



# Finding Common Ground

## August 2025

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### Up Front

We're thrilled to celebrate the arrival of our newest member of the Common Ground family—baby Jascha! Welcome to this world, Jascha, and congratulations to Caleb & Abigail. May your adventure of being a family be richly blessed. We so look forward to the day we get welcome Jascha to the Community.

Common Ground is an agrarian ecovillage. This means that growing nourishing food and cultivating loving care for the land and all beings are paramount for us. It's a holistic vision and we are called to honor inter-relationships in all we do.



*Wild Rose Pink graces the Far Field (Photo: Hope)*



*Papa Caleb explores who weighs more, Jascha or the watermelon? (Photo: Kai)*

*Banner above: Doug's tractor is dwarfed by the Far Field's expanse (Photo: Robby)*

You'll see these values reflected in the news and events reported below. And there are oh, so many ways that you can, learn, evolve, and contribute just by showing up and being yourself. Build things, grow food, care for land, learn heartful ways to cooperate and communicate, help to develop a village, celebrate the seasons—and have lots of fun along the way! Read on and be in touch. Let's create compassionate community together.

## Circle News



### Governance & Communication

Many of our members need training in Sociocracy, but it's been difficult to pin down when/how to offer it. **Now, Becky has a great idea!** She's offering a **Learning Circle** starting on August 24<sup>th</sup>, morning or afternoon depending upon interest and availability. Take a look in the Events section and [contact Becky](#) to get on board with Sociocracy.

#### What is sociocracy?

Basic concept: **no one ignored**  
Processes that support the values of **transparency, effectiveness and equivalence in service of the organization's aims.**



Courtesy of [Sociocracy for All](#)

We're happy to announce that the General Circle has consented to a joint proposal with the Membership Circle that basic knowledge of Compassionate/Nonviolent Communication (NVC) be expected of members as a condition of advancing in membership in addition to Sociocracy training. **We propose that all members commit to acquiring basic NVC knowledge before moving to the land, and ideally as soon as possible.** We have agreed that we will call this new combined training and way of being as Compassionate Cooperative Culture (CCC). We understand that proficiency in CCC cannot be forced or assessed, but is the result of ongoing exposure to materials, practice, and experiencing others who actively practice these skills, combined with a willingness and capacity to make this shift in consciousness.

## Meetings & Events

- ♦ **All gatherings are in Eastern Time** and open to everyone unless otherwise stated.
- ♦ **You must RSVP** for details and last-minute changes.
- ♦ **COVID Policy:** For your safety and others', bring a mask in case it is needed. At CGEV, we protect those most vulnerable.
- ♦ **Accessibility:** At this stage, terrain is unpaved and uneven, and restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
- ♦ **Google Calendar Link:** CGEV Calendar  
To subscribe, add or change an event, email Ren at [calendar@commonground.eco](mailto:calendar@commonground.eco)

### Circle Meetings

#### Membership

Thursday, Aug 7 & 21, 12-2pm, Zoom. Task meetings as needed, Aug 14 & 28, 12-2pm.  
[RSVP to Lisa](#) with subject "Membership Circle."

#### Land Stewardship

Tuesday, Aug 12, 7-8:30pm, on the land at the barn (hybrid if needed).

[RSVP to Doug](#) to confirm details.

#### Planning & Development

Updated time! Wednesdays, Aug 13 and 27, 4:00-5:30pm, hybrid.

[RSVP to Anthony](#) with subject "P&D."



Kiki enjoys her final week as a summer intern (Photo: Hope)



## Planning & Development

Big Moves go on!

**Ownership structure:** We have decided that individual lots will be owned fee-simple and the land as a whole will be managed by an HOA that is carefully structured around Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs) to reflect our Principles & Intentions and foster a cooperative and stewardship-oriented culture. We'd have much preferred a more cooperative and trust-oriented structure, but after years of fruitlessly trying every angle we could imagine to make it work, we've settled on an HOA for now. Please read the consented proposal and rationale [here](#).

**Infrastructure:** We are working with a roughly \$850,000 bid from MEC Environmental Construction for road-building, pond renovation, and stormwater control including berms, swales and a water system. Other firms will build the septic fields and drill the wells to the tune of about \$250,000. We are planning to get started with MEC in early fall. House construction could



*Randy joined Indigo and Reema from the Eno River Association visited the Conservation Easement areas on the land on a very hot afternoon! Hope came along and snapped the photo.*

## Financial & Legal Subcircle of P&D

Every Tuesday in August, 3:30-5pm, Zoom

[Contact Theresa](#) to offer your participation

## General Circle

Sunday, August 24, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom. [RSVP to Hope](#) with subject "GC" 2 days in advance.

## Governance & Communication

Tuesday, Aug 26, 7-9pm, Zoom

[RSVP to Quai](#) with subject "G&CC."

### Compassion Corner: Making Life More Wonderful Governance & Communications Circle

We're enduring quite a heat wave this Summer and it seems like a good time to remind ourselves to regularly check in with ourselves - our bodies, our feelings and thoughts. In practical terms, it may save our health or our lives in those moments when our mindfulness practice alerts us to previously unnoticed symptoms. In our relationships and our communities, practices of regular self-check-ins are foundational tools for keeping the heat from conflicts down.

## All About Events

### Tours of the Land

#### Membership Circle

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining?

Contact Lisa with subject "Request a Tour:"

[Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com), or text 919-619-2979

### Community Lammas Celebration

#### Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday, August 2, Pavilion Fire Circle, 5:30pm

arrive; 6pm feast, 6:45 storytelling, singing, dancing and drumming into the evening

[Contact Kai](#) for full details

follow 3-4 months later but will depend mostly on securing the financing. Randy and Anthony are juggling these balls with the able assistance of our site engineer, Bobby Tucker.

**Financing:** It will be key to identify and organize the financing, both external and internal, for this big step forward. With Theresa and Becky in the lead, and Eric recently joined, the F&L Subcircle has expanded and is at the center of the work. We continue to work with the amazingly energetic and well-connected Robyn Heeks of Heeks Collective as financial consultant and development (co-)manager. Promising possibilities continue to open for fast-tracking design and construction planning and supporting affordability. Watch for email notices on CG-Connect and on the Discourse Forum.

**Common House:** We expect to receive a workable design very soon from consultant Greg Allen of the Muddauber School (yes it will be built with strawbale and clay). This will enable us to start building this foundational Community structure. Lucas is taking the lead alongside Anthony, Kathleen, and Bradley and they are very motivated to get started.

**Lot preferences:** Most lots are now provisionally assigned to Members, and the Financial & Legal Subcircle is hoping to initiate pre-sales agreements and receive deposits soon. Again, watch your email. (Note that some only go to those who will be buying lots.)

**Architecture:** As a completion date for the infrastructure comes into sight (roughly early 2026), thinking about architecture needs to move into full steam. P&D has now populated a Design Subcircle (Anthony, Bradley, Eric, Momo) to offer support, advice and feedback as people begin to formulate plans or consider signing on to some shared plans. Guidelines are in OnlyOffice [here](#). Member-builders, it's not too early to be in touch!

Let's collectively remember how to celebrate the passage of time during important moments of the year in a way that honors the land and the ones who came before us.

## Racial Awareness Book Group

### *Membership Circle*

**Every Monday, 7-8 pm, via Zoom**

Contact Lisa to join with subject "Racial

Awareness Book Group": [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com)

**We are finishing up reading *The Rage of***

***Innocence – How America Criminalizes Black***

***Youth*, by Kristin Henning. The book group is for**

CGEV members and the larger community. The

format is reading aloud and breaking between

paragraphs to share personal reflections,

questions, and ideas. People attend as often as

they can. **August is a good time to join the Book**

**Group since we will choose a new selection to read.**



*Ginormous hibiscus blossom (Photo: Kai)*

## Two Monthly Heart Shares

### *Membership Circle*

**Sunday, August 3, 12 noon, under the Grandmother Oak**

Contact Lucas for details: 301-767-6720

This is a chance to be together on a beautiful day





*A kaleidoscope of mushrooms (Photo: Hope)*

**Preparing hearts and minds:** When we committed to going ahead with construction we also committed to taking care and giving heart to preparing ourselves and the land beings as best we can for the disruptions and changes to come. Randy, Janey and Doug are moving this work forward, most recently with the establishment of a Tree Team to give special care to the grand old trees that will be coming down near the entrance.

