

Spring Meeting 2026

Saturday, April 18, 2026 (St Albans Congregational Church)

President's Report

Good afternoon, siblings in Christ.

I begin with 1 Corinthians 12:4–7:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

This reminds us that the strength of the church — and of our Association — lies in the gifts we each bring, and how we share them for the common good.

Over the past year, **my primary focus has been local church engagement** — through visits, calls, virtual meetings, and pulpit supply. I am grateful for the ways our churches continue to show up — not only financially, but through service, leadership, and deep commitment to their communities.

What I see across our congregations is both real challenge and deep faithfulness. Many churches are navigating aging buildings, changing neighborhoods, and pastoral transitions, with lay leaders often bridging leadership gaps.

And yet, ministry continues — through food pantries, community meals, thrift shops, advocacy, and the daily work of welcoming neighbors in Christ's name.

Because of this, the board and Association committees prioritize **resources that support our local churches**. Several congregations are currently unable to worship in their buildings due to needed repairs, and two are facing serious litigation. The Association and the New York Conference are working together to support these churches and seek the best possible outcomes.

We have also made meaningful progress in **reconnecting with churches** where relationships had lapsed, and I am grateful to those who have helped re-open those doors.

At the same time, we are working to cultivate a healthier Association culture — one where clergy and lay leaders can fully lend their voices and gifts. This includes stronger board and committee function, more consistent engagement, and clearer coordination.

We are investing in connection and formation, including an upcoming clergy retreat, regional gatherings, and workshops throughout 2025 to equip our churches for today's realities.

We have also strengthened our financial stewardship and transparency — formalizing separation of duties in how funds are handled, with our audit underway and **budgets moving closer to balance**.

We are also beginning an important and proactive conversation regarding **Grant Mortgages** issued years ago to support church growth. These were generally not expected to be repaid unless a church leaves the UCC or sells its building. As part of the church file digitization project, documents referencing mortgages or loans will be pulled so that they can be provided to churches. These letters will invite churches to review their records so that we can be aligned and avoid future conflict.

We also want to be transparent that in certain situations, the New York Conference, as the judicatory in New York State, has a legal role, and in some cases court action has directed funds to the Conference. The Association & Conference are engaged in such a matter with Pilgrim Church in the Bronx. The New York Conference has taken on the legal costs of this matter, and their board has approved a covenant to provide 30% of net proceeds to the Metropolitan Association presuming there are proceeds. This is shared in the spirit of clarity, transparency, and faithful stewardship.

We have also strengthened our administrative capacity with the hiring of Rev. Michael Junkroski as Registrar, supporting the Committee on Ministry in updating clergy files, confirming good standing, and improving communication around required trainings.

The Committee on Ministry (COM) is also working with its new subcommittee — formerly the Spiritual Life & Professional Development Committee — to develop a process for regular clergy check-ins and to support the spiritual and vocational health of our ministers through a clergy retreat and regional gatherings.

If you have not yet completed the retreat planning survey, we encourage you to do so, as your input will help shape a retreat that reflects what matters most to our clergy.

In addition, we are exploring new partnerships and strengthening existing ones — including Bricks and Mortals (founded and incubated at Judson Memorial Church), UCC Financial Ministries, long-time UCC partner Church World Service, and the Councils of Churches in New York City, Long Island and New York State — to provide additional resources and mission opportunities for our congregations as they navigate property decisions, sustainability, and God's call for their ministry today.

We continue to work closely with the New York Conference, the Parish Resource Center (PRC), and initiatives within the UCC National Setting. All of the partnerships and the workshops in the planning stage by the Association's Standing & Development Committee remind us that our churches do not have to navigate these questions alone.

As we reflect on this moment, we also remember that the Metropolitan Association has been supporting churches for nearly two centuries. There are conflicting dates of our formation as either 1825 or 1841 so that we are either 201 years old or 185; either way, we've been resourcing churches a long time. We have accomplished much together, and we've got a cake during lunch to celebrate. Please join us.

Today, the landscape may look different. In many cases, we are navigating consolidation rather than expansion. But reimagining does not mean the end of the story. It is an invitation — to explore new paths together, to share our gifts more fully, and to support one another in ways that are healthy, faithful, and grounded in Christ.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to our Board, our officers, our committee leaders, and the many clergy and lay leaders who sustain this Association — and to our congregations for the powerful ministry you continue to carry forward.

In closing, I remain inspired by the creative and faithful ways ministry is unfolding across our Association, and I look forward to continuing this work together. God is not finished with us yet — and neither are we finished with one another.

Thank you and grace and peace to you all,

Yvette Wynn

Metropolitan Association Virtual Office: 516-231-6865 X101 (President)

President's Metro Church Engagement:

Engagement since my election in June 2024 is inclusive of in person, virtual/zoom, email and telephone for events, leadership meetings, worship visits & pulpit supply.

Manhattan: Riverside Church, Rivers of Living Waters, Judson Memorial Church, Church of the Living Hope, Union Congregational Church (Harlem), Sacred Fellowship Ministries

Queens: Bowne Street Community Church, Christhava Tamil Koil (CTK), Pilgrim UCC (Richmond Hills), The Church in the Gardens, Corona Congregational Church, Hollis Ave, Emanuel UCC, Victoria Congregational Church

Brooklyn: Nazarene Congregational Church, Church of the Evangel

Staten Island: Imanuel Union Church

Nassau County: Behtany Congregational Church, Wantagh Community Church, Westbury Congregational Church, Garden City Community Church, United Church of Rockville Center, Manhasset, Community Church of Syosset

Westchester: Scarsdale Congregational Church, Community Church in the Circle, West Center Congregational Church, Ridgeview Congregational church, Chatterton Hill UCC, Church in the Highlands, Briarcliff Congregational Church, Mt Vernon Heights Congregational Church

Bronx: Bedford Park Congregational Church, Pilgrim UCC (Bronx), Congregational Church of North New York (North Church), Christ Church, First Congregational Church of Morrisania, St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Additional In-Person Visits:

Vice President (Michelle Wiltshire Clement) – Judson Memorial Church, Grace Congregational Church & Union Congregational Church

Anthony Viji – Rivers of Living Waters (Jt)

Deborah Dee Brayton- Flatbush Tompkins Memorial Church (Jt)

Noel Vanek- Armenian Evangelical Church New York

Jacob Thomas: CSI Jubilee, Malayalam Church of Greater New York

***Thank you –**

Metro Committee Chairs

Emily Brown and Rebecca Pridmore -**Committee on Ministry**

Maria Vives- **Spiritual Life and Professional Development Committee**, COM subcommittee

Susan Switzer - **Social Justice**

Bill Nye -**Standing and Development**

Stephanie Bennett and Noel Vanek – **Nominating Committee**
Deborah Dee Brayton - **Scholarship Committee**
Ron Wells – **Personnel Committee**

Officers

Charlaine Apsel – Secretary

Phil Salmon - Treasurer

Moderator/Vice Moderator – Ron Wells, Deborah Dee Brayton

Non-Board Leaders

Rev. Noel Vanek – **Pulpit Supply Committee**

Reginald Brantley – **Bylaws Committee**

Aksana Viji – Social Media

*Apologies if I missed any names.