

Connections

June 2020

Building a community where all are enriched through Christian Love, Service, and Spiritual Renewal.

Pastor's Message

I'd like to share a portion of a speech written by Martin Luther King, Jr. the day before he was assassinated.

"The nation is sick; trouble is in the land, confusion all around...But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century. Something is happening in our world."

While Dr. King was referencing something different than a coronavirus, he is describing a dis-ease among the people. Now in 2020, we are experiencing that same emotion of unrest. My Easter Letter talked about a dark cloud lurking overhead. I know many of us have been impacted by this pandemic: sickness, death, loss of job, relationships strained, the feeling of isolation – it is a dark period. And again, we have racial unrest in our troubled land. Yet, through God's love we have the light of Jesus. Jesus is the light and we continue to walk towards that light to the Hope that only God can provide.

While our building has not been opened, our Church has never been more active. We immediately launched into a virtual world holding worship services, devotions, classes, Bible Studies, Church School – we are offering something every day for different people in our congregation. We even have interactive game nights!

Our caring team called our members to check on them, and later our Council of Trustees set up a calling chain to reach out to all members of our church. Food is delivered to the emergency food pantry every two weeks and the donations have become a community project. We are even getting an article in the GC News almost weekly reflecting on the many events and programs we have going on. We truly are blessed to be following our Mission Statement:

Faithfully Reaching Out, Inclusively Drawing In.

The Season of Easter ends May 30th and we enter into the Christian Calendar known as Ordinary Times. There is nothing ordinary about these times, yet we are all settling into this new normal. Please read this newsletter in its entirety. You will see how each of the officers and members of our Council of Trustees have been hard at work behind the scenes applying for grants, taking care of our building and personnel, ministering to each of you and most importantly, staying safe.

I am grateful for our leadership that has been diligent in staying in front of this pandemic and making sure we are able to minister in a safe, yet effective manner. This summer will look different in regard to how we worship and connect, but rest assured, we are still connecting and for that I am grateful. Stay safe and let us know how we can minister to you.

Blessings,

Lynn

Senior Pastor

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- Group Articles
- Zoom meetings
- Volunteer Services from Men's Breakfast Group
- Reader's Circle
- & Much More !

Worship Schedule

Sundays

10:30 AM
Livestream

Tuesdays

Intercessory
Prayer Service
9:30 AM
Conference Call

Wednesdays

8 PM
Zoom Meeting

GRATITUDE GROWS!

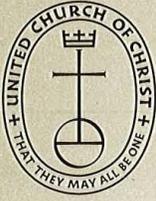
Gratitude Grows has been a way to thank and highlight members of our faith community who continue to take the extra step in helping our church and volunteering their time. This list touches the surface for what is happening behind the scenes the rest of Lent, Easter and planning for the Summer. We are a blessed church!

- Drew Hearon for his insightful leadership during this pandemic
- Council of Trustees for their unwavering commitment to our church
- Janet Martens and her Worship Committee for assisting in our transition to a virtual world
- Paula Tusiani-Eng for spearheading our Service Programs and church-wide calling
- The Caring Ministry Team for making the initial calls to our homebound members
- Paul Cohn for his work with personnel
- Robin Laisure and Rick Herbst for their roles in managing our building and finances
- Doug Yasso, Steve Short, Corey Laisure and Mark Sullivan for making sure our services are Live-streamed
- Kimberly Pauley for her dedication to the church garden
- Andrew Ellis for his creativity in setting up the Greetings from Home
- Melva Victorino for writing weekly articles for the Garden City News
- Christine Hanson for her wisdom with our Christian Education
- Tracey Lawson for her work with Next Step Ministries regarding the Mission Trip
- Cindy Campbell for her desire to keep people connected
- Liz Galzerano for her involvement in applying for our grants and loans
- Rob Sipkin for his dedication to our building while it is closed
- Chris Dieguez for stepping up and running a virtual Men's Retreat
- Margie Price for her endless hours assisting me through Holy Week and creating Fun Friday Night Events
- Mico Faella and the search committee's progress for our Associate Pastor
- George Bashian for his continued ministry in Pastoral Care and Hosting Reader's Circle
- Bob Stark, Jr., George Bashian and Chris Dieguez for the enhanced virtual Men's breakfast
- Frank Crosio and Jen Broustein for our Sunday Worship Services
- Jillian Yoo for her continued music ministry on Wednesdays.
- Brad and Ruby for their work with the Community Theatre.
- Andy Morreale for his gift in creating a different Easter Service.
- The angels who delivered the Easter Lilies
- Our parents for getting their children on Zoom Confirmation Classes, ABS, Middle and High School classes
- Paul Cohn, Chair; Janet Martens and Paula Tusiani-Eng for their commitment to the Sabbatical Committee
- Ed Yoo for continuing the Yoga classes via zoom
- Tuesday Prayer Service for their continuation during this time
- John Feyrer, Nancy Morreale, Marion Levins , Kathy Yoo for delivering food to the Emergency Food Pantry in Freeport
- Everyone who has been donating food for the Long Island Emergency Food Shelter in Freeport
- Gloria Malin and Kim Pryor for their assistance during this time of building closure
- John Hudson for his 20 years of wonderful service to the choir
- George Salem for his 30 plus years of service to our Investment Committee & Finance and Administration Committee
- Our Zoom ushers

Virtual Memorial Service

A Virtual Memorial Service was live-streamed on Saturday, May 30th at 2:00 PM. This Virtual Memorial Service was designed to provide comfort to those who have not yet had a service for their loved ones.

This live-stream service is on the website, for you to watch at your convenience, and as often as you find comfort in it. *web-site:* www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org We encourage you to have a candle nearby so that when the minister lights candles during the service you can light one to honor your family and friends.



The Garden City Community Church

United Church of Christ



May 27th, 2020

Hello fellow Church Members!

In my January letter and opening statement at the Congregation's Annual February Meeting, I stated that it was unlikely we would repeat such a successful year. At that point, I was merely emphasizing how well our Ministry, our Leadership, our Congregation, and all our Volunteers had executed on their respective Goals for the year. It was an unwitting prediction of what was to occur four short weeks later. Now we are approaching mid-year, and we are ten weeks into a terrible Pandemic and subsequent organizational and building shutdown. Because of all that has transpired, we will be hosting our first ever Zoom Town Hall Congregational Meeting at Noon on June 7th, following the LiveStream service that we have all come to enjoy.

While on the topic of LiveStream services, it is important to note that our Church now offers a litany of Virtual delivery offerings in addition to our now regular Sunday LiveStream worship Services and more interactive Wednesday Zoom Services. All Spring Confirmation Classes and Sunday school programs immediately transitioned to Virtual Delivery and were well attended, in some cases exceeding in-person attendance averages. Virtually delivered offerings currently include Intergenerational Events, a thriving weekly Men's Breakfast, and weekly Bible Study groups. All events are regularly updated on our new and improved secure Website, and through our regular Bi-weekly Wednesday and Friday email Blasts.

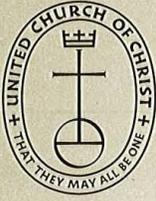
Your leadership team has responded and performed exceptionally and I need to extend my heartfelt THANK YOU to all the Leaders who rose to this challenge, dedicating countless (often times frustrating) hours of discussions, deliberations and decisions throughout this crisis. Every leader deserves our gratitude for their caring, commitment, and devotion to our Church organization, all the while managing their own new personal situations at Work, at Home or at School.

It is because of this dedication throughout this unexpectedly tumultuous time, that the Garden City Community Church has maintained a very healthy financial position. This has enabled us to continue to pay 100% of our staff, most of whom have been under the State of New York's 'Stay-at-Home' directive, and to also fulfill our financial obligations as initially planned. Additionally, we are in a position to advance funds early to several Charitable Organizations that we support rather than the typical monetary gifting later in the year. We will be addressing financial specifics and questions at the Town Hall Zoom meeting.

We also expect there will be dramatic adjustments required on all of our traditional Programming throughout the rest of this year, so the Council of Trustees will update the congregation of anticipated Programming and Worship adjustments and cancellations at this Mid-Year Congregational Zoom Town Hall.

Best Regards,

Drew Hearon
Chairman, Council of Trustees



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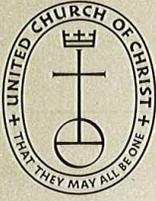
Town Hall is scheduled for: June 7th at Noon

Agenda

- 1) **Intro:** Drew Hearon COT Chair
- 2) **Greeting and Opening Comments:** Rev Lynn Sullivan
- 3) **Worship Schedule:** Janet Martens, COT, Ministry
- 4) **F&A Update:** Robin Laisure, COT, F&A
- 5) **Summer Programming:** Ms. Margie Price
- 6) **Service Update:** Paula Tusiani-Eng, COT, Service Ministry
- 7) **Search Committee:** Mico Faella, Full Time Pastor Search Committee Chairperson
- 8) **Pastor Sabbatical Update:** Paul Cohn, COT Personnel
- 9) **Chapel Remodel/Refresh Update:** Drew Hearon, COT Chair
- 10) **Q&A**
- 11) **Closing Comments, Reflection and Prayer :** Rev Lynn Sullivan

To follow are some anticipated updates to be discussed on the Zoom Town Hall covering our Church organizations Programming and Initiatives through the balance of the year. As stated last month, the Garden City Community Church will strictly follow CDC and State of New York guidance on opening up our Building and Programming, which has a direct and indirect impact on many of our traditional plans.

