

The delicious taste of rural ministry

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The

farm-to-fork movement is uber-hip. But this post is about something even more local: tasty backyard garden-grown food in season. It's one of the perks of rural ministry.

My

partner and I are shareholders in an organic farm that operates under the community-supported agriculture model. We love our weekly box teeming with vegetables grown by people we know at a farm we can visit-and help weed.

What's

even better is the apple crumble delivered to my study desk recently, still hot, and filling the whole church with the smell of baked-apple goodness. The apples were from a church member's tree—I can see his house from the window of the manse.

There's

scrumptious plum jelly, also made with produce from a member's tree, and on many summer Sundays I return to my office after worship and find a bag full of tomatoes or apples picked that morning. They have discolored spots and are oddly shaped, but they taste as sweet as the land on which they were grown.

Then

there's the retired farmer who pickles beets and makes his own sauerkraut—and shares with the pastor.

Sure,

your downtown church may have a Starbucks nearby, but I have ten gardens within walking distance, and they don't take cash, credit or debit. It tastes good to be a rural pastor.