

Grace Church, an Episcopal Community in the southern Berkshires, seeks a full time, year round Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor who will manage Gideon's Garden and mentor and supervise the young people who work there. Although we require the candidate to be fully immersed in his/her faith journey, this is not a position that requires the candidate to be ordained. The candidate we seek must love creation and see farming as a method of ministry. To quote from Princeton Theological Seminary: "Christian leaders must learn the pastoral sensibilities of nurturing seeds, persisting through seasons of slow growth, promoting bountiful harvest, and holding life and death in reverent wonder." In our case it is literal as well as figurative.

The successful candidate will have a strong passion for working with youth and desire to meet and impact young people where they are whether they are Christian or not. We do not expect the outcome of this work to "fill our pews" but rather to translate the love of God into the language needed by those who will work in the Garden.

The successful candidate will have experience in both farming and youth leadership, whether in camping, teaching or church youth ministry. As Gideon's Garden is located on the land of a commercial farm, this position requires excellent communication skills and the ability to work with professional farmers, business partners, and seasonal workers. Nurturing a wide variety of relationships comprised of volunteers, community advocates, parish members, clergy, and the public will require someone who is adept at working with and inspiring many types of people.

Gideon's Garden has been a strong force for hope and good in the Berkshires for 10 years. It began with a question from a child as to why we as the church could not do more to feed those who are hungry. The response has been not only beautiful fresh produce delivered to food pantries and agencies who serve people in need of healthy food, but also the transformation of lives who have been a part of this great adventure led by God.

Please contact kclausen@graceberkshires.org with letter of interest, salary requirements, and résumé.

Grace Church
an Episcopal Community in the Southern Berkshires
Great Barrington, MA
<http://graceberkshires.org>

More details:

- coordinate with our partner farm, Taft Farms, working with owners and staff
- plan, plant, harvest a variety of vegetables, including a budget, alongside youth
- teach cycles of farming, monitor production, create annual planting day
- connect with Grace congregation, our rector, the Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman, and other nearby churches
- connect with the educational community
- connect with community youth organizations

The following description details this position as we envision it. This is a very rich description and includes all our hopes and dreams. This position is well supported by members of Grace Church and the staff at Taft Farms. We recognize that it may take a generous length of time to fully realize the many dimensions of the *Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor*, as this is a completely new position.

Develop and nurture a working relationship with a wide variety of people at Taft Farms. Taft Farms provides the land on which Gideon's Garden and its Butterfly House exists. The owners of Taft, as well as the staff, provide expertise, guidance, and are exceptionally generous with time and energy to keep the Garden going. Seeking advice and support from these experts is both necessary and has to be carefully coordinated allowing for the commercial nature of Taft. Taft Farms gives freely of time and materials to support Gideon's Garden because the owners, the Tawczynski family, believe in the mission of Gideon's Garden. A balance and an interplay between Grace Church and Taft has developed over the past 10 years and its health is essential for the continuation of Gideon's Garden. The *Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor* will connect the youth to the farm and model appropriate and respectful relationships filled with appreciation.

Develop a budget and agricultural plan for the 1.5 acre garden. Germinate or acquire plants for the Annual Planting day to which the community is invited. Maintain the Garden alongside the youth, training new youth and mentoring returning youth. Schedule harvesting and deliveries to pantries and feeding programs. Celebrate the accomplishments along the way. Be fully responsible for the care of the Garden from start to finish, including stewardship of farm

equipment and the Gideon's Garden van while mentoring this care to the young people who serve in the Garden.

Work alongside our rector, the Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman, to support the spiritual needs of the youth in the garden and minister to them allowing God's unconditional love to meet them "where they are". Be their "pastor, friend, and cheerleader."

Maintain connection to Grace Church with regular appearances to update the congregation, planning and producing the Annual Blessing of the Garden and community planting day (first Saturday in June), producing the Gideon's Garden "month" usually in October, and offering updates in the bulletin, on the website and in the e-newsletter, *Tuesday's Child*.

Eventually these aspects will become part of this position:

Connect to the local schools in a variety of ways, from attending school events that the GG youth appear in to possibly volunteering to teach classes on food production and its components. Meet with school counselors to learn about possible youth who would benefit from joining the garden. Develop recruitment channels in concert with counselors and teachers. Become a trusted and visible member of the school community.

Connect with other youth organizations in our area to support all youth and understand local challenges. Become involved, as appropriate, to strengthen Grace's commitment to the young people in our community.

Expand on the online presence of Gideon's Garden, which is currently a page on the Grace Church website. Perhaps develop an independent website, or other social media presence. With support from Grace, develop other ways to communicate the mission of Gideon's Garden for purposes of recruiting more members. Eventually, this position will, with support, be responsible for writing grants and seeking funding as the Garden expands. As head of Gideon's Garden, this position will become the person who shapes the vision of the future of the Garden always in consultation with Grace Church and Taft Farms' owners.

A knowledge or fluency in Spanish would be a plus in this position.