

Village Voice



August
2026



We Should Be Like Gardens

by Terry Koch



Sitting on our deck as the sun begins its descent, the heady, spicy scent of the petunias makes my timeout rest from a busy day so pleasant.

I wonder if it was a result of the mild winter we experienced, but it seems like our gardens are just exploding this year.

I salvaged one gasping-for-life small stick of a raspberry plant from the clearance rack two years ago. This year, that close-to-its-demise plant has turned into a wonderful jungle loaded with fruit! What can taste better than a sun-warmed raspberry, its delicious juice slowly flowing over your taste buds?



Well, I can think of more: sun-kissed tomatoes and peaches.

Our peach tree surprised us. It seemed as if it had no fruit on it because of a freeze that came at the wrong time in the development of the blossoms. We were so disappointed. Then one day, while mowing around the tree, I happened to look up and saw a great number of round, green balls of fruit that had begun to form.

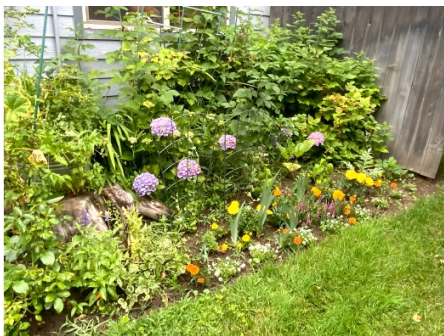
The roses, too! They were ready to swallow our home as they grew like Jack's Beanstalk and were bedecked with countless stunning blossoms.



The gardens are a muddled mixture of fruit and vegetables. They exist together in a riotous rapport. Among others, roses and rhubarb; cosmos and cucumbers; snapdragons and snap peas; alyssum and artichoke; pansies and peppers.

The description may sound confusing, but in

my several visits to the United Kingdom, I have seen many “English gardens” which contain an elaborate and tangled but still harmoniously beautiful variety of “this and that” in the often small front yard garden spaces. Although I do like the look of formal gardens at palaces, I think I prefer the happy concoction of unrelated species.



We had a locust tree in our back yard. Eventually it went the way of all living things so we had it removed and the stump ground up. I mixed the small chips of the stump with garden soil and a rich potting mixture and formed a large, more or less circular and conical planting space, at the top of which I “planted” a blue ceramic birdbath. I have been filling the space with perennials and annuals.

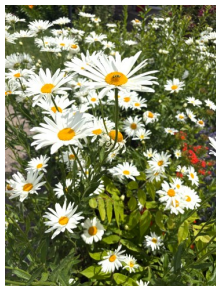


It is a spot that gives me a sense of peacefulness. In fact, I call it “The Peace Garden.” Looking at it washes the world out of me as I watch the little birds make a landing for a drink or to take a fluttery ablution. Above, butterflies come by on their interestingly erratic flight patterns.

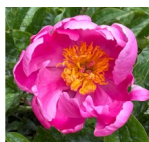


There certainly are deep object lessons presented for our spiritual growth in a garden.

When I was a kid in the Primary division of our church, one of the songs from our “Happy Songs” book that made an impression on me was “Beautiful Flowers.”* The lyrics connect human characteristics and ways of living for emulation in our spiritual lives to garden flowers.



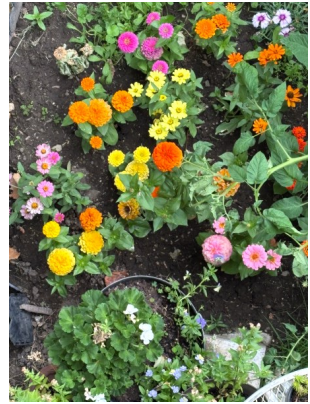
We should be like gardens,
Bright and sweet with flowers,



Blessed with heaven's sunshine,
Cheered by gentle showers;
Violets are the kind words,
Roses, deeds of love,
Fragrant pinks and pansies,
Thoughts of God above.

Beautiful flowers, beautiful flowers,
Bright with morning dew;
Beautiful flowers, beautiful flowers,
We would be like you.

Jesus has a garden,
Filled with children sweet;
We would be among them,
Bowing at His feet,
Drinking in life's waters,
Growing by His grace,
Like the flowers, looking
Up into His face.



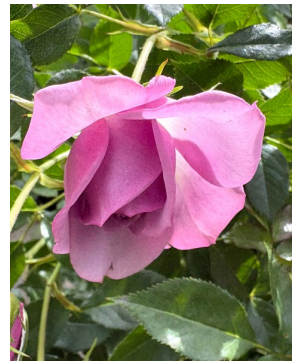
The prophet/poet Isaiah elegantly pictures this in chapter 58:11.

“The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.”

Terry Koch



*[https://hymnary.org/text/we_should_be_like_gardens/full texts](https://hymnary.org/text/we_should_be_like_gardens/full_texts)





The Fourth of July has always been a time for celebration, a time to remember how blessed we are to live in a country that offers us so much liberty, where we are free to gather together and worship God out of the love and gratefulness in our hearts. This was especially true as America celebrated its 250th anniversary. Since this year's Fourth of July was also on a Sabbath, the people at College Place Village Church decided to get together and do something extra special to celebrate our heritage, our history, and all the ways God has led us in the past.

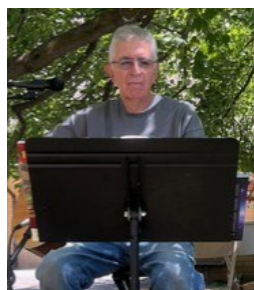


Following the sermon, people headed towards the majestic set



Eliana Kearns

of sycamore trees that adorn the back lawn of the church, carrying with them tables, lawn chairs, and lots of food, lovingly prepared.



Jack Carico

Tables were set up under the shade of the sycamores and the Fourth of July picnic was soon underway with enough hot dishes, salads, fresh fruit, and dessert for everyone. During the meal, Eliana Kearns provided a musical interlude on

her guitar, followed by a couple of pieces from Jack Carico on his guitar.



Once people had had ample time to eat and chat, Ricky Kearns gave a short presentation. He began with a reading of the Declaration of Independence followed by a few historical stories about religious liberty. He talked about how people have defended that right in the past, declaring that people must be free to worship God as their conscience leads them and not according to the dictates of government. At the end of the presentation, Ricky Kearns had handouts and booklets available discussing the

connection between God’s people and the defense of religious liberty, both in the past and the future.

After this presentation, Pastor Steve Reasor introduced the final event of the picnic, a concert from the Village Brass. Inspiring stories were shared about each piece and its composer that described meaningful experiences they had had and the deep faith they shared with others through music. Village Brass had prepared a repertoire of sacred and patriotic songs, beginning with “America the Beautiful” and culminating with “Eternal Father, Strong to Save.” The congregation even had a chance to sing along during many of the songs as Renita and Clarissa Carlin stood up front, leading out in these triumphant and inspirational pieces of music.



Ricky Kearns



The Village Brass



Clarissa and Renita



As the concert came to an end and everyone prepared to say their goodbyes, Pastor Reasor offered a farewell prayer, reminding Village Church of how much God has done for us as a people over these last 250 years and how grateful we are for the freedom to worship and serve Him openly. God truly has blessed this country of ours since its founding, and whatever the future holds, we know that He will never stop caring for those who place their trust in Him.

Beth Travis



What a glorious way to celebrate the Fourth of July together. From everyone at Village Church, God Bless.

2026
Autumn Series
Pastor Steve Reasor

COLLEGE PLACE
VILLAGE CHURCH
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Humans have gone to extreme lengths in search of love. We have crossed oceans and climbed mountains, built civilizations and destroyed cities in our quest for love. Our greatest desire is to be loved, and yet we are too often fooled by people and things that offer love but give us something else instead. This fall, join Dr. Steve Reasor, lead pastor of the College Place Village Church, in a series that addresses the question, "What is Love?" From the deepest questions of our hearts to the very heart of God, we will find that the greatest power in the universe is truly the power of love.

Begins September 5, 2026

Valued Volunteers

The Transportation Committee

by Carolyn Karlstrom

Some folks need help getting to church. Maybe you're among them, or know someone who is. There's a provision made by the church for that need, and it's called the Transportation Committee. Headed up by Scott McCoon, who's aided by several other energetic individuals, this ministry is comprised of three separate programs involving three different modes of transportation. All vehicles are owned by the church, serviced by Scott, and made available to us by him and the church office.



There is the bus, which is used primarily for picking people up on Sabbath morning and getting them to church, then home again afterwards. Its round starts at 8:30 a.m. and everyone is aboard by 9:15. Current regular stops include Solista, Quail Run, Veterans Affairs, and two private residences. Around ten folks are being accommodated each week at this time. There's room for a few more, though space is somewhat dependent upon the equipment each person has with them, such as wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

The bus has a wheelchair lift, so with assistance, anyone should be able to get on board. There is a need for more drivers, and Scott stresses that women as well as men can easily serve. No specialized licensure is required such as a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Scott coordinates the schedule so that each driver is on duty once every 5-6 weeks. If you need a ride, know someone who does, or are willing to volunteer as a scheduled or back-up driver, please call Scott or the church office and make that known.

The church also owns a van. This vehicle is available to any



church group that needs it for transporting a small number of passengers, for example, a group of female members attending a women's retreat in another city. The Pathfinders also use it occasionally; day camp personnel use it in the summertime; and individuals from the community can be picked up in it for special evening meetings such as health programs or an evangelistic meeting. Again, anyone with a need for this sort of transportation should let Scott or the church office know. Each request will be accommodated if possible.

There is a boat, too, that is available for any church group or ministry to use. Scott would like folks to know that its use is encouraged. Day camp is welcome to avail itself of it, as are any small groups or ministry teams, such as a Sabbath School class that would like to get together for some water fun. Simply contact the church office. Each request will be considered and supported.



We owe a great debt of thanks to Scott and his team for making this service available to our members and to the community. And so we do thank you, Scott, as well as you, Jim Fowler, Jim Cain, Brian Sewell, Shawn Ellis, James McCoon, Scott Klein, and Rudy Sanchez. Our hats are off to you. May God richly bless each one.

Carolyn K.



“While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord’s people may not have mercy or justice. The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending. Its professions are mild and apparently Christian, but when it shall speak it will reveal the spirit of the dragon.”

—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 452

Family Matters—by Bev Donahey

Help Needed

Have you ever been in a difficult situation when you needed help but none was available? Like when your car breaks down on a lonely stretch of road, or you don't have a report completed to present at a meeting that is about to start. Not fun, is it?



How about parenting? Have you puzzled about what to do to get Junior to take responsibility for his homework, or to quit annoying his sister. Or to get the 3 year old to put her toys away? Or the 14 year old to realize she's not grown up and still has to obey you? Or have you needed help to control yourself when you are frustrated or exhausted?



Good news: Help is available! Yes! Our mighty God is a parent's best Friend. Like most problems, avoiding them is best. And we can get help from God to avoid problems. But, wonderfully, He is also available when we didn't avoid and are right in the middle of horrible incidents. Here is one of His many promises: "...call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me." Psalms 50:15. And another promise to help us respond appropriately to problems is Ezekiel 36:27. "And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws." That's so nice! He tells us how to live, then He gives us the Spirit to help us follow His instructions and be kind and patient.

Satan wants parents to alienate children by harshness and negligence, but God provides the help we need to care for them kindly and wisely. Praise be to God!



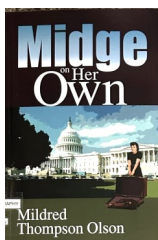
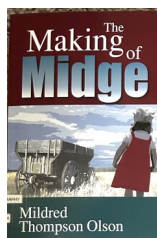
Bev Donahey has degrees in psychology and Applied Behavioral Science and shares tips she picks up from her experiences, friends and research.



From the Library—by Marcel Grondahl

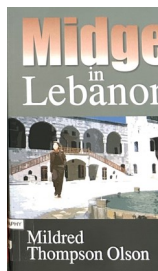
Our format this month is different—six books instead of four, all by the same author. The author is Mildred Thompson Olsen, known as Midge in her books.

The Making of Midge highlights her eventful childhood in Colman, South Dakota.

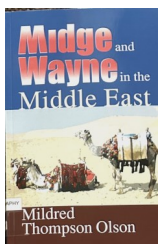


Midge on Her Own relates the sometimes troubling experiences of a young woman finding her way in life.

Midge in Lebanon tells the story of the young family leaving their home country and traveling by ship to share the gospel in a new country with all the adventures that brings.



Diamondola recounts the astounding courage of a young woman who fearlessly spread the gospel in her own country and the amazing miracle God performed in her behalf. Read more about her life in the sequel, Diamondola and Aram.



Midge and Wayne in the Middle East continues the saga of Mildred Olsen and her husband, Wayne, (whose family was from Milton-Freewater) as they serve the Lord in Iran and beyond.

The author currently lives in Clarkston, Washington.

The Village Pantry—hosted by Pattie Reasor

Thai basil provides robust amounts of vitamins A, C, and K! These vitamins help support your immune system and your overall health. Tofu is known for delivering a complete protein and bone-strengthening calcium. Those are reasons enough to eat this dish, but the flavor is amazing, too. Once you sample this tofu dish, your taste buds will be asking for more!



Thai Basil Tofu

Ingredients:

- 16 oz. of extra firm tofu, pressed and drained for 30 min.
- 2 Tbsp. of avocado oil
- 2 large bell peppers, sliced
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup fresh Thai basil
- Salt to taste
- Peanuts to taste

Sauce ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1-2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 4 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp chili oil
- 1 lime, juiced



Instructions:

Start by pressing the tofu to remove excess water. If you don't have a press, you can use two cutting boards. I always put mine on an angle so the fluid runs off. Press for about 30 minutes.

Cube the tofu and then fry it in oil. When it has started to brown, add the bell peppers and onion. When those are cooked to al dente, add the sauce and basil. Cook until the basil starts to wilt—about 3 minutes. Add salt and peanuts to the top.

Serve this over your favorite rice and add a spring roll! This dish is full of flavor!

Right now my garden is producing lots of food and I was able to pick the onions and peppers right from my garden for this dish. Sadly, I had only planted Italian basil so I had to purchase my Thai basil from The Chef Store. In a pinch, you could use another type of basil in this recipe. Basil from The Chef Store comes in huge bags. I wash it, strip the leaves, and freeze the extras. Then I can enjoy Thai basil in dishes whenever I wish.



Pattie Reasor

Did you know the organ malfunctioned? In the middle of special music with the brass, the middle C key suddenly stuck on! Terri Koch turned off the organ and adeptly switched to the piano for the remainder of the service. Later, with the phone assistance of a very helpful organ technician at Rogers Organ Company in Oregon, and the help of soldering expert, Glenn Maxted, Pastor Steve was able to repair the instrument. Praise God for gifting them all with wisdom and extraordinary skills!





A total of 145 children came to VBS this year, though not every child was there every night. The highest number in one day was 120, the lowest was 73. There were 92 volunteers representing many different churches in the Walla Walla Valley.

Each night, the group met in the sanctuary at the University Church for the song service and opening skit. Then the groups divided up and rotated through various stations. These rotations went outdoors for Reef Rec Games and downstairs to the



fellowship hall for Deep Bible Adventures where various Bible stories were reenacted. In the Sabbath School wing, there was Sticky Scripture where the children watched a video illustrating the Bible verse for the day and learned where to find it in their Bibles. Mr. Nob, science teacher at WWVA, shared a nature nugget. Across the hall was the room I led out in—



Imagination Station. Because I was leading the Imagination Station, I never got to see what the others were doing. Though I know that these Bible stories were highlighted during Deep Bible Adventures. The first night was about how God showed Himself to Elijah through ups and downs. Night 2 was Jonah and how God showed compassion to the people of Nineveh. Night 3 was



Jesus calming the storm to show the kids they can trust God when life's troubles crash around them. Night 4 was the death of Jesus and His resurrection, so the kids would know that because of

Jesus' sacrifice, they can have a forever friendship with God. Night 5 was Paul sharing the story of Jesus with everyone, including a woman named Lydia, because no one should be left out of God's loving friendship.

The Imagination Station was mostly science experiments to help the kids learn more about the amazing ocean.

On night 1 we learned about echolocation and how a lot of animals use echolocation to find their way around. We can't normally see the vibration of sound, so to illustrate it, I took a clear plastic storage container and cut a hole in the side big enough for a toilet paper roll to fit into. Then I took off the lid and stretched a balloon over the hole. We sprinkled salt flakes on the stretched balloon so that when the kids put their TP roll in the hole and hummed into it they could see the salt vibrate on the top. (Yes, each child got their own roll!!) I told the kids that even though we can't see sound we can see the effects of sound by the vibration. We also can't see God, but we can see the effects of what He does in our lives. Even though we can't see Him, we know God is a friend who's real!

On night 2 we learned about water surface tension. The kids



watched their group leader place a 2x2-inch waterproof piece of paper, cut in the shape of a boat, on the top of some water in a lasagna pan. The leader then dipped a Q-tip in some dish soap and gently touched it to the water behind the paper boat. The kids watched the paper boat race across the water as the surface tension broke. I heard lots of oohs and aahs! I told the kids that even though the soap only works to break the water tension once, God gives us lots of chances because God is a friend who loves us! So then I gave the kids each a paper straw to gently blow their paper boats across the water.



On night 3 we learned about water pressure. Before the kids arrived, I took a water bottle and removed the label, then I used a thumb tack and poked holes all around the middle of the water bottle and set it on my table. When the kids were there and it was time, I held the bottle up by the cap and told them that there were holes in the bottle. But they weren't sure they believed me since they couldn't see the holes and the bottle wasn't leaking water. Then I unscrewed the lid which changed the pressure on the water and the water started leaking through the holes. I then screwed the cap back on and it stopped leaking, until I squeezed the bottle, which also changed the pressure, and out the water came from the holes! Each group then got their own bottle to

experiment with water pressure and they loved it! I told the kids that sometimes we can feel like we are under a lot of pressure, but we can always turn to God for help. He is a friend we can trust!

On night 4 we learned about things that float vs. things that sink. First, I showed the kids an egg and asked them if they thought it would sink or float. Most said they thought it would float, so I put it in a glass of water and it sank. We then gave each group an egg and a cup of water and I let them know that because the water in the ocean is full of salt, the water in the ocean is heavier than water without salt. Each child in each group took turns adding a spoonful of salt to the water as the leader gently stirred it in. Eventually the egg started floating when enough salt was added to make the water heavier than the egg. I told the kids that just like the salt lifted the egg in the water, God can lift us out of selfishness and He will be our friend forever!



On night 5 we learned how water molecules hold onto each other. Each group received a metal heart key chain, a cup of water, and a water dropper. The kids guessed how many drops of water would fit on the back of the heart before it spilled off, then they went around the circle adding a drop of water and counting the drops. The groups were very surprised that up to 56-74 drops could fit on the heart before it ran off. I told the kids that even though we couldn't guess how many drops would fit on the heart, we also can't measure God's love. He has enough love for everybody! So God is a friend for everyone!

Then I told each group to choose someone who had helped out in VBS and made VBS extra special for them, and as a group, give them the key chain that said, "God Loves You!" on the front of the heart. The kids really enjoyed giving the key chains to a special VBS helper!

I think the kids had a lot of fun this year at VBS where we focused on diving into a friendship with God!

Sandy Wiebe



More VBS Pictures!



Clockwise from top left:

1. Submarine in the sanctuary
2. Shark observation cage, lobby
3. Fishing boat on Galilee
4. Sandy using imaginary goggles
5. "Underwater" background scene

Dear Village Voice readers,

Searching for Jesus in all of Scripture, we discover beautiful revelations of the character of God.

Consider the story of Jacob's sons, brought before the governor of Egypt whom they did not realize was their brother Joseph. On their second trip to buy food for their starving families, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack of grain. Upon hearing that Benjamin would be made a slave, Judah pleads before Joseph. Hear these words again as though they are the words of Jesus about humanity, about you. Hear the yearning of His powerful love for you!

"For your servant (Jesus) became surety for the lad (you) to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me?" Genesis 44:32-34a.



Read the echo of these words in John 17:24, and let your heart respond.

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor

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