



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 64 No. 1

East Rockaway, N.Y.

January-February 2024

Our next issue will be the April-May edition and will be out in mid-April. Here are some reminders of dates in February and March

Happy
St. Patrick's
Day



Dates to Remember:

January 1...New Year's Day
January 15...Martin Luther King Day
January 22...Grand Opening of Eclectic Psychotherapy (downstairs of Bethany)
February 12...Lincoln's Birthday
February 14...Ash Wednesday
February 14...Valentine's Day
February 19...President's Day
February 22...Washington's Birthday
March 3...Troop 121 Pancake Breakfast
March 10...Begin Daylight Savings
March 17... St. Patrick's Day
March 19...First Day of Spring
March 23...Men's Club Spaghetti Dinner
March 24...Palm Sunday
March 29...Good Friday
March 31...Easter Sunday



Sermon from Christmas Eve Service 2023

by David Donovan

Before I begin tonight's message, a couple of quick notes. I am going to refer to Charles M. Schulz as Sparky. He got this nickname from his uncle who named him "Sparky" after the horse Spark Plug in the comic strip *Barney Google*. That would also be a great thing to know for Jeopardy! And now that I think of it, knowing that there was a comic strip named Barney GOOGLE might also be a good thing to know for Jeopardy! AND his name is Charles M. SCHULZ, say it with me: SCHULZ, not SCHUTLZ with a "T" as people incorrectly pronounce it. Schultz is the name of the guard of the prisoner of war camp on the 60s tv show Hogan's Heroes!

Also, before I start, I got some great advice from my family about doing tonight's service.

"Dad, remember the service is NOT about you!"

"It's Christmas Eve, keep it short, people have things to do!"

Also, I'm sure you all know that I am the 2022 *Long Island Herald* person of the year and I'll be doing my last public appearance at Cappy's Discount Liquor in Lynbrook on New Year's Eve.

So, Charlie Brown cries out "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"

Linus answers "Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about,"

[Linus walks to center stage.]

"Lights, please."

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sure afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold,

Bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born

this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

That reading is from Luke Chapter 2 verses 08-14 King James Version of the Bible

It's April 1965 and the Advertising Agency McCann Erickson, right here in New York City, is looking for a Christmas Special for its client Coca Cola to sponsor. They approach producer Lee Mendelson and he says, yes I have a Christmas Special. The agency says ok, have an outline for us on Tuesday! He calls his friend Charles Schulz and says "I just sold a "Charlie Brown Christmas Special" to which Sparky responds, "what's that?" And Mendelson says to him, I don't know, but you are going to write it! They get together with animator Bill Melendez on a Thursday afternoon and make an outline. They present it on Monday and on Tuesday the agency says yes! Now they have six months to make the animated *Charlie Brown Christmas Special*.

They had to figure out so many things. How do these characters: Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy and the gang, who up until then only existed in a two dimensional space, translate to animation? Who would do the voices? They decided to go with mostly regular kids' voices and some professional child actors, but they were adamant, no adult voices trying to sound like kids.

They also decided on a jazz soundtrack that produced the famous "Linus and Lucy" theme by Vince Guaraldi. The song

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"Christmas Time Is Here" was originally an instrumental, and there was no one around to write the words, so producer Mendelson wrote the lyrics in fifteen minutes! The voice of Snoopy was just a rough track done by animator Bill Melendez that they decided to keep because it sounded right.

If you can believe it, at this time, the Peanuts comic strip appeared in 2600 newspapers in 75 countries and the animators were trying very hard to keep Peanuts as Peanuts. Then Sparky told the producer that Linus was going to read from the Bible! This had never been done before! They all thought that this was a dangerous thing to do! Animate from the Bible? Sparky said, "Well, if we don't do it, who will?" Schulz had used Bible verse in the comic strip and felt that the Bible was meant for everybody. And Linus's reading from the book of Luke, helps Charlie Brown to deal with his frustration about the commercialism of Christmas.

When the producer and the animator looked at the final cut of the show, they thought that they had ruined Charlie Brown! And the network didn't like it at all. Too Slow! It didn't translate well to television and they had negative comments about the music and the child voices used. But the show was already scheduled in the *TV Guide*, remember that?, so they had to run it. And before we get to the results, I want to quote the Hollywood sage William Gold-

man, screenwriter of such films as: *The Princess Bride*, *Marathon Man*, *All The President's Men*, and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Goldman said "Nobody knows anything..... Not one person in the entire motion picture field knows for a certainty what's going to work. Every time out it's a guess and, if you're lucky, an educated one."

Well, *The Charlie Brown Christmas* aired on December 9, 1965 at 7:30 pm. And it was an enormous success! It was the second most watched show that week, pulling in a 49% share, almost half of the televisions in the United States watched it! What was the show that was watched more that week in the number 1 spot? Bonanza! *The Charlie Brown Christmas Special* was aired EVERY YEAR SINCE THEN, sometimes multiple times in December. It is such a valuable asset that you can only watch it now on Apple TV with a subscription! The show won an Emmy and a Peabody award which was quite a surprise to Sparky because Charlie Brown never won anything!

Let us pray. Lord, let us take the lesson of Linus that we learned tonight with us. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Amen

Yours in Christ,

David Donovan



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BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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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

January/February 2024 Greetings,

The holidays are over. The decorations are stored away. The cookies and candies have all been eaten. It was great. It was wonderful. But wait! What about those New Year resolutions? Are you sticking to it or are you already buried in guilt from not living up to your expectations? Well – I’ve found some that we can all embrace or at least get a chuckle out of. *Italics are my contributions!*

1. Exercise...my right to eat more chocolate! (*or pizza, Dipsy Doodles...*)
2. I will finally learn to cook something other than reservations. (*how do you like your cereal?*)
3. Committing to a daily workout routine: laughing at my jokes. (*As if...Ha ha! I'm so funny*)
4. Embrace my inner couch potato, guilt-free. (*someone hand me the remote, please*)
5. I will try to remember where I left my keys at least once a week. (*But wait- where's the car?*)
6. I vow to keep my plants alive for more than a month. (*Plastic stays green a long time!*)
7. Perfect the art of pretending to listen during Zoom meetings.  (*maybe not*)
8. I will attempt to fold fitted sheets without summoning dark forces. (*sorry -impossible*)
9. Master the art of parallel parking (or continue to avoid it) (*Don't you just love those pull-in parking spots?*)
10. I will limit my screen time to only 8 hours of Netflix per day. (*or Facebook, Instagram...*)
11. Become a morning person... starting at noon. (*Okay – 11:59. That's still A.M.*)
12. I promise to use the gym membership I've been paying for all year. (*the shower's nice*)
13. I will try not to judge my cat for sleeping 18 hours a day. (*and claiming me as her servant for the other six*)
14. Develop the ability to remember names, even if it's just mine. (*You know, I really love name tags*)
15. I will strive to say 'no' more often... unless it involves dessert. (*Good luck with that at Bethany!*)

<https://www.scoopwhoop.com/humour/funny-new-year-resolutions/>

I hope you enjoyed these resolutions. I think the real deal is just do your best every day. Each morning comes with a reset button. Don't take yourself too seriously and keep your sense of humor!

On a different note – it may feel like winter just started for real but listen to this! We are well on our way to spring. On Christmas Day 2023, the sun rose at 7:18 and set at 4:34 giving us 9 hours and 15.54 minutes of daylight. January 25, 2024 saw the sun rise at 7:12 and set at 5:04. 9 hours and 52.14 minutes of light. Awesome! Did you notice? Did you enjoy those additional 37 minutes of day? And every day a little more. Enjoy! Don't miss it!

Bethany has a new Music Minister and we are SO excited!

Meet Jillian Carelli

She comes to us with exceptional talent, skills, and experience. Come to service to hear Jillian not only lead the choir and play but also sing.

Wow - Are we blessed!



Join us for the grand opening of our new mental health clinic in East Rockaway, New York!

We are excited to announce that we will be serving young children through adult and geriatric populations. We offer a wide range of services including individual, group, family, and couples counseling.

Come and celebrate with us as we embark on this new journey of providing quality mental health care to our community.

Annie Petraro, Director
646-659-3895

Eclectic Psychotherapy

Downstairs of Bethany



You are cordially invited! Celebration for the launch of



"You are not broken, you are breaking through."

Monday January 22, 2024. Starts at noon until 1:00

RSVP to Anne before January 15th- 646-659-3895

100 Main Street (Downstairs of Bethany)



TAKE THE "TACKLE HUNGER CHALLENGE".
Bethany will be collecting \$1 bills and cans of Soup on
Super Bowl Sunday, February 11, 2024

In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need.



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

Through this mission, people learn they can make a positive difference in the world as they collect food, raise money and serve at hunger-relief charities and show caring and compassion in local communities across the country. Share in God's love for our neighbors in need and give generously on Souper Bowl Sunday.

All of the donations collected will go directly to our Souper Bowl of Caring Charity of Choice:

LONG ISLAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
230 Hanse Avenue
Freeport, NY 11520

PARISH RESOURCE CENTER

Resource Center LI West at 919 Elmont Rd. Valley Stream, NY 11580. We thank you in advance!

GIVING UP NOISE FOR LENT MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Saturday Feb 3rd 2024

11AM to 2PM

at the Parish Resource Center

As the season of Lent approaches we often try to decide what to give up. This workshop will offer a unique take on a Lenten discipline. Pastor Ron Garner, Pastor of Wantagh Memorial Congregational Church, will introduce participants to Christian Meditation combined with Lectio Divina on selected Lenten biblical texts. Space is limited. Contact Pastor Garner via ron.garner@gmail.com or by calling 516-785-1829 or 917-940-6447 Or call the PRC at 516-285-0919 to register

OUTREACH COMMITTEE:

The outreach committee was happy to lead a very successful adopt a family project this year, with the help of our congregation. Carol Henck and Barbara Merna delivered six large bags of toys and clothing, as well as a \$100 gift card for each of the three families (six children) to the Mary Brennan in Hempstead in early December. Each of our six adopt-a-family children received every gift on their wish list as well as clothing and other items. These families surely felt very blessed this Christmas.

Responding to the urgent need of a family within our congregation, the Grateful Hearts collection once again Demonstrated the generosity and love of our Bethany family.

We are so grateful that the spirit of giving generously is alive and well within our Bethany family. The next project the Outreach Committee is planning will be a collection to support young mothers and their children around Mother's Day, details to be determined.

Wishing everyone a happy and blessed new year ahead.

Pastor Search Committee Update:

The search committee has received notice of interest from 2 candidates for our open Pastor position. We have received all required paperwork and have interviewed the first candidate. We are awaiting the paperwork from the second candidate and should receive it within the next two weeks. We will then set up an interview with the second candidate. If we feel one of them is the the right person for Bethany, we will pursue an offer. If not, we will continue the search.

Please continue to pray for Bethany and the committee as we carry on with our search.

Bethany Search Committee

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 John Farrell 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

FROM THE EDITOR:

Condolences It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of Tyler's father, Peter Read. Jaime Elliott requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to aid Tyler in his future. These donations will be handled separately from our ongoing Grateful Hearts collection.

Thank you all for the love and support you consistently provide for both our community and beyond.

TROOP 121



The week before Thanksgiving, the Troop held their annual "Campsgiving". They spend the weekend camping. This year they

went to Baiting Hollow Scout Reservation where they prepared an entire Thanksgiving feast for their friends and family. As usual, the turkey was cooked in a garbage pail over an open fire!



The members of Troop 121 are going on another thrilling hike to celebrate the new year. The troop is known for its com-

mitment to outdoor adventures, fostering teamwork, and instilling a love for nature in its scouts. This outdoor excursion not only promotes physical fitness but also serves as an opportunity for scouts to develop essential life skills such as navigation, teamwork, and resilience.

In addition to their outdoor pursuits, Troop 121 is actively engaged in community events, including an upcoming pancake breakfast. This event not only serves as a delicious fundraising opportunity for the troop and Bethany, but also brings together both scouting and God. The troop's commitment to community engagement extends beyond this event, as they recently hosted a Christmas party that brought joy to the members and their families.

Moreover, their recent open house was met with enthusiasm, attracting new scouts and showcasing the troop's achievements and values. Troop 121 continues to thrive as a dynamic and community-oriented scouting group, fostering personal growth and creating lasting memories for its members.

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

GIRL SCOUT TROOP 2503

They are a new troop just getting started. They meet every other Tuesday at 6:00 PM in Room 301 (upstairs from the office.)

Look for their upcoming Cookie Sale! For information, contact Christine at 516-320-5976

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

The Trustees have been very involved with various projects. First and foremost, we are rehabbing the Parsonage. It has been painted. Jason Kane has tithed his labor to rewire the entire building so that it is safe! He installed new receptacles and lighting fixtures throughout. Among the projects completed and to be done are: tree removal in front, new kitchen floor, all floors to be sanded and finished. We are currently dealing with furnace issues.

We also needed to do some work on Baisley Hall (the building next to the church.)

Billy Lewald and his sons, William and JJ, installed a new toilet bowl between the nursery and meeting room.

Our new tenants are holding their Grand Opening on January 22nd. They are *Eclectic Psychotherapy* and will be offering mental health to those in need.

There is a new Girl Scout Troop for kindergartners that meets upstairs in 301.

We have been blessed with the amount of volunteerism but we can always use help! Please contact us if there is anything or any way you can do to help. Thank you.

Peace and love, Richard Eaves,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Happy New Year...may 2024 hold wonderful memories for you!

We had lots of fun in December performing at our annual Christmas pageant. After a couple of weeks off due to the holidays, we started back to our religious studies January 7. We are excited with a classroom filled with little ones plus 3 students will be confirmed May 19, 2024 Pentecost Sunday.

Below is a calendar of dates to have available for easy reference;

January 21-regular classes

January 28-regular classes

February 4-regular class

February 11-regular class+ **host Coffee Hour**

February 18-**No school**-Winter break

February 25-regular classes

March 3-regular class

March 10-regular class + **host Coffee hour**

March 17-regular class

March 24-*Easter pageant*

March 31-**No school**-Happy Easter

Bethany Sunday school takes place at 9:45 am with Sunday service directly following @10:30am. If you know anyone who would like to join our classes please reach out to Tina Lewald at 917-270-6509.



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*) Sadly, we lost our book reviewer, Lou Gaspari. Any readers out there to step up?

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.

MEN'S CLUB:

We would like start with a wish that everyone has a Happy and Healthy 2024! In addition, a BIG Thank You for supporting the club at the Christmas Fair in December. We had some very happy winners!

Our annual Spaghetti Dinner will take place on Saturday, March 23, 2024 @6 pm in the Parish Hall. (mark your calendars) Adults are \$12 and Children are \$5. This year's dinner includes salad, bread, pasta, meatballs, sausage and peppers, refreshments and dessert. There will also be a raffle to add to the fun!

We hope you can join us. There will be a signup sheet in the church hallway. You can reach out to Bill Lewald @516-837-3485. Leave your name and number of guest attending. Remember: tell a friend; bring a friend to Bethany's Dinner.

Spaghetti
Dinner



WOMEN'S LEAGUE:

I wanted to thank all who helped out the Women's League to make the Christmas Fair a huge success. We made \$4,819.06! \$1,600 more than last year!

I say it all the time, we could not do this without you. We appreciate all who helped out Thursday night, all day Friday and all the volunteers for the fair. We tried something new by opening up two rooms with merchandise and it worked in our favor. But without enough people to work it, this would not have been successful.

Please thank Hughie the scout leader of Troop 121 for helping us out on Thursday night. And a big thank you to Danny who was there all three days to help us out. We may be asking for more help in April for an indoor Flea Market with all of the new items from the thriftique.

For any of the ladies that are not on my emails, thank you!! We appreciate seeing you every year at the fair. Hope to see you at the Flea Market.

Any ladies who are not on my email list and would like to be included, please let me know at cclarke724@gmail.com. I usually send out a recap after every meeting.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Cathy Clarke

Our next Women's League meeting is Sunday, January 14th. We will be planning our Potluck breakfast which is usually in March, and we are planning on an indoor Flea Market to sell more of the new items from the thriftique. Right now our plan is for April. Happy New Year!



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George Washington "Rules of Civility"

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It helps to offset costs.
Thank you.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)