



Garden City Community Church

Connections

January 2026

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

A Message from the Chair of the Council of Trustees

As we step into a new year together, January invites us to pause, reflect, and renew our sense of purpose. It is a season of fresh beginnings—an opportunity to release what no longer serves us and to open our hearts to where God may be leading us next.

I am deeply grateful for this congregation and for the many ways you show up for one another and for our church. Through your time, talents, generosity, and prayers, you help create a place where faith is nurtured, community is strengthened, and hope is shared. These quiet acts of care and commitment are the foundation that allows our church to continue its mission with confidence and grace.

As we continue our search for a new Senior Pastor, this season calls us to practice patience, trust, and hope. Transitions can feel uncertain, but they also create space for discernment and renewal. I invite you to hold this process in prayer—praying for wisdom for those involved in the search, for openness to God's guidance, and for encouragement for one another as we wait. Trust that God is at work, even when the path forward is still unfolding.

As Chair of the Council of Trustees, I want you to know that we begin this year with thoughtful stewardship and a strong sense of responsibility. We are committed to caring well for the resources entrusted to us, ensuring that our church remains a welcoming, vibrant home—not only for those of us here today, but for generations to come.

As we look ahead, may we do so with confidence rooted in faith, remembering that God's love and mercy meet us anew each day. May that promise guide us as we continue this journey together, trusting in God's timing and grace.

Thank you for being part of this faithful community. May the year ahead bring you peace, renewed strength, and moments of grace that remind you of God's presence in both the ordinary and the extraordinary.

With gratitude and blessings for the new year,

Kirsten Bahlke — Chair, Council of Trustees





Inside This Issue

Page 1	A Note from the Council of Trustees (COT) Chair
Page 3	Pulpit Supply, Emergent Pastoral Needs, Men's Breakfast & LICC Emergency Food Pantry Collections
Page 4	Sunday Forums , Tuesday Prayer Service, TestTakers offer to GCCC students, Members at Home list
Page 5	Altar & Fellowship Hour Donations, Ushers & Liturgists Opportunities
Page 6	UCC Christmas Fund Donations, News from the Office, Americana Fair follow-up meeting & Tech Team Request
Page 7	Beat the Jets to Tackle Hunger Flyer
Page 8	Musical Ensembles (Adult Choir, Youth Choir, Handbell Choir, Youth Band)
Page 9	Lutheran Counseling
Page 10	January Calendar

Worship Schedule

Sundays

10:30 AM

Livestream & In-person

Tuesdays

Intercessory
Prayer Service

9:30 AM In-person

Pulpit Supply for January



January 4th—Rev. Noel Vanek

January 11th—Rev. Susan Switzer

January 18th—Rev. Linda Tarry-Chard

January 25th—Rev. Brenda Ford

Emergent Pastoral Needs after August 24th

In the event of a Pastoral Emergency please contact the Church Office for Assistance – 516-746-1700.

**PLEASE
PRAY**

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 3rd & February 7th at 8:00 am: Carle Place Diner 151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**



LICC Emergency Food Pantry Bi-weekly Food Collections

Our next scheduled donation dates are **January 7th and 21st**. Please drop off your non-perishable food items on these dates before noon on the Whitehall Blvd. porch.

- They are in need of: dry cereal (cold), Hot cereal (grits, oatmeal),
- canned vegetables,
- plastic bottles of jelly,
- any kind of soup, pasta, pasta sauce *****especially needed at this time*****
- 1 or 2 pound bags of rice,
- shelf stable milk,
- canned meats (chicken, spam, Vienna sausage)
- toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, feminine products, razors, shampoo, Conditioner)
- all sizes of baby diapers.



If you want to sign up to be a driver to deliver our donations, please sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-60986164-2026>

We are working on a special seasonal donation at this time—please see the flyer in this newsletter to help out. As of the printing of this newsletter, we are slightly behind in donated non-perishable food items (in comparison to yards rushed by the Jets.) Any items you can donate at this time would be much appreciated.

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 if you have a prayer request. **All requests are kept confidential.**



Members at Home List

If you or a loved one would like to be included on our 'Members at Home' list or if you have moved to a residential facility, please make the church office aware by emailing us at: churchoffice@thegccc.org or calling us at (516) 746-1700 prompt 2. We want to make sure we can reach out to you! Do you know a church member that we should add to this list? If so, please let us know.

Sunday Forums

January 25th Forum: All are invited to the Sunday Forum on January 25th at 11:45 a.m. after the 10:30 worship service. Robin Boyle-Laisure, JD will be discussing her recently published book, *Taken No More: Protect Your Children Against Traffickers and Cults (Bloomsbury 2025)*. Signed copies of books will be available for purchase. The book is a culmination of nearly three decades of researching, writing, and presenting on laws pertaining to cults and human trafficking, which are timely topics these days!

On Forum days - Fellowship hour will start in the Parlor at 11:30 am. The forum will start at 11:45 am. If people want to continue with the fellowship hour they can move to the Kensington Room. The fellowship items will remain in the Parlor.



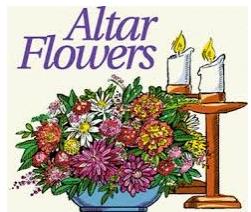
TestTakers starting Winter Classes

TestTakers will be starting classes here in January. They offer SAT prep, ACT prep and academic tutoring. If you are interested in more information contact the church office. They are offering a special discount to GCCC students.



