

University United Methodist Church, IV

892 Camino Del Sur,
Isla Vista, California



May 31, 2018

Methodist Garden: Our Edible Garden Project in Isla Vista

University United Methodist Church, IV and the Edible Campus Program of UCSB are working collaboratively to develop a Neighborhood garden in the space surrounding the church. The UCSB Edible Campus Program has planned the layout of the garden, are choosing the crops to be grown and are training garden workers. These workers come from the diverse neighborhood population of students and families who live in the area. Workshops are being organized to educate the neighborhood about urban gardening and healthy eating.

Garden workers and community members will be able to harvest food and take what they can use. Surplus food will be given to those who cook to feed the homeless and to the Associated Students Food Bank.

The mission of this project is as follows:

- **use available land in a residential neighborhood,**
- **grow healthy foods to improve diets of those of lower economic means,**
- **educate public in knowledge of gardening and healthy foods,**
- **encourage collaboration among persons of diverse backgrounds.**

This is a new project. We feel it is necessary because of the need for healthy food for the students of our community, for neighborhood families, and for the homeless. We have land that is otherwise unused. The UCSB Edible Campus Program has need for land to add to their already successful program of community gardens. Converting unused land for the purpose of meeting local food insecurities shows that the Isla Vista University Church is responsive to local needs and is a good steward of land that surrounds the church building.

Our project will engage those who will be served in the planning and implementation of the garden. The garden will serve as a neighborhood gathering place, bringing together residents from various backgrounds with a common interest in gardening and eating healthy. All will be encouraged to join in the work of the garden and the educational/training activities.

Isla Vista is a unique community. Demographics show mostly UCSB and SBCC students, low-income families and the homeless live here. These low-income families are mostly Hispanic. There are limited opportunities for positive interaction between these diverse groups. This neighborhood garden will provide an opportunity for working together to address a common concern.

Local neighbors have shared their enthusiasm and are excited to become involved. The Isla Vista Parks and Recreation Director has expressed support saying this garden will help meet a need for land where food production can be encouraged.