



Garden City Community Church Connections January 2025

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

A Message from Pastor John Livingston

Throughout the Advent and Christmas Season I have shared the inspiring poetry of Ann Weems. She also wrote something appropriate for January: *January's Song*.

There is rumor on the streets that Christmas is over. Lights and ornaments are packed away, trees dragged to the curb, people back to business as usual. We're no longer in the party mood; the humbugging is back in vogue.

This is January..... How can Christmas be over?

The Child is just newborn, the song of Peace and Goodwill still rings in our ears. The shepherds and sages still kneel to this One who is born to us!

How can Christmas be over?? The story of the gospel is just beginning. We who saw the Star now live in its Light. We who saw and heard now believe.

Christmas is not over. We're just beginning to follow this One who calls us now to Live in the Light of Love. Christmas is not over. It's just beginning and this is January's song!!

Well... that is one January song. And I must confess that when I was a child moving into January did mean for me that in some ways Christmas was over and soon I would be heading back to school. I think that's part of the reason I never really liked New Year's Eve. However, when I was growing up my parents always had a big New Year's Eve party. Family and friends, lots of food and drink and they played games. But still, for me, it was a kind of bitter sweet even sad night. One of the traditions of my parents' party was right after midnight, once everyone blew horns and made all kinds of sounds with various noise makers and shouted "Happy New Year" and kissed and hugged everybody, something I avoided until I was about 10 years old, they got into a big circle and locked elbows and swayed back and forth as they sang another January song.....

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and days o' lang syne! For auld lang syne, my dear For auld lang syne, We'll take a cup o' kindness yet. For auld lang syne!

I never really knew what the song meant, I'm still not quite sure, but for me, at least, it meant that we were, like it not, we were now in January. And I have, since my childhood learned to somewhat appreciate New Year's Eve as a time for new beginnings, a time to move on, like the expression:

"Out with the old! In with the new!"

I thought about those words when I recently read an article in *The Christian Century* magazine about a woman who was in Mexico one year with her husband on New Year's Eve. They found themselves in the middle of something they didn't understand at the time.

It was late in the evening, not yet midnight, and the central square was full of people, lights, music, kids, old people, and families. Stands were set up and people were selling, in addition to all the usual souvenirs and food and so forth, an array of very inexpensive pottery, mostly simple clay plates. What was interesting was that people were buying these simple clay plates and then standing back and throwing them with full force against one wall of the great cathedral in the community square, smashing the plates into smithereens.

It was loud and raucous and exciting. Only later did she learn that this tradition grew out of a deep human need to throw out the old, to start the New Year free of old resentments, old fears, old prejudices, old sins. She ended the article with these words:

“I believe the foundation and greatest affirmation of our faith is that we can throw away all those things because God is ready to offer healing and new life.”

As we move forward into January, may we be open to healing and new life.

That reminds me of the expression, “Today is the first day of the rest of your life!”

It is a positive expression about life and that today really can be the first day in your new life. I encourage you to live your new life just one day at a time!

I also encourage you to use Reinhold Niebuhr’s The Serenity Prayer as part of your daily prayers. Most people know the first part, here is the full version.

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change
the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference .
Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time.
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as he did, the sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.
Trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to His will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever.*

New Year Blessings and Peace,

Pastor John Livingston

A Message from Pastor Bonnie

By the time you get this note Christmas will be over. At least all the craze of shopping, making dinners, visiting will be behind you. If you put up a fresh Christmas tree, by now the branches may be hanging lower than they did when you first hung the ornaments on them. Occasionally, you might even hear a quiet silvery tinkle as one of the glass ornaments becomes unloosed from its hook and gently falls down through the branches below. It is time to move on but the church liturgical calendar says we are still in the Christmas season, making our first stop on January 5 reflecting on the visit of the wisemen to the Christ child, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It falls on Sunday, January 5th perhaps reminding us that all our gift giving is not over. What gift of ourselves do we carry into the new year to honor the gift of the savior in our lives? What gifts and talents do we bring to share to realize all the hopes and ideas we have for the church? It is a good question for us to consider in the quieter, wintery days of January.

Would love to hear your thoughts,

Pastor Bonnie

(revbonnie@thegccc.org)



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Worship Schedule

Sundays

10:30 AM

Livestream & In-person

Tuesdays

Intercessory

Prayer Service

9:30 AM In-person

LICC Emergency Food Pantry

Bi-weekly Food Collections



Our next scheduled donation dates are January 8th and 22nd. Please drop off your non-perishable food items on this dates before noon on the Whitehall Blvd. porch. If you want to sign up to be a driver (to deliver our donations), please sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-54023518-2025>

Sunday Forum

Our Sunday Forums will return on Sunday, January 26th it 11:45 am in the Parlor. Max Hill will be speaking.

He is one of our newest members and is delightful to talk to. He can't wait to share with you why he joined GCCC.

Please join us—all are welcome to attend.

Thanks to everyone

Thanks to everyone that helped out or attended the Candlelight Christmas Concert. A special thanks goes to Frank Crosio, for his beautiful music and to Alice Melkonian and Jan Levine for their hard work.

Thanks to everyone that donated gifts for the children at the Nueva Vida Presbyterian Church, Bedford Hills and our mitten trees. They were much appreciated by their recipients.



MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

News from our Sunday School & Youth Groups



Thank you to everyone who helped make the Pageant a great success! The kids had so much fun we hope you all enjoyed it!

Sunday School will return on Jan. 12th! We can't wait to see you all again!

The next Sunday School Event is on Sunday, Jan. 19th. We are looking into going ice-skating. Check for more information in the weekly emails!

Youth emails seem to be going to spam. So, if you do not see the weekly emails check you spam and if they are still not showing up or you would like to be added to the emails please contact Amanda, adias@thegccc.org



The High School and Middle School Youth Groups are having an ice-skating trip on Jan. 12th. If you are interested in signing your child up, please email Amanda, adias@thegccc.org. In the coming weeks, the Sunday School will be learning about important stories about Jesus and his works such as about the parable of the prodigal son, the sisters Mary and Martha, and Zacchaeus. We are using the Sparkhouse Curriculum to make fun and engaging lesson plans for the kids!

In the coming weeks, the Middle School Youth Group will be learning about important historical figures such as Father Broderick Greer and Gustavo Gutierrez. We learn about how these amazing human beings embody the spirit of Christ. We are using the Holy Troublemakers Curriculum to make fun and engaging lesson plans for our teens!

Amanda

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 January 4th and February 1st at 8:00 am at the Carle Place Diner—151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**

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 email churchoffice@thegccc.org.

Here is the link to sign up to be a liturgist:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-54020501-2025>



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, or George Bashian if you have a prayer request. **All requests are kept confidential.**



Communion will be on January 12th (not January 5th)

Please mark your calendars accordingly

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.

News About the Building

Kristian and Joe have been busy setting up for all the festivities and special events that we had here during the Christmas season.

They have also started to strip and wax the floors in the Nursery School.



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 to 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



Musical Ensembles September through June

Adult Choir – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm.



Youth Choir – Open to grades 3-5. 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

The Winter Blues

By LCC Counselors

As the days grow shorter and daylight decreases many people start to notice a change in their mood and a decrease in their energy level. Some days it can be challenging to get out of bed when it is dark and cold. This is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and it is a type of depression.

SAD happens during certain seasons of the year, most often fall or winter. It is thought that shorter days and less daylight may set off a chemical change in the brain leading to symptoms of depression.

There are several things we can do to lessen the impact and duration of depressive episodes, so we can get back to our life and actually enjoy the changing of the seasons.

Some helpful and proactive suggestions include:

- Go outside every day, walk, sit in the grass and look at the sky.
- Be intentional and focus on positive information *via* social media.
- Attend church, pray, meditate and hear the Good News!
- Drink cold water, use ice and add a twist of mint or lemon.
- Clean or organize something for 15 minutes - a drawer, a countertop, make your bed.
- Listen to music, something upbeat with energy. Sing at the top of your voice. Dance!
- Watch something funny, laughing lifts our mood.
- Make food because treating depression involves nourishing your body with healthy food.
- Make something – draw, paint, color, create.
- Reach out to a loved one, talk to a stranger and actively seek out human connection.
- Listen to someone else, volunteer because helping helps you!
- Cuddle with your pets, talk to them and tell them your troubles.
- Light therapy and antidepressants can help treat SAD.

Make an appointment to meet with a professional therapist.

If you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of depression and it is not improving after two weeks, it is important to seek treatment. The Lutheran Counseling Center offers faith-based counselors, available virtually and at some locations in person.

LCC Counselors are available for secure, virtual and, at some locations, in person counseling. For an appointment or for more information, call the Lutheran Counseling Center at 516-741-0994 or 1-800-317-1173 or e-mail us at Center@lccny.org.

**Our mood
and energy
are changed by
shorter days
and decreased
daylight.**

January



2025

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|------------------------------|---|--|--------|---|
| | | | 1 Church Office Closed New Year's Day | 2 Adult Choir 8:00 pm NOT SCHEDULED | 3 | 4 Men's Breakfast Carle Place Diner 8:00 am |
| 5 Sunday Service 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am NOT SCHEDULED Fellowship Hour 11:30 am Confirmation II Meeting 7 pm NOT SCHEDULED | 6 | 7 Prayer Service 9:30 am | 8 Food Donation drop off - noon Council of Trustees (COT) Meeting 7:30 pm | 9 Adult Choir 8:00 pm | 10 | 11 |
| 12 Sunday Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am Americana Fair Wrap up meeting - 11:45 am Confirmation II Meeting 7 pm | 13 | 14 Prayer Service 9:30 am | 15 | 16 Adult Choir 8:00 pm | 17 | 18 |
| 19 Sunday Service 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am NOT SCHEDULED Fellowship Hour 11:30 am Ministry Meeting 12:00 pm Confirmation II Meeting 7 pm NOT SCHEDULED | 20 Church Office Closed MLK Day | 21 Prayer Service 9:30 am | 22 Food Donation drop off - noon Council of Trustees (COT) Meeting 7:30 pm | 23 Adult Choir 8:00 pm | 24 | 25 |
| 26 Sunday Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am Sunday Forum 11:45 am Confirmation II Meeting 7 pm | 27 | 28 Prayer Service 9:30 am | 29 | 30 Adult Choir 8:00 pm | 31 | |