



Garden City Community Church Connections March 2024

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

Pastor's Message

Friends,

Easter arrives the last day of March - a fifth Sunday - a rarity. Ash Wednesday arrived nearly three weeks ago. The liturgy and message for that evening invited us to make three intentions, or promises to God. Here they are:

- I promise, God, to release (from my thinking, my doing, my beliefs / convictions)
- I promise, God, to begin (new thinking, new doing, new believing / conviction)
- I promise, God, to sustain (life-giving thinking, doing, and believing)

We are about one-third of the way through these 40 days of Lent. Like Jesus, we are, in Buechner's words about Jesus' wilderness time as our wilderness time: "supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be...." (*Beyond Words* page 223-224)

He goes on to describe big questions about God and faith. Life choices. Sacrifice. Love. Buechner writes: "To hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are, but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become."

William Bridges, Ph.D., the change practitioner, describes this journey for organizations:

"Transition... is a three-phase psychological reorientation process that people go through when they are coming to terms with change.

It begins with ending - with people letting go of their old reality and their old identity. Unless people can make a real ending, they will be unable to make a successful beginning.

After the ending... the neutral zone. This is no-man's land where people are "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born." (Matthew Arnold). The neutral zone is a time and a state of being in which the old behaviors and attitudes die out, and people go dormant for a while as they prepare to move out in a new direction. It is a dangerous time...also a time when innovations and experiments have an especially good chance of succeeding.

Only after going through each of these first two phases of transition can people deal successfully with the third phase: beginning over again, with new energy, a new sense of purpose, a new outlook, and a new image of themselves." (*Getting Them Through The Wilderness, page 2*)

Perhaps you are noticing, or wondering: am I, are we (church) coming to terms with endings, most noticeably staff / minister change and its aftermath? Are you noticing, or wondering: am I, are we (church) in the neutral zone - "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born"?

The Season of Lent, in a symbolic way, describes the emotional and spiritual process for faithful persons and faithful congregations. You and I, and we, church, cannot know the truly deep gladness of new beginnings - Easter - unless we have released "old reality and identity" and spent a season "wandering between two worlds..." the process of ending and neutral zone, symbolized by the 40 days leading to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Saturday death and burial.

Of course, every individual finds themselves on this continuum from endings to new beginnings. Some of you are gladly, joyfully Eastering now! Others of you are in the grief and distress of endings. Others still wandering and lost. Some of you are glimpsing and sensing the new horizon. Your life apart of the Garden City Community Church and with church are always intertwined. Yet collective church life, like work, school, and home life, live in a particular transition phase or moment.

When you listen to the spirit of the Garden City Community Church, what do you hear? Are you, church, in endings where the spirit of Pharaoh - Bridges calls Pharaoh "the symbol of power and the status quo - tightens it's hold... and plagues of problems develop..."? (page 5) Indeed, everything - from Mission trip and VBS and Sunday School, to governance and fellowship, worship and leadership and more, lives necessarily, for a while, in emotional and spiritual ending and between two worlds: "letting go of their old reality and their old identity." We rightly call this season Lent!

Hear the good news, friends. You are not alone. Endings must have their time, wandering lost too. Jesus leans into prayer and God-companionship. Maundy Thursday must become Good Friday and then, O Church, glad, wholesome, Resurrection!

You are not alone church. God companions. I do too, as do your leaders. During wilderness time some said to Moses - you have taken us to a place with no water, no food, no hope and we will surely die. You are killing us! We were better [before]! (Read Exodus, beginning the end of chapter 15 - chapter 17)

Some of you, dear church, are, like the Israelites in the Exodus story, feeling lost and afraid and uncomfortable. With God's help I will, with Leaders, as did Moses and Aaron, provide nourishment and hope. All who are willing journey into wilderness and through wilderness into Garden City Community Church's new beginning. All who are willing will move from endings, through feeling off balance and unmoored, and cross into the promised land. All who are willing, with God's help.

