



THE BELL TOWER



“PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD
JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS”

Vol. 62 No. 5

East Rockaway, N.Y.

May 2022

NO.1 From the Creator of **HURRICON**
David Donovan Presents



FURNACECON

A Special Comic Art Convention for Bethany Congregational Church

JUNE 4th 2022
10am - 5pm

\$5 donation to Bethany Congregational Church

LOCAL CREATORS!
1000S OF COMIC BOOKS FOR SALE!
KIDS IN COSTUME ARE FREE!


Featuring Guests:
Joe Ciano
John Broglia
Tom Travers & more!



AFTER JACK BURNLEY

Bethany Congregational Church
100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518
comics • toys • art • food • raffles

MEMORIAL DAY...
...IS THE DAY THAT'S SET ASIDE TO REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE AND PRIDE ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AND DIED FOR OUR COUNTRY AND OUR FREEDOM.
MAY YOUR DAY BE FILLED WITH MEMORIES AND PEACE.
GOD BLESS AMERICA



GodVine.com

Dates to Remember:

May 22...Corporate Meeting (In person and on zoom). Contact the office for link
 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
 September 11...Patriot Day

Lay Readers and Ushers are needed for Sunday Worship. Please sign up on the sheet in the Hallway or speak with Maryanne (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)

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

Resurrection

The sanctity of life is a cornerstone of our beliefs as disciples of Jesus Christ. Though we have struggled with the universality of this reality since the creation, it remains, at least in principle, foundational to our faith because only God is the author of life and because we understand that to everything, especially every life, there is a divine purpose and that the kin-dom of God is complete, only when abundant life is not just a possession of the few, but the birthright of the many. Life is a miracle that only God can make, and, let's face it, life is an amazing thing, especially this time of year. From the seedlings breaking up through the ground, their flowers opening up in celebration of the season, to the birds singing in the trees, to the squirrels running around our yards, everything is motion, a joyful cacophony celebrating these beautiful Spring days as if they had never been before and would never come again. All of the creatures, accommodating each other as they shared the abundance that God has provided. They say that "love is in the air" in Spring, but I think it smells more like hope, hope that this new beginning can be the seeds of something salvific, and like faith, faith that comes from trust in the power of God's love to show us the way to make that so, right here in East Rockaway.

It's said to be a tough time to be the church right now. The pandemic decimated so many congregations that were already struggling with members. The lure of false gospels and "us against them" thinking and theologies endanger Christ's gospel of radical inclusion and grace in the church. Many churches have gone to streaming for safety but have not been able to come back. So, what else is new? In a way, "tough" is good, because it is when we get

too comfortable that we begin to lose our way, get distracted by lesser things and forget that we are disciples charged with the Great Commission, the healing and transformation of life itself. As we have traveled through the years in our COVID induced wilderness, we have learned a great deal about how to do things we couldn't do before, and how to see things we couldn't see before. More importantly our understanding of what it means to be church has grown through this time in the wilderness. Watching and wrestling with our angels and demons, we have also learned these past two years how important it is to disagree with grace, to recognize the divine image of God in the person with whom we disagree, and to honor them even as we assert what we believe to be right and true. Because we have, we are stronger than we were two years ago and more ready than ever to move forward into the future with hope, faith, and love. Yes we have more challenges ahead, but Jesus has given us all the tools we need to take on those challenges and frankly to become the spiritual and moral voice for this century and this generation, to hold open the door to the kin-dom during this difficult time and to work together to become not just a community of like-minded and well-intentioned folks, but a gateway to the kin-dom of God, a signpost pointing to the Way the Truth and the Life.

All these things can seem to be very lofty and overwhelming. Especially now, as we are seeking to find a new pastor to lead Bethany into our future. It's a little bit scary for some folks, after so many years together to look at making a change like this, even when it is due. But we are resurrection people, no community more so than this one.

