

Pilgrim Community Garden

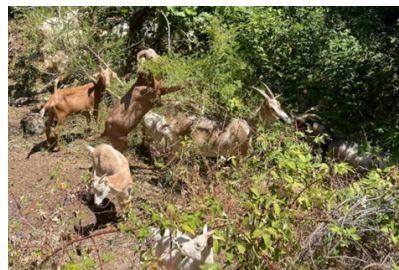
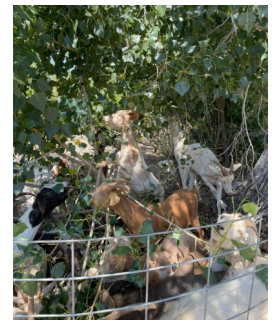
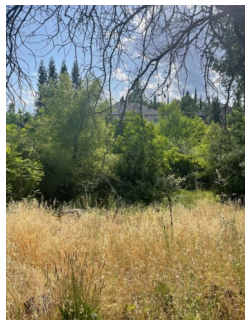
By Joriana Gibbens-Egolf

Pilgrim Congregational Church
Redding, CA

Overview: Jori realized how overgrown the Church's grounds had gotten over the years and identified much of the growth as invasive species that was negatively impacting their environment. She organized the use of goats to clear the acreage and volunteers to follow up and prep the land for health growth.

In Reflection: When I was little, our Church grounds used to have a beaver we all called "Chewie." As a high schooler in AP Environmental science, I learned about keystone species and realized that our church grounds being so overgrown was a clear sign that Chewie was gone. Our building was designed so you could look out the widows of the sanctuary and see the rolling hills. I wanted to do something to repair the damage to our environment and bring back the beautiful view.

More Details: Jori's full vision included a garden where community partners could come and learn about the environment and where the Church community could work together. This aspect of project may still happen, but the initial clearing of the land became a massive project of its own. Jori's efforts brought a team of goats into the church property that did more than clear the ground. Senior adults and children loved seeing the goats at church. With the goats came other challenges, such as someone cutting the fence and letting the goats loose in the neighborhood. Even with the challenges, this project gave the church a boost of excitement and pride as people got to see the beauty of the grounds that had long been hidden.



"I learned a lot about myself as a leader and a changemaker. I learned that I am capable of doing hard things and that I also have the confidence and compatibility to make connections with others to make my vision become a reality." - Jori