Self-Guided Cathedral Gardens Tour

Welcome! Here’s what’s new in the Cathedral gardens. Follow this map for a walking tour of some of the more recently-renovated green spaces on the Close (descriptions on the reverse of this page).

Newly-renovated Garden Spaces 2020-21

For a full interactive audio tour of the Close, including the Bishop’s Garden, scan this code to access it on our website, www.allhallowsguild.org.
A. Sayre House Front Garden
Sayre House is once again the private residence of the Dean of the Washington National Cathedral. In 2018, following the house’s renovation, All Hallows Guild worked with the horticulture staff to design the front and back gardens; the Guild paid for the plants and their installation, in addition to stonework and wrought iron railings. Trees and shrubs include Serviceberries, Camellia, Hydrangea, Inkberry, and Fragrant Olives, giving street separation, color, and interest throughout the year. Perennials include Columbine, Astilbe, Lenten Rose, Phlox, and Veronica, adding soft colors of pink, white, and blue.

B. Pollinator Garden
The AHG 2018 summer interns designed this garden adjacent to the NCS Athletic Center, transforming what had been an empty mulch island on a slope. Planted in 2019 with a variety of native pollinator-friendly plants, the labels and tags educate the humans who traverse the hill. Joe Pye Weed, Milkweed, St. John’s Wort, Asters, Coneflower, Black-Eyed Susan, Mountain Mint, and Bee Balm are among the plants that have greatly increased our pollinator population.

C. Garth
On the north side of the Cathedral, the Garth offers a place of respite, centered on an abstract fountain designed by George Tsutakawa. The All Souls Memorial Garden, located in the grassy area in the back of the garth, provides an in-ground burial place for cremated remains. The original Garth Garden, designed by landscape architect Mead Palmer, was renovated and replanted in 2019 to create the All Souls Memorial Garden. The top of the bronze plaque on the garden wall is inscribed: All We Go Down To The Dust Yet Even At The Grave We Make Our Song – Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Plants include Dogwoods, Weeping Cherry, Hydrangeas, Camellias, Lenten Rose, & Coral Bells.

D. Church House Front Garden
Church House was originally the residence of the Bishop of Washington. Now it serves as the offices for the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

In 2020 utility work at the east side of the front garden of Church House required a serious excavation, destroying plantings in that area but creating an opportunity for renewal of a tired garden and planting a new border. Our in-house horticulturists worked with the Guild to plan the renewal, and AHG gladly provided part of the funds to accomplish this. Old boxwood were replaced with cherry laurel, and tall ‘Dee Runk’ boxwood now screen the new utilities. Three new trees – Sweet Gum, Redbud, and Ninebark were planted, added to existing dogwood and a scarlet oak. Perennials include Hummingbird Mint, Bugleweed, Ornamental Onion, Japanese Forest Grass and Lenten Rose, providing changing blossom colors and varying shades of green all year round. The new garden is a proper setting for this venerable building.

E. Pilgrim Road Beds
The Pilgrim Road border is a small work of art itself, just outside the Bishop’s Lawn wall. Formerly overgrown and weedy, the border was recently transformed with trees, shrubs, and perennials blooming in shades from pink to deep rose and purple. Redbuds, Yoshino cherry, Hawthorn, and Crape Myrtle are joined by Lenten rose, Foamflower, Penstemon, Viburnum, Laurel, and Hydrangeas to make this well-traveled road worth walking – it is, after all, the Pilgrim Road.

F. Nitze Garden
Located east of the Pilgrim Steps, this perennial and shrub garden was dedicated in 1989 to the memory of Phyllis Pratt Nitze, former President of All Hallows Guild.

The Nitze Garden received a major renovation in 2019, with AHG collaborating on design with our horticulturists, and funding the work. The stone wall backing the garden was rebuilt, and five new dogwoods were added to reflect the trees in the adjacent Olmsted Woods. For many, this is a “drive-by” garden, but strong pink blooms and bold-colored grasses draw attention and invite closer scrutiny. Columbine, Cranesbills, Foamflower, Ferns, Viburnum, and Hydrangeas are features of this shady garden.