

THE BELL TOWER



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

Vol. 66 No.2

East Rockaway, NY 11518

March-April 2026

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
DAY



HURRICON! SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026

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Dates to Remember:

- March 17...St. Patrick's Day
- March 19...St. Joseph's Day
- March 29...Palm Sunday
- April 1...April Fool's Day
- April 3...Good Friday
- April 5...EASTER
- April 8...First Monthly Call to Pray for Peace
- April 26...Pastor's Installation
- May 3...Song and Story Café
- May 9...Hurricon
- May 10... Mother's Day
- May 24...Pentecost Sunday

HELP WANTED: Bethany Church Secretary Position

We are once again seeking a secretary for the Bethany Church of-
fice. This position could be ideal for retirees with good computer skills or
people seeking a part time job during school hours. Please share it out to any-
one or group that you think appropriate. Here are the basic facts. We have a
longer full job description available to any interested party.

Hours: 16 hours per week, **Hourly Pay:** \$20.00

Schedule: Regular office hours are required, preferably **Tuesday through Friday** on-site. Some flexibility may be available.

Start Date: Position available immediately

To Apply: Please email your resume and cover letter to:

revps@bethanycong.com & moderator@bethanycong.com

An Open Door Church

“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!

He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” — John 4:29

Dear Congregation,

This month marks one year since I began serving among you, and I want to begin with a simple word: **thank you**. It has been a year filled with warmth, laughter, prayer, and meaningful moments together. From Sunday worship to fellowship gatherings, from quiet conversations to shared service, I have seen a community that truly cares for one another. It has been a joy and a blessing to walk alongside you in ministry.

In the **Gospel of John 4:29**, we hear the Samaritan woman running back to her village after encountering Jesus at the well. She doesn't give a long sermon or a detailed theological explanation. Instead, she simply says, **“Come and see.”** Her invitation was honest and humble, yet because of it many people came to meet Jesus for themselves. Invitations do not have to be dramatic—they can be simple, genuine, and thankfully require no juggling or magic tricks.

That is one of the most beautiful pictures of the church. We are not called to have all the answers or to be perfect people. We simply say to others, **“Come and see.”** Come and see a community that prays together, sings together, serves together, and sometimes laughs together when things don't go exactly as planned—like when the microphone decides to take a Sunday off or when we are quietly searching for the altar light remote during the service. Thankfully, grace covers those moments too!

Over the past year, I have seen many signs that our church is becoming **an open-door church**. I have seen members warmly greeting visitors, volunteers faithfully serving, and friends supporting one another in times of joy and challenge. These moments remind me that God is at work among us.

To those who are active and engaged in the life of the church, **thank you**. Your faithfulness, generosity, and willingness to serve help make this communi-

ty a place where people feel welcomed and valued. Every smile at the door, every prayer offered, and every act of kindness helps someone feel that they belong here.

At the same time, some members may not have been able to participate regularly this past year. Life becomes busy, schedules change, and sometimes we drift away without realizing it. If that is your story, please know this: **the door is always open**. There is always a place for you here.

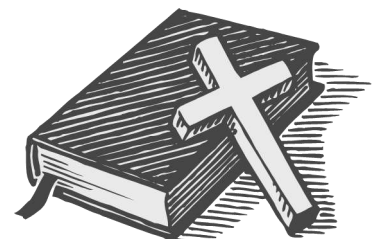
The church is not simply a building or a weekly gathering. It is a family of people learning to follow Jesus together—and families always make room for one another.

As we step into another year of ministry, I invite each of us to carry the spirit of that simple invitation: **“Come and see.”** Invite a friend. Welcome a visitor. Reach out to someone you have not seen in a while. Sometimes the smallest invitation can open the door for someone to encounter and experience God's love in a new way. This is the heart of Bethany—a house of worship where we share our gifts and grow in faith together. Simply put: **come and see!**

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your pastor and for sharing this journey of faith together. **Ida and I are deeply grateful** for the relationships we have formed here and for the opportunity to reflect Christ's love in our ministry together. We look forward with hope to all that God will continue to do among us in the year ahead.

With gratitude and hope,

The Rev. Prabhu Sigamani



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

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

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Once again, as we approach Easter and the high holydays, I would like to thank you all for having your most remarkable Church.

Here are some of the things that we've been doing:

We now have cameras on every entrance and exit, including the dumpster and the parsonage. One of the problems is people like to use our dumpster for their garbage and it overflows. The town of East Rockaway picks it up for us and they get a little annoyed. Now that we're watching, that seems to have dramatically gone down.

We also have smoke alarms and CO2 detectors in every available space in the church. Now that makes me extremely comfortable. L&M Construction (Mike Magliaro) has done a wonderful job in helping us fix certain problems around the church. He also has put in a changing table in the ladies room, hand dryers and automatic on and off lights. Here are some pictures.

Thank you. We all miss Barbara Goodspeed in the trustees. She was always a constant source of information and good ideas.

Richard Eaves,
Chair,
Board of Trustees



Bethany Bell Tower ...is a bi-monthly publication of **BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**
Pastor: Reverend Prabhu Sigamani

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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

Spring Greetings!

Today, March 9th, was a fantastic day! Not that the world is without problems. Not that I am without problems. Today was a fantastic day because after bone chilling cold weather and way too much snow, it was unseasonably warm and sunny. I think it may have hit 70°.

Awesome. I got myself outside and pattered about the yard, cleaning up some of the winter debris. To my delight, I discovered bulbs popping up, green iris blades rising and two fall chrysanthemums that refused to die. I didn't need to turn on my music as the birds were treating me to a joyful symphony. My Merlin phone App identified all sorts of bird species in less than three minutes, from sparrows, to finches, to woodpeckers. If you like birds at all, I highly recommend Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab. It lets you record the bird sounds around you and tells you what they are and what those birds look like.



So, what is the point of all this? It's about Hope. And hand in hand with Hope is Faith. In the midst of a troubled world, the seasons still change. Winter does not last forever. The birds still sing their songs regardless of the price of groceries. The flowers will bloom no matter how high the gas prices become. The sun still rises and the stars still twinkle. We, as a people, need to nurture our faith and allow hope to enter our hearts. Not to become happy idiots – no, no, no! When we embrace our faith and allow ourselves to hope, we become like the spring bulb with the power to burst out of the dark into the light of a new day. And every day is a new day.

Just as the flower brings joy, we can bring our light into the world and work in ways both small and mighty to make it a better place for all. I have faith and hope that you will do just that. I wish all a blessed Easter – the ultimate celebration of Faith and Hope!

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

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL:



Bethany Sunday school takes place at 9:45 am with Sunday service directly following @10:30am. If you know anyone who would like to join our classes please reach out to Marie Farrell - 516-528-4984 or Tina Lewald at 917-270-6509.

On April 26th, Pastor Prabhu will be formally installed as our Pastor. This is an important and wonderful event. Invites will be going out but to avoid the possibility of missing anyone, we are sending this version out now. Feel free to RSVP to Jessie Kilgus at the number below.

Bethany Congregational Church, 100 Main St, East Rockaway, NY 11518

joyously invites you to join us for the Installation of

The Reverend Prabhu Sigamani as our Pastor and Teacher

Sunday, April 26, 2026

at three o'clock in the afternoon.m(3:00 P.M.)

***Save
The
Date!***

A reception will follow in our Fellowship Hall

Please RSVP (text or call) to Jessie at 516-860-4998

VENTURE CREW 121



Congratulations to our 12 charter adults on being awarded the *William D Bryce New Unit Award*, many were helping as they were being awarded. Thank you to the Bethany congregation for welcoming us to your service & joining us for our 2nd annual Pancake breakfast.

The Crew meets every Thursday evening at 7:30 P.M. Come on down for more information on what they do and how 17-20 year olds may join.

VENTURE CREW 518

This is another Crew that meets on Tuesdays.

Come on down for more information on what they do and how 17-20 year olds may join.

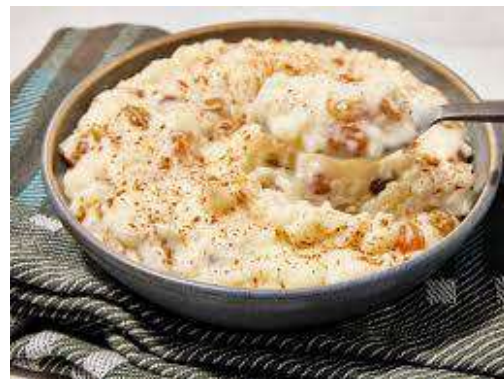


JANE O'HARA'S RICE PUDDING (submitted by Linda Fardella)

1/2 Gallon Milk	1 cup heavy cream
1/4 lb. butter (1 Stick)	1 tsp vanilla
3/4 cup sugar	1 1/2 ounces Ameretta
Bring above mixture to a slow boil.	Add to mixture
Add 1 cup rice—lower flame	Continue to cook 10-15 minutes
Simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour	Pour in a bowl
Stir often	Sprinkle with cinnamon
Beat 1 egg	

Chill

Serve with whipped cream...Enjoy



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FROM THE EDITOR:



In sympathy for the Sigamani family, We share the sad news of the passing of Navaratnam Devadoss. Please keep Pastor, Ida and their family in your prayers.



All the best to Janet Moser and Maryanne Walling for complete and healthy recoveries.



....to Mr. and Mrs. Ben Lukens on the birth of Ella Clare born February 27th.

Rev. Mark and Kate Lukens are the very proud grandparents.



New York Conference United Church of Christ

Monthly Prayer Calls for Peace and Unity Are Set To Begin April 8th

"Pray without ceasing" (1Thessalonians 5:17). On some days that may seem harder to do than on others. When every day feels heavier than the last, it is more important than ever for us to turn to the one Source of love and life that is constant and comforting, the Source of our strength, the One who gives us hope.

Our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, and our Moderator, Rev. Judy Van Kennen, are inviting everyone in the New York Conference to come together, monthly, for a Prayer Call for Peace and Unity beginning **Wednesday, April 8th, at 8:00 am** (EDT) and continuing every 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 8:00 am, thereafter.

So many of our siblings, both inside our borders and out, need our prayers. Together, we will lift our voices as one. Together, we will pray for an end to the suffering that so many worldwide are experiencing. Together, we will pray without ceasing.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them..." Matthew 18:20

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

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

What Does Love Mean?

How 4-8 Year-Old Kids Describe Love

By Ladan Lashkari (Nov 15, 2024)

Website: dailygood.org "Stories that nurture the soul"

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds:

"What does love mean?" The answers were deeper than they ever imagined:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca - age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK." Danny - age 7

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby - age 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate." Nikka 6

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken." Elaine - age 5

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary—age 4

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross." Mark—age 6

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget." Jessica - age 8

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH ~~ Carol Henck

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JOIN US FOR A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

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Sunday

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If you walked by the Bethany Parish Hall on Sunday night, March 1st, you would have heard much laughter. Comedians Joe Pontillo, Devin Bramle, Rosanne Sorrentino, Chris Ferretti, and Les Degen kept the audience in stitches while Bethany's own Maureen Meltzer hosted the show! Bravo!



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Our deadline for publication in the next issue is always the 10th of the following months:

January; March; May; July; September and November. The costs would be as follows:

- 1/8 page....\$40.00/issue or \$200.00/all six
- 1/4 page ...\$75.00/issue or \$375.00/all six

Contact our editor: cjdagostino@gmail.com or Call or text: 516-721-8885 for all of the details.

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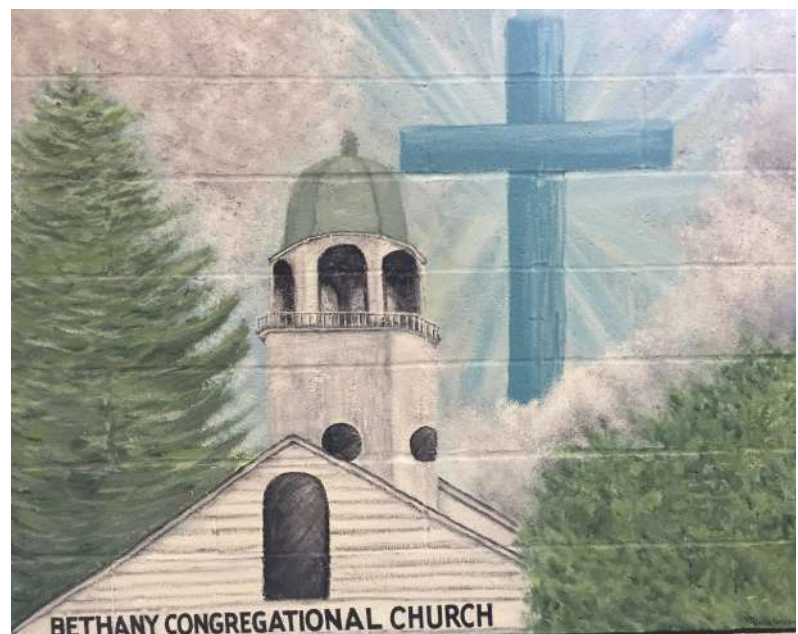
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It helps to offset costs.
Thank you.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)