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 2026 Flowers' - or - hand deliver or mail to The Garden City Community Church.

Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-60985577-2026>

Include the wording you wish us to include in the Order of Worship.

2026 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/904084BACAD2EAA8-60985864-2026>

Questions? Call the office at (516) 746-1700 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 2026 Fellowship'.

Worship Ushers or Liturgists Opportunity

Perhaps you would love to serve as an usher or liturgist on Sunday morning?

Please call the church office at (516) 746-1700 or email us at churchoffice@thegccc.org.

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

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-60985875-2026>



Christmas Fund—Special UCC Donation Campaign

During the month of January we will be supporting the UCC—Christmas Fund. This fund provides pension & health benefits, emergency grants & thank-you checks to retired clergy and their families. Every gift to them came from people like you. Please help with this worthy cause if you are able.

Americana Fair

There will be an Americana Fair follow-up meeting on Sunday, January 11th at 11:45 am in the Kensington Room. For more information on how we did and how you can help at the next fair email Cindy Campbell at cindala86@gmail.com



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.

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



HELP US TURN GCCC SPIRIT INTO COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our Goal: To donate more food items than the Jets rush for yards this season



Why: the need for food assistance is greater than ever

How we can help: For this year's football season, please bring in non-perishable goods which will be donated to the LICC Emergency Food Pantry and the INN.

We will share donation updates throughout the season.

Help us beat the Jets to tackle hunger

Musical Ensembles

September through June

Adult Choir – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. The choir sings from Welcome Day in September through Church School Sunday in June.



Youth/Church School Choir – Open to grades 3-5. Rehearses during Church School. Performs at the 10:30 am service before Church School dismissal.



Handbell Choir – Open to H.S. students through adults. Rehearsals are planned in modules before each performance. Performs 4 times a year.



Youth Band – Open to grades 8-12 and college students. Performs on special occasions.



For more information contact Frank Crosio, Minister of Music at music@thegccc.org



JANUARY 2026

WITH SECURE, VIRTUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS
AVAILABLE FOR ANY NEW YORK RESIDENT

Prepared especially for LCC Congregations & Schools



Grief and Loss

By Bettina Bove, LCSW

Grief and loss is something that has or will impact each of us, in one form or another during our lifetime. We experience it in many ways. From the loss of a relationship whether it be from distance, divorce or death, we are affected. Loss of our role when the kids go off to college or leave home. We may experience loss from the impact of someone's addiction, mental illness, a conflict or trust issue in a relationship. Loss due to infertility or miscarriage. Loss of a job, financial security or our professional identity upon retirement. The loss of a home, a community, a feeling of safety or way of life. The loss of our health or the health of someone we care for or a decreased ability to function as we once did. We can even experience loss of hopes and dreams never realized. The list could go on and on.

Often we don't realize or acknowledge the impact our experiences have on us.

- We minimize how much loss affects us, or those around us.
- We can have unrealistic expectations.
- We attempt to intellectualize.
- We impose a time frame of when we should be over something.

Being there for someone in need can mean just that, simply being there.

We benefit more from compassion when it's the heart that needs healing.

Sometimes our experience and discomfort with grief stems not from our own personal loss, but from the effects of loss of someone we care about and their struggle. It can be difficult to be around someone's sadness, anger or agitation. It can be extremely uncomfortable and can trigger our own unresolved feelings. We can feel awkward not knowing what to say or do, feeling as though we're responsible to make someone feel better and feeling badly when we can't. We may want to avoid the person grieving not because we don't care about them, but more likely because we don't have the skill set to deal with those emotions and what it triggers in us. Being there for someone in need can mean just that, simply being there. Just sitting quietly in the same room can be enough. Hand holding, giving a hug, a call, a text or card is a reminder that we are not alone and someone cares, which is what we all want to feel.



Bettina leading a guided meditation – during the pandemic – at LCC's Annual Corporators Meeting in March 2021.

It is important not to compare; honor all feelings and respect our unique time frame. Grief does not have a time limit and can come and go in waves, but it becomes more tolerable over time. Utilize the support of the safe people available to you, and give grace to those who may disappoint you. Be gentle and kind with yourself and others. Rely on the God who is always available to us, for our God is the true and ultimate healer. God wants to comfort us and wants us to draw close, whether you're going through a difficult season now or perhaps in preparation for when you might. Stay close to God – it's what we're made for and allow God to fill those God-shaped holes.

Bettina Bove, LCSW
LCC Counselor

To learn more about [Bettina Bove](#), and all LCC's Counselors, go to <https://www.lccny.org/meetourcounselors>. Call the Lutheran Counseling Center at 516-741-0994 or 1-800-317-1173 or e-mail us at Center@lccny.org to set an appointment.

January



2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
				Church office closed		3
						Men's Breakfast Carle Place Diner 8:00 am
	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Prayer Service 9:30 am	Food Donation drop off - noon			10
	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Prayer Service 9:30 am	Confirmation Classes 6:45pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal 7pm		17
	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Prayer Service 9:30 am	Food Donation drop off - noon Confirmation Classes 6:45pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal 7pm		24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
		Prayer Service 9:30 am		Adult Choir Rehearsal 7pm		31
10						
Sunday Service 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Sunday Forum 11:45am						