



THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD"

JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 65 No.6

East Rockaway, NY 11518

November-December 2025



BETHANY CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025

10:00 AM-3:00 PM

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026!

Dates to Remember:

November 22...HurriCon
November 27...Thanksgiving
December 6...Christmas Fair
December 14...Hanukkah
December 21...Christmas Pageant
December 21...Christmas Caroling
December 25... Christmas
January 1...New Year's Day...2026
January 10...Epiphany Celebration
January 19...MLK Day
February 12...Lincoln's Birthday
February 14... Valentine's Day
February 16...Presidents' Day



HurriCon blows back into Bethany Church November 22nd! 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!

Listening for God's Peace in Unsettled Times

Dear Church Family,

There are seasons when the world feels heavy. We look around and see people struggling—some facing job loss or uncertainty about their future, others worrying about food and housing as the cost of living continues to rise. Many are weary from the constant stream of public debate and differing opinions that too often strain our friendships and families. These burdens weigh on our hearts and test our hope.

Yet even in such times, God's Word reminds us: "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."— *Psalms 46:10, NRSV*

This verse doesn't promise that the storms of life will cease immediately, but it invites us to rest in the One who remains steady when everything else feels uncertain. In the quiet stillness, God's voice can reach us—not through the clamor of headlines or arguments, but through God's gentle whisper of peace and direction.

When the world feels divided, everyone seems to be speaking *at* one another. But listening—to God and to one another—has become an act of grace. It is through listening that we begin to notice the quiet suffering of our neighbors and the deep longing for compassion in our communities.

As followers of Christ, we are called to be different. Instead of adding to the noise, we can bring calm. Instead of closing our

hearts, we can open them. Instead of despair, we can choose hope. The Apostle Paul reminds us: "Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near."— *Philippians 4:5, NRSV*

When we listen for God's whisper, we begin to see others as God sees them—beloved, valuable, and worthy of grace. Compassion grows, bridges form, and unity takes root—not because we agree on everything, but because we are tuned to the same Spirit.

As we prepare to enter the season of Advent, Scripture reminds us that the birth of Jesus came in deeply unsettled times. Yet the angel's message to the shepherds was simple and powerful: "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."— *Luke 2:10, NRSV*

This Advent, may we enter the journey with one goal in mind—to listen for God's guidance and to listen to one another, not to respond but to understand. In that space of listening, compassion can take deep root and bear the fruit of peace & harmony.

May the peace of Christ guard your hearts and minds this season, and may His presence bring calm to every anxious place.

With love and prayers,

Rev. Prabhu Sigamani



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

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

There is nothing major to talk about in terms of work done to the church except for the trees being pruned and cut down around the parking lot, the parsonage and Baisley Hall. It really needed to be done and I would like to thank David Donovan for taking care of that. I would also like to thank Anthony Romanelli, our Sexton, and his brother for doing a wonderful job with masonry work for the front of the church. I would like to thank Andrea Eaves and Charles D'Agostino for taking care of some Administration duties that were probably the most important thing that's happened to our church in a long time and they did it professionally and quickly. I would like to thank the pastor also for his help in solving this Administration problem.

Currently, we are looking into replacing the back door to the thrift store and I want to thank the ladies who dedicate so much of their time to this store which gives us enough money to do the repairs that need to be done in our small but powerful Church. Thank you and God bless.

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

FROM THE EDITOR:

We hope that you like the Bi-Monthly issues. We have a number of contributors and we are happy for their collaboration. Our next issue will be November-December 2025, with deadline of November 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.



On Sunday, November 2, 2025, Bethany held a joint service with the Korean Methodist Church. They share our sanctuary every Sunday and this was the first time we worshipped together. It was a wonderful event. A delicious coffee hour followed and we got to meet our co-habitants for the first time. Perhaps this may become an annual event?

Please remember to support our upcoming events: Hurricon on November 22! The Christmas Fair on December 6! The Children's Christmas Pageant on December 21 and our neighborhood Christmas Caroling the same day...December 21. Have a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

HELP WANTED: Bethany is seeking a new church secretary. Great part-time position but looking for a long term commitment. **Hours:** 16 hours per week; **Hourly Pay:** \$20.00 ; **Schedule:** Regular office hours are required, **Tuesday through Friday** on-site is preferred. Some flexibility may be available. **Skills:** Basic secretarial skills including intermediate computer skills. Must be self-motivated and responsible. **Start Date:** Position available immediately; must be filled by **December 1, 2025**. If interested, please call or text Janet Moser (516) 603-3972, email moderator@bethanycong.com or call the church office at (516) 599-5768

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 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

How Do You Pray?

“Let us pray”. We hear that in every church service and we pretty much know what that entails and what it looks like here at Bethany. But what about the rest of the world? Hmmm... To begin with, all religions pray. Even non-religious people have been known to raise their voices to a greater power or even themselves now and again. But the practice of prayer looks and sounds very different based on religion and culture. Let's do the “Who, What, Where, When, and Why” of prayer.

The “Why” is universal. Regardless of all else, prayer seeks to establish connection and dialogue.

The “Who” we will look at will primarily be the followers of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, with a bit of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Native American.

“What” do we pray? Christianity is a mix of structured, pre-written prayer and personal prayers of one's own wording. Prayers can be praise, a lament, a request, blessing... An Islamic prayer, however, is a prayer of adoration and not an opportunity for added requests. Judaism has many set prayers and use the scriptures as well. Two types of Hindu prayers are dhyana (meditation) and stotra (praise). Buddhists do not pray to a deity but to enlightened individuals. They may use repetition of a word or chant. Prayer wheels, rolls of printed prayers, are turned while praying thus sending all those prayers out to the world as well. Native Americans often address their prayers to the Great Spirit and may use precomposed prayers for various situations.

Here comes the “When” and the “Where”. Christianity has no set number, time, or setting. Many Christians pray before and possibly after meals and prior to sleep. Additional prayers are personal options. A preferred setting for many is the church, the house of prayer. Judaism dictates prayer three times a day, morning, afternoon, and night, as well as before meals. If the meal contained bread, an aftermeal prayer should be shared. Jews can pray any where and any time but it is believed that the ideal is ten or more men together. An ideal location is the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. Followers of Islam pray five times a day, after sunrise, midday, late afternoon, after sunset, and night. Optional additional prayers may occur. Any clean place is a good location although a mosque is best, especially for gathering. It is felt that prayers by groups increases its rewards 27 times over!

Let's throw in a “How”. Christians have no required apparel or posture although some women cover their heads. Common posture is eyes closed, hands folded, possibly kneeling. Catholics utilize rosary beads in prayer. Islamic prayer requires men to wear loose clothing while women can only expose hands and face. Dhikr beads (beaded necklace) can be used as a prayer aid. Prayer rugs are used as the postures involve moving from standing to kneeling, to prostrating, and end with kneeling. Some male Jews cover their heads with a kippah, wear a tafillin (a small box on a prayer belt), and often hold prayer books or a scripture. Women must always have their heads covered. A common Jewish posture is to pray standing but rock the upper body front to back. Native Americans, as well as many other cultures, embed prayer in dance and song.

Have you noticed a trend here? Of all the proscribed rules and practices, one religion adheres to little of that. Christianity. We can thank Jesus for that. It was his teachings that empowered us to take personal charge of our faith and practices with no need for an intermediary or endless rites and rituals. Pretty cool.

So then, Bethany. Let us pray - however, whenever, whatever, and wherever you so choose!
Amen.

**Let's
Pray!**

Wishing everyone a Grateful Thanksgiving and a Joyous Christmas!

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Thanks to everyone who helped to make our Flea Market a success! Next up is our annual Christmas Fair on December 6th. Please support us by donating baskets, helping with your time, or just coming down to buy treats and gifts for your friends and family. Any questions? You can always contact Cathy Clarke at cclarke724@gmail.com or 516-205-4309. Thank you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Bethany's Sunday School officially started last October 21st with our Rally Day. It was a success! We collected peanut butter and jelly for the Food Pantry. The kids had a great time doing a craft while having breakfast.

The kids have also been enjoying different crafts based on the lessons we discussed. We built a tower using spaghetti and marshmallows after discussing Tower of Babel. We talked about the friendship between Ruth and Naomi and made friendship bracelets. We made mini catapults using popsicle sticks and rubber bands after talking about the bravery of David versus Goliath.

December 21st is Sunday School Christmas Pageant. Hope to see everyone there!

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.



Greetings everyone,

This year The Parish Resource Center has decided to change things up!

We will be having an Epiphany Celebration instead of the Festival of Miniature Trees.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our past Festival of Miniature Trees event and we hope you will join us for Epiphany.

Epiphany Celebration

**Saturday January 10th
from 11 am to 1:00 pm**

You are invited to join the board and staff of the PRC as we celebrate Epiphany. There will be plenty of food and fellowship as we close the season of Christmas. The celebration includes festive music, door prizes and more!



Parish Resource Center Of LI West Inc
919 Elmont Road
Valley Stream, New York 11580
516-285-0919

Sharing Christmas Joy at Bethany!

The Outreach Committee is happy to announce once again..

This Christmas Season we have “adopted” a family from the **Mary Brennan Inn** in Hempstead! We are blessed with the opportunity to provide Christmas gifts to brighten the Christmas season for this family.

Meet our Family!

Mother ~ Isabell H. , Mason, age 10 , Ethan, age 9, Linda, age 8, Ariel, age 4

Please “stay tuned” to Bethany emails, Church announcements and bulletin inserts for more details!

With Joy, Carol Henck and Barbara Merna (Outreach Committee)

VENTURE CREW 121

Since the day of our Q-Zar trip, we’ve had a pancake fundraiser at Bethany, which was very successful. Those funds helped send us to Baiting Hollow Scout Reservation on our first camping trip as a crew. As our crew’s one year anniversary draws near, we are preparing a Founder’s Day party to celebrate this moment in our crew’s history! We thank the Bethany Congregation for their generous support, and we hope to continue our great adventures and strengthen our brotherhood as a crew! Yours in Scouting, Crew 121



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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Bethany Congregational Church

wishes all a Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled
with Health, Peace, and Prosperity!

Pastor Prabhu and Ida Sigamani

The Leves Family

Carol and Peter Henck

Janet Moser

Tina, Bill, William, Katie and James Lewald

Jennifer Firth

Barbara Merna

Heidi Hofmann

Lora Fioramonti

Marianne Fioramonti

Jacqueline Webb and Family

The Valis Family

Jen Valis, Charlie & J.P. D'Agostino

The Hastings Family

The Sobey Family

The Schneider-Leonsky Family: Jo, Steve and Kittens Cleo, Dolly & Pippin

The Clarke Family

The Goodspeed Family

The Fardella Family

Dan Gilloon

The Gilloon Family

The Jimenez Family

Dylan McConnach-Henck Family

The Kilgus Family



"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him." — Proverbs 22:15

Parenting with Love and Wisdom: Building Strong Families Through Connection and Values

Parenting is both a sacred calling and a profound responsibility. Scripture reminds us that every child is born with a measure of foolishness—a natural tendency toward self-centeredness and disobedience. This truth doesn't condemn children; rather, it calls parents to recognize their vital role in shaping and guiding young hearts toward wisdom and righteousness. Correction, therefore, is not simply punishment—it is love in action.

Love: The Foundation of Correction

Love is the first and most essential ingredient in good parenting. It is the soil in which discipline, instruction, and growth take root. Without love, correction becomes harsh and hollow. With love, even the firmest guidance can nurture a child's sense of security and self-worth.

Children need to experience love not only through words but also through actions—through hugs, affirming touch, encouragement, and quality time. These gestures communicate safety and acceptance. When children know they are loved unconditionally, correction becomes an act of care rather than rejection.

Adolescence can test this love. Teenagers, often aware of appearances and struggling for independence, may resist affection or boundaries. Yet love remains essential even when a child is difficult to reach. Scripture reminds us that a measure of rebellion is normal, but parents must discern when rebellion crosses into sin and lovingly guide their children back toward truth.

Discipline Rooted in Love

Biblical correction is not about control—it is about training. Proverbs 13:24 teaches, "He

who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly." True discipline envisions a better future for the child. It aims to shape the heart, not merely modify behavior.

Parents are called to be consistent and kind, firm yet gentle—what some call the KFC R d, Firm, and Consistent. When correction is paired with love, it builds respect rather than resentment. Children learn that boundaries exist not to punish, but to protect and prepare them for life.

A child's understanding of love and correction is deeply influenced by what they see in their parents. When parents admit mistakes, ask forgiveness, and show humility, they teach by example. Love that mirrors God's grace helps children understand that failure is not final—that growth comes through repentance and forgiveness.

Parents who walk closely with God demonstrate to their children how faith shapes character. Let your child see your relationship with God—when you pray, when you praise, and even when you struggle. Your example becomes a living lesson of love and correction working together.

Listening Hearts: Building Strong Families Through Connection and Values

Why Listening to Your Children Matters: Listening to your children is one of the most powerful acts of love you can give. When parents take time to truly hear their child's words, feelings, and even their silence, they communicate worth and belonging. A listening ear tells a child, "You matter to me." This simple act builds trust, strengthens emotional bonds, and opens the door for healthy communication as they grow.

When parents listen without judgment, children are more likely to share their challenges and

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joys. They learn that home is a safe place—a place where they can express themselves, be corrected with love, and guided in truth. Proverbs reminds us, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction," but wise parents teach through patient listening and gentle correction.

Friendships Built on Shared Values and Morals

The friends our children keep can greatly shape their character, habits, and decisions. Encouraging friendships that reflect the same values and morals you teach at home reinforces what you are building in their hearts. When children walk with those who share their faith, honesty, and respect, they are less likely to be led astray by peer pressure or negative influences.

Scripture teaches that "bad company corrupts good morals." As parents, guiding our children to choose friends who lift them up—rather than lead them down—protects their spiritual and emotional well-being. Friendships grounded in shared values become a source of encouragement, accountability, and joy throughout life's journey.

Contributing to the Family: A Foundation for Life

When children and youth are encouraged to contribute to the family—whether through chores, helping siblings, or serving one another—they learn responsibility, gratitude, and teamwork. This participation builds confidence and helps them see that they are an important part of something bigger than themselves.

Contributing also prepares them for adulthood. Life requires cooperation, discipline, and perseverance. A child who learns these skills at home is better equipped to handle future challenges with maturity and faith. A contributing family member grows into a contributing citizen and, ultimately, a servant-hearted follower of Christ.

Family Time Without Devices: Building Trust and Security

In today's digital world, screens often replace meaningful conversation. Yet real connection—face-to-face and heart-to-heart—is what nourishes a family's soul. Setting aside time without devices allows families to share meals, laugh, pray, and listen to one another.

These moments build safety and emotional security. When children feel seen and heard, they learn that their family is a place of love and stability. Shared conversations help parents understand what's happening in their children's hearts and minds, fostering deeper trust.

Try having a "device-free dinner" or a weekly family night to talk, play games, or reflect on blessings. These habits may seem small, but they build a foundation of unity, joy, and spiritual connection that will last a lifetime.

Conclusion: Love That Leads to Wisdom

Foolishness may be bound in a child's heart, but love guided by God's wisdom can drive it out. Love disciplines, forgives, and endures. It embraces the child while shaping the soul. In every act of correction, love must be the driving force—just as God lovingly corrects His own children for their good (Hebrews 12:6).

Parents who love deeply and correct wisely are not only shaping behavior—they are forming hearts capable of love, obedience, and faithfulness. Listening hearts, shared values, family responsibility, and time spent together—these are the cornerstones of a strong family. As parents and caregivers, we are not called to be perfect, but to be present. When love, faith, and communication lead the way, our homes become places where children grow not only in wisdom but also in grace.

Submitted by Lily and Mike Magliaro

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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)