



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 63 No. 6

East Rockaway, N.Y.

June 2023

SUMMER IS HERE!

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

IMPORTANT!

There will be changes to *The Bell Tower!*

Please see the Editor’s Page inside.

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!



JULY 4TH
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Dates to Remember:

June 17...Hurricane!
 June 14...Flag Day
 June 18...Father’s Day
 July 4...Independence Day
 September 4...Labor Day
 September 11...Patriot Day
 September 23...First Day of Autumn
 October 9...Columbus Day

Lay Readers and Ushers are needed for Sunday Worship. Please sign up on the sheet in the Hallway or speak with Marianne (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 John Farrell for further directions.

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon (Closed Thursdays)

END OF AN ERA!!

Pastor Mark Lukens has retired from Bethany Church after 25 years of outstanding ministry. He will be missed, as will his wife, Kate, and sons Ben and James. We watched both grow from young boys to gentlemen. We sincerely wish the very best to the entire Lukens family.

Pastor Mark's last service was May 28th. His retirement luncheon was on Sunday, June 4th, over 130 congregants and well-wishers attended. The blanket says: "God loves you, He really really does! Here are a few pictures from the service (led by David Donovan) and the luncheon:





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BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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***Statements made in editorials, signed articles or letters, do not represent an official position in this church.
Persons with differing opinions are invited to express their views in letters to the editor.***

Are you less than perfect? Welcome! We are a community of imperfect people (including but not restricted to): squirming children and their harried parents, happy and sad people, people with challenges, seniors, young people, middle aged folks, people of every race, poor people, rich people, in between people, LGBT and straight people, true believers, seekers, agnostics, odd and ordinary people, extraordinary people, un-churched and unsure people, people with disabilities, hypocrites, saints, sinners and everybody else. Because no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here just as you are!



Greetings from your Bethany Moderator

In peace, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

June 2023 Greetings,



“Change is the only constant in life.” Heraclitus

Ain't that the truth!

Lately, I'm feeling like I need a seatbelt 24-7 just to keep me a little grounded in my life. Like Pastor Mark, I too am retiring this year. After 20 years, I am saying goodbye to my school librarian position. It's more than a little bit scary, but it is also very exciting and full of opportunities.

Bethany is also facing some difficult times. Changing pastors is always stressful but especially so when the person leaving is so loved and respected. That goes for Kate too! And they are not exactly around the corner either. This total absence feels more like grieving. But just like with the grieving process, we will work through this together, sharing fond (and funny) memories, nostalgia, emotions, and more. Then we will move on - as we must.

Our Pulpit Search Committee has been doing a great job fulfilling all the requirements asked of us by the UCC powers that be. Unfortunately, those folks are also overworked and understaffed so it is all taking so much longer than it seems it should. Here is where we are in this process. The Bethany committee submitted all needed information in a very timely fashion including the diversity questionnaire. I know that survey seemed strange to many but it was important for several reasons. Not only do we need to feel a good match with a new pastor, they need to feel comfortable with us! While it was certainly uncomfortable to discover our own areas of unease and concern, it was a necessary and eye-opening event. These are important discussions that need to continue as we grow and move forward. So, now we are waiting for the UCC to post our church profile. That is the equivalent to posting a “pastor wanted ad”. Once that happens, we wait for respondents, interview them, and have them deliver a sermon to our congregation. You have a voice in our response to each candidate. Pretty cool but it might take a bit of time. Patience is needed.

Please note- we are not “closed until further notice.” Our deacons, led by John Farrell, have arranged for substitute preachers to keep us worshipping and inspired. Please continue to attend services and meet and hear some new preachers. Remember those opportunities?

Summer is around the corner. Goodbye to Spring. The seasons change, each with their own beauty and peril. As we face the changes at Bethany, remember to look for the beauty. It is there. It always is. So is the peril. It always has been. But together we can face it all and move forward.

*“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”
John F. Kennedy*

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



Women's League held a very special farewell luncheon for Kate Lukens. As mentioned earlier, the Lukens family are leaving Bethany and moving to Las Vegas. There were laughs and tears and plenty of reminiscing.



***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!***

TROOP 121

The annual Camporee at Hempstead Lake Park on the weekend of May 20th was washed out due to the heavy rains.

This month the boys at Troop 121 had quite the fulfilling weekend. To start, they attended the annual Huckleberry Frolic and sold hot dogs, making nearly double in donations what they mad last year.

The next day the boys went on a five mile hike to finish off one of their scouts requirements for 2nd class.

All in all, the scouts are excited for the summer and for what leads them ahead in scouting. On June 19th, they will celebrate the end of the year with their annual barbecue and award ceremony for those who completed some of the many achievements and moved up in rank.

From July 29th through August 5th members of the troop will spend the week at Onteora Boy Scout Camp in the Catskills. This will enable them to earn many of the merit badges they need for advancement.

The end goal is to become an Eagle Scout.

Matthew Reddash made that achievement recently and Troop 121 held a ceremony at Bethany for him. Many of the local dignitaries were present and Matthew received the various citations. **BULLY!**



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

Bethany is still alive and kicking!

A Bethany contingent marched in the June 10th Huckleberry Frolic parade. We hosted a booth of baked good and other yummys to join the East Rockaway community in raising funds for the historic Grist Mill.



FROM THE EDITOR:

The printer that we have been using for many years has gone out of business. We went to eight local printers and could not find another one that could even come close to the price we were getting. Therefore, we have a few options and I need your *immediate* feedback. The options are:

1. Go completely digital. I will email everyone *The Bell Tower* (in full color). It will also be posted to Bethany's website: www.bethanycong.com...look under "Newsletters". They are all there now.
2. Keep the hard copy edition (black and white) but it would be published bi-monthly as follows: September-October; November-December; January-February; March-April; May-June; July-August. We have to mail at least 200 copies in order to maintain our bulk-mailing privileges.
3. A hybrid choice...digital monthly and hard-copy bi-monthly (but again mailing 200 copies)
4. Go digital and mail a few copies to those of you who have no access to email or internet.

If we go digital, we can completely save the printing costs (about \$1500.00) and the postage fees (about \$400.00/year plus the permit fee of \$150.00) for a total of \$2000.00/year. We do get advertisers but not nearly enough to cover costs. We operate at a loss yearly.

What do you need to do now? Contact me with your choice!

1. Email me with your best email address and get on the digital list. (mine is cjdagostino@gmail.com)
2. Call or text me at 516-721-8885
3. Write me: Charles D'Agostino; 70 Sunrise Drive, Lynbrook, NY 11563

The next issue will not be until mid September. If you do not receive The Bell Tower then, check your email and the website because we went 100% digital.

PLEASE REPLY ASAP!

BOOK REVIEW

By Lou Gaspari

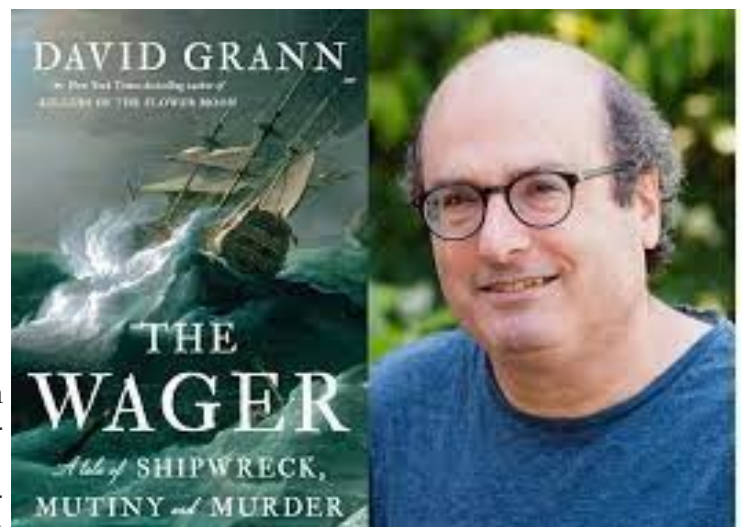
The Wager

by David Grann

For those who love adventure, the sea, courtroom dramas and historic tales, Grann's novel will absolutely thrill you.

The *Wager* takes you to the sea with a story of mutiny, murder, savagery and survival ending with a court martial for mutiny which brings out a surprising result. Grann's book is a magnificent novel which will be heralded and can be compared with the great books of the sea such as, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Mutiny On the Bounty*, *Billy Budd* and *Moby Dick*.

When you begin reading "Wager" you will not put it down until completed. ENJOY.



Confirmation Sunday May 21, 2023

Congratulations to the Confirmands: Jack William Boll; Dani Lynne Fardella; Julia Rose Kilgus; Taryn Alexandra McConnagh



This was a bittersweet occasion as it was Pastor Mark's last Confirmation class.

BAPTISM SUNDAY



Gemma Alice Cacciola was baptized on May 21, 2023. She is the daughter of Nicholas Andrew Cacciola and Juliann Marie Calabrese. Her God Parents are Anthony Walter Calabrese and Chelsea Leah Gussaroff. (This was Pastor Mark's last Baptism at Bethany.)

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!

Current Health News Nuggets

CALL 9-8-8

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in *suicidal crisis or emotional distress* 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, across the U.S. **Spread the word** about this important emergency number!

Help Someone Else If someone you know is struggling emotionally or having a hard time, you can be the difference in getting them the help they need. It's important to take care of yourself when you are supporting someone through a difficult time. Reach out for support yourself!

DOES SUNSCREEN EXPIRE?

Sunscreen does have a shelf life, but it's a long one. The FDA mandates that sunscreens be formulated to stay stable and effective for three years. They will remain so, even if the container has been opened, provided it's been stored at room temperature. Some sunscreens have an expiration date on the container, but the FDA doesn't require manufacturers to date their products. If you have a date-less sunscreen and can't recall when you bought it, don't take a chance. An expired sunscreen will no longer adequately protect you from the sun. Buy a new one and use a permanent marker to write the date you purchased it on the container. Regardless of the sunscreen's expiration or purchase date, toss it if it's been in your car for a while (temperature fluctuations may have affected its performance) or the contents have separated - spoiled" sunscreen will be watery, have changed color, or have a funny smell. (*Consumer Reports May 2023*)



FOOD SAFETY ALERT-SUCRALOSE

A new study reveals health concerns about the sugar substitute Sucralose. Researchers suggest that consumers should reconsider eating it and the government should regulate it more. Sucralose is sold under the brand name Splenda and is also used as an ingredient in packaged foods and beverages. As reported in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health*, the researchers conducted a series of laboratory experiments exposing human blood cells and gut (intestinal) tissue to Sucralose.



The researchers found that Sucralose caused DNA to break apart, putting people at risk for disease. They also linked sucralose to leaky gut syndrome, which means the lining of the intestines could become worn down and become permeable. Look at product ingredient labels (especially diet foods/drinks) to check for the presence of Sucralose.

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH



On June 9, Barbara Merna and Carol Henck delivered multiple bags of baby clothing and other childcare items were delivered to Momma's house. Thank you to all of our Bethany family for your generosity! "



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
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- Published monthly. (Except only one issue for July/August)
- Not just local...we mail all over.
- Send us camera-ready artwork or we will create your ad for you.
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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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**Thinking Real Estate? Buying?
Selling? Renting? Relocating?**

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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THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

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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.)