James Baldwin, quoted by James H. Cone, washes us in God-purpose, who guides and nourishes: "To be with God is to be involved with some enormous, overwhelming desire, and joy, and power which you cannot control, which controls you. I conceive of my own life as a journey toward something I do not understand which in going forward, makes me better. I conceive of God, in fact, as a means of liberation..." (cited in *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*)

What will you release, begin, and sustain, dear one? Church, what will you release, begin, and sustain?

Heart, mind, body, and soul, I am glad to be with you!

Peace,



Schedule a Visit with Pastor Arlen

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

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

His email address is revarlen@thegccc.org. Mobile: 585-455-2289



Inside This Issue

Page 1,2	Pastor's Message
Page 4	Trustees (COT) News
Page 5	Holy Week Schedule & Mission Events
Page 6	Chair Yoga & Easter Egg Hunt
Page 7	Easter Music & Plants Donations
Page 8	Words from our Minister of Music
Page 9	Building News
Pages 9-11	Ministry Activities
Pages 12-13	News from the Office
Page 14	Musical Ensembles
Page 15	March Calendar

Worship Schedule

Sundays

10:30 AM

Livestream & In-person

Tuesdays

Intercessory

Prayer Service

9:30 AM In-person

Council of Trustees News (COT)

To the GCCC Congregation-

I wanted to share again the preliminary timeline for this interim period.

GENERAL TIMELINE	
Now through the Summer of 2024	“Cottage Conversations” to celebrate and take stock in who we have been and who we are now.
Fall 2024 through Winter 2025	Conversations to engage on three questions: God, what are you calling this congregation to be? God, what are you calling this congregation to do? God, who is our neighbor?”
Spring of 2025	Begin to update the Profile based on the learning from above
Summer of 2025	Commission Search and Call Team and begin search

In March the COT and other volunteers will receive training in the interim process and in how to moderate the cottage conversations so that in April we can begin the discussions. We will be seeking volunteers to host a “cottage conversation” in their home . We will also offer space at the church for these small group discussions. Please be ready when the call goes out for volunteers to raise your hand to help GCCC. As I said before, the goal is to get as many people engaged in discussion as possible before we work on updating the GCCC profile.

Meantime I encourage you to reach out to me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

“In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.” — Abraham Maslow

Let’s step forward together.

Faithfully submitted,

Kirsten Bahlke—Council of Trustees (COT) Chair



MISSION EVENTS

2024 Mission Trip — July 14-20

Knoxville, Tennessee

We are so excited to announce that we have a fantastic leader team and our planning for the Mission Trip is well under way! Our leaders are: Jessica Dowd-Wilde, Drew Hearon, Karin Melkonian and Scott Frain. Our junior leaders are: Erin Lanning and Avery Hearon. We will be announcing a bowling date/meeting in the beginning of April - watch for that email. Please mark your calendar for our annual Plant Sale/Car Wash which will be held on May 11th. The plants are truly spectacular - you will not be disappointed!

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 24th — Palm Sunday
10:30am

Thursday, March 28th — Tenebrae Service
will be in the Sanctuary at 8:00 pm

Friday, March 29th — Good Friday
12:00pm—3:00 pm
Prayers & Meditation will be in the Chapel

Sunday, March 31st — Easter Services
in the Sanctuary

6:30 am Sunrise Communion Service

9:00 am Easter Service

10:00 am Easter Egg Hunt (after service)

11:00 am Easter Service

Bi-weekly Food Collections for the Long Island Council of Churches Food Pantry

We have been collecting non-perishable food items 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 soup (NOT Vegetarian and NOT low-sodium), pasta, peanut butter, and jelly. Our next few scheduled donation days are: March 6th and 20th. Donations should be left on the Whitehall porch before noon on the dates mentioned above. Any donations you can make will be greatly appreciated .

Time to volunteer? [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46044897-2024#/#](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46044897-2024#/)

Birthday in a Box - Service Event

On March 10th our older youth will be putting together boxes with birthday supplies for an organization called 'Birthday Wishes of Long Island.' They will create boxes with the supplies needed for a child that is experiencing homelessness to have a Birthday Party.

Birthday Wishes gives the party box to children and their families that are staying in domestic violence safe shelters. You can help them with this project by donating needed items. **Items are due no later than Sunday, March 10th.**

Sign up to donate <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-46627334-birthday>



Chair Yoga led by Amy McCoy, RYT 200

Wednesday March 6th and March 13th from 9:30 am – 10:30 am

Are you new to yoga? Welcome!

Have you been practicing for years? Welcome!

Come join our class in the Chapel with an open mind and an intention to strengthen the body/mind connection. \$10 per class.

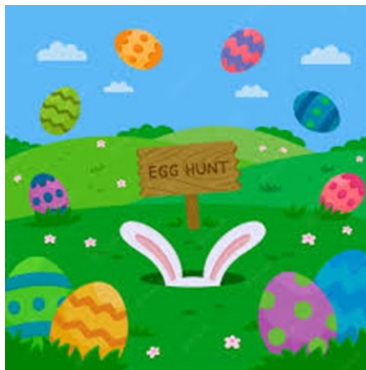
Questions? Call or text Amy (516) 551-9390.



Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2023 - 10:00 am (after the 9:00 am Worship service)

All children (ages 2 through 5th grade) are invited to join us for our annual Easter Egg hunt which will be held in the Playscape after our 9:00 am Easter Sunday Service. For more information contact Amanda Dias at adias@thegccc.org



EASTER MUSIC 2024

If you would like to donate to enhance the Music Program of our Church, you are invited to contribute to the Music Fund. Please fill out the form below and return it to the church office no later than **SUNDAY, MARCH 17**

In memory of: _____

OR

In honor of: _____

Given by: _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____



EASTER PLANTS 2024

We invite you to have Easter plants placed in the Sanctuary in memory of or in honor of loved ones. Please fill out the form below and return it to the church office no later than **SUNDAY, MARCH 17**

I would like to have an Easter plant in the church this year...

In memory of: _____

OR

In honor of: _____

Given by: _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____



Easter Music and Easter Plants

If you are interested in having Easter Plants in the Sanctuary on Easter in honor or in memory of someone or if you would like to donate to enhance the Music Program of the church, you can either fill out the forms above and submit them to the church office or you can donate online. Deadline for donation requests is Sunday, March 17th.

Easter Music: <https://gcc.breezechms.com/form/8e7d2445>

Easter Plants: <https://gcc.breezechms.com/form/8e7d248845>





Words from Our Minister of Music, Frank Crosio

The Holy City – A Garden City Community Church Palm Sunday Tradition

For many church members, the singing of “The Holy City” as part of the Palm Sunday service is a cherished tradition that they look forward to each year. So, I thought I would write a little about the history of the piece and its composer and lyricist.

The Holy City was composed as a ballad for solo voice in 1892. The music was written by the English baritone, Michael Maybrick (1841-1913) who wrote many songs under the pseudonym, Stephen Adams. The Lyrics were written by Frederic Weatherby (1848-1929) who was an English lawyer, author, and lyricist. Although he wrote quite a large number of song lyrics during his lifetime, the two that are the most remembered today are The Holy City, and Danny Boy.

The Holy City has had broad appeal in the worlds of both sacred and secular music. It is mentioned by author, James Joyce, in his novel, *Ulysses*, and was sung by Jeanette MacDonald in the movie, *San Francisco* (1936). It also has enjoyed performances by celebrated choral groups such as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Weatherby’s lyrics center around Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, his crucifixion on Good Friday, and culminates in the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem as foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Last night I lay asleeping, there came a dream so fair;
I stood in old Jerusalem beside the temple there;
I heard the children singing, and ever as they sang,
I thought the voice of angels from heav’n in answer rang.

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Lift up you gates and sing,
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to your King!”

And then I thought my dream was chang’d, the streets no longer rang,
Hush’d were the glad Hosannas the little children sang;
The sun grew dark with mystery, the morn was cold and chill,
As the shadow of a cross arose upon a lonely hill.

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Hark! How the angels sing,
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to your King!”

And once again the scene was chang’d, new earth there seem’d to be.
I saw the Holy City beside the tideless sea;
The light of God was on its streets, the gates were open wide,
And all who would might enter, and no one was denied.
No need of moon or stars by night, or sun to shine by day,
It was the new Jerusalem, that would not pass away.

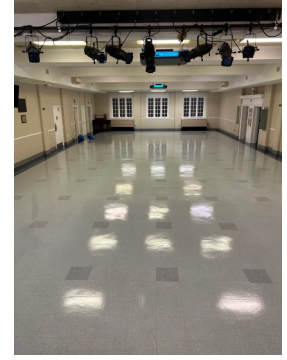
“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Sing for the night is o’er!
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna forevermore!”

I hope these brief thoughts will enhance your enjoyment and understanding of the Anthem when you hear it sung by the choir on Palm Sunday.

News About the Building

Rob Sipkin and Kristian Rhein finished stripping and waxing the floor in Gardner Hall.

Next they will be repainting the Youth Room. Then they will be repairing and painting the walls outside of the boiler room.



MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

News from our Sunday School



Things we have done:

The Sunday School families had a wonderful time going Ice Skating at the Christopher Morley Park. We are looking forward to our next family bonding event. The Sunday School Team is also looking to do some intergenerational events in the near future.

The Sunday School made Valentines for local Veterans and the homebound of the church. The kids had a great time creating for the community.

The Sunday School made Valentine Cake Pops for their loved ones as we learned about loving your neighbor, the Greatest Commandment.

Upcoming Events:

March 10th the Middle School Youth Group and Confirmation class will be working on a service project, Birthday in a Box. They will be putting together boxes and wrapping them. We are in need of donations!

VBS planning meeting: Mar 10th, right after worship! Join us as we begin to plan VBS for this Summer! We can use all the help we can get, so if you are able to please get to this meeting. We will be meeting in the Kensington Room.

Lent activity: The Sunday School Team is planning on having engaging Lenten activities throughout the month. Join us at Sunday School to see what we are up to next!

Palm Sunday, the Sunday School will be singing at the 10:30am service. Come celebrate Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem with us!

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.



Lectio Divina

hosted & facilitated by Rev. Arlen G. Vernava

Join us in the Parlor at 11:45 am on Sundays, March 3rd and March 10th for Lectio Divina (Latin for 'Divine Reading'.) It is a traditional monastic practice of scripture reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. Traditionally, Lectio Divina has four steps: read, meditate, pray and contemplate. Join us to learn more and discover how the word of God speaks to each of us.



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

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'.



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 March 2nd and April 6th 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.**

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.



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!

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.



Deaths

Mark van Schenkhof - January 1, 2024 (GCCC former organist and choir director)

Steve Haussel-February 26, 2024

Baptisms

Aidan Theodore Clark—February 25, 2024

Madelyn Mary Hoge—February 25, 2024

Josie Belle Hoge—February 25, 2024

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://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.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

We had to bid farewell to our Beech Tree.

One side of the tree had a disease and the tree was no longer safe to remain standing.



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

March



2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Men's Breakfast 8am - Carle Place Diner Bell Choir 9am
Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Lectio Divina 11:45am Confirmation I class 6:45pm		4 Prayer Service 9:30am	5 Chair Yoga with Amy 9:30 am	6 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	7 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	8 Bell Choir 9am
3						9
Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Lectio Divina 11:45am VBS Planning Meeting 12pm M.S. Youth / Birthday in a Box 6pm Confirmation I class 7pm	10 Trustees (COT) meeting 7:30pm	11 Prayer Service 9:30am	12 Chair Yoga with Amy 9:30 am	13 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	14 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	15 Bell Choir 9am
						16
Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Ministry Meeting 12pm H.S. Youth Group 6pm Confirmation I class 7pm	17	18 Prayer Service 9:30am	19	20 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	21 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	22
						23
Palm Sunday Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am M.S. Youth Group 6pm F&A meeting 6:00 pm Confirmation I class 7pm	24	25 Prayer Service 9:30am	26	27 Tenebrae Service 8pm	28 Tenebrae Service 8pm	29 Good Friday Prayers & Meditation 12pm – 3pm
						30
Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 am Easter Service 9am -prelude 15 min earlier Easter Egg Hunt 10am (after service) Easter Service 11am-prelude 15 min earlier Fellowship Hour after each service No Sunday School or Confirmation I class	31					