



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 62 No. 8

East Rockaway, N.Y.

September 2022

Bethany's Fall Corporate Meeting

Sunday October 2, 2022 (following our church service at about 11:45)

This is my favorite meeting as we share each committee's annual report of activities, goals, and plans. Although this past year has been also challenging, you will see that we have indeed risen from the depths of quarantine!

The meeting will be in person in the fellowship hall but will also have a Zoom remote component for those unable to attend physically. That link is below.

I look forward to seeing you there. Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

Zoom info:

Topic: Corporate Meeting

Time: Oct 2, 2022 11:30 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 871 7093 5938, Passcode: 177835

Dial by your location..+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Dates to Remember:

September 23...First Day of Autumn
September 25...Rosh Hashanah begins
October 2...Corporate Meeting
October 4...Yom Kippur
October 10...Columbus Day
October 31...Halloween
November 6...end Daylight Savings
November 8...ELECTION DAY
November 11...Veterans' Day
November 19...HURRICON

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. 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

Paradise: Lost and Found

I love the summer. Even if I don't do much other than take naps on the deck or hang out at the beach, summer is the time when it seems like we have at least a little bit of a respite from the craziness of life in the early 21st century. And, hey, Long Island shines in the summer! We have beautiful beaches, great surf, fishing, boating, concerts, you name it, not to mention great bars and some of the best restaurants in the country. Summer rocks from Rockaway to Montauk and everywhere in between. Winter is potholes and freezing wind, but on those beautiful summer days, a cooling breeze in your hair, the smell of salt water in your nostrils, our island in all of its full glory, it almost seems just a little bit like a glimpse of the "mountaintop." Only this time, God's image is made manifest in the perfection of the days, reflected in the platinum glow of the few clouds that serve only to offset the beautiful blue of the sky, not one shade of blue, but infinite shades, melding together as they move across the sky. Paradise!

It's not hard to understand, then, why we want to preserve our way of life, especially those of us who, through our hard work, have made a home here, raised our kids here, and maybe even been able to do a little better than just scratch out a living, in the most expensive place to live in the country. It is easy to understand why we're suspicious of change, worried that the problems we worked so hard to escape are following us to this place of sanctuary. Long Island has a well-

deserved reputation as being the home of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard), maybe because we worked hard to get here, and we want it to stay this way. But that's not how life works, and as we witness the struggles of the next generation forced to leave in search of affordable housing, the greying of our population, the intractable problems we have with the cost of living, with the incredible gap between the have and have-nots, it becomes increasingly obvious our focus on maintaining the status quo has made it hard for us to adapt as life requires. Maybe, in our love for our island, we have forgotten the teachings of the Bible that call us to remember that life is change, that the things of this world, are either growing or decaying and dying and that when we try to slam the door on change, we have chosen the latter. When our zeal for preservation makes us forget to practice God's love as hospitality to the stranger, care of the needy, and an openness to the breath of the Spirit that blows where it will, we turn away from life in favor of fear and find that we are chipping away at the spirit of community that makes this place the home it has been for us. "This is the guilt of your sister Sodom:" God says through the prophet Ezekiel, "she and her daughters had pride, excess of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy." When we focus too much on building walls, on protecting what we have, we close the door to what can be, and close our ears to the voice of our still-speaking God, who is

calling us to see that genuine sanctuary is built on faith and not on fear, with a door that is open to all.

The truth is, there is no such thing as standing still, even on the mountaintop. Life goes on and it changes. Ours is a dynamic God; a Redeemer seeking us out, calling us up and out of our comfortable places and inviting us to be part the new thing that he is doing: the souls transformed, the dry bones of old assumptions and old ways suddenly giving way to new ways of living and being as we learn to let go of what was, to have faith in the future and to trust our will and our lives to God. As long as we live in faith, we can greet the inevitability of change with joyful anticipation instead of resistance, because God is still speaking, still calling us to something new and better. We can let go of that baggage of suspicion and fear as our faith transforms our hearts and our lives because God has even better things in store for us all.

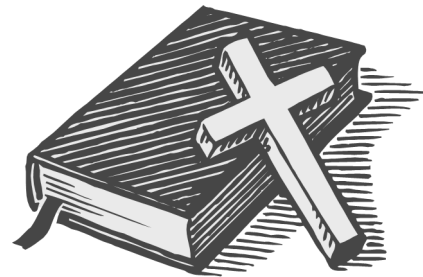
As I begin to prepare for our last church year together, I cannot help but remember our

first years, and the extraordinary faith and determination of this little church to be a light to this community and all who seek to share the Word of Life. On paper, Bethany looked like a bad bet, but you showed me, my family, and anyone else with eyes to see the power of God's love lived by people determined to live by kingdom rules, rather than conventional wisdom. That's what has made Bethany the bright shining "city on a hill" that it is and in that spirit, it will continue to be.

Oh, and, if you see me doing weird things like stroking the wood of the pews or sitting in the sanctuary or smiling stupidly, I'm drinking it all in, holding you all close, and storing grace for the days to come, for when I need to remember what God's love looks like at church.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mark



Bethany Bell Tower ...is a monthly publication of

BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

100 Main Street, East Rockaway, New York 11518 (516) 599-5768
Maryanne Walling, Secretary, bethanyoffice@optimum.net, www.bethanycong.org

Reverend Mark Lukens, Pastor, revlu@aol.com
Mildred and Art Roemer, Editors Emeritus and Guiding Lights
Charles D'Agostino, Editor, Jennifer Valis, Assistant Editor
Reach us directly at: cjdagostino@gmail.com or 516-721-8885

***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
September Greetings to our Bethany

Congregational Church family!

The summer Bell Tower issue contained a wonderful piece by David Donovan discussing the background of the Congregationalist church. He shared its history as well as its tenets of faith in action. It was wonderful to be reminded of the many ways the Congregational Church has stepped forward to live the faith by insisting on acceptance for all.

Here is one of *Merriam Webster's* definition of congregational:

*capitalized : of or relating to a body of Protestant churches deriving from the English Independents of the 17th century and affirming the **essential importance and the autonomy of the local congregation*** (Bold type is my addition.)

Now let's segue off David's words and think about what it means to be a part of Bethany Congregational Church.

First off, we all matter. You matter. I matter. We are the congregation! Isn't it wonderful that we don't have some high up church official telling us how to run our services or who can come in our doors and who cannot? We, the local congregation, make those decisions for Bethany and I must say, I am proud of our Bethany family and what we do.

That's all wonderful but there is a downside. There always is, isn't there? It means we, you and I, are responsible for what happens at Bethany. Yes, we have our Pastor to lead us in our spiritual growth but the rest is up to us. We, the congregation, make sure the service runs as it should with readers, oil in the candles, the communion elements... We, the congregation, are responsible for paying the bills and trying to keep an aging building together. We, the congregation, are the social and spiritual family of Bethany as well as the welcomers of the stranger. It's all good but some of this is more fun than others.

I'm asking us to think of our relationship with Bethany and see what role we can serve, be it time, talent, or treasure. Perhaps you have handyman skills. We need you! Maybe you love to bake. We need you! Perhaps you like to sing. We need you! There is so much we can do with helping hands!

Here's a fun Bethany Congregational story. On July 6th, we found out that Pastor was under the weather and would not be able to preach Sunday, July 10th. No problem, right? We reached out to Rev. Rayford Howell who had covered Pastor's vacation the week before. Oh no, not available. Our next guest preacher was also not around. Oh boy. Can't do a hymn sing because we had a substitute music person covering for Kate. What to do??? Well we could have canceled services for that day and no one would have faulted us. Not gonna happen! David Donovan stepped up to provide a homily. Thank you! Wait, there's more. Unfortunately, the music person had a family tragedy occur just as she was headed out. No music? Not gonna happen! Maryanne graciously agreed to give us some one handed notes to keep us on key and we did our best.

That, my friends, is the Congregational spirit! Now, I'm not asking you to preach or sing acapella. I am asking you to come on out and find your niche in our Bethany family.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

If I've inspired you to pursue this further, please call the church office at 516-599-5768. Maryanne will take your information and connect you to a very appreciative appropriate person.

The United Church of Christ has raised its assessment of membership from \$10 to \$12. (What hasn't gone up lately?)

What does this mean to us? Well, it means that our church must send a check for that amount to the UCC. That would be our membership of about 164 times \$12. Ouch. This money does go to good causes such as important mission work, interfaith involvement, the training of pastors, and curriculum development and it's not optional.

Why am I telling you this? I think, as Bethany members, we should stand tall and pay our own way. This \$12 won't destroy my budget but I wouldn't want to pay that whole amount! If all that are able do their little part, the Bethany checkbook won't take such a big hit. This is, after all, our church.

Just send in your check or Venmo with a notation of UCC membership.

Thank you, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

FROM THE EDITOR:

We have a few condolences to offer to the friends and families:

We are sad to report the passings of **Diane Sisco**, our former secretary and **Michael (Mike) Fioramonti**, good friend to Bethany Church. For Mike, donations may be made in Michael's name to: Wounded Warrior Project, 4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300, Jacksonville, Florida 32256.

Congratulations Robert and Dorothy Dever on their 79th Wedding Anniversary in August. The Devers were former Deacons at Bethany many years ago. *(They are each 100 years old! Birthdays are coming up soon!)*

Get Well Wishes to Dorothy Dever, Mati and Chris Padjus.

Editor's Note: If you would like us to make an announcement of any sort, please send it to me directly at cjdagostino@gmail.com or call or text: 516-721-8885

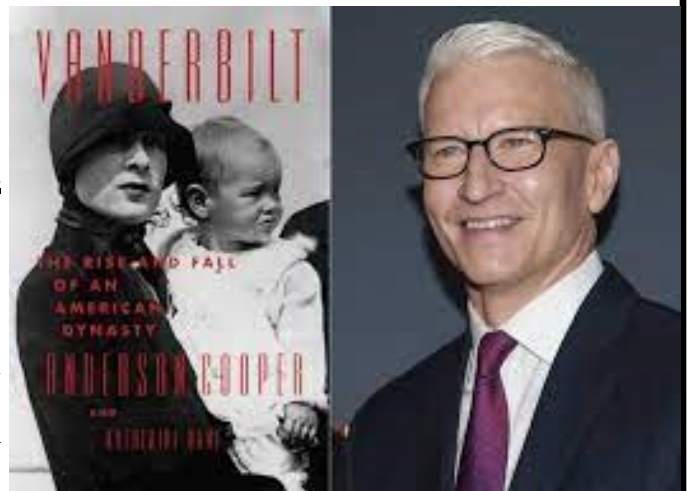
BOOK REVIEW:

Submitted by Lou Gaspari

VANDERBILT: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty

By Anderson Cooper & Katherine How

This book is a wonderful accounting of American aristocracy in decline. The book is full of fantastic depictions of affluence, personal craziness, family rivalry within and with the other millionaires of the era, such as the Astors, Belmonts and Delanos. As you read you begin to realize how closely we resemble European aristocracy and actually copy it and how we Americans are unbelievably in love with the rich. One might easily state that the spending and losing of a great fortune earned the Vanderbilts something even greater or more ratified than money and that is Enduring Fame. I believe you will find this book to be a fascinating read.



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

TROOP 121

In the first week of August '22, the Scouts BSA troop 121 embarked on a trip to Onteoria. Onteoria is a summer camp run by Scouts for Scouts. It is upstate New York in the heart of the Catskill Mountains. There, the Scouts can earn merit badges to complete their journey to Eagle and beyond. Every year at the camp there is a theme. This year it was pirate theme and the camp had two teams, the Privateers and Buccaneers. The teams would compete in a series of challenges for one to become the victor, including a scavenger hunt.

There is also a daily challenge where one troop can win the "Spirit Stick". The stick is earned by showing the most spirit at camp. Troop 121 was the troop to go home with it because they showed the most spirit during the whole week!!



In addition to current Troop 121 members, Jack, Max, JP and Caleb, there a couple of leaders...Mr. Boll and Mr. Boyle.

Also, T121 alumni: Matt, Finn, and Nathan.

The boys to the left (Max, JP and Jack) are proudly displaying the "Spirit Stick" .

BULLY!!

Troop 121 is recruiting! Any boys interested in joining are welcome to join them at any scheduled meeting. The meet in Bethany's Fellowship Hall (Gym) every Monday 7:30– 9:00 P.M.

Mr. Boyle will be stepping up as the new Scoutmaster.

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

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

UCC SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING:

Neighbors in Need — Sunday, October 2nd

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.





HurriCON returns to Bethany Church on: Saturday, November 19, 2022 from 10 am to 5 pm in the Parish Hall!

This year there will be over 30 tables featuring comics book artists and writers, local artists, comic books, toys, food, fellowship, and much, much more.

Admission is a \$5 donation to the church and children 12 and under in costume get in free!

This year's featured guests include Star Trek Novelist Michael Jan Friedman, artist Sean Jackson with the debut of his new hand drawn maze book "Marvel Mazes", DC/Marvel Comics Keith Williams, and East Rockaway's own artist Kimball Thorpe sketching just for you!

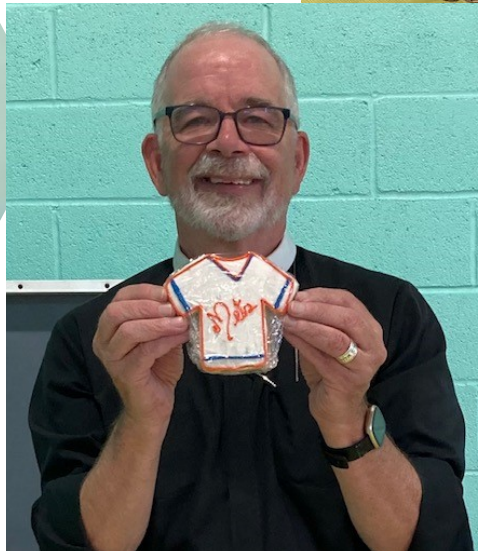
Come down and get that unique holiday gift that you won't find anywhere else!

Volunteers are always needed, please get in touch with David Donovan at hurriCON@yahoo.com and any high school students who need to do community service should also get in touch because we need your help too!

We celebrated Pastor's birthday at coffee hour Sunday, September 4th!



It is likely his last birthday celebration with us. All the best in retirement and good



luck to his beloved METS!
LGM!

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

FUN FACTS ABOUT FALL

When the air starts getting crisp and the smell of pumpkin pie spice is all around, then you know that the Fall Season has arrived! It will soon be time to enjoy beautiful autumn foliage, go apple picking and stock up on Halloween treats. Here are a few facts you might like to know about this wonderful time of the year!

Americans typically refer to this time of year as “Fall,” while the British use the word “Autumn.” Historically, Fall was called “harvest” because of the “harvest moon” that occurs close to the autumn equinox.

Fall colors are caused by the amount of sugar in leaves. The redder the leaf, the more sugar that leaf is storing. That is why Maple trees are so vibrant. Evergreens don’t change because their leaves have a thick wax covering that protects the chlorophyll (green) in the leaves.

The Fall season is caused by the Earth’s tilt, not by our distance from the sun. When the northern hemisphere tilts towards the sun, we get warmer. When it tilts away, we get colder. Fall and spring are the times of transition.

Ancient people wore Halloween costumes to hide from ghosts. The Celtic tradition believed that ghosts roamed the earth on Halloween. Wearing a disguise would help you to avert these spirits.

The Irish used to carve turnips and potatoes. Much like Halloween costumes, Jack-O-Lanterns started out as a way for people to scare off evil spirits around Halloween. Back in the day, the Irish carved the faces into turnips, beets, or potatoes instead of pumpkins.

Bobbing for apples was once a British courting ritual. In this old-fashioned Halloween party game, men were assigned an apple and the women would bob for them trying to get the right apple from the man she had her eye on. If she was successful, it was taken as an omen that they were meant to be together.

There are more than 7,500 apple varieties. There is an amazing number of apple varieties that are grown around the globe. According to *The Best of Life* there are 2,500 types grown in the US and 7,500 types in total. Since apples are so good for you, you can choose the one you like and make sure to eat one a day to keep the doctor away!



Sources: www.redbookmag.com , www.news.onecountry.com

Wishing you a Wealth of Health
Carol Henck

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

Parish Resource Center®

The Parish Resource Center of Long Island West, located in Valley Stream, NY, is excited to announce several upcoming events that we hope will be of interest to you and your ministry. Enclosed you will find a bulletin insert to share this information with your congregation. I have also enclosed flyers and registration information. Thank you for helping to spread the word about these events.

Teacher Training Event on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9:30am to 12pm \$10/person for subscribers

Resourcing For Committees, Boards, and Groups on Saturday, October 15 from 10:30am to 2pm

FREE Event for our Subscribing Congregations with a chance to meet with PRC Staff Members to select the best resources for your board or group.

Re-Cycle and Up-Cycle Advent and Christmas Workshop on Saturday, November 12

Morning Session from 10am to 11:30am – Ideas for personal or church use including a chance to design and make your own Christmas Greeting Cards \$10/person

Afternoon Session from 12pm to 1:30pm – Ideas for personal or church use including a chance to make and take your own personal size banner - \$10/person

Attend Both Sessions - \$15/person

Annual Festival of Trees, Cookie Walk and Christmas Boutique beginning November 5th with the drawing on Saturday, December 3 from 11am to 1pm.

Please feel free to check us out online at www.cpr4church.org or call us at 516-285-0919 with any questions.

Faithfully,

Karla McKenzie

Executive Director

Did you know that Bethany has a Book Group?

Well, we do and Pastor Mark is an amazing discussion leader. We have read some very interesting titles and are just about to start a new one.

We meet via Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. Please call the Bethany office (516-599-5768) to get the Zoom information if you would like to join us or just sit in to try it out.

Perhaps you may have a suggestion for the next book.

The more who participate, the greater the reward. Hope to see you soon.

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

cjdagostino@gmail.com or

Call or text: 516-721-8885 for all of the details.

Write for The Bell Tower

- **Movie or TV Review?**
- **Recipe?**
- **Restaurant Review?**
- **Play Review?**
- **Book Review?**
- **Local History or reminiscences?**
- **Concert Review?**
- **Announcement?**
- **No political positioning.**



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

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!

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.



East Rockaway Fire Department, Inc



Gregory Hall - Available For Rental
5 Main Street East Rockaway, NY 11518
Phone (516) 599-9771 • Fax (516) 596-4712

HELP ME HELP BETHANY!

**Thinking Real Estate? Buying?
Selling? Renting? Relocating?**



Charles D'Agostino
516-721-8885
Lic. Associate Broker
cdagostino@gmail.com
www.charlesdagostino.com
Since 1994!!

As a member of Bethany Church, I will gladly *donate* to the Church **25% of my earned income** (in your name) coming from a referral from any member of Bethany or reader of ***The Bell Tower***, whether it is for yourself, friend, or relative! This includes any rental or the sale of any residential, condo, co-op, commercial or investment property.

FREE MARKET ANALYSIS! COMPETITIVE COMMISSION RATES! 25 POINT MARKETING PLAN!



LA ROSA REALTY
NEW YORK



American Cool Air

Marc Goldberg

21 Ryder Place
East Rockaway, NY 11518

(516) 593-0888 (Office)
(516) 593-0999 (Fax)



Virna D'Agostino
Debbie Sugrue

Travel Advisors/Franchise Owners

virna.dagostino@cruiseplanners.com
(516) 305-3775
debbie.sugrue@cruiseplanners.com
(917) 929-4260

www.FriendsLoveTravel.com



Customized Individual & Group Travel * Family
or High School Reunions * Ocean & River Cruising
* Food & Wine Travel * Cultural Expeditions
* Land Tours & Private Excursions * Guided
Tours & Vacation



Trust
is a Donza promise

*Trust us with your families wishes.
To provide your family with the best
decision and care for your loved ones.
Call us to sit down and
discuss a Tradition & Trust
pre-arrangement.*

Guy Donza SFD, Thomas Donza
& Christine Donza
Funeral Directors &
Pre-Arrangement Counselors

Donza
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

1926 **92** years 2018

Warm and Personal Service
A Family Tradition Since 1926



333 Atlantic Avenue, East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518
Tel: (516) 593-2521 / Fax: (516) 825-6380
www.donzafuneralhome.com



THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

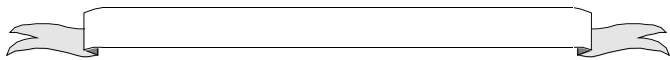
100 Main Street

East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518

(Non-profit Organization)

Dated material

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage paid at
East Rockaway
New York.
PERMIT NO 52

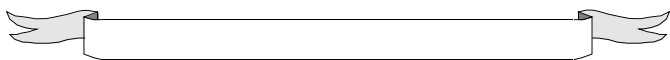


Bell Tower Boosters

Thank you

Barbara Valis!

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.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)