

THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 61 No. 3

East Rockaway, N.Y.

March 2021



Dates to Remember:

(When things get back to Normal.)

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

May 31... Memorial Day

June 14...Flag Day

June 20...Father's Day

(Summer begins)

July 4...Independence Day

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)

Normal

On March 16th, 2020, we did something that I don't think has ever been done in the history of this community: we closed the church building. Worship continued via Facebook until we could partially re-open in August, and the ministry of the church continued as well. It wasn't easy, we scrambled for ways to worship, to be in community, to do what we had to do so that we could fulfill our call to discipleship. The logistics of everything these days is much harder than it used to be. It requires thoughtfulness and intention, to make sure that our work gets done, our families are cared for, that the virus is kept at bay and the bills are paid. It hasn't been easy, and a whole lot of folks are falling through the cracks. Some of us have lost loved ones, others have lost their jobs, most of us have lost our tempers and just about all of us are yearning for the day when we can return to normal.

But what does that mean? In this solemn season of Lent in particular, we are invited to remember that "normal," is not all it's cracked up to be. Jesus challenged "normal" at every turn as did the Hebrew Prophets because "normal" was not working for most of God's people. Let's face it, nothing about "normal" is any more appealing today than it was then and in fact, what does "normal," mean anyway? Our planet seems to be in open rebellion, our weather out of control, our public discourse is uncivil and extreme. Cracks are appearing in our economic, public, and personal

lives. Schisms are opening in our society, our world and in our churches as well and those things are connected, each contributing to the others like a tiny crack in your car's windshield that somehow seems to have morphed into a giant spiderweb while it was parked in your driveway. The wounds of our history have not healed themselves, but are still festering, poisoning our spirits and our relationships and it's clear that they will not simply go away on their own.

We're partially open now, of course, and with the vaccines coming online, we can expect to see the pandemic's devastation begin to ease, even as we mourn for the more than half a million of our fellow citizens who have perished from the disease over the past year. No doubt there will be inquiries and reports as to why one of the wealthiest nations in the world did such a poor job of protecting our citizens. That's all to the good, but we may need to look a little deeper if we are to do more than go back to the chaos that seems to have become "normal" these days. We need to figure out what has brought us to this point where so many of our institutions have failed so many of our people. We need to look for the plank in our own eye, all of us, and not just the mote in some convenient scapegoat's eye. Perhaps most importantly, we need to find out why the church, the one institution that is bound not by law, but by the morality of the gospel, has failed to be the moral voice it was creat-

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ed to be; why so many who claim our faith have aligned themselves not with the people of Christ, those considered the least the last and the lost, but with the principalities and powers of this world, with prejudice, division and oppression, aligning themselves with power and privilege rather than leading God's people toward the fulfillment of the Great Commandments to love God, love one another and to love ourselves as God loves us all.

A fearless inventory is called for, precisely the thing for this solemn season. Not so that we can throw mud on our past or repudiate what is best about our faith, our country, our people, but so we can grow. So, we can be better, our reality more closely reflecting our best hopes and aspirations. So that we can begin to build bridges with our neighbors that will result in stronger communities and a more abundant life for all of us. That doesn't happen by magic, it requires discipline, the discipline of repentance that is the point of this Lenten journey of introspection and prayer. It is a call to the cross

because it asks us to open ears and minds long closed by well worn "truisms;" by myths and fears that keep us from seeing the image of God in others that we pray others will see in us. But it is also a call to the resurrection and to new life, to the coming of the kin-dom of God, even as it is a call to let go of privileges and prejudices in favor of the abundant life that Jesus came to realize for all of us. As we are transformed in this Lenten journey, we in turn become agents of transformation for our churches, our communities, our creation in Christ's blessed name. The road to Calvary is a hard and thorny one, but salvation awaits on the other side! Rejoice, my sisters and brothers, God is calling us to a new normal and it's going to be worth the journey- Easter is coming, the kingdom is at hand!

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

***Spring is here, Spring has come, The bird is on the wing.
My, my – how absurd. I thought the wing was on the bird!***

Yes! The vernal equinox arrived on March 20th at 5:37am. Did you set your clock for it? Me neither. Anyway, I have always gotten a kick out of the silly poem above and especially enjoyed torturing my friends and family with it, vernal equinox after vernal equinox. My poor son probably thought he was free from it now that he's married and on his own. Nuh uh – I know how to text. Let's celebrate Spring.

I found ten interesting ideas on this website, www.holidappy.com.

1. Play some great classical spring music. Of course, Vivaldi's *For Seasons* is a first choice. I'm in! Try it out even if it's just great background music while you do other springtime activities.
2. Balance an egg on end. I'm not sure when you will be reading this. Perhaps the equinox has passed. No worries. That's really an urban legend. You can balance an egg any day you are so motivated. Hint: let the egg warm to room temperature so the inside contents are not so vicious. It really is a fun spring myth so don't tell the kids. Keep it special.
3. Do some spring crafts. Maybe find some wildflowers to press. I'm not very crafty so you are on your own here.
4. Take an equinox walk and enjoy the signs of spring. Take a "four days after the equinox" walk. And another....and another.
5. Splash in a puddle. Seriously. I dare you to try this and not end up giggling like a little kid. Just dress for it.
6. The site recommended March Madness. I'm proud of myself for knowing it is about basketball (I think). Sorry sports fans. Not my thing. It truly would drive me to madness.
7. Make Spring Rolls. No, I don't mean order them from your favorite restaurant. Find a recipe and actually make them. Nice family activity and you get food.
8. Draw spring. Yes, this is a great one for the family but not just for kids. Have everyone draw what represents spring to them. See what they come up with.
9. Spring Cleaning. Forget the house. You've been in the house for endless months. Get outside and clean the birdbath, birdhouses, feeders. Guests will be arriving!
10. Plan and plant a garden. Maybe flowers are calling your name. Perhaps it's veggies – again you get food! Get creative. It doesn't matter if you have acres or just a flowerpot or two. You will still enjoy that special satisfaction and joy as your little plants grow and bloom.



It's spring. Let's shake off those winter doldrums and enjoy this season of hope and renewal. However you choose to celebrate, be sure to "spring" into action!

✿**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

FROM THE TRUSTEES:

The Trustees have been busy. We have authorized an upgrade to the bathroom in the Parsonage. There were many plumbing issues and it is the original bathroom to the house.

The Trustees also agreed to hire a gardener for the year to maintain the property and lawn around the Parsonage and the Church.

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

BOOK CLUB

Tuesdays, beginning March 2nd, 7:00 p.m.

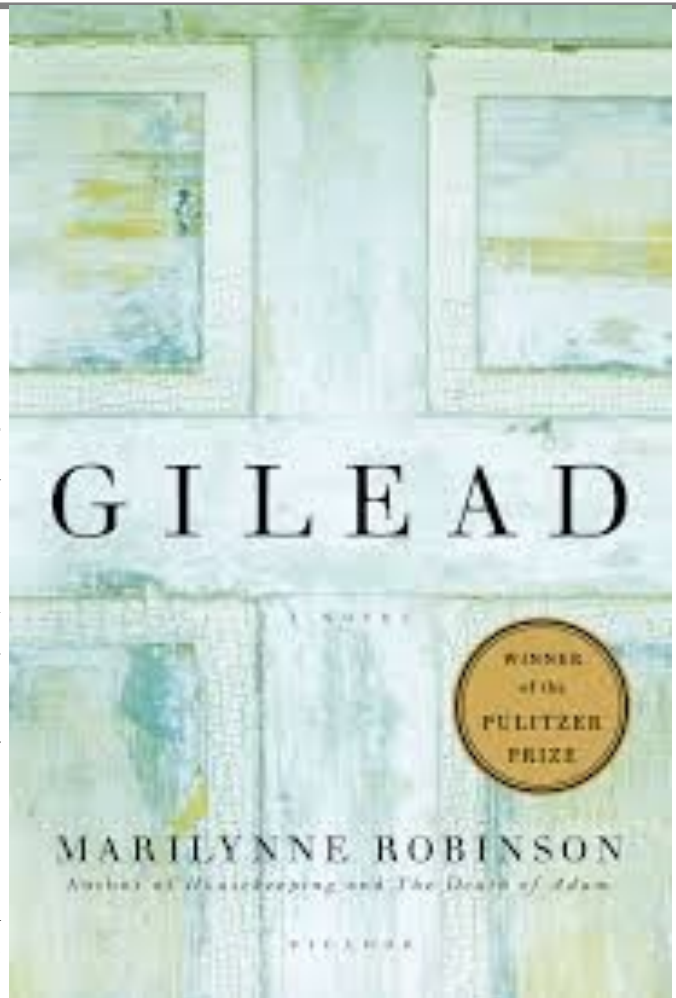
Weekly Book Club,

Gilead

by Marilynne Robinson, a novel.

Led by Pastor Mark - via ZOOM.

If interested, please contact the Office at 516-599-5768. As far as the book, it is not divided neatly into chapters and because it is a novel, I urge you to start reading and read as far as you would like, but at least try to get through ten pages or so if you can. If you think of a question, notice something interesting or unusual, have a reaction to someone, make a mental or physical note of it, and we can discuss it as a group. Remember this is a discussion, there are not right or wrong perceptions or opinions, but this novel is jam-packed with all kinds of imagery and story, and it will be our joyous task to try and unpack it for ourselves.



If there are no reports from any of our usual committees, it is because everything is still on COVID routine. We hope that by September (if not sooner) we will be able to start socializing with the Men's Club, Women's League, Coffee Hour, etc. In the meantime, stay safe. Take the vaccine when you are eligible and pray for those who are not as fortunate as many of us are. Keep the Faith. Hope to really see you soon!

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.

cjdagostino@gmail.com or text to 516-721-8885

Remember the Freeport Food Pantry. Drop off your donations of nonperishable food-stuff at the church. If you are able to help by delivering these items to the Freeport Pantry, please let the office know.



Continued prayers for Jane O'Hara, Marion Wright, and Ron Urso

Write for The Bell Tower

The Bethany **Bell Tower** is **our** newsletter. Let's make it really ours by submitting articles of interest. This can prove to be especially beneficial to writers and readers alike in this isolation. Following are some suggestions but feel free to improvise.

Do you know some Bethany history? A person of interest for a Spotlight article? Let's hear it. We know that some of our congregants are personally involved with a variety of charities. For example, "Locks for Love". If you are involved or know of someone, please drop us a note. Everyone would love to hear about it. Have you read a great book recently? Have you seen a great movie lately? Share a book or movie review. Perhaps a product review? How about having a recipe swap? A 30 minute meal for during the work week? Do you have a favorite poem or prayer? How about a nice clean joke? Do you have a favorite restaurant? Find a new one? Give us a review. Great vacation? Fun getaway place? Tell us.

You can email submissions to Charles D'Agostino at cjdagostino@gmail.com or drop them off to the Church office. You can even mail to him directly: 70 Sunrise Drive, Lynbrook, NY 11563. *Thank you!*

We would like to see reviews of local restaurants (local, of course). Perhaps reviews of TV shows, Movies, etc., either Netflix, Hulu, Theatre, etc. is more your thing. Perhaps you would like to endorse a local establishment because of their outstanding customer service, etc. We are not looking for any gripes about anyone or anything. We think our readers would appreciate doing business with a recommended enterprise. (See above for ways to send to us.)

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

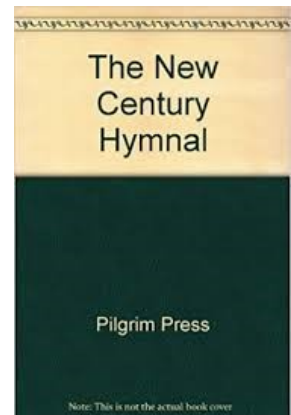
**Join us in this timely upgrade by “purchasing” a hymnal for Bethany.
Although this was inspired as a memorial to our dear friend Wally Merna,
each hymnal may be dedicated to whomever you choose.
Hymnals are \$20 each.**

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:

- more than 600 hymns
- many new translations to bring freshness to older texts
- over 100 psalms, set to music
- harmonizations carefully selected for congregational singing
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The pew edition is hardcover.



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 _____

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14 Ways to Reduce Indoor Air Pollution *Easy habits*

Excerpts from Consumer Reports Magazine

All of us are spending more time inside our homes these days, so making our home environment a bit healthier might be something of interest!

Everyday pollutants can be introduced into the air of your home a number of ways. Some are carried in on a breeze; some are carried in unwittingly by you.

“A lot of things come into our homes on our clothing, including pollen and cat allergens,” says Elliott Horner, PhD, lead scientist for UL Environment (Underwriters Laboratories). Other pollutants originate inside the home, such as when you pet your dog and release dander into the air or burn a piece of toast and send smoke streaming into the kitchen. It’s difficult not to generate indoor air pollution in your home, Horner says.

To get rid of impurities, you need to pursue several lines of attack. Follow the checklist below to help minimize indoor air pollution.

1. Open Windows

Adequate ventilation is key to promoting healthy indoor air, and opening windows (when it’s not too cold or the pollen count isn’t too high, of course) is an easy way to encourage a good exchange of indoor and outdoor air.

2. Ban Smoking

“Absolutely no cigarette smoke,” says Norman Edelman, MD, senior scientific adviser for the American Lung Association. Secondhand smoke impairs respiratory health and is responsible for about 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year in non-smokers, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

3. Give Your Pets a Bath

If you have pets, bathe them and wash their bedding

often to reduce allergy-causing dander. (And it is helpful to keep them out of bedrooms, as difficult as that may be!)

4. Use Exhaust Fans

Run fans in the kitchen to remove cooking fumes and in bathrooms to remove steam. Also be sure that your dryer vents to the outside to minimize lint. To reduce the level of pollen in the air on days it’s not possible to open the windows, run your window air conditioner on the fan setting with a clean filter.

5. Put Down a Doormat

Wiping shoes can reduce pollutants carried into the house. Better yet, establish a shoes-off policy.

6. Change Filters

If you have a forced-air heating and cooling system, change the air filters more often when there’s more smoke or pollen in the air.

7. Skip Fires

Flames dancing in a fireplace look delightful, but they release soot and smoke into the air.

8. Don’t Cover Up Odors

Avoid air fresheners, scented candles, incense, and other odor-masking fragrances, which can trigger asthma.

9. Vacuum Often

Do this especially if you have a pet. Brooms can just stir up more dust.

10. Use a Microfiber Dusting Cloth

It will capture more dust than a cotton rag.

11. Minimize Carpeting

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to bust the everyday dust that gathers in your home

submitted by Carol Henck

It can trap pollutants such as dust mites, pet dander, mold spores, and other dirt and dust. Choose hard-surface flooring instead.

12. Try to Stay Dry

To reduce mold, keep moisture down by using a dehumidifier and cleaning the filter regularly.

13. Store Chemicals Safely

Store solvents, glues, and pesticides away from living areas. And when possible, use homemade cleaning products, such as a mixture of white vinegar and water.

14. Try an Air Purifier

An air purifier alone won't remove all the impurities in your indoor air. But if you've gone to the effort to keep allergens and other pollutants out of your home, an air purifier could help to reduce them further. And running one in the bedroom of a child who suffers from asthma certainly won't hurt and may even be of some benefit.

SOME "GIGGLES" TO HELP YOU THRU THE DAY

courtesy of Don Gillies

Did I read that sign right?

TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW.

In a Laundromat:

AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

In a London department store: BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS...

In an office:

WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN.

In an office:

AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.

Outside a second-hand shop:

WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC. WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?

Notice in health food shop window: CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS...

Spotted in a safari park:

(I sure hope so.)

ELEPHANTS, PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR.

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

Dear Advertisers and potential advertisers:

(This was mailed out the last week of February)

Thank you for your past support.

Our deadline for publication in the next issue is always the 10th of the month.

The costs would be as follows:

1/8 page (Business Card Size).....\$25.00/month or \$200.00/year

1/4 page.....\$35.00/month or \$300.00/year

If you prefer, we accept Boosters every month for any amount that makes you comfortable. We will mention your name and place of business.

Sorry, but we no longer accept half page or full page ads.

All checks should be made out to **Bethany Church** with *The Bell Tower* in the memo box.

Ads may be camera ready or we will create one for you. A business card will work, too.

Since last year, Bethany Church has developed a website: www.bethanycong.com. Each of our newsletters is posted every month.

Bethany also has been live streaming their Sunday service but the older ones are all available through the website.

Any questions, please call my cell at 516-721-8885 or

E-mail cjdagostino@gmail.com.

Please send all ads and checks to me, directly, at my home:

Charles D'Agostino

70 Sunrise Drive

Lynbrook, NY 11563

Thanking you in advance for your support!

Charles D'Agostino

Editor

HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



Charlie D'Agostino
516-721-8885

Lic. Associate Broker, CBR, RSSC
cjdagostino@gmail.com
www.charlesdagostino.com



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Selling? Renting? Florida?**

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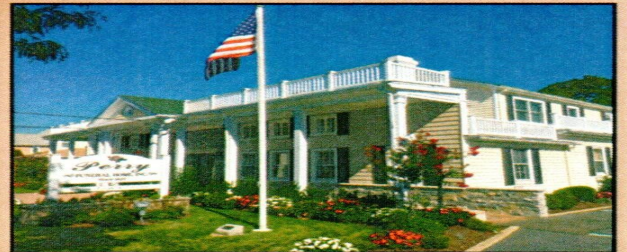
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We are pleased to announce that the Thrift Shop at Bethany Congregational Church located at 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY, is open for business once again. Our hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Entry of people will be limited 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.

THE BELL TOWER

Bethany Congregational Church

100 Main Street

East Rockaway, N.Y. 11518

(Non-profit Organization)

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In memory of her cousin
Pasha Ellis

If you enjoy *The Bell Tower*
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a small donation to
Bethany Church.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie