

## Just Neighbors Award May 2014

*Presented by:*

**Compassion, Peace & Justice Task Force of the Presbytery of Des Moines**

*Presented to:*

**St. Paul Presbyterian Church, Johnston, Iowa  
for engaging in compassion, peace and justice ministry in their community through the  
Johnston Community Garden**

For the past 12 years, clients of the Johnston Partnership Food Pantry have enjoyed fresh produce picked across the street at the Johnston Community Garden at St. Paul Presbyterian Church. The garden project began when members of the church decided to put the beautiful, sweeping lawns of the church yard to use. Remembering Jesus words in Matthew 25, "...for I was hungry and you gave me food," these folks decided that the best use for their land was to produce food for hungry people in their neighborhood. With the help of Boy Scouts and other members of the community, the garden idea came to fruition.

Today, volunteers work to plant, harvest and deliver food on a regular basis throughout the season to the pantry. The healthy, nutrient-rich vegetables supplement the, mostly, non-perishable food items available at the food pantry. Fresh vegetables are expensive at the grocery store, and are often not accessible for low- or no-income families and individuals. Donations like those growing in the Johnston Community Garden are crucial to providing a healthy diet for those who are struggling to find food security.

Well done, St. Paul Presbyterian Church and the hard-working volunteers at the Johnston Community Garden!



Rev. Bill O'Connell & Lois Keister are shown accepting the award on behalf of the church from Rev. Michelle Parsons.