



# THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD"

JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 66 No.1

East Rockaway, NY 11518

January-February 2026

**We sorrowfully said goodbye to two**

**Bethany Church icons in 2025:**

**William Lewald and Barbara Goodspeed**

## **William F. Lewald**

**August 5, 1930 - August 30, 2025**



**B**ill was a dedicated member of Bethany Congregational Church, where he served as deacon and trustee. To me, Bill was the heart of the Bethany Men's Club. I always looked forward to those spaghetti dinners and Christmas Fair raffles! He always provided a helping hand for whatever event was going on.

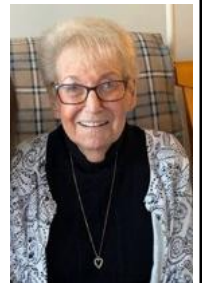
**I** remember seeing him outside in the summer heat mowing the grass! Bill just quietly did whatever needed to be done, never seeking recognition or praise.

**H**e loved hearing the organ played at church so I am thankful he got to hear that happening again.

Submitted by *Janet Moser*

## **Barbara Goodspeed**

**February 17, 1937 - December 27, 2025**



**B**arbara was also a dedicated member of Bethany. Her history with Bethany began with her marriage there to her husband, Bill Goodspeed, in 1958 and her love for both Bethany and Bill never ended. Barbara filled many roles during her time in Bethany but the one that really stands out to me is her many years as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Not an easy job – just ask Rich Eaves!

**B**arbara had a heart of gold and was sincere and authentic in all she did. Even in her language! She had no filters and routinely embellished her greetings and comments with a plethora of carefully curated cuss words! But trust me, it didn't mean she didn't love you. In fact, it meant she did.

Submitted by *Janet Moser*

(Continued on Page 9)

**W**e also learned of the passing of *Patricia Rice* on January 1, 2026. Many of us at Bethany knew her as the sister of Helen Harding. Like Helen, Pat had a cheery smile and a ready laugh.

### **Dates to Remember:**

January 19...MLK Day  
February 12...Lincoln's Birthday  
February 14...Valentine's Day  
February 16...Presidents' Day  
February 18...Ash Wednesday  
March 1...Pancake Breakfast  
March 8...Begin Daylight Savings  
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

**.HAPPY.**  
*Valentine's Day*

## The Zinc Spark of God:

### When the Word Meets Flesh and Light Breaks Out ...*John 1:1-18*

**Y**ou may remember from science class that zinc creates a spark only when it comes into contact with the right element. On its own, it sits quietly—full of potential, but inactive. When contact happens, light appears.

John's Gospel tells us something similar about faith:

"In the beginning was the Word... and the Word became flesh and lived among us." (John 1:1, 14)

**G**od's Word has always existed, but when the Word meets real human life—real joy, real grief, real struggle—something ignites. Light breaks out.

**W**e saw that light recently in the life and witness of **Barbara Goodspeed**. Barbara did not live a polished or pretend faith. She lived a *real* one. She knew sorrow and strength, laughter and loss. Her faith was not flawless, raw, or rigid—but honest. She loved deeply, spoke plainly, and yes, occasionally used a few *colorful words*. And somehow, in all that humanity, the light of Christ still shone.

**B**arbara reminded us that faith does not require perfection. It requires presence. Religion need not be tight or unrelatable to be faithful. God does not ask us to be edited versions of ourselves—only authentic ones. When the Word meets flesh as it truly is, not as we wish it to be, the spark happens.

John assures us,

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

**A**s we move into the New Year, **may the light of God shine upon our flesh**, leading us forward with clarity and courage. May it help us see the true purpose of our being, enrich us with peace and understanding, and encourage us to expose both our flaws and our faith—fearlessly and honestly.

Christian faith is not merely something we believe; it is something that ignites. When God's Word touches real lives, light appears—and we are invited to carry that light into the world.

**T**hanks be to God.

*Rev. Prabhu Sigamani*



**P**lease join me in warmly welcoming our new church secretary, **Amelia Rodriguez**. Amelia comes to us with experience in administrative assistance and brings with her a genuine eagerness to support the ongoing ministry and life of our church. We are grateful for her willingness to serve and for the gifts she brings to our community.

**I**f you are in the church building during the week, please stop by the office, introduce yourself, and say hello. I know your warm welcome will mean a great deal to her.

**I**am also happy to share that we have launched our **new church website**. Please take a moment to explore it and feel free to share it with your friends and family.

**<https://bethanycongregation.us/>**

**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:**

**W**e put heaters and motion sensing lights in all of the bathrooms. We've replaced every light bulb with LEDs. Now we are making repairs to the church that have been long overdue. Our contractor, Mike Magliaro, has been working steadily for three weeks. We have been making improvements wherever we can.

**Y**ours in Christ, *Rich Eaves, Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

## **FROM THE EDITOR:**

**F**aythe Stone and David Donovan Wedding Announcement :Congratulations! "In the afternoon of their ninth anniversary, November 12, 2025, Fay & Dave exchanged vows during a private ceremony at Manhattan City Hall. Later in the evening, the two celebrated their newly formed union with a small, intimate dinner with their close friends and family."



**T**hank you to the East Rockaway Kiwanis club and Bethany congregational Church of East Rockaway for their donation of all this non-perishable food. Over 100 pounds was delivered to the Long Island Council of Church's Emergency Food Pantry in Freeport just in time for Thanksgiving.

**A** BIG THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS FOR THE GENEROSITY AND COMPASSION OF OUR BETHANY FAMILY IN PROVIDING BLESSINGS AT CHRISTMAS TIME TO THIS FAMILY. ALL ITEMS WERE DELIVERED TO THE "INN" in Hempstead.

**T**he Director of the program sent her most sincere and profuse thanks to all on behalf of this family. Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas. Love, Carol Henck and Barbara Merna



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

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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*

## Winter Greetings to All

For most of us, this is NOT our favorite time of year. The excitement of Christmas and the festivities of New Year's have passed. We are left with nothing but short days and dark nights. But wait! Things are looking up. On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, the sun rose at 7:20 and set at 4:40 giving us 9 hours and 20 minutes of daylight. As I write this on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the sun rose at 7:20 but didn't set until 4:41. I got a whole 60 seconds more! Big deal, right?



What can a person do with one minute? Me being me, I had to do some research on this and I found some fun information on a most unexpected site. *The Alabama Crimson Tide News and Opinion site*. Isn't that sports?

<https://bamahammer.com/2014/05/07/61-things-you-can-do-in-60-seconds/>

They list 61 but here is a sampling.

Drink a glass of water. Take 10 deep breaths. Think of something you're grateful for. Scratch your dog's belly. Eat an apple. Swivel your hips. Shimmy your shoulders. Write a thank-you note. Call your parents. Sprinkle a spoonful of flaxseed in something you're about to eat. Hug someone you love. Hug someone you kinda, sorta like. Hug someone you don't care for one bit. Sign up for an art class. Balance on one foot for 60 seconds. Balance on the other foot for 60 seconds. Floss your teeth. Schedule a complete physical. Eat a handful of almonds. Tell a joke. Do 60 jumping jacks. Close your eyes and think of nothing. Listen to one good song. Sing along to one good song. Dance to one good song. Eat a tomato like it's an apple. Give someone a minute's worth of your undivided attention. Make a cup of tea. Pay yourself a compliment. Jump rope. Do 10 push-ups, on your knees if you have to. Do 10 sit-ups, crunches if you have to. Make a list of your five favorite songs. Meditate. Try a vegetable you think you don't like. Stretch and yawn, even if you're not sleepy. Read a poem. Lie on the floor with your legs up a wall. Call your congressman about an issue that's important to you. Spin a hula hoop around your waist, neck, or each arm. Read the first page of a new book. Make a list of your five favorite movies. Make a paper plane and launch it. Take a multi-vitamin. Do 10 squats. Give yourself a temple massage. Bend forward at the waist and hang. Yodel. Gargle. Try to balance standing on your tippy toes. Eat a handful of berries. Open a window and take a breath of fresh air. Even if it's January. Take off your shoes and walk barefoot. Even if it's January. Look up into the branches of a tree. Send a check to a good cause. Wash your hands.



On February 1<sup>st</sup> we'll have 10 hours and 5 minutes of day. Just think what you could do!

# SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Our Sunday School was in full swing with lessons. We learned about Daniel and the Lion's Den and Jonah. The kids enjoyed making a lion craft and fish crafts after watching the lessons. The kids also hosted coffee hour and helped serve. Kate and Elena participated in service last December 14<sup>th</sup>. Kate read the First reading and Elena read the Epistle Reading.

The Bethany kids also presented their Christmas Pageant on December 21st. We had Kate and Elena as narrators, David, Connor and Dylan as the Three Wise Men. Mary was played by Meghan and Joseph by Tyler. We had our precious angels Jackie, Jacqueline and Maddie. Elyse played our beloved donkey with Ms. Marie as a shepherd. Following the service, we had our first Christmas Carol Fundraiser for the Children's Ministry.

The kids enjoyed singing Christmas Carols in the direction of Ms. Jae. Everyone enjoyed treats and hot cocoa while watching amazing performers sing. It was indeed a wonderful time! We are thankful for everyone's support and love especially the people who performed and help make this a success.



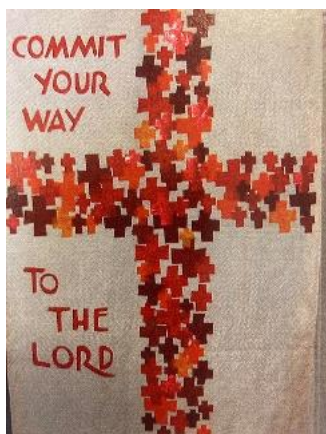
## Make and take Banner Workshop Saturday February 7th from 9am to 1pm

Join in the fun and leave with a completed banner for your congregation to enjoy! This workshop is offered to beginners and experienced banner makers and will provide easy step-by-step directions to make and take a banner. **This banner will be offered in red/orange (as pictured), blue/purple, or green tones.**

Registration Information:

Please call the PRC at 516-285-0919 for more information, registration/ materials fee, or to reserve your spot.

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## ***VENTURE CREW 518***



**H**ello, from Crew 518, the R.A.T.A. (Range and target activities) crew. For those who don't know, the venturing program, similar to the scouting program, focuses on youth ages 14-20 seeking more personal challenges in their scouting lives. The Crew meets every other Thursday of the month and has a focus on Range and target activities. This month the crew is planning on attending and aiding in a scout skills event put on at the Levittown VFW. Additionally the crew is planning on holding a Game-Night/Food drive in the Gym to try to draw in new members. This event will be open to any youth ages 14-21, whether they have been in scouting or not.

**I**f you're interested in attending this event please Reach out to the Crew Advisor, Anne Reiter [crew518advisor@gmail.com](mailto:crew518advisor@gmail.com), as well as our Crew President, Caleb Cassano [Darmuathegrey@gmail.com](mailto:Darmuathegrey@gmail.com). We would really love to see new youth at this event and are excited to be a part of the Bethany Congregational Church family.

## ***VENTURE CREW 121***



**T**his past year, Crew 121 has had a wonderful year of growth and fellowship. Some highlights include our first camping trip as a crew to Baiting Hollow and a successful pancake fundraiser breakfast, which we are excited to host again on March 1st. As we look ahead, we are planning camping trips, leadership trainings, team building outings and community service for the upcoming year. We thank the Bethany congregation for continued support.



**O**ur 2026 Crew Advisor, Keisha Thomas-Ellis, awarded several Crew 121 youth the rank of Venturing at our first meeting of the year.

## **WITH JOY FOR THE NEW YEAR and a BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON: THANK YOU.....**

For bringing JOY to our Adopt-A-Family: Our generous Bethany Congregation and Friends

For beautifying our Sanctuary for the Christmas Season: Our dedicated deacons and blessed Bethany volunteers ...Jenn Firth and crew and our poinsettia donors

For bringing Hope, Peace, Joy and Love through lighting the Advent Wreath Candles: Melanie, Jason and Shay Kane; Rebecca, Harold and Jacqueline Webb; Marie, Eddie, Elena and Elyse Farrell. Our Thriftful Ladies; Ida and Rev. Prabhu Sigamani

For Sharing the Christmas Story and Pageant: Our precious Sunday School Children

For bringing Christmas Spirit through song: Jae Carelli, Marie Farrell and our Sunday School Choir

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

**WOMENS 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 who donated!!! The following merchants made donations:

### **EAST ROCKAWAY**

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Lia's Pizza  
Thriftway Card & Gifts  
Imagine Toys  
Play it Again Sports

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Joey's Bold Flavors

### **BARNUM ISLE**

Jordan's Lobster



# Ending with Gratitude; Beginning with Purpose

**“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” — Ecclesiastes 3:1**

**G**od often ends what we cling to so He can begin what we truly need.

**A**t the heart of every ending and beginning in Scripture stands **Jesus Christ**. His life reveals a holy pattern: what appears final is often the doorway to God’s greatest work.

## The Sacred Pattern of Endings

**T**he cross looked like defeat. Hope seemed sealed behind a stone. The disciples believed everything they loved had ended. Yet heaven was not silent—God was at work. The death of Jesus was not the end of the story; it was the beginning of redemption, reconciliation, and resurrection life. Endings, then, are not evidence of abandonment; they are invitations into transformation.

**E**very ending carries weight. Some arrive gently; others come wrapped in grief, disappointment, or unanswered questions. Scripture reminds us that seasons are not random—they are purposeful. God stands at the close of one chapter just as surely as He stands at the opening of the next.

## Anchored in God’s Sovereignty

**T**here are moments in life when everything feels uncertain. Plans fall apart. Prayers seem unanswered. The world feels unstable, and our personal lives can feel even more so. In those moments, one truth must anchor our hearts: **God has never lost control.**

**G**od is not reacting to circumstances—He reigns over them. What surprises us never surprises Him. What feels chaotic to us is still under His authority. Scripture reminds us that His throne is established—not shaken, not threatened, not temporary. God is sovereign even when life feels out of order.

**T**his does not mean life will always be easy. It does not mean we will never experience loss, disappointment, or pain. But it does mean that nothing is wasted in God’s hands. He is working even when we cannot see it. He is shaping us even when we feel broken. He is present even when we feel alone.

**“In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”**

— Proverbs 3:6

## Gratitude in Transition

**G**ratITUDE during transition does not mean pretending that loss did not hurt or that unfulfilled dreams were insignificant. Rather, it means acknowledging that God was present in the season that is now passing. It is choosing to look back with gratitude—honoring what was learned, how faith was stretched, and how God proved faithful even in uncertainty.

**W**hen we pause to give thanks, we create space to look forward with hope. Gratitude becomes the bridge between what was and what will be. It softens the heart, allowing us to step into new beginnings not with fear, but with expectation—trusting that God will continue to reveal His love and guidance.

## Walking Forward with Purpose

**G**od does not simply move us forward; He invites us to walk forward with purpose. Transition is not wasted time—it is holy ground where God reshapes perspective, realigns priorities, and renews dependence on Him.

**W**hen we release an ending into God’s hands with gratitude, we are free to step into new beginnings with clarity, direction, and hope.

*Submitted by Lily and Mike Magliaro*

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

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Barbara on the right with her husband Bill.

I would be remiss if I did not talk about Barbara Goodspeed and Bill Goodspeed and the Goodspeed family on just how much that family has donated in time and resources to Bethany. Barbara told me many stories about how she started as a trustee and wound up over the years running the board with always Bethany foremost on her mind. I was a board member for 15 years with her at the head of the table and during that time I talked to her two to three times a week about the needs of Bethany and it was always easy to get what I needed. It is a job that requires patience and understanding and love of community! Barbara had two of these. Patience was not her forte. For a long time the only committee that truly met was the trustees and it was because of Barbara that Bethany is still open and affirming to all that are in need.

I take my cue from Barbara, keep your mouth shut! Do your job, do the best you can !!! Try not to piss anybody off. Because it was the Christian thing to do!!! She lives large in my memory and in Bethany's. much love to the Goodspeed family.

Yours in Christ,

*Richard Eaves*, Chairman, Board of Trustees

**From Jo Schneider-Leonsky:**

I know Barbara Goodspeed for many years through my attendance at Bethany Congregational Church. However, our paths have crossed in other areas as well. Barbara has also been an active member of the East Rockaway Grist Mill Committee, as am I, so that is another source of interest that we share. While doing an exhibit at "the Mill" I interviewed Joan Hope Mac-

Naughton from Leggz Dance Studio in Rockville Centre. When I mentioned that I lived in East Rockaway and I went to Bethany Church, she said: "you must know Barbara Goodspeed. My husband and I rented an apartment from Bill and Barbara when we first got married; what kind people they are". I realized then, that Barbara is well known through more communities than just our own.

Barbara is truly a remarkable woman. She is capable, strong, has a great sense of humor, and, as she says, "she tells it like it is". The beauty of her honesty, which is never sugar coated, is not shared in a malicious way...but in the hope of inducing positive change. And, once the truth is told...the discussion is over; she holds no grudge or animosity. If the person on the receiving end is receptive, they can learn a thing or two from their talk with Barbara, if their mind is open to do so.

The flip side of Barbara is her softness. She is warm, affectionate, generous and loving. I recall dropping off some Grist Mill paperwork at her house, where she greeted me warmly and invited me in. Our family was going through a really rough patch as we were in the process of losing our precious "Pink Princess", our 14 year old Kitten, Cookie Cuddles, to cancer. Our talk took place when I was extremely emotionally fragile. Being in great distress, I shared painful feelings about the sickness in the family, which in many cases, would make the person on the receiving end uncomfortable. But, though I'm sure though my words were hard to hear, sweet Barbara listened patiently, offering hope and healing thoughts. By the time I kissed her good-bye and thanked her for all the support she had given me, I felt truly uplifted. So, in addition to all of Barbara's service to different organizations, being an excellent Wife and Mother, devoted Sister and Family member, she also has the gift of being a caring and faithful Friend.

Knowing Barbara over the years has truly been a blessing. I thank her for sharing her wisdom, caring ways, and for being a true and treasured Friend!

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If you enjoy *The Bell Tower* and you would like to see your name here, please send a small donation to Bethany Church.



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie (dec.)