Our faith isn't based in optimism, it is based on "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews) Our community is founded not on good wishes but on the kind of active hope that never stops seeking after the light in the midst of the darkness. It is based in faith, trust in the steadfast love of God, and Jesus' will to abundant life for all of God's creation, and it is grounded in the self-sacrificing love of God lived out in the life of God's people. We do not give in to fear, but instead rejoice in the resurrection of Christ reflected in the resurrection of our church family, our community, our world. Because it is a resurrection and not a mere resuscitation, we are looking not backward, but forward to the brave new world in which we find ourselves, bloodied but unbowed, and with the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, we can rejoice that God has led us through this wilderness and is bringing us closer to the realization of her kin-dom.

Now it is our turn to shine, as they say; to assert the sanctity of the life of this com-

munity of faith. We are moving forward gathering all of our flock, planning for the future, including the search for a new minister for Bethany. We are weary from the battle with the pandemic and many of us need some Sabbath to rest and revive, (especially those who have been holding the fort during this time). We need other folks in our community to step up, take the baton and run with it. We need readers, ushers, organizers, singers, in order to continue the work Christ calls us to do, and we need everyone's input as we, like those first disciples after finding the tomb empty, prepare for this next great chapter in our journey to the kin-dom of God. So, hey, we need you! Get involved! Oh, and remember, Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mark



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 express their views in letters to the editor.***

Are you less than perfect? Welcome! We are a community of 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

May Greetings

May is a beautiful month. Spring is happening for real. None of that March and April weather where it is lovely one day and arctic the next! And it's the big gardening month. Mother's Day has been the benchmark for many of us as the safe time to plant our veggies and flowers.

I've been enjoying wandering in my yard to see what plants have reemerged. The spring bulbs did their job, brightening the winter landscape. Now its everyone else's turn. The coneflowers and butterfly weed show signs of promise. The bleeding hearts and lavender are showing off. The wild violets and dandelions add splashes of color all over.

So, curious nerd that I am, I got to thinking about flowers and wondered if they each had some sort of special symbolism. Got a while? It turns out they certainly do!

We all know about romantic red roses but did you know that coral roses stand for friendship and sympathy? Pink roses symbolize grace, happiness, and gentleness – the perfect Mother's Day bouquet. White roses are for new beginnings but look out for yellow roses. They have been associated with jealousy and infidelity!



Need a plant for an absent friend? The pansy, zinnia, or forget-me-not are perfect symbols of thoughtfulness and remembrance. Is there someone you look up to and respect? Go for an iris. Originally associated with royalty, the iris now symbolizes wisdom and respect. Daisies represent innocence. No surprise then that the youngest Girl Scout members are called just that!

Chrysanthemums stand for honesty but beware the snapdragon and its association with deception. A perfect gift for the athlete in your circle is the hyacinth. It is symbolic of sports and games. How about a gladiolus for your high school or college graduate? It stands for strength, integrity, and victory! Alyssum stands for "worth beyond beauty" and has been used to repel negative emotions. Cosmos represent order and harmony. I could go on and on but I will end with a few that I found especially interesting.



The calla lily is the perfect flower for someone you find beautiful inside and out. Here is the cool part. The actual flower is the stalk inside. The outer petals are really the leaves.

Then there's the lotus. This inspiring flower grows in mud. Each night it returns to that mud only to rebloom in the morning. A beautiful representation of purity, rebirth and enlightenment.

Iwish for each of you a Bethany begonia – the symbol for gratitude and uniqueness. I am thankful for all our Bethany family, each with their individual gifts and blessings!



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.

With the reopening of the church, the board has been extremely busy. We finally have the new furnace... it is in and they have taken care of all of the bugs. It is working fine.

I am also looking at our finances so we can make air conditioning the Thriftique affordable.

We had a Boy Scout Eagle Scout project from Troop 121 and they did a wonderful job of reorganizing our storage rooms. They moved equipment from one maintenance room to another room. We now have another empty room to work with. Also, as part of the project they laid down carpet squares in the hallway leading into the gymnasium. We had them left over from when we carpeted the large room downstairs. It came out great! We all need to help the Boy Scout group as much as possible spread the word they are looking for Scouts to join the group.

With the reopening, I would also like to thank Dan Gilloon, our Sexton, for doing a great job throughout the pandemic and continuing to do a great job for Bethany. We also added Anthony Kilgus to the AV team on Sunday mornings for streaming the service and he's doing a great job, as are John-Paul (JP) D'Agostino and Jack Boll.

Yours In Christ, Richard Eaves, Chair

BROADWAY PLAY REVIEW:

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

By Charles D'Agostino

Calling all Harry Potter fans and aficionados! If you are into Hogwarts, wizardry and magic— this is the play for you. The special effects and magical illusions rival any David Copperfield show. As they say, you will believe in magic again.

It centers around a middle-aged Harry Potter and his son, Albus Severus Potter, (named after Professor Dumbledore and Professor Snape). Middle-aged Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger and their children are also part of the action. If I just lost you, forget it. The audience has to be up on the storylines from previous books and movies.

However, the play is very long at three and half hours (includes a 20 minute intermission). The plot is a little hard to keep up with because there are numerous shifts in time. And no one is winning a Tony for their acting. But, overall, it was a fun and enjoyable and we are very happy that we had the experience.



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FROM THE EDITOR:

We just have a few reminders:

- Bethany needs help with money for a new furnace. Please remit whatever you can.
- The Pastoral Search Committee is reviewing the surveys that folks have been submitting in order to decide on the best possible candidate for everyone's needs, hopes and desires. Please be sure to submit your survey.
- The Bell Tower is always in need of boosters and advertisers.
- The Bell Tower is always in need of submissions.
- Bethany is open for service with coffee hour! (Please consider volunteering to help out or host.)
- The Corporate Meeting will be May 22, 2022 at 11:30. Live and on Zoom. Contact the office for the link.
- The Thrift Shop is always in need of donations. (There is a shed next to the garage where items may be left at any time.)
- The Thrift Shop is open on Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

TROOP 121

The troop is pleased to say that two of their scouts are working on Eagle Projects.

Ethan is working at the Tanglewood Preserve. He and his fellow scouts are restoring one of the enclosed areas with new and refurbished fencing. They are also giving it a fresh coat of paint.

Max's project was at Bethany. He and his fellow scouts cleaned out an old storage room. They also put new carpet tiles in the hallway at the top of the outdoor stairs in front of the Parish Hall.

Hopefully pictures and details for both projects will follow shortly.

Troop 121 is now recruiting! If you know of any young men who are thinking of scouting or are unhappy with their present troop, come on down and see what all of the excitement is about. Troop 121 meets every Monday evening at 7:30 PM in the Parish Hall (Gym), except on days when schools are closed.

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

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



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

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!



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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

12 Simple Ways to Reduce Stress That Are Easy to Incorporate into Your Life

It only makes sense. Do things that are fun or relaxing, and that heart-pounding presentation you're facing may not seem so daunting. Whatever brings you stress, these 12 tactics will help bring well-deserved calm to your life. Here's how these habits can affect your health:

1. **Take a YouTube break.** Just make sure it's funny. A good belly laugh increases oxygen intake, relaxes muscles, lowers blood pressure, reduces cortisol levels and releases natural painkillers. Even a few minutes of laughter is a terrific stress reliever.
2. **Breathe like a lion.** Try this yoga breath to immediately relieve tension in the jaw, chest and face. Take a deep breath through your nose, filling your chest and belly with air, then stick out your tongue as far as possible toward your chin — à la Mick Jagger — and exhale with a loud "ha" sound. Extra perk: It helps prevent neck wrinkles.
3. **Give a bear hug to someone you live with.** A nice big squeeze will reduce your heart rate and cortisol levels and trigger the release of the warm and fuzzy love hormone oxytocin. Muscles relax, and nerves are soothed. No hug-worthy friends close by?
4. **Hang with friends.** Buddies buffer stress by reducing cortisol and increasing the body's natural opiates. Call, text, FaceTime or Zoom with pals as daily medication.
5. **Eat a square of chocolate.** Not only is it rich in healthy flavanols, but cocoa consumption also increases nitric oxide in the blood, opening blood vessels and reducing blood pressure. What's more, it causes the brain to release feel-good endorphins.
6. **Pet your pet.** Stroking a furry friend reduces blood pressure and stress levels. No pets at home? Volunteer at an animal shelter.
7. **Reach out and volunteer.** People who engage in meaningful and purposeful activities — such as helping others — have improved immunity and lower levels of inflammation.
8. **Get dirty.** The good bacteria in dirt increase the release of serotonin and improve mood in the same way antidepressants do, research finds. So plant something beautiful when the weather's right. Your stress levels will drop as your garden blooms.
9. **Find a green space.** Walking in nature relieves tension, decreases frustration, and increases calm feelings. No time to find a park? Even five minutes outside boosts mood.
10. **Get good zzz's.** Too much cortisol contributes to nighttime wakefulness and worries that keep your brain awake. Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed, set regular sleep and wake times, and keep the room dark.
11. **Get moving.** Exercise pumps out feel-good endorphins, improves mood, aids sleep and acts as moving meditation. A good workout can blunt the stress response for a full day.
12. **Go for it.** Bust out moves to your favorite songs or take a cold shower. Even putting a little extra spice on your burger can help reset stress levels, says therapist Christy Matta, author of *The Stress Response*. -Elizabeth Agnval
From AAP Staying Sharp May2022

Wishing you a Wealth of Health ~~ Carol Henck

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As Father's Day approaches I think nostalgically of my own Daddy who, unfortunately, has been gone since September 10, 1963. Losing him at age ten was truly tragic, but memories of him come to me often.

Daddy grew up in Long Beach, New York and we were very close to his Family who remained in the area. The Schneider clan was comprised of a warm, accepting, loving and affectionate bunch who welcomed everyone into their circle. I grew up in a quirky, retro 1950's ranch house in Far Rockaway (built by my Maternal Great Grandfather) with a kitchen that was installed by Daddy (kitchen contracting was his profession), complete with a green linen Formica chrome trimmed countertop, a generously sized General Electric fridge, a single handled Hobart dishwasher and a retro style electric stove with a built in clock and side compartment for storing pots and pans. The room contained all the latest trends to best encourage success in the culinary arts. He also built a jalousie porch at the back of the house where we ate in tightly screened bug-free comfort during the warm weather months. It was also a perfect spot for viewing the Rockaways' Playland Amusement Park fireworks which lit up the sky each Friday night. Beyond our rear yard was a huge open field which back in the day was considered a piece of "unbuildable wetland" in the County of Queens. The large swath of property was in plain view beyond our lattice fence and it was my happiest play spot on sunny days where my imagination soared amidst the trees, birds, wild flowers, bunnies, and butterflies. Daddy, Mom and my Paternal Grandmother, Wa Wa, loved nature, so having this area beyond the border of our yard was appreciated by us all. The front of our house had a wood divider with a flat top that the robins used as a choice nesting spot. Daddy taught us to close the screen door ever so gently to insure the feathered family would be safe during their annual highly anticipated visit.



My Wonderful Parents...

My father was a "fix it please" Daddy who could repair anything from a malfunctioning clock to a broken heart. He was a true lover of innocent creatures and nature, soft, affectionate and gentle. He had a great sense of humor, was artistically as well as musically talented and was blessed with a "green thumb" inherited from his Mother which accounted for our flower filled gardens made even more beautiful with the help of our much loved landscaper, Lenny. I cherished the Summer evenings when Daddy would come home from work and take me swimming at the Bay on Beach 9th Street. He was athletic in his youth until, sadly, he was afflicted with Polio. Growing up near the ocean, he learned to swim very young and, thankfully, despite other physical limitations experienced as a result of the illness, his ability to swim remained strong and unaffected. Before leaving, we'd walk on the water's edge to the circular concession stand that rested on stilts; I would choose a treat and Daddy would enjoy a refreshing cold drink. Walking back to the car I'd collect shells in my tin-litho sand pail, souvenirs of a wonderful time spent bonding with Daddy; and if the timing was just right, we'd view the setting sun on the water before heading home.

My Father was a true "pet person". He grew up with dogs and his favorite was a St. Bernard named "Lady". Though it was his plan to have the same breed when he grew up as part of the household, there was no way Mom could deal with that. He once came home with a Basset Hound as partial payment for a kitchen install, who bayed and barked all night. Next morning, the dog was returned to its original owner and Mom said with the puppy keeping everyone awake all night, it was worth it to let the customer have the dog and we would pay HER the amount SHE OWED Daddy to take the animal back! My Father couldn't manage without a pet, and though we had a turtle, a canary and a parakeet at different periods, furry pets were his favorites. So, pussycats became the agreed upon compromise. They required limited amounts of grooming, ate significantly less than a giant St. Bernard, they were devoted Family members and were small enough to fit comfortably in our one story house with ease. Daddy being a soft touch, brought home a large red tabby cat (with a lipstick kiss on his forehead from the Pet Mama who kissed him good-bye) as the balance due for finishing a kitchen from a home-owner short on cash. Needless to say, this was not the first time a payment had been made by the barter system...though Mom would have much preferred Daddy be paid with money instead...a method that was better in terms of keeping the family budget intact. But, in the end, Georgie became a wonderful addition to the Family and to me he was worth more than all the money in the world. Needless to say, my love for animals, cats in particular, are part of my DNA inherited from Daddy. Though Mom wasn't a pet lover originally, she did warm up to kitties and was completely won over when we adopted our cat, Angel, in 2005. So, I guess my great love for nature and pets was unavoidable since it was a trait extended family members as well as both my parents shared...Daddy all his life and Mom later on.

I am grateful to my parents for giving me a view of what a good marriage looked like. I met Steve when I was 17 and we have been "an item" ever since. He is not only a wonderful, gentle patient and loving Husband and Father, but he has also been deeply invested in helping raise generations of our "fur babies" in addition to being kind and steady through the years.

Mother's Day came and went and I thought of my Mom often. She was strong, loving, and always did the right thing - not the easy thing. Father's Day will be coming soon and though I had Daddy with me for a limited time, his influence has lasted a lifetime.

Having such a happy home life in my early years with such wonderful parents along with support from extended family and spending my late teenage years to the present with Steve has provided me with stability that was sorely lacking after Daddy's sad passing. Despite the trials and tribulations thrown my way, things had to happen the way they did to have life turn out the way it did, which is really pretty wonderful. Losing Daddy so young taught me to value and appreciate those I love since we don't know how long we'll be together and we aren't necessarily promised tomorrow. I miss my parents tremendously but it's a comfort to think of the wonderful Family bonds that forever tie us together. No matter what, I will always be the Daughter of Roslyn and Eugene Schneider...a fact that neither the passing of time nor the finality of death can sever.

With love and best wishes for a wonderful Father's Day filled with tender memories from us all,

Jo, Steve and Kittens Teddy, Cleo and Dolly

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS:

- Space is now available for advertising. (No full or half pages)
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- 1/8 page....\$200.00/year; \$25.00/month
- 1/4 page ...\$300.00/year; \$45.00/month
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- 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.



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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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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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- Not just local...we mail all over.
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- Business expense deduction (Perhaps a charitable deduction?)

Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

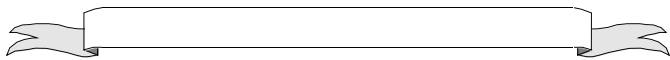
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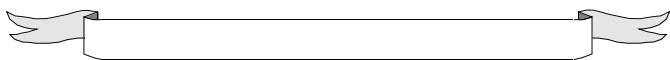
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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)