

THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 64 No. 4

East Rockaway, N.Y.

September-October 2024



MEETING NOTICE!

Bethany Congregational Church

The Two Hundred and Fourteenth (214) Corporate Meeting of your church will be held **September 29, 2024 at 11:30 AM** in the Parish Hall as well as access through Zoom. (*By-Laws Article VI, Section 2c*) for the following purposes:

1. To review and accept the Annual Reports of all Church Boards, Officers and Committees.
2. 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

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83487804906?
pwd=U5LUleb57WbD7p11DePX1d9mrBSMXO.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83487804906?pwd=U5LUleb57WbD7p11DePX1d9mrBSMXO.1)

Meeting ID: 834 8780 4906, Passcode: 342313

Welcome Back !

Sunday services have room for many more.

Please join us. Reservations are NOT required.

So just come on over.

Let's worship together.

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 Maryanne for further directions.

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

Dates to Remember:

- September 19...Executive Board Meet
- September 21...Flea Market
- September 22...First Day of Autumn
- September 29...Corporate Meeting
- October 2...Begin Rosh Hashanah
- October 14...Columbus Day (Observed)
- October 31...Halloween
- November 3...End Daylight Savings
- November 5...Election Day
- November 10...Deadline for Bell Tower**
- November 11...Veterans' Day
- November 23...HURRIGON!
- November 28...Thanksgiving Day
- December 7...Christmas Fair
- December 21...First Day of Winter

HURRIGON! STORMS INTO EAST ROCKAWAY!
SATURDAY 10AM - 5PM
NOVEMBER 23RD 2024
 EAST ROCKAWAY, NY 11518

MEET COMIC BOOK ARTISTS AND WRITERS
 PROCEEDS ALL BENEFIT BETHANY CHURCH
 ADMISSION \$5 DONATION

COMICS TOYS ART
 FELLOWSHIP GREAT RAFFLES
 KIDS UNDER 12 IN COSTUME GET IN FREE!

SCAN THE QR CODE

HurriCon returns to Bethany Church on Saturday, November 23, 2024, from 10 am to 4 pm. Come to the church for comics, toys, fellowship, Funco pops, unique Christmas gifts, food, The Walking Taco, original comic art, fellowship, comic book artists and writers, and an amazing raffle table. See you there!

We are an open and affirming congregation!

Welcome to Bethany Congregational Church of East Rockaway, New York. Founded in 1885, Bethany Church has been right here on this spot at 100 Main Street, for the past 138 years, AMAZING! The “Little Church On Main Street” as my Sunday School Teacher Bob Dever would call it. We are an open and affirming congregation!

What DOES that mean? EVERYONE is welcome here. There are no prerequisites. There are no secret handshakes. No passwords! Come as you are! If you are here in person, welcome!

And just as Jesus Christ welcomed all, you are welcome here at Bethany Congregational Church of East Rockaway, no matter who you are!

I’d like to begin today’s service with a reading from Pastor’s Mark’s Hero Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

“Each new day is a new beginning in our life. Each day is a self-contained whole. Today is the limit of our cares and concerns. Today is long enough to find God or to lose him, to keep the faith or to succumb to sin and shame. God created day and night so that we should not wander in boundless space but in the morning already see before us our evening’s destination.”

Just as the old sun is new each day it rises, so too that eternal mercy of God’s old faithfulness anew each morning, to be able to begin a new life with God in the midst of a life with God, is the gift that God gives us every morning. When we wake we can drive away the dark shades of the night and the confusion of our dreams by immediately uttering the morning blessing and commending ourselves in this day to help the triune God. Before the ear perceives the countless voices of the day it must listen in the early morning to the voice of the Creator and Redeemer. God has prepared the stillness of the earliest morning for himself. It must beong to him.”— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas

I want to give you an idea what goes into preparing the message for you this morning at Bethany Congregational Church. The first thing to know is that we follow a lectionary. Lectionary means a Book of scripture readings for a particular day or occasion and other Protestant Churches read the same Bible readings that we are doing today. If you go to another UCC church, you will hear the same Bible verse that you heard here today.

I have learned from the pastors that we have met during our search, that they all have different styles are they

prepare for their worship service. Some do just bullet points and then go off of that. That is not for me, if I go OFF SCRIPT, I may never get BACK TO THE SCRIPT. I prefer the second alternative: I write the whole sermon out and stick to the script!

If I were to go off script, I might start talking about the beginnings of Marvel Comics with writer Stan Lee, and his co-creators artists and co-plotters Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko. But I’m not going to go off script. To get back to the point, then you read and reread the scripture verses and find one of the three that interests you, or sticks to you, that you can use in the sermon. The Sermon should always reflect the scripture readings in some way. Sounds easy right? Sometimes it is! Christmas Eve service was very easy for me because I wanted to talk and inform you all about the Peanuts Christmas Special. Did you see that service? It’s a good one...look for it on our YouTube channel.

I also have the advantage of being a past Sunday School teacher here at Bethany, so many of my messages are based on what I taught and or learned while being a teacher here.

The Epistle reading this morning from the book of James made me think. Hear this from the scripture - *You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.*

Wow, a lesson to be learned for all of us. **Quick to Listen--** ok so that is hard but we can try, **Slow to speak--**we are all New Yorkers and we speak very fast, so that is even harder. And **slow to anger?**—Really? So James is really telling us to count to 10 or more like probably 100, maybe, because your anger does not produce God’s righteousness! To be slow to speak, slow to anger, quick to listen is always a good policy for life in general.

The reading from James goes on with: *For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like.*

Now James is telling us to take a good look at ourselves, who is that person? Is that me? Or is that the person other people see? Is that the person I want to be? Who am I?

One of our basic beliefs as Congregationalist Protestants is that we are charged with having to prac-

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

tice our faith outside these church walls, in our everyday lives, at our jobs, at school, in line at the grocery store, and in our homes. What is the song title? “*They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love*”? Easy to say, easier to sing, but much harder to practice is our daily lives. So what can you do to accomplish this?

Let’s start simple: Bring food to Bethany Church, it will be delivered to the Hempstead branch of Long Island Cares to feed our neighbors who are experiencing “food uncertainty”. “Food uncertainty”? Really? What a phrase, isn’t it sad that we must define that? I’ll make it easy for us all to understand. In the year 2024, there are hungry people right here in our own neighborhood that depend on our generosity! Please give if you can. You can help and any amount is welcome.

Also, think of donating more to the church. I have asked this before and I’ll ask you all again, please consider reinvesting in Bethany Congregational Church. Just think of increasing your weekly offering by just five dollars, it would make a huge difference. There is so much work that is needed to be done on the church to keep it going and up to speed. This holy place has been part of the community since 1885, think about that. Let’s think about Bethany being here past the year 2085! We can do it and you can help, and as I said, any amount is welcome!

We are at a crossroads with our Pastoral Search committee interviewing a potential hire to be the spiritual leader for church. I’m on the committee and I’m asking you to have patience so that we make the right choice that is the best fit for Bethany’s future.

What can I do to make the world better and practice what Jesus taught us? “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is*

this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’”

Is it easy? No way! And it all starts with little things that we can do. Bring food to the church, donate to the Thriftique, better yet **work at the Thriftique**, say hello to the stranger, welcome a stranger into our church or, better off, invite a friend to our church. Pastor Mark always told me that someone who has never been to our church, will come if asked by a member more than being asked by the pastor. So, invite your friends, look around, we have the seats!

When I stand here in front of Bethany Church, I am reminded of all those who came before me and personally showed me the way. The incomplete list of those mentors include; my friends Art and Mildred Roemer, Andy Durso, James Fried, Arthur Harding, Bill Lewald, Bob Dever, Barbara Goodspeed, Ethel Gillon, Mike Fiormonti, Wally Merna, to name just a few and of course all of you for putting up with my shenanigans. And because of that I repeat the words that Pastor Mark and Rev George Hardy before him would say at the end of each worship service here at Bethany Church,

God Loves you and you and you...
He Really, Really Does!

