



# THE BELL TOWER



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

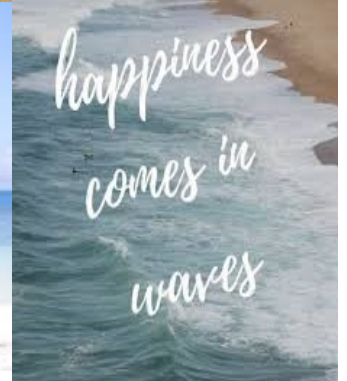
Vol. 60 No. 7

East Rockaway, N.Y.

July-August 2020



**SOCIAL DISTANCING**



## **Dates to Remember:**

(When things get back to Normal.)

- September 7...Labor Day
- September 11...Patriot Day
- September 13...Grandparents' Day
- September 22...First Day of Fall
- October 12...Columbus Day
- October 31...Halloween
- November 1...End Daylight Savings Time
- November 3...Election Day...Please VOTE!!
- November 11...Veterans' Day
- November 26...Thanksgiving Day
- December 7...Pearl Harbor Day
- December 21...Winter Begins (Brrrr!)



# “Sabbath”

There aren't too many better places to be in the summer than on Long Island. We have the breezes and the beaches and more so than in years past, the air is a little cleaner, maybe the sand seems a little more pristine, the various critters and birds, a bit more plentiful than they were in the past. I don't know if that is really so, or if maybe just being cooped up for months has made the sight of our typical flora and fauna just a little more special than it had been in the past. Kate and I are rushing out in our kayak at every conceivable free moment, except when we are looking for a beach to enjoy our newfound freedom to put our toes in the sand, or the water, and just plain get outside. So what if I have to distance or wear a mask, the sun is shining, the birds are singing and hope is in the air. The sun rises and sets, the birds fly, the fish swim and God is in charge, doing what she always does, looking out for the creation, while her people, the ones who were given dominion over that creation, are inside coping with the virus and all the changes, hopeful and frightening, that we are going through as we go through what, God willing, is a growth spurt in our dealings with one another as human beings and siblings, children of the One God who created us all.

Maybe it's the time we spent in quarantine, the chance to think about things, or the prayer time a lot of us have had. Maybe it's the videos we've seen, that leave no room for denial or prevarication, or maybe it's just God's time, but the Holy Spirit is working through this land. How do I know? Because the only black driver in NASCAR, a bastion of white southern culture, was pushed to the head of the line at the Talladega, Alabama racetrack by a crowd of 5000 drivers, mechanics and fans to let him know that they chose full inclusion over traditional symbols, because it is the right thing to do. They understood that human beings are more important than abstractions like symbols, especially when those symbols separate us rather than bringing us together as a people. To quote our savior in the gospel of Mark chapter 2: "... the sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the sabbath."

Maybe that is part of the message of Talladega: that people are more important than any symbol, no matter how cherished, and especially one that is an anathema to so many. That "get over it" is not

how we are commanded to answer the claim of our brothers and sisters on our faith and our souls. Maybe it is time we stop defending what we have always done, and begin to look at what it has done to others, for whom that way hasn't worked. Maybe some of this awakening we see all around us at this time is partly due to a recognition of our interdependence as we have come to rely for our sustenance on people, (often people of color), for essential services and suddenly began to wonder about the life of this man or woman forced to risk their health in order to feed their families and ours as well. Maybe we need to, even as we open up, hold on to that idea of Sabbath, not just as a day of rest, but as a kind of jubilee, a break from the way we've always thought or knew or seen and look very deeply at ourselves, take it to Jesus in prayer, and try to open up our minds and hearts to the breath of the Spirit. Take a moment to think not of us and ours in our usual sense, but in God's sense, including all the folks we don't think of as us. Ask for help from the One who made us. Take a sabbath from the "yeah, but," and ask the Spirit to put us in our neighbor's place, our neighbor's life. It is an easy ask, and most of us don't do so well with sabbath. We tend to take the world the way it is and cut our best deal, without thinking about why things are the way they are. We work hard and we follow the rules. But maybe don't think about what the rules mean and why they are there. We are used to a 24/7 type culture where the pace of life is on constant full bore, balancing all the things that are supposed to make us healthy wealthy and wise, but which often make us exhausted, worried and woeful instead, stealing our time from the people we love, running on empty, as we struggle within a system that gets more demanding every day. It's pretty hard to muster up any worries, let alone empathy for the guy in the back of the line when you're trying with all your might to hold on to your spot, just a couple of steps ahead of that guy.

So, God decreed a sabbath, immediately after the hard work of creation was done. God called that sabbath good, just like his works of creation because the sabbath was the time not simply for rest, but for evaluation of what God had done. Time to look at this Eden he created and determine if it was truly the

fulfillment of his loving will. As we peruse the pages of the Hebrew Bible, we see that same dynamic again and again as God takes the time to review his creation and to make the transformative, life altering changes that will lead his erring children back to the path he has set for them, and back to the laws of love.

Maybe the troubles of our era are God's call to us to Sabbath; to stop, think, feel and pray. Maybe this is the time, when Jesus is saying to us, as he said to his disciples in the part of the gospels called the "little apocalypse" that the way things are is no longer viable, that they must and will change, with us or without us. The suffering and the destruction to bodies and souls has gone on too long and it has gone too far. We have to change, my sisters and brothers, to repent and to be ready to listen to new ways of being if we are to preserve what is best about ourselves and our land. We have to look to the gospel, which tells us in Matthew 25 that Christ is here, among us, and that he is calling us through the crucifixion of the innocent, through the revolt of our planet, through this forced sabbath to a fearless and thoughtful moral inventory, to a rethinking of our values, our ideas, and especially our faith and what these things are about, so that we can become Jesus' allies in this time of change.

This isn't about being "woke," or "liberal," or "political." This is about the Good News and

good news is exactly what it is. It is a tumultuous time, because change is in the air and the Spirit is tearing the scabs off of wounds that have never healed. It is messy and scary, just as Jesus said it would be, but as he assured the first disciples, we too can be assured that it is not the end of the world. It is a challenge to God's children to come together with opened eyes to make change that benefits us all. We, people of faith are essential to this process, because we are the ones bearing the light of the Son, the gospel of grace and the good news about the Love of God for all of his creatures and creation. We care because we are disciples of the One whose love created us all and whose love redeems and sustains us all. We are the ones who believe that black lives do matter, as much as white lives, we are the ones who figured out that people of color, like the LGBTQ folks we stand with, are folks, like us, who want to live lives like we do, with love and families. Most importantly, we know, that we cannot be the kingdom of God, we will not be saved, until we have learned to value every life, and until we come to the gates, together. So let's take some time for sabbath this summer, and spend some of that on our knees. Happy summer!

*Yours in Christ,*

*Pastor Mark*



***Bethany Bell Tower*** ...is a monthly publication of

**BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

100 Main Street, East Rockaway, New York 11518 (516) 599-5768  
Maryanne Walling, Secretary, [bethanyoffice@optimum.net](mailto:bethanyoffice@optimum.net), [www.bethanycongregation.org](http://www.bethanycongregation.org)

Reverend Mark Lukens, Pastor, [revlu@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto: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

**W**ell, here we are in the middle of summer and it's still looking pretty weird out there. This is my very first pandemic and I have to say – I don't much care for it. I often celebrate my June birthday with an outing to a museum or garden - something a little different. This year? I could not find any place open so the morning of my 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday was spent weeding at Bethany with a friend. Thanks, Andrea! By the way, that's something you can do too. We saved you plenty of weeds! Mind you, I'm not complaining. I love being outdoors and enjoy gardening. I get a great deal of satisfaction from creating order from chaos. Look at our flower beds and you will see what I mean!

**M**aybe gardening isn't your passion. No problem. This one is much easier and has so many benefits. **Take a walk.**

**T**here you have it. Three little words with incredible impact.

**I** went to [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com) and looked up the benefits of walking. Incredible!

1. Burn calories – I'm all for that.
2. Strengthen your heart – I've done some St Francis Hospital time in the past year so I'm all in for that one too!
3. Can help lower your blood sugar – always a good thing.
4. Ease joint pain – ease joint pain? In other words, instead of saying I'm too achy to walk – I need to say I'm achy so I am going to walk and then do it.
5. Boosts immune function – who cares about that.... oh wait – Covid 19? We all care about that one!
6. Get an energy boost – it's all about the oxygen.
7. Improve your mood – “it can help reduce anxiety, depression, and a negative mood. It can also boost self-esteem and reduce symptoms of social withdrawal.”  
Jackpot! I can honestly say that walking in my neighborhood has kept me sane these past months (or as sane as I will ever be). Social isolation? Quite the opposite. I have met so many of my neighbors, their dogs, admired their gardens. It's been great!
8. Extend your life – I'm not done yet so yes!
9. Tone your legs – who wants untuned legs?
10. Help you think creatively – I sure need that extra creativity to come up with an article for you each month. You ought to try it. Seriously – write something for the Bell Tower. Share a recipe, a poem, some history, interview a Bethany or community member...



**S**o get on those walking shoes or sneakers, pack your mask in case you need it (you may not as outdoor social distancing is pretty low risk), and get yourself outside and moving. You'll be glad you did.

## **FROM THE TRUSTEES:**

**B**ethany is moving forward. We are working diligently to get everyone back into the sanctuary where we all belong. But, in the meantime, the streaming services should be up and running by August... either the first week or the second. The portable hand cleaning stations are ordered and should be arriving soon. We are in the process of buying a fogger for sanitation purposes for after service. The executive committee has met about opening the church and is trying to figure out the best way to do that.

**R**emember there are multiple ways to tithe. Please don't forget your church! The generosity has been astonishing but we still need to maintain and keep up with our costs because we are spending a great deal of money to open as soon as possible, which is our ultimate goal.

*Yours in Christ,*

*Richard Eaves*

**[www.bethanycong.com](http://www.bethanycong.com)**



Bethany's Bible Study Group will be starting up again on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 10:30 a.m. We study the bible readings (the lectionary) for the following Sunday.

The only requirements are that you must wear a mask and maintain a six foot distance from each other. We will be meeting in the Sanctuary.

Please enter by the downstairs side door.

And we wish to remind you that we are always collecting nonperishable food items for the Freeport Pantry of the Long Island Council of Churches. A bin is available at the bottom of the side entrance steps or outside the Sanctuary area. All are welcome!

## **A BIT OF LEVITY:**



**SMILE**  
**While you**  
**Still have**  
**TEETH!!!**

## Greetings Members & friends of Long Island Council of Churches,

Thank you to all of those who have donated to the LICC Emergency Food Pantry through our [LICCDonate.org](http://LICCDonate.org) website during this urgent time. WE have raised almost \$6,000.00 for direct food purchase. With all of the gracious donations we have received, we still your help as the need for food grows with all of our Neighbors. Please read the following message and support the LICC in combating food insecurity in our communiutes. Thank you.

During this time of uncertainty with many of our *Neighbors* facing times of unprecedented closings and layoffs the Long Island Council of Churches (LICC) needs your support in keeping our shelves stocked so we may keep our doors open to continue in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need*.

While many of our religious institutions are practicing social distancing with closings, the LICC Emergency Food Pantry **WILL CONTINUE** to stay open. However, we have seen a sharp decline in direct delivery food donations from Churches and Congregations. At this time of social awareness, in an effort to support social distancing and promote healthy living, we are asking for your support to continue in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need* with donations by alternative means, please see below:

LICC website, [LICCDonate.org](http://LICCDonate.org). OR [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and have items shipped directly to: (OR Mail a check to:)

**Long Island Council of Churches  
Attn: Emergency Food Drive  
230 Hanse Avenue  
Freeport, New York 11520-1009**

### Emergency Items Needed:

**Dry Cereal** (Cold); **Hot Cereal** (Grits; oatmeal); **Vegetables** (Canned corn; carrots; spinach, collard and green beans, etc.); **Jelly** (plastic bottles preferred); **Soup** (any kind); **Pasta** (any kind); **Pasta Sauce**; **Rice** (1- or 2-pound bags); **Shelf stable milk**; **Canned meats** (Chicken; spam; Vienna sausage), **Toiletries** (Toothpaste; Toothbrushes; soap; deodorant; feminine products; razors; shampoo; conditioner); **Baby diapers** (All sizes)

If you have any questions, please contact the Freeport Emergency Food Pantry at 516-868-4989.

Thank you from the hungry Long Islanders we serve, staff, and Long Island Council of Churches' Administrative Board for your support in helping us in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need*.

Anthony Achong, Director of Administration and Operations

## **FROM THE EDITOR:**

**W**e are working from home as are many of you. We sincerely hope that everyone is healthy and safe and that we will all see each other in the not too distant future. We will publish **The Bell Tower** each month as long as the printer is working and the post office is operational. If anyone would like an issue emailed just send your best email to: [cjdagostino@gmail.com](mailto:cjdagostino@gmail.com). It is in PDF form and that is how we get to the printer each month. The pictures are in color! Or, if you go to Bethany's website, [www.bethanycong.com](http://www.bethanycong.com) you will find ***The Bell Tower*** when you click on "Newsletter". Every issue for 2020 is there...in color! Enjoy.

**Get Well Soon!**



**P**lease keep ***Lou Gaspari*** in your thoughts and prayers.

He is our friend and frequent book reviewer in ***The Bell Tower***. We hope he has a speedy recovery.



# Birds of the Bible

*Bill Brinkworth*



- |                 |         |           |         |         |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| <b>Words to</b> | doves   | nighthawk | peacock | stork   |
| <b>Find:</b>    | eagles  | ospray    | pelican | swallow |
| bat             | hawks   | ossifrage | pigeon  | vulture |
| bitterns        | herons  | ostriches | quail   |         |
| cormorants      | kites   | owl       | raven   |         |
| cuckow          | lapwing |           |         |         |

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Kahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Kahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my children, friends, family and work.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the Adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

I may have been in Continent, but I don't remember what country I was in. It's an age thing. They tell me it is very wet and damp there.

Life is too short for negative drama and petty things.

So laugh insanely, love truly and forgive quickly.

*Submitted by Don Gillies*

## **TROOP 121**

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

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



# BOOK REVIEW

By Jennifer Valis

## A Man Called Ove

By Frederick Backman

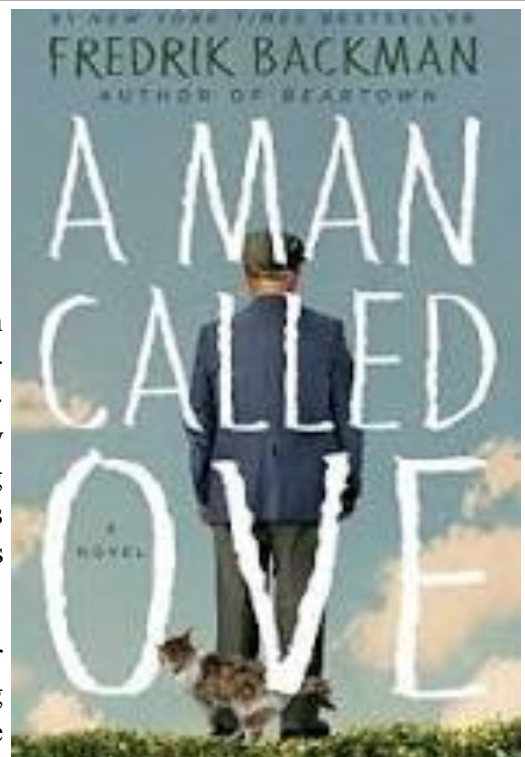
There are certain situations in life for which we need to be in the mood. For me this includes grading papers, writing, having an emotionally difficult talk, paying bills, cleaning, organizing...I'm sure you get the idea and I'm sure you too have a fairly similar list. I recently realized that included on my list is reading particular books. I must confess my nightstand is full of books that I have started and stopped for myriad reasons. Most times it's because the book just isn't speaking to me.

A couple of weeks ago I returned to a book I had put down for months: *A Man Called Ove* by New York Times bestselling author Frederick Backman. If you haven't read it but recognize the title it may be due to the fact that it was turned into a major motion picture (Swedish with English subtitles). Originally, the book was given to me by a dear friend who promised me a quick read and that I would "love, love, love it". Well, I didn't. At first. It was a harmless beginning read but it just wasn't speaking to me because I wasn't in the mood.

Fast forward to quarantine and all the emotional stressors that have come with it. I picked up *Ove* again and I fell for him. Hard. Actually, I enjoyed all the quirky Swedish characters and the overall life lesson that even the coldest of hearts can be the softest.

Another confession: When I turned the last page of the book, I had tears streaming down my face. Not tears borne of sadness but, rather, tears of happiness. The last time I recall that happening was many years ago as I turned the last page of *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt.

I offer you my friend's synopsis: a quick read and a book that you will love, love, love.



### The Sin of Lying

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

## Change In Thrift Shop Hours:

As a preventive precaution  
against the Coronavirus,  
Bethany's Thriftique will  
be closed as of Friday,  
March 13, 2020 until  
further notice.

We thank you for your  
patronage, apologize for  
any inconvenience and  
hope to reopen soon.

Bethany is looking for a **Not-For-Profit** Organization to rent the space that we have downstairs.

We are looking to rent the large room, smaller room and 3 small office size rooms plus two (2) large storage areas. If you know of any interested group, please have them contact :

**Charlie D'Agostino 516-721-8885**

East Rockaway

Fire Department, Inc.



Gregory Hall-Available For Rental

5 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518

Phone (516)599-9771

Fax (516)596-4712



*Trust*  
is a Donza promise

*Trust us with your families wishes.  
To provide your family with the best  
decision and care for your loved ones.*

Guy Donza SFD, Thomas Donza  
& Christine Donza  
Funeral Directors &  
Pre-Arrangement Counselors

*Call us to sit down and  
discuss a Tradition & Trust  
pre-arrangement.*

**Donza**  
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

1926 **92** years 2018  
Warm and Personal Service  
A Family Tradition Since 1926



333 Atlantic Avenue, East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518  
Tel: (516) 593-2521 / Fax: (516) 825-6380  
[www.donzafuneralhome.com](http://www.donzafuneralhome.com)



ROBERT F. GARRISON VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

POST 3350 AND AUXILIARY

164 MAIN STREET EAST ROCKAWAY NY 11518

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS - PATRIOTS PEN, VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

TEACHER AWARD, EMS, FIRE, POLICE, AND SCOUTING

POST LOOKING FOR MEMBERSHIP IN BOTH VFW AND AUXILIARY

(please call post @ (516)887-8170) WEBSITE [vfwpost3350.org](http://vfwpost3350.org)

HALL AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES AND PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

WE SPONSOR TWO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

EVERY MONDAY NIGHT

BEGINNERS MEETING 7:00PM, OPEN MEETING 8:15PM

***Please support the goals at the Post!***



# HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



**Charlie D'Agostino**

**516-721-8885**

Lic. Associate Broker, CBR, RSSC

[cjdagostino@gmail.com](mailto:cjdagostino@gmail.com)

[www.charlesdagostino.com](http://www.charlesdagostino.com)



LA ROSA REALTY  
NEW YORK

**Thinking Real Estate? Buying?  
Selling? Renting? Florida?**

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.

**FREE MARKET ANALYSIS! COMPETITIVE COMMISSION RATES! 25 POINT MARKETING PLAN!**



Thinking of a cruise? We can help!

**Virna D'Agostino**

**Debbie Sugrue**

Travel Advisors/Franchise Owners

[virna.dagostino@cruiseplanners.com](mailto:virna.dagostino@cruiseplanners.com)  
(516) 305-3775

[debbie.sugrue@cruiseplanners.com](mailto:debbie.sugrue@cruiseplanners.com)  
(917) 929-4260

[www.FriendsLoveTravel.com](http://www.FriendsLoveTravel.com)



Customized Individual & Group Travel \* Family or High School Reunions \* Ocean & River Cruising \* Food & Wine Travel \* Cultural Expeditions \* Land Tours & Private Excursions \* Guided Tours & Vacation



## *Perry Funeral Home, Inc.*

"Since 1825"

**KENNETH LYSAK JR. & PHILIP M. TAGLIA**

*Serving All Faiths*

*Cremation Services • Medicaid Approved*

*Burial Trusts Arranged*

*Newly Renovated*

**Pre-Planned Funeral  
Arrangements**



*Area's Largest Chapel*

118 Union Avenue,  
Lynbrook

**516-593-1111**

[www.perryfh.com](http://www.perryfh.com)



**American Cool Air**

Marc Goldberg

21 Ryder Place  
East Rockaway, NY 11518

(516) 593-0888 (Office)  
(516) 593-0999 (Fax)

**Sons of the American Legion**

*American Legion Post 958*

*71 Main Street*

*East Rockaway, NY 11518*

**516-599-5335**

*God Bless America!*





# THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

100 Main Street

East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518

(Non-profit Organization)

Dated material

Non Profit Org  
U.S. Postage paid at  
East Rockaway  
New York.  
PERMIT NO 52



## 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

