

Brookville Multifaith Campus



Room for All
An Open and Affirming
Campus to the
LGBTQIA+ community.

*One house, many faiths, endless
opportunities for growth!*

NEWS

August 2023

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516-626-0414

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Rev. Vicky L. Eastland
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The New Synagogue of Long Island

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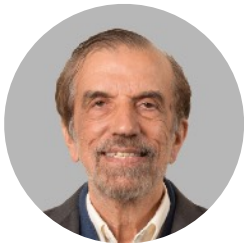
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The Interfaith Community of Long Island

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Vision Statement

Through learning opportunities, essential partnerships, and occasional shared worship, our campus welcomes all who want to learn, question and grow, while making a positive and lasting impact in the community and world.

Mission

To build a multifaith community of people from different faiths who connect to one another by embracing similarities while celebrating differences.

Find a Place to Belong

We invite you to discover a spiritual community made up of different religious groups. Each group maintains its own religious identity but fosters an open environment for learning, celebrating and honoring each distinct religion.

Trailblazers

Since Brookville Church became affiliated with the United Church of Christ (UCC) in 2021, I receive a weekly e-newsletter from the New York Conference. There are 38 regional conferences, in the UCC. NY Conference encompasses the entire state of New York and consists of approximately 276 NY churches, of which Brookville is now one.

Last year, the Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams became the New York Conference Transitional Minister. The Minister of the conference at the time had to step down because his wife became ill. He was planning on retiring but the conference thought it had a little more time to find his replacement. Rev. Williams was already serving on staff for the conference and so she stepped in to be the transitional minister while they figured out what to do next.

In her article for the July 17 weekly newsletter she talked about the UCC being the first of any Protestant denomination regarding several things. I want to share part of her article with you and how it relates to me personally and us together as Brookville Church.

Rev. Williams writes:

The United Church of Christ proudly touts itself as being a denomination of firsts. First to ordain an African American, a woman and an openly gay clergy person. All of these firsts were deemed revolutionary. This past week at the 34th General Synod in Indianapolis, Indiana, our denomination added another first to its historic list. By an overwhelming favorable vote, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected as the first woman and first woman of African descent to serve as our General Minister and President.

There is always something odd about being the first. Even as I sit being the first African descent, same-gender-loving female to lead this Conference I recognize the enormous burden of being the first. There is a crushing sense of responsibility to pave the way for those who may come behind.

When I read the above words from Rev. Williams, it made me realize that I too have been the first of many things as an ordained woman in the

Reformed Church in America (RCA). I was the first female to be ordained in the RCA in California. You may find that odd because most East Coasters think California is pretty liberal, not so in the Christian church.

My first ordained call was to First Reformed Church of Catskill, New York and I was the first female pastor that church had ever had. I served there nine years. Then I was called to Brookville Church as the first female pastor Brookville has ever had, in its almost 300 year history!

I too recognize the sense of responsibility of being the first to pave the way for others who come behind. I never wanted to be the first in any of the things listed above, but God must have wanted that.

Lately, I have been told by many people who have sought out our church that one of the reasons they chose to come to Brookville Church was because a woman was leading it. I don't like that kind of spot light put on me, but I do understand the significance of being the first woman that many have seen in a Christian pulpit.

As a congregation, Brookville Church is the first RCA and UCC church to host a multifaith campus and to include other religions into our fellowship. We know this garnered the attention of a Belgium film maker who included our story in his documentary. With this call of being the first church in now two denominations, comes a lot of responsibility. We have the responsibility to pave a way that will make it easier for other churches to follow behind.

I am humbled to be the first female of Brookville Church to be at the helm of such an amazing congregation who has embraced a multifaith mission. Let's continue to be an example that others will want to follow.

To my fellow trailblazers, I say, "God bless you!"

Rev. Vicky

Havdalah Ceremony

At the end of the Shabbat day, when three stars appear, it is time for the brief ceremony of Havdalah (literally, separation or distinction), at which time we take leave of Shabbat. Our rabbis teach that on Shabbat, we are given an extra soul. At Havdalah we relinquish that extra soul but hope that the sweetness and holiness of the day will remain with us during the week. The service can take place in the home, in synagogue or in a group. Havdalah is a beautiful, brief ceremony that uses three elements to mark the moment we sadly say goodbye to the beauty of Shabbat, and pledge to carry its gifts into the week to come.

We drink from a cup of wine, which symbolizes the joy we experienced on Shabbat. We take one last sip of the joy of Shabbat as we bid Shabbat goodbye for another week. We pass a spice box (full of cinnamon or another sweet-smelling spice), which symbolizes the lingering scent of the sweetness of Shabbat, whose pleasant aroma we breathe in one last time that it might last us through the week to come until we can welcome Shabbat again. We light a multi-wicked candle, which symbolizes how our busy separate selves come together on Shabbat. The lighted candle also symbolizes the light of Shabbat and the strands of the braid have been interpreted as the many types of Jews in the world, all of whom are part of one unified people. The light, the wine, and spices all come together to help us carry Shabbat with us through the week until the next Shabbat. We extinguish the candle into the wine to conclude the ceremony, as a final moment of “goodbye” to Shabbat. With the singing of Shavua Tov and Eliyahu haNavi we wish each other a “good week” to come and long for a day when Shabbat won’t need to end at all!

The greatest tool we have for appreciating anything is the ability to distinguish and differentiate. When we see things as rare and they stand out as special; they have their own place in the world. Yet, all too often, we have a hard time utilizing this tool and seeing things for their own uniqueness.

Masses of people just become ordinary beings. Beautiful sunsets start to look all the same. Our challenge is to discern and see the minute differences that exist in the world in order to appreciate their rare qualities and thus take pleasure in their existence. It takes effort to refine this ability.

In the Havdalah ceremony, we set a braided candle aflame and hold up our fingers to see the light and shadows dancing upon them. This light and darkness symbolize wisdom and confusion, and we hold our hands before the flame in order to see the difference. When we contrast understanding and confusion, we differentiate and gain a deep appreciation for wisdom. Shabbat is over. We mark the ending with Havdalah and recognize the beginning of a week. But we also mark the difference in how we will live the week.

Shabbat is a gift. Appreciating its beauty and understanding the depths of its wonder sometimes means seeing it in contrast to the rest of the week. By defining the separation of Shabbat from the workday week, the relationship between the two is also established - a relationship in which Shabbat imparts its vision to the rest of the week and the six days of daily life feed into the sanctity of Shabbat. Take a moment before Havdalah to search for something special that you want to carry with you into the week. Remember it and reflect on it when things don’t go according to plan.

Shabbat Shalom!
Sabbath Peace

Shavua Tov!
A good week

Love and blessings,
Rabbi Scott Matous



Power in the Words We Speak

by Dr. Syed Asad and Imam Sultan Abdulhameed

In this essay, we will discuss the power of words and their impact on our lives. Allah, the Most High, has given human beings the extraordinary ability to communicate through words. As the Quran reminds us in Surah Ibrahim, Verse 24-27:

Have you not seen how Allah has set forth a parable? A good word is like a good tree with firm roots and branches reaching the heavens. It gives fruit in all seasons by the will of its Lord. And God sets forth parables for people that they may be instructed.

And the parable of an ugly word is that of a rotten tree: its root is removed from the top of the soil and has no firm roots. God strengthens those who have faith with firm words in this present life and in the life to come; God will leave in error those who are in the dark; God does what He will.

The ability to speak is a divine attribute, and it has power. The words a person speaks are connected to images and feelings that represent their inner reality. The words are expressions of their spirit. They carry energy, and they shape the conditions around them.

Everything that you believe is possible or not possible is contained in the words you have heard. It is a common observation that some people habitually speak positive language. Their conversation conveys optimism, encouragement, confidence, happiness, and gratitude. Maybe you have come across such people. Their affairs are harmonious; they attract the right people and seem to succeed quickly. Whereas some people habitually speak pessimistic words; they talk about unfortunate events, their limitations, disease, doubt in themselves, and envy of others. They seem to be trapped on the wrong side of life.

Thus words can have a profound effect on ourselves and those around us. They have the power to inspire, motivate, and uplift others. Positive and kind words can turn someone's day around, bring hope to those in despair, and create an atmosphere of love and compassion. On the other hand, harmful and hurtful words can cause deep wounds and leave lasting scars on a person's heart.

We reveal our deeply held beliefs in our speech. We hear two influential voices in our lives; a person who believes that God is a beneficent force in life and habitually sees goodness in circumstances or a person whose deep belief is that life is terrible and habitually expresses this idea in conversation. These opposing powerful words from people can sway our mindsets. The first step is to become aware of the words we routinely speak. With some effort, we can stop using pessimistic and discouraging words to describe ourselves, our children and spouses, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, and our colleagues at work. We can train ourselves to use encouraging and uplifting words more and more.

You can change your life by choosing to hear different words. You can stop going to places where you hear criticism, condemnation, or anger. The average person uses only a few words again and again.

We speak all the time, and our words are like drops of rain collecting on the ground. They gather into puddles and gradually seep into the ground. They find their way to the roots. Thus, the good words you learn to speak soon penetrate your subconscious mind, where your automatic thoughts and pictures are formed. This creates an autopilot inside you that charts new and higher directions for you and takes you to a better life.

Prayer is a selection of good words. The words of prayer speak of God's compassion for us, God's willingness to help us, guide us, and forgive our mistakes. Prayer speaks of our gratitude and our willingness to serve.

Prophet Muhammad said, *If you have faith, you will only speak of good or keep quiet.* The human mind is never idle. The conversation goes on inside us, even when we are by ourselves. Discipline yourself to speak words to yourself that uplift you.

Let us recognize the power of our words and use them to spread positivity, kindness, and love. Let us strive to align our words with our actions and constantly seek knowledge and guidance from Allah. This is our Jihad; we can hope and pray for Allah's favor and blessings in this life and the hereafter.

A.S.A.P. By Christine Mankes

Almost three years ago, my family attended Brookville’s weekly service via zoom. The service was in October of 2020 and many covid restrictions were still in place. At that service, Rev. Vicky’s sermon was based on Ephesians 6:18 *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Many of us have heard the mnemonic **A.S.A.P.** Typically people associate the meaning of these letters to be “As Soon As Possible.” But, at that October service, Rev. Vicky suggested another meaning: “Always Say A Prayer.”

Now that it is August 2023, why would I suddenly recall a sermon delivered by Rev. Vicky in October of 2020? There is a very simple answer to this: our multifaith campus prayer chain.

Since joining the prayer chain almost 10 years ago, I have prayed for, and with, dozens of people of all faiths and with all different types of needs. Sometimes I would pray for them at the beginning or end of my day, other times the people in need would pop into my head at a random moment during the day and I would say a quick prayer for them. Each member of our multifaith prayer chain prays in a way that feels right in his or her heart. There are no rules about the prayers that we must say, or when we must say them.

I have also asked the prayer chain to pray for loved ones, family members, friends, co-workers and acquaintances. There is something so beautiful and special about sending out those requests and to feel at peace with the knowledge that there are almost two dozen people, of all different faiths and denominations, who are praying for those needs. Sometimes our prayer chain members follow up with an email or text message too. The prayer chain is, quite literally, a family of people connected by our belief that our shared prayers will lift up those who need God’s help.

I recently requested that the prayer chain lift up my cousin, her husband, two-year old daughter and newborn baby in prayer. The baby, who is almost three weeks old now, was born with many challenges. My cousin and husband are traveling back and forth to the hospital to be with their newborn who is in pediatric ICU. But they also need to be with and care for their toddler. There is a lot of medical information and terminology that they are trying to understand and navigate as well. To say they are overwhelmed is an understatement. But there is something uplifting about knowing there is a group of people who are thinking about them and praying for them: for answers, for help, for guidance, for strength, for patience.

A.S.A.P. Always Say A Prayer. We do it for each other and for ourselves. Our family of many faiths, connected to each other by lifting up our requests to God.

Mark your calendars!
9/10/23 - 12 PM
Interfaith
Community of L.I.
Open House!

How can I stay informed regarding the Interfaith Community?

EMAIL

Please check your email for updates. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email allison@interfaithli.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ifcli>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/interfaithcommunityli/>

Please check our website <https://www.interfaithli.org/home> for a full calendar



EVENTS ON THE BOULEVARD PRESENTS

AN EVENING
OF

BROADWAY

& OPERA DIVAS



with

Irene Failenbogen

At Schwartz Brothers-Jeffer Memorial Chapels

114-03 Queens Blvd, Forest Hills, NY 11375

Tuesday ▪ August 8, 2023 ▪ 5:00 pm

RSVP: Jennifer.Martin@DignityMemorial.com or 718-263-7600

Light refreshments will be served ▪ Free parking available in our lot

Broadway and Opera Divas is a concert featuring many characters from famous and well known Operas & Broadway Musicals. Originally from Argentina, Irene Failenbogen, Soprano & Jewish Cantor, will present notable melodies & delight the audience with Divas from Carmen by Bizet, Evita by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sound of Music by Rodgers & Hammerstein, Fidler on the Roof by Jerry Block & the Musical Hairspray by Marc Shaiman & Scott Wittman, to name a few.

Schwartz Brothers-Jeffer Memorial Chapels ▪ Sinai Chapels ▪ Parkside Memorial Chapels ▪ Forest Park Funeral Home
These firms are owned by a subsidiary of Service Corp. International, 1929 Allen Pkwy. Houston, TX 77019 (713-522-5141).

Muslim Reform Movement Organization

Quran Study by Zoom every other Sunday 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. **All are welcome!**

To be invited to the meeting, please send an email to <mailto:muslimreform@hotmail.com>

Reformed Jumua prayer in person at the Brookville Multifaith Campus



Every Friday: The *Khutba* is at **1:10 PM** in English
The Prayer (*Salat*) begins at **1:30 PM**.

In the prayer, the Arabic recitation is followed by its English translation.



Hosted by: **Imam Sultan Abdulhameed**, author of "*The Quran & the Life of Excellence*"
email for details: muslimreform@hotmail.com

BRAG BOX

Nadeera Ali, granddaughter of Dr Asad, graduated from Huntington High School, and will be attending Boston University as a Biochemistry major



Sima Ali, Nadeera, Sabeena, Dr. Syed Asad



Brookville Multifaith Campus was featured on the front page of the LI Herald, Oyster Bay Edition (LIHerald.com) on July 21, 2023.

[Click here to check it out!](#)

A multifaith community welcomes all

By WILL SHEELINE
...ants who grew up in different faiths.
This group formed the Interfaith Community of Long Island in 2005, with the goal of building an abundance of churches, synagogues and mosques, some of which date back to colonial times. One religious community that identifies with all of them is the Brookville Multifaith Campus, a non-profit organization that celebrates the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths that comprise the Abrahamic religions.
Originally known as the Brookville Church, the organization was founded in 1982 and until the Civil War it conducted all of its services in Dutch, highlighting the county's Dutch origins. In the early 2000s, the church leaders began to develop closer relations with the growing Jewish-Christian community made up of families with par-
ents who connect to one another by embracing similarities while celebrating differences.
Irree Fallontogen, the cantor of the New Synagogue of Long Island, one of the directors of education for the interfaith community and one half of an interfaith marriage, said that teaching children about both sides of their religious heritage gives them a richer faith experience and ensures that cultural and religious traditions are passed down to the next generation.
"It provides a learning experience for the kids, and teaches them to really experience and enjoy both so that

If you have something you would like to brag about please send your submissions to brookvillemfc@gmail.com by the 20th of the month prior. We'd love to celebrate with you!

On July 19th the Consistory (Church Board) of Brookville Church and their families had a BBQ on our front lawn. We honored Rigo and his wife, Esperanza for their 16 years of service to our church as the sextons - taking special care of the buildings and grounds. They will be retiring in the next few months and moving back to their home country of El Salvador. We hope to have an opportunity as an entire campus to have a send off party and will keep you posted as plans progress.



Rev. Dr. Donna Field and Brookville Church, Elder Vice President, Tom Field, Deacon Hank Surig, Deacon John Kelleher with son Jack, wife Nancy, son William, Esperanza and Rigo Melara, Rev. Vicky, Elder Lisa Denison and husband Dave.



PROJECTS AROUND OUR CAMPUS!



A big thank you goes to Tom Field who scraped and painted the porch steps, wrought iron railings, columns, white railings and lattice!



New bird bath in our Peace Garden



Rigo Melara removed the fallen tree trunk and Tom Field fixed the fence



Worship resumes in August at Brookville Church with the RCLV congregation joining us. We have a special contemplative Communion worship planned for Aug. 6th and a special Baptism on Aug. 20th.

We will be holding worship at the Reformed Church of Locust Valley for one Sunday only on September 3rd.



Join us!

IFC of Long Island Open House

Sunday September 10, 12 PM

Meet our faith leaders, religious education instructors, and families just like you!

Brookville Multifaith Campus

will host a

MEAL FOR PEACE

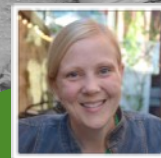
Sunday, October 15
12 PM

RSVP at



<https://forms.gle/XtAhDcoL7eXN6Qgs7>

Featured Speaker



JJ TenClay,
RCA Refugee
Ministries
Coordinator

An intentional gathering to learn more about and be part of peace-building in South Sudan.

The Next Chapter



There are many new things that happen to, and around us as we settled into New Jersey that are common events in a Senior Retirement Community. Pick any part of the day and we can find the familiar intertwined with the new.

Grocery shopping in a store is familiar until what is really needed appears. Start with mobility; electric shopping carts are available in most grocery stores, but having a stable of fifteen red carts lined up together like horses at hitching post is an impressive sight. Nearby, at Walmart, there are all new handicap parking spots for thirty automobiles and all are frequently filled; who would have thought it would ever happen, but it has here.

Medical care is done the same in any doctor's office, but to have two to four within two or three miles is quite astonishing. Many of the professions have multiple office buildings inside of the county borders -- in three different villages. Some of them are only open two days a week to accommodate the local customers there, but for them that makes traveling to the doctor a short trip. There are other offices just around the corner that often have more than five doctors on staff so they can attend to a lot of patients. It seems the patients often, at least half of them each day, come as the married couple they are and one or the other is the responsible one to get their spouse taken care of. It is a sweet thing to see them getting things done together. I am sure that Nancy and I appear like such a devoted couple.

It was time to renew the registration on our car and the application form went missing so we went to the local New Jersey Motor Vehicle Office. During Covid-19 in 2021 and 2022 New Jersey had to create an appointment system because people were standing in lines at 4 AM to take care of business. On an afternoon when I went with Nancy the door sign said "By appointment only." I went inside and the security guard saw my perplexed look and he asked a couple of questions and said if we could drive ten miles to Lakewood he would call and get us

an appoint for the next day, and he did that with his cell phone. The next day in the next town I got inside and the staff were just as kind and helped with the application and said Nancy could stay in the car and it will be okay just for me to show her driver's license (it is her car) and I could do the waiting. I was expecting an hour wait as it always was in NY and I had a book to read. Living in New York for fifty years there have been plenty of days spent in the Motor Vehicle office and watched the assignment numbers slowly creep up to the one I held. My New Jersey day took less than twenty minutes to complete and everybody was pleasant and sent me out quickly. What a change to what was an ugly experience in New York.

Good books come from a good library, with printed and digital choices. The original County Library in the middle of town is unfortunately hard to visit because parking is limited, but when we travel away from the population center the same library system is attractive, well managed, full of books and a huge parking area. We go there often.

Unfortunately COVID-19 has made it necessary for me to work via the internet, but I have found that work is more enjoyable done from home and is preferred to learning hobbies that I have not done before.

We miss being in the Brookville Church in person, however we prefer keeping the connection with Brookville to starting over so we are very attached via Zoom. We are very happy here. I have said this a few times -- moving to New Jersey into a downsized house with the furniture we have had in the family for years has felt like being the newlyweds we were when moving into quarters in an Alaskan Army Post. It has often reminded us of the first year of marriage 63 years ago. God has blessed us.



~ *Branch & Nancy Worsham*

BEAT NAVY!