



New Garden Park

MASTER PLAN VISION TEAM

The first time Alan shared the vision for the Parish/Park/Farm/Abbey with me, we were sitting on the grass at a Grasshopper's game close to the playground so our little kids could rotate between that spot and rolling down the hill where we were sitting. He spoke of a Farm, with someone hired to oversee it and maybe even live on the grounds, and of an Abbey where new ministries and Christian businesses could take root with no or low rent until they were established; of a Park, which would be a place of beauty, rest, and retreat, and of course of a Parish, where our church body could gather to worship and fellowship together. I loved what he shared and was hooked from the beginning. I believe that was back in 2010 and the land/facilities that God has since opened the door for us to acquire were nowhere on our radar.

Here we are in 2021 with some of our kids now in college and the others hot on their heels. The vision Alan first shared with me 11 years ago is taking form and function with beautiful results already. We have a working farm which operated a free farmer's market last fall with plans to do so again soon. We have office space rented for ministries like Combat Female Veterans Families United. We have a beautiful sanctuary and greenhouse for services, fellowship, and special events. The land has been used for interactive stations of the cross during the season of Lent and has a garden prayer labyrinth. God has been faithful and generous to invite us into this vision and we need to be faithful in executing it with integrity, wisdom, and intentionality.

To this end, I was humbled to be asked to chair the Master Plan Vision Team whose purpose is to look at the future, big picture of our land use and make recommendations to the Vestry on best design layouts to facilitate multiple ministry agendas. Our current church body is already embracing many ministries that all demand space

(the farm for crops; the Abbey for retreat and edification; the youth and children's ministries for classroom as well as outdoor space). And yet, there is a vision to not only see each of these ministries expand, but for us to add more in the future. Where will we designate land for livestock? Can we build homes on the land for people who will contribute to various ministries? How can we expand our venue space and facilities for special events? Where will we build the world's largest water slide that Drew Hill wants? In short, how will we be using our land 5, 10, or 25 years from now?

The Master Plan Vision Team will first seek to take inventory of how each ministry area is already using the land and facilities. We then plan to solicit feedback on all the hopes and dreams that staff, ministry leaders, and congregation members have for future growth and land use. Looking at current state versus future vision, while making sure we comply with county/state ordinances and building codes, we will make recommendations to the Vestry on layout, design, and multi-use facility management. It is anticipated that this will be a process that is drawn out over several years to continue to hear from stakeholders and ensure the best path forward is being pursued.

No matter your role at Church of the Redeemer, whether a member, a staff member, or anything in between, I am grateful to be a part of the Body with you. It is inspiring to see so many volunteering with time, finances, labor, ideas, and prayer to have so many ministries thriving on this land! May we continue to grow into all that God has for us with excellence, obedience, and joy!

(If you have interest in applying to be part of this team, please contact the church for an application.)

by Doug West

