Garden City Community Church
Connections
July 2026

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

Dear GCCC,

What a month it has been!

We are well into our sermon series, *We Begin…Again*. Children's Sunday was a joyous success, our picnic afterward was fun and well attended, we celebrated two nursery school graduations, made some aesthetic updates around the church, reformulated our e-blasts, and so much more.

And we're not slowing down anytime soon!

Looking toward July, we are excited to continue preparing for our one-night carnival extravaganza VBS, Sunday Fundays for kids, our mission trip and Mission Trip Sunday, Lobster Fest, and all the other ways we gather, serve, and celebrate together.

It has been such a joy to begin settling into this role as your Senior Minister. Ministry—especially at this level—is a tremendous honor, gift, and responsibility, one that I do not take lightly.

When I meet with teams and committees, when decisions are being made both large and small, I always have you in mind. I think about your hopes for this church, your dreams for its future, and the kind of community we are building together.

Even something as simple as updating our entryway and bulletin boards comes from that place. My hope is that when you walk through our doors, you encounter beauty, hospitality, and a deeper sense of belonging. Because we are always telling a story about who we are at Garden City Community Church.

We tell it from the pulpit each week. We tell it through our garden, our service projects, our ministries, our community events, and the ways we care for one another. We tell it through how we lead, how we welcome, and how we imagine the future together.

That same story—past, present, and future—should be reflected throughout our building as well.

That is why we have made some of these small but meaningful changes to the entryway. And while I have many ideas for our spaces, they are not *my* spaces. They are *our* spaces. This is not my church; it belongs to all of us—to those who came before us, those who are here now, and those who will come after us.

With that in mind, I would love to begin assembling a small team to help think creatively about the visual life of our church.

Gloria and I have been managing the bulletin boards, but I would love additional help rotating displays and keeping our shared spaces fresh and engaging. I am also interested in gathering a group to think more broadly about signage, hallway displays, historical artifacts, and how we tell the story of GCCC through our physical environment.

Continuation of Dr. French's July letter

We have so many beautiful pieces in our archives that deserve to be seen and appreciated. And yes, I still have a fever dream of restoring our phone booth as a heritage feature!

Most of all, I would love to invite some of our younger members into this work. Fresh eyes often help us see new possibilities while honoring the rich history that brought us here.

If any of this sparks your interest, I would love to hear from you. Please reach out to me at pastor@thegccc.org.

In truth, my inbox and office door are always open. I would love to get coffee with you, hear your ideas, and continue getting to know you better.

I am grateful for all that we have already begun together, and I look forward to what comes next.

Grace and peace,

Maria
Rev. Dr. Maria Francesca French
Senior Minister
Garden City Community Church

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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

"Build homes and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce." Jeremiah 29:5

Rev. Maria has been with us less than a month and she has already accomplished so many things in her short time. Not only is she learning the ins-and-outs of the church and preparing sermons but she has updated our entryway with a new sleek reception desk and weekly rotating bulletin boards. These are little changes that make our building more attractive, welcoming and appealing to visitors and all who enter our doors.

While our building's foundation must be strong, our church's mission is to build a community where all are enriched through Christian Love, Service, and Spiritual Renewal. We do this by attending worship, staying for fellowship, attending church events and helping in the garden or serving our neighbors in different ways. This Sunday, we harvested our first crop of lettuce for the Mary Brennan INN. It was so exciting!!! Every leaf reminds me of what great things we can do as a church family. Our garden is a great way to show Christian love, share fellowship and serve our neighbors in need. Our sense of community is what makes the Garden City Community Church so awesome!

I meet with Rev. Maria weekly to discuss the past, present and future of our church. It is exciting time in the life of our church and I am so glad to be part of it.

In her first month, she has met with staff members, parishioners and committee members, attended her first Finance and Administration meeting (on her very first day), addressed the community through articles in the Garden City News, reformatted our E-blasts, connected with the community by participating in the Nursery School's graduation day, attended our intergenerational mini-golf evening and shared fellowship at our Children's Sunday picnic.

We had already "built a home" but with Rev. Maria's help, we will work together to improve our home and "plan to stay". We have "planted gardens" to help feed those in need. We are truly doing God's work at the Garden City Community Church.

Remember, a strong church is one that worships together, builds together and plants together.

Join us in the garden after church this summer – all are welcome!!

Come, invite your family and friends to share in our faith, fellowship and service.

Faithfully,

Karin Melkonian — COT Chair

Church Council

A note from our Nursery School Director, Cathie McCullough

The Nursery School was so proud to hold our graduation and moving up ceremonies in the sanctuary last week.

We were even happier to have Rev. Maria join us to say prayers with us and bless the children as they go on their way to their next life adventures.

We sang lots of songs remembering our year of school. We were also pleased to have Frank Crosio join us on the piano!!

Now we're on to summer camp 😎

Summer Plans from Christian Education

from Amanda Dias, Youth Ministry/Outreach Coordinator

There are some really amazing things coming up in July! We have our Summer Fundays on July 12th and 19th. Join Ms. Katie for some summer fun during the 10:30am service. For kids 3 years old to 5th grade!

Save the date: On Friday, July 31st from 5-8pm we will be having our one night VBS Carnival Bash! Fun for the whole family! Programing including story telling, crafts, and games for the kids, and after a fun carnival! There is also going to be a chance for adults to hear from Dr. French about modern faith and family. 6th to 12th graders also have a chance to earn service hours! Registration is open, $25 for one child, $45 for 2 children, and 3 or more children will be $85!

The Christian Education committee is looking for volunteers to help with supervision of the kids over the summer. We are looking for 2 volunteers a week to sit in the Kensington room with the kids. We also need volunteers to help Ms. Katie with Summer Fundays, July 12th and 19th. Supplies will be provided. You can sign up here:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904084BACAD2EAA8-64569250-summer#/

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 July 4th & August 1st at 8:00 am: Carle Place Diner 151 Old Country Road in Carle Place. Reservations are not needed.**

Mission Trip Sunday

Join us on Sunday, July 19th at our 10:30 am service as we welcome back our Mission Trip students and volunteer leaders from their trip to Colorado Springs, CO. They will fill us in on everything they did and accomplished on this trip. All are welcome to come to our service.

Save the Date for these upcoming services

9/11 Memorial Service

We will be holding a 25th anniversary 9/11 service on Friday evening, September 11th. Time TBD. More info to follow.

Blessing of the Animals

Join us on Sunday, September 20th at our regular 10:30 am service. This service will include a blessing of the animals. All pets are welcome to attend. More info to follow.

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

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

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**.

Americana Fair Update

As a reminder, the church is accepting donations now for the Americana Fair. Some people have started to bring items to the church and we thank everyone for being so generous. The Fair committee and room chairs would like to emphasize how important it is to please donate items that are in sellable condition. Please do not donate broken items, items with missing parts or clothes that are obviously stained. We do not want to discourage donations, but it will take a few minutes to organize your individual donations, rather than hours for the fair workers to sort through all the donations in the Fall. Thank you again for thinking of the church while deciding how to part with your many treasures!

Please contact Gloria in the office to schedule a drop-off time at (516) 746-1700 option 2. The fair will be held on **Saturday, Nov. 7th from 10am-3pm.**

There is a Fair meeting on July 12th at 11:45 am in the Kensington Room. All are invited to attend.

Prayer Service Brunch

Our prayer service attendees had their annual Burning of the Prayer Cards at their 9:30 am service on June 23rd. All the prayers they receive are kept confidential. At the end of the year the prayer cards are burned symbolizing the release of these prayers to God's loving care. Afterwards they had their annual brunch. A good time was had by all. They meet each Tuesday at 9:30 am. All are invited to attend.

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.

THE GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

+ LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!

SCAN TO PAY

$55 LOBSTER (PER PERSON)
$35 CHICKEN (PER PERSON)
$25 CHICKEN TENDERS (CHILD)

BRING YOUR OWN
BEVERAGE: WINE, BEER, SODA

PAYMENT IS DUE WHEN RESERVATION IS MADE

PAY BY CHECK TO GCCC OR BY QR CODE

RSVP BY JULY 13, 2026

THE GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

LOBSTER FEST

JULY 25TH 6 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

JAN LEVINE

(516) 965-4559

OR

ALICE MELKONIAN

(516) 741-6675

ALICEMELKONIAN24@GMAIL.COM

PLEASE RETURN FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT

_____

NAME: _____

OF GUESTS: _____

PLEASE INDICATE HOW MANY OF EACH:

LOBSTER (PER PERSON) _____

CHICKEN (PER PERSON) _____

CHICKEN TENDERS (CHILD) _____

SCAN TO PAY

GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

SUMMER FUN

Summer Fun Days

July 12th & 19th
Come and have fun with us with summer crafts and games!

VBS

July 31st
Our one day VBS Carnival Bash!

Duck's Game

We are looking to go to a Ducks Game in August! Look out for more information!

Welcome Day Movie Night

Our outdoor movie night will take place the Saturday before Welcome day, Sept. 12th!

Welcome Day

We will welcome back our youth with our end of summer bash on Sept. 13th

JOIN US!

245 Stewart AVE, Garden City
(516)746-1700
churchoffice@thegccc.org

GARDEN CITY
COMMUNITY CHURCH

VBS
CARNIVAL BASH

31 JULY 2026
5:00PM-8:00PM

BIBLE STORIES - FACE PAINTING - FOOD - CARNIVAL GAMES

This year we are having a one day VBS event, fun for the whole family! Parents are welcome to join Dr. French from 6-6:30pm in the chapel as she offers some thoughts on modern faith and the family.

245 Stewart AVE, Garden City NY 11530

1 Kid: $25
2 Kids: $45
3+ Kids: $85

Register here:

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

Ministry Team

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.

Online Giving

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

Lutheran Counseling Center
hope and healing

JULY 2026

Navigating Graduation: Coping with Life's Next Chapter

By Jennifer Siemann Schultz, LCSW

Graduation is often portrayed as one of life's happiest milestones. After years of hard work, you've finally reached the finish line. Yet once the celebrations end, many graduates find themselves wondering, "What happens next?"

Once graduation is over, many new responsibilities begin. Whether you're starting a full-time job, heading to college, living independently, or managing bills, the transition can feel overwhelming and scary. You're not alone! 40% of final year students experience clinically relevant levels of anxiety and depression (*Frontiers in Psychology*).

How do we overcome it? You don't have to do everything at once. Take it one step at a time; update your resume one day, complete job applications a few more days, break the final project/paper into sections, etc. Stay connected with your friends and support system, and be open to developing new friendships. They are likely experiencing similar anxieties about the future so talk to each other, make a plan for monthly or bi-monthly fun activities. Be aware, however, that your friendships may grow apart, and that is okay. Try to avoid comparing yourself to others- your journey is your own!

Practice self-care through continuing to do the things that you love to increase your happiness and sense of meaning. Turn to God and hand that anxiety over to God while praying for guidance. Practicing mindfulness techniques can reduce worry about the future and will redirect you to the present moment.
This technique includes:

- The 5 senses grounding technique (5 things you can see, 4 you can feel/touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell and 1 you can taste).
- Deep breathing.
- Body scan meditation.

LCC Counselor
Jennifer Siemann Schultz

Therapy can help you develop personalized coping skills and provide a safe, supportive environment to explore your thoughts, feelings, and concerns about the future.

While graduation marks the end of one chapter, it is also the beginning of another. It is normal to feel uncertain about the future. By taking small steps, staying connected to supportive people, practicing self-care, and seeking help when needed, you can navigate this transition with greater confidence and resilience.

To learn more about LCC Counselor Jennifer Siemann Schultz, LCSW 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.

References: Front Psychol. 2024 Jul 9;15:1351386. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1351386

July

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Office closed for July 4th	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	6	7 Prayer Service 9:30 am	8 Food Donation drop off - noon	9	10	11
Mission Trip week 12 Sunday Service 10:30 am Church School Summer Funday 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am Americana Fair Meeting 11:45 am	13	14 Prayer Service 9:30 am	15	16	17	18
19 Mission Trip Sunday Service 10:30 am Church School Summer Funday 10:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am	20	21 Prayer Service 9:30 am	22 Food Donation drop off - noon	23	24	25 Lobster Fest 6:00 pm
26 Sunday Service 10:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Not Scheduled Fellowship Hour 11:30am Ministry Committee Meeting 12:00 pm	27	28 Prayer Service 9:30 am	29	30	31 VBS 5:00 pm	