



# THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 62 No. 6

East Rockaway, N.Y.

June 2022



### Dates to Remember:

June 19...Father's Day  
June 21...First Day of Summer  
July 4...Independence Day  
September 5...Labor Day  
September 11...Patriot Day  
September 23...First Day of Autumn  
September 25...Rosh Hashanah begins  
October 4...Yom Kippur  
October 10...Columbus Day  
October 31...Halloween

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**

# Memorial Day Musings

This may be the last time I get invited in an “official” capacity as the pastor of Bethany and as I went to the interfaith Memorial Day service, (beautifully led by the Cantor and Rabbi at Congregation Etz Chaim), I found myself deeply moved in a way I had not before. Despite our struggles, our divisions, despite the skyrocketing rate of hate directed at the Jewish community in the past few years, despite the alienation and brokenness of much of our public discourse; people of different faiths came together to remember the terrible price paid in our nation’s wars, to mourn the dead, to pray together for peace and to commit ourselves to the foundational principles for which those lives were sacrificed: liberty, equality before the law and the opportunity to work toward the realization of the promise of this nation for all of her people, as yet unrealized.

Isn’t that what Memorial Day is supposed to be? A time to remember not just the war dead, but to meditate on what is it that they were willing to fight and die for? As we remember those who stepped up into the carnage of war, we remember that they did so not out of some quest for glory, but out of love for their homeland and what it stands for. Memorial day transcends our petty differences in favor of remembering who we are as a people and what that requires of us in terms of how we relate to one another and the world. It is a day to remember that the ultimate sacrifices demanded and given are usually made by those who have yet to really even begin their lives. Most importantly I think, it is a time for us to come together, share our grief and our gratitude as Americans of every race, creed, or political opinion, because they gave themselves for and from all of us. And yet, as I attended the village ceremony, the first thing that struck me were the dwindling number of attendees for this vital event. That’s too bad, because our shared love of our land, our reverence for human liberty and dignity, are part of what holds us together as a people, and that reminds us not only that on the important things we are one but that our diversity is what makes that oneness so important.

Civic organizations of all kinds are on the decline. The pandemic was, for many of these

groups, the final blow to their shrinking membership. Things are not much different in the church. For the past few decades, churches have been declining in numbers, and struggling with not only our message, but with our relevancy in this brave new world we live in. We like to keep church and state separate (and for good reasons), but the tearing of the social contract, this rend in the fabric of our society first became apparent in the radical decline in numbers for the historic denominations way back in the 1960’s and ‘70’s, the years of social upheaval over the failure of our country to live up to its promises in terms of justice for people of color, of Jim Crow, and over the War in Vietnam, and over Roe v. Wade, all of which have divided us in ways that have defied healing over these many years.

None of this is new, of course, especially to us as disciples of Christ. Human institutions reflect human flaws and human sins. Only the One who came that we all might have life, and have it abundantly had pure motives and methods and only the Author of Creation has the ultimate say over the fate of us all. We do not expect humans, no more so in the church than any other place to be perfect, or frankly to be harmoniously in sync on all of their opinions. We know that birth and growth always take place in the context of conflict and that, unless a seed falls to the earth and dies, it cannot be part of bringing new life into the world. So, we do not give in to despair, but continue to put one foot in front of the other as we seek to do what we have always done: walked together toward the kingdom of God. Not each of us alone, but all of us together, because we know that the healing of our people requires the ministry of presence. We need to be together, physically, look at each other and listen to each other, and remember that even though Sally is a little eccentric and Bennie’s politics seem crazy to me, and Mrs. C barely speaks the language etc., etc., they are real human beings, my brothers and sisters, part of our communion and not just all those words we use when we mean, “them.”

There are a lot of good solutions out there for our many problems, but I believe that only

one to the malaise that has afflicted our land and our people and that involves the same things it did in the time of the prophets, a crisis of faith in the future and in the will of our people to do something about it, to let go of their allegiances to the principalities and powers that has made us enemies and that is to re-dedicate ourselves to those values. It means being willing to make changes, recognizing that God is still speaking and that whether it is on a civic or a faith level, even the most sacred of our institutions is a product of human, not divine discernment, and that God calls us to be ready to repent and make changes when we have strayed from his way. Why us? Because we have a grip on the transcendent reality that “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” It is our job to be the voice crying in the wilderness, speaking truth to power, insisting on persevering in doing good, because love is what we are all about, what our God is all about. We are the ones called to “do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.” We are the ones who understand the vital role the human spirit plays in the way we live our lives every day: not cut off from our fellow human beings, especially the ones who challenge our best intentions, but with them, speaking truth to power, but never forgetting that the love is the thing and that it really is more important to be compassionate and kind than it is to be right. We support secular movements and parties and organizations as long as we see that they are acting in concert with kindness values of inclusion, justice, and care for the

least of these, and not if and when they are not. We approach the world on our best, most respectful behavior, like we did for our interfaith service recognizing as Jesus told the disciples, that “those who are not against us are with us,” and that no one who does a good deed in the name of love for one’s fellow humans is far from the kingdom we want to be.

God will not abandon us in this mess, but neither will God swoop down and make us all comfortable. We have to do the arduous work of discipleship through holy hospitality, radical inclusion, and a commitment to be the voice of John the Baptist and the light of God’s love in the world. It starts with showing up, which is what we need to do right now. We cannot cede our world to the mass shooters, the haters, the so-called militias or antifas, or to billionaires and despots. We cannot cede our church to any side in the culture wars, because our king is not of this world and we cannot stop loving each other no matter how weird or crazy we all get (especially as we get older). We need each other, and we need to teach this world of ours how to love. It starts with showing up and deciding to behave. It really does.

*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 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*

## **Summer Greetings!**

I'm sure I've mentioned the ridiculous amount of email I receive daily. It ranges from animal groups, political candidates, sales pitches, and everything in between. It's tempting, and probably wise, to just hit that delete button. But every so often, in the midst of the madness, comes a gem and here it is. It's entitled 12 Quotes on Faith from Religious Leaders Around the World. Although I appreciate each of them, what strikes me the most is their commonality. In a world gone mad and a society locked into taking sides, it is refreshing to note that our spiritual leaders seem to speak the same language – the language of faith and love.

### **See what you think:**

**Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by Love.**

— *Pope Francis*

**My faith helps me overcome such negative emotions and find my equilibrium.**

— *Dalai Lama*

**Faith is the substance of whatever it is that we hope for. The important thing is that we teach that faith is connected to good works and responsibility.**

— *Bishop Thomas Dexter Jakes*

**Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.**

— *Martin Luther King Jr.*

**Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.**

— *D. Elton Trueblood, Quaker theologian and chaplain*

**Faith brings you stability, centeredness, calmness and love.**

— *Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*

**To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.**

— *Thomas Aquinas, Dominican friar and philosopher*

**You will not complete your faith until you love one another.**

— *Muhammad*

**God has given us many faiths but only one world in which to co-exist. May your work help all of us to cherish our commonalities and feel enlarged by our differences.**

— *Jonathan Sacks, English rabbi and philosopher*

**Faith is unflinching trust in something divine.**

— *A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of the Hare Krishna Movement*

**Faith is not the clinging to a shrine but an endless pilgrimage of the heart.**

— *Abraham Joshua Heschel, American rabbi*

**All work that is worth anything is done in faith.**

— *Albert Schweitzer, Lutheran theologian*



## **FROM THE TRUSTEES:**

**A**s we are coming to the end of this year and going into our summer months, it has been a privilege and an honor to work with the dedicated people who keep our small little church going. They are such a strong resource for our church community and for our community surrounding us right now. We are getting hit with some very unique financial issues but, due to our congregation of wonderful people who are generous to a fault, we will pull through with no issues .

**I**would like to thank my board who has helped me through this. I would also like to thank our pastor, Mark Lukens, our secretary, Maryanne Walling, and our Sexton, Danny Gilloon. Also, I would like to extend a very important thank you to our moderator, Janet Moser, who has kept us all on track. She is truly a wonder of organization and positive energy. I would also like to thank all the officers of the church for doing all of the wonderful things to keep our community going.

**O**ne last item: John Farrell donated money for a microphone that will pick up everybody during Joys and Concerns, instead of the noisy one we have now.

*Yours In Christ,*

*Richard Eaves, Chair*

## **BOOK REVIEW:**

### **The Golfer's Carol**

By: Robert Bailey

**T**his novel is an outstanding story about a person who believes there is no way to solve his earthly problems aside from ending his life. Although there is a great deal of golf chatter, the story is excellent.

**I**f you enjoyed Field of Dreams, A Christmas Carol, It's a Wonderful Life, and books by Mitch Albom, you will truly love this book.

Inspirational stories are often trite and somewhat hoagie, but Bailey has managed to bring grace and beauty that will stay with you after you have turned the last page. It suffices to say that this book is a winner. Read and enjoy.

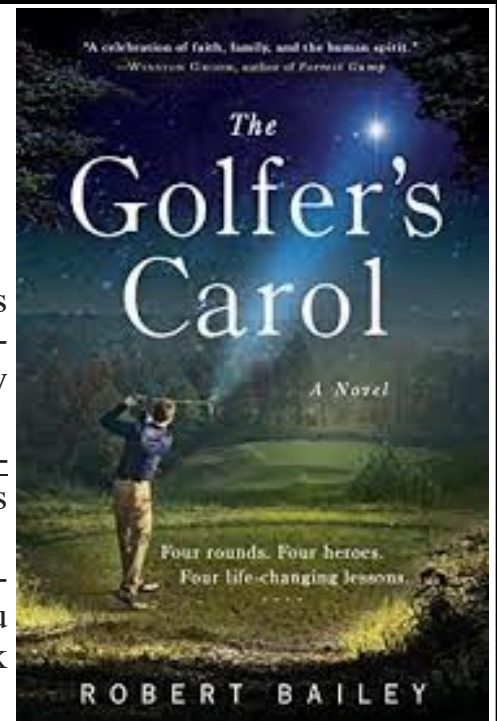
Submitted by Lou Gaspari

### **Long Island Council of Churches Emergency Food Pantry**

This month, the church did a flash sale of Father's Day and Graduation cards and raised \$100 for the Pantry.

Also, this month the church donated 130 pounds of non perishable food to the Freeport Pantry.

As always, thank you everyone for your generous support!



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

## **FROM THE EDITOR:**

### ***We just have a few reminders:***

- Bethany needs help with money for a new furnace. Please remit whatever you can.
- The Bell Tower is always in need of boosters and advertisers and submissions
- Bethany is open for service with coffee hour! (Please consider volunteering to help out or host.)
- 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.) It is open on Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- Our next issue will be a combined July-August edition. The final deadline for submission will be July 10, 2022. Thank you

## **TROOP 121**

**T**roop 121 is wrapping up its season with a Court of Honor and BBQ on June 20th. All advancement earned will be awarded that night, and we will have good food and good company to celebrate together.

**W**e just finished an amazing camping weekend from the 3rd to the 5th at the Allamuchy Scout Reservation in Stanhope, NJ. The weather was perfect, and we camped on the top of a dam with a grand view of the lake. We were treated with a symphony of frogs at dusk and woke to the songs of birds at daybreak. The main focus of this trip was a day long experience on the COPE course (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experiences.) It's a team building activity where we overcome challenges and work as a team. The high COPE in the afternoon is where we climbed up a wobbly cable ladder and into the treetops (harnessed in with a safety rope.) We walked tight wires, climbed over obstacles and even had to jump to reach the next rope (if you got that far.) Then we conquered the rock climbing wall, and an obstacle challenge that went straight up.

**A**t the COPE course there was a great quote by Frank Outlaw on the wall:

*Watch your Words  
They become your Thoughts  
Watch your Thoughts  
They become your Actions  
Watch your Actions  
They become your Habits  
Watch your Habits  
They become your Destiny*



On June 11th we had a booth at the Huckleberry Frolic in Memorial Park. We sold hot dogs and soda, like we do every year in support of the Grist Mill Museum.

As always, thank you Bethany for all of your support!

Yours In Scouting, Troop 121

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

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

## FurnaceCon:

This winter, the furnace of the church failed and had to be replaced. This was an unexpected expense for Bethany. At the urging of Board of Trustees President Richard Eaves, we decided to have a comic art convention fundraising event at the church called “FurnaceCon”. Usually, Bethany Church does a comic art benefit convention in the month of November called “HurriCon”, but we needed to do something right now.

FurnaceCon took place in the Parish Hall on Saturday, June 4, 2022. The event featured over 30 tables filled with comic book vendors, local comic book writers and artists, food, and raffles. Almost 100 people from the community came to the event and supported the church. All proceeds benefited the church and raised \$3729 (almost half the cost of the furnace). HurriCon returns to the church on November 19, 2022.

If you would like to make a donation to the new furnace, you can send your contribution to the church and write “FurnaceCon” in the memo line or electronically through Venmo @Bethany-Eastrock



*Many thanks to David Donovan and his family and friends! Great job!!*

# LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

With so much power to heal and renew, the ability to laugh easily and frequently is a tremendous resource for surmounting problems, enhancing your relationships, and supporting both physical and emotional health. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use.

As children, we used to laugh hundreds of times a day, but as adults, life tends to be more serious and laughter more infrequent. But by seeking out more opportunities for humor and laughter, you can improve your emotional health, strengthen your relationships, find greater happiness—and even add years to your life.



## The benefits of laughter:

**Laughter relaxes the whole body.** A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.

**Laughter boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.

**Laughter triggers the release of endorphins,** the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

**Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

**Laughter burns calories.** Okay, so it's no replacement for going to the gym, but one study found that laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn approximately 40 calories—which could be enough to lose three or four pounds over the course of a year.

**Laughter lightens anger's heavy load.** Nothing diffuses anger and conflict faster than a shared laugh. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable you to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness or resentment.

**Laughter may even help you to live longer.** A study in Norway found that people with a strong sense of humor outlived those who don't laugh as much. The difference was particularly notable for those battling cancer.

SOURCE: Helpguide.org

*Wishing you a Wealth of Health ~~ Carol Henck*

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



## ***NEWS FROM "MISSIONS":***

***CWS Hygiene Kits:*** Because there is only one drop off church on Long Island in Riverhead and only one day available to drop the Kits off before 2 p.m., instead of preparing "Hygiene Kits", your Mission Committee is asking for monetary donations (each Kit costs about \$17). Your donations will be sent to Church World Service to enable them to purchase the items needed to fill Hygiene Kits. Please make checks payable to "Church World Service" and write "kits" in the memo of your check.



***Long Island Coalition for the Homeless:*** Your Mission Committee is also asking you to support the LICH's annual Supply Our Students (SOS) Drive through July 29<sup>th</sup>. All donations go to school-aged children and teens who are homeless in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Supplies Needed (New or Unused): Staplers, Staples, Post-Its, Index Cards, Calculators, Pencil Cases, Protractors, Pencil Sharpeners, Lunchboxes, Highlighters, Paper Clips, 3-Hole Punches, White Out, and Permanent Markers.



***LI Council of Churches Food Pantry:*** Hunger doesn't stop for a pandemic or national emergency. There is a much greater need than normal for food needed by school children and their families. During the summer months when school is not in session, children are not able to take advantage of meals provided by our schools. You can continue to donate non-perishable food items at Bethany. Just drop them off during office hours which are Tuesdays and Fridays (9 a.m. to 12 Noon) during July and August. We will see that these donations are delivered to the Long Island Council of Churches Food Pantry in Freeport..



Thank YOU for all you do for your neighbors in need.- Maryanne Walling, Missions

## **Did you know that Bethany has a Book Group?**

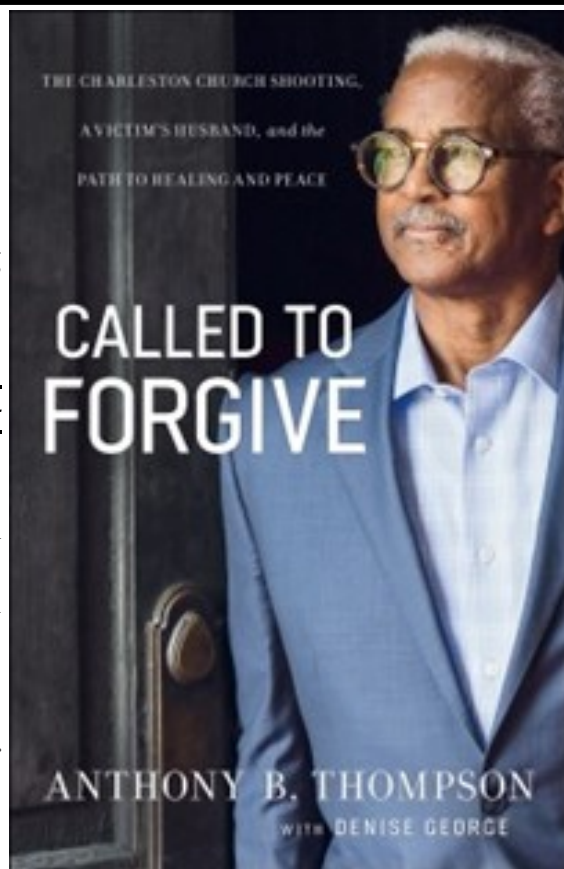
**W**ell, we do and Pastor Mark is an amazing discussion leader. We have read some very interesting titles and are just about to start a new one.

***This book is Called to Forgive: The Charleston Church Shooting, a Victim's Husband, and the Path to Healing and Peace by Anthony B. Thompson.***

**A**fter the murder of his wife during the Charleston church shooting, Anthony Thompson chose to privately and publicly forgive the shooter. Though many questioned his reasoning, as they witnessed this act of forgiveness, the community was radically changed. This poignant account shows how forgiveness can affect our lives, communities, and even our nation.'

**W**ow! This is going to be one powerful read.

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.



## 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](mailto:cjdagostino@gmail.com) or**

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

## 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:

**Y**ou 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.

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

**N**ow 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.

## Write for The Bell Tower



You can email submissions to Charles D'Agostino at [cjdagostino@gmail.com](mailto: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!

## HELP ME HELP BETHANY!

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



**Charles D'Agostino**  
**516-721-8885**  
Lic. Associate Broker  
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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.

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Bethany Congregational Church

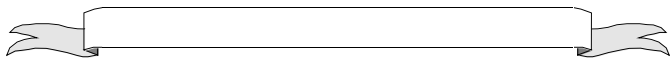
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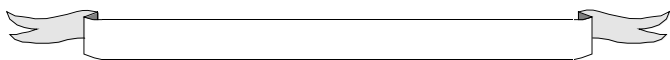
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## Bell Tower Boosters

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 (dec.)