

## **Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter**

**February 2021**



**The Camellias have arrived! Look at the buds not yet opened!**

**I am finally back in South Carolina and it is amazing to see what all has gone on at Mepkin! Last month they did get some pruning and fallen trees taken care of, plus Dennis has started a wonderful project in the Tool Room. He has made several cabinets and is finishing a work bench plus re-arranging things for more work room.**

**In February, we will continue to clean up the fallen Camellias and watch as the Azaleas start to bloom. It will be time to cut back the Nandina and Abelia, taking 1/3 of the oldest canes out. The Labyrinth will get its annual prescribed burn and I believe they are going to bushhog what was planted there and get some easier way to keep it looking good. I noticed several bulb groups have peeped up their leaves and should be in bloom before long.**

**Garden Updates:**

**Store:**

**Angel has the Store looking good, with several new products offered. These photos are just a sampling. Visit and leave with a big bag!**



**Long sleeved tee shirt in several colors**



**New colors for Mepkin mugs**

**St. Clare:**

**I always look forward, first thing when I return, to stroll through St. Clare's Walk.**



**Does this say “Mepkin, peace and serenity?”**

**Kathy continues (with Gail and Jill now) to keep everything in top shape. Here are a few of the Camellias in bloom:**



**Another new surprise was the placement of several of the Creches in the beds at St. Clare.**





**A favorite**



**Such a nice touch.**

**The Tractor Seats even have a serenity without their blooms. I cannot wait for this perennial to be planted in the Memorial Arbor.**



**Cloister:**

**The Cloister has added annual color in the raised beds for winter.**



**Raised herb beds with Pansies**



**Raised vegetable beds**

#### **Orchard:**

**The weather has ups and downs at Mepkin. It has been my experience that when I dress for the temperatures forecast on TV it's a good bit cooler until it's time to go home. Nothing like a trip in a Gator especially with a head wind. It should be warmer soon.**

**The citrus has remained wrapped with a non-woven cloth that Dennis brought. The cloth has stayed in place despite the strong winds and rains we've had. The protection the cloth offered has been sufficient so far. I think if the temperatures get in the 20's we will need the lights to provide a bit of heat. Last year we had a makeshift cover with corrugated roofing material and covered with beach umbrellas that Norm brought. Today they look better but time will tell how effective it is. I understand that older plants can stand the cold. The problem will be that if we aren't prepared for when a cold spell hits, we are in trouble.**

**We need to see if there is interest in oriental persimmons. The plants that we have have been beaten up by animals so there was hardly any fruit. I brought some fruit from home from my armored tree. The racoons have gotten much of my fruit in the past, but this year I wrapped the trunk with aluminum flashing. It worked very well- I only regret not seeing frustrated racoons sliding around.**

**Well, lets hope for warm weather and see how the plants fared.**

**Howard**



## **Regenerative Agricultural Institute:**

**We're planting vegetable seeds now in anticipation of our spring plant sale. We have a new farmer now , Catherine. She's showing great progress and fitting right in.**

**We recently harvested turnips, radicchio and broccoli. We sold some in Charleston and the brothers enjoyed them as well I believe.**

**We expect to be planting, growing and harvesting vegetables from now until June. This is definitely a learning experience for us all.**

**Jimmy**



**Look at the Strawberries planted in the photo on the right. Yum!**

## **Greenhouse:**

**The organization of Greenhouse 1 has been amazing. Jamie and Dennis tell me it is a “work in progress.” They have a donation to put in a misting system, etc. which will make the Greenhouse take less labor in keeping things in good shape. More exciting is that they have set dates for a Spring Sale in March. Mark your calendars: Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup> (if they do not sell out on the 5<sup>th</sup>). Look on Facebook for details.**



**Here is a sample display of the sale items.**

**Of interest also is to see the various Succulents blooming:**



**This blooming happens with this each winter when we bring the pots in from St. Benedict.**





### **Odds and Ends:**



### **New Postulant Greg Wilson**

**Greg Wilson became a postulant of Mepkin Abbey January 6<sup>th</sup> after spending several months with us as an observer. He now joins Brother Paul, Brother Matthew, and Brother Jophan. We welcome Greg, a native of Greenwood, South Carolina as a postulant**

## **New Member Joins Regenerative Agricultural**

## Institute



**Katherine Weatherall has joined the Regenerative Agricultural Institute. Katherine is a native of England, born in Surry in 1990. She came to the United States in early 2001 to live in North Carolina, just before the nationwide trauma of 9/11. After her college education, she traveled, moving to California for a year, then Hawaii, and then to Charleston. After that, she returned to North Carolina. In more recent times, she's been working from home in a technical support job. And so, it will be an interesting adjustment for her to adapt to a more monastic life. She would like to develop her skills in farming so she can offer other communities help, especially as a teacher. Spiritually, she wants to enrich her soul and rediscover her Catholic faith. We offer Katherine a warm welcome to Mepkin.**

## New Resident at Mepkin

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**Mepkin has a new resident, Jake Atlas, who will be with us for six months, until June. Jake is a native of Austin, Texas. He has one older sister. After attending his local public school, he attended University of Texas, in Austin. He studied philosophy and graduated in May 2020.**

**Since May, Jake has been living in the Southeast doing conservation work, most notably building a mountain bike trail in West Virginia. He also worked in the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina. Most recently, he was employed as a window repair technician on Andrew Jackson's ancestral home in Greenville, Tennessee. When he finishes at Mepkin, he hopes to go to Malawi with the Peace Corps.**

**Although Jake joins us because of his interest in religion from an academic point of view, he also has been searching for a deeper meaning in life after having been raised without a religious tradition. Reading Thomas Merton's Seven Storey Mountain has brought him to our monastery. We wish him every blessing during his time with us.**

**Please go to the Mepkin Website to see Christmas wishes from the Trappist Sisters in Ecuador. [www.mepkinabbey.org](http://www.mepkinabbey.org).**

**We continue to need more Volunteers. Give yourself this gift.**

**-“some time in Nature is essential-it is singularly the most nourishing, healing....practice. When we spend time in Nature we find we open up, and rekindle a relationship with the natural world. We lose any sense of neediness, and the world opens herself up to us. After awhile, we feel there is nothing we am seeking, nothing we need.” Sabbath, by Wayne Muller.**

**To Volunteer: contact Dennis Nelson at 843-830-9349 or by email at [MepkinAbbeyVolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:MepkinAbbeyVolunteers@gmail.com)**

**Thanks to Howard and Jimmy for their reports. Thanks to those of you who email comments on the Newsletter. I pass all compliments on to the Volunteers, which makes their work even more worthwhile.**



**As we hopefully see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, let us take a count of the many blessings we have. Wear your mask, observe distancing and wash your hands frequently. Praise God each day for “this place”. See you next month, dottie**



**Arrangement by Father Gueric**