Go in peace!

Yours in Christ,

David Donovan



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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

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

Autumn Greetings!



I love autumn, but I know for some of you, saying goodbye to summer is rather painful. I have a plan to ease your pain. If you recall in the past, I have often listed and commented on unusual and lesser known celebrations of a month or season. Good fun. Let's kick it up a notch and create our own holiday!

I really got this idea from my precocious son when he was about 8 years old. He felt it was simply too long between his birthday in June and Christmas so he created Oct-Moser day. I humored him and got him a card and small gift for our special day. When I asked what he had for me, he hastily ran into his room and made me a three second handmade card. Needless to say, that was the first and last Oct-Moser day!

But, we can do better. Here are some of my ideas. These can be family or friend events or solo ventures.

- ◆ Balance eggs on end for the autumn solstice (Sept. 22). You truthfully can do that on any day but it is fun to perpetuate the myth of the solstice ability. When you've had enough of that, dye or otherwise decorate the eggs as a creative reminder.
- ◆ Send a card to someone you have never sent anything to before. Imagine their pleasant surprise opening your greeting!
- ◆ If you're able, buy a small present for someone you usually don't exchange gifts with. Won't that bring a smile to you both!
- ◆ Create a wear yellow day. Let your smile spread sunshine to everyone you meet.
- ◆ Make a special meal for yourself but make extra to share with a neighbor or shut-in.
- ◆ Have a "go for a walk" day. Take it slow and notice all the details you miss buzzing by in the car.
- ◆ Enjoy an Autumn Beach Day. Take in the sounds of the birds and water without the distraction of the crowds. Beachcomb – see what curious shells you can find.
- ◆ Go wild with a "Crazy Dance Day". Dance like no one is watching. If you're feeling daring, video your crazy dance and send it to a friend to get them in on the action!
- ◆ How about "Cloud Watching Day"? Look to the sky and let your imagination soar.
- ◆ Pick your personal holiday day. Have a countdown to whatever time suits you, maybe noon, 5pm... whatever, and celebrate with streamers and noisemakers. Celebrate the joy of simply celebrating!
- ◆ How about "Bring a Friend to Bethany Day"? We've got something special going on here. Share that love.

Whatever you choose, or don't choose, celebrate your life and bring joy to yourself and those around you.





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. Thank you!



This is the collection of food and school supplies that was dropped off recently to the Mary Brennan INN in Hempstead. They were very grateful for the donation that included diapers and personal health items. Thank you for your donations and please continue to bring them to the church. There are bins at the top of the side stairs between the Office and the Gymnasium.

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Bethany Congregational Church,

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the congregation at Bethany Congregational Church for your invaluable support of our Infant Layette Program at the New LIFE Center. Your generous cash donation and donation of baby items will make a significant difference in the lives of many young mothers who are in need of support during this crucial time.

The assistance we provide to new mothers helps to create stability as they welcome their newborns into their homes. Your congregation's generosity is deeply appreciated and will have a lasting impact.

Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity.

Best Regards, Lynn Butte, Program Director, Lutheran Social Services NY, New LIFE Center-Long Island

Neighbors-in-Need Special Mission Offering

In 2024 the Neighbors In Need theme is "Mental Health Justice For All!" This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey.

Please join us on **October 6, 2024**, as part of World Communion Sunday, remembering that one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM); two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.



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



Troop 121 had an amazing time at Onteora Summer Camp in the Catskills this year, packed with adventure and advancement. Scouts worked hard on earning merit badges, focusing on key skills like swimming and shooting. The rock-climbing wall was a huge hit, challenging the Scouts to push their limits. Another favorite was tomahawk throwing, where they practiced their aim and had a lot of laughs along the way.

After returning from camp, the troop came together to help JP with his Eagle Scout project. Everyone pitched in and helped restore the staircases and lighting at Bethany.



Now the troop is gearing up for their next camping trip on the weekend of September 21st. The Scouts look forward to another adventure in the great outdoors and some of the younger scouts will be camping for the first time.

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

Congratulations to our local Daisy Troop 2503 who bridged to Brownie in June. They will be kicking off the year with a Toy Drive Take Action Plan. They will be collecting unopened toys for donation to The Coalition for the Homeless. Please drop all unopened toys in the box marked Brownie Troop 2503 located @ Bethany Church. Donations will be accepted until November 29.

If you have a 2nd grade girl interested in joining Brownies, you can reach out to Christine for more into (516) 320-5976

They meet every other Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. in Room 301 (upstairs from the office.)

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

It has been a busy summer for us! We had another shed installed for the Thriftique collections. Now there is plenty of room for donations 24/7/365. We also engaged the services of a young man who will bring everything from the sheds to the Thrift Store thus saving the backs of our dedicated staff.



We also had a great Boy Scout Eagle Project from our own John-Paul D'Agostino who painted every railing and stairs, and the 80' ramp. They also painted yellow stripes on the steps for safety. He also had the electrical lights around the church repaired (with the help of Jason Kane). JP did a fabulous job!!! Many thanks to him and his friends, the scouts of Troop 121 and the leaders of the troop who helped as well.

The Parsonage is 98% done. It just needs a deep cleaning and a pastor and we're all set.

I also started to work on replacing the sign facing the CVS parking lot, had the bushes cut down, and I am currently looking at how much an electronic sign would cost. Jason Kane has been a tremendous help and doing so much electrical around the church it just blows me away... thank you, Jason!

All of our accounts are up to date ...thanks to Charlie D'Agostino for handling that. Our bank book after spending a great deal of money on the parsonage and other important updates is not doing badly. If you're looking for details I will gladly sit down with you and show you...we are completely transparent.

So, as the new year is about to start, I see nothing but good things happening for Bethany!

Thank you all sincerely, Richard Eaves, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

September 15th RALLY DAY!

Bethany's Sunday school will start on September 15, 2024 with our welcome breakfast. Please join us if you are looking for your child to have a kid friendly, biblical faithful lesson on Sundays at **9:45 am**. We will start this year off with our traditional Peanut Butter, Jelly and Cereal **food drive** to support the Freeport Long Island Council of Churches Food Pantry. We hope to see you here at Bethany.

Dates to remember September -December
Sunday school will meet on:

September 22,29; October 20,27; November 17,24; December 8,15
December 22 will be our Christmas Pageant!

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.

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!

THE JOYS AND BENEFITS OF HOUSEPLANTS

As we transition to the Fall and Winter seasons, we will likely find ourselves spending more time indoors. Houseplants are an accessible, interesting way to make an otherwise drab indoor space more inviting, and there's a unique thrill to watching them grow. Although scientific studies have been limited, they have had promising findings indicating that plants may make us happier and healthier!

Plants are soothing. When people in a hospital waiting room were exposed to live plants or were shown photos of plants, their stress levels decreased, while the stress levels remained the same for the people with no exposure to plants. Cortisol, the stress hormone, which is present in saliva, was found to be decreased after plant exposure. **Plants can sharpen attention.** Numerous studies have suggested that greenery is restorative and increases the ability to concentrate. One study found that elementary students in classrooms with a green wall (vertical garden with green plants) scored better on attention tests than students in standard classrooms.

They may speed up healing. Plants may play a role in speeding up recovery from an illness, injury, or surgery. According to one [research review](#), hospitalized people who had a view of plants or trees were calmer and had better clinical outcomes, including a reduced need for pain medication and a shorter hospital stay, compared to those who didn't. They may boost happiness and life satisfaction. Several studies have indicated that feelings of comfort and positivity will increase the longer you spend with plants. It was noted that purple and green plants were particularly effective at reducing negative feelings.

WANT TO GET STARTED? One of the following plants might be a good choice to start your indoor garden!

- ⇒ **Snake plants:** This thick-leafed succulent is easy to care for and is particularly resilient. It is nearly impossible to kill! A safe bet for beginning your indoor garden.
- ⇒ **Microgreens:** You can grow these tiny sprout forms of vegetables and herbs inside your home! These little greens contain very high levels of vitamins, minerals and more. It only takes about seven days to harvest them. They can add flavor and nutrients to salads, sandwiches, and soups!
- ⇒ **Orchids:** Orchids can be slightly tricky to care for—but the payoff is worth it. The flowering plant can be a beautiful spectacle, and certain varieties are fragrant as well.
- ⇒ **Spider plants:** These plants, which have narrow, cascading leaves, are very easy to propagate. They form shoots with “baby” plants that are easy to share with friends and family.
- ⇒ **Jade plants:** One of the nice things about these succulents is that if they break or get too big, you can cut them and start new ones very easily.

Submitted by Carol Henck

(Excerpts from Time Magazine article by Angela Haupt, March 2023)

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH!

BOOK REVIEW: *submitted by Barbara Valis*

Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon

Maine 1789: When the Kennebec River freezes a man is found frozen in the ice. Martha Ballard, midwife for the town, is summoned to examine the body to determine the cause of death.

As a midwife and healer, Martha knows what goes on behind closed doors and she keeps a record of everything that goes on in town. There had been a rape committed by two very respected men, one of whom was found dead in the ice. Perhaps there is a connection. This is a fascinating story of life, love, family and a woman's place in the 1700's.

Martha Ballard was a heroine in her day and now, thanks to Ariel Lawhon's book, she is a heroine to us all. This is a must-read book.



Dear Church Family:

Every year on the first Sunday in September, Pet Memorial Day is celebrated at the Bide A Wee Cemetery in Wantagh. I became aware of this event after joining a Pet Bereavement Group at Bide A Wee in 2005, after sadly losing our 17 1/2 year old Kitty, Scooter.

I was asked by our wonderful facilitator, Medea, in 2011 if I would speak at the Pet Memorial Day that year, which happened to fall on the anniversary of my beloved Father, Eugene Schneider's Passing. I did speak that day, and have attended many Pet Memorial

Days, though, unfortunately, our Bereavement Group has since disbanded. Thoughts of Daddy flood more than usual on his July 17th birthday and in September after passing tragically when I was 10.

This year, Pet Memorial Day was held on September 8th, a glorious crisp sunny day with a blue sky and white puffy clouds; God surely Blessed us with perfect weather! Thank you for being not only cherished family members but also treasured and faithful friends. **Love, Jo Schneider-Leonsky**



WOMEN'S LEAGUE:

Help is needed with the bins and setting up the tables. The bins and boxes are downstairs and need to be brought up. We will meet Friday, September 20th at 6:30 pm. This should be a quick job, if we have enough people. I would say about a half hour to 45 minutes. Many hands make light work.

Also, if anyone can help us with the sale that would be great. Also, keep in mind:

BETHANY CHRISTMAS FAIR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024

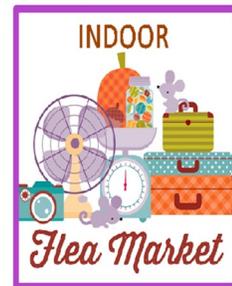
10AM - 3PM JOIN US IN OUR CAFÉ FOR LUNCH

RAFFLES, NEW TOYS, JEWELRY, LOTS OF NEW CLOTHING

LOT OF FUN! Hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, please see Cathy Clarke.

**COME ONE AND ALL TO THE BETHANY
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**



**THAT WILL TAKE PLACE AT: 100 MAIN STREET
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ON: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

BETWEEN: 10 AM AND 3 PM

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SEE YOU THERE!**



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

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



ANNUAL HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday, December 7, 2024
10 AM - 3 PM

Bethany Congregational Church
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East Rockaway, NY 11518
Call (516) 599-5768 For Directions
NO VENDORS PLEASE

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HELP ME HELP BETHANY!

**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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