of their time to plant, weed, water and trim.

The Grounds Crew consists of about 25 parishioners who begin work the first week of April and stay busy until the last week of October.

According to Dan McCorkle, Grounds Crew coordinator, the group meets one Saturday a month for about four hours to tend to keep the church's five acres looking beautiful and well-manicured. During the summer, a smaller group of dedicated volunteers meet for two hours each Thursday morning to weed, water and pinch "deadheads."

"Each year, we log at least 1,000 volunteer hours," said McCorkle. "We save the church at least \$20,000 a year in landscaping services, assuming we paid the workers \$20 an hour."

You don't need a green thumb to get involved. No special experience in gardening is needed, just a commitment to help out as time allows.

"You don't even have to come each month – whatever you can offer," said McCorkle. "There is so much work to be done."

In the spring, the biggest job is spreading 60 yards of mulch. In the fall, the crew tackles special projects, such as thinning out or moving overgrown shrubs.

If you would like to get involved with the Grounds Crew, call McCorkle at 330-836-4551.

Faith in Action: Dan and Mary Jane McCorkle

Dan and Mary Jane McCorkle were involved with Habitat for Humanity when they were invited to begin a volunteer ministry to help keep up St. Sebastian's gardens and grounds. That was about 12 years ago.

Today, Dan, a retired accountant, heads up the Grounds Crew and Mary Jane – along with Mary Faye Madigan and Bill Cotter – is instrumental in planning the landscaping. For example, the cross of yellow marigold blooms and red salvia in front of the church was their inspiration.

The McCorkles have been parishioners since 1954 and have five children. While they enjoy the camaraderie of the group (coffee and doughnuts are usually available on workdays), they take great pride in the church grounds. "Sometimes we see brides and grooms having their pictures on the church grounds," said Dan. "They could go to parks or other places so that's always nice to see."

The couple's stewardship extends to other areas of the parish as well. Dan is an usher and Mary Jane, a rectory volunteer.

A Disciple's Response

Genesis tells us that God placed the first human beings in a garden to practice stewardship there – "to cultivate and care for it." The world remains a kind of garden – entrusted to the care of men and women for God's glory and the service of humankind.