



# Garden City Community Church Connections April 2024

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

## Pastor's Message

Dear the Garden City Community Church - Members and Friends,

Alleluia! Christ has risen. Christ has risen indeed! What a glad Easter greeting, affirmation, and rejoicing. This good news flows to us from the faith communities we refer to as the Gospels. One might presume their recollections are overwhelmingly positive. Matthew and Mark describe resurrection as something to acclaim, and to doubt.

- Matthew reports: "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.
- Mark tells these stories: "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome...went out from and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." "...Jesus himself sent out through them (the disciples), from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation." "Later Jesus appeared to the eleven...; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen."

Luke and John offer a different energy:

- Luke: "While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, Jesus... took and ate broiled fish in their presence...While Jesus was blessing the disciples, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God."
- John: Mary Magdalene...to the disciples, "'I have seen the Sovereign!.... Jesus came and stood among the disciples...they rejoiced...Thomas said to the other disciples 'Unless I see the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'... Thomas answered Jesus, 'My Sovereign and my God!'"

Resurrection Good News, these stories say, is always contextual. It's new beginning celebrates a unique passage from an ending to a new beginning. For some of you, resurrection means a settled heart and mind following a divorce or illness diagnosis. For some of you, alleluia! begins an adventure: retirement, parenthood, empty-nest, re-feathered nest, job, the next school grade, a driver's license...

What Easter Good News Garden City Community Church? I introduced you to the story of Moses last month, from William Bridges *Getting Them Through the Wilderness*. Like God's people then and now, the spirit of this faith community lives in emotional and spiritual wilderness. Where does church, then, experience Easter resurrection?

### Quoting Bridges:

"...transition leader identifies, gathers together, and educates the pivotal people who will help...creating among them the basis for a new identity and a new culture.

When Pharoah (the symbol of power and status quo) finally let Moses' people go, some of them surely thought that the Promised Land (new vision/purpose) was just around the corner." Moses "first had to draw a line of no return between the ending and the neutral zone (wilderness). Second, he had to keep people in the neutral zone long enough for them to be fundamentally changed by the wilderness experience." (page 7)

For some of you, Matthew and Mark's stories resonate. Resurrection - wilderness good news feels mixed and unsettled. Jesus observing that some are in, others not. For others of you, Luke and John's stories resonate. Resurrection - wilderness good news - feels unsettled then hopeful. Those who doubt want to believe, and experiencing Jesus do believe, leading to community rejoicing. For all of us, Bridges emotional and spiritual neutral zone describes where ministry and mission lives, as another new beginning germinates and grows.

Our world of nature sits wide awake. Blossoming, blooming, growing; rainbow colors wrapped in green. As church, we are celebrating the great good news of God's love victorious over all things hindering life eternal. Nothing, says our Easter story, need hinder loving God with all ones being, loving those who are unlike us, loving those who are like us; nothing, our resurrection story says, hinders God in Christ Jesus loving and leading each one of us, and this community of faith!

Our church Easter alleluias! sound in wilderness-time this season. They, I believe, affirm hope in unsettledness, and doubt finding belief and transformation. William Bridges calls this time the neutral zone. The church calls this time the forty days leading to Pentecost. You and I call this time intentional interim ministry.

What Easter Good News Garden City Community Church? Your past knows the blessing of alleluias! Thanks be to God for what has been - and for the risen Christ, here, now, being with us on this journey! Alleluia! Amen!

Peace,



Intentional Interim Senior Pastor

Schedule a Visit with Pastor Arlen

In person, or on Zoom, and at your place of choice.

Calendar: <https://bookme.name/WalkingAlongside/beingwith-hour>



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### **Worship Schedule**

#### **Sundays**

10:30 AM  
Livestream & In-person

#### **Tuesdays**

Intercessory  
Prayer Service  
9:30 AM In-person

## Council of Trustees News (COT)

Dear Church-

Have you read our Mission statement recently? It is in our by-laws, which you can [find here](#) or on our website under the 'about us' section. This month, I want to share a part of it with you and ask you to think and pray about it.

*Celebrating our diversity, we are working to build a loving fellowship where:*

- *people are supported and families are strengthened;*
- *friends are made and hurts are healed;*
- *justice is sought and the world is served;*
- *God is worshipped;*
- *and above all, Jesus Christ is Lord.*

Does this feel right for GCCC now? Our interim period and the work that Pastor Arlen will guide us through is a reassessment, strengthening, and confirming of our mission.

I know this interim process has not been as clear to the congregation and COT as it should be. I take responsibility for that and deeply apologize. Your COT has grappled with the scope, goals and pace of the work leading to delays but we are working through an exercise to improve our understanding and affirm our commitment. Soon we will reach out to the people who volunteered to be on the interim team to help, in conjunction with COT, to lead the next phase of the interim work – our cottage conversations.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Faithfully submitted,

Kirsten Bahlke—Council of Trustees (COT) Chair

## MISSION EVENTS

### **Our Birthday in a Box Service Project was a great success!!**

Our older youth made 27 boxes which were delivered to an organization called 'Birthday Wishes.' They host birthday parties for children in shelters. Thanks to everyone that helped out and/or donated the needed items.





## MISSION EVENTS

2024 Mission Trip — July 14-20

Knoxville, Tennessee

Mark your calendars and make sure to join us for the final events!

- 1.) **Bowling and Bonding** event for all Mission Trip participants! The sign up genius has already been sent out- please RSVP and plan to join us **April 7th from 2-4 at AMF Garden City Lanes.**
- 2.) **Plant Sale and Car Wash will be Saturday, May 11th.** Spread the word to family and friends- the plants have been absolutely fabulous the past few years!
- 3.) The **Commissioning of the Mission Trip** will be during church on **June 2nd** (Church School Sunday) and we will have our **final meeting** reviewing logistics and handing out shirts in the sanctuary right after the church service- **parents and students need to attend.**

### Updated message from the LICC Emergency Food Pantry

The Long Island Council of Churches is still in need of a new home for the Freeport Emergency Food Pantry on Hanse Ave effective **April 1!**

**Their doors were closed to the public at the end of March. They are still able to accept food through the end of April.** They will be giving the food to local pantries that are in need. If you are able to make a donation, they are especially in need of soup (NOT Vegetarian and NOT low-sodium), pasta, peanut butter, and jelly. Our next collection dates are Wednesday, April 3rd and April 17th.

**If you are able to sign up to take our food donations to the pantry on Wednesday, April 17th I will give you Anthony Achong's cell number so that you can call him directly to let him know when you will be stopping by.** To sign go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46044897-2024#/>

They are still searching for a large space that can accommodate food inventory and neighbor services, or smaller spaces across multiple sites. If you know of available space among your community, church and faith communities, please contact Anthony Achong asap: [liccanthony@optonline.net](mailto:liccanthony@optonline.net).



## News About the Building

Rob Sipkin and Kristian Rhein are presently working on repairing the walls outside the boiler room. When completed they will begin painting them. Then they will repair the floor tiles in the youth room.

The church has accumulated a number of walkers, canes and wheelchairs over the years. Much more than we can use. Arrangements were made to donate them to the Society of Lending Comforts in Smithtown, NY. They in turn will either loan them out to those in need or send them to a church in Ukraine that can use them.



## MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

News from our Sunday School, Confirmation Class & Youth Groups

### **Sunday School:**

3/31: Our Lenten Board Game event is coming to an end as Easter fast approaches. Bring the board back by April 7th with 30 out of 40 slots completed to earn a prize.

4/14: The Sunday School is having a family outing. Come and bond with our other families. We will be having a Garden Scavenger Hunt at Clark Gardens.

### **Middle School Youth Group:**

4/7: We will be planting in the church garden. Our efforts will make a difference in the local community. High schoolers are welcome to join us for this service project. The more hands the merrier!

5/4: The Middle School Youth Group will be hosting an intergenerational board game night. Hoping you will come by to have fun with your church community! More info to follow,

### **High School Youth Group:**

Thank you again to Susan Cushman for being our permanent High School Youth Group Co-Leader!

**Confirmation:** We had our Confirmation Retreat! 2 days of bonding and learning more about Jesus! Thank you to everyone involved in making this retreat a great success!

## MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

### Sunday Forums

- Members of the Forum Committee are Mary Dewar, Debbie Pecora, Melva Victorino, and Marilyn Yasus. Sunday Forums are held on last Sundays of the month at 11:45 a.m., unless otherwise in conflict with other church events.
- **Future Forum: Kimberly Pauley will lead forum on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. with “Tales from the Kitchen and the Garden” Join us in the Parlor with some mid-day refreshment and get to know the lady behind all the luscious pies and goodies that support the church.**
- **What you have missed:**
- September 24, 2023: “The Power of Friendship” with Debbie Pecora
- October 8, 2023: The Fate of St. Paul’s Historic Main Building. The speakers presented two popular concepts. **George Salem** spoke about the **Demolition of St. Paul’s** and plans for the property; **Frank McDonough** from St. Paul’s Alliance spoke on the **Restoration and Repurposing of the St. Paul’s** building for use as a Community Center with programs for residents of all ages. The forum was well attended by the community. **GCCC merely provided a venue and did not support one view or the other.**
- November 26, 2023: Getting to Know You with Rev. Arlen G. Vernava
- NO DECEMBER FORUM DUE TO ADVENT AND NEW YEAR’S HOLIDAYS
- January 28, 2024: Amanda Dias shared about herself and her ministry with Garden City Community Church (GCCC.)
- February 25: Dr. Karin A. Melkonian and Alice Melkonian (Daughter and mother) shared their faith journey “Why GCCC?”



### Sunday Forum

#### Tales from the Kitchen and Garden

Join us in the Parlor at 11:45 am on Sunday April 14th as Kimberly Pauley hosts this ‘Sunday’s Forum.’ Kimberly will be hosting the fellowship hour after our worship service so please come to taste some of Kimberly’s delicious food. All are invited to attend.





## MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

### Worship Altar Flower Donations

A \$50.00 dollar donation provides a gift of love! Use this link:

<https://www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org/give> and go to the online giving 'quick give' and choose the dropdown line: 'Give to 2024 Flowers' - or - hand deliver or mail to The Garden City Community Church.

Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46046622-2024> Include the wording you wish us to include in the Order of Worship.



### Worship Ushers or Liturgists Opportunity

Perhaps you love to greet and welcome and lead, and work best as part of a team? Reach out to the *Ministry Committee* or *Pastor Arlen*, or email [churchoffice@thegccc.org](mailto:churchoffice@thegccc.org).



### Membership Informational Meeting

Curious about the church? Thinking about becoming a member?

Join us on Sunday, April 28th at 11:30 am (after the worship service) in the Kensington Room to learn more. All are welcome to attend!



## MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

### Men's Breakfast

All men of the church and their visitors are welcome; it is an opportunity to enjoy relaxed fellowship and conversation over a shared meal. **Next meetings are on April 6th and May 4th at 8:00 am at the Carle Place Diner—151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**



### Tuesday Prayer Service

The Prayer Service welcomes anyone who wishes to join us. We are meeting in the Chapel Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am. Please email the office, George Bashian or Rev. Arlen G. Vernava if you have a prayer request. **All requests are kept confidential.**



### GC Community Church Tech Team



We are looking for youth (and the otherwise young-at-heart) to contribute to bringing our weekly services, special services, and other content to our homebound and our away-from-home members. This is also our chance to reach out for those seeking a new church home. But we cannot do this alone, we need your help, or your children's help in making this happen. Absolutely no experience required, and while we will guide newcomers, we will also gladly take advice from the old-sages.

Contact Steve Short, Tim Martens, or William Stone

Or Just join us some Sunday, in the balcony!



## MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

### 2024 Fellowship Hour Sign Up

**Hosting Refreshment and Friendship after worship conversation** - Perhaps hospitality and hosting are your passion. Schedule two ways: notebook in the Parlor or:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46048741-2024> Questions?  
 Reach out to *Ministry Committee* or email [churchoffice@thegccc.org](mailto:churchoffice@thegccc.org)

**Fund a Refreshment and Friendship conversation time:**  
<https://www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org/give> and go to the online giving 'quick give' and choose the dropdown line: 'Give to 2024 Fellowship'.

## NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

HAVE YOU CHANGED ANY OF YOUR CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION LATELY?

Moving or preparing to move?

Do you have a new address, a new phone number or a new e-mail address?

Do you want to receive our weekly e-blasts about all the activities going on in the church?

Are you getting the mailings from the church?

Please let the church office know if any of your information has changed so that we can stay in touch with you! We are updating our files and want to make sure we have the correct information.



## ON-LINE GIVING UPDATE

Garden City Community Church has 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 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://gccc.breezechms.com/login/create>

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

<https://gardencitycommunitychurch.org>

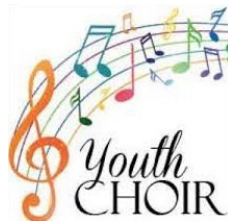
We appreciate your support in our efforts. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Liz or Kim in the office (516)746-1700.

## Musical Ensembles

**Adult Choir** – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm. Performs Sundays & Holidays September through June.



**Youth Choir** – Open to grades 3-8. Rehearsal are Sundays from noon to 12:30pm. Performs 1 Sunday a month at the 10:30 am service before Sunday School dismissal.



**Handbell Choir** – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 6:45 pm – 7:45 pm in modules. Performs 4 times a year.



**Youth Band** – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are 1-2 Saturday mornings per month. Performs 1 Sunday or Special Occasion per month.



For more information contact Frank Crosio, Minister of Music at [music@thegccc.org](mailto:music@thegccc.org)

# April



# 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Office closed for Easter Monday	Prayer Service 9:30am		Adult Choir Practice 8pm		Men's Breakfast 8am Carle Place Diner
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Mission Trip Bowling 2:00 pm Planting/M.S. Youth Group 5:30 pm F&A Meeting 6pm Confirmation 1 class/dinner 6:45pm	Trustees (COT) Meeting 7:30pm	Prayer Service 9:30am		Adult Choir Practice 8pm		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Sunday Forum 11:45am Planting/M.S. Youth Group 5:30 pm (raindate) H.S. Youth Group 6pm Confirmation 1 class 7pm		Prayer Service 9:30am		Adult Choir Practice 8pm		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Service 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Ministry meeting 12 pm M.S Youth Group 6:00 pm <b>Sunday School &amp; Conf. 1 class Not scheduled</b>		Prayer Service 9:30am		Adult Choir Practice 8pm		
28	29	30				
Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Membership Information Meeting 11:30 am Confirmation 1 class 7 pm		Prayer Service 9:30am				