



The Good Food Digest

A publication of the Baltimore Food and Faith Project supported by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

FRUITFUL SEASON AT KNOX PRESBYTERIAN

This past summer, the BFFP partnered with Knox Presbyterian Church in East Baltimore to bring fresh, organic produce to the church's neighborhood. Knowing that the majority of food outlets in their community were corner stores that typically don't sell a lot of produce, and that residents of East Baltimore were more likely to be low income and suffer from diet-related diseases like heart disease and diabetes, the church wanted to find a way to make a difference.

Enter One Straw Farm's CSA. With a grant from a private foundation, the BFFP purchased ten shares from the farm. Farmers Joan and Drew Norman tithed an additional share and the Center for a Livable Future donated a few more. Every Tuesday afternoon from July to November, we set up a stand at Knox, pricing the items from the farm individually and according to prices folks would pay for similar food at a nearby grocery store. Because many people in Knox's community cannot afford to purchase a whole share every week (the cost is roughly \$20/week—not much for some of us, but a lot for others), pricing by the piece ensured that people can still buy produce that is much fresher than what they could otherwise find in their area. They also got to choose just what they wanted and to feel the vegetables when choosing, a much more dignified way of helping to provide food for those in need.



And you should've heard our customers ooh-ing and ah-ing over the "best tomatoes and watermelon I've ever had!" People were lined up before we even opened during those watermelon weeks!!

All proceeds were put into a fund that will be used to purchase shares in upcoming years, the hope being that within three to four years, the project will be economically self-sufficient and no longer need grant money to help maintain.

Leftover produce is either donated to Knox's soup kitchen which serves around 120 people every Friday afternoon, or to local residents in need.

Thank you so much to Knox Presbyterian Church members Pastor Tanya, Clarence, Doris, Julia, George, Amoese, Dale, and all the kids, especially Kimberly and Devonte, who helped out. Their dedication to the project and sense of humor made every week a great adventure!

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BFFP's mission:

To partner with Baltimore area faith communities and religious organizations of all faith traditions to promote a just, safe, and trustworthy food system that allows us to produce what is needed now and for future generations in a way that protects people, animals, air, land, and water.

FOOD OF THE SEASON

PEARS!!



Ah pears!! There's a reason why Homer called them "gift(s) of the gods" in his epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Juicy and sweet with a divine scent, pears have long (since the Stone Age, some think) been revered for being delicious.

Available from August to October (and around here even longer as they store well in cold) (but best in October and November), pears are high in fiber and so promote good colon health and, research is now showing, good cardiovascular health as well since fiber appears to lower cholesterol.

Wonderful as a raw snack on the go, cut up into a salad, or warmed for dessert, pears are a versatile fruit that won't disappoint.

(From Whole Foods Market website)



Classic Poached Pears

Adapted from *CooksRecipes.com* (<http://www.cooksrecipes.com/dessert/classic-poached-pear-recipe.html>)

In looking over our past newsletters, we realized that we have always featured main dishes and recipes with vegetables, thereby neglecting two entire categories of food that deserve at least as much attention—if not more, for those of us with a sweet tooth! - **fruits** and **desserts**. This recipe combines both, is easy to make, and will be a lovely conclusion to any fall meal.

- 1 pound Bosc or Anjou pears**
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar**, or to taste
- 2 cups water**

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Juice and zest of 2 lemons**

Peel pears leaving stem intact. Scoop out core, if desired. Rub with cut lemon to prevent flesh from discoloring. In a saucepan which will hold all the pears standing upright, heat sugar with the water, vanilla, lemon rind and juice until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil and add the pears. Make sure fruit is completely covered by the syrup, if not double the recipe for syrup or prepare the fruit in two batches. Bring pears almost back to a boil and poach gently about 20 to 25 minutes until fruit is semi-transparent and just tender when pierced with the point of a small knife. Cooking time will vary depending on the ripeness and variety of the fruit. Let fruit cool to room temperature in the syrup, then transfer to serving bowl. Boil syrup down until it's fairly thick and about half of it's original volume. Strain syrup and pour over fruit. Serve cool or chilled.

BFFP MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Govans Presbyterian Church
 5828 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212
 (410) 435-9188
 Reverend Tom Harris, Pastor



Front Plot Before...

... and After!!

Govans Presbyterian Church took advantage of our Small Grants program this past summer to help create two beautiful veggie gardens with the worthy goal of getting healthy, fresh produce to those in need in their community. Bonnie Thomson, a member of Govans, helped spearhead the creation of this garden and shared with us just how this project came about and what good things have resulted from it:

“A 165-year old congregation located in the Govans neighborhood of Baltimore City, we are a congregation with a deep commitment to helping those less fortunate and seeking justice for those from whom it has been deprived. Since the 1960s, our church has helped individually and in partnership with a neighborhood organization, GEDCO, to provide job training, housing for the elderly and people with disabilities, and food for the hungry. One specific GEDCO endeavor that is near and dear to many church members is the CARES food pantry located in the garage of St. Mary’s of the Assumption Church.

Our support of CARES includes continuous food collection all year, designation of funds for the pantry through our benevolence budget and a June Communion offering, and an annual food drive in June that helps stock pantry in the summer when donations tend to be low. Three years ago we also became a drop off site for a Community Supported Agriculture program with One Straw Farm. We chose this farm because of its commitment of “tithing shares” – for every 10 shares we buy, the farm “tithes” one share to be used as we see fit. We donate the tithed shares and all extra produce to the CARES Food Pantry.

Knowing that the farm produce we donate to CARES only goes so far and that the pantry’s resources for food are limited in the summer when community needs are greatest, we searched for other ways our congregation could help the pantry.

The idea for a garden began when two church members attended the BFFP’s Faith Community Garden Workshop in February to seek information. With some networking, assistance from a master gardener, and an appeal to the congregation, the “Govans Garden Friends” began working towards an April groundbreaking. By the time we broke ground we had 11 people plowing, turning soil, removing rocks, unloading free compost from the Baltimore County Eastern Landfill, and installing bunny blockade fencing. Some new friends and garden helpers are the Sisters of Notre Dame who live on church property.

Once the gardens were ready for planting, another plea to the congregation was made for plants. We suggested certain plants we wanted to try, but our motto was “You donate it and we will grow it.” We received both purchased and home sprouted seedlings from 9 other church members. Baltimore Master Gardeners and Cylburn Arboretum also donated plants and herbs.

When the garden started producing vegetables and herbs we were able to contribute 2 crates of vegetables a week to CARES in addition to the One Straw Farm produce. Our little garden of faith started from a tiny seed of an idea and has flourished into a beautiful and productive garden that is having a variety of positive impacts throughout community.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We've heard a lot about the poor state of our nation's economy over the past year. Many people have put forth ideas for how to bring us out of this recession, the most popular being to encourage even more growth, despite the fact that rampant, unchecked growth is partly what led us to our current predicament. This idea has also been primary among agribusiness for over 50 years now, as it has encouraged an unending quest to increase crop yields and the number of animals being raised for meat without giving much thought to the quality of food being produced. While it is true that the industrial food system has largely succeeded in reaching its goals as we now produce enough food for everyone in the U.S. (3800 calories/person/day is produced, and we need around 2000 to thrive), we know that unfortunately many among us still aren't getting the food they need, and that there have been some other important unintended consequences resulting from this growth. Increased air and water pollution, soil degradation, farmers making barely enough to hold on to their land, inhumane treatment of animals, poor working conditions for farm workers, and an overabundance of unhealthy, processed food that is more affordable than healthier options are just a few of the results of the rampant growth of industrial agriculture. Just as our country is now in the process of rethinking its old economic growth model, so too are many of us trying to imagine a new food system where there is enough for all, and where our environment, health, and livelihoods are protected as well. Although important, there is more to growing food than the bottom line. Poet, farmer, essayist, and philosopher Wendell Berry sums it up well:

The outer harmony we desire between our economy and the world depends finally upon on inward harmony between our own hearts and the originating spirit as near us as our flesh and yet forever beyond measures or this obsessively measuring age. We can grow good wheat and good bread only if we understand that we do not live by bread alone.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, 11/15/09
11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Tikvat Israel Congregation
2200 Baltimore Road
Rockville, MD 20851

RSVP by November 9 to
execdir@tikvatisrael.org or call
(301) 762-7338.

Wednesday, 11/18/09
6:00 PM—Film
7:15 PM—Panel Discussion
8:00 PM—Reception with local food

Becton Dickenson Hall (W1020)
Bloomberg School of Public Health
615 N. Wolfe Street
Baltimore, MD 21205

Friday, 11/20/09
12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

Bloomberg School of Public Health
615 N. Wolfe Street, Room W4030
Baltimore, MD 21205

Art and Agriculture: A Celebration of Food

11:00 a.m.: Grand opening of ArtSites "Food" exhibition with works by local artists with a food theme. Admission to the art show is free.

4:00 p.m.: Lecture on Jewish Agricultural Communities in North America by Dr. Theodore Herzl (Ted) Friedgut, Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

6:00 p.m.: Organic vegetarian dinner, featuring locally grown foods

Dinner and the lecture: \$18 for general public; \$5 for children 12 and under
Lecture only: \$5.00

See <http://www.artsitesjudaicguild.org/> or <http://tikvatisrael.org/> for more information.

Fresh: A Film by Ana Sofia Joanes. Featuring Will Allen, Joel Salatin, and Michael Pollan, *Fresh* is a movie about what's wrong with American agriculture and how we can fix it.

Vertical Farming and Public Health. Talk by Dickson Despommier, founder of the vertical farming movement and director of the [Vertical Farm Project](#) which addresses issues related to urban agriculture, environmental disturbance, and the restoration of damaged ecosystems.

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