

The Story of the Two Erics Garden

Laura Reed and Diane Wasson are old friends who were recently drawn together again after each lost a loved one tragically and prematurely. Diane's son Eric Wasson passed away suddenly, a little over five years ago, when he was just 37-years-old. Laura's husband, Eric Reed, died just over year ago, after a long and difficult illness. He was only 50-years old.

Diane and Laura have both found solace and peace in the belief - common in many cultures - that the presence of butterflies mean that our lost loved ones are near, and so, when Diane reached out in sympathy to Laura, she had a suggestion.

Diane had recently read an article in the National Wildlife Federation magazine about how school children and public garden staff were creating butterfly and bird gardens to preserve species. She suggested that they build a garden, somewhere in Belmont, not only to honor their Erics, but to also help the environment and bring comfort to others who have suffered losses.

Laura immediately knew the perfect place and reached out to Rev. Michael Barham of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Belmont. Good Shepherd was chosen because of its location within the downtown Belmont neighborhood, a focus of the city's strategic plan and proximity to plans for increased walkable development. Also, for decades GS has been a hub for community engagement, serving as host to numerous community groups and events, and being a place people like to come and sit to prayer or to rest. Eric Reed was an active leader in the congregation.

Together, Fr. Michael, Diane and Laura have developed a plan for a meditation garden, designed to attract butterflies and birds, for those in need of a sacred space to grieve, a spiritual place to pray or simply a peaceful place to be.

We are now ready to create and plant what will be a perpetual site and will be open to all. To do this, we need many different types of assistance:

1. Funds:

- First stage: funds will be used to build the garden infrastructure (including a retaining wall), initial plantings, and perpetual upkeep.
- Second stage: funds will be used to remove and replace an existing ramp, allowing for an expansion of the garden, and improved accessibility for both the garden and the surrounding buildings.

2. Physical labor to build the infrastructure and condition the soil for planting, and

3. Help installing the plants, shrubs and memorial benches