

## Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

January 2019



### Christmas in the Church

December found the Volunteers bringing the various pots to the Greenhouse or redoing pots that can winter over. Planting of new trees was done (Holly trees have replaced the dying Cypress trees at St. Bernard and St. Benedict). A general cleanup was started for winter—raking leaves, mulching tender plants and trees, and pruning materials that had died or gone dormant.



Entry Doors into Church



Foyer into Church



## Church at Christmas

This month we will do winter pruning, prune the climbing roses, and remove the overpowering Wisteria from the Arbor which was constantly taking over the Store. Craig plans to find something that can be less aggressive. The first Camellias are in bloom and we continue to clean up the spent blooms to avoid blight.

The sheep were left until the first of the year and a delight to everyone. The Creche Festival was its usual success, thanks to over 100 Volunteers. Here are the winners:

#1<sup>st</sup> Place-



Sparkplug Sheep

#2-



Clothespin Sheep

#3-



Seashell Sheep

#4-



Puzzle Piece Sheep

#5-



Spanish Moss Sheep

Congratulations to all the “honored” sheep.

### **GARDEN UPDATES:**

#### **Orchard:**

We have had a two week sabbatical from the abbey and hope to find our citrus in good shape. The weather has been unpredictable and just as soon we are convinced that spring is here we will have a cold spell.

Not much to say. Will report our findings next month

Howard

Below are the “barrels” that protect the Citrus trees from the cold. Inside there is a lightbulb for a source of heat.



Protective

covering for the Citrus trees.(Craig Clark)

### **Odds and Ends:**

We are delighted to have a new Volunteer. Her name is Ailsa Foulke. She is working with the Thursday group. Welcome, Ailsa!



Ailsa (Sylvia Bras)

Also helping us during the holidays was Francie's grandson, Nate, who planted several shrubs at the Laundry. Thank you, Nate, for your help.

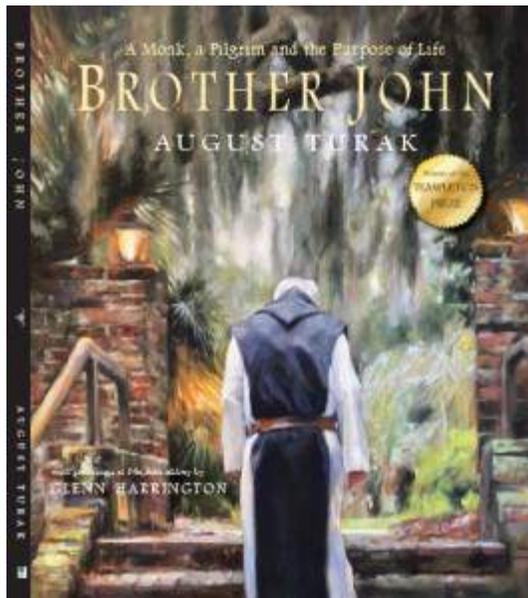


Nate (Craig Clark)

The most exciting “happening” this past month for me was discovering the wonderful book that has come out concerning Brother John. In my opinion, it epitomizes the spirit of these devoted men of Mepkin. You may find it in the Store or on Amazon. The paintings of the property at Mepkin are awesome. Buy it! You are in for a treat!

***Brother John: A Monk, a Pilgrim, and the Purpose of Life* by August Turak**

On October 21, 2018, Clovercroft Publishing released [\*Brother John: A Monk, a Pilgrim and the Purpose of Life\*](#), an essay about Mepkin’s Br. John and that won the coveted Templeton Prize, as an illustrated book. *Brother John*, written by August Turak, is the true story of a monastic encounter between the author, going through a midlife crisis, and an umbrella wielding Trappist monk: a magical Christmas Eve lesson that teaches us all the redemptive power of an authentically purposeful life.



Uplifting, deeply moving, and set in the magnificent Trappist monastery of Mepkin Abbey, *Brother John* is dramatically brought to life by 22 full-color paintings by Glenn Harrington, a multiple award-winning artist who has illustrated over 700 books for all the top publishers. “I didn’t try to retell Turak’s story,” said Harrington, “he does a great job of that. My vision was to artistically capture the incredible spirituality of Mepkin Abbey, and it is gratifying to find out that the reaction so far suggests that I was able to do just that.”

*Brother John* works equally well as a Christmas gift or all year long, and the book’s inspirational message and rich illustrations will bring readers back again and again.

Each year in the fields across from the Breakroom we have a crop. This year it is cotton. I thought you would enjoy seeing what we see daily. I am afraid all the rain ruined the crop, but it is still a pleasure.



Cotton Field (Craig Clark)

If you have not visited the Mepkin website lately, you should. It has vastly improved! The improved Website has some very interesting information that is current. Visit and see: [mepkinabbey@gmail.org](mailto:mepkinabbey@gmail.org)

My thanks to Father Jonas for most of the photos, Craig, and Sylvia for the rest. This issue would not have been possible without them, as I was in Tennessee for several weeks during the holidays. My thanks also to Howard, for the Orchard Report and to Langhorne for editing.

I leave you with this passage:

“Today, take a few moments to notice the simple wonders of nature. Watch clouds floating, listen to leaves rustling in the wind, delight in the rose’s fragrance and fresh-cut grass...let yourself become enthralled and enchanted by the gift of God’s creation. You need to see God’s work in all the world around you.”

In the coming months, look forward to reports on the busy project of succulents being divided and arranged into beautiful pots to prepare for the April show in the Arbor; for the seeds and bulbs in brown bags cooling to be planted in the Spring; to a new look in the Columbarium; to the Claremont Cemetery Project beds being planted; and to the start of a Memorial Arbor. Lots of activity out here at the Abbey. We would love to have more help. Contact Craig at 843-709-8362 or [mepkinvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:mepkinvolunteers@gmail.com). We work Monday-Thursday from 8:30-11:30.

Much happiness and joy to each of you in the new year. Until next month,  
blessings, dottie