



THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD

JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 65 No. 1

East Rockaway, NY 11518

January-February 2025



MEETING NOTICE!

The Pulpit Search Committee has a candidate for us to hear, meet, and consider. Yes - we may have our new minister. Our prospective minister will preach to our congregation on January 26th. Following service will be a meet and greet coffee hour to allow greater familiarity and interaction.

At 12:30 p.m., we will conduct a special corporate meeting to allow the congregation to discuss the candidate and conduct a vote to determine if this person is to be our new pastor. Everyone is invited but only members have a vote.

This is exciting news but, to move forward in our congregational way, we need you to be there and share your thoughts. Please mark your calendar with this date - January 26, 2025 - and make every effort to attend service and meet the candidate. If you are unable to physically attend church that day, you can watch the service on our live stream (<https://www.bethanycongreg.com>) and join the corporate meeting via Zoom. If you are a Bethany member, your vote will count! Your opinion and vote matters in setting a new course for Bethany.

Topic: Bethany Congregational's Zoom Meeting

Time: Jan 26, 2025 12:30 PM Eastern Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81532812462?pwd=fz2Q9LgyUUTZDSKhLZnCq4XkgPkyxc.1>

Meeting ID: 815 3281 2462

Passcode: 227297

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Thank you, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

Dates to Remember:

January 20...MLK, Jr. Day

January 26...Corporate Meeting

February 14...Valentine's Day

February 17...President's Day

March 5...Ash Wednesday

March 9...Begin Daylight Savings

March 17...St. Patrick's Day

April 12...Begin Passover

April 13...Palm Sunday

April 20...Easter Sunday

May 11...Mother's Day

May 26...Memorial Day

June 14...Hurricane Returns



Lay Readers and Ushers are needed for Sunday Worship. Please sign up on the sheet in the hallway or speak with someone in the office (516-599-5768). Lay Readers will be required to assist with the service and read two (2) Bible passages for that Sunday. Please speak to Carol Henck for further directions.

OFFICE HOURS: Will be variable until further notice. Marianne Walling retired and volunteers are filling when. Call 516-599-5768 before going there.

Let's listen to This Morning's Gospel reading from Matthew again:

[40](#) "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

[41](#) Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous;

[42](#) and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

In this reading *He that receiveth you, receiveth me* is said to comfort the disciples, Christ is suggesting, that there would be some that would embrace the Gospel preached by them, and receive them kindly into their houses, and entertain them in a very hospitable manner: and, for the encouragement of such persons, who would risk their own goods and lives by so doing, he lets them know, that receiving of his disciples, was a receiving of himself; and what they did to them, would be taken as kindly, as if done to him, Christ, personally; and, in like manner, would it be understood and accepted by his Father.

So, my brothers and sisters, WE must be that person, WE have to welcome anyone who enters these doors and make them feel at right at home here at Bethany. Remember whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me, the Father!

Sounds heavy right? And sometimes not so easy!

This is Bethany, AFTER MARK: Bethany A.M., today's sermon's title.

No doubt, Pastor Mark Lukens has had a tremendous impact on our lives here at Bethany Church and in East Rockaway for the past 25 years and that is nothing to sneeze at!

He kept on preaching to us even through the pandemic, and he even stuck around a little longer than he planned to perform the marriage ceremony of Jack and Maria Donovan!

And now we are charged with continuing without him and finding a new pastor to lead us. I can tell you that the Pastoral Search Committee is working very hard on this and I know that for many of you, this change will be very hard, I am asking you for patience in our search. You all

were involved with the pastoral survey and that was a good start, a good indicator on what we are all looking for in a new pastor here at Bethany! Please bear with us.

Please have patience. Please believe the God will provide. And keep praying!

I have seen change here at Bethany in the past! Bethany is part of my history here in East Rockaway and as I'm sure you are aware, I am the East Rockaway/Lynbrook Herald Person Of The Year, I have the issue right here to prove it!

I'm sure you know the story of how my family ended up at Bethany? The Reverend Maculduary was walking down Fifth Avenue in his straw hat one summer night, stopped at 17 Fifth Avenue and invited us to attend the Bethany Church Sunday School. For my mom and dad, getting a break from three boys for an hour on Sunday was too good a deal to pass up! And we stayed!

Some Memories of Bethany Church for me?

- Who remembers Wally Merna's sermon about his dad who was a Boar's Head delivery driver and Wally wanted to know why he had to go out on that snowy day? He told Wally he HAD to go out and get the provisions to the stores so that people could eat.
- White Gift Sunday with my dear friend Mildred Roemer dressed in authentic Native American garb while we collected warm clothing for our brothers and sisters on the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. Does anyone remember Mrs. Roemer's Native American name?
- Extra credit if you remember Mildred's seeing eye dog's name. Anyone? BRANDY!
- How about Men's Club Sundays? Bob Dever would deliver the sermon and the choir would be made up of men like Art Harding, James Fried, Bill Lewald, and Andy Durso. Time to bring that back!
- I remember Andy Durso! I am friends with his daughters on Facebook and have told them that when I am up here, I think of him and feel his presence. He always made this look so easy!
- And there was Reverend George E. Hardy. What a special man he was for Bethany Church for so many years. His wife Marion ran the Sunday School. I remember Reverend Hardy at Bethany's 100-year celebration down the street at the Colonial Room as it was called then back in 1985, where I dressed up as Darth Vader

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and used the force to choke Bob Dever!

- I remember seeing a photo of Rev Hardy burning the mortgage for the Parsonage. He also co-officiated my brother Dennis and sister-in-law Joan's wedding at Saint Raymond's Church!
- And Reverend George E. Hardy was the first pastor at Bethany to coin the phrase, "God Loves You, He Really, Really Does"! And when he said it, he really, really meant it!

Here we are again, in search of a new pastor. And it is up to us! Remember one of our basic beliefs as Protestants is that every believer is a priest and obtains reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ, alone. The emphasis is on us!

I met a woman in the Bethany parking lot who asked about our church and also asked if we did an Ash Wednesday service. Pastor Lukens initiated this and many of you took part. I told her yes we do that service and then she asked about confession! We do not do confession here at Bethany Church, why? Because another of our basic beliefs is *Solus Christus*: Christ alone, Only Christ is a mediator between God and man, that puts the emphasis on us in our relationship with God. We don't go through a priest, it is up to us. It is our responsibility! We speak directly through the father!

Did you know that there are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church, do you know what they are? Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Confession, Last Rites, Marriage, Ordination.

What are the sacraments of our Protestant faith? The only two that Jesus performed were baptism and Communion. That's a great answer for Jeopardy! If

you want I'll repeat them so you can write them down, I'm running a little short here!

So, I had to tell this lady, that no, we do not do confession here at Bethany, but I did invite her in to see what we are all about, and that is what I am leaving you with today and charging you with. As Pastor Mark told me years ago, a person will be more likely to come and attend church for the first time, if they are invited by a friend or a parishioner, not by the pastor.

As we look for a new spiritual leader, let's all make it our own search to find those who really need us, invite them in, make them feel welcome at Bethany. This is a safe place for all!

As you leave I want you to remember two things
First

"Live long and prosper"

And also in remembering Pastors George Hardy and Mark Lukens: Please remember that

***God Loves you and you and YOU!
He really, really, REALLY does!***

Go in peace!

Yours in Christ,

David Donovan



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BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

100 Main Street, East Rockaway, New York 11518 (516) 599-5768
bethanyoffice@optimum.net, www.bethanycong.org

Mildred and Art Roemer, Editors Emeritus and Guiding Lights
Charles D'Agostino, Editor, Jennifer Valis, Assistant Editor
Reach us directly at: 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!

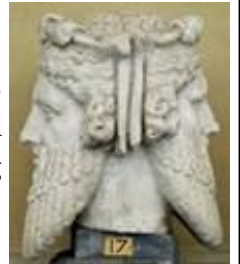


Greetings from your Bethany Moderator

In peace, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

Welcome to January of 2025 – a bit cold and a bit dark. After all, we did experience the winter solstice on December 21st, the shortest day of the year. Here is something interesting about the word solstice. It's based on the Latin words *sol* and *sistere* meaning sun and stand still. It does seem like the sun pauses in its trajectory on that day. Perhaps it's a sign that we too should stop our busy-ness and pause for a reset. Nonetheless, the days are getting longer. On December 21, 2024, we had 9 hours and 15 minutes of day. On January 21, 2025, we will experience an additional 31 minutes. Don't miss it! Use it well.

January – the first month of a new year filled with new hope and resolutions. Did you ever wonder where January got its name? Probably not, but I'm going to tell you anyway. It's named after the two-faced Roman god Janus who simultaneously looks back at the past while also facing the future. The Roman god of crossing thresholds and new beginnings.



That brings us to resolutions. I recently received an inspiring email from an unlikely source – Gardener's Supply Company. Great gardening resources and as I discovered, great advice too. They suggest these four resolutions.

- ♦ **Curate Your Calm:** There are way too many reasons for anxiety and stress these days. I think we are all feeling that. But gardeners know that "what you focus on grows". If you focus on fears and stresses, guess what you're growing. Don't bury yourself in worry. Instead cultivate calm. Of course this article stresses gardening and they are right. Getting outside, working in a garden, even cultivating your houseplants indoors is a great way to create worry-free space. Find your way to create that stress-free haven.
- ♦ **Return to Earth:** We are all so ridiculously busy with so many demands on our time and attention. Resolve to "take back ownership of your time, peel off the grip of your devices, and reconnect with the Earth." Of course, gardening helps, planting a seed and watching it grow... but I see many ways to get back on track here. I don't know about you, but I am a slave to a ridiculous amount of emails. I need to limit the amount I get and most importantly, the time I invest in them. Maybe you find yourself on Facebook too much or some other distraction. Take a good look at what is using your time and act accordingly.
- ♦ **Nurture Your Nature:** This one is my favorite! On one hand, it means being the responsible and loving stewards of the Earth that God called us to be. But it also means nurturing our personal nature as well. Just as a plant needs the right resources and supports to grow to its full potential, so do you. Give it some thought. Are your resources and supports serving you well or do they need some tweaking? Are there "weeds" in your life that need to be removed or "flowers" that need your nurturing? Get to know yourself. "Celebrate your unique selfhood both in and beyond the garden; rather than trying to follow someone else's vision, let your authenticity shine through."
- ♦ **Process Your Plenty:** Waste not, want not. In gardening terms, we're talking about using all we grow. Turn the preservation of your harvest (canning, cooking, whatever) into a friend and family event. Share the love and the produce! In our larger world, take time for gratitude and appreciation. Share your resources when you can, be it financially or bringing extra food to a hungry neighbor. Remember, the joy you share multiplies exponentially within your own heart!



FROM THE EDITOR:

We would like to thank David Donovan for initiating, coordinating, and running the HurriCon events. Here are a few pictures from last November. Two are scheduled for 2025: June 14 and November 22!



We also have a few pictures from the Lightings of the Advent Candles:



Upper Left: The Cummins/O'Hara Family

Upper right: The Ladies of the Thriftique

Lower left: The Meltzer Family

Lower right: The Donovan Family

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!

VENTURE CREW 121



We are proud to announce the formation of Venture Crew 121. We would like to thank Bethany Congregational for sponsoring our Crew. Since our December inception, we have had weekly meetings in order to plan our upcoming outings, trips and fundraising events. Our crew would like to acknowledge Charles D'Agostino our COR (Charter Organization Representative) as well as Rich Eves, for taking the time to listen to our needs and concerns. Your kind words, actions and deeds made our Crew feel extremely welcome in our new home.

I would also like to personally thank all the adult leaders from troops all over Nassau County that have answered the call to be Advisors and Committee members in Crew 121, as well as the great scouts who have joined us. I hope everyone in Bethany Congregational gets a chance to meet our scouts they are exceptional youth and future leaders. That being said I would like to thank Maryanne Walling for helping to secure our meeting dates. We wish you well in your retirement. Crew 121 Looks forward to working with Bethany for a long time to come.

Yours in Scouting, Steven Mascolo, Crew 121 Advisor/Buckskin Lodge Ceremonial Advisor

(Editor's Note: Regrettably, Troop 121 held its last meeting in December 2024. It operated out of Bethany for close to 90 years. They could not generate enough interest in order to remain functional. They will be missed. Bethany was also the Charter Organization. We would like to thank Hugh Boyle, the last scoutmaster, Vicky Boyle, his wife, Nick Sincinito, Paul Gish, Joe Borgia and the host of previous leaders who worked so hard and lovingly to help form the great scouts who were a part of Troop 121's long and illustrious history. As they say in scouting: **BULLY!**)

GIRL SCOUT TROOP 2503

If you have a 2nd grade girl interested in joining Brownies, you can reach out to Christine for more info (516) 320-5976 (They meet every other Friday at 3:30 P.M. in Room 301 (upstairs from the office.)

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Let's hope that this year brings us a new pastor and new projects to focus on. We would like to beautify the outside of our church. Yes, we are going to concentrate on getting all that peeling paint scraped and the wood painted. We are planning on a new sign in the parking lot... nothing fancy. We have some large projects that we would like to complete. We would love to get air conditioning and heating for the Thriftique. We have talked about that for quite some time but every time we start focusing on that, something else breaks. The roof in the gymnasium is an ongoing problem and it is extremely expensive to fix it the right way. We want to make it watertight but that is one of those "We want to do, not what we can do!" projects. What we can do takes time, money, and patience. So please be patient and generous and remember that it's **our** church. We need Bethany's help to make this place as beautiful as we can. Feel free to contact me about **HOW you** can help.

Lastly, I want to talk about a number of the members who have been around for a long time and I want to thank them for all of the work they have done in the past...and continue to work. You have not been forgotten!!! You are always generous with your time and money. You have always been helpful and we could be nothing but grateful for your support.

Much love to my church family. Richard Eaves, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Bethany's Sunday school put on a magnificent Nativity Pageant.

The story of Jesus' birth was told by our narrator, Elena. The star played by Elyse, shined bright above Bethlehem. Katie and Tyler our Mary & Joseph placed Jesus in the manger. They were surrounded by shepherds and animals, a cow, Jacqueline and donkey, Shay. The Angels Joey, Jackie, Maddie and Megan visited baby Jesus and the wisemen Dylan, David & Conor brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

We also want to thank Marie and Melanie for their guidance in the pageant.

The pageant was enjoyed by the congregation and we believe those watching from home enjoyed as well. Happy New Year to All.



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 Tina Lewald at 917-270-6509.

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!

Make These 12 Promises to Yourself for Your Best Year Yet

A month-to-month guide to more optimism and pleasure

By Michele Weldon ...from AARP January 2023

January: Pay Attention As we begin this first month of the new year, be relentlessly honest about what benefits you reap from relationships, activities, work, hobbies and communities. Use this assessment and create a plan to stick with those people and things that enhance your life.

February: Love Yourself Whether you have a “partner” or not, *salute* the lovable aspects of your own personality, purpose and daily life. Then commit to appreciating all these positive parts of yourself!

March: Get Creative Whether it be woodworking, yoga, or cooking, dive into starting a new endeavor by seeking classes, YouTube, podcasts or books on how to embark on a skill that will renew you.



April: Embrace Truths Speak up when you hear gossip or misinformation, whether it is idle chatter about a neighbor or falsehoods about news from around the world. You want to rely on the veracity of information you ingest as well as the truth of what you dish out.

May: Be the Bonus The biblical idiom, “To whom much is given, much will be required” goes beyond the religious context. Volunteer your expertise and time to family, friends, community, and larger world as your generosity can deliver love, fulfillment and connections back to you.

June: Meet Wellness Halfway This is a time halfway through the year, when you can look back and ahead, reaffirming healthier habits in ways that are achievable, adjusting if needed.

July: Start Something Beyond discussing social justice in the abstract, align yourself with a movement or cause to further the mission of fairness, equity and equality across the community and beyond.

August: Be Climate Clean Contribute as a global citizen daily by lessening your carbon footprint with sustainable practices, whether that means reusable water bottles and grocery bags, recycling old clothes, or taking a hike or bike instead of a car.



September: Book It Promise to read and learn more of new genres such as new sci-fi, poetry or historical fiction. Share titles with friends, discussing what you’re reading and why it matters.

October: Face Fears You don’t have to go bungee jumping (unless you want to) but participate in something that may scare you a little like live Karaoke. Or, be bold and travel alone to a nearby city or faraway town, and go museum-hopping, with the best company possible—yourself.

November: Yes, Thanks Write a short note (pen to paper, not a text, Facebook or Instagram post), thanking a friend or stranger for their accomplishment or act of kindness.

December: Celebrate Good Times Accentuate the positives of the past year—by yourself or with friends—with a candle in a cupcake (or muffin) and tell yourself, “I did my best! I am fine!”



WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH !!

Submitted by Carol Henck

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!

WOMEN'S LEAGUE:

On behalf of the Women's League I would like to thank everyone for their help to make our Christmas Fair a success. I would also like to thank our Women's League for their dedication and hard work for this event. Thank you to Linda Fardella, Kim Hastings and Jo Schneider-Leonsky for all your work in making the baskets and making this fair possible.

I would also like to thank the local businesses, that made donations for our baskets. Please shop local, and thank those that donated! The following merchants made donations:

East Rockaway: Far Sing, La Favorita, Citi Nail, Best Deal Wine, Grandpa Tony's, Villa Maria, Calmer U, Goldy's Liquor, Bagel Cafe, Carvel, James and Main, Bagel Gourmet, Allison Nails, Greek Express; **Lynbrook:** Lynbrook Bagels, The Sweet Peace, Amazing Wok, Mur Lee's, Fine Nails, Unicorn Nails, Vincent's Pizza, The Gallery Four, Craft Kitchen, Pearsall Station, Magic Nails, Joey's Pizza, Miller's Hardware, E&L Deli, Elsie Lane, Livorno's, **Oceanside:** Oceanside Car Wash, Pizziola, Seven Brothers, Colori Bella, Lia's Pizza, Thriftway Card & Gifts, Nuzen, Emagine Toys, Play It Again Sports **Barnum Isle:** Jordan's Lobsters **Malverne:** Our Town Grille, **Hewlett:** Trilogy Hair Salon

Thank you all! Cathy Clarke



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"Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect for those that are present"

George Washington "Rules of Civility"

Civility Is Contagious

"So I say, live by the Spirit . . . and the fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control, and against such things there is no law."

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Selling? Renting? Relocating?**

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.



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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)