

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

January 2016



Camellia behind Senior Wing (Father Jonas photo)

Believe it or not, I am writing this Newsletter from Tennessee! Father Jonas has been an angel and sent me these beautiful photos so I could use them in the Newsletter. Even though our Volunteers took off Christmas Week and the week after, work continued with Nick blowing leaves and Russ picking up debris. What a gift these men are! We are all anxious to finish the winter cleanup which started right after the very successful Creche Festival (8500 people attended this year.). We had so many compliments, on the grounds and the gardens, by the visitors as well as by the Creche Volunteers.

January is cleanup time and a time we prepare for any necessary protection that might be needed during a hard freeze. Please enjoy looking back to the time we were gone with these photos of the Church and it's decoration for the Christmas Holidays.



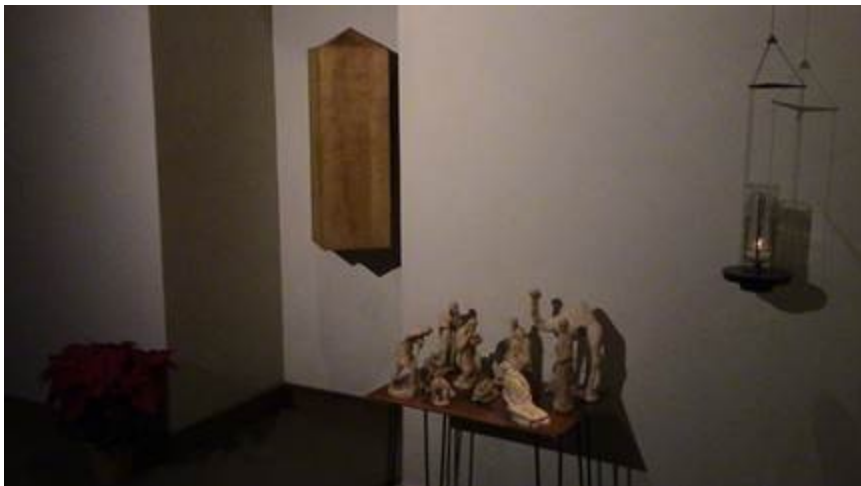
Wreaths at the doors of the Church



The Altar



The Lectern



The Tabernacle Chapel

Garden Updates

Entry to Church:

The Japanese Maple leant color to the Entry of the Church before Christmas.



Japanese Maple to left of entrance



Japanese Maple to right of entrance

Cloister:

George works year round on the raised vegetable beds in the Cloister to provide extra variety for Father Joe's kitchen.

As you can see, his produce is not only tasty but beautiful:

!



Also, Trees and shrubs are in bloom near the Cloister:



Redbud Blossoms by Library



Camellia Blossoms near Old Cemetery



Tea Olive Blossoms by the 12 Man Cottage

Walk to Church:

A new feature on the Walk to the Church is the Mundo edging that Green Carolina put in. We had clumps of Mundo nearby, so we moved it to help the beds not drain dirt onto the Walk when it rains.



View from the Crosswalk



View towards the Crosswalk

The Orchard:

The "orchard" has been put to sleep for the "cold" season. We encapsulated the citrus in boxes from the mushroom operation and put about 12-18 inches of oak leaves in the bottom. The objective is to protect the graft . If the graft is frozen the tree will sprout from the roots and the resulting tree would be an undesirable variety.

Even though the fruit trees and brambles are resting up for spring many of the weeds are not. We have put a huge dent in the weeds but

there is always more to do. In another month or so we will be pruning the trees. A gardeners work is never done.

Best wishes for a productive 2016. Howard

Luce Garden:

The crew at Luce were busy during December as they divided the daisies and then transplanted them into a more pleasant arrangement. The beds should be wonderful this summer.



Re-positioned divided daisies



Another view of the re-positioned daisy beds with Russ

Retreat Center:

There are several options for Retreats:

- Private Retreat with Optional Conferences
- Center Prayer Retreats
- Directed Retreats
- Contemplative Directed Retreats
- Ignation Directed Retreats, and

--Retreats with a Special Focus:

To find out details, please go to mepkinabbey.org and then to Visits, then down to St. Francis Retreat Center.

There are some amazing offerings for everyone.

Odds and Ends:

One of our goals for the garden program is to landscape or to plant out areas of grass, especially where roots of trees make it almost impossible to mow in the summer. There is a new area where we are leaving leaves to build up the soil. It's by the Gallery, from near the road to the St. Clare Walk. As we are able to either move or obtain additional trees and shrubs, we will be planting "infill". It has become obvious that it is a struggle in the summer to keep the quality appearance that we desire in these areas. Our landscape architect suggested this might be a solution.



A new leaf area to be planted with shrubs



Nearby area in mulch.

New Bench:

A new bench for the bluff near the Columbarium was given by a benefactor. It is a lovely addition for those wanting to sit quietly and view the Cooper River.



New Bench

Many thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report, to Father Jonas and Craig for the photos and to Langhorne for editing this issue. Next month I will be picturing and reporting more about the brickwork repair that is still in progress. We continue to upgrade areas that have fallen into disrepair. They become much easier for us to maintain when they have proper drainage, etc. We so appreciate the continuing support of the Abbot and the Brothers to our program. Hoping everyone had a blessed Christmas, and we look forward to many blessings in 2016. dottie