



We must have driven past the white-steeped church on Hwy. K in Stone Bank a half dozen times before we stopped, curious to know more about the picturesque little scene that included the church, an old barn, a greenhouse and a good bit of farmland. There wasn't clear signage at the time, but it didn't seem like the well-tended structure was being used for a church anymore. Having recently moved to S.E. Wisconsin from Utah, my husband and I spent our weekends exploring the area and decided to check out this place. I pulled open the heavy wooden door at the top of the church stairs and my husband and I entered. While most certainly the beauty and simplicity of the century-old church still remains, the church pews and pulpit have been replaced with a vibrant display of home-grown produce, tall glass coolers of meats, cheeses, and shelves of local products like applesauce, dilly beans and strawberry jam.

When I returned a week later, Kim, the farm manager, was working in the market. Kim is as friendly and welcoming as a person could be. After loading up my market basket with fresh greens, carrots, yams, local eggs and cheeses, something compelled me to ask Kim if she would ever need any help in the greenhouse --- I'm not sure why ---- because I don't garden. I've never had much interest in it. Cut to less than one year later, I've been happily helping out when I can with planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. I'm still no gardener. I just do what I'm told. The thrill of it for me comes not in watching things grow by my own hand, but in knowing that I've had a small part in helping to bring wholesome, healthy, local food to a community that sees the value in it, as Wisconsinites have done for generations.

I wish every community had a little gem of a place like this one, and maybe they will one day, as people seem to be realizing the benefit of real food and knowing where it comes from. In the meantime, I will be offering a blog based on my experiences with Stone Bank Farm and with the good folks who make it happen.



*Jen Groves is a teaching naturalist with a love for the outdoors and an interest in spreading the word about one of her favorite places in SE Wisconsin.*