



# Garden City Community Church Connections May 2026

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

## A Message from our Council of Trustees (COT) Chair

Spring is here!! A time for exciting new beginnings.

“It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.” Luke 13:19.

We have many exciting things to look forward to, as we enjoy the warmer weather and blue skies.

- The Giving Garden was recently opened. A group of 11 congregants came together to prepare the vegetable beds and plant an early harvest of lettuce and beans for the INN. Keep your eyes open for opportunities to help tend the garden, deliver produce and share fellowship with each other.
- Just like the seeds we planted in the earth, we are anticipating the arrival of our new Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Maria Francesca French in June. She represents Jesus’ mustard seed that will help grow our church outward, as a tree with many branches, expanding our caring and supportive ministry to the surrounding community.
- Here are some ways to help and support our church and help spread the “branches of the tree” that have been planted by our Search and Call team.
  - ◆ Become a church school teacher/helper
  - ◆ Have your car washed at the Mission Trip Plant Sale and Car wash (Sat. May 9<sup>th</sup>)
  - ◆ Experience the Service of Music led by Frank Crosio (May 17<sup>th</sup>)
  - ◆ Help plan and attend Church School Sunday (June 14<sup>th</sup>)
  - ◆ Volunteer at Vacation Bible School (VBS)
  - ◆ Support our youth by attending Mission Trip Fundraisers at Grimaldi’s Pizzeria
  - ◆ Become an usher or a liturgist
  - ◆ Join the choir
  - ◆ Offer to drive a congregant to and from church
  - ◆ Deliver food to the New LIFE Center in Franklin Square and the INN
  - ◆ Join the Tech Team
  - ◆ Sponsor a fellowship hour or altar flowers

These are some simple ways to engage and encourage the growth of our church. Be sure to invite your friends!! Just like a garden needs water and sun, the church needs each and every one of its congregants to help spread its branches, reaching out to positively impact the lives of those around us.

Happy Spring!!

Karin Melkonian, COT Chair





## Inside This Issue

Page 1	A Message from our Council of Trustees (COT) Chair
Page 3	Pulpit Supply, Emergent Pastoral Needs, Men's Breakfast, Mission Trip Fundraisers at Grimaldi's Pizzeria
Pages 4-5	Easter Sunrise Service Reflections by Faith Short
Page 5	Heartfelt Thank You from the Ministry Team
Page 6	Ministry Activities, On-line Giving
Page 7	New LIFE Center—Long Island Food Pantry Donations, Tuesday Prayer Service, Service of Music
Page 8	Mission Trip Plant Sale/Car Wash Flyer
Page 9	Mission Trip Fundraisers at Grimaldi's Pizzeria Flyer
Page 10	Intergenerational Game Night, Donations for the Americana Fair, News from the office & Tech Team Request
Page 11	Musical Ensembles (Adult Choir, Youth Choir, Handbell Choir, Youth Band)
Page 12	Lutheran Counseling Center article
Page 13	May Calendar

## Worship Schedule

### Sundays

10:30 AM

Livestream & In-person

### Tuesdays

Intercessory

Prayer Service

9:30 AM In-person

## Pulpit Supply for May

May 3rd — 10:30 am Rev. Noel Vanek  
 May 10th — 10:30 am Rev. Linda Tarry Chard  
 May 17th—10:30 am Rev. John Livingston  
 May 24th—10:30 am—Rev. Linda Tarry Chard  
 May 31st—10:30 am—Rev. Bonnie McDougall Olson



### **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 May 2nd and June 6th at 8:00 am: Carle Place Diner 151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**



### Mission Trip Fundraisers at Grimaldi's Pizzeria

Support a great cause while enjoying a delicious meal! Join us for a fundraiser at Grimaldi's Pizzeria in Garden City to help fund the upcoming community mission trip to Colorado Springs this July. Whether you are dining in or taking out, a portion of all sales will go directly toward supporting our youth and volunteers as they head out to Colorado to serve and assist with local community projects. It is a wonderful way to enjoy some world-class coal-brick oven pizza while making a tangible difference for our mission team. You must present the flyer at the time of the purchase for us to receive the donation. Flyers will be available shortly, so please look for them in our e-blasts or on the Whitehall desk.

#### **Event Details:**

**Dates:** Wednesday, May 13th & Wednesday, May 20th  
**Time:** 4:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
**Location:** Grimaldi's Pizzeria, 980 Franklin Ave, Garden City, NY  
**Purpose:** Supporting the Garden City Community Church Mission Trip to Colorado Springs



## Easter Sunrise Service Reflection by Faith Short, Junior at the University of Maryland

6 Filbert Street has always meant one thing to me: home.

A three-bedroom house on a street where I knew all of my neighbors' names and life stories. My bedroom has the same decorations from when I was thirteen and had questionable taste. A place that is uniquely familiar to me.

Three years ago, I left 6 Filbert for the University of Maryland in high spirits for this new chapter of my life. I was ready to leave Garden City, my parents, my friends, and everything I knew for the exciting unknowns of college life. A place that promised new friends, experiences, and many adventures.

What I wasn't prepared for were the questions.

Freshman year I discovered for the first time that my decisions had real consequences. Nobody was making sure I ate dinner or got enough sleep. Nobody was checking whether I went to class, which I didn't. Questions that I wasn't equipped for began flooding my mind: Am I at the right school? Am I pursuing the right field of study? What do I want to accomplish in life?

Sophomore year I was thrown into another new and equally terrifying environment: the workforce. I took a gap semester for a software engineering internship. I was convinced I would thrive in this environment. I would become a more efficient engineer, become more certain, and maybe brush up on my office small talk. Instead, I came back with more questions. What kind of life do I want to lead? Is this the field I want to spend the next forty years in? Am I talented and strong enough to make it?

In all of that confusion, I had one anchor: 6 Filbert. On a whim, I could simply hop on an Amtrak and escape all the questions. When I was home, everything felt familiar. There were no deeper questions to ask because it was a place that already knew who I was.

In today's reading, we find Mary Magdalene at her own kind of threshold.

She comes to the tomb early in the morning, before the sun has fully risen. She carries with her a grief she doesn't know how to handle. She is desperate for familiarity. She hopes to find something at the tomb to ground her in this confusion and darkness.

Instead, she finds that the stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty and the body is gone.

She has already lost her teacher once, and now it feels like she has lost him again.

She sits outside the tomb weeping, trying to understand what has happened. She is so consumed by grief that she doesn't recognize Jesus, even when he is standing directly in front of her. She instead mistakes him for the gardener.



## **Easter Sunrise Service Reflection by Faith Short, Junior at the University of Maryland (continued)**

It would be easy to judge Mary in this moment. But she is experiencing something deeply human. She came to the tomb longing for comfort and familiarity, and instead, she was met with something entirely new. And that's just it.

The resurrection is not a return to the status quo. Jesus explicitly tells Mary not to hold on to him, as he has not come back to resume his teachings. Instead, his resurrection has ushered a new era. One with a new relationship between man and God, and a new promise of eternal salvation.

Mary came to the tomb seeking the familiar. I kept going back to 6 Filbert for the same reason. And there is nothing wrong with that. We, as human beings, are all wired to seek home in hard times. To find familiarity in the darkness. While this longing for safety and belonging is not a weakness. We cannot let it keep us from venturing into the unknown.

I'm finishing my junior year now. I've lived in the same apartment for two years with three girls who I now consider my best friends. I've spent the last year and a half with someone who has broadened my perspective and challenges me every day. And somewhere in the middle of all of this, my definition of home began to change.

Home was never just 6 Filbert. It was the people and the community that sat at the center of. Home was my parents, my sister, my friends, and this church community. The people who see you for who you are and choose to stay.

Over the last three years, I have felt how Mary felt at the tomb. Confused, disoriented, and full of questions, I couldn't answer. But when I look back now, I can see that the confusion wasn't a sign that something was awry. It was a sign that I was growing. Every hard question was pulling me away from my comfort zone and into brighter and better versions of myself.

So today, as we celebrate Easter, I want to invite you to think about your own tomb. Whatever situation in your life feels empty, disorienting, or not what you expected. And I want to ask you the same question Mary's story asks me: Are you willing to recognize the new life that might already be right in front of you?

### **A Heartfelt Thank You**

Despite the cloudy skies and drizzle at 6:31 am, the spirit of our Easter Sunrise Service remained bright. Moving the service into the Chapel provided a unique, resonant space for our guest violinist to lead us in worship.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated team who made this morning possible through their planning, prayers, setup, and hospitality:

Janet Martens	Tim Martens	Kristain Rhein	Kim Salsberg	Faith Short
Steve Short	Doug Yasso	Marina Kelley-Renda (Violinist, Adelphi University Senior)		

Thank you for your service and for being such a welcoming presence to our visitors!

The Ministry Team



**The Ministry Team Invites All to  
Participate in the Ministry Activities at the GCCC**



**Give a Gift of Love by Donation of Alta Flowers**

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

**Provide Refreshments for Fellowship**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-60985864-2026>

**Be a Guest Liturgist**

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

**Become an Usher**

Call the office at (516) 746-1700 or email [churchoffice@thegccc.org](mailto:churchoffice@thegccc.org)

**ON-LINE GIVING**

Garden City Community Church is 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 in the office (516)746-1700.



## Food Pantry Bi-weekly Food Collections

We are now taking our food donations to: the **New LIFE Center-Long Island.**



### 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,
- 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.

Our next scheduled donation drop-off dates are **May 13th and 27th** . 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/904084BACAD2EAA8-60986164-2026>

## 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.**



## Service of Music

Please join us on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at our 10:30 am service for our annual Service of Music performed by the Adult Choir, soloists, string ensemble and organ. The pieces will be *'Hear My Prayer'* and *'I Waited for the Lord'* by Felix Mendelssohn.



# Garden City Community Church

## 2026 Plant Sale & Car Wash

Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>

8am – 12pm



Please come support our Mission Trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado this summer by getting your car washed, and purchasing beautiful plants

All proceeds of the Plant Sale and Car Wash go towards  
the 2026 Mission Trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado

Rain or Shine

245 Stewart Ave, Garden City, NY 11530

**GRIMALDI'S**  
 Garden City  
 Coal Brick-Oven Pizzeria  
**\*\*GRIMALDI'S GIVES BACK\*\***

**Grimaldi's of Garden City: Giving Back to the Community**

\*\*Partnering with The Garden City Community Church Mission Trip\*\*

**\*\*PRINT THIS FLYER or SHOW A PHOTO TO YOUR SERVER\*\***

We're proud to host two special fundraising days to support the Garden City Community Church's upcoming mission Trip to Colorado Springs in July.

**\*\*Dates:\*\***

**\*\*Wednesday, May 13th\*\***

**\*\*Wednesday, May 20th\*\***

**Time: Lunch-11:30-4pm Dinner- 4PM - 9PM**

**\*\*How You Can Help: \*\***

When you dine in or order take-out (*take-out orders must be called in*)

**\*\*15% of your dinner bill will be donated\*\***

directly to The Garden City Community Church for this vital cause.

**\*\*About the Mission Trip \*\***

The purpose of the trip is to support a poverty-stricken neighborhood. Our representatives will participate in building projects for families in transitional housing, join outreach events in the community, and engage in tangible service projects that meet the food and shelter needs of individuals living in states of at-risk homelessness or homelessness.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

**YOU MUST PRINT & PRESENT THIS FLYER or SHOW A  
 PHOTO TO YOUR SERVER  
 AT THE TIME OF PAYMENT!!**

## Intergenerational Game Night—Friday May 29th at 6:00 pm

We are having an intergenerational Game Night! Come down and join us for a night of games and laughter. Feel free to bring your favorite boardgame to share. Friday, May 29th at 6:00pm in the community room.



### Donations for Americana Fair

We are collecting donated items for this year's Americana Fair. Please contact Gloria in the office for more info or to schedule a drop-off time at (516) 746-1700 option 2. The fair will be held on **Saturday, Nov. 7th from 10am-3pm.**



## 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

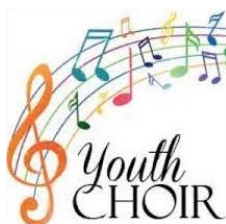


## Musical Ensembles September through June

**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](mailto:music@thegccc.org)

MAY 2026

WITH SECURE, VIRTUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS  
AVAILABLE FOR ANY NEW YORK RESIDENT  
Prepared especially for LCC Congregations & Schools

## “Addiction and Recovery”

By Bettina Bove, LCSWR

**T**he disease of addiction is present in our world, our society and our families lives today. We face new temptations and challenges in today's modern world with the legalization of marijuana and new addictive substances readily available.

Alcohol has been prevalent and socially acceptable in the world since the beginning of time. But for some, it has devastating effects. Drugs whether consumed socially or medically prescribed can also have an addictive component. One of the most challenging things about substance use and addiction is the denial factor that accompanies it. Often making someone treatment resistant. We can become addicted to anything mood and mind altering. When something is utilized beyond its intended use, it has the potential to become dysfunctional. The impact on the family isn't just on the identified person using substances. It can affect family members and the family system for generations. Relatives of individuals with addiction are more likely to develop similar issues. Inherited genes influence how the brain and body respond to alcohol, drugs, and behaviors that have an addictive component. Similar to risks for diabetes or heart disease. Addiction does not have to be destiny. Having a family member with an addiction does not mean you will develop one; it means you have a higher risk factor. Prevention tactics are important. Early awareness, education, and intervention can significantly mitigate the genetic component and environmental risks.

**One of the most challenging things about substance use and addiction is the denial factor.**

There is an impact on the family system when there is active abuse or addiction in a family member. With the best of intentions helping can morph into enabling and become a roadblock and hindrance to recovery instead of help. We can “help someone to death” by not allowing them to experience the consequences of their choices to become motivated to make different choices and change. Treatment is important for all members of a family, not just the person with the identified issue.

Comorbidity or co-occurring disorders between addiction and mental health issues is very common. Many people self-medicate mental health issues unaware that that's what they're doing until the substances create a secondary issue.

**T**reatment and recovery is available and prevalent in our society today. We are more knowledgeable and educated than ever before. Hopefully this impacts and diminishes any stigma associated with addiction and mental health issues. 12 step recovery programs are available around the clock and around the world. The recovery community includes opportunities for treatment, fellowship, and healing for friends, families, and those that are or have been impacted in the past by mental health issues, addictive behaviors, or dynamics. It is imperative to not be alone in these issues and utilize assistance from others who are well versed in addressing these problems.



Bettina Bove, presented on  
“Addiction & Recovery”  
at LCC’s Annual Corporators’ Meeting

Bettina Bove, LCSWR

To learn more about [Bettina Bove, LCSWR](https://www.lccny.org/meetourcounselors) 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](mailto:Center@lccny.org) to set an appointment.

# May



# 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Men's Breakfast 8am Carle Place Diner
						2
3 Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Middle School Youth Group 6pm	4	5 Prayer Service 9:30am	6	7 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	8	9 Plant Sale/Car Wash 8am- noon
10 Mother's Day Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am	11	12 Prayer Service 9:30am	13 Food donations drop off before noon Grimaldi's Fundraiser 4:00pm - 9:00pm COT Meeting 7pm	14 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	15	16
17 Service of Music/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Ministry Meeting 12:00pm	18	19 Prayer Service 9:30am	20 Grimaldi's Fundraiser 4:00pm - 9:00pm	21 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	22	23
24 Service 10:30am Sunday School 10:30am <b>NOT SCHEDULED</b> Fellowship Hour 11:30am	25	26 Prayer Service 9:30am	27 Food donations drop off before noon	28 Adult Choir Practice 8pm	29 Intergenerational Game Night 6pm	30
31 Service/Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship Hour 11:30am High School Youth Group 6pm						