- I. Ministry Activities:
 - o Pastoral Care – As per Ministry on going Guidance
 - o Baptisms/Weddings/Funerals – As per Ministry on going guidance
- II. Worship Services:
 - o Sunday Services - Livestream until Further Notice
 - o Wednesday Services - Livestream/Zoom until Further Notice
- III. Community Service Programs:
 - o Sandwich Sundays – Alternative ways of donating
 - o Mission Trip 2021 Planning
- IV. Family Programs and Christian Education to Follow Public School Guidance:
 - o Sunday School - Virtual
 - o Confirmation Classes – Virtual
- V. Fellowship Programs
 - o Fellowship Hour - Postponed
 - o The Fair – Cancelled
 - o Chrysanthemum Bridge - Cancelled



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Garden City Community Church

Key Time Line of Events:

March 9th: Council of Trustees meeting: Evolving Crisis discussed at length, and a 4-Category Decision matrix was implemented regarding Building Closure and Organizational Response:

March 11th: Council of Trustees assigns status to Level 1

March 13th: In conjunction with neighboring nursery schools, Garden City Nursery School announces immediate indefinite Nursery School Closure.

March 14th: Council of Trustees Moves to Level 3, in response to Local Community Closures and the Garden City School District Schools closure announcement

March 16th: Garden City Community Church office Coordinates a 2 day Deep Cleaning of Building

March 18th: Council of Trustees Conference Call #1. Confirmation of continuing Building Closure procedures discussed. Conference Calls are joined by Ministry, Church Office, and all 2020 elected Church Leaders.

March 23rd: Council of Trustees Conference Call #2 discussing ongoing crisis and projected length of Closures through at least April. We will continue these weekly COT Conference Calls until we have firmer visibility on a timeline to building reopening and full programming recommencing.

March 30th: Council of Trustees Conference Call, On Going Situation Monitoring

April 2nd: Council of Trustees Conference Call, On Going Situation Monitoring and Planning

April 6th: Council of Trustees Conference Call: SBA 'PPP' Loan Application Approval Building to remain closed to June 1.

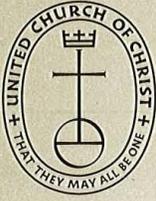
April 10th: Council of Trustees Conference Call: Addressing emerging Virtual Security concerns

April 13th: Council of Trustees Conference Call, On Going Situation Monitoring

April 20th: Council of Trustees Conference Call, On Going Situation Monitoring

April 27th: Council of Trustees Conference Call - Preparing conversion to Building Closure to 3 Phase Re-Opening Plan

May 13th: Council of Trustees Conference Call - Finalizing Building and Organization 3-Phase Re-Opening Plan with expectation to commence Re Opening Phase 1 once Nassau County officially opens.



The Garden City Community Church

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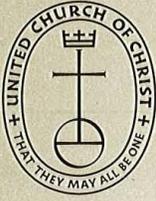
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5/20/20 UPDATE

RE-OPEN PLAN Detailed framework following the Center for Disease control (CDC) Guidelines. Additionally, the following applies to all Organizational, Business office and Business related activities. Effective at the end of our Level 4 building Closure status, which retires on May 31, 2020, we will move to the following Phases and begin with Phase 1 on June 1, 2020.

- **PHASE 1: Initiates June 1, 2020:**
 - Building remains Closed to Congregational Members and general Public
 - 10 Maximum person restriction with strict adherence to Social Distancing Guidelines
 - Worship Services to continue as LiveStream and Zoom Services only*
 - Renters within the Building, operating so named 'Essential' or 'Permissible' by the State of New York, permitted access with updated Policy Compliance requirements and attestation of their Business essentiality and their Safety Compliance. No General Public permitted
 - Office Staff restricted to Mandatory Personnel only, preparing for a rotating Phase-in of Employees on an as-required basis and practicing strictest Social Distancing Guidelines
 - Schools and Camps Remain Closed**
- **PHASE 2: Initiates when Nassau County enters Phase 4 of the State of NY "NY Forward" Re-Open Plan**
 - Building to be open to Congregational members only, not to General Public.
 - 10 Maximum person restriction with strict adherence to Social Distancing guidelines.
 - Building Common Areas remain closed.
 - Worship Services to continue to LiveStream and Zoom Services, and limited in person allowances*
 - All Building renters permitted to reopen provided continued strict adherence to policy.
 - All Office Staff Permitted to work within building under strict adherence to Social Distancing guidelines.
 - Schools and Youth Programming permitted to Open.**
- **PHASE 3: Initiates after 4 weeks of Nassau County entering Phase 4, and continuing on-schedule for full reopening, also requiring a Council of Trustees Confirming Vote to full re-opening per below.**
 - Full resumption of Programming and Building use.
 - 50 Maximum person restriction on gatherings until CDC, or Health Dept. advises otherwise.
 - Worship Services as per updated GCCC Ministry recommendations and guidance
 - Permanent policy instituted for instances of confirmed Communicable Infectious Disease within the Building at 245 Stewart Ave.



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** Regarding Worship Services: Garden City Community Church Ministry led by Rev Lynn Sullivan, will provide on-going Guidance as to the Schedule, Framework, and permissibility while respecting CDC, the State of New York, and the UCC-NY Guidance regarding Worship Services and In-Person Gathering limitations.*

*** Regarding School: For both Church School and the Garden City Community Church Nursery School, it's our intention to follow The Garden City Union Free School District (GCFUSD) guidance based upon State and County determination and we expect this guidance will be further determined and clarified, resulting in adaption to above Phases.*

The Garden City Community Church reopen plan is derived directly recognizing CDC and State of New York Guidance, to the best of our ability and will be changed/adjusted as needed and as is communicated by aforementioned agencies. Additionally, the UCC New York Conference has issued guidance that we will also recognize as our policies evolve. The Garden City Community Church will strive to adhere both safely and conservatively within these guidelines.

Additionally, the CDC notes the following definition as High Risk Population to illness and that High-Risk Population refrain from in-person activity and take extra precaution if circumstances require otherwise:

Resource Appendix:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

<https://forward.ny.gov/>

<http://uccny.org/covid-19/>

ON-LINE GIVING UPDATE

Garden City Community Church has recently partnered with Breeze Church Management Systems to support our *On-line Giving Initiative*. If you would like to set up “Recurring Contributions” or make a “Onetime Contribution” to support our many Ministries, please click on the link below. Our new online giving platform allows us to align our congregational giving with our member data base, resulting in greater efficiency and clarity for Church Members.

<https://gcc.breezechms.com/login/create>

Giving can also be accessed through GCCC website via the “GIVE” button

<https://gardencitycommunitychurch.org>

We appreciate your support in our efforts. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Liz or Kim in the office (516)746-1700.

COMMUNION SCHEDULED FIRST OF THE MONTH

The Worship Committee had decided to include Communion the first of the month June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6 at the 10:30 am Live-Stream Service. Make sure you have your bread and cup Ready before the service. If you come from a tradition that wants the elements blessed in advance, please contact the office, and we will have the sanitized separate, disposal cups and wafers ready for you outside the Whitehall Porch either Wednesday or Friday the week before. We will only put them out if you contact the office.



Please remember our friends at
the INN & LI Cares

<https://the-inn.org/>

<https://www.licares.org/>



INN BIN REQUEST

Please hold off on dropping clothes off at the church until further notice as the INN is not accepting clothing donations in the usual capacity at this time.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Worship Committee has decided to continue the Live-Stream Service at 10:30 am throughout the summer.

TUESDAY PRAYER SERVICE CONTINUES

We continue to hold the Prayer Services via Conference call each Tuesday morning at 9:30 am. Please email the church office, George Bashian or Rev. Lynn Sullivan if you have a prayer request. All requests are kept confidential.

Community Theatre Refund Policy

It has certainly been a different and difficult last few months. Back in early March the GCCT was fine tuning our performances, polishing our songs and dances, finishing the set design and putting together the Playbill while selling tickets for what would have been a terrific show.

Sadly, we were forced to cancel the show due to the Coronavirus and any date for rescheduling is very unclear at the moment. Therefore, we have established the following refund policy for tickets purchased or ads submitted:

Hopefully sometime in the fall (virus permitting), we will be at the Church at a few scheduled times to refund tickets. Bring back your tickets and we will refund the proper amount. The same policy will be in effect for monies paid for playbill ads or patrons.

If, however, you would care to donate any monies paid to the Church to offset expenses incurred for this year's production, please contact us at rubygustavson@gmail.com to let us know and we will gratefully deposit your donation.

Thank you and remember - the show will go on - eventually. Have a safe summer.

Ministry Committee—Liturgists

Greetings from the Garden City Community Church Ministry Committee. As we are slowing and methodically increasing the number of people allowed in the sanctuary on Sundays, we are opening up the role of Liturgist again that will include reading prayers, scripture and if comfortable, writing the pastoral prayer.

The role of a liturgist is a little different via live-stream, as you are projecting into the camera. There will be a sound check before the service, to make sure you are heard. We also are mindful of social distancing, meaning the liturgist sits in the pew and comes up to the lectern for their parts.

We are grateful for anyone who is willing to participate in this ministry, and hope you are mindful of the CDC and state guidelines about being symptomatic, wearing masks entering/leaving the building, staying away if anyone in your family is exposed or at risk.

The others in the sanctuary: clergy, organist, soloist and camera crew have been following these guidelines with much success. Start watching the service more critically and you will see the minor changes we have made to keep everyone safe.

If you are interested in serving as a liturgist in the next few months, please reach out Janet Martens at janetmartens@optonline.net or the church office at churchoffice@thegccc.org.

Faithfully, The Ministry Team

Summer 2020 From the Minister of Music

To say that 2020 is not the year any of us expected it to be is an understatement! As the world comes to grips with a global pandemic, all of our lives have changed. Certainly the experience of how we pray and come together for worship has taken on very different forms, but the substance of what we do when we gather for worship, and the Faith that gathers us together remain the same.

Let me share with you all bit about what it feels like to create the live-stream service each Sunday morning. Actually, I'm sure it feels different to each participant, so I can only speak about what it feels like to me.

Everyone arrives at least an hour before the live-stream is scheduled to begin to brush up on their own parts, and to coordinate with others so the transitions during the service are as seamless as possible. Everyone is very conscious about social distancing and keeping things safe for one another.

Most of my experience as a musician has been performing music for a live congregation or audience, and making recordings. The experience of live-streaming is different from both of those things. You don't have the excitement and the exchange of energy that happens when a live congregation is present to listen, or sing with you, and you don't have the ability to go back and do a retake of something the way you would in a recording studio. So it's been a learning curve for me to figure out how best to approach it. This is what I've learned so far: I look at the empty sanctuary and try to imagine each of you sitting in your usual places, and although I can't see you or hear you, I know that you are sitting at your computers, and I try to feel the connection between us. This has been especially helpful when I'm reading scripture. I haven't had an opportunity to read scripture publicly in a very long time, and while I'm enjoying it, I can't wait to welcome back our regular crew of wonderful Liturgists. Needless to say, I also miss working with the Adult, Carol, and Handbell choirs, and all of the wonderful anthems we would have prepared for you during these past three months.

I'm grateful to Lynn for her help and guidance during this time of challenge and change, to the Council of Trustees, for their unwavering support, and to the live-stream camera and technical crew that makes it possible for us to stay connected.

I can't conclude this article without introducing our wonderful new soprano section leader, Jennifer Brounstein. Jen recently graduated with an MM in vocal performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her undergraduate work was at SUNY Fredonia. In addition to her work as a soloist in many churches, she has sung in both Opera and Musical Theatre, and teaches voice and piano lessons privately. Jen is a resident of Hauppauge, NY. She joined the church music staff at the beginning of March and was only able to sing with the Adult Choir for 2 weeks before the shut-down, and then courageously agreed to be part of our weekly live-stream ministry team. If you are enjoying listening to her voice through your computer speakers, trust me when I tell you that it sounds even better in person. I know you will want to join me in extending a wonderful GCCC welcome to her when we can all be together again.

Submitted by Frank Crosio

Greetings from Home

Our Church has done an amazing job transitioning and adjusting to this new virtual environment. As someone who regularly joined Livestream services prior to COVID-19, it is amazing to see the participant count jump from 10 to 100 and an active chat room each Sunday. However, we still long for personal interaction with our Congregation, something that we did freely each week in pre-COVID times during the 'Passing of the Peace of Christ' and Fellowship Hour. In an effort to 'virtualize' these connections, we decided to create the 'Greetings from Home' video segment, a compilation of video greetings, that is played after the postlude.

Thanks to the videography of Steve Short, Cindy Campbell and Mark Sullivan. In addition to submissions directly from our members, we have collected 39 videos since April 19. We've also included montages of local photographs from our members set to music. These videos include familiar faces offering words of encouragement, keeping us connected while we are distanced. Past week 'Greetings' replays are linked to from the Church website alongside the full Sunday Service Livestream replays and are also included in the GCCC Friday Update email.

We would like to continue this new tradition for as long as our Sunday Services are virtual, but this depends on your submissions. If you haven't created a message yet, please do. If you have already, we would love to hear from you again. To participate, please: 1) arrange for a videographer to come to your home (at a safe distance) by emailing the church at churchoffice@thegccc.org; or 2) create a video directly from your phone or tablet at <http://tiny.cc/GCCCgreetings/> If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to Andrew Ellis directly at aellis06@gmail.com.

Submitted by Andrew Ellis

SANDWICH SUNDAY OUTREACH

Hi GC Community Church family,

We hope that you are all doing well during this unprecedented time. Among the many things that we have been missing about being together, the fellowship and service of Sandwich Sundays is certainly one of them.

We are pleased to share that we have an opportunity to still help the Mary Brennan INN during this time.

The INN has been working with Adelphi Deli and the Garden City Gourmet to provide sliced Hero sandwiches in lunch bags to guests each day. As you can imagine during this time, the number of INN volunteers has decreased, yet the number of guests and their families needing a meal has increased.

We would love to be able to help in the spirit of our Sandwich Sunday outreach.

Every \$5 we collect pays for a guest's bagged lunch. Please consider donating as many bagged lunches as you are comfortable. You may make the donation directly through our GCCC link here.

https://gccc.breezechms.com/give/online?fund_id=490096

Donations will be collected until June 15th. At that point our church will make a donation to the INN which we hope will continue to support the meals that they are providing at this time.

We look forward to resuming the fellowship of our traditional Sandwich Sundays when we are all able to be together again.

Warm regards,

Jen Gisolfi, Tina Palmer, Paula Tusiani-Eng and Liz McQuaid.

ZOOM MEETINGS

Since mid-March, we have been holding different Zoom meetings at Noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Monday Morning Chat: this meeting begins with a check-in and a check-up using the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley's words, "How is it with your Soul?" After everyone has an opportunity to share, we discuss the service from the day before. Sometimes it focuses on the scripture reading, sometimes a word from the sermon catches our attention, sometimes the Children's Message is discussed and of course people respond to the music. Feel free to join us.

Wednesday with Women: On Wednesday, we have been following the book, Wisdom's Daughters: Stories of Women around Jesus by Elizabeth G, Watson since we started the study during the season of Lent. The author writes in the first person of the women who knew Jesus and tells *behind the scene stories* of life at that time. Among the women studied include: Joanna, The Syrophenician Woman, The Bent-over Woman, Martha, Mary, the wife of Clopas. It has been enlightening.

Faithful Fridays: Fridays started out as a Family time, and evolved into a time of meditation. For three weeks we used a meditation series provided by Lynn's colleague, Rev. Bonnie McDougal Olsen (she presented at a Women's Retreat). Now we are following a reading of the book of Mark by the actor, David Suchet (Frank shared this liturgical reading with us). We were told to listen to these stories come alive as the author of Mark most likely got his information from Peter. We have all enjoyed listening, commenting and learning.

TUESDAY TIME at 9:00 pm WITH THE 25-30 GROUP (*more or less*)

For the first nine weeks, Rev. Lynn lead the group studying the Fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is a biblical term that sums up nine attributes of a person or community living in accord with the Holy Spirit, according to chapter 5 of the Epistle to the Galatians: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. ...

Now, different people in the group are leading each week. If you are of this age, please join this group. It has been a joy to be part of it.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT WORSHIP VIA ZOOM 8:00 PM

Our Wednesday Worship continues via zoom. We have been getting a great turnout, including our members who have moved out of state. While the messages and songs are inspirational and beautiful, it is wonderful to *hang out* at the end for a time of greeting. If you haven't joined us, it is every Wednesday at 8:00 pm. the zoom information is on our weekly eblast. If you need assistance, contact churchoffice@thegccc.org

Sabbatical Update

Sabbaticals are part of clergy contracts. For various reasons, Rev. Lynn didn't take her sabbatical which was scheduled for 2018. She was planning on taking her Sabbatical this summer, and all her plans were canceled.

We had an opportunity to apply for a Clergy Renewal Grant offered through the Lilly Foundation that is both for the Clergy to take a sabbatical and the Congregation to engage in work while the clergy is away. We formed a Sabbatical Committee to work with Lynn. Paul Cohn, Chair, Janet Martens and Paula Tusiani-Eng. Paul Cohn has been instrumental in assisting Lynn in writing the Grant, which you can imagine has many parts to it. The Lilly Foundation expects the Congregation to support the clergy AND be willing to engage in the work during her absence. Our theme is Connections, like our newsletter, and we hope to continue exploring ways to connect. The Grant was submitted before the June 5 deadline, and we will learn whether we received the Grant late October. If the church is approved for the Grant, we all benefit as Lynn will have an enriched experience, and the church will engage in thoughtful studies. Regardless, Lynn will be taking her Sabbatical after Confirmation Sunday in 2021.

WILL SING FOR FOOD



On June 14th, WILL SING FOR FOOD will be launching **Virtual Bytes 7 Days of Music & Giving** a virtual charity campaign to raise money for Long Island Cares Inc, Harry Chapin Food Bank. Each day the group will stream a music video on social media.

Please watch this brief video to learn more. **A MESSAGE FROM WILL SING FOR FOOD:**

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/423717378>

To DONATE NOW visit: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E10717&id=13>

Stepping Out, Stepping up for Others

As New York State shut down our economy, forcing our community into quarantine in mid-March, leaders at our church stepped up and stepped out to serve others.

With masks covering their faces, and gloves on, many ventured out of the safety of their homes to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and set prisoners free (Luke 4).

Here are some of the ways we have impacted others or are adapting our ministries in light of COVID-19.

Non-Perishable Food Delivery. The “Whitehall porch” has now become more important than “Whitehall desk!” Dozens of Church members have filled our side-porch every other Wednesday with hundreds of units of non-perishable food collected for the Long Island Council of Churches in Freeport. Volunteer Drivers have generously packed their cars, and delivered it to Freeport. They were greeted with smiles and gratitude as many food pantries are in desperate need of food. Thank you!

Garden Ministry. Kimberly Pauley ventured out to a half a dozen nurseries during the height of the pandemic on Long Island to purchase starter vegetables, and planted them in the summer INN garden. Volunteers, including young people, have helped her tend and water the garden, despite the sprinklers not being turned on yet. What a beacon of hope to drive down Whitehall, and see vegetables growing, signs of life and nourishment.

Caring Ministry Phone Calls. Church Council members and other leaders volunteered to make phone calls to all church members during COVID-19, offering greeting, concern and prayers. The goal of the “We are here for you” message was to keep our community connected, and many reported positive conversations. We hope you enjoyed staying connected. Don’t hesitate to call the church if you have a need, or want to talk to someone. We are here for you!

Clothing Delivery. Our INN bins were filled to the brim with clothing in May (they had not been emptied since March), and none of our community partners were accepting delivery. The Rhein family sorted it and delivered it to a local member of the Garden City community delivering clothes to the Bronx. 10 garbage bags of clothes were sorted and delivered! This ministry will not continue until local agencies accept used clothing again, but we are grateful for this effort and hope to resume as the economy opens and it is deemed safe.

INN Sandwich Sunday Ministry – This ministry pivoted to invite the congregation to finance sandwich donations to the Adelphi Deli, who has been making the sandwiches for the Inn during quarantine. We may not be able to physically make sandwiches, but thanks to Liz McQuaid, Jen Gisolfi, and Tina Palmer, we can now still support the distribution of Sandwiches.

Will Sing for Food – Our WSFF ministry will be launching a series of virtual concerts in June to raise money for the Harry Chapin Food Bank/Long Island Cares. They will be using their talents to offer those at home a way to connect, enjoy music, and raise money to address the food shortage on Long Island. A special thanks go out to Andy Morreale who is spearheading this endeavor.

Many of these ministries and new service ideas are listed in the June Newsletter. Will you get involved? It is never too late to step out, and step up for others in God’s name. With 30% unemployment, food insecurity will continue to be a major issue on Long Island, and church community will continue to explore and expand our service opportunities. We welcome volunteers!

Paula Tusiani-Eng, Service Ministries, Church Council

Men's Breakfast Group

In an effort to keep Church members among us who might be feeling the crush of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and have unmet needs, the men's breakfast group is offering to be a source of man power to help those who feel they may need assistance in meeting their essential needs. The group may be able to assist in providing help with the following types of chores:

Gardening

- General clean up

- Planting

- Bush and hedge trimming

- Minor storm or weather damage

- Leader and gutter cleaning or minor repair

- Setting up summer or patio chairs, lounges, tables, umbrellas and related items

Home maintenance (Note: Our ability to enter homes may be severely limited at this time)

- Small home repairs

- Window cleaning and change of curtains or drapes

- Minor woodworking or painting repairs needing attention

- Installation of window air conditioners

Other

- Shopping for household cleaning, maintenance and other similar items

- Picking up orders from hardware or similar stores

- Minor automobile issues

- Other reasonable requests within the talents and of the men's group.

If members of the Church have any requests for assistance, please send a detailed description of your request, together with your name, address and the best way to reach you (e-mail, phone or other) to the following:

Dan McCarthy:(516)488-0955 danjohngalt@gmail.com

Joe Rivera:(516)328-0799 jrmixman1@gmail.com

The men's group will endeavor to respond to you promptly and inform you of what assistance it may be able to provide. Although requests may be made to the Church Office, office hours have been severely reduced and the workload for the staff is very high. We recommend that you contact the men's group directly for best response. The men's group is undertaking this ministry out of love and Christian fellowship. Although our hearts are open, please be mindful that our competencies, time and abilities are limited.

Messages from Margie on ABS (Adventure Bible School) , Youth, 3rd Grade Bible Class . Game Nights & More



What a season we have been going through! This spring we have gone through an unprecedented time of change and reinventing ourselves. The Covid-19 pandemic has devastated the world. We have been watching its progress and feeling its affects in our country, state, cities, and in our own homes. Many of us have lost family and friends, have been infected with the virus ourselves, suffered the loss of employment or schooling, have had to rearrange our living spaces to adapt to working or schooling from home, and have just had our lives generally turned upside down as a result. Not to mention having to add the accessory of a facemask every time we walk outside (although finding ways to color coordinate them has been somewhat amusing).

In and around all of this, though, we are blessed to know that God has always been right there beside us. And our church and church family has journeyed along this path together. We didn't miss a beat. While a lot of work, discussion, and learning went into all that happened, we made an almost seamless transition from in person gatherings to a completely virtual church. We almost completely reinvented ourselves and continue to re-imagine what we can become.

In March when we first started our physical distancing due to the Stay At Home orders from the governor, we took **ABS (Adventure Bible School)** online. We skipped the week of 03/16/2020 but then picked right up and started holding ABS classes on Zoom at noon, right after church. We averaged 6-8 students each week from Pre-K through 5th grade. We have had lots of fun learning about Jesus' ministry and the beginning of the church this spring through Bible stories and games. The kids even taught me how to color on Zoom so that we could create artwork together.

3rd Grade Bible was our first Zoom program and ran for 3 weeks in March and April. We had 4 students complete the course and I am looking forward to presenting them with their Bibles. We will get their Bibles to them this summer and they will be celebrated during worship when we get to worship together in person again.

Our youth groups and confirmation classes took to Zoom also. **Middle School Youth Group** started meeting right after ABS on Sunday afternoons and the **High School Youth Group** met on Sunday evenings. College age youth were invited to join the high school group. This was a great opportunity for them to have discussion about their faith and what is going on in their lives, and just to socialize with each other. Our **Confirmation** groups finished their year online learning more about their faith and our church. The confirmands from Confirmation II will be celebrated during an upcoming Livestreamed service.

Friday Game Night is an event that came out of the need for connection during this time of physical distancing. Once a month we gather on Zoom for fun and games. In March we played Charades, there was Bingo in April and we Named That Tune in May. It has been a great chance to get together for intergenerational laughter and all-around silliness, something we have desperately need at this time.

In an effort to provide more opportunities for people to connect, **Thursday Thoughts** was started in March. This was a quiet time of Lectio Divina style devotional. It was a group that didn't thrive well and was let go. There is a time and place for everything and this was just not the right moment for this group. We continue to listen to the needs of our community to respond to what is important and needed as much as possible.

We are looking to the future, to all the programs we can bring to keep us all together and connected, all while staying safe during this time of Covid-19. We continue to reimagine what church can be while we cannot gather inside the building. Some of the **activities we hope share** with you over the summer are: Community-wide Mask-Making, Storytime for Children, some Youth Movie Nights, Cooking with Kids, more Friday Game Nights, Virtual VBS, and even a Church Music Video! I am very excited about the possibilities! We do need a lot of help and volunteers to make these events the success I know they can be. If you, or the younger members of your household have **interest in participating or assisting** with any of these activities, please reach out to me at margie@thegccc.org. This summer may be different than anything else we've ever experienced, but it can still be a fun, faith-filled time.

Blessings to you all!

Margie Price

Sermons and Services

We can mail a copy of our Sermons and Service to people that are NOT able to go on live stream to see our Sunday service. Please tell the church office if you know of someone that can't see our Live stream service that would like to receive a copy of the Sermon and Service.

Men's Virtual Breakfast

In lieu of our regular monthly breakfasts held at a local diner, the men of GCCC have been virtually gathering weekly on Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. since March 28th to talk about how we're all dealing with life, family, health, work or just about anything else on their minds during this unprecedented coronavirus crisis. The breakfasts last about one hour which involve personal sharing and learning. During the past few weeks, we're reading about King David in 1Samuel with Chris Dieguez leading discussions about the similarities of David's experiences to our lives. It's just another way our community of faith supports each other.

Regards,

Bob Stark, Jr.

Communion Process During GCCC Building Closure

We are offering two alternatives to receive Communion

1st Option: Provide your own bread and cup at home during live-stream and Rev. Lynn Sullivan will bless the elements during the service.

2nd Option: If you live in the area, pre-bought, individually wrapped, wafers and cups that have been blessed by Rev. Lynn Sullivan can be picked up at the Whitehall Blvd Porch to the church on the Wednesday or Friday prior to the service. Please call the church office to make arrangements. This same procedure will be in effect for all Communion Services during building closure.

Ministry Committee Review

Go Ye Into All the World meant something new for us this past March.

Changes for our Worship Services during the pandemic ramped up very quickly thanks to so many behind the scenes. Led by Rev. Lynn Sullivan and with the guidance of the COT, those with technical abilities were able to provide a smooth transition to Live-streaming with only 4 individuals in the Sanctuary. The limited occupancy Worship commenced on March 22, 2020.

Since then there have been 11 live-streamed Sunday Worship services, and 14 Wednesday Evening services provided through ZOOM. The number of total views for the regular, Sunday Services (not Easter) has ranged from 291-739!!

With an average of 404 views!

Easter week included the Maundy Thursday Service and 2 Good Friday Services via ZOOM. Easter Sunday's Sunrise Service through ZOOM, and the pre-recorded Easter Worship at 10:30am.

And now for the drum roll.....

Easter Sunday total views were 906 (so far)!

Submitted by Janet Martens



Needed - New or used 20" girls bicycle
please contact Cindy Campbell @ 516-524-1617.

**Jesus can wash away your sins
but you still have to wash your hands.**

High School/College Youth Group Meetings

Quarantine blues getting you down? Join our monthly Youth Group group Zoom: June 14th, July 12th, and Aug 9th at 8PM. All students from Confirmation 1 and up through recent High School graduates are welcome to join as we support each other, talk about what matter to us, grow in our faith together, and have some good old fashioned hang out time!

We're also hoping to engage the Youth Group and Mission Trip students in service this summer. As YouTube churns out videos of riots, protests and overflowing hospitals, do you find yourself wishing you could do more to help out? Keep you eyes out for virtual events and get togethers as we find creative ways to serve God during the most challenging time in recent memory!

Submitted by Chris Dieguez

Milestone Anniversaries

Melva and Manny Victorino celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Diane and John Feyrer celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

Christine and Brian Meringolo celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

One Great Hour of Sharing & Strengthen the Church

How many problems can we take at any one time? Aren't a pandemic and violent racial confrontations enough? But these crises do not mean that serious and immediate underlying conditions no longer exist.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Another of our "5-for-5" collections is Strengthen the Church. This fund supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. We are, after all, in the season of Pentecost – the birth of the Church. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adult

We are still accepting donations for ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING through the GCCC website. The campaign in March was cut a bit short due to the pandemic. If you want to make a donation for STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH, please go to the GCCC website or mail it to the church office.

Even a small donation means the world to someone who has nothing and tells the world that we care.

Submitted by Peg Mainusch

Caring Ministry

The caring ministry has been very diligent in making calls to our home bound members. Under the leadership of Paula Tusiani-Eng, the Council has been making calls to everyone in the Church directory to find out if there is any way we can help the individual and to make them aware of our livestream services and zoom meetings. We will be making follow up calls. It has given us the opportunity to engage with our Church members. On behalf of the Council and volunteer callers, it has been very gratifying for the caller and receiver of the caring call. Dorinda Varricchio has sent condolence cards and words of sympathy to those who have suffered losses.

Cindy Campbell

READER'S CIRCLE



Tuesday, July 7th at Noon

“Traveling Mercies” by Anne Lamott

Zoom meeting—contact the church office for information

Bring your lunch



EASTER MUSIC 2020 & EASTER PLANTS 2020



Prior to Easter, we were receiving donations in honor or in memory of our loved ones to enhance the Music Program of our Church as well as to have Easter plants placed in the Sanctuary. While we did have the lilies on Easter Sunday, we did not have the window boxes. We did list the people who contributed in the Easter Order of Worship, and will rerun the revised list when we return and celebrate a Resurrection Sunday.

Volunteers Needed to Help Take Care of the Church Giving Garden



Anyone interested in helping in the garden please email Kimberly Pauley at kfpauley3@gmail.com.

At this time only 1 individual or a sibling group will be in the garden at a time with Kimberly.

Masks, gloves required.

SUMMER YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

As with everything else in church right now, we have re-imagined the summer program for our children and youth. While we will not be able to bring a week-long VBS program, we will be using a VBS curriculum throughout the summer to share in the fun stories, activities, and learning that VBS brings. This year's curriculum, from Illustrated Ministry, is **Compassion Camp: Be Loved, Be Kind, Be You**. Its theme is compassion for others, ourselves and the world. This curriculum will be integrated into all of our youth and children's activities throughout the summer.

Compassion is so desperately needed throughout the world, and especially in our own country right now and I look forward to sharing this curriculum.

Blessings,

Margie

BI-WEEKLY FOOD COLLECTIONS FOR THE LICC EMERGENCY FOOD CENTER

We have been collecting non-perishable food items the past few months to support the Long Island Council of Churches Emergency Food Center. Your generosity has been a testament to what we can accomplish, even under the most trying of times. If you are able to make a donation, they are especially in need of cereal, canned vegetables and fruits, and shelf stable milk. We are also in need of drivers to take the food to the food pantry. Our next few scheduled donation days are: June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29, August 12, and August 26. Donations should be left on the Whitehall porch before noon on the dates mentioned above.

If you want to sign up to be a driver to deliver the food to the pantry on one of our donation days, please go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084bacad2eaa8-licc>

Artwork Needed!!!

Art Drop for Hope

Garden City Community Church member and 2019 Confirmation Class graduate Ethan Meringolo is collecting artwork in order to lift the spirits of local senior citizens at The Bristol at Garden City. The Art Drop for Hope's mission is to connect people through the universal language of art.

The Art Drop for Hope Project will address those most effected by the pandemic, our elderly. Any drawing, painting or coloring will be greatly appreciated. The artwork gathered through this endeavor will be displayed on a rolling cart that will be shared throughout the Bristol facility for all residents and staff to enjoy.

Artwork can be dropped off on the front porch at [79 Oxford Boulevard in Garden City](#) and placed inside the weatherproof bin. Please tape an index card to the back of your artwork with the following information: First Name and Last Initial and a message of hope for residents at The Bristol.

For questions please contact: Christine Meringolo at [516-850-5313](tel:516-850-5313) or cmeringolo22@gmail.com.

Search and Call Committee

Dear Garden City Community Church Members and Friends!

As you all are aware, the GCCC is in the process of searching for, and calling, an Associate Minister.

In August 2019, the Pastoral Re-Assessment, Insights, Search and Explore Team – the “PRAISE Team” was formed and commissioned to evaluate the current and future ministry and worship needs of our church. This committee was comprised of four members (Greg Matzelle, Scott Palmer, Melanie Ross and Jillian Yoo), each of whom agreed to follow the mission, goals and objectives outlined by the Council of Trustees. The outcome of this evaluation led to a recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the GCCC hire a Full Time Associate Pastor to be called to assist in the ministry needs of our church.

Due to the PRAISE Committee’s recommendations, a Search and Call Committee was voted on at our Church’s 2020 Annual meeting.

The Committee Members are Michaela (Mico) Faella, Peter Clarke, Melva Victorino, Karin Melkonian, Diane Feyrer, Ivette Olivo, Melanie Ross, Doug Yasso, Viki Rehkugler and Brian Matzelle

This Search and Call process is provided in our church’s By-Laws and includes several steps, the first of which is to assess and consider the needs of our church, by updating the Church Profile which was last done in 2015. This is the task which the Committee is currently working on.

The following, for your information, are the specific chapters of the Church Profile which we are working through as sub teams (there are two members for each chapter):

Chapter 1 – Position Posting

Chapter 2 - Who is God calling us to become?

Chapter 3 – Who are we now?

Chapter 4 – Who is our Neighbor?

Chapter 5 – References

Chapter 6 – Closing Thoughts - The entire Committee will work this final Chapter together after Chapters 1-5 are completed.

The Search and Call Committee has met four times over the past few months. Once in person on March 11, and then subsequently by Zoom meetings. All Committee members are also doing hours of “homework” on their own particular assignments.

The Committee is well into the work of updating of the Church Profile. Many components of the Church profile are mechanical (updating church membership and general statistics, obtaining current financial information, and geographic analysis). Other components of the church profile require thoughtful consideration by the Committee members.

As a result of this need for thoughtful consideration, the members of the Committee have made the decision to circulate to the Members of the Congregation a brief questionnaire. This questionnaire will help the Committee better understand the actual opinions and thoughts of our church Membership. We hope to have this questionnaire circulated in the coming weeks and we look forward to your consideration and honest replies. Please check your mailboxes!

Once the Profile is completed, the next step is to work through the UCC’s Search and Call process (which our church has used several times in the past) to locate potential candidates and follow our church’s criteria to make our recommendation(s).

The church will then vote (a 2/3 vote is needed) on the recommendation.

The Committee is working thoughtfully, slowly and methodically – there is no rush to our efforts. However, we also do feel a sense of urgency to address the needs of our clergy and hope to have the initial portion of our task – the Church Profile – completed by mid- to late-summer.

Again, we look forward to your insight as a congregation to assist us on this!

Thank you for your consideration and God bless you all!

Respectfully, Mico Faella

Chair, Garden City Community Church Search and Call Committee for an Associate Pastor

Dear Church Family,

I want to let you all know that Pat and I and our boys will be moving to North Carolina in mid July. It is with very mixed emotions that I share that news. It is a good move for our family, but very, very difficult to leave. I love our church and I have so many wonderful memories of the time I've been here. The fact that I won't get to be in our actual building to worship together again and say goodbye in person is particularly hard for me. So I guess that means I'll have to come back and visit!

Being part of our church family has meant so much to me.
And so many of you have meant so much to me.

I plan on staying connected in all the different ways we've become used to these past weeks. And as always, Garden City Community Church will remain in my heart and in my prayers.

In Faith and with love,

Debbie Lazzaro
(and Pat, Mark, and Steven)



Merci! Gracias! Danke!

from the GCCC Family and Ministry Team

A tremendous Thank-you to Doug Yasso, Steve Short, Mark Sullivan, Corey Laisure for all the behind the scenes activities, live streaming, and their technical expertise each week to make sure our Worship services continued seamlessly. Thanks also to the church staff Liz, Gloria, Kim for all their work and commitment during this time.

Thanks to Andrew Ellis for organizing our Member Greetings and the volunteer videographers for keeping us connected each week!

Diane Feyrer and others who provided their time as Zoom ushers and hosts.

Andrew Morreale and all the participants for putting together the wonderful prerecorded Easter service.

Lynn, Frank, Margie, Chris and Jen for using their creativity and talents to guide, inspire and lift us up each week through our new ways of worshiping together. Each are a true gift.

Submitted by Janet Martens

BAPTISMS

Jamison Thomas Collins - June 7, 2020

Lillian Elizabeth Collins - June 7, 2020



Ipod Ipad

Try Ipray

God is listening

Deaths

Heather Haynes February 29, 2020 (Barbara Haynes' Daughter)

Luz Henriquez March 1, 2020 (Jesse Henriquez's Mother)

John Becker March 22, 2020 (Nancy Fardelmann's Son)

Ruth Eva Buschmann April 11, 2020 (Joan Cox's Mother)

Nancy Binetti April 23, 2020 (Louise Rooney's Mother)

Donald Scardino April 28, 2020 (Gina DeBold's Father)

Chester (Chet) Zalewski May, 2, 2020 (Karen's brother-in-law)

Lemuel Seth Tiomico May 30, 2020 (Melva's brother)

Johanna Van Daele May 25, 2020 Chris Dieguez' grandmother

Virginia Sanossian (David Sanossian's mother)

Mission Trip—2020

For over 20 years the youth of our church have had fabulous opportunities to travel in the summer to various parts of the country and take part in our Mission Trips. We were extremely disappointed to have had to cancel this summer's Mission Trip to Knoxville, TN. The mission trips are wonderful opportunities to help others, strengthen relationships within our church family, strengthen your relationship with Christ and learn about the people and communities who live in need in our country. The pandemic has cancelled our trip, but unfortunately it has also disrupted the economy and we know the need for helpers will be even greater. We hope to announce a wonderful plan for next summer this Fall. Best wishes for a peaceful and healthy summer.

Sincerely,

Tracey Lawson and the Mission Trip Committee

CHAPEL RENOVATION

As of this printing, the date for the Chapel renovation is uncertain.

3RD GRADE BIBLE

3rd Grade Bible was our first Zoom program and ran for 3 weeks in March and April. We had 4 students complete the course: Gray Forelli, Reese Goettlemann, Cleo Hux, Pierce Walker, and Evelyn Yasso. I will be presenting them with their Bibles this summer and recording them for our Greetings From Home. So keep an eye out!



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations and best wishes are due to Viki Rehkugler, Matt Tittler and big brother Wexford on the birth of
Finnian Reh Tittler
Born on May 23, 2020
7lbs. 5 oz. 20 inches

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DRIVERS



WE want to give a special shout out to those people that volunteered to take our food donations over to the Long Island Emergency Food Center.

John Feyrer
Marion Levins
Nancy Morreale
Kathy Yoo

YOUTH MOVIE SERIES

This summer we will be hosting a once-a-month movie and discussion series geared towards our middle and high school age youth. In keeping with our Compassion theme, each of the 3 movies will take a look at the issue of race in the United States, working to understand the struggle and how we can work to ensure the justice of equality in God's world.

Our youth will have the opportunity to watch the movies on their own and then we will come together through Zoom to discuss it, our reactions to it, and how we might relate to it. These will be contemporary movies, some our youth may have already seen, and some may be brand new to them. Watch the weekly e-blast for more information regarding our first movie in June. If you have any questions, please contact Margie Price at margie@thegccc.org.

GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

A special congratulations to all our graduating seniors:

Christian Durand	Joseph Gisolfi
Brian Matzelle	James McQuaid
Olivia Meringolo	Lisa Noody
Lauren Palmer	Maya Rich
Patrick Riggers	Troy Ross
Emma Ruckh	Cara Ramsey
Jack Thompson	Anna Westfall
Jessica Yoo	

They are graduating at a difficult time, and as they go forth to face an uncertain fall, we surround them with all our love and support.

COMMUNITY-WIDE MASK-MAKING

Are you looking for something to do? Do you have some unused fabric laying around? Catholic Health Services could still use donations of face masks. I have patterns for adult and child masks that can take anywhere from 20 min to 45 min to make. We will collect them and send them to those in need at the end of June. If you would like patterns or more information contact Margie at margie@thegccc.org.

ZOOM GAME NIGHTS

Margie Price hosted a zoom gathering on April 3 where six families played Charades. The evening was lots of fun and enjoyed by all.

Margie Price was the host for a zoom gathering on May 1 where six families played BINGO! A lot of fun. Everyone had a great time.

Rebecca Melkonian was the host for a zoom gathering on May 29 where six families played Name That Tune. Meghan McGann and Sam Tusiani-Eng tied as winners. The evening was full of fun and laughs.

Submitted by Cindy Campbell

GCCC Information Form & Directory Update

We have sent out forms for you to fill out and send back to the church office so that we can update our information. This information will only be used for church purposes and will be kept private and not shared. You have the choice to 'opt in or out' of the church wide directory.

Please take a moment to fill out these forms and send them back to the church office. If you have any questions please email the church at churchoffice@thegccc.org.

2020 -21 Scholarships Metropolitan Association

NY Conference UCC

Applications are now available for the 2020 -21 Scholarships from the South Congregational Scholarship Fund for undergraduates in their 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of colleges/ universities. Youth must be active members of a Metropolitan Association church with a minimum GPA of 3.0. The deadline for complete applications is August 31, 2020.

Contact the church office or go to the Metropolitan Association website for the application:

www.metrouccnyc.org

COMPASSION THURSDAYS FOR KIDS

We are hosting a 6-week program running from **July 2nd through August 13th** on **Thursdays at 6:30PM**. This would be about a half hour time for kids to hear a story and do a craft or activity shared by different church members. I'm looking forward to the fun we'll have with craft projects, cooking, games and stories all based on our Compassion Camp curriculum. Watch the weekly e-blasts for more information as we get closer.

If you would like to volunteer to read a story or lead an activity, please contact Margie Price at margie@thegccc.org.

YOUTH GROUP

While our youth group is no longer meeting weekly this summer, they will be meeting once a month with their leaders through Zoom. The planned meeting dates are: **June 14th, July 12th, and August 9th**. The links for the Zoom meeting will be in the weekly e-blast.

SHARING ABS ART

One of the fun features we have learned about in Zoom, is the ability to color together. Our children have made some fun artwork together and we expect to do some more throughout the summer. As a way for us to share with some of our members who are not able to connect technologically, we will be sending out some letters and some of our artwork to them. This is our way of letting them know we are thinking of them, even if we don't get a chance to see them right now.

Garden City Community Church

alive and online

April 3, 2020

By Melva Victorino



The Rev. Lynn Sullivan, Senior Pastor of Garden City Community Church

The Garden City Community Church (GCCC) has never been so alive and so connected than right now! A few weeks ago, we were all so busy preparing for one of the holiest seasons in all the Christian liturgical calendar. Even before Christmas, books were being prepared for the five Sundays for Lenten Studies. Church school teachers and volunteers were strategically pinpointing the best places to hide the Easter eggs. Children are choosing their Easter outfits. Reservations were made for vacations. Anticipation for Spring breaks. Families visiting. Airlines tickets bought, seats chosen. All plans in place!

Then, slowly the news came, it's far from our shores. It's far away across the other seas. It's NOT going to reach us. But it was traveling faster than we expected. We were not expecting it to happen in our midst. Then the first confirmed case of coronavirus in America flashed in the news. Not in America. Not in Garden City. Not in my church!

All plans changed! After the initial confirmation of the threat, the Council of Trustees (COT) of GCCC met on March 9th and first discussed the "bourgeoning crisis" as the COT chairperson, Drew Hearon, puts it. Drew addresses the members of GCCC in his congregational letter, *"My heart goes out to everybody across our Congregation for all we are currently experiencing together. The key word here is that we are experiencing this 'together,' and while prudent management presents challenges to congregating in person, we are already finding comfort and camaraderie within our existing online Garden City Community Church Home."*



The Rev. Lynn Sullivan, Senior Pastor of GCCC, the ministry team, the church staff and the devoted volunteers have been hard at work.

The Vision of GCCC is, "Faithfully Reaching Out, Inclusively Drawing In." Its Purpose is, "Building a community where all are enriched through Christian Love, Service, and Spiritual Renewal." Oh, how the members of GCCC rose up to the challenge of faithfully reaching out. On the first Sunday of Worship during the outbreak in America of COVID-19, faithful volunteers and staff came, to make worship reach out to more than 300 people and this was only on the first Sunday. Rev. Lynn reminded the streaming congregation to, *"Reach out to two people each day, just to say hi and stay connected. Two different people each day. And remember, 'Love heals the world.' Blessings to you all."*

It's not that GCCC wasn't connected to the Internet before COVID-19. For years, Worship Services have been streaming live for those who couldn't be physically present at the church. There is an option to give Online. GCCC was ahead on being Online, being connected and being electronically savvy; but this readiness was not planned for something as socially debilitating as this. Reaching out to two people was multiplied ten times, a hundred times in just a few weeks. Members were calling homebound people. Consoling the friends who lost their love ones, just to say, "Good night." Pastoral Calls have been made to the homebound and those that are vulnerable at this time. Their needs are being assessed by Rev. Lynn, Janet Martens and the Deacons Care Ministry team. Daily Zoom meetings and telephone support groups are being offered for connection and prayers. Stevie Wonder's song, "I Just Called to Say I Love You," became a theme song for two people calling each other everyday.

Paula Tusiani-Eng and Janet Martens spearheaded the Service Ministry team to collect non-perishable canned food for the Long Island Council of Churches (LICC) Emergency Food Center. The first food collection was last March 23, and on **Wednesday, April 8th another drop off schedule will be from morning to 12:00 noon at the Whitehall Blvd porch**. John Feyrer and others are doing another food run with the delivery of the food collected. These are all great Holy Week Activities, but it doesn't stop there.

As we all adjust to life during the COVID-19 pandemic, all Worship Services and Programs of GCCC are taking place virtually through Livestreaming, Zoom, conference calls and on Facebook. Without abandoning it's Vision, GCCC has a present Mission, as so boldly stated by Rev. Lynn, we are **"Bringing Church to the People," while "Bringing People to the Church."** The stories do not end here, *"we are all in this together."* There are many stories to hear, much love to share, missions to reveal, virtual hugs to exchange, resources to give. This is just the beginning! Join the GCCC in being Alive, through its website www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org for Worship Services, educational resources, children and youth programs, Bible studies, conference calls, zoom meetings and more.

As GCCC member anticipates and ponders the coming Holly Week and the Joyful Easter Sunday, emotions were mixed as Bob Stark, Jr. expressed his sadness for not being physically able to attend the Easter Sunrise Service. "This will be the first time in my life I will not be worshipping outside as the sun rises on Easter morning." There was silence in the group who were Zooming for a noon day Chat with Rev. Lynn. The silence was louder than any sound for they all felt the pain of physical separation. Minister George Bashian broke the silence by saying that this is a new way the church in moving and there is a promise of hope when this is all over, we have planted a new seed for the generations to come – and that is EASTER.

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During this time, The Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. will be a Zoom meeting.

The Easter Service at 10:30 a.m. will be Streaming live.

The Monday Chat with Lynn at 12:00 noon, will be done by Zoom meetings, as well as the following, Tuesday Time at Nine (Young Adults) 9:00 p.m., Wednesday Women's Reflections at 12:00 noon, Wednesday Service is at 8:00 p.m., Thursday Thoughts at 7:00 p.m., Friday Faith Connections at 12:00 noon and the Men's Virtual Breakfast on Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. The Tuesday Intercessory Prayer Service which will be done by conference call at 9:30 a.m. Instructions to connect to Zoom can be found on the church website.

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Non-perishable food donations for the LICC

Garden City Community Church gathered and together online

April 09, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Margie Price and Katie Masters Zooming Palm Sunday Projects with the kids

Garden City Community Church (GCCC) marked the beginning of Holy Week as it remembered the triumphant entry of Jesus, riding on a colt through the streets leading to Jerusalem. Instead of the crowds waving palm branches, the Rev. Lynn Sullivan, Senior Pastor of GCCC, waved a green streamer to welcome all to church on Palm Sunday worship service saying, "Welcome to church on this beautiful Sunday morning. We cannot go straight from the triumphant entry to Jerusalem to the Glory of Easter Sunday. We need to hear the story of betrayal, arrest, trial and death before we can sing Halleluiah on Easter Sunday. We can't be robbed of this wonderful day!"

It was worship as usual at GCCC as Frank Crosio, Minister of Music, filled the sanctuary with *Benedictus Op. 59 Max Reger's "Blessed is the One who comes in the Name of the Lord."* Rev. Lynn was at the pulpit, Michaela Faella at the lectern, Soprano Jennifer Brounstein at the choir loft and Mark Sullivan behind the camera. Perfect setting for a Palm Sunday celebration except the congregation were virtually worshiping from their homes while service was live-streaming online.

Earlier at 9:15 a.m., the 3rd Grade Bible Class zoomed with Margie Price, followed at 12:00 Noon by Adventure Bible School (ABS). ABS children zoomed with Margie Price and Katie Masters making palms and crosses out of any materials they have at home.



Fresh palms for Palm Sunday

The day wasn't over yet as Chris Dieguez and Christine Hanson zoomed at 1:00 p.m. with the middle school youth. Later in the evening at 7:00 p.m. Chris and his wife, Sarina Applegren zoomed with the high school and college youth.

And this was only for one day of activities. This Holy week, visit our website www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org for all updated services, programs and events to participate in the sacred week leading to the Resurrection of Jesus. Instructions to connect to Zoom, Live-streaming, Facebook and conference calls can be found on the church website.

During this time, The Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. will be a Zoom meeting. We will be virtually celebrating communion together during this service. Please have food and drink with you so that you may celebrate this meal with us from home.

The Easter Service at 10:30 a.m. will be streaming live.

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Garden City Community Church praises God on Easter Sunday

April 16, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Rev. Lynn Sullivan, Senior Pastor

(All photos are from Zoom)

Our journey from Palm Sunday through the Holy Week was nothing that we have ever experienced before. Our lives changed as we developed a new way of mission, a new way of being together from afar. Garden City Community Church (GCCC) walked through the Holy Week, with a different sense of togetherness. The whole week has the somber longing to be with families and friends, and they found this in the presence of each other while being connected online.

Hans Holznagel from the United Church of Christ (UCC) posted on its KYP (Keeping You Posted) newsletter, *“After a Holy Week unlike any other, churches have new insights as Easter dawns. Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, and because of it, new insights broke forth from old stories during Holy Week and Easter Sunday in many congregations of the UCC as pastors and their people – unable to meet in person – made virtual contact over the Internet.”* And this is so evident in the lives of the members, families and friends of GCCC.

The Holy Week was dedicated in the observance of sacred readings, meditations and prayers of the last week of the human life of Jesus. His agony, the betrayal, His arrest, His trial and His crucifixion and His last breath culminated with His Resurrection of Easter Sunday.

The church was in everyone’s homes, sharing in the darkness. Sunrise came and as faithful believers, GCCC gathered at 6:30 a.m. for a Sunrise Service, Zoomed with virtual communion. The 10:30 Easter Sunday Service was live-streamed by more than 200 worshipers, joyfully singing Halleluiah. Frank Crosio’s playing the organ was a sacrament in itself. Additional music was heralded by Ryan Resky’s trumpet, the melodious soprano voice of Jennifer Brounstein reached all the homes in six States and two counties. Jillian Yoo shared in the readings from the lectern in the sanctuary. From their own homes Sydney and Sophie Rhein did the children’s reading with Beth Atkins Schroeder, Brian Matzelle, and George Bashian, all being apart but together. The “We Sing For Food” group sang their way into the church. The WSFF group members are Andy Morreale, his daughter Anna, Jessica and Jillian Yoo, Amber Henriquez and Joe Rivera.

The Rev. Lynn Sullivan delivered a very powerful Message, Christ Alone, Cornerstone. Rev. Lynn’s voice reverberated the far beyond the pews of GCCC and as Debbie Wood Pecora shared in her iMessage, *“So sweet. Wasn’t the Sunday so fantastic? Fantastic! And Lynn preached her heart out! I’m sure that anyone watching for the first time will want to come to our church.”*

This is what it is all about in GCCC! No one and Nothing can rob us of our faith, love with each other and our trust in Jesus Christ. Come and join us all week long. We have services, events and programs for all ages. Visit www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org.

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Garden City Community Church has Hope

April 23, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Rev. Lynn Sullivan

“If you want to make God laugh, tell Him of your plans.” N.T. Wright, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford, stated that plans could be shattered in an instance but God will smile when we adjust to those shattering moments.

God is smiling at Garden City Community Church (GCCC) right now as we picked ourselves up and adapted to the shattering circumstances brought forth to us and the whole world. Without hesitation we looked up and availed the many resources that makes GCCC a church of HOPE. We developed a setting to reach out and make each day a time of hope, a time of anticipation, a time of making God smile.

Going online was the simplest way to reach out to the many families, friends and members during this crisis, but GCCC did more than that, it brought the church to the people in a unique way by making each home the church. The services, programs, and events were improved to meet the ministries and needs of the congregation. The strength of the church lies on the volunteers who stepped up to the plate and mobilized a new way of ministry.

Chris Dieguez, one of our Licensed Ministers, led a very hope-filled Wednesday evening service. We are in the Eastertide Season and what a more appropriate message than “Born in a Living Hope.” The service by zoom brought up the impromptu ways of worshipping when Rick and Carolyn Herbst, joined in the singing of Jennifer and Jessica Yoo, by playing flute and trumpet.

Chris added a deeper meaning to the message by sharing the story behind the composition of the hymn of hope, “Because he lives, I can face tomorrow.” George Bashian used this as the sending forth music with his accordion. The worship ended but the service began when Rick Herbst played the trumpet while Carolyn and Katie sang, “Christ the Lord is Risen Today.”



Chris Dieguez

The Resurrection of Jesus gives us the promise of hope and as the Rev. Lynn Sullivan, the Senior Pastor, asked GCCC, *“Where do we go from here? What do we do now?”* Is the sending out of Jesus parallel to the sending of Jesus by God? Can we emulate the relationship of Jesus with God? This is an invitation to a call, as Rev. Lynn acknowledged those who help make our adaptive motto, “Bringing the church to the people, while bringing the people to the church.” Her heartfelt affirmation of the volunteers was expressed, *“If you weren’t helping make this church alive, I would just be preaching to an empty sanctuary. We are the church of today. How we manage it will determine the church of tomorrow if we have been given a glimpse of what that would look like.”*

Are we going to let COVID 19 affect us? Maybe. Not much. Sometimes. But it will not change us as a church, it will make us stronger Christians, improved, better and as Rev. Lynn asked us, *“Where do we go from here? What do we do now?”* We move on, we plan and let God laugh at us and it’s okay for at the same time, God is smiling.

Come and join us all week long. We have services, events and programs for all ages!

Visit our website at www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org

The Church is increasing security with our online services. For our services via zoom, please be advised that you will be directed to a waiting room and “zoom ushers” (people designated by Council of Trustees) will screen to make sure participants are known to us. There may be a slight delay in starting, please be patient. Participants will not be permitted to share screens, video, or audio without hosts’ approval.

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Virtual Memorial Service at Garden City Community Church

May 21, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Garden City Community Church never closes

The Garden City Community Church (GCCC) is always virtually open to all people, even at this times of social distancing. **A Virtual Memorial Service will be live-streamed on Saturday, May 30th at 2:00 PM.** This Virtual Memorial Service will be designed to provide comfort to those who have not yet had a service for their loved ones.

A place to virtually gather and remember. Remembering the times you spent with them. The first time you met. The places you visited. The times when you knew you were creating memories with them. The trust and secrets that were shared that only they understood about you. The vacations you went together. The stories they told and the advice they gave. The last embrace. The last goodbye!

We encourage you to have a candle nearby so that when the minister lights candles during the service you can light one to honor your family and friends. For those with sensitivities to candle fumes, you have options to choose to have a picture of your loved ones, a cross, a book or a Bible or an object that means something to your loved ones.

These are your memories! And GCCC is the place to come together and to let these memories live forever in your hearts. GCCC loves and supports you, and we will continue to be here for you on this time of loss.

This will be a live-stream service that people can watch. If you cannot watch at that time, it will be on our website for viewing at a later date.

For information regarding our virtual worship services and programs, please go to our *website: www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org.*

Come and join us all week long. Out of an abundance of caution and following the mandates set by the village, county and state, we have closed our building until further notice. The Church is increasing security with our online services. For our services via zoom, please be advised that you will be directed to a waiting room and "zoom ushers" will screen to make sure participants are known to us. There may be a slight delay in starting, please be patient. Participants will not be permitted to share screens, video, or audio without hosts' approval.

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GC Community Church collects food for LICC

May 28, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Non-perishable Food Items and Paper Goods collected by GCCC for LICC Emergency Food Center

The Garden City Community Church (GCCC) is continuously focusing on one thing right now – to help and give to others as they never have before. It's not a unique opportunity but has an impact on the lives of many who are affected by COVID-19. What better way to do this than to collect food for the Long Island Council of Churches (LICC) Emergency Food Center.

While many are practicing social distancing with closing their physical buildings, the LICC Emergency Food Pantry WILL CONTINUE to stay open. However, they have seen a sharp decline in direct delivery food donations from churches, congregations and the community. At this time of social awareness, in an effort to support social distancing and promote healthy living, GCCC will be collecting non-perishable food items for the LICC Emergency Food Center on Wednesday, June 3rd. Donation can be dropped off on the Church Whitehall Porch before noon. Special needs are canned vegetables and fruits, cereal, shelf stable milk, rice, oatmeal, and powdered beverages. No bottled items. Paper goods are also welcomed. All are invited to participate in this appeal to help feed our neighbors. In a world full of problems, let us be the solution.

As we remember our neighbors, GCCC is also inviting all to a live-stream Virtual Memorial/Remembrance Service on Saturday, May 30th at 2:00 p.m. in memory of those who died during this trying time of the coronavirus and all that may have passed at this time where a service could not be performed.

This Virtual Memorial/Remembrance Service will be designed to provide comfort to those who have not yet had a service for their loved ones. We encourage you to have a candle nearby so that when the minister lights candles during the service you can light one to honor your family and friends. For those with sensitivities to candle fumes, you have options to choose to have a picture of your loved ones, a cross, a book, a Bible or an object that meant something to your loved ones. This will be a live-stream service that people can watch. If you cannot watch at that time, it will be on our website for viewing at a later date.

For information regarding our virtual worship services and programs, please go to website www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org

Come and join us online all week long. Out of an abundance of caution and following the mandates set by the village, county and state, we have closed our building until further notice. The Church is increasing security with our online services. For our services via zoom, please be advised that you will be directed to a waiting room and "zoom ushers" will screen to make sure participants are known to us. There may be a slight delay in starting, please be patient. Participants will not be permitted to share screens, video, or audio without hosts' approval.

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Garden City Community Church has three grains of rice

June 04, 2020

By Melva Victorino



Three grains of rice

Growing up, I was a picky eater that I always left morsels of food on my plate. It was like a scripted admonition from my mother when she would remind us, *"There are thousands of starving children in China who have no food, not even a grain of rice on their plates!"* It didn't make sense to me how a grain of rice could feed another child. It was not even a spoonful! As I grew older, my mother's reminder to us made sense. Out of curiosity, I checked the Encyclopedia Britannica (No Google yet) what a grain of rice was worth. A seed of rice will sprout into a mature plant in four to five months producing several blooms of stalks with each stalk producing 300 grains or so per head. By then I stopped multiplying how many grains each seed could produce. All I knew was from one seed, enough rice could be harvested to feed all the starving children in China, even the world!

Garden City Community Church (GCCC) is NOT a rice field where we can harvest tons and tons of rice to feed many people. But GCCC has 3 grains of rice that we can share with others. Sharing is more than material things or a bag of rice. We are rich with people willing to give their time by volunteering and give their talents to make our church a place with 3 grains of rice.

One grain is embodied in the volunteers who made our ministries reach far beyond our doorsteps. For the past thirteen weeks all our programs, events, Bible Studies, children and youth programs, worship services and communications are done virtually. Special technical supports are needed to make the live-streaming, zooming and conference calls effective and safe to connect us to everyone. The challenge is not just the tech talk, but how to execute everything while staying home and practice safe distancing. We are blessed with members who give their knowledge of the intricacies of web designs of the Internet, the use of simple cameras and smartphones to record, play, and post greetings from members, the live-stream Sunday worship services from our sanctuary while adhering to only four people present. I could name them all but I will need more than a whole page of the Garden City News. The one grain of rice will represent the hearts of our volunteers. There is nothing stronger than the hearts of volunteers, they are rare... at a time when they are needed, they come forward and stay faithful even without being recognized.

The second grain of rice of GCCC are the staff members who go above and beyond their calls of duty. This time, with apologies to the volunteers, I could name some of them. The bills have to be paid. The statements have to be balanced. The checks have to be cut. Did I say the bills have to be paid? From her home, Liz Galzerano, our Business Manager does these in coordination with the Board of Finance. Gloria Malin, the Administrative Assistant makes the office runs smoothly from her home even as our schedule changes every second before the Wednesday and Friday e-blast come out. Even if our physical building is closed there are aspects that have to be checked regularly for building maintenance and sanitation protection. Robert Sipkin, Building Manager safely inspects the structural condition of our facilities. Music is an integral part of worship and our Minister of Music, Frank Crosio makes music a worship in itself. Frank and Soprano, Jennifer Brounstein fill the sanctuary with music every live-stream Sunday worship. Of course, the camera will not transmit by itself. The behind the scene actions are alternately done by Mark Sullivan and Steve Short onsite; Doug Yasso takes care of all the computer live-streaming from his home, and Andrew Ellis does the recorded members greetings from home. When needed, Steve Short takes care of sound and additional wiring.

GCCC's third grain of rice is our Ministry. The congregation is the Ministers to the World. Our congregation is composed of diverse people that minister to our neighbors, our communities, our country and the World. GCCC is blessed with generous members who share their gifts to make us touch others. Food for LICC, Sing for Food, clothes, domestic and global disaster reliefs, services, supporting mission workers, sending gifts to people whose faces we will never see and places we will never go. Our guiding mission is to, *"Go Ye Into All the World."*

Rev. Lynn Sullivan, our Senior Pastor, tirelessly inspires us all. She can make us laugh, make us cry, be silent and act with compassion as if she has a magic wand. George Bashian, Chris Dieguez, and Margie Price give the educational supports, children and youth programs and church school studies with parents giving their assistance.

Preaching is one bowl of rice that GCCC has. In all that we do and all that we have, it will not mean anything, if we forget the source of all our rice. We love God first and we nourish each other each time we hear the spoken words as uttered by our ministers. GCCC is a resilient church and for 90 years we have committed ourselves to love God above all things, and others as ourselves. With all the turmoil happening around us, GCCC stays faithful to be a place of spiritual refuge where all are welcomed. We never doubt what the future holds for us, because we have a true friend in Jesus and we don't doubt a true friend.

To help us bring more of the Spoken Words to you, **the Rev. Earl Y. Thorpe, Pastor to Church-in-the-Garden, will virtually be preaching from the GCCC sanctuary on Sunday, June 14th at 10:30 a.m. service.** Rev. Thorpe uses traditional and contemporary ministry models along with Christ-centered alternatives to engage the church in spiritual development, social activism, and economic empowerment. Under his leadership, Church-in-the-Garden has witnessed widespread spiritual growth and young people newly committing their lives to Jesus Christ. Rev. Thorpe deeply considers it a blessing to pursue new paths in discipleship, worship, evangelism, and social concern. In the present troubling times of our Nation, Rev. Thorpe is the voice we need to hear to make the Words of Jesus Matter. GCCC, the community, Long Island and the State are blessed to have Rev. Thorpe grace our pulpit to make the 3 Grains of Rice Matter. **Don't miss this gift of God, save the date, Sunday, June 14th at 10:30 a.m. to join GCCC live-stream worship, visit www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org.**

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Coping With Anxieties and Confusion of COVID19

By The Rev. Kirk A. Bingaman, LCC Pastoral Counselor

It is a miracle that you and I and anyone on the planet is alive today. A group of scientists a few years ago attempted to quantify the odds of this, and what they came up with staggers the imagination: for the average human being, it is something like 1 in 400 trillion that you and I were born, in other words pretty much a miracle. Shortly after the odds were revealed, you began seeing on web sites the following encouragement: "Today, act like the miracle you are." Which I try to do to the very best of my ability, and my hunch is you try to as well. But at the moment it can be something of a challenge, given the present situation of COVID 19, of not knowing how long the present crisis will last and when life will return to some semblance of normal again in the New York area, across the nation, across the world.

These are challenging days for anyone, perhaps even more so for people of faith. We believe in a God who is with us to the end of the age, even if we are not always sure what the Spirit of God is doing in the world at any given moment. Indeed, the present moment and with it the unfolding COVID crisis is a reminder of how fragile human existence can really be, and therefore how precious is the gift of life. In these days of social distancing, of sheltering at and working from home, of having more time on our hands, let us "redeem" the time in a way that furthers our spiritual growth and development.

On the one hand, we need to keep up with the news in the interest of personal and public safety and well-being. On the other hand, we will need to recognize the warning signs of our own central nervous system: when our anxiety approaches the "tipping point," when it is time to take a "sacred pause" by putting down the smartphone, turning off the TV and the unrelenting "Breaking News," and giving ourselves a moment to simply breathe and meditate in the interest of emotional and spiritual balance. As the oracle used to say famously at the Temple of Delphi in ancient Greece, "Know Thyself," and in this case know thy limitations and when to say when.

And if we do have those existential moments of confusion, about the nature of the COVID crisis, how long it will last, how it will impact our lives in the long run, where is God in all of it, this is "normal," even for people of faith. We are called by God, not to put an artificially happy spin on things, but to be honest and authentic, emotionally and spiritually. Go easy on yourself and others, if there is a moment of confusion or even doubt. Be kind and compassionate. And always remember that we are in good company with those who have gone before, as the famous prayer of Thomas Merton reminds us (see below). Take very good care these days, you and yours, be well and keep safe. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

*I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope
I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything
apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.*

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

For more information or to set an appointment, call LCC at 1-800-317-1173. For safety, all sessions are provided using a secure, HIPAA compliant virtual video and/or audio platform.