

# EEN REGENERATE

A Monthly Faith & Agriculture Newsletter

## WELCOME TO THE JANUARY 2024 ISSUE OF REGENERATE!

January's issue features information on Summit 24: Resilience, an article on the USDA's Summer Nutrition Program, a note on the delay of the U.S. Farm Bill, info on EEN's next Faith & Ag Webinar, and some warm winter soup recipes.



### Join us for Summit 24: Resilience!

EEN's virtual summit returns this winter for its fourth year! **Join us on February 1 from 12 – 2pm EST** for Summit 2024: Resilience, an opportunity for our community to gather online to hear from incredible guest speakers, share encouraging creation care stories, learn about new ways to defend God's creation, and look ahead to another year of engagement and advocacy.

[Register for Summit: 24 Resilience](#)

## Heaven on Earth - Meet Farmer and Conservation Leader Ray Gaesser at Summit 24

"Heaven on Earth" is how Iowa farmer Ray Gaesser describes the privilege and responsibility of caring for his farmland to serve both God and his community. Ray will be featured at one of the Summit 24 breakout sessions. Virtually visit Ray's farm now to learn how he cares for God's gift of land and community.



# Watch the Video

## Bless Children like Jesus



The Gospels invite us to observe Jesus’s interaction with children. In the Gospel of Mark we read, “‘I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.’ Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.” Mk. 10:15-16 (NLT) Furthermore, Jesus offers tough teaching as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was

hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’” Matt. 25:34-40 (NLT)

Our children, regardless of where they live or their circumstances, are the least among us. One way that we can bless children like Jesus is to offer healthy food during the school summer break. Please take a moment to read the letter below from EEN’s friends at the USDA’s Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Learn how you can bless children like Jesus by taking action to ensure there will be plentiful and healthy food available in your communities and neighborhoods this summer.

### **Letter from the director of the USDA’s Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Samantha Joseph, to Faith-based Leaders:**

A healthier future for our country begins with our children. Children need consistent access to nutritious foods to be healthy now and throughout their lives. USDA’s food and nutrition assistance programs such as WIC, SNAP, school meals, and summer meals build on and complement each other to meet nutritional needs from birth throughout childhood and beyond. More than 30 million children participate in school meal programs during the school year. However, when schools are closed, children lose access to these healthy meals and are at higher risk of food and nutrition insecurity. As a result, for many children, summer is the hungriest time of the year. While we and our state and local partners—often with strong support from faith-based organizations—have worked to leverage our summer feeding program to tackle summer hunger, traditional in-person summer meal sites historically only reach 1 in 6 children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the school year.

Fortunately, as a result of new bi-partisan legislation, we have two new powerful tools to ensure every child gets the nourishment they need when school is out of session, including a permanent option that began this past summer to provide non-congregate summer meals to children in certain rural areas such as “grab and go” meals or meal delivery and a permanent, nationwide program called Summer EBT that, starting Summer 2024, will allow states to provide low-income households with eligible children food dollars that can be spent at grocery stores.

Under this new program design, eligible children can combine Summer EBT benefits with either congregate or non-congregate meals. Our vision is that all states, Tribes, and territories will leverage the three tools we have—traditional congregate summer meals, non-congregate meals in certain rural communities, and Summer EBT—to ensure all children have the nutrition they need in the summer months.

Simply put, Summer EBT is an incredible opportunity to end childhood hunger during the summer. Under the Summer EBT option, families will receive \$40 worth of food benefits per summer month on a pre-loaded EBT card for each eligible child. That amounts to a potential estimated \$3.5 billion going into the pockets of low-income families with children. To ensure we maximize this historic opportunity, faith and community leaders can:

- Convene state and local faith-based leaders for critical discussions on how Summer EBT will advance in your community and how faith-based leaders can help ensure a successful rollout, for example, by supporting outreach.
- Encourage your congregations and communities to engage with Governors on the incredible opportunity that Summer EBT represents to respond to summer hunger. Governors can use their platforms, such as their State of the State addresses, their budget proposals, and convening power to underscore their strong support for the new summer feeding options.
- Commit to supporting future outreach and marketing campaigns for the expanded summer meals programs.

**To learn more about our new, expanded summer nutrition programs, visit [fns.usda.gov/summer](https://fns.usda.gov/summer) .**

## Delayed Reauthorization of the 2023 Farm Bill is Hurting Farmers & Ranchers

Recently, a third generation Nebraska farmer told an EEN staff member that the delay in the reauthorization of the Federal Farm Bill is hurting their business. She expressed frustration that she and her family are unable to make wise long-term business and management decisions until they have access to the final reauthorized version of the new Farm Bill. The comments of American Farm Bureau Federation President, Zippy Duvall concur with the Nebraska farmer's concerns.

“It’s critical that Congress pass a bipartisan Farm Bill early this year. We can’t afford any further delays in getting an updated Farm Bill that would address modern challenges facing our farmers and ranchers across America. The Farm Bill matters well beyond the farm. It addresses food security, sustainability to nutrition programs, and all of these programs benefit the nation as a whole.”

– American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall by [RFD TV](#)

While the Federal Farm Bill portfolio includes many essential programs for the common good, every US citizen and their family members who eat, wear clothes, and put fuel in their vehicles are impacted by the support that the Farm Bill provides to the nation's farmers and ranchers. Please reach out during the next few days to your state's Congressional delegation to strongly encourage the timely reauthorization of the Federal Farm Bill to support our country's farmers.

**[Take Action on the Farm Bill](#)**

## Join us for EEN's February Faith & Agriculture Webinar

The next faith & agriculture webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, February 29, at 7 p.m. (CT)/ 8pm (ET)**. It will be a showing of the documentary *From the Heartland*. The 35-minute film features Minnesota farmers Shawn and Becky Feikema.

Located in the southwest corner of southwest Minnesota, Shawn and Becky, co-owners of Feikema Farms, are living out God's call to care for their farm land by practicing no-till, minimum till, cover crop management, and diverse crop rotations on 7,000 acres of prime Minnesota farmland. Highlighted in the documentary, *From the Heartland*, the Feikema family is guided by the understanding that God's creation is "very good," and that they have a sacred duty to steward creation with their best efforts. The Feikemas represent thousands of Christian farmers, ranchers, and foresters who can benefit from a fully-funded, conservation-forward Federal Farm Bill to support the implementation of best practices for enhancing soil health, sequestering carbon, maintaining clean water, and feeding a hungry world.

Following the film showing, the Feikemas and the documentary producer, Matthew Coddair will be available to answer questions from the audience.

[Register Here](#)

## Come to the Table - Soup Recipes



This month's Come to the Table features "From the Garden" Soup recipes from guest contributor Amber Lounsbery.

Amber Lounsbery loves to spend time in the kitchen and considers herself a "foodie." She learned her cooking skills from her Norwegian grandmother and adventurous mother. Amber has a degree in Home Economics from South Dakota State University and is an expert in food preservation. She has taught many canning and cooking classes as well as judged numerous county fairs. Amber resides on a farm in Southeastern South Dakota with her husband Jeff and the many critters they feed.

One of the things I "enjoy" about the weather getting colder is the aspect of comfort food...like soup! If you can imagine it, you can make it, and that is especially true with your garden goodies. These 2 notable soups will be sure

to warm you up and make you feel like you are eating a hearty meal when in fact it's really on the skinny... mostly.

Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavor and texture to your food without adding additional salt. You can also swap in or out heavy cream for a lighter half & half, cow's milk, or coconut milk (which is great for lactose intolerance or special diets).

## Curried Butternut Squash Soup

A butternut squash soup loaded with immune boosting spices. It's the perfect way to warm up in the winter months.

1 medium head of garlic, halved crosswise	1 tsp - 1 tbsp curry powder,
1 butternut squash (about 3 pounds), halved lengthwise and seeded	to taste
1 medium onion, quartered	1 pinch cayenne pepper
1 shallot, halved	1 tsp turmeric (optional)
1 (1 ½ inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled	Salt & Pepper to taste
4 cups chicken broth, divided (Can also use water)	
1 cup to 1 can of coconut milk, depending on consistency and taste preference	

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Wrap each garlic half in foil and place on the prepared baking sheet. Add squash, cut side down. Place onion, shallot and ginger on the baking sheet as well. Roast in the preheated oven until the vegetables are golden and the squash skin is easily pierced with a fork...this will take roughly 45 minutes to 1 hour. Squeeze out the roasted garlic cloves and scoop out the flesh. Place the roasted vegetables and garlic into a food processor or blender. Add 2 cups broth or water and puree (in batches if necessary) until smooth. Transfer to a Dutch oven or large pot. Over medium heat, add remaining broth or water. Whisk in curry powder, cayenne and turmeric (if using). Add coconut milk and cook until heated through, about 15 minutes. Season with salt & pepper.

## Potato and Leek Soup

A classic potato leek soup made lighter by swapping out heavy cream for ½ and ½. This can be made vegetarian by using vegetable broth and omitting the bacon.

2 Tbsp olive or grapeseed oil	1 tsp Italian seasoning
2 Tbsp butter	¼ tsp dried thyme and/or rosemary
4 leeks, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced	½ cup fat free half & half
4 cloves of garlic, minced	Salt & Pepper to taste
3 medium russet or Yukon gold potatoes, scrubbed and diced	4 slices cooked bacon, crumbled (optional)
3 to 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth, add more or less based on consistency desired	

Slice leeks lengthwise to clean then slice thinly. Heat oil and butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add leeks and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add potatoes, broth and spices. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let soup cool briefly. Transfer mixture to a blender or food processor (or use an immersion blender) to puree in batches if needed. Return to the pot and stir in half-and-half and season with salt and pepper. Reheat gently, about 5 minutes. Garnish with green onions, cheese or bacon as desired.

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