



THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD"

JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 66 No.3

East Rockaway, NY 11518

May-June 2026

Bethany Congregational Church



The Two Hundred and Seventeenth Corporate Meeting of your church will be held on **Sunday, June 14, 2026, at 11:30 A.M.** (By-Laws Article VI, Section 2c) for the following purposes:

- ♦ To elect church officers for the year 2026-2027.
- ♦ To review and approve the church budget as presented by the Board of Trustees for 2026-2027.
- ♦ To consider and vote upon such other business that may be legally called before the Corporate Body.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Maddalone, Clerk of the Corporation

The meeting will be held in person as well as via Zoom to allow all members to participate.

Topic: Bethany Congregational's Annual Corporate Zoom Meeting

Time: Jun 14, 2026 11:45 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89920176688?pwd=9NiMMER7I4kXvjUfNZ4Gvhwbfbij17.1>

Meeting ID: 899 2017 6688

Passcode: 566776

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Dates to Remember:

May 24...Pentecost Sunday
May 25...Memorial Day
June 6...Blood Drive (Crew 121)
June 6...Huckleberry Frolic
June 13...Indoor Flea Market
June 14...Corporate Meeting
June 14...Flag Day
June 19...Juneteenth
June 21...First Day of Summer
July 4...Independence Day
August 15...Feast of the Assumption
September 7...Labor Day
September 11...Patriot Day

AN INDOOR FLEA MARKET

Will take place on
Saturday, June 13, 2026
from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at
BETHANY
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
100 Main Street
East Rockaway, NY 11518
ALL NEW MERCHANDISE WILL
BE FEATURED and...there's
something for everyone. We
look forward to seeing you there!

I'm truly grateful to write this note...

Marking my first full year at Bethany and my first letter as your settled pastor. In twelve months, I've learned where the light switches are, which doors actually open, and that "just one quick question, Pastor..." is almost never quick (and almost always love in disguise). One of Bethany's greatest gifts is how deeply you care for one another—sometimes so deeply that we become a cheerful, holy inconvenience for all the right reasons.

Over this past year, we've learned from one another, tried some new things, and watched God place opportunities right in front of us. We've shared joys, learned from missteps, and practiced grace—patient, honest, and quick to forgive.

There is something truly special about Bethany Congregational Church, and I'm committed to nurturing it. Pastoral care is primary for me—being present with you in prayer, in seasons of joy, and in times of struggle—and I want to support the steady, everyday work of strengthening our bonds of love. Your generosity and willingness to show up for the body of Christ is remarkable, and it makes even hard work lighter—favored with laughter and shared purpose.

I see God at work among us in so many ways, and I believe that—together—we can keep listening for where the Spirit is leading next. As we grow, I'm excited for us to try new ways of doing ministry while also strengthening the good work already happening—especially in our Sunday School. I love the connection that's growing between our children and me; their joy and curiosity are a steady reminder that God is already at work among the next generation. Along the way, I hope we'll keep cultivating a warmer spirit of welcome and exploring fresh ways to worship that honor the

traditions we hold close—so that worship is more than a weekly gathering, but a shared space where we truly encounter God in our midst.

A recurring thought has stayed with me: Bethany is rich with gifts and talents—and, above all, a love for God and for one another that is easy to see. In the months ahead, I'd love for us to name and deepen what makes us *Bethany*: our shared convictions, our practices of care, and our witness in the wider community. In other words, **may we live the "Bethany way"—caring for each other so well that hope spills beyond our walls.**

Ida and I also want you to know what a joy it has been to be with you at Bethany. In a surprisingly short time, you have felt like a newly found family—one that somehow also feels as though it has been ours for many years. Thank you for your kindness, your prayers, your patience, and your love.

As we continue this journey, please remember: you are not alone. If you are carrying a burden, celebrating a new beginning, or simply needing someone to pray with you, I'm here—and I'm grateful to walk with you. May the Lord bless Bethany Congregational Church, strengthen our bonds of love, and make us faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ's grace in our homes, our neighborhood, and the world.

Peace & blessings

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:

Bethany had some really great stuff happen in the short time between the last trustees report and today. The biggest one, of course, is the installation of our most beloved pastor, as I call him Pastor P. Pastor Prabhu was enthusiastic in getting our church off the ground again. It was a hard time for all of us weeping The Wheels on the tracks making sure that our small, but powerful, organization went to the next century in a positive manner all thanks to Pastor P.

We also hired a new secretary, Alicia, who is wonderful, hard-working and dedicated to our church. She has become a church daughter already and we are truly happy to have her and we are thrilled that she's in the office.

There are a few new things: there is a church camera a Canon es5 in the office. If you need to take pictures for anything Bethany related the camera is very easy to use and should come as a great benefit. That will help the people know who we are and what we are because He loves us you. He really, really does. Thank you, in Christ's name, Rich Eaves, Chair, Board of Trustees



Pastor's Installation

April 26, 2026

Rev. Dr. Asayo Thomas, Rev. Dr. Christopher Ponnuraj, Rev. Dr. Fred Weidmann, Rev. Joyce Dugar, Rev. Lynn Sullivan, Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Rabbi Michael Schlesinger, Rev. Dr. Noel Vanek, Ms. Susan Cushman, Mr. Youngren C. Ponnuraj, Minister Vanessa Pugh.

Mayor Gordon Fox, Deputy Mayor Bruno Romano, Fire Chief Pignataro

Bethany Bell Tower* ...is a bi-monthly publication of **BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH*

Pastor: Reverend Prabhu Sigamani; Music Minister: Jae Carelli; Moderator: Janet Moser

Office Assistant: Alicia Ciullo...Office hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00 AM-2:00 PM, Friday 2-5 PM

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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

Spring Greetings!

It's amazing the people you meet in your life. Some you get to know rather well, such as family, close friends, co-workers, Bethany folk... Some you don't really know at all, at least not yet; the people you say hello to as you take a walk in the neighborhood, the person on line with you at the grocery store, or the wait staff at the diner or coffee shop. Other contacts may be totally one sided yet still meaningful; the NPR commentator, Jeff Spurgeon (my favorite WQXR radio host), the television talk show panel, or the presentation by an interesting and/or knowledgeable person.



During my 20 year career as a school librarian in Port Washington, I was able to meet and facilitate many school visits from outstanding authors and illustrators. My first author visit was in 2004 and I was a bit nervous being new at all this. It turns out my author was a bit nervous as this was her first author visit too! She had written a book called Gregor the Overlander in 2003 and was there to talk about it, herself, and the writing process. It all went very well and she went on to become super famous as the author of the Hunger Game trilogy. Imagine that! And to think I knew her when...

I was also able to attend library conferences and programs. That's how I got to meet Mo Willems and buy a personalized signed Pigeon book for me! The NY State Conferences had some wonderful keynote speakers such as Mae Jemison. However, the person who impacted me the most at a conference was Jane Goodall. She dedicated her life to studying chimpanzees in Tanzania when she was 26. Not exactly a common choice for a young British woman. Jane lived as a neighbor to the chimps getting first hand knowledge of their social behaviors and various personalities. Through Jane's scientific observations, we learned that humankind's closest relatives are also tool-users. Groundbreaking knowledge. She also witnessed the troubles these creatures had due to human activity and became their advocate – the voice for protection and conservation. This broadened to the conservation and protection of all living creatures, people included. I remember her speaking of this organization she had founded called Roots & Shoots. It involved empowering young people with knowledge and confidence to promote conservation in their communities. It is now active in 100 countries. Jane Goodall followed her passion and strove to put her vision of a better world in the hands of the next generation. What an impactful life!



“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” Jane Goodall

What impact will you have on our world? Here is an idea. Our Bethany Corporate meeting is coming up on June 14th. Perhaps there is a position or task that calls your name. Many people stay on in their positions just because no one else has stepped up. Can you be that person? Maybe you can't commit to a formal position but your skills could be used to help in one (or more) of the committees. Please let us know. The nominating committee is Tina, Jon, and Kim. They'd love to hear from you and answer any questions.

Let's make a wonderful “Impact” on Bethany, East Rockaway, and the world. Thank you!

It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to our new Bethany Office Assistant, Alicia Ciullo. She is a skilled, enthusiastic worker and a really nice person! Stop by during the week and say hello. Alicia is a student at Molloy University, graduating in May with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology. She currently serves as an office assistant, where she brings strong organizational skills and a people-focused mindset to her work. Outside of her academic and professional pursuits, Alicia enjoys playing the guitar and painting, using creativity as another way to express herself and connect with others.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School presented an Easter Pageant last March 29th. Connor was our narrator, Katie played Jesus while Megan and Elena played the disciples. We had Dom, Maddie, Jackie, and Christian as children and Elyse played as the donkey.

The children also participated in Pastor Prabhu's Installation Service last April 26th leading the singing of "In the House that Love is Building."

Regular Sunday school lessons and confirmation classes are going well. The kids loved creating crafts and playing games. During our Doubting Thomas Lesson we played "Guess what's in the box" wherein the kids put their hands in a box and they have to guess the object just by using their hands and not looking. We also played "Eye Found It" during our Road to Emmaus Lesson. During the Jesus the Good Shepherd lesson, we played "Guess who says the saying" and instead of raising our hands, we had to shout "Baa" if we know the answer. The kids also did some flower crafts for Pastor Prabhu's Installation Ceremony.



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.

From the Thriftique

We are extremely fortunate in the amount of donations we receive from the community. We then sell those donations. Most are bought for personal use, but some are bought by people who then turn around and donate them. We have people supporting a rehab facility and others who send the items on to other countries to family and friends. This picture is an example of this. This gentleman buys athletic equipment



and brings it to the schools in the Dominican Republic, especially baseball equipment. It's nice to know that not only does the Thriftique benefit our church and community, but the wider world as well.

VENTURE CREW 121



Blood Drive!

SAVE A LIFE



GIVE BLOOD

Crew 121 will be sponsoring a Blood Drive at
Bethany Congregational Church

Saturday, June 6

10:00 AM-4:00 PM

The Crew meets every Thursday at 7:30. They accept young men and women between the ages of 17 and 21. If you know any one who may be interested, come on down!

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THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY!

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.



FROM THE EDITOR:



...to the Lukens Family on the passing of Jan Sneed, Kate Lukens' sister

...to the Warren Family on the passing of Dan Warren (Dr. Wood)

...to the Curry Family, on the passing of Patrick Curry

...to the Sigamani Family on the passing of Vinutha Deavadoss, cousin of Rev. Prabhu Sigamnani



...to Rev. Prabhu Sigamani on his installation as the Pastor of Bethany Congregational Church. The Ceremony was held April 26, 2026. It was a great celebration with many congregants and local politicians in attendance.

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!

Tick Safety 101

NEWS FLASH !! Tic Season is here and the incidence of t c borne illnesses has skyrocketed over the past few years. In addit on, a new variety of t ck has proliferated in areas, including Long Island. A bite from this Lone Star t ck may cause an allergy to meat and dairy products, while bites from other types of t cks may cause Lyme disease or other ailments.

GOOD NEWS !! Follow these 5 easy steps to prevent a Tick bite...**Be Tick A.W.A.R.E. !**

- **AVOID** areas where t cks live. Ticks thrive in places like wood piles, leaf lit er, long grass, beach grass, bushy areas, stone walls, and perimeters where the lawn meets the woods.
- **WEAR** light-colored clothing to spot t cks more easily; long-sleeved shirt tucked in at the waist, long pants tucked into high socks, closed-toe shoes, and a hat with your hair tucked in, if possible. Do not walk in the grass barefoot or in open sandals.
- **APPLY** EPA-approved t ck repellent (such as picaridin or DEET) to skin and insect cide (such as permethrin) to clothing, and shoes as directed.
- **REMOVE** clothing upon entering the home; toss into the dryer at high temperature for 10-15 minutes to kill live t cks. Put ng them in the washer, however, will not.
- **EXAMINE** yourself and your pets for t cks whenever possibly exposed. Feel for bumps paying close at ent on to the back of knees, groin, armpits, in and behind the ears, belly but on, and scalp. Check everywhere – t cks love to hide “where the sun don't shine.”

IF YOU FIND A TICK ON YOUR BODY:

- Remove the t ck ASAP by grabbing it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and pull it straight out from the bite area. Do not jerk or twist. Try to remove all mouth parts
- Dispose of a live t ck by placing it in alcohol, put ng it in a sealed bag, wrap it t ghtly in tape, or f ush it down the toilet. (Never crush it with your f ngers)
- Af er removing and disposing of the t ck, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
- If you f nd a t ck on you, send a photo to TickEncounter.org for help in ident fying the t ck variety.
- Follow up with your doctor if you develop a rash or fever or allergy symptoms
- within several weeks of removing a t ck. Tell the doctor about when the bite happened, where you were bit en and where you most likely acquired the t ck.

Be Tick AWARE – and Enjoy your Spring and Summer!!

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH!! ~~ Carol Henck

THANK YOU, BETHANY BUDDIES For your compassionate and generous donation of \$840 to the **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC in UNION CITY, MICHIGAN!**

This gift will help support the community as they rebuild after a devastating tornado.

With Thanks and appreciation, The Outreach Committee,

Carol Henck and Barbara Merna

From Hibernation to Purpose:

Preparing for the Next Season Through Biblical Alignment

Life unfolds in seasons, each one carrying its own purpose, lessons, and demands. There are times when individuals find themselves in what can be described as a “hibernation” season—a period marked by stillness, reflection, withdrawal, and internal growth. While these seasons are necessary and often divinely appointed, they are not meant to be permanent. Just as nature transitions from winter into spring, so too must individuals prepare to move from a place of dormancy into a season of renewed purpose, engagement, and intentional living.

The transition from hibernation to preparation for the next season requires awareness, spiritual alignment, and a willingness to shift priorities. According to Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” Recognizing when a season has shifted is the first step toward transformation. Remaining in a place of rest beyond its intended time can lead to stagnation rather than restoration. Therefore, discernment becomes essential in identifying when God is calling one to rise and move forward.

Central to this transition is the individual’s walk with God. During seasons of stillness, spiritual growth often deepens beneath the surface. However, as one prepares for a new season, that relationship must evolve from passive reflection to active obedience. Prayer becomes more intentional, shifting from merely seeking answers to listening for direction. Scripture becomes not only a source of comfort but a guide for action. As stated in Isaiah 43:19, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” This verse emphasizes that God initiates new seasons, often beginning internally before external changes become visible.

In addition to spiritual alignment, transitioning into a new season requires strengthening foundational relationships, particularly within marriage and family. Marriage must be nurtured through intentional communication, unity, and shared purpose. Rather than reacting to change, couples are called to approach transitions with understanding and alignment, recognizing that a strong partnership serves as a stabilizing force. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reminds us that “a cord of three strands is not quickly broken,” illustrating the importance of including God within the marital relationship.

Similarly, children require stability and guidance during times of transition. They often perceive change emotionally before they can understand it cognitively. Therefore, it is essential for parents to lead with presence, consistency, and emotional availability. Modeling faith, resilience, and adaptability provides children with a framework for navigating their own experiences of change.

Beyond the home, re-engagement with community becomes a critical component of moving into the next season. Hibernation often leads to isolation; however, purpose is rarely fulfilled in solitude. Community provides opportunities for growth, accountability, and the activation of one’s gifts. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to “consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,” highlighting the importance of connection and collective encouragement. Transitioning individuals must shift from isolation to participation, recognizing that meaningful impact occurs in relationship with others.

Career and vocational pursuits also require realignment during this transition. While not every occupation represents a calling, every role presents an opportunity to reflect purpose. This season invites individuals to evaluate whether their work is driven solely by obligation or aligned with a deeper sense of meaning. As Colossians 3:23 instructs, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” This perspective transforms work from a transactional activity into an expression of purpose and service.

One of the most significant shifts required in this transition is moving from a task-oriented mindset to a people-centered approach. A task-driven life prioritizes productivity, efficiency, and completion, often at the expense of relational depth. In contrast, a purpose-driven life prioritizes people, valuing connection, impact, and transformation. Jesus exemplified this approach throughout His ministry, consistently prioritizing individuals over agendas. Philippians 2:4 reinforces this principle by urging believers to “look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

This shift ultimately leads to a deeper transformation—from transactional living to purposeful living. Transactions focus on exchange, obligation, and measurable outcomes, whereas purpose is rooted in calling, intention, and eternal impact. When individuals align their lives with God's design, everyday interactions become meaningful opportunities. Work becomes ministry, conversations become moments of influence, and relationships become avenues through which purpose is fulfilled.

Transitioning from a season of hibernation into preparation for the next season is both a spiritual and practical process. It requires intentional reflection, renewed commitment to one's walk with God, strengthened relationships, active engagement in community, and a realignment of priorities. Most importantly, it calls for a shift from focusing on tasks to investing in people, and from living transactionally to living purposefully. Though the process may be challenging, it is through this transition that individuals step fully into the life God has prepared for them—one marked not by mere activity, but by intentionality, connection, and lasting impact.

Walk forward with clarity. And trust that the same God who sustained you in stillness will guide you in movement.
...submitted by Lily and Mike Magliaro

HurriCon blew back into Bethany Church on Saturday, May 9 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Attendees were treated to comic books, artwork, toys, jewelry, artists and writers in the comic book world. In the kitchen, Linda and Joe Fardella cooked up the Walking Taco, Hot Dogs, Knishes, and more great food. Dolores Jimenez and Carol Henck helped serve and Alice Calabrese handled the food checkout. At the front desk were Jack and David Donovan, Chris Heuser, Adam Crowe, and Mike Felecio. There were door prize giveaways every half hour that made everyone a winner at HurriCon! George Jimenez manned the raffle table that included many unique items, including original comic book art, oversized omnibus editions, toys, pokemon cards, statues and more. Even though it rained, the event was well attended and will be back at Bethany on December 12, 2026! Mark your calendar!



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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

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