

THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 62 No. 10

East Rockaway, N.Y.

November 2022



HurriCON returns to Bethany Church on: Saturday, November 19, 2022 from 10 AM to 5 PM!

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!

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!

Dates to Remember:

November 19...HURRICON
November 24...Thanksgiving Day
December 3...Christmas Fair
December 18...Begin Chanukah
December 21...First Day of Winter
December 24...Christmas Eve
December 25...Christmas Day
December 26...Kwanzaa
December 31...New Year's Eve
January 1...New Year's Day



Bethany Congregational Church is opening their doors to the Community for their Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. All are welcome to join us for fellowship and a delicious feast!

Please call in advance to make reservations to join us for a warm "in person" meal with all the trimmings or to arrange for pick-up or home delivery.

Where: Bethany Congregational UCC...Fellowship Hall

100 Main Street, East Rockway, NY 11518

When: Thanksgiving Day

November 24, 2022

from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Please call to make reservations: (516) 599-5768

God's love is free and so is the Turkey Dinner.

Come share the love at Bethany.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here as you are!

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

Love the Ones You're With

One of the things about family? You don't get to choose them. But even if you did, you probably wouldn't. Maybe the point, because love isn't about choosing the right people, it's about learning to cherish the ones you have been given, about growing into grace, as we struggle with the task of being, as individuals, and as families growing in the place where we have been planted. That's what our faith tells us life is: learning to love as we are loved, and to reflect the grace that made us so that it provides the foundations for families, communities, and ultimately the coming of the kingdom of God. That means less about choosing the "right people," and more about becoming those people: people who live in the light, because they can see the image of God in the world around them; people who trust in the power of love to transform themselves, and the world in which they live. When I do premarital counseling with folks, sometimes they will tell me they "found their soulmate," but over the years I've come to believe that we don't "find," our soulmate; we become each other soul mates through the discipline of grace.

I think that might apply to people in community as well. Our faith teaches us to see one another, not as competitors, but rather as brothers and sisters who are charged with the stewardship of a creation that was created as a paradise of plenty for all. Nowhere is that more apparent than on this island we share. Our neighbors are a diverse and fascinating crowd, filled with the hopefulness and determination of a region full of strivers, people who have come here to fulfill the prophesy of Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon, to build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat what they produce, have families,

make lives and become part of this big bustling beautiful corner of the world we live in. This island is full of people who were happy to stake their claim to being a part of a cornucopia of humanity, all with their unique gifts and yes, issues, but sharing the same yearning for her free air; all working, and hustling to make a life. We're loud, brusque, and cynical, but mostly we have learned to live and let live, to enjoy each other and learn from each other, even if we're still working on the love. The result is a great celebration of the diversity of God's creation, with all the cultural richness that brings; all part of something that can exist as it does, only in a place that welcomes the gifts that come with welcoming people from all over the world.

When fear and hatred begin to be introduced into the mix, however, that acceptance can be poisoned by misinformation and by fear, just as it can in personal relationships. It causes us to withdraw from one another, and when we do, it is easier to begin to see difference as a threat rather than a gift, and to cast others in the role of "threat," in order to scapegoat and dehumanize them. Once we do that, whether it is in the public square, or with respect to personal relationships, we undermine the faith and the expectation of good will that is essential for human relationships and human community.

"I came," Jesus said, "that all may have life and have it abundantly." When the wisdom of the world pits us against each other, it lowers the quality of life for all of us. When hate groups drop leaflets preaching hate against our Jewish neighbors, for instance, it casts a shadow of fear and suspicion on all of us. Folks begin to wonder who else shares this hatred. Friends stop being friends as we begin to gravitate toward so-

called “safe spaces,” where we don’t have to deal with “other” people. Throw in an act of vandalism, some vitriolic election rhetoric, or an act of violence and the years of carefully weaving together the many diverse threads of our community are damaged by the age-old demons of fear, bigotry and “us against them.”

As disciples, we understand that the building of communion and community among God’s people in accordance with the Great Commission is our reason for being. Our call to persevere in hope, faith, and love, living by kin-dom rules and by Christ’s economy in the “here and now” as well as in the “to come,” is what we do. There are no separate spheres with separate rules. The sacred and the secular are one and love is essence of the God who made it so. We’re simply not allowed to hate people, even the ones who really seem to beg for it. We’re Christ’s people and we know that love is the only means that will bring us to the salvation we seek.

