

THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD
JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 62 No. 4

East Rockaway, N.Y.

April 2022



PALM SUNDAY PASSION PAGEANT



Thanks to our
Sunday School
Students:

Julia, Taryn,
Danilynn, Joey,
Anthony, Tyler,
Dylan, Eleana.

And to:

Jessie Kilgus &
Jamie Elliott

Dates to Remember:

May 8...Mother's Day
May 21...Yard Sale
May 21... Armed Forces Day
May 30...Memorial Day
June.4...FurnaceCon!
June 14...Flag Day
June 19...Father's Day
June 21...First Day of Summer
July 4...Independence Day
September 5...Labor Day



The Thrift Shop is OPEN!! Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

He is RISEN!

“This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Psalm 118:24

“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that she has served her term, her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand, double for all her sins.” Isaiah 40:1-2

As I write this, I am sitting in my office looking out at the sunshine. It’s a chilly day for the Spring, even the early spring, but it still lifts my heart as I stretch my arms, draw a deep breath, and remember what it was like just a few, short months ago when we were locked down, masked up and, well, sometimes it seemed as if this was just the way things were going to be. Like the people of Judah at the time of the exile, we have been forced to go “underground”, as we struggled this pandemic that came sweeping seemingly out of nowhere like the biblical plagues of Egypt, taking lives left and right, filling up our morgues, and igniting yet more fighting and division as our already fractured people fought for control of the sinking ship like folks arguing over the placement of the deck chairs of the Titanic, unable to even agree on measures to protect their own lives.

So, we reaped the whirlwind of our folly with the deaths of almost a million of our fellow citizens, and many million more worldwide as this tiny, but deadly virus invaded our people, our economy, eroding our sense of security and exploiting our mutual foolishness and distrust, undeterred by the opinions of pundits and politicians, by our warring ideas about individual rights or any of the other things that we fought so hard over these past few years. Like the plagues of Egypt, it finally began to abate only when we used the tools God gave us,

our scientific knowledge, our concern for one another, our striving for life began to overcome our other pre-occupations, when we finally decided to work together for the benefit of all. The pandemic isn’t over, not by any means, but it has become something we can deal with by getting vaccines, just like we do with measles, rubella, and the flu. Not a track record to be proud of, perhaps, but still a great cause for rejoicing, as we begin to come out of our spaces as if we were awakening to the end of a nightmare, only to find ourselves back in the world we knew once again.

But are we? And if we are, is that where we want to stay? On April 17th of this year, we will celebrate on the two most central events of our faith, the resurrection of Jesus Christ after his life was taken by the principalities and powers on Good Friday. Murdered because his message threatened their grip on the reality under which God’s people lived. Murdered, because he spoke truth to power, murdered, because God’s economy is about human life and human thriving and not about the maintenance of power. But God’s love could not be destroyed, even by the power of death itself and so Christ rose on the third day, to empower us to pick up our crosses and follow him in the way, the truth, and the life.

This was no mere resuscitation, Jesus the carpenter’s son emerged as the Christ,

calling on his people not to return to some past time or way of being, not to rise up and become the image of the violence and death that are the enemy of grace, but, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to become the kingdom of God, the bright shining city on a hill that we have always been called to be. To recognize that when we have exorcise the demons of the fear, of sin and of violence from among ourselves, it is then that we become closer to our Creator, the Ground of our Being, and that we simply cannot accept, as disciples of Christ, a world full of needless suffering, of poverty and want, even if it is not the place where we live or before our eyes every day.

“I came that all might have life and have it abundantly,” Jesus said and that is our call. With the great joyous celebration of the resurrection, comes not only rejoicing at what was, but a recognition that there is so much more to do and so much to be gained by doing it. Bethany is a noisy place sometimes, full of people with diverse ideas, opinions, politics, ethnic and experiential backgrounds, and yet during this time we have determined to honor each other as disciples anyway and we have come out of this with our community intact, our love for one another stronger than ever. That is what God is asking of us,

that everything we do come from that place of love, that font of living water, empowered by the Spirit like the first disciples, and ready to light up the world with our love.

Glory! Glory! Glory!

Christ has risen, he has risen indeed!

Happy Easter!

Pastor Mark



Lay Readers and Ushers are needed for Sunday Worship. Please sign up on the sheet in the Hallway or speak with Marianne (516-599-5768) in the office or Stephanie Maddolone (516-355-1970). Lay Readers will be required to assist with the service and read two (2) Bible passages for that Sunday. Please speak to Pastor Mark for further directions.

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon (Closed Thursdays)

Bethany Bell Tower ...is a monthly publication of

BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Statements made in editorials, signed articles or letters, do not represent an official position in this church. Persons with differing opinions are invited to expres their views in letters to the editor.

Are you less than perfect? Welcome! We are a community or imperfect people (including but not restricted to): squirming children and their harried parents, happy and sad people, people with challenges, seniors, young people, middle aged folks, people of every race, poor people, rich people, in between people, LGBT and straight people, true believers, seekers, agnostics, odd and ordinary people, extraordinary people, un-churched and unsure people, people with disabilities, hypocrites, saints, sinners and everybody else. Because no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here just as you are!



Greetings from your Bethany Moderator

In peace, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

April Greetings

I hope everyone enjoyed this Easter, a time of renewal of faith and hope for the future. It is a glorious celebration ending the forty days of Lent and somber reflection. Happy Easter to all!

Then I got wondering - just how did you celebrate? Were you at Bethany for Easter service or perhaps following along online? Did you get fancied up in your Easter best, perhaps with a new Easter bonnet. (I know, I know, we really don't do that anymore, but hats are so much fun!). Did you have fun creating baskets for the Easter Bunny to deliver? Did you dye Easter eggs and hide them for the kids? Eat a lot of chocolate? Decorate the house with bunnies and chicks? Treat yourself or family to a special dinner? (In my household we celebrate with Easter tacos for dinner!). Watch those classic movies like King of Kings and The Robe? Call friends and relations to share the joy of the day? Whatever you did, I hope it brought you comfort and a revival of faith and spirit.

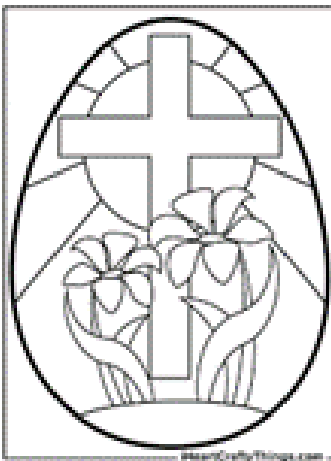
Now let's have some fun and see what we might have been doing if we lived elsewhere.

Go fly a kite! Well, in Bermuda, that's what we would do on Good Friday. It seems a Sunday school teacher was struggling to explain Christ's ascension into heaven. He created a kite that looked like Jesus and flew it into the sky to create a visual representation. And that's how traditions are born.

Australians have no interest in chocolate bunnies. There, rabbits are a pest, destroying crops and such. In 1991, the Easter bunny was replaced by the Easter bilby (rabbit-eared bandicoot). A nice touch - the companies making these treats donate the proceeds toward aiding endangered animals.



In Finland, young children earn their chocolate eggs. On Palm Sunday, they dress up as witches with colorful clothing and painted on freckles. They carry willow twigs embellished with crepe paper and feathers and go house to house reciting blessings.



Here's an Easter Monday tradition practiced in Haux, a town in southern France. A giant, I mean GIANT omelet is created using over 15,000 eggs! It feeds about 1000 people. What prompted this tradition? It seems Napoleon, while travelling with his army, had stopped in this little town and was served an omelet. He enjoyed it so much, he had all the townspeople gather their eggs to make a giant omelet for his army the next day.

For more interesting traditions, visit my source -<https://www.womansday.com/life/travel-tips/g2175/easter-traditions/>

The Thrift Shop is OPEN!! Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

FROM THE TRUSTEES:

We are still looking to place a non-profit or not-for-profit in our downstairs space. It does not have to be a day care. Any type of charitable organization would work.

Please reach out to Charlie D'Agostino at 516-721-8885 with any and all questions.

In regard to building maintenance, we need a new furnace. David Donovan has stepped up again and will run another comic convention. This time he is calling it FurnaceCon. (HurriCon was named to pay for the damage to the gymnasium from the relief efforts after Hurricane Sandy).

Saturday, June 4, 2022. 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Furthermore, I'd like to put to rest some of the concerns that the trustee board is spending recklessly. For a long time we have been extremely conservative with the money entrusted to us by our congregation and, in doing so, it allowed us to make it through two years of a pandemic and I congratulate everyone who contributed to our funds and allowed our small but powerful congregation to remain relatively financially healthy. We have never been over the top and into the red but we've always managed to hold on and do well. The church buildings and grounds are getting older and the furnace basically has gotten to the age where we can no longer buy parts for it and that is the reason why we are replacing it.

Iwould like to put AC down in the Thriftique because, without them, Bethany surely would have been closed! These ladies do a tremendous job keeping us liquid. It is very difficult to find the outside client to fill the space underneath the sanctuary where the nursery school used to be. Charles D'Agostino is doing a fabulous job trying to get this place filled with a non-profit. It is very difficult.

In the near future we are looking to fundraise for the money that we need to put in these air conditioning units. Your generosity would help immensely. The Board of Trustees takes our fiduciary responsibility very seriously but sometimes you just need to spend money!!! Thank you for trust in us and for understanding our predicament.

Yours In Christ, Richard Eaves, Chair

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The Women's League and Thriftique will be participating in the East Rockaway Village-Wide Yard Sale on Saturday, May 21, 2022 from 9am-3pm.

We will take donations the day of the sale. Hope to see you there!

There is always "Something for Someone"...See you at the Sale!

Any questions, please contact Cathy Clarke.



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FROM THE EDITOR:

We are saddened to report the passing of Anthony Claverie in early April. As you may recall, Anthony lettered the mural in the Fellowship hall that Diane Harrison painted. Prayers go out to his entire family.

On Palm Sunday, David Donovan organized a sale of Easter Cards to benefit the Long Island Council Of Churches Food Pantry in Freeport and \$157 was raised during Coffee Hour. Thank you to everyone who purchased a card!



TROOP 121

During our recent meetings the troop has been practicing raising and lowering the flag along with proper flag folding. We are preparing for our Camporee in May, which is our annual competition weekend. The competition is between troops in our district and it's a chance for all youth to show off the skills they have learned up to the present time. There is a skill trail comprised of competitions created by each troop and forming a circuit for patrols to compete in, earning ribbons to display on their troop's flag pole.



The Camporee has a theme this year of "Time Travel" and our troop has been working on creating their competition and also creating their idea for a gateway and a menu for the cooking competition. These are scored separately from the skills trail and are more skills for the scouts to show off. And, of course, there is a costume contest reflecting the theme. Seeing the creativity of the of the scouts is always a fun part for the adults.



The scouts have been working on rank advancement and getting closer to their Eagle rank. Our senior patrol leader, Ethan and our assistant senior patrol leader, Max, are working on their Eagle Scout rank presently. Ethan is restoring an old fence at The Center for Science Teaching and Learning at Tanglewood Preserve in RVC. Max is installing carpet tiles and transition strips in the entryway of Bethany leading to the gym. Many skills will be learned in these two projects by the whole troop as they help their fellow scouts reach the rank of Eagle. Congratulations to both Ethan and Max on reaching the point of working on their projects and good luck on the completion of both bringing them to their ultimate goal of Eagle Scout.

Troop 121 hopes that everyone enjoyed a very Happy Passover and a very Happy Easter.

(For more information, please visit the troop's website: <http://troop121ny.org>)

BOY SCOUT TROOP 121
TODAY'S YOUTH...TOMORROW'S LEADERS

NEWS FROM MISSIONS:

CWS-Hygiene Kits:

When people are forced to abruptly leave their homes because of emergencies, they may not have time to pack the things they use on a daily basis like toothbrushes or soap. But after a few days without these items, they definitely miss them. Hygiene kits offer a refreshing daily boost for someone when supplies are hard to come by.



Providing these kits can make all the difference between sickness and health for struggling families.

Again, this year instead of preparing "Hygiene Kits", we are asking for monetary donations because there is only one drop off church on Long Island — in Riverhead — and only one day available to drop them off before 2 p.m. Your donations will be sent to Church World Service to enable them to purchase the items needed to fill Hygiene Kits.

A Hygiene Kit with processing has a value of \$17. Please make your checks payable to Church World Service and mark in the memo "cwskits".

Each Kit is going to a family that has gone through a really traumatic experience. Every little thing counts to them.

FurnaceCon

On June 4, 2022, the first FurnaceCon will take place at Bethany Church in the Parish Hall. FurnaceCon is a division of HurriCon and it is a comic art convention to benefit the church to raise funds for the new furnace to heat the church.

What will you find at FurnaceCon? Comic books, toys, artists, writers, food, fellowship and more. Admission is a \$5 donation to the church. For more information, search "HURRICON" on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. You can also email

hurricon@yahoo.com.

If you can't make the show and would like to donate to the furnace fund, please send a check to the church and write "furnance" in the memo line. Thank you!



Health Benefits of Pet Ownership

April is a Month Full of Celebrations of Pet Ownership:

National Pet Day 4/11 ~ National Hug Your Dog Day 4/10

National Pet Parents Day 4/24 ~ National Adopt a Shelter Pet Day 4/30

In celebration of those furry friends and their human caretakers, I am offering excerpts from an article by the Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center:

People who have pets will tell you that their furry friends add a lot of joy and happiness to their lives. Whether they're cats, dogs, birds, bunnies, or something else, pets provide unconditional love and companionship to the humans who care for them. Pet ownership also comes with a variety of health benefits. Studies have shown that having a pet can be good for everything from your heart to your brain.

Humans are naturally drawn to companionship, which is one of the many reasons why many people want to own pets. Pets require a lot of care, and humans are happy to provide it. This is because the relationship between a pet and his or her owner is mutually beneficial, and science has started to prove it. According to the **WALTHAM** book of human-animal interactions, owning a pet can have positive effects on one's overall mental and physical wellbeing. WALTHAM has been an authority of scientific research of the nutrition and health of pets for more than 50 years.

Anthrozoology, the study of the interaction between humans and other animals, has been growing over the last 35 years. Controlled research in this discipline has proved that owning a pet can:

- Buffer stress
- Lower heart rate
- Lower blood pressure
- Give social support
- Increase physical fitness level
- Prevent certain sicknesses



This is possible in part because pets provide their owner with comfort, love and humor, all of which have health benefits. In addition, pets demand their owners stay active by requiring walks, attention, play time, baths, and overall care. Studies have shown that pets are similarly beneficial for children. When a child has a good relationship with their pet, the animal will encourage:

- Cognitive stimulation
- Improved behavior in children
- Heightened understanding of others
- Increased immunity
- Lower anxiety levels



So give that special pet of yours some extra attention today in appreciation of their love, loyalty and contribution to your well-being!! (Source: <https://vet.osu.edu/>)

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH!!

Submitted by Carol Henck



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

As you know, Pastor Mark is retiring soon. The Pastoral Search Committee, led by Heidi Hofmann, has begun the necessary process of seeking an appropriate new minister. Part of this process is hearing from you. The Bethany Search Committee has developed a congregational survey. This survey allows the committee to determine what you feel is important and the direction we need to move forward. This allows the committee to seek clergy with the same objectives and goals as we have. Your assistance is very important to us. You can either print the survey or complete the survey online. Please contact the office for an online version.

Printed paper surveys will also be available in church during Sunday worship as well as in the church office.

Completed surveys must be returned to either the church office or emailed to sarahjsobey@gmail.com by **May 1st**. Thank you for your help Bethany search and call committee.

Please take the time to complete the survey and provide your voice in this process. You matter!

Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

Dear Bethany Family,

Bethany needs your help. Our furnace is on the way out and needs to be replaced. The cost is about \$10,000.00.

I do not usually solicit funds directly from you, but we have had a tough two years, financially speaking.

Please do what you can to help.

As you know, Bethany is at 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518

Checks may be made to Bethany Congregational Church.

We also accept Venmo. Please contact the office for that information.

The office number is 516-599-578

My email is revlu@aol.com

Yours in Christ,

Mark Lukens

Pastor Mark



The Thrift Shop is OPEN!! Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS:

- Space is now available for advertising. (No full or half pages)
- Reasonably priced.
- 1/8 page....\$200.00/year; \$25.00/month
- 1/4 page ...\$300.00/year; \$45.00/month
- 200+ circulation.
- Published monthly. (Except only one issue for July/August)
- Not just local...we mail all over.
- Send us camera-ready artwork or we will create your ad for you.
- Business expense deduction (Perhaps a charitable deduction?)

Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

You can drop food off at the church from 9 a.m. to Noon on Tuesdays and Fridays during July and August. If you would like to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to "The Long Island Council of Churches" with "food pantry" in the memo.

Any questions, please call the office and leave a message at 516-599-5768.

Now that school has started in person, we will also be collecting school supplies.

A big "Thank you" to all who have been faithfully donating food each week.

HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



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Write for The Bell Tower



You can email submissions to Charles D'Agostino at cjdagostino@gmail.com or drop them off to the Church office. You can even mail to him directly: 70 Sunrise Drive, Lynbrook, NY 11563.

Thank you!



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 **CRUISE PLANNERS**

THRIFTique

We are pleased to announce that the Thrift Shop at Bethany Congregational Church located at 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY, is open for business once again. Our hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Entry of people will be limited to few at a time, temperatures will be taken, hand sanitizer and masks must be used and social distancing will be put into practice to help keep both customers and staff healthy and safe.

We carry many items in our shop and there's something for everyone!

Looking forward to seeing friends
- old and new - real soon!




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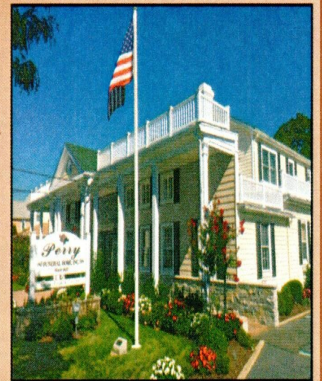
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Bell Tower Boosters

If you enjoy *The Bell Tower* and you would like to see your name here, please send a small donation to Bethany Church. It helps to offset costs. Thank you.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie