



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 63 No. 4

East Rockaway, N.Y.

April 2023

BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Two Hundred and Eleventh Corporate Meeting of your church will be held on Sunday, April 30, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. (By-Laws Article VI, Section 2c) for the following purposes:

1. To elect church officers for the year 2023-2024.
2. To review and approve the church budget as presented by the Board of Trustees for 2023-2024.
3. To consider and vote upon such other business that may be legally called before the Corporate Body.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryanne Walling
Clerk of the
Corporation

We are still working on filling all our Bethany Church positions. Is this the year in which you will get more involved? It's very rewarding and you'll work with the most delightful people!

If so, please contact the church office or our nominating committee – Tina Lewald and Barbara Valis.

Please plan on attending this important meeting as we cannot move forward without a quorum of members.

Thank you!

Janet Moser

Bethany Moderator

Dates to Remember:

- April 30...Corporate Meeting (in person)
- May 14...Mother's Day
- May 20...PRC...Learn to make banners
- May 20...Yard Sale (Women's League)
- May 29...Memorial Day
- June 17...Hurricane!
- June 14...Flag Day
- June 18...Father's Day
- July 4...Independence Day

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO VISIT BETHANY'S

LOCATED AT 100 MAIN STREET, EAST ROCKAWAY, NY 11518.
THE "THRIFTIQUE" IS OPEN FRIDAY AND SATURDAY FROM 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM AND THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Please help our Community of Faith **BLOOM** by joining us for **In-Person Worship at Bethany!**

He is Risen, He is risen indeed!

My favorite rendition of the Easter story is the one from the Gospel of Mark. It sounds a little perverse, I guess, but the main reason I am so fond of it is because it has such an unsatisfactory ending. After finding the empty tomb and the young man in the white robe who assured them that Jesus was risen, that he would be found in Galilee, "... they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone because they were afraid."

That's it. Even in John's gospel, the discovery of the empty tomb leads the disciples to seeing even as it tells us that they "returned to their homes," without understanding what they believed. Even Mary Magdalene, probably the bravest and most faithful of Jesus' disciples, did not recognize Jesus until he spoke her name and called her out of her grief, to see the Light of the World, not reveling in his triumph over death, or marching in conquest of the forces of evil; but quietly tending the fields of the Lord, a gardener of grace, sowing the seeds of the kin-dom of God.

Still, for those who turn to their faith seeking the answers to life's great question, these words aren't very satisfactory. They are so unsatisfactory in fact that there were further additions made in later centuries to the Gospel of Mark, just to kind of wrap up the story. But

maybe the story isn't supposed to be wrapped up and maybe it isn't supposed to be a roadmap, but rather a challenge. Maybe what the Gospel writers wanted us to know that the triumph of love over death is not a one and done event, but rather the opening of a door to a new kind of relationship with God, one that was not possible when we were infants in the garden of Eden, or wanderers in the desert, still searching for eyes to see the light that we were to follow, making our way through the wilderness. On Resurrection Sunday, God's love incarnate in Jesus the man of Nazareth, tore the veil that separated humanity from the Ground of Our Being and opened the door to the kin-dom, the salvation of his creation. Because of that act of grace, we have been liberated from the need for sacrifice, or bloodshed or coercive power to create the kin-dom that God calls us to, but rather, to live our lives according to God's law of love as given to us in the great commandments.

Of course, the way of Jesus is demanding and difficult and we can't do it alone. Love requires community and communion, like the kind we have sought to create here over these many years. It is hard to even know what that blessed community looks like, but somehow, the people of this church seem to have figured it out. For

nearly twenty-five years we have been walking together through this wilderness we share, learning together what it means to be a blessed community in the face of the vagaries of life and fate in this chaotic and beautiful, but scary world we share. Like the family members that we are, we have grown used to each other as companions on this journey of faith.

Now the time is coming for me to retire and go on to see what God has in store for Kate and me for this next chapter in our lives. We cannot imagine life right now outside of Bethany, any more than the disciples could imagine life outside of their tight knit community, but we know that God will lead us where God would have us go. But now it is Easter, Jesus has done his part in this salvation story and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, our faith is in our hands now and so is our future. Because of the resurrection, we also know that while we have sadness

now, anticipating this ending of our days here at Bethany, God has new miracles and delights in store for us and for this blessed community, as you take hold of the challenges ahead. We are not large, but there is no more authentic expression of our faith than that found right here at Bethany. Your faith and your willingness to do what it takes to keep this light shining here is the cause of that. I saw it back in March of 1998 and I see it even more clearly now, as Easter reminds us that God is always finding a way, always cooking up something great and glorious if we can simply find the eyes to see and the ears to hear. So, bring on the future!

He is Risen, He is risen indeed!

Happy Easter!

Pastor Mark



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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

April 2023 Greetings,

Welcome to April, **National Poetry Month**. Of course, poetry rocks all year long but like so many topics or groups of people, we set aside a certain month to encourage special attention.

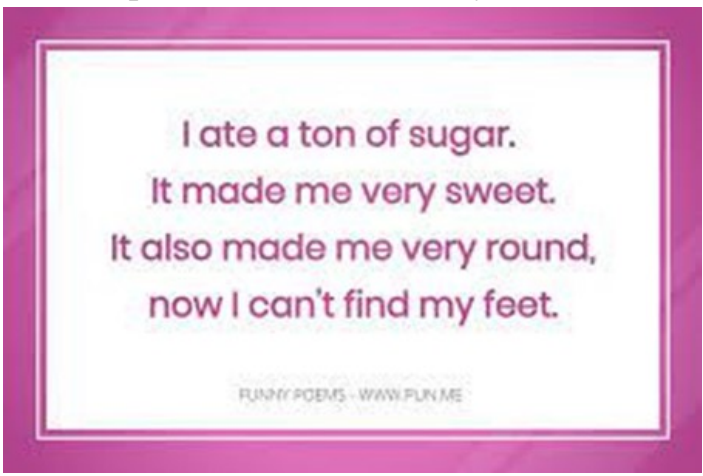
It's fun to ask my school kids just what poetry or a poem is.

'Something that rhymes.' Does it have to? Well, no.

'Short writing?' Some poems are quite long. Hmmm

Yes, poems can be so many things we finally agreed on this. Poems are songs without the music! Indeed, the poet uses the choice of words and arrangement of lines to create a beat, a cadence, a rhythm. Pretty cool. What is very cool is this makes poetry accessible to us all – as readers or creators. So when was the last time you penned a few lines of verse? Maybe not since you were a school kid or an angst filled teenager. I encourage you to give it a try. Be silly and share it with the world. Be introspective and lock it away forever.

Whatever strikes your fancy. Open the floodgates and let your creative juices flow!



Welcome to Easter!

Welcome to sunshine,
warm on our faces;
welcome to spring rain
falling like graces;
welcome to birds
coming home in swift flight;
welcome to new life,
sprung up overnight!

Welcome to sunlight
replacing earth's gloom;
welcome to Life that
lays empty the tomb;
welcome the true hope
that God can restore;
welcome to Easter
and Life evermore!



Poem: ©2018 by Sarah M. Menkin
Image: Public domain from Pixabay

Parish Resource Center Upcoming Events

Mini Pentecost Banner Workshop:

Saturday, May 20th from 10:30 AM to 12 noon. Cost \$10 per person

Join in the fun of banner making and leave with a completed mini size banner for your home, church or to give as a gift. This workshop is offered to new and experienced banner makers. No sewing skills required. Pre-registration is required by May 7th so supplies can be purchased and prepared. Please **call 516-285-0919** to register,

FROM THE EDITOR:

Bethany can always use the help of volunteers and donations of any kind. You can always contact the office if you want to know what is needed.

Envelopes for tithing are now available in the office. So many have been mailing in their donations or using Venmo that it was decided to stop ordering for envelopes everyone but rather just offer them to those who prefer the traditional method of contributing.

The Men's Club

Pasta Dinner



This was a success! More than forty (40) hungry folks participated. Many thank to Bill Lewald, President of the Men's Club, for inspiring and organizing the event. It was made possible through the huge efforts of Tina and Billy Lewald. Billy did all of the cooking and Charlie D'Agostino made the salad. Thanks also to the Lewald children, William, JJ and Caitlin for setting up and putting away the tables and chairs. There was a 50/50 raffle and everyone had a great time.



*Bethany
is
back!!*



While there, JJ Lewald covered up a broken window with an assist from David Donovan.



TROOP 121

This month Troop 121 has a busy schedule of 2 trips in one month. Both of the trips take place in the Catskill mountains. The first trip will involve them going to Bethel Woods to learn about wood stock and backpacking on a five mile hike. The second takes their adventure to the land in the sky, Onteora, also home to the boys' summer camp.

Pictures and a report will be in the next issue!

Troop 121 is recruiting! Any boys interested in joining are welcome to join them at any scheduled meeting.

They 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

BOOK CLUB

Join the Bethany Book Club!

Looking for a good read and maybe some good fellowship to go with it? Join us for Bethany Book Group, Tuesday evening at 7pm on Zoom! We are currently reading *Spiritual Disciplines* by Dr. Howard Thurman. All are welcome, just call us at 516 599-5768 or e mail us at BethanyOffice@optonline.net for the zoom codes!

BOOK REVIEW

By Lou Gaspari

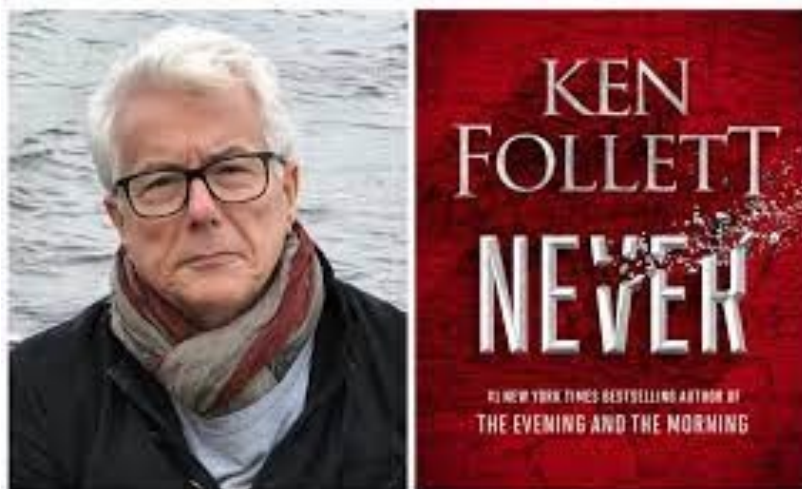
NEVER

By Ken Follett

Ken Follett's NEVER is an entertaining novel, enlightening and downright frightening. You can easily state that the novel NEVER should never happen to the world.

The novel is set in the present time and tells the story of a global crisis that threatens to lead to the outbreak of a nuclear war. It is a long book (800 pages) with fascinating characters and a message to all nations of how misunderstanding and different beliefs can lead to Catastrophe.

Read this book and then compare it to our present world.



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

Donations may be left anytime in the shed next to the garage!

SUNDAY SCHOOL:



The annual Easter pageant was produced on Palm Sunday! The children were wonderful!

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ May 7...The children will be decorating church planters
- ◆ May 21.... Confirmation Sunday
- ◆ Reach out to Jessie Kilgus or Tina Lewald with any questions.
- ◆ Jessie (516)860-4998 or Tina (917)270-6509

The Women's League

The Women's League yard sale is on Saturday May 20 from 9-3.
We will be participating in the Village-wide yard sale.



Also, we will be participating in the Huckleberry Frolic with our bake stand on Saturday June 10th. Please contact Cathy Clarke if you want to help or if you just have questions.





Bethany Family's **MOMMAS HOUSE OUTREACH**



The Outreach Committee is pleased to announce the latest opportunity for our Church Family to help others in need. MOMMAS House, located in Levittown, established in 1986, is the only Transitional Residential Program on Long Island created specifically for Young Mothers and Babies.

MOMMAS House makes it possible for a young mother to raise her baby in a caring and supportive environment while she works toward reaching her full potential and develops in her role as a mother. (Website: mommashouse.org)

Serves young mothers ages 18-24, pregnant and/or parenting, and their children (ages 0-5)
Offers a unique stay of up to 2 years, because we know change cannot occur overnight.
Promotes healthy birth outcomes and fosters a healthy lifestyle.

The Outreach Committee is requesting your donations of the following items that are currently needed by the MOMMAS House mothers and babies:

(Please donate only the specific items listed! Thank you!)

- Health Care Kit for Babies
- (Aspirator, thermometer, nail clippers)
- First Aid Kits
- Baby Monitors
- Pac & Play crib sheets
- Regular size Crib Sheets
- Crib Mattress Covers
- 5T – 6T Pull ups
- Newborn diapers
- Size #1 Diapers
- **All Sizes** Spring & Summer Clothes, boys and girls
- Socks for all sizes Babies – Toddlers

Donated items will be collected at Bethany Congregational Church as follows:

Bring donations to Church Service on Sundays: May 7th and May 14th or Bring donations to Church Office any time during office hours between May 7th – May 19th

Questions? Please contact Carol Henck (516-650-3800)

Ethel Gilloon or Barbara Merna

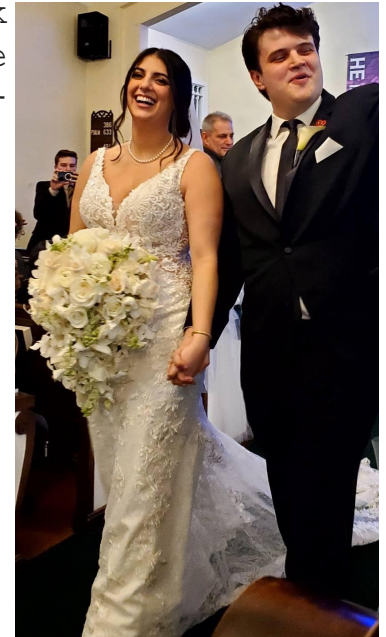
Please join us in this opportunity to support MOMMAS House!

With Thanks, Outreach Committee

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

WEDDING AT BETHANY

On Saturday Afternoon, March 25, 2023, John "Jack" Kirby Donovan exchanged vows with Maria Spaulding at Bethany Church. The Best Man was David Paul Donovan and the Maid of Honor was Joanna Spaulding. Linda and Greg Spaulding are the bride's parents and Linda and David Donovan are the parents of Jack. After a lovely luncheon in Parish Hall, open to all, the reception took place later that day at the Essex Club and the newlyweds honeymooned in Hawaii!



HurriCon returns to Bethany Church on June 17 and November 11, 2023!

This is one of the church's biggest fund raisers of the year, so make sure you mark your calendar and come to the church to support HurriCon!

What will you find at HurriCon 2023?

Comic Books, Writers, Artists, Food, Toys, Action Figures, Comic Book Art, and that unique gift you have been looking for! Come for the food! The Walking Taco will return!

Support the comic art convention that benefits the church that supports the community!
Nuff Said!



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

Donations may be left anytime in the shed next to the garage!

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- Space is now available for advertising. (No full or half pages)
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Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

cjdagostino@gmail.com or

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

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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, please)

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!*

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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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Thank you.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)