So, as we sit down for our Thanksgiving dinners this year, fresh off this year’s struggles, trials, failures, and triumphs, we can lift up our thanks to God for the family

we didn’t pick and probably wouldn’t have if we could, because that is how we learn what love really is. Let’s remember that we’re all gifts to each other from a loving and abundant God, and maybe it’s time to start treating each other accordingly. Finally, maybe we can resolve to cherish each other, to “own” whoever we disagree with by surprising them with grace, maybe grant some benefit of the doubt, and for all of us: by letting go of these big bags of ugly we’ve been carrying around too long. That just might give us something to be thankful for!

Happy Thanksgiving,

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

November Greetings to all,

Autumn is my favorite time of year. I love watching the leaves on the trees magically change from green to yellow, red, gold, and orange. It is a beautiful celebration as the trees ready themselves for a long winter's rest. Odd, how I can still enjoy the fall changes even though I know it portends the coming of winter with its bare trees and cold dark days. No, not odd at all. I can celebrate the autumn changes with joy and even make the best of those less than comfortable days of winter because I have learned by experience and with faith that spring will return with its own changes – a celebration of life reborn!

Change: defined as 1. To make different, alter or modify 2. Replace with something else

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, is credited with expounding the concept “the only constant in life is change.” He also supposedly said “you cannot step twice into the same stream.” Hmm

Another constant we might add to the mix is the fear of change. It seems to be part of the human condition to desire routine. It gives us a sense of security and the feeling (perhaps illusion) of being in control of our lives.

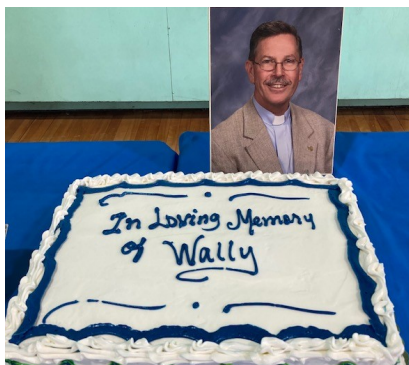
That said, we at Bethany have been in and are in for some noticeable changes. When the pandemic struck, we found ourselves unable to attend Sunday worship. Big change for us and especially for Pastor Mark, who we know is not the number one fan of technology gizmos; we switched to online services. We got used to it. Unfortunately, even though our doors and pews are now open, some folks have fallen out of the routine of attending Sunday services. We miss you and need you. Please come back!

Upcoming MAJOR Change – Pastor Mark will be retiring early June of 2023. Yikes! This change will really send us reeling if we don't approach it mindfully. We all love Pastor Mark and family and will miss them terribly. BUT – our focus will need to be on recognizing the gifts and talents of our new clergy, not falling into the trap of comparing and finding fault.

We can, must, and will face this challenging change as the Bethany family we are – with open minds and open hearts. We know that the beautiful autumn leads to a bit of winter discomfort but have faith that we shall see a blessed spring of rebirth and renewal.

A very recent change – we have switched to a new hymnal. Yes, I know it takes some getting used to. I suspect when our older hymnals were first adopted, they caused a little stress too. Be patient and open-hearted. What is new today can become our faithful companion given time. These new hymnals are in remembrance of

Walter (Wally) Merna, who served as our Deacon for many years. We hope that you remember him as fondly as we do.



FROM THE EDITOR:

Happy Birthday: ..CORRECTION: .to Robert Dever on his 101ST! ...October 30th. And to *Dorothy Dever who will be 101 on December 6th!*) The Devers were former Deacons at Bethany many years ago.

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

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*

Another Baptism! October 23rd. Christian William Mirando. Welcome to Bethany!

(Son of Nicholas Mirando and Heather Petry Mirando. Godparents are Caitlyn Tamashiro and Vincent Mirando)



BOOK REVIEW:

Submitted by Lou Gaspari

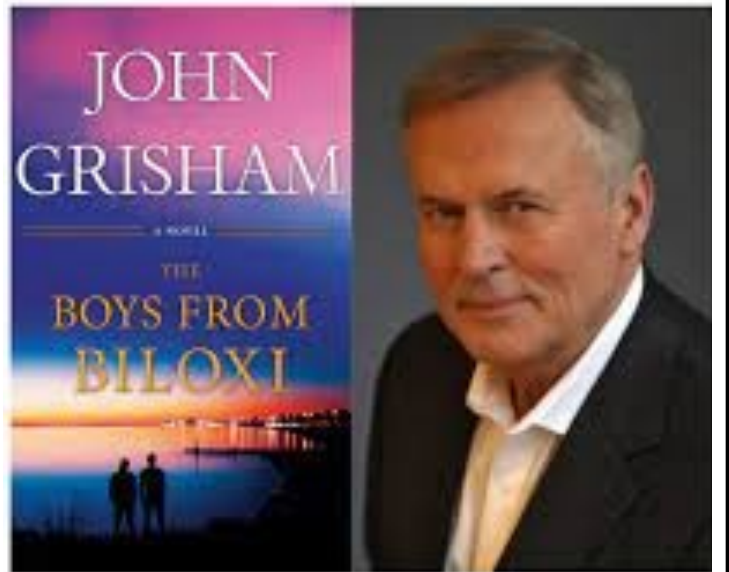
The Boys from Biloxi

By John Grisham

There are a great multitude of great fiction authors, but there is only one whose novels shine above all of them and he is the critically acclaimed John Grisham.

His latest novel is a captivating story of two boys who grow up as friends, but eventually find themselves on opposite sides of the law. The story takes place in the 1960's in the city of Biloxi, Mississippi which at that time was well known for corruption, drugs, vice and controlled by what we may describe as the Dixie Mafia.

It is a thrilling saga, filled with history and a great cast of unforgettable characters. The showdown as you certainly realize will be in the courtroom as most books by Grisham are. If you enjoy mysteries and courtroom dramas, do not miss reading this book.



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

TROOP 121

This past weekend (October 29-30) Troop 121's Nathan Gagliardo and Aidan Stutzmann were called out for Vigil Honor in the Order of the Arrow, scouting's National Honor Society. (Vigil Honor is the Order of the Arrow's highest honor.) Founded over 100 years ago, it recognizes Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify Scouting in their daily lives.

Also, on the day of October 30th Troop 121 went on an adventure to go Geocaching in Grant Park. Geocaching is an activity where one hides a so-called "cache", usually with a logbook and other items, and posts the location to an app where others can find it. Most of the Geocaches we looked for at Grant Park were micro caches, which makes them a little harder to find because of how small they are. Unfortunately, we weren't able to find most of the caches but we did find one with a logbook inside of it. Even though the troop didn't find all the caches in the park, everyone still had fun! Geocaching is fun for the whole family and a great activity to go outside.



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

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

SAVE THE DATE! BETHANY'S CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022 10:00 AM-3:00 PM



Join us for raffles, new clothing, toys, housewares, baked good and much more! Stop at our café for lunch. If you cannot make it and would like to send a donation, please send it to Bethany Church, 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518 and write 'Christmas Fair' in the memo.

Thank you. Hope to see you there!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Church Family,

As Thanksgiving approaches quickly, I realize how much there is to be thankful for.

Steve and I have been blessed to be together for over 50 years. We have shared our Home with generations of precious Kittens who have served as cherished members of our Family... none more endearing than Teddy (age 13, "Head Kitty In Charge"), Cleopatra (5 years old, aka "Cleo Kitty, Giant Pussycat") and Dolly (age 3, aka "Baby Dolly, The Teeny Tiny Purrrson"). Though it's taken years, we finally have three Little Kittens who not only love Steve and me, but also each other so very, very much...now that's something to appreciate!

We're thankful for our Friends and Church Family at Bethany who have supported us during times of difficulty and generously celebrated happy events with us as well.

We are grateful for the shelter of our Circa 1888 Home - "Fireside Cottage" - that keeps us cozy, safe and snug.

Coming to Bethany on Sunday is healing and often when I go through a rough patch, watching the sun rise or set, seeing a sky filled with the moon and glittering stars, taking a walk through our garden - a home for the flora and fauna, making beautiful memories with my dear husband, Steve, and our adorable Kittens all help bring comfort and joy.

Our prayers and wishes for peace, prosperity, good health and fun times are being sent your way. And may you experience wonderful things in the days to come that make you feel thankful, grateful and blessed!

Love to all, Jo, Steve and Kittens



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Bethany's Sunday school had a very busy October. Thank you to everyone who attended our Sunday school Halloween pot luck brunch. All the dishes were delicious!

In November we will be making cookies for Bethany's thanksgiving dinner.

The children help make trees to donate to the parish resource center for their festival of miniature trees on 12/3.



Reach out to Jessie Kilgus or Tina Lewald with any questions.

Jessie (516)860-4998 or Tina (917)270-6509

Sharing Christmas Joy at Bethany!

This Christmas Season we “adopted” two families from the **Mary Brennan Inn** in Hempstead!

We are blessed with the opportunity to provide Christmas gifts to brighten the Holiday season for these needy families. The Outreach Committee is requesting donations of specific clothing items and toys on the children’s Christmas Lists, as well as cash donations.

Meet our Families!

#1 Father Mark, Jennifer age 9, Matt age 7

#2 Mother Doris, Valerie age 12, Dylan age 5

For each child, we have been provided with a Wish List indicating clothing sizes and needs

as well as types of toys, books, etc. Please direct any questions to Carol Henck at:
CHENCKRN@HOTMAIL.COM /516-650-3800

Thank you for your support! Outreach Committee: Carol Henck & Ethel Gilloon

SEVERAL EASY WAYS TO PARTICIPATE !

COME TO CHURCH !

A Christmas Display with “tear off” gift requests for each child will be available for you to select gift options during each Sunday Church Service as well as within Church Office hours during the week.

GO ONLINE !

An email containing a “link” that can be viewed to access gift options (as well as make your gift selections) will be sent to all who are on Bethany’s email list the week of 11/14. Easy to follow instructions will be provided.

MONETARY DONATION!

Cash donations are also requested as we need to purchase one gift card per parent. Cash may also be donated for us to purchase gifts.

CASH/CHECK to *Carol Henck* or *Church Office*.
(Please indicate Adopt-A-Family on check memo line.)

VENMO- Venmo@Bethany-EastRock (Include Adopt-A-Family on memo line)

GIFT DROP OFF!

**Gifts may be dropped off at Sunday Church Service or at the Church Office during office hours.

**Packages ordered online may be delivered to:

Carol Henck, 135 Harding Avenue, Long Beach, NY 11561

(Include child’s name on gift receipt within package, Please!)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION !!

All gifts must be **UNWRAPPED!** Please include label with **NAME OF CHILD** on each donated gift. **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4** is the FINAL DAY for submitting gift or monetary donations.

*Thank you all for your generous spirit in helping our
“Adopt-A-Families” to feel LOVE at CHRISTMAS !*

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

Happy Thanksgiving

Long Island Council of Churches Share Your Blessings Food Drive

We are welcoming your blessings this Thanksgiving holiday starting November 14, through November 18th, distribution will start on Monday, November 21.

Most Needed Donations:

- Turkeys, Ham/Canned Ham, Oven-stuffer chickens, Stuffing and/or Cornbread mix.
- White & Sweet Canned Potatoes, Gravy, Rice
- Canned pumpkin, corn, string beans & greens.
- Pie crust shells and/or cake mixes
- Coffee, tea, juice (including cider & apple juice)
- Donations of money for Food also needed!

516-868-4989 Pantry/516-565-0290 Office

Mail: Long Island Council of Churches
230 Hanse Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520

Thank You in Advance for your participation

Yolanda



FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

The board has been working diligently in the beginning of this year to set up for normal service. We almost are completely reopened, and it looks like we're going to keep the yellow chained area for the immediate future just to make those comfortable and at ease when coming to service.

I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and remember that service to our church and our community brings joy. Thanksgiving dinner will once again be served by the Hermans, Barbara and Doug. They can use all the help that we can give them. If you haven't lay read for the church, think about doing it. We need all the help we can get,. We also need help setting up for the coffee hour .

The last three years have stretched us thin and, with the constant bombardment of bad news or news that disturbs us, it's easy to lose sight of the goal to Love Thy Neighbor. It is truly what drives us. God bless to you and yours in this holiday season.

Thank you. Richard Eaves, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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

November 13th is World Kindness Day!

Let's be both kind and grateful

30 Days of Gratitude

1 Start a gratitude journal.	2 Thank 3 people for something they did.	3 End the day sharing one positive thing.	4 Do something nice for someone in your family.	5 Take a treat to a friend or neighbor.
6 Jot down 5 things you are thankful that happened in your life.	7 Start a Gratitude Pumpkin.	8 Call a family member you are thankful for.	9 Pay a compliment to a stranger.	10 Fill a box for Operation Christmas Child..
11 Reflect on your strengths and abilities.	12 Do something nice for a neighbor.	13 Give thanks for your food, shelter and clothing.	14 Tell the boss of a store employee he/she did a good job.	15 Give an extra big tip at your salon, restaurant, etc.
16 Write down things you love about your home.	17 Send cards to the Troops.	18 Help someone with a chore.	19 Call a friend you are thankful for.	20 Pay for the coffee for the person behind you in line.
21 Give thanks for what you love about where you live..	22 Read a book about Gratitude.	23 Take a walk in nature and reflect on its beauty.	24 Give a positive review about a local restaurant/store	25 Buy coffee for a teacher or caregiver.
26 Jot down what you are grateful for this year.	27 Look for a way to serve those in need as a family.	28 Learn about how to write a good thank you note.	29 Set up a family appreciation jar.	30 Leave treats for your delivery crew

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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



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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

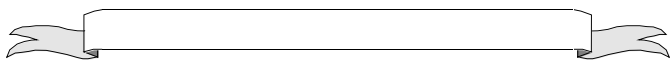
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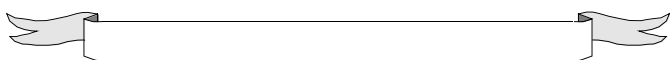


Bell Tower Boosters

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.)