



Garden City Community Church

Connections

September 2026

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

Dear Church,

I am writing this the night before I leave for my little end-of-summer holiday. It is almost 9 p.m., the night before an international flight, and I am thinking of you, as I do so often.

My bags are packed. In front of me is a hat box carrying a newly purchased Panama hat and a raffia fedora. Beside me is a small travel bag for when I want to pack light. There is a tiny bit of Diet Coke left, even though I know perfectly well I shouldn't be drinking caffeine at this hour. There is a legal pad and a to-do list covered in scratchings that only I can read. And my passport is sitting next to my computer, ready to be worked out again after a long night's sleep.

And still, I am thinking about you.

And I am so happy to be.

I have written to you many times this summer. Through e-blasts, *On the Way to Sunday with Dr. French*, newsletters, the *GC News*, and even a survey about a potential new service, I have tried to be as transparent as I can about what is happening at our church. I have encouraged my team to do the same.

We know you want to hear from us.

We know you want to know what is happening and what is coming.

And the truth is, we are so excited to tell you.

Not simply because we have a calendar full of new events and programs, but because we are working very hard to partner with you to build a church where life is flowing, meaning is being made, community continues to grow and form, and where all can find belonging.

That is the work.

And it is good work.

I want to thank you for a beautiful first three months. They have been an absolute gift to me.

My role has not been without its challenges, but I believe you called me because you knew I was up to the task. And I hope that these first three months have shown you that I believe in this church, I believe in its people, and I believe deeply in what we can become together.

As I look forward to this next week and a half away to rest, recharge, and step outside the ordinary rhythms of church life, I know that I will also be thinking about what comes next.

(continued on next page)

Continuation of Dr. French's September letter

I want to return with fresh imagination.

New questions.

New possibilities.

And renewed energy for the work of creating the future of this church together.

I know this newsletter will arrive just after I return. But I wanted you to hear these sentiments from my heart as I prepare to travel because even as I leave, I am carrying you with me.

Thank you for these first three months.

Thank you for your trust.

Thank you for your welcome.

Thank you for the ways you have already made this place feel like home.

You are so loved.

And I know I am, too.

Thank you for that.

With all my love,

Your pastor,

Maria



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Worship Schedule

Sundays

10:30 AM

Livestream & In-person

Tuesdays

Intercessory

Prayer Service

9:30 AM In-person

A Message from our Council of Trustees (COT) Chair

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43: 19

At the GCCC, we have a rich history. After almost 100 years, of worshiping, serving and gathering together, we are writing a new chapter of our story with the help of Rev. Maria. Here are some highlights.....

- A new VBS program followed by a Carnival Extravaganza was held. Twenty-nine children and their parents from both the church and the community attended. The children learned about one of Jesus’ many miracles – healing a paralyzed man. This was followed by carnival games, a bouncy house, face painting, balloon animals and cotton candy.
- We are starting a new combined Middle school and High school youth group combining worship with engaging discussions and events.
- A Women’s group, called Le Salon will meet on Sept. 25th at 6pm. This will be a special time for women come together and connect in friendship and faith.
- Animals are important. We will be celebrating our animals in a special church service to “Bless the Animals”, on Sept. 27th at 10:30am, in Gardner Hall.
- A new Stewardship campaign is being implemented for October which we have named Stewardship month. This campaign is essential to the functioning of our church including faith programming, special events (shared meals, VBS, movie nights, etc.), staff salaries, building maintenance, etc.

These new programs will provide new opportunities for people to gather, worship and connect. We are moving from the wilderness together into exciting new places. Come, “travel” with me, as we do exciting new things together!!!

Faithfully,

Karin





Christian Education Updates

from Amanda Dias, Youth Ministry/Outreach Coordinator

It is finally September! The Garden City Community Church is ready and excited to start up our youth programming for the 2026-2027 year. We are starting off with a bang! We hope to see you at our Welcome Back Outdoor Movie Night on Sept. 12th at 7:00 pm. We will be watching "Because of Winn Dixie", brought to you by the Piotrowski Family! Then Welcome Day on the 13th! Sunday School will be starting up again for the year! We will have a luncheon to follow the service and even an ice cream truck! **Please RSVP so we have enough food!** Starting on the 20th we will be splitting our Sunday School into 3 classrooms by age group! This means we are going to need a lot of help! We need leaders to help with supervision, crafts, activities, but we are also looking for teachers, those willing to run the lessons. We are looking to create a rotation of leaders so everyone gets a chance to go to church.

We are also running our traditional programs like 3rd grade bible and communion. We will need volunteers for those as well! You will be working directly with Dr. French on these programs. We have confirmation leaders for this year but feel free to chat with any of the leaders and think about if that would be something you would like to participate in next year!

Our Youth Group will be starting up again in October. We are combining the two groups, middle school and high school. We are also changing up the format, making it a youth service. Anyone who has been on the Mission Trip has had a taste of something like what we are planning on doing. But in order for everything to come together we are going to need a lot of help! We are looking for anyone who considers themselves musically inclined to help out, not every meeting but whenever you have the time. We are also looking for a lay leader to help with supervision, games, discussion, etc... Look out for a sign-up sheet coming soon.

Exciting things are happening and we hope you are a part of them. Working together we can build a village for our kids. One that helps them grow into followers of Christ. For information on any of our programs please reach out, adidas@thegccc.org.

Registration Forms for Youth Programs

We need completed registration forms on file for all children that will be participating in our Sunday School classes, our Confirmation class, our Middle School Youth Group and/or our High School Youth Group. The links are below to fill out the forms for our upcoming school year. These forms also have an area where you let us know if we have consent to use photos. Please make sure to fill out this area as well.

Sunday School registration form: <https://gccc.breezechms.com/form/SundayS2599>

Confirmation Class registration form: <https://gccc.breezechms.com/form/25Confo178>

High School Youth Group registration form: <https://gccc.breezechms.com/form/HSYG2552>

Middle School Youth Group registration form: <https://gccc.breezechms.com/form/MSYG252>



Garden City Community Church Financial Picture as of July 31, 2026

The financial position of Garden City Community Church remains stable and in line with our current budget. Through July 31, 2026, we have received \$130,033 of the \$214,355 pledged for 2026, reflecting the continued generosity and commitment of our congregation.

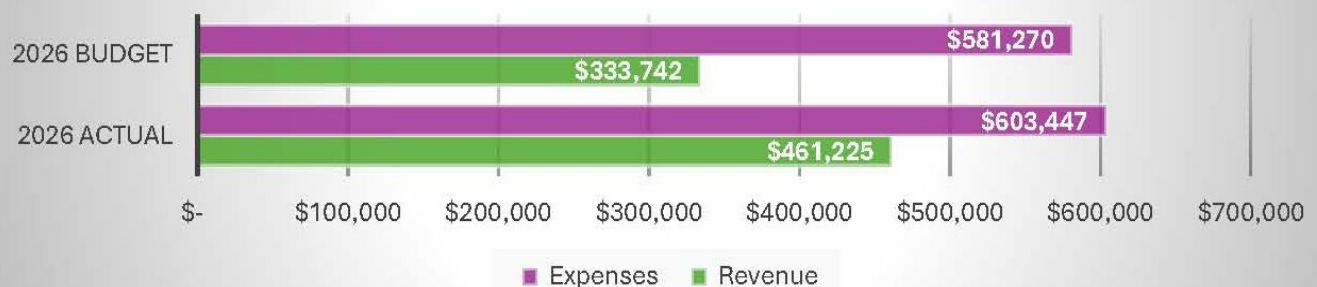
While overall revenue and expenses remain consistent with budget expectations, we acknowledge that energy costs continue to exceed budget projections. Despite these increased utility expenses, the church's financial outlook remains positive, and we continue to monitor spending carefully to ensure responsible stewardship of our resources.

We are grateful for the faithful support of our members and friends whose contributions sustain the ministries, programs, and mission of Garden City Community Church. As we move through the remainder of 2026, we remain committed to prudent financial management while supporting the work and future growth of our church community.

**Revenue July YTD
2026**



**2026 Net Income/ (Deficit)
Jan-July**



Community Adventures Summer Camp celebrates 15 years

The Garden City Community Church Nursery School recently celebrated its 15th year of Community Adventures Summer Camp, continuing a tradition of providing young children with a fun, enriching, and nurturing summer experience. Held Tuesday through Thursday mornings over four weeks, the camp is led by the Nursery School's experienced teachers and supported by more than 50 dedicated volunteers, ranging from sixth graders to high school students from Garden City and neighboring communities.

Each day is filled with play-based learning and discovery. Campers enjoy arts and crafts, painting, puzzles, imaginative play, and plenty of outdoor adventures. Favorite activities include exploring the school's natural playground, riding bikes, bouncing on mini trampolines, splashing at the water tables, and making new friendships while reconnecting with familiar faces.

One of the most cherished traditions is snack time, when all of the campers gather together to say their prayers and proudly sing their group songs. Heartwarming moments are never in short supply, especially when siblings of different ages find each other on the playground for a quick hug before returning to their friends and activities.

As the excitement of summer comes to a close, the Nursery School is looking forward to welcoming both returning families and new students when the school year begins in early September. Limited openings are currently available in the Pre-K, 3-year-old, and 2-year-old programs, including the Play School program.

Families interested in learning more about the Garden City Community Church Nursery School are encouraged to visit GCCCNurserySchool.com, email gcccnursery@gmail.com, or follow the school on Instagram @gcccnurseryschool for updates and a glimpse into daily life at the school. Now is a wonderful time to discover why so many local families have chosen the Garden City Community Church Nursery School as the foundation for their children's early learning journey.



UCC Special Donation—Neighbors in Need

During the month of the month of September we will be collecting donations for the UCC's special offering — Neighbors in Need.

Gifts to Neighbors in Need support the United Church of Christ's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The other two-thirds of the offering support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and grants. Neighbors in Need grants are annually awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. Envelopes will be provided in the Order of Worship if you wish to contribute.



Tuesday Prayer Group

The Prayer Group 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.



Highlights of the 2026 Metropolitan Association Meeting

On Saturday, April 18th, the Metropolitan Association held its Spring Meeting at St. Alban's Congregational Church. Deborah Dee Brayton and the Metro Association planning team successfully offered a well-rounded event to host Metro churches including laity, clergy, and delegates. St. Alban's, with their 45 volunteers, did a beautiful job of extending hospitality to all.

Garden City Community Church was well represented by Kitt Von Braunsberg, Mary Dewar, and Melva Victorino. Both Mary and Melva were recognized for their decades of dedicated service to the United Church of Christ (UCC). Melva Victorino was elected to one of the committees.

Rev. Yvette Michelle Wynn, Association President, declared the state of the Association to be strong, but challenged by the task of bracing congregations who are struggling financially due to waning membership. The Association was then actively assisting the five or so members of St. Mark's, Ridgewood (Queens), who, sadly, could no longer keep their church open. Wellness of clergy and congregations was the resonating theme of the day. The emphasis was on building relationships across the Association in order to strengthen churches and support clergy by sharing resources among neighboring congregations. This would enable the Love of Christ to be extended throughout the larger community. Also, clergy retreats are being scheduled to support ministers spiritually and to address any particular needs.

In response to this point at issue, the Metro Board launched two new committees to address the stated needs. The Committee on Communication was established to bolster the connections among churches to encourage shared ministries. Both Rev. Noel Vanek and Rev. Susan Switzer, already known to GCCC, will serve on this commission. The second committee established is aptly known as "Acts 4:32." Its purpose is to establish an emergency assistance endowment for local churches. The goal is to raise \$20,000 to begin making grants to congregations facing unexpected financial hardships. If anyone feels moved to contribute to this fund, please see me and I will get you further information.

In keeping with the theme of sharing, GCCC received Honorable Mention for Our Church's Wider Mission's (OCWM) "5 for 5." This nomenclature represents the fund from congregations for conferences and the ministries of the UCC. The honor is accorded to too few churches and its recognition will be cited at the next national UCC Synod. Way to go GCCC— "God loves a cheerful giver."! (Cor. 9:7)

Other business addressed was the new prerequisite for ministerial standing. Rev. Emily Brown, Co-Chair of the Committee on Ministry announced the requirement for 3 and 4 way covenants among active ministers and retired ministers who are church members; their affiliated church; the Association; and, whenever possible, outside employers of chaplains and other clergy who are church members. A three-year grace period will be given for completion.

During lunch, Mary Dewar had an opportunity to address the delegation and relate some of her experiences as a missionary nurse in China. For those who wanted to hear more (and it would seem to be many), she was able to promote her book, "Behind the Red Curtain." Deservedly, she received a standing ovation.

It is my hope that this account provides a bit more insight into our Association, and what an important part of the greater Church that GCCC plays. I am truly proud to be a member of the GCCC and to acknowledge its contributions to the UCC ministries our congregation supports!

Respectfully Submitted, In Love, Our Source, Kitt Von Braunsberg

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. **The next meetings are on September 5th and October 3rd at 8:00 am: Carle Place Diner 151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**



9/11 Memorial Service

We will be holding a 25th anniversary 9/11 service on Friday evening, September 11th at 7:00 pm. All are invited to attend.



Blessing of the Animals

Join us on Sunday, September 27th at our regular 10:30 am service. This service will include a blessing of the animals. All pets are welcome to attend. We are planning to hold & livestream the service in Gardner Hall. We will be having lunch afterwards. You bring your lunch and we will supply the dessert and pet treats. All are invited to attend.

Le Salon—A Gathering for Women

September 25th—6:00 pm

All women are welcome to join Rev. Dr. Maria Francesca French for conversation, connection, and petite refreshments.

See our flyer in this newsletter and watch our e-blasts for more info.



Service Requests for help with our Giving Garden & needs for the New LIFE Center

Our vegetable garden is thriving so we are looking for volunteers in the coming weeks and months to pick the vegetables from the garden to take them over to the New LIFE Center. Their address is 145 Franklin Avenue Franklin Square, NY. Deliveries can be made from Monday-Friday 9am-1pm. Their cross street is Plane Ave. The phone number for the director, Lynn Butte is (516) 238-1035. Interested in helping with the garden—please speak to Suzanne Roche or contact the church office at (516) 746-1700.

We've been told by Lynn that the clients especially love the fresh vegetables. They immediately take the fresh produce as soon as it arrives and that the produce shelves are often bare.



To sign up to take the food donations over to the pantry go to:

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

The items for the senior kits are in high demand. The items requested are:

The items requested are:

- 2 rolls of toilet paper
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 1 small bottle of dish detergent
- 1 small bottle of laundry detergent
- 1 small bottle of concentrated cleaner (like Lysol)
- 1 sponge with scrubbing side

All non-perishable items are needed by the Lew LIFE Center Pantry but they especially need the following items at this time:

- complete pancake mix & syrup
- jelly/jam
- dried beans: red & black
- canned salmon & sardines
- spam
- ramen
- juice boxes & 64oz bottles
- Coffee-instant & ground-regular & decaf
- Ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce, hot sauce & salad dressings
- Canned corn
- 1 or 2 lb. packages of sugar & flour
- Masa Flour (corn flour)
- Spices/seasonings: onion powder; garlic powder; crushed red pepper; Goya Adobo all-purpose seasoning; cumin, curry powder

Essential Care Products Needed:

- Toilet paper
- Laundry detergent pods
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Unscented bar soap
- Small bottles of dish detergent
- Shaving cream & Razors
- VO5 3 in 1 for Men (Shampoo, conditioner & body wash)

Baby Items Needed:

- Baby wipes
- Diapers-size 4, 5 & 6

Miscellaneous:

- Dry Cat & Dog food (**not grain free**)



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 or Tim Martens. 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.



Facilities Team Update

The Facilities Team has had a busy and productive summer in 2026. In addition to maintaining the daily operations of our church building and providing support for our many summer rental groups, the team has been hard at work refreshing the Church School Wing. Their efforts have included painting, repairs and improvements designed to create a brighter, more welcoming environment for our children, families, and visitors. They have also been working on a few annual maintenance projects for the GCCC Nursery School. We are grateful for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that our facilities remain safe, attractive, and ready to serve the many ministries and community groups that call GCCC home.

GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

245 STEWART AVE, GARDEN CITY

WE REMEMBER

A SERVICE FOLLOWED BY CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
AND REMEMBRANCE LIGHTS.

SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2026 - 7PM
OPEN TO ALL



GARDEN CITY
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Outdoor MOVIE NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2026

START AT 7:00 PM

“BECAUSE OF WINN DIXIE”

REGISTER HERE:



JOIN US!

BRING A CHAIR OR A BLANKET AND
SETTLE IN FOR A WONDERFUL
NIGHT! ALL ARE WELCOME!
SUGGESTED DONATION OF \$5 TO
HELP COVER CRAFTS AND SNACKS!

A CRAFT FOR
THE KIDS



FOR MORE INFORMATION: ADIAS@THEGCCC.ORG
245 STEWART AVE, GARDEN CITY

GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH
245 STEWART AVE

JOIN US FOR
WELCOME DAY!

READY, SET, GO!

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION NOW OPEN



REGISTER HERE FOR LUNCHEON

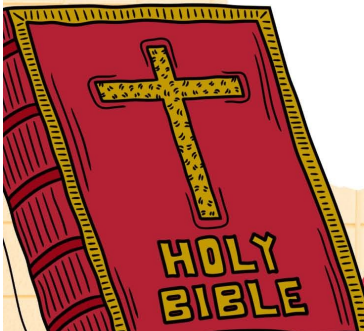
SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2026

WELCOME DAY SERVICE 10:30AM
LUNCHEON, GAMES, MR SOFTEE TO FOLLOW

BRING
YOUR
BACKPACK
TO BE
BLESSED!

COME AND START THE 2026-2027 YOUTH PROGRAM
YEAR WITH US! WE WILL HAVE A SPECIAL CRAFT AND
A LUNCHEON TO FOLLOW THE SERVICE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL ADIAS@THEGCCC.ORG



FRIDAY, SEP 25TH, 6PM, 245 STEWART AVE, GARDEN CITY



a gathering for women:
conversation, connection, and petite refreshments

Free childcare will be provided

GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH



SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 | GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH | 245 STEWART AVE.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

BRING YOUR PET TO GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH FOR A PERSONAL BLESSING AND A SERVICE DEVOTED TO OUR PETS. BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH FOR AFTER.

ALL ANIMALS ARE WELCOME. PLEASE ENSURE YOUR PET IS UNDER FULL CONTROL AT ALL TIMES. PERHAPS LEAVE YOUR PET TIGER AT HOME. THIS WILL TAKE PLACE DURING OUR REGULAR SUNDAY 10:30AM SERVICE, WHICH WILL BE HELD IN GARDNER HALL FOR THIS WEEK.



245 STEWART AVENUE AT
WHITEHALL BLVD., GARDEN CITY

November 7, 2026 **10:00 AM — 3:00 PM**

The Garden City • Community Church
Americana Fair



**We Need
YOUR Help!**

Please donate any items to the fair. We will accept clean and gently used men's and women's clothing, kids' clothing, jewelry, china, crystal, silver, pictures and frames, lamps, toys, holiday items, and household items. Make sure all items are clean and in saleable condition. **NO LARGE PIECES OF FURNITURE OR ELECTRONICS, PLEASE.**

Donation Drop-Off Times:

Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday between 9am – 3pm.
Please call the office at (516) 746-1700.

No donations accepted after November 5th



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



Give a Gift of Love by Donation of Altar 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

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.



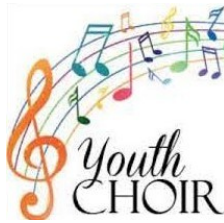
Musical Ensembles

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

September



2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Food Donation drop off - noon	2	3	4 Men's Breakfast Carle Place Diner 8:00 am	5
6 Sunday Service 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Not Scheduled Fellowship Hour 11:30 am	7 Labor Day – office closed	8 Prayer Service 9:30 am	9	10	11 9/11 25 th anniversary memorial service 7:00 pm	12 Outdoor Movie Night 7:00 pm
13 Welcome Day Sunday Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Welcome Day Luncheon/Ice cream truck 11:30 am	14 Prayer Service 9:30 am	15 Food Donation drop off - noon	16	17	18	19
20 Sunday Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am	21 F&A Meeting 4:00 pm	22 Prayer Service 9:30 am	23 Adult Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm	24 Le Salon - A Gathering for Women 6:00 pm	25	26
27 Blessing of the Animals Service/Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30am Ministry Meeting 12:00 pm	28	29 Prayer Service 9:30 am	30 Food Donation drop off - noon			