**As usual we'll end by reminding you that all of this work could use more hands.** We are now in an absolutely vital phase for building the village and reconstituting human and more than human communities around it. Key circles are meeting at least weekly and key people virtually daily, and we all are stretched very thin. **Once again, anyone interested in helping with the work is strongly encouraged to contact any of the folks just listed to volunteer!**

## Land Stewardship

Janey and Randy lead the way in making preparations on the land for infrastructure construction potentially beginning this autumn. This involves the critical intangible work of communicating with the land and beings here, honoring their lives, and learning how to be in this development process in a good way. It also involves very tangible activity like marking

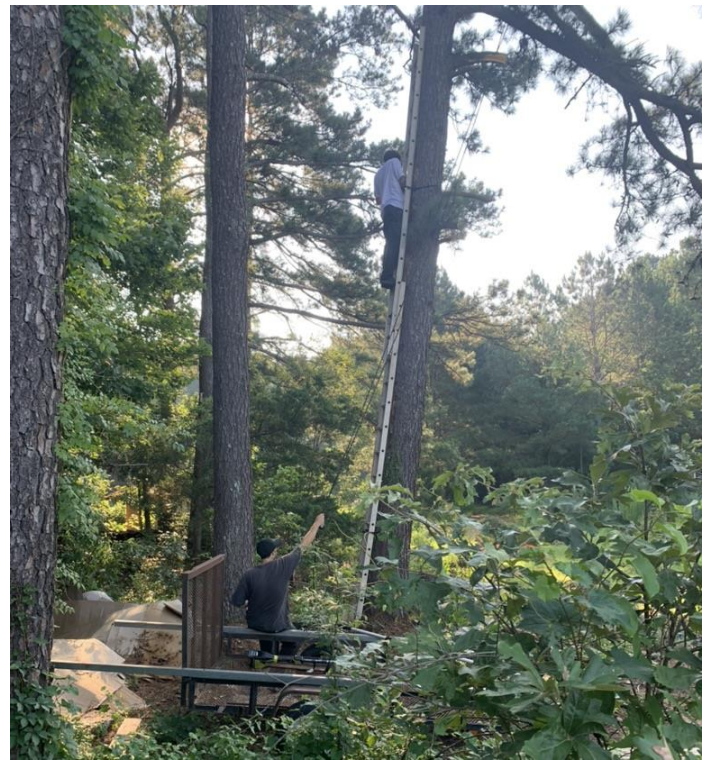
and share deeply from our hearts. The format will be similar to the online Heart Share.

**Friday, August 15, 7-9 p.m., Zoom**

Organizers TBD, Theme TBD.

**RSVP [Heart\\_Share@commonground.eco](mailto:Heart_Share@commonground.eco).**

These monthly gatherings offer a meaningful way for CGEV members to connect on a deeper level than our usual gatherings allow. New members often explore this way, so committed members are encouraged to welcome them. Facilitators needed; we'll support you and you can choose the theme!



*Goni and Hector take down a damaged pine tree which was in danger of falling on the farm fence (Photo: Kai)*

## Community Farm-to-Table Lunch

*Land Stewardship Circle*

Every Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the Barn

**Contact Lucas** if you plan to come:

[lucas.babinec@posteo.net](mailto:lucas.babinec@posteo.net), 301-767-6720

Come enjoy a simple, nourishing meal prepared straight from the garden plus thoughtful conversation with good humans who care about

individual trees that are in the path of the new road that have particular value as lumber for the community and triaging other trees for additional purposes such as: biochar, woodchips, and firewood. **We want all of the trees that have to be cut down for the development to proceed to remain on this land.** That is the best way to honor their lives. This is work that is essential for living in reciprocity and harmony with the other than human world here. We need more people to get involved!

Throughout the 1st half of summer, community continues to grow here on the land. Numerous monarch butterflies flutter about the tithonia flowers. As an indicator species for ecosystem health, they are a beacon of good energy here. They are a gift for the eyes and the heart.

On the other hand, the squirrels continue to be a menace. A few crafty ones scampering up a drain pipe and flung themselves onto the open window edge to chew their way through the screens of the window in the 2nd floor barn kitchen. They then proceeded to collect butternut squash seeds Doug was organizing and plant them into celery flats that were in the room to stay cooler for germination. A few days later and voilà, up sprouted new butternut squash plants. If only we could train the squirrels to plant all of our seeds in exchange for moderate pillaging of the corn ears, we would take them up on that exchange!



*A drone's-eye view of the farm in May (Photo: Robby)*

the earth. **In order to put these meals on every week, we need support.** This can be a chance for you to learn the skill of cooking for community with what's seasonally available. Lucas can help you plan the menu and get everything ready to put on a yummy farm-to-table meal for other community members and visitors. Please sign up to support the cooking or the post-meal dishwashing [here](#). And remember to offer donations—cash, Venmo, or pantry staples are much appreciated (olive oil, rice, beans, lentils, GF flour, etc...)



*Laura and Jacob pack fresh basil for the CSA (Photo: Kai)*

## **Full Table Farm Dinner**

### *Land Stewardship Circle*

Thursday, August 21, 5pm onward (we eat at 6:30pm)

[Contact Lucas](#), 301-767-6720, if you plan to come. Every third Thursday of the month, you're invited to a simple farm-to-fork meal made by your Farm Team, with whatever veggies are in season. Feel free to come as early as 5:00 to walk the garden or trails and see what's happening on the farm and work up an appetite for the 6:30 meal.

## **Sociocracy Learning Circle**

### *Governance & Communications Circle*

Sunday, August 24, morning or afternoon depending on interest, Zoom or in-person

[Contact Becky](#) with your interest and availability. We want to check in on where you each are



Special announcement: we received a TON of rain!! In both the tropical storm event and thunderstorms on subsequent days, **monthly rainfall for July easily surpassed 14 inches (and we're still on day 23 as this is written)**. The bridge to the lower 40 got ruined again. Water flooded the barn (though we count our blessings that our damage was minuscule compared to what happened elsewhere in the region). We still danced in the rain.

## The Farm

As July ends, our intern, Kiki Alston, completes her summer internship with Full Table. We're grateful that Kiki brought her enthusiasm for farming, attention to detail, food-growing experience, and willingness to jump into any task. It's been a a delight to see Kiki learn new farming skills, tools, and business practices that she can carry forward on her path of agricultural studies and local farming here in the Triangle.

In a culture that idealizes individualism, most folks feel shy about asking for help. But here at the farm we know that mutual aid and pitching in together is how good work gets done and community becomes...community. So, we're not going to be bashful about asking for what we need. If you'd like to contribute items and/or your presence, [contact Kai](#) and she'll put you in touch with the right people and/or info.

**Here is our wish list:**

◆ **Help Goni to build our new green house and high tunnel:** This will be a rewarding communal construction project that will result in new smart structures that expand our capacity to grow delicious food year-round with greater ease.

with understanding the CGEV governance system. Becky is offering to start a Learning Circle for CGEV folks to practice Sociocracy values and skills. Please let her know if you can join a group with her. She'd like to have folks come to Arcadia Cohousing in Carrboro, if possible.



*Thanks to the beavers and Chantal, gotta find another way to cross the wetland (Photo: Hope)*

## Community on the Ground

*Governance & Communications Circle*

**Saturday, August 30, 3-5pm, Zoom and in-person at the Nest in Mebane.**

RSVP to [Becky](#), subject "COG."

These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved.



*Lucas marvels at a tomato that could feed a village (Photo: Kai)*

### ◆ Join our Gifted Garden Hands team:

Whether you have a strong back and want a great workout, or like to sit in the shade carefully planting seeds into flats, we have tasks for just about every body and any schedule.

**This is for YOU if:** **A)** you love getting your feet on the ground and hands in the earth and being part of something that matters; **B)** you're curious to learn about tending the earth and growing delicious food; **C)** you can commit to a consistent schedule of your choosing (a couple of hours or more weekly, bi-weekly, etc).

◆ **Donate buckets:** We have oodles of uses for buckets and eventually wear them out (especially the handles), so if you have any sitting around that you aren't using...do bring them on down. We can use sturdy 5-gallon buckets with comfortable handles (bonus if they have a lid!), empty Tidy Cat kitty litter buckets with strong handles (lid preferred but not necessary), and berry-picking buckets.

**Thanks for helping to grow community and cultivate goodness by contributing to the Farm!**

### Membership

July brought some beautiful opportunities to connect and deepen our sense of community at Common Ground. The Membership Committee has been focused on both welcoming new energy and nurturing long-time bonds.

We hosted a thoughtful **Listening Session** exploring the theme of Belonging: feelings/concerns/ideas as the residential community becomes a reality. The conversation was rich, and we're looking forward to more sessions like this that foster sharing and listening.

Our **New Member Coffee** gathering was another highlight—casual, cozy, and full of great

### Community Potluck

#### *Membership Circle*

**Saturday, August 30, 5:30-7:30 p.m., following Community on the Ground**

The potluck is held on the land by the Grandmother Oak Tree. In inclement weather, it is often held at the Nest next door. RSVP is helpful but not required. Contact Lisa at [Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com) or 919 619 2979.

Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, sometimes chew over the Community on the Ground meeting content. Please bring something to share. Vegetable dishes typically predominate, but all sorts of food are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients or jot them down when you come. Make it a habit to come to these events!



*Tropical Storm Chantal caused the pond to swell up over the bank, washing up this little fish in the process (Photo: Kai)*



conversation. New folks got to, ask questions, and start weaving themselves into the fabric bond with each other as well as seasoned members of the community. We're grateful to Caribou Coffee in Chapel Hill for providing a quiet meeting room. As always, we've been staying in touch with new members and refining our orientation materials to help folks land gently and confidently as they join.

**The JOIN form** has been updated and will be connected to a member portal (database). All of this is being tested now and will be available soon. In the last quarter, the monthly number of new visiting members ranged from 3-8.

**We are looking for people who are strongly interested in one of these key topics: vaccination, guns, pets and spirituality.** We envision small teams listening to thoughts from the membership and then forming a policy proposal. Please contact Lisa or Amy H. to volunteer for this short term project. If you have ideas for future events or ways we can support new and longtime members alike, we'd love to hear them!



*Overview of the Far Field (Photo: Robby)*

## **New Member Coffee Meet-up**

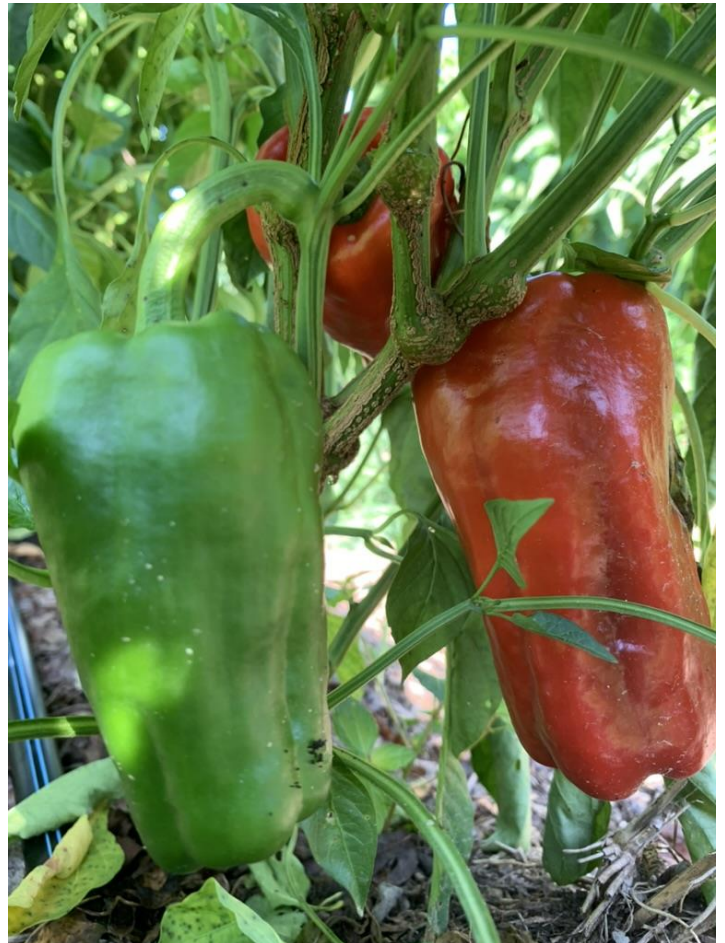
Membership Circle

The next one will be in September with date/time/location TBA.

**For more information or to sign up,** contact Lisa:

[Lberley@yahoo.com](mailto:Lberley@yahoo.com), 919 619 2979

This is a great opportunity for those who are curious about CGEV and want to make connections with other members.



*Ooo, Doug's famous peppers are ripening now (Photo: Kai)*





*Are you my lily pad? (Photo: Kai)*