

NEW DORP MORAVIAN CHURCH

February

2026



February

An Invitation or a Referral

According to various studies (Barna Research, Lifeway Research, etc.) an invitation from a friend to attend church is still the best way to get new folks to attend church. This has been true for quite some time, though the effectiveness of the invitation varies in different periods. The willingness for church members/attenders to offer an invitation has also varied across time. The thing that I think is most important in all of this is that inviting someone to church is much, much more effective in getting them here than not inviting them.

Have you ever thought about the difference between an invitation and a referral? Though a strict definition of an invitation does not necessarily mean that the one offering the invitation will be present when the invited person arrives, I think that is what most persons expect. If you invite me to your house, you are, hopefully, going to be there when I arrive. If you invite me to go to a concert, we are probably going to sit together aren't we? On the other hand, a referral, both from a strict definition and in casual use, is a sending. Your doctor refers you (or sends you) to a specialist, and you do not expect to see the referring doctor when you get there.



Elders

Pastor Walter Bishop*

Carol Bugge

Patrick Carolan

Marla DiForte**

Toni Ann Slevin

Maria Glorioso

Ed Ranieri, Jr.

Alexandra Romito

Peter Traut

Trustees

Dorothy Ambrosino**

Paul Chen

Anna Gaw

Alice Giovannello-Cohen

Stephen Greet*

Robert Iadarola

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Central Elders

Joyce Fernandez

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Central Trustees

Harold Gerstenlauer

Richard Simpson

Treasurer

Harold Gerstenlauer

Counters

Steve Greet

Barbara Impallaria

* Chair

** Vice-Chair

If you are in a Sales position, you want referrals so that your customers will send other people to you, or send you to other people.

I think that invitations from friends and acquaintances are more appealing than referrals. The anticipation of being in the company of a friend or family member makes the opportunity feel safer and it gives a person a sense that they know what they can expect. Joining a friend or family member at an event or location often also means that you will not be isolated or feel like a stranger in a strange land. The friend(s) or family member(s) that invite you may also serve as guides for you in case you feel out of place or the customs seem unfamiliar.

In the NRSV version of the Holy Bible, one form or another of the word “invitation” is found over 60 times. The word “referral” is not found at all. (For the purposes of this article, I distinguish “referral” from “sending” since “referral” is a suggestion as “invite” is, whereas “sending” is a directive.) When I do home Communion, I use a liturgy which includes Matthew 11:28 and is adapted from the 1969 hymnal. It includes these words: *“Hear also His **invitation** ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’”* Jesus invites us. We should invite others! Honestly, I’ll be happy for folks to refer others to New Dorp Moravian. We should be glad for every positive mention of our congregation. It means that we are doing something right. But I would trade away several referrals for one invitation any day. Though I went to church while I was growing up, I had quit going for a time. My introduction to the Moravian Church and my return to church life came by way of an invitation. The pastor of Park Road Moravian Church sent a messenger to say “Tell (him) to come see me.” I accepted his invitation and found a new church home, and eventually a new calling. Inviting friends, neighbors, and family is still the most successful way to get new persons involved in our work done in Jesus’ name for the Kingdom of God, and the children of God. Do also try to be here when they accept your invitation. Otherwise, they might feel like they’ve been referred, instead of invited.



I share these words from a hymn in our Moravian Book of Worship beginning on page 136:

***Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing the children of each tribe and race.
His grace did invite us, his love shall unite us
to work for God's kingdom and answer his call.***

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Let us, like Christ, be inviting. And let us, as often as possible, be here to also welcome others in Christ's name.

A happy invitee,

Pastor Walter

(A version of this article has been previously published)





Benevolence Giving for 2025

Listed below are the donations received in **2025** for the monthly benevolences. These are monthly donations given beyond our regular stewardship that also include our monthly Joyful Noise collections.

January	Wings of Mercy	\$328.00
February	HIV/AIDS Work at Ahuas Clinic	\$229.42
March	Annual Unity Offering	\$351.42
April	Vietnam Veterans Post 421	\$289.33
May	Moravian Open Door	\$463.00
June	Eden II School	\$266.00
July	God's Love We Deliver	\$275.81
August	Global Medical Relief Fund	\$203.00
September	Moravian Disaster Response	\$239.00
October	Thanksgiving Baskets	\$250.00
November	Staten Island Council of Churches	\$222.50
December	Heifer International	\$259.50

Thank you for your continued generosity in helping these important agencies and causes care for those in need! This is God's love in action!

Our Benevolence for the Month is HIV/AIDS Work at Ahuas Clinic



“The Clínica Evangélica Morava in Ahuas, Honduras (the Ahuas Clinic) is a Moravian clinic that has been serving the remote region of La Moskitia for over 75 years. The clinic offers general medical services including surgeries and reproductive care, as well as public health initiatives like community health education and children's nutrition programs. Patients from the surrounding area often walk hours to receive care at the Ahuas Clinic, as it is the nearest facility that treats a wide variety of medical needs. There are currently eight patients receiving treatment for HIV / AIDS at the Ahuas Clinic, which includes IAC treatment (intensive adherence counseling) every two months, as well as counseling, emotional support, and additional medical admission and home visits as needed. As the clinic is able, it also supports the cost of patients' travel to Puerto Lempira, where the government hospital is located, for testing and specialist visits. HIV / AIDS patients should visit Puerto Lempira every six months, but cost is prohibitive (about \$120 per trip), so many patients make the trip once per year instead. Donations to the HIV / AIDS work at the Ahuas Clinic support medication and staffing costs related to treatment, as well as the cost of travel to Puerto Lempira.”

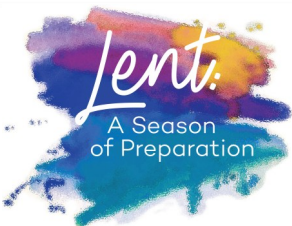
*(Article provided by Sylvie Hauser at the BWM
and reprinted from February 2024 issue.)*



2026 FEB

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 10am Worship/SS 11ish Coffee/ Fellowship	2	3	4
8 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany 10am Worship/SS 11ish Coffee/ Fellowship	9 7:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	10	11 10:00 am
15 Transfiguration Sunday 10am Worship/SS 11ish Pancake Fellowship	16  The Church Office will be closed.	17	18  7:00 pm Ash Wed Service
22 First Sunday in Lent 10am Worship/ Holy Communion/ SS 11ish Coffee/ Fellowship	23	24	25 10:00 am

FEBRUARY



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	5	6	7
h Sonrisers	12	13	14  A rectangular graphic with a border of colorful hearts. Inside, it says "Happy Valentine's Day" in purple, "Trash to Treasure" in purple, and "10 am - 2 pm" in purple.
 A graphic of a flame with the word "Wednesday" below it. nesday	19	20	21  A cartoon illustration of five diverse people sitting around a table eating and drinking. Vanderbilt Community Dinner 4 pm - 6:30 pm
h Sonrisers	26	27	28



Elders' Report from January 2026 meeting: The Board of Elders gathered on January 12 with five members present. A devotion was presented by Toni-Ann Slevin to open the meeting. Minutes from the December meeting were reviewed and approved. A church membership list was reviewed and some folks were designated to receive a letter approved by the Joint Board asking the recipients to advise of their own sense of being a member of the congregation or not. Elders whose terms are coming to a close were advised as to whether or not they were eligible for another term, if elected, and asked to advise if they were willing to serve another term. The upcoming annual report was noted and the questions that would need input from the Joint Board members were distributed and replies requested. Items that needed the input from members not in attendance were tabled until the next meeting. The need for a Church Music Director was restated. The calendar for upcoming months was reviewed and updated. An Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 4. The meeting was closed with prayer. Prepared by Pastor Walter Bishop

Trustees' Report from January 2026 meeting: Trustee meeting was held on January 19th. Pastor Walter highlighted a program rollout to identify our current membership rolls along with the ongoing search for a music director. Trash to Treasure (T&T) realized a \$1190 profit for January (a good turnout for this time of the year). A Pop up Pantry and clothing swap did remarkably well, held on January 17th with many volunteers assisting. The church sign is in progress and funds have been approved for the sign to be made. We will install the sign with volunteer help. Several of the Trustees met with a contractor for development of audio-video upgrades to the Sanctuary. This contractor came highly recommended by Vanderbilt Ave Church as they have had a major design of the same performed by this contractor. Parish House (PH) rentals had another good year taking in \$92,000 for 2025. Expectations are that this will continue in 2026. Wall heaters are being installed in

the ADA bathrooms located in the PH. Windows have been replaced in the Parsonage and the mold situation is being addressed. Lawn signs will return for sale in April. The proposed budget for 2026 was presented by the Treasurer, Harry, and approved to present to the entire congregation for their approval in the near future. Security upgrades for the Sanctuary were discussed as was the need to develop emergency evacuation procedures. The next meeting will be held in February.

Prepared by Steve Greet, Chair



Sonrisers Group

The Sonrisers are a prayer and card ministry group that generally meets two Wednesdays out of the month in the Conference Center.

All are welcome to participate and/or submit prayer requests.

The schedule for this month:



February 11	10:00 am
February 25	10:00 am



2	Roger Acker	16	Melody Harden-Sandhu
3	Doris Burtner	16	Connie Vadola
7	Caitlyn Godoy	20	Barbara Impallaria
7	Melissa Zipf	23	Laura Campagna (Ranieri)
14	Tiffany Maffeo	24	Carmel McCarthy
15	Justin O'Donnell	25	Andrew Ciccone



16	Ed & Isabel Ranieri	1975
25	Frank & Joyce Fernandez	1979





**Please help us keep our prayer list current
and notify the church office if changes occur.**

For On-going Concerns: Dolores Cavallo, Richard Iadorola, Barbara Carolan, Linda Griggs, Connie Vadola, Lois Zipf, Libby Neri, Estefania Griggs, Charlee Cheru and family (Charlee undergoing treatment for childhood leukemia), John DiForte, Jean DelBagno, Michael Cericola, Jackie Passburg, Debbie Lotito.

For Healing: Joyce Fernandez (treatment for breast cancer), Carol Bugge, Marla DiForte, Maria Metzger (undergoing chemotherapy), Van Takoushian (diagnosed with partial heart failure), Megan Poljak (treatment for breast cancer), Deborah Griggs (in rehab), Shirley Parson, Peter Jones, Michele Ward, Frank Carolan, Sue Yee, Faye and Patrick Eng, Karen Ortado (recovering from surgery), Carmel McCarthy (recovering from surgery), Rob Renaud (recovering from surgery), Guilianna Stasinski (medical setbacks with Rett Syndrome), Rosie Fabritorre, Dorothy Ambrosino (recovering from knee surgery), and those involved in care-giving of family members.

Other Concerns: For leaders here and throughout the world to seek solutions for peace and justice, and an end to all war.

Please remember to pray for our denominational leaders, our Pastor, Board Members, and Committee Chairs, and for our church, that we may follow God's call and leading in our service and ministries, and help those who come to us seeking, find whatever they need.



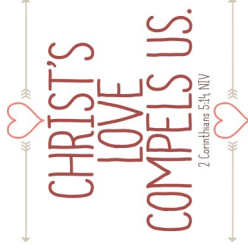
New Dorp Moravian

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Newsletter is also available to read on our website.

The Rev. Walter Bishop, Pastor



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CONTACT INFORMATION:

PHONE: 718-351-0090

OFFICE@NEWDORPMORAVIAN.ORG

WWW.NEWDORPMORAVIAN.ORG