



THE BELL TOWER



"PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD
JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS"

Vol. 62 No. 2

East Rockaway, N.Y.

February 2022



Come on back! Sunday services have room for many more.

Please join us. Reservations are NOT required. So just come on over.

Dates to Remember:

March 2...Ash Wednesday
March 6...Pancake Breakfast
March 13...Begin Daylight Savings
March 17...St. Patrick's Day
March 20...First Day of Spring
April 10...Palm Sunday
April 15...Good Friday
April 16...Begin Passover

Lay Readers and Ushers are needed for Sunday Worship. Please sign up on the sheet in the Hallway or speak with Maryanne (516-599-5768) in the office or Stephanie Maddolone (516-355-1970). Lay Readers will be required to assist with the service and read two (2) Bible passages for that Sunday. Please speak to Pastor Mark for further directions.

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon (Closed Thursdays)

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

Stepping Outside

“Comfort, comfort my people says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her, her warfare is ended, her iniquity is pardoned, and she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” Isaiah 40:1-2

One evening a couple of weeks ago, I went to a vigil on a very cold night at Memorial Park here in East Rockaway. With a few dozen folks in the freezing cold, we held candles and prayed, for two young police officers, one all of 22 years of age, murdered when they responded to a domestic violence call. This was not a political gathering, or part of the so-called “culture wars,” it was cry of grief, not only for these two young lives cut short, but for all of us, as we protested the rage, the violence, the unraveling of those things that have held us together as a people: the difficult combination of “live and let live” and the understanding, lived out especially in times of trouble, that we are all in this together. A spirit that once inspired even those who didn’t reap the full benefits of our land to defend her with their lives.

Times are different these days. The soaring divisions between us are exacerbated by media companies that make their profits from that division, by the uncivil rhetoric that has crept into the public square and by the pandemic which has forced more and more of us into spaces that while they may keep us safe from COVID, isolate us more and more from one another, and siloing us into increasingly isolated clans. So many folks no longer have that informal, everyday contact with other people that reminds us that we are all human, all trying to make a way for ourselves and our families, those daily interfaces with others that remind us that as my grand mom used to say, “it takes all kinds of people to make a world.” Hate crimes are on the rise as people we once interacted with on a regular basis are increasingly becoming strangers, the “other,” and we are fed a steady diet from our screens about what “those people,” are doing to our people.”

Of course, COVID doesn’t care about the state of our society, or our individual souls and health and safety concerns have to be paramount if we are going to defeat it. With each new variant, and the rising death toll that goes with it, that much

is clear. Like the invading armies of Babylon that rolled over Israel and Judah, burning their cities and carrying off their culture, their wealth and anything and anyone else they fancied off to a foreign land, leaving them with nothing but their memories, their grief, and their rage. As the decades went by, their community began to unravel, its once proud monuments reduced to the dry bones of what once was and would no longer be and it did seem that God’s people would join the list of civilizations lost in the mists of conflict and time.

But God wasn’t having any of that then and God isn’t having any of that now. God sent the great prophets, like Ezekiel whom he instructed to prophesy the dry bones of his chosen people back to life. He called on a man of unclean lips in Isaiah to call them to new hope, by calling them to remember who and whose they are, the divine purpose to which they were called. He reminded them that they were the children of the steadfast God of Israel who led them out of bondage in Egypt, through the wilderness and