



THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 62 No. 7

East Rockaway, N.Y.

July/August 2022

HAPPY SUMMER



Dates to Remember:

September 5...Labor Day
September 11...Patriot Day
September 23...First Day of Autumn
September 25...Rosh Hashanah begins
October 4...Yom Kippur
October 10...Columbus Day
October 31...Halloween
November 6...end Daylight Savings
November 8...ELECTION DAY
November 11...Veterans' 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. 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.

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

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

What Now?

“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her, for she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord, double for all her sins.” Isaiah 40:1-2

It seems to me that after the last two years wrestling with this horrible pandemic and all the death and destruction that it caused, we should have some kind of formal celebration the way we do when a war ends. With 1 million deaths, it should be marked at least by a day of remembrance to remind us not only of the courage and determination of our medical people, often under fire, but of all of the people from delivery drivers to police officers to paramedics who kept our world running at such a great risk to themselves. Then again, maybe it's too soon. We're still struggling with the economic and social fallout of the pandemic, and still picking up the pieces of our lives after the past two years of lock-down and struggle. A whole lot of us are still trying and ease back into life, and trying to integrate what we have been through, what we have learned and how, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to proceed in this is strange new world in which we find ourselves. We are “rusty,” on our social skills, and cranky, like bears coming out of their caves at the end of particularly harsh winter and a sleep filled with stressful dreams and maybe even a little Jacob-style wrestling with our better angels. Now perhaps would be a good time to take stock and ask ourselves what we have learned from this pandemic, and if we can see anything redemptive coming out of it.

One thing I hope we have learned is that we can't just go back to “normal.” “Normal,” is what led us into this crisis which killed more of our people than all of the wars in the 20th century. “Normal,” (as in mistrust, misinformation, and political games), strangled our efforts at dealing effectively with this universal threat and tore us apart when we needed most to work together. “Normal,” had us ignore reality, not only in the

early days of the pandemic, but also with respect to the groaning of the planet and the suffering of too many of our fellow human beings. We may or may not have an obligation to address that suffering as citizens, but as disciples of Jesus, there is no question that we do. We are our neighbor's keeper, commanded through the prophet Micah to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God; our example the light that leads to the way, the truth, and the life. We serve the Lord and that means we stand up for the other, especially in the face of all the world doing the contrary, all the good reasons why not, all the prudence and wisdom that would turn us inward, and away from our calling as the people of Christ.

We don't all see things the same way of course, no more than any other folks, and so some of us become “red” and some of us “blue,” others of us go back and forth. But all of us share the same commitment to live in hope, faith, and love, devoted to the well-being of the place in which God in his wisdom has placed us, and perhaps most importantly, granting each other the benefit of the doubt as fellow images of God. We are Christ's voice and his hands in this world, so we do as he commanded: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger and make peace with the enemy. As he himself has told us, it is when the last become first, the hungry are full and the naked are clothed, that we are closest to the kin-dom of God.

It's a tall order, especially for people exhausted from the struggles of the past couple of years. And maybe before we gird ourselves for the next steps on our journey to the kin-dom, we can thank God for this time of summer, a time to get out and see people again, re-connect before

we do anything else. Our faith is all about presence, after all, and maybe, once we're seeing each other once again, negotiating the social world in real time instead of virtually, we'll remember that there really is something more important than our opinions, that being kind really is more important than being right and that "those" people, who scare us from our screens, are moms and dads, sons and daughters, friends just like us, people, with feelings like ours, who want the same things as us and for the same good reasons. Most importantly, our physical presence together reminds us that God put these people, for better or worse, into our lives for a reason, and since, (as my dad used to say when my autistic brother would stomp on my airplane model), "we can't kill him," we'll have to find a way to get along, even cherish each other instead. Maybe that's when we are finally able to catch a glimpse of the kin-dom of God, when we take a deep breathe, and recognize once and for all, that we're all going to have find a way to get along, so we might as well do it with grace.

So, let's take advantage of this first "open" summer and spend some time together here at Bethany. Maybe we can take a good look at each other, and remember who we are, whose we are, and what that means. We can get out on the beach, or up into the mountains, and come home to church where we've been waiting to see you

like a puppy dog waiting at the window. Let the Spirit remind you that life isn't all rat races, wars, politics, and lock downs, it's also about the smile of an old friend, a conversation about the grandkids, or where you're going to college in the Fall. It's about thanking God for this beautiful, difficult, and glorious gift of life that we share and all the characters we've been gifted to share it with.

The Lord has placed us in this "brave new world" for a reason. We are the ones who hold open the door to let the Spirit in, when everyone else is hunkered down in their bunkers. We're the ones who help each other up after the storm, shake the dust off our sandals and say, "Whew, that was something! What now, Jesus?," because we know that the light comes with the dawn and that in Christ ever day the world is born again. So, let's pray together, let's share the sacraments and sing sacred songs, and let's make sure that this little light of ours is shining! Come, pray with us, play with us and be in the presence of God. You are missed!

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 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

Summer Greetings!

God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. *Genesis 1:16*

I have a great idea, (at least I think so), for a summer activity. Let's have an astronomy party! Since sun gazing is a very, very bad idea, we'll focus on moon and star gazing. Sitting quietly outside in the dark is a very peaceful feeling. Fix your eyes on the stars and it becomes awe inspiring. Even if you don't get to experience the solitude and serenity, do not despair. This is an absolutely wonderful family experience and an important one as well. Too often, we and the children experience the world primarily through photos or images on a screen. What a disconnect. Let's go live!

At the most basic level, just look up into the night sky and see how many celestial objects you can detect with your unaided eyes. The longer you look, the more you will see. (Maybe stars are shy?) Give yourself and your family extra points if they can identify what they are seeing. Let's start with the moon. We can all recognize that one! Do you have a pair of binoculars? If so, bring them out. The best viewing time, believe it or not, is not the full moon. Too bright! The details get lost. Try for the time between the quarter moon and crescent moon for the best detail. You and the kids will be amazed at what you see. It's just like the images seen in the school/library books or on our computers, but it is REAL – LIVE – and in our own backyard. By the way, those same binoculars will allow you to make out Saturn's rings. How cool is that?

The North Star and the Big Dipper are some of the easiest to locate. The North Star's, (Polaris), position holds steady throughout the night, and you can find it using the Big Dipper: just look along the imaginary line between the constellation's outermost stars—the two farthest from the "handle."



https://www.tpl.org/blog/7-tips-city-stargazing-chicago-park-astronomer?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIicSX1_Xu-AIVkfljBx0yOA4DEAAyAAEgKQa_D_BwE

If you want to pursue this further, and I hope you do, dust off your mythology books and read a bit about Orion. Then locate that constellation in the sky. See if you can spot the nebula just south of his belt. For the techies, there are apps like Stellarium and Google Sky which will let your Smartphone or iPad tell you what you are looking at. Pretty neat!

<https://nineplanets.org/kids/orion-constellation>



When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, *Psalms 8:3*

FROM THE EDITOR:

We just have a few reminders:

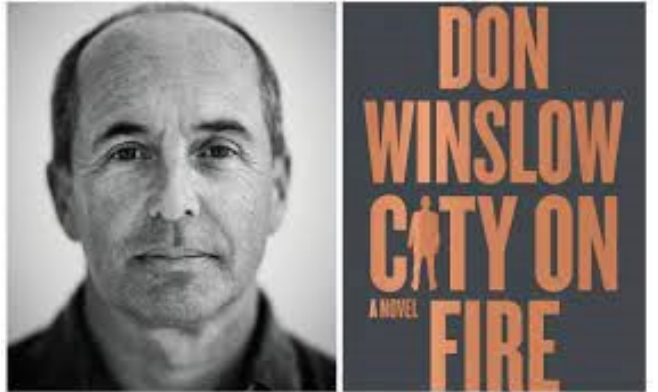
- Bethany still needs help with money for a new furnace. Please remit whatever you can.
- The Bell Tower is always in need of boosters and advertisers and submissions.
- Bethany is open for service with coffee hour! (Please consider volunteering to help out or host.)
- The Thrift Shop is always in need of donations. (There is a shed next to the garage where items may be left at any time.) It is open on Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
- Our next issue will be the September edition. The final deadline for submission will be: September 10, 2022. Thank you.

BOOK REVIEW:

Submitted by Lou Gaspari

If you enjoyed "The Godfather" and "The Sopranos" you will love this incendiary novel of warring ethnic gangs in the smallest of our Un-United States: Rhode Island. The book is the first of a planned trilogy which deals with Irish and Italian gangs going to war after many years of peaceful cooperation. These criminal empires controlled all of Rhode Island until a beautiful woman comes between the the Irish and Italians starting a feud that destroys the peaceful alliance.

The novel is a great read filled with action, love, philosophy and unbelievable characters. My final feeling is that this book will become a great movie.



ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS:

- Space is now available for advertising. (No full or half pages)...Reasonably priced.
- 1/8 page....\$200.00/year; \$25.00/month
- 1/4 page ...\$300.00/year; \$45.00/month
- 200+ circulation. Published monthly. (Except only one issue for July/August)
- Not just local...we mail all over.
- Send us camera-ready artwork or we will create your ad for you.
- Business expense deduction (Perhaps a charitable deduction?)

Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

cjdagostino@gmail.com or Call or text: 516-721-8885 for all of the details. Thank you.

TROOP 121

Troop 121 held its annual Court of Honor and season end BBQ on June 20th in the parking lot of Bethany. Everyone brought a side dish or dessert while the troop grilled burgers and hot dogs! There was a photo contest from our last camping weekend at the Allamuchy Scout Reservation. Parents and Scouts voted for three winners in the categories of "Best People Shot", "Best Nature Shot" and "Best of Show. Every Scout also received their advancement and/or merit badges that were earned.



At the end of the month the Troop is going to summer camp from July 31st through August 6th. We return to our favorite campsite "Cochise" at the Onteora Scout Reservation in Livingston Manor, NY. The boys will have a week of merit badge classes to help them in their advancement. They also experience a great sense of camaraderie with the troop, and from the Scouts of other troops. It is truly unforgettable. The summer camp experience leaves a lifelong impression the boys will always cherish. Mr. Hughie Boyle will be leading the boys again this year, and help ensure the success and personal growth of everyone attending. We appreciate Mr. Boyle's commitment to the troop!

The Troop is very grateful for all the support that Bethany provides! We wish everyone an exceptional summer full of great memories and fellowship!



Yours In Scouting, Troop 121

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

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

Do you know where our form of Protestantism , "Congregationalist", comes from?

The first Congregationalists were English Puritans who believed that the Church of England, the Anglican Church, was too much like the Roman Catholic Church. They thought that the church should be simple and plain and follow the Bible more closely. Take a minute and look around at the layout of our church, is it very plain and simple. Simple pews, simple stained-glass windows. Also, the cross in front of the church, Jesus doesn't hang on our cross. Our cross represents the promise of eternal life thru Jesus!

Back to the history, so some broke away and formed "nonconformist" churches, which angered the English government. These nonconformist puritans fled England first for Holland and then America. They landed in 1620 at Plymouth Rock and formed the Plymouth Colony, our ancestors were known as Pilgrims and were among the first European American immigrants. They became concerned with education, social justice, and ecumenism (which is the principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian Churches). They founded educational institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth, which was originally a school for Native Americans. (cont'd)

So, what are some of our most important beliefs as Protestants? The great reformer John Calvin stressed that our faith is not something that we do only on Sunday, it should guide our lives and our decisions every day. Today's Gospel reading from Luke is called the "the parable of the good Samaritan" and it states that "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself."²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." If you really listen to the parable, the Samaritan went above and beyond what was expected of him to take care of the man. How many people walked past him without doing anything to help this injured man? The gospel says "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Did you know that Congregationalists were leaders in the abolitionist movement in England and America because we believe that all people are equal in God's eyes and that no person should be the property of another? The word "Congregationalist" refers to the church's belief that the local church is the gathering body of Christ, each one independent of one another but bound to the others by covenant rather than connection.

The Congregational Church was the first to ordain women in the ministry in 1836, because we believe that God calls both men and women into HIS service. Our parent organization, the United Church of Christ is a leader in the struggle for human rights and human dignity because we believe that Christ is found among the hungry and that is where we should be found as well.

Listen to this reading from Matthew 25...this is called **The Judgment of the Nations**: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

So, with everything going on in the world right now, how can we, Bethany Church, love our neighbor in this time of social distancing? You know the price of food right now is at an all time high with many of our neighbors facing "Food Uncertainty". You can bring a donation of nonperishable food right here to church and it will go to the Long Island Council of Churches Emergency Food Pantry in Freeport. Remember our own Wally Mernan ran the Pantry for years and you can help keep his legacy alive by donating. You can also go online to donate at liccdonate.org.

Another important belief we have as Congregational Christians is what is known as "The Priesthood of All Believers". We are called upon to spread the good news of God's love for all people and to prove that in everything we say and do. We believe in human liberty, that there is no hierarchy telling us how to worship or how to live our faith. We ourselves are responsible for living God's word and spreading his love in our own lives. Our congregation works together to help each other to become better Christians and better people. We do this to make the world a better place, for all people.

Probably our most important belief is called "Sola Gratia" *Sola gratia* is a Latin phrase that means "grace alone." *Sola gratia* means that salvation from sin and death is provided by God's unmerited favor alone, and we can do nothing to earn it. The concept is expressed in Ephesians 2 which reads, "For *by grace* you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." WE believe that you cannot earn forgiveness of sins or "buy" your way into heaven by your good works. This is because no one is ever fully free from sin. Because of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, we are able to be saved by God's grace, and we do what is right because we have faith. We trust in God's love and do our best to live that love in our daily lives.

Submitted by David Donovan

July is "NATIONAL CELL PHONE COURTESY MONTH"

Our cell phones have become an integral part of our lives. We schedule events, organize shopping lists, order birthday presents, and communicate all from this one, small device. But as helpful as the smartphone can be for modern consumers, it also presents clear drawbacks in some areas —and courtesy is an obvious top contender.

Such is the inspiration for *National Cell Phone Courtesy Month*, which is observed each July in an effort to keep smartphone users mindful of their manners when it comes to using their handy handheld devices. This year consumers looking to be more courteous with their smartphone use should keep these *Etiquette Tips* in mind:

Silence is golden: Silence the phone whenever you're spending time with anyone, including work, a meal, meeting or with family. If you are attending a performance of any kind, turn the phone off. Better still, simply put the phone away in situations where providing full attention would be ideal. Placing a smartphone in Vibrate Mode or Do Not Disturb Mode will prevent it from delivering an audible ring when a call is received.

Stay in the moment: Considerate smartphone users should avoid texting or otherwise looking at their device screens when having a face-to-face conversation. The same rule applies when attending a meeting or presentation, enjoying family time or engaging in other activities where friends, relatives or other colleagues can reasonably expect the device owner to be attentive.

Voices carry: Many smartphone users have a tendency to speak more loudly when taking or making their phone calls. Monitor the volume of your voice. Even when you step away, voices carry.

Use speakerphone sparingly: Most phone calls are private conversations, and as such, others within ear-shot typically do not care to hear them. To be considerate of others, speakerphone users should only employ these devices for phone calls in private places or when others who are close by are actually involved with or interested in the conversation.

Pause before sending emails, texts, or social media posts. Consider the content, especially if it is posted in haste. Ask yourself the following questions before sending:

- Will I regret sending this later?
- Am I angry?
- Will this hurt someone?
- Is this appropriate?

Will this affect my job or relationship?

Eyes on the road: Last but certainly not least, drivers should never allow their smartphones to distract them while they are actively on the road and behind the wheel (even if done using hands-free technology.) Any message can wait until you arrive at your destination. If it truly is urgent, pull over in a safe stopping area to receive the message or call. A great tool to employ that is available on most smartphones is the Do Not Disturb feature on iPhones and the Driving Mode feature on Android phones.

Sources: www.ftc.net and <https://nationaldaycalendar.com>



Wishing you a Wealth of Health
Carol Henck

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



Hobbies can keep your mind focused and on track, especially as we come closer to retirement. For me, I'm not quite as active physically at work and that is all I know. So I had to start doing something to keep myself engaged and enthused. If anybody is interested in learning how to make these types of windows or to cut glass, I would be more than happy to sit down and give a tutorial... Rich Eaves



Did you know that Bethany has a Book Group?

Well, we do and Pastor Mark is an amazing discussion leader. We have read some very interesting titles and are just about to start a new one.

The last book that was discussed was *Called to Forgive: The Charleston Church Shooting, a Victim's Husband, and the Path to Healing and Peace* by Anthony B. Thompson.

We meet via Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. Please call the Bethany office (516-599-5768) to get the Zoom information if you would like to join us or just sit in to try it out.

Perhaps you may have a suggestion for the next book.

The more who participate, the greater the reward. Hope to see you soon.



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- Reasonably priced.
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- 1/4 page ...\$300.00/year; \$45.00/month
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- Published monthly. (Except only one issue for July/August)
- Not just local...we mail all over.
- Send us camera-ready artwork or we will create your ad for you.
- Business expense deduction (Perhaps a charitable deduction?)

Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

cjdagostino@gmail.com or

Call or text: 516-721-8885 for all of the details.

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.**



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!*

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!



FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

You can drop food off at the church from 9 a.m. to Noon on Tuesdays and Fridays during July and August. If you would like to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to "The Long Island Council of Churches" with "food pantry" in the memo.

Any questions, please call the office and leave a message at 516-599-5768.

Now that school has started in person, we will also be collecting school supplies.

A big "Thank you" to all who have been faithfully donating food each week.

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Bethany Congregational Church

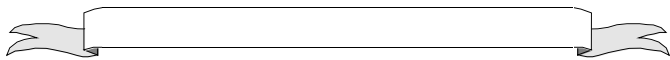
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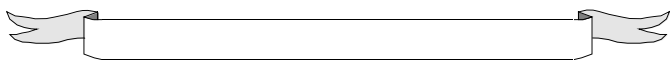
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Bell Tower Boosters

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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)