



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 61 No. 2

East Rockaway, N.Y.

February 2021



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 or Stephanie Madolone (516-355-1970).

Lay Readers will be required to assist with the service and read two (2) Bible passages for that Sunday. Please speak to Pastor Mark for further directions.

NEW OFFICE HOURS:

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



Dates to Remember:

(When things get back to Normal.)

February 17...Ash Wednesday
March 14...Begin Daylight Savings Time
March 17...St. Patrick's Day
March 20...Spring Begins
March 27...Passover begins
March 28...Palm Sunday
April 1...April Fools' Day
April 2...Good Friday
April 4...Easter Sunday
May 9... Mother's Day
May 13... Ascension Thursday
June 20...Father's Day

ON A LIGHTER NOTE:



Playing in the Snow

There is something magical about a blizzard. I'm not a big fan of the cold weather and shoveling snow, but as I sit in my living room watching the flakes gently blanketing the gritty streets in a coat of white, it is almost as if nature has called a time-out; the snow forcing us to put down all busyness and pay heed to the most basic of things. After a little bit, the children start to come out, reminding us of the magic of the season. How many of us have watched a weather report, our hearts sinking in anticipation of a nasty commute or a big shovel, only to be buoyed by the cheerful anticipation of the kids, their heads filled with visions of a whole new world in which to play?

Maybe that's a little bit of why Jesus seemed to be so partial to children. Unless "you come as a child," he told his disciples, you "cannot enter the kingdom of God." Many folks seem to believe that Jesus was referring to the innocence of children, who have not yet learned what many of us used to call the "difference between right and wrong," but which also meant absorbing the baggage, the myths, the prejudices, and the meanness that comes with life in our benighted world. But perhaps Jesus was concerned about something deeper than a comforting, but clichéd view of the innocence of children; lifting up instead their gift for seeing the redemptive possibilities that can be squeezed out of even the worst of situations. Children are always seeking a way to play; to fashion something joyful out of whatever situation they are in. They see what is and then use their imaginations to re-create it in some new and joyful way. We older folks, jaded and

broken down by the ways of the world, see a scum covered pond for instance, but children see the potential for fish and frogs and the opportunity for adventure. Buoyed by their faith in the power of their parents' love to lead, shape and sustain them in the world, they live by the "assurance of things hoped for" and "the conviction of things unseen." Children know how to dream dreams and see visions and they, as the hymn says, "can feel the thrill of harvest, when the buds have just begun to sprout."

Just as importantly, children are loved, when they are well loved, not because they are smart, or strong, or beautiful, but simply because they are. When they are cared for as they should be, they take love for granted. They trust their parents even when they bounce off the boundaries that we set for them because they know that there is always sanctuary and safety in our presence. They are loved, and they know it. Obedience is not a matter of might (usually), but of trust and of love.

Of course, children are not very practical. They are not wise in the ways of the world. They are dependent on others for their sustenance and they know it. They tend to view themselves, their world and other people in a positive way unless told otherwise and they are not prudent or wise with their grace, making them susceptible to the evils of the world. Without the love of their elders, they might not survive and they certainly would not thrive. They need others and they accept that, confident that their needs will be met.

That, of course, might just be the point. Maybe all that “practicality,” can miss the mark. As we see the mess that we have made of this paradise God has given us, both in terms of the creation itself and, even more so, in our inability to come together as the sisters and brothers that God made us to be, we can see that beating the creation into submission isn’t working. Maybe these snowstorms are a reminder of our need for Sabbath, but also of the central fact of our existence: that just as our young ones are dependent on us for their sustenance, we are in fact all interdependent, not just as human beings, but as living creatures of every kind. More than that, at the heart of that interdependence is God, from whose font of living water springs the water of life that all of us are utterly dependent on for everything that matters. This life, this world are gifts, and the point is live them, share them, celebrate, and share them some more.

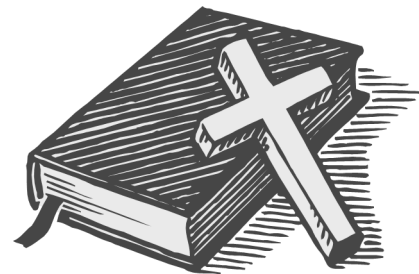
The pandemic has been a curse for most of us, like a snowstorm that never goes away. It has plunged people into situations of dependence, stripping away the illusion of our own pow-

er and reminded us in a grim way that life is vulnerable and fragile. It has exacerbated the suffering of the most vulnerable among us and created educational and mental health crises among God’s people. We cannot change that, but we do get to choose what we will do about it. We can seek to make something redemptive, out of what we have endured, maybe learn a bit about mutuality and the value of our fellow human beings, especially those in some of our least paid and respected occupations who have become lifelines to so many of us.

The things about snowstorms, is the thing about life itself. Stuff happens to us, but we choose, ultimately, what that will mean. If we look for the beauty, the harmony, the love, we’ll see it. If you can’t see it, make a call and we’ll find some way to help. That’s why we’re here-

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mark



Bethany Bell Tower ...is a monthly publication of

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 expres their views in letters to the editor.***

Are you less than perfect? Welcome! We are a community or 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

Wanted: One member of Bethany Congregation Church

To serve on the Pulpit/Search Committee

Yes, it's true. Pastor Mark will be retiring in early 2023. While we are sad and reluctant to let him go, he has more than earned the right to kick back and enjoy the good life. How blessed we have been to have him as our spiritual leader and friend for so many years!

That said, we need to plan for Pastor's replacement.

The Committee - According to our By-Laws, a pulpit/search committee is to be formed of five members: one trustee, one deacon, and three members at large.

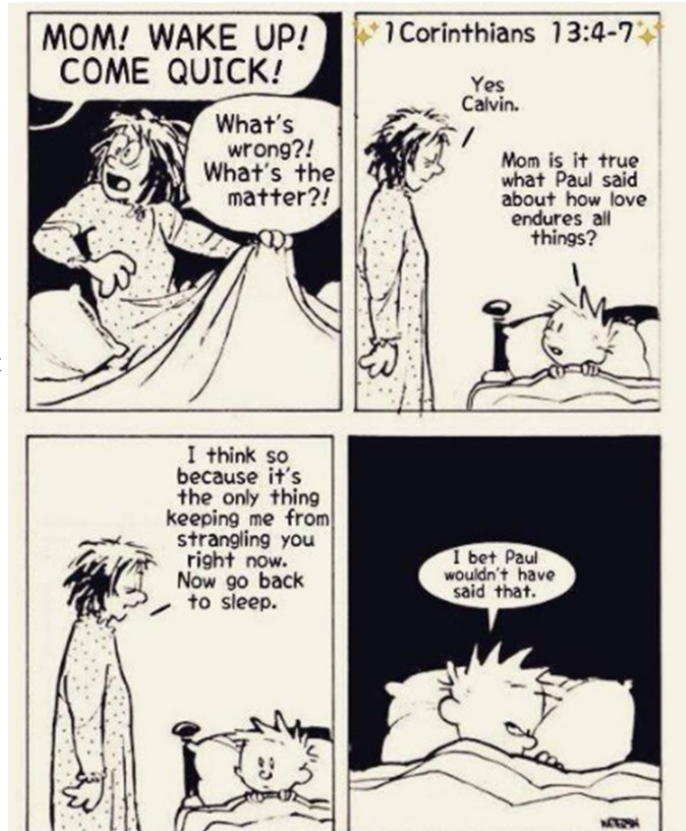
What does the committee do? – the role of this group is to reexamine Bethany's mission moving forward. What do we envision as Bethany's ministry in the future and what will that look like? Next begins the search for an appropriate interim pastor (not as hard as it may sound – there are listings). The final step is seeking suitable nominees as our new pastor. Potential candidates will preach at a regular service at Bethany to allow the congregation their say in this process.

How long does this take? – This is a long-term commitment but will not eat up your every waking moment! The process will start upon the confirmation of its members at the May corporate meeting. There will be periodic meetings over these several years as each step is completed. No worries – Pastor Mark will guide us through this with his experience and knowledge.

****We need one more member-at-large to complete the roster.** You must be a member of Bethany. What would be absolutely wonderful is if we could get this input from one of our younger members. Perhaps someone with children who will be growing up in our Bethany family. This is our future but your future is a lot longer than mine! It's important that Bethany moves in the right direction for you and your families. Please step up and help in this pulpit search.

If you are interested in volunteering for this important committee, please contact the church office or me

janet630@optonline.net



Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Waterson – one of my favorites!

FROM THE TRUSTEES:

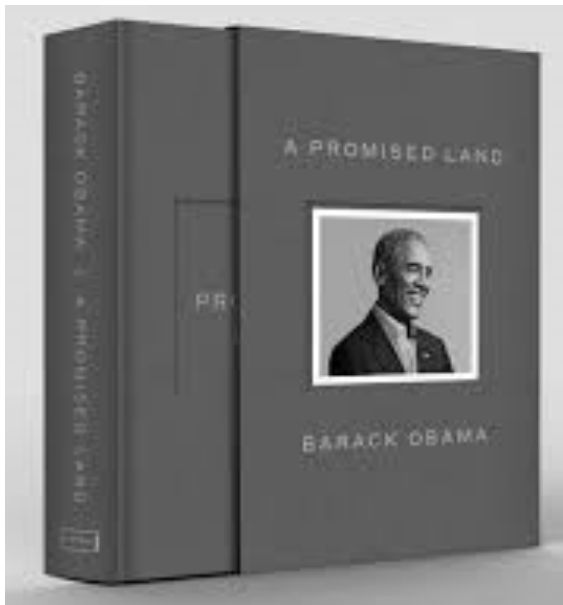
Boy Scout Troop 121 at Bethany completed project 3! Jonathan Rohleder, with the help of his troop, family and friends, painted the lower half of the walls in the Parish Hall (gym). It is for his Eagle Scout Project and we are very proud of him and grateful for him willing to help Bethany.

If you would like to attend any Sunday, please call the office during the week so that Maryanne can reserve you a seat or two. If you cannot attend services, please remember to send in your donations to the office. Thank you.

Yours in Christ, Richard Eaves

www.bethanycong.com

BOOK REVIEW by Lou Gaspari



When you read President Obama's autobiography you begin to fully realize the deep abyss between Trump and Obama and wonder how our country ever came to choose two individuals who differ so greatly.

A Promised Land is the first volume of a two volume memoir. The book starts with Obama's early political career and details in a long book his time on the national scale beginning with the 2004 Senate campaign and ends in May of 2011 with the death of Osama Ben Laden. The book is an extremely verbose autobiography in a first person narrative. The book demonstrates Obama's incredible intelligence and conscience and he is not shy in explaining some of his decisions which he feels that he could have done better. The book gives us an exceptional insight regarding the recession he inherited in 2008, foreign affairs, White House staff and many more problems up to 2011.

A second volume will be forthcoming within the next year. The book is memorable and explains the success and failures of a great President.



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

FROM THE EDITOR:

We are thinking of starting classified ads. If you have a service to offer, please let us know. (Driving to appointments, light housecleaning, small home repairs, etc.) If you need services, same sort of idea. (Mowing, shoveling, shopping, etc.). Also, if you have something to sell send us a picture and pertinent information. (furniture, tools, electronics, etc.) Likewise if you need something, let us know. The ads will be free, but we do ask for small donations if you make money from it. Of course, we reserve the right to edit and not print anything untoward.

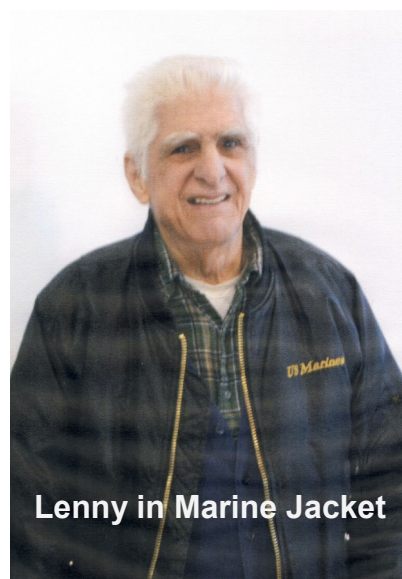
Memorial Coffee Hour: A Yearly Tradition

By Jo Schneider-Leonsky

Each year on the anniversary of my beloved Mother's passing, I hostess Coffee Hour in Memory of Mom. This year, due to health and safety constraints involving the Coronavirus, remembering Mom with food and fresh flowers was impossible. Losing my parents is still painful, even after all these years. But I was deeply saddened about a recent loss, discovered during a call at Thanksgiving, when I was told that Lenny had passed away of heart complications. Annette and Lenny had been in a loving marriage for many years, raised a close knit family and were cherished friends of our family for as far back as I can remember. Lenny's passing was a terrible shock and he will be sorely missed. So...now, the problem remained: how could I handle Mom's Coffee Hour this year?

After much thought, I decided that a revised Memorial for Mom, Daddy and Lenny would be arranged. Tucking Forget Me Not Seeds into the February 28, 2021 program at Bethany's Church Service and an artificial flower arrangement was the best I could do this year. It is with great regret that this is the first time I have not been able to share food and fellowship with my beloved Church Family celebrating lost loved ones. But the Coronavirus has forced us to change the way we celebrate special occasions as well as the way we live our every day lives.

This past year has made me realize more than ever how fragile life is. And though Daddy's passing was traumatic - especially because I was so young at the time - it made me realize the need to cherish those we love deeply - as we never know how long they will be with us. Losing a loved one is still hard - even as a "grown up".



Lenny in Marine Jacket

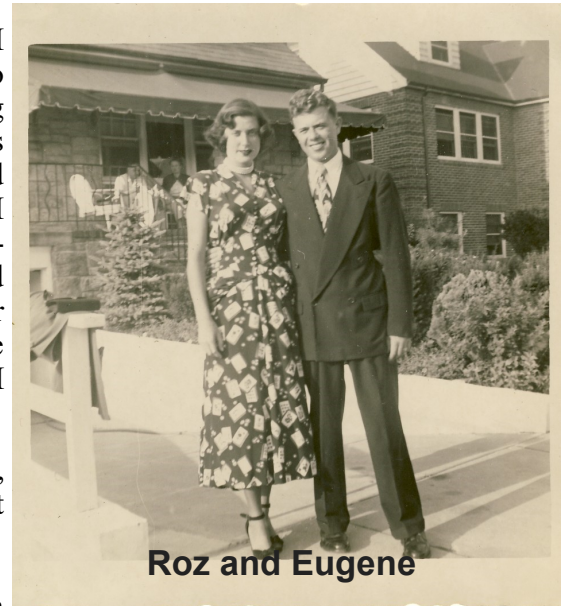
How much we have taken for granted over time...who would think that we would suffer so many limitations with the spread of this terrible sickness? Gratefully, Bethany has followed the guidelines to help everyone stay well and I'm so proud of that.

I pray by next February, this terrible Virus will be over and we will be able to partake in Mom's Annual Coffee Hour safely - all of us together. I greatly missed ordering the cakes, cookies and pies - as well as my trip to the party store for flowered paper goods to serve on. Not a day goes by that I don't think of my parents and this year, I'm also remembering Lenny and his family too.

As Valentine's Day approaches, hold your dear ones close, and may memories of those loved and lost warm your heart, offering hope, healing and comfort.

Thanks to my Church Family for all your support in sunshine and shadow.

Love to all, Jo



Roz and Eugene

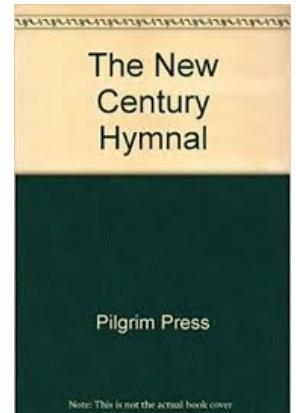
**Bethany Congregational is indeed in the 21st century
and now our hymnal will be too!**

**Join us in this timely upgrade by “purchasing” a hymnal for Bethany.
Although this was inspired as a memorial to our dear friend Wally Merna,
each hymnal may be dedicated to whomever you choose.
Hymnals are \$20 each.**

The New Century Hymnal | Pew Edition

The New Century Hymnal invites the Church into the 21st century. The best hymns of the past are combined with exciting new hymnody from some of the finest contemporary poets and composers. *The New Century Hymnal* reflects a high level of musical and theological scholarship -- including fresh adaptations of original texts, honoring tradition while at the same time using inclusive language that will welcome and affirm all as members of Christ's church. It includes:

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Hymnal Order Form

Your name _____

and phone # _____

Number of hymnals requested _____ x \$20 (includes shipping) = \$ _____

Please submit check payable to Bethany Congregational Church with your order form.

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

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

NATIONAL DON'T CRY OVER SPILLED MILK DAY

On February 11th, “Don’t Cry Over Spilled Milk Day” promotes a positive attitude even when things might not be going your way. It’s a day for looking on the bright side of things and then carrying that feeling with you every day after. Do not worry and do not stress over the little things. Life is too short to let ourselves be bothered by the “little things”!

In one of its oldest forms, the proverb was “No weeping for shed milk,” as referenced by James Howell in 1659. The saying has evolved over time, but still retains its original intent. There is no changing what is done and crying over it serves no purpose. Everyone knows that unexpected or unplanned things happen in life, sometimes daily. (These days, more than ever!) With a positive attitude, life is much brighter and easier.

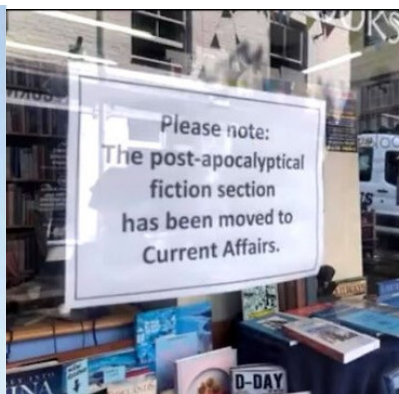
HOW TO OBSERVE Don’t Cry Over Spilled Milk Day

- Don’t cry over spilled milk. We poured a glass of milk and discussed our favorite ways to face daily challenges:
- Be prepared! Sometimes the things that happen do so because we didn’t study, prepare or organize our day. While not every detail needs to be planned, the general *stuff* of the day does.
- Expect the unexpected. No matter who we are or what we do, things happen. Kids get sick. Customers make special requests. A car pulls out in front of you. The server brings the wrong dish. You take a wrong turn. If you adjust and move on, it will only be a blip on your day. Have a backup plan. These come in especially handy for big occasions. We’re talking about surprise parties or a wedding.
- In the end, what’s really important about special occasions are the good memories we make. If a little milk should fall, er, spill, while everyone laughs, dances and smiles, it really won’t matter.
- Breathe. Ask yourself, *Will this issue matter in a day?* If the answer is, *No*, then it’s just a little spilled milk. How about a week? Still a no? It’s still just spilled milk. If the concern doesn’t change the entire course of your life, it’s only spilled milk.

www.nationaldaycalendar.com

Wishing you a Wealth of Health and Happiness!

Submitted by Carol Henck



We hope you had a chuckle or two with the comic graphics! They are courtesy of Don Gillies, former member of Bethany now residing in Texas.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING:

Hunger doesn't stop for a pandemic or national emergency. With the uncertainty of our daily routine, it is important that we remember the premise for which the "Souper Bowl of Caring" was created: we need to be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat. Remember, 100% of what we collect goes to relieve hunger in our area. Using the idea, "What if each person who watched the big game gave just \$1 to hunger relief," what if each of us took it upon ourselves to check in on our neighbors to be sure they have their needs met right now, in light of this virus that affects us all? The food banks certainly can't do it alone.

If you are not yet attending church in person, you may drop off your donations to the church office during regular office hours from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Your Mission Committee



TROOP 121

Troop 121 ended January with a small, but successful Court of Honor where scouts who worked hard for the past few months received their awards. February started out with a continuing effort on the part of our troop to help refresh and beautify Bethany Church with Jonathan R's Eagle project. Members of Troop 121 and some of Jonathan's family got together Saturday, February 6th, to repaint Bethany's gym. This was the final requirement before his Board of Review to reach the rank of Eagle. The last time the gym was painted was by another Troop member before Jonathan even joined the troop in 2014. Jonathan would like to thank all of those who participated to help him reach his goal of Eagle and is proud to contribute to Bethany to help refresh the facility.

Finn B. has also completed his Eagle project and will be heading to his Eagle Board of Review on February 11th. Good luck Finn!! Finn's project was also at Bethany. He led a crew in the repair of the potholes in the parking lot along with some drain repair and gutter cleanout of the garage.

Caleb C. put his scouting skills to use by making and sleeping in a quinzee, or snow cave, during the snowstorm. This is an important skill learned in scouting for use in cold weather camping.

Troop 121 has a new member named Jack Boll. Jack is a member of Bethany Congregational. He says "I love it here in our troop because we have so much independence and I am very proud to say I am part of Troop 121."

Our adult leaders have been busy taking courses to benefit the troop as well. Steve M. has been certified as an NRA Shotgun and Rifle RSO {Range Safety Officer}. Anne R. has been certified as a Level 2 USA Archery instructor as well as an NRA Rifle instructor. The youth is our future.



Caleb's Quinzee

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

BOY SCOUT TROOP 121

TODAY'S YOUTH...TOMORROW'S LEADERS

THRIFTique

We are pleased to announce that the Thrift Shop at Bethany Congregational Church located at 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY, is open for business once again. Our hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Entry of people will be limited to few at a time, temperatures will be taken, hand sanitizer and masks must be used and social distancing will be put into practice to help keep both customers and staff healthy and safe.

We carry many items in our shop and there's something for everyone!

Looking forward to seeing friends
- old and new - real 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.

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THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

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East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518

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Thank you.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie