



THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD"

JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 65 No. 4

East Rockaway, NY 11518

July-August 2025

Welcome Home!

Meet our new

Pastor Every Sunday!

*Reverend Prabhu
Sigamani*

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: Flexible. Please call the office before going.

Dates to Remember:

September 1...Labor Day
September 7...Rally Day (tentative)
September 11...Patriot Day
September 22...First Day of Autumn
September 23...Rosh Hashanah
October 2...Yom Kippur
October 13...Columbus Day
November 2...End Daylight Savings
November 4...Election Day
November 11...Veterans' Day
November 27...Thanksgiving
December 14...Hanukkah
December 25... Christmas



HurriCon blows back into Bethany Church November 22! Come down to the Parish Hall and meet comic book artists and writers, purchase original comic art and cool comic books and other unique items. Don't miss the raffle with some amazing items up for grabs! And did we mention there will be free comic books for everybody? HurriCon!

*"A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you."
Psalm 91:7 NRSV*

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

On July 4th, following a relaxing day, we returned to the parsonage at approximately 10:30 pm and were met with an unexpected sight. Orange and blue flames were visible across the street as a house across the street was ablaze. My wife and I immediately assessed the situation and considered contacting emergency services; within minutes, the fire department, police, and EMS personnel arrived on the scene. Concerned neighbors assembled nearby, speculating about possible casualties. After roughly two hours, once the emergency vehicles had departed, it was confirmed that no individuals had been home at the time of the fire. This provided considerable relief, as property can be restored and rebuilt, but loss of life would have been far more devastating.

This was certainly a scary and difficult moment. Each day, we are confronted with news that is deeply distressing, including personal loss, illness, violence, displaced families, and natural disasters among many others. Individuals, regardless of their beliefs, may wonder, "Where is God?" This inquiry does not necessarily stem from doubt but rather reflects a need for reassurance of the presence of a higher power.

Our faith helps to improve our spiritual as well as emotional well-being. We may feel the anger of what is happening or happened. We tend to worry about problems that may occur in the future. With this preoccupation with past or future, we can lose sight of the present. As a result, there is only frustration.

We do not have control over our entry into or departure from this world, and the span in between is brief. Faith can provide grounding in the present, encouraging appreciation for what we possess rather than focusing on what we lack. Appreci-

ation of what we possess can be calming. Adding strength to our faith, in ourselves and relying on God for guidance. For example, two weeks ago, Elena read the scriptures for us; her delivery conveyed a profound and personal connection to the word of God, exemplifying true confidence.

There may be times when we witness or even experience circumstances where everything appears to be falling apart. During such moments, faith and self-assurance are valuable assets that can help us regain our composure. Fostering strong connections among our members, utilizing available resources, and seeking assistance when needed. Sincerely supporting one another are all essential during times like this. The assurance of Divine promise and protection is always present, often manifesting in various ways, though we may not always recognize them immediately.

The verse "*A thousand may fall by your side and ten thousand at your right hand*" is often interpreted as emphasizing resilience or protection in difficult circumstances. This passage highlights the idea of steadfast love of God even when facing widespread hardship, suggesting a source of faith and comfort regardless of external situations.

Let us live with faith and confidence, doing what we are able. This approach will allow us to build a community whose collective strength supports its members during times of need.

Closing with love of Jesus Christ and best wishes for a Happy Summer.

In faith

*Rev. Prabhu
Sigamani, Pastor*



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!

**Baptism of Mia Collette,
daughter of Heather and
Nick Mirando
June 8, 2025**



New Members of Bethany Congregational Church:



Marie, George, Carol Henck, Pastor Sigamani, Ida and Joe



Welcome!!

***Joe Fardella, George Jiminez
Ida S. Sigamani, Marie Farrell***



**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 Moderator

Summer Greetings to All



Although it's been either crazy hot, rainy, or both, I've tried to spend as much time as possible working in my yard and gardens. My plants have done a fine job reseeding and spreading themselves to the point that my garden is overgrown with what was at one time, desired plants. Dilemma, as I have trouble uprooting live plants. I have given many cone flowers and yarrow plants away as I try to regain control of my jungle. This got me thinking about what to value and what to discard. What are my weeds? I seemed to remember writing about this in the past and sure enough, found this May 2021 article. Since summer, at least when I was a kid, was TV rerun season, with your indulgence, I will also have a rerun moment.

☞ As much as I enjoy gardening, one early spring task is a difficult one. Plant life of all sorts is popping up everywhere! What do I want to nurture? What goes into the compost bin? Which plants do I want, and which are weeds?

Just what exactly is a weed? It seems rather arbitrary. Oxford Languages defines it as a wild plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with cultivated plants. Merriam Webster says a weed is a plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth especially : one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants.

Well, that is indeed a subjective decision. So, anything I did not invite into my garden is a weed? Is a wild plant a bad thing? I'm not too comfortable with that. Who knows what will grow in our gardens, courtesy of the birds and wind, given a chance? We might be yanking out treasures beyond belief. Those violets that keep showing up in flower beds and even lawns are real pretty in bloom. That mystery plant that grew two feet tall was a real eye catcher! I really don't recall planting that flower in that corner.

Both weed definitions used terms such as unwanted, not valued, in competition with the chosen plants. Unwanted and unvalued by whom? Most people are not fans of dandelions and spend a lot of time and unfortunately, chemicals on trying to eliminate them. Are they without value? Far from it! Dandelions are an important early food source for bees. We know how important those pollinators are. They are also edible, used for medicinal purposes, and actually good for your lawn. Read more at this site -<https://www.mofga.org/resources/weeds/ten-things-you-might-not-know-about-dandelions/>

I think sometimes we are a little too quick to decide what has value and what does not. Let's leave the garden for a moment. What else in our world gets treated as weeds? Yes, I'm talking about people here. Do we look at others and make judgements as to their worth? When someone a bit different enters our circles, do we consider them a weed, unwanted competition? Too many people in our world are treated as weeds, unwanted, unvalued, and therefore, deprived of nurturing and opportunities. Whether it be based upon race, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual identity, religion, or whatever, too many people receive that designation of weed.

We need to, and we can, turn this around. It starts by realizing that everything and everyone has value and a role to fulfill in God's creation. Not everything or everyone on this planet is "cute" and that's okay.

Let's dig a little deeper and think a little longer. Actively look for the value in all living things and you will find it."



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

FROM THE EDITOR:

We hope that you are getting used to the Bi-Monthly issues. We have a number of contributors and we are happy for their collaboration. Our next issue will be September-October 2025, with deadline of September 10th. As you know, we are always open to accepting new content. We try to keep everyone interested in Bethany Church. Also, please let us know if someone would like to receive a copy, either by mail or email.

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, please*) Sadly, we lost our book reviewer, Lou Gaspari. Any readers out there to step up?



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!*

HUCKLEBERRY FROLIC

JUNE 7, 2025

Bethany was represented in the parade by Joe Fardella (new member), Linda Fardella and Janet Moser

(Thank you!)



And more thanks to everyone who contributed the bake goods and to those who worked the booth to sell all of the yummy goodies!

Kim Hastings and friend

Jaime Read

Jo Leonsky

Linda Fardella

Joe Fardella

Cathy Clarke

Janet Moser

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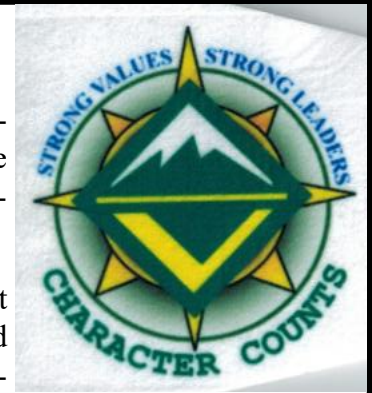
VENTURE CREW 121

Crew 121 recently held a pancake breakfast fundraiser, bringing together families, friends, and supporters for a delicious morning in support of Scouting. The event was a big success, raising funds that will go directly toward camping trips, outdoor adventures, and special crew activities throughout the year.

A huge thank-you goes out to **Bethany Church** for generously hosting the event and providing a welcoming space for the community to gather. Their continued support means a great deal to the crew and helps make events like this possible. Additionally, 10% of the funds raised by the crew at the pancake fundraiser will go to the church.

Also, Crew 121 recognizes Rebecca Sult and Gavin Kinney who recently received the Vigil honor, the highest recognition in the Order of the Arrow — Scouting's national honor society. The Vigil is awarded to those who have shown exceptional service and dedication. Rebecca was sponsored by Samuel Sult, the President of Crew 121, and Gavin was sponsored by Steve Mascolo, Advisor of Crew 121. Hal Rabin, Co-Advisor of Crew 121, sponsored Aedan Corless, a dedicated member of the Order of the Arrow.

With a successful fundraiser behind them and exciting adventures ahead, Crew 121 is looking forward to a great year of growth, service, and fun.... Yours in Scouting, Rebecca Sult



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 Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. in Room 301 (upstairs from the office.)

For information, contact Christine at 516-320-5976



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FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Although we do not meet in the summer, we continue to address any issues that might arise. The roof no longer leaks, and we have caught a bunch of squirrels. The next step is to find where they are getting in.

The Women's League has graciously and generously paid for new stoves in the kitchen. They are installed and just waiting for the hood to come in. It is still a work in progress but they look fantastic!

Yours in Christ, Rich Eaves, Chairman of the Board of Trustees



HURRICON...JUNE 14, 2025

Another successful HurriCon blew into Bethany Church on Saturday, June 14, 2025. Over 100 fans came through the doors of the Parish Hall to buy comic books, original art, toys, trading cards, and more from over 30 vendors. Our special guest was Joe Kelly, the current writer of Marvel Comics Amazing Spider-Man and we gave away free copies of his first issue to many happy fans who got them signed by the author! Our friends at Cosmic Comics and Games of Baldwin donated all those comics.

Linda Fardella, with the help of Dolores Jimenez and Linda Donovan, fed the hungry fans Walking Tacos, hot dogs, pulled pork and no one left the show hungry!

George and Hunter Jimenez manned the raffle table that featured original comic art, statues, Captain America's shield, toys, signed books, and unique Walking Dead items. Chris Hueser and David P. Donovan also helped man the front table.

A great day for HurriCon and a great day for Bethany, we raised over \$3000.

****Next show is Saturday, November 22, 2025, mark your calendar!***



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Understanding the Importance of Your Purpose and Calling in Christ

At first, I wanted nothing to do with anything related to serving. I was just trying to get through life, overwhelmed and feeling like I had no time, no capacity, and honestly, no interest. But something changed.

As I slowly began to open my heart to serving God and His people—just small steps at first—something miraculous happened: I found **life**. Real life. A life of **joy, purpose**, and unexpected **blessing**. I discovered that the more I gave, the more I received. The more I served, the more strength I had. What once felt like a burden became a **source of joy** and a **divine assignment**. I realized I wasn't just helping others—I was walking in my **God-given purpose**.



Now I enjoy serving. I look forward to being part of what God is doing in the lives of others. And the blessings? They're not always material, but they are always real. Peace. Provision. Direction. Growth. Community. Favor.

Don't be afraid to trust God with your time, your gifts, and your life. When you follow Him, He doesn't just give you tasks—He gives you **purpose**. And when you walk in that purpose, you'll find blessings beyond anything you imagined.

Now, my wife and I have been serving God for over 15 years—both individually and as a couple. What started as a simple "yes" to God has become a life filled with purpose, growth, and grace.

Over the years, we've had the privilege of serving in many ministries:

- **Hospitality** – welcoming others into God's house with warmth and love
- **Events and Conventions** – organizing spaces for people to encounter God
- **Children's Ministry** – sowing seeds of faith into the next generation
- **Small Group Life Leaders** – walking with others through life and spiritual growth

Through each ministry, God has shaped us. We've grown **spiritually**, deepened our **marriage**, and experienced more of **God's grace** than we could have imagined. Each season of service brought new challenges—but also new revelations of who God is and who He's called us to be. We've learned that serving isn't just about doing things—it's about **becoming**. Becoming more like Christ. Becoming stronger together. Becoming vessels of His love, power, and presence.



To anyone wondering if it's worth it:
Yes. It's worth it. Don't be afraid to say "yes" to serving. When you give your time, your gifts, and your heart to God, He will always give you back more than you could ever give Him.

...submitted by Mike and Lily Magliaro

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W E S T G R A D U A T E B L O G

** W E S T G R A D U A T E B L O G

If there is a song in your soul, sing it out loud — whether in your car on your morning commute or at karaoke with friends. It's okay if you are not the next Beyoncé.

Making music — even if we aren't especially good at it — can still be good for us.

Music can be powerful and healing. “It can move us emotionally, it can move us physically, it can connect us to other people,” which are all important elements of mental health, said Daniel Bowling (Stanford School of Medicine who researches music-based treatments for mental health.) Studies have shown that listening to music we enjoy is associated with better subjective well-being, stress reduction and greater coping with negative emotions while lifting up positive ones, and that it can be an effective way to alleviate feelings of depression and anxiety.

Making music with our voice or another instrument adds another dimension to the experience. Singing karaoke was linked to increased feelings of flow and meaning in life, reported one 2022 study of 305 older adults.

Making music can protect brain health as we age and can build up our cognitive reserve, or how resilient our brain is during aging. Making music facilitates the making of new neural connections even if you're not any good at it. One study of 132 older adults reported that six months of piano practice or active music listening led to increases in gray matter in the brain and improvements in short-term memory of sounds.

Making music syncs us with other people. Making music with others — in a choir, jam session or karaoke bar — supercharges its benefits. Music also syncs up our brains, and more so when we make it together than merely listening. Neural activity becomes more similar in the brains of people engaged with the same music, imaging studies have shown. Singing in groups can decrease cortisol, a stress hormone, and increase the release of oxytocin, a hormone important for social bonding. *(Help Wanted: Bethany Choir)*

H O W T O S T A R T

Start small. Even just listening to music can be a beneficial experience. If you start to enjoy singing or learning to play an instrument, benefits are enhanced!

Consider playing music/singing with others. Humankind has always sung together (whether they could carry a tune or not!). If you don't feel comfortable doing it with others around, you can also start in the privacy of your shower or car.

Focus on engagement, not mastery. This shift in mindset may help with feelings of self-consciousness. Feelings of mastery and confidence come with time and practice. But the *real* benefits of music — of reward and social bonding, and on emotion — can be gained as soon as you take the leap into making music! **Remember, it's never too late to start!!**

Source: Excerpted from Richard Sima article (Washington Post 6/10/2025)

Wishing you a Wealth of Health!!

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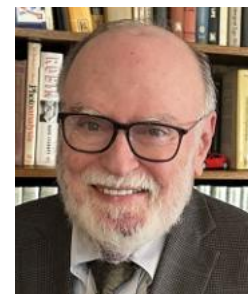
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"Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect for those that are present"

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."

HELP ME HELP BETHANY!

Thinking Real Estate?

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Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)