

First Presbyterian taking applications for plots in new community garden

A community garden is sprouting at First Presbyterian Church.

The 16 raised plots, situated behind the ballfield on church property, are available beginning March 1 to anyone in the community on a first-come, first-served basis, according to Tom Yakowenko, deacon at the church, 270 Woodbridge Ave.

The idea came from the church's temporary senior pastor, the Rev. Ellen Clark Clemot.

"When I first joined the church in 2015, I saw the space. It was really just used for leaf refuse," she said, and that prompted her to think it would be a good spot for a community garden.

Volunteers cleared the space, and Metuchen High student Diego Lije-

ron, a church member, built the raised beds last summer as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Yakowenko said there are no restrictions on what people can grow, although organizers are trying to keep a 4-foot height limit to prevent sun blockage. A water tank will be provided and the area will be fenced to keep out deer.

The plots cost \$20 each, Clemot said, and the proceeds will be used for mulching and weed prevention around the plots, as well as a shed with basic garden tools and water containers.

Those interested can email Yakowenko at fpccommunitygarden18@gmail.com. - **Marlaina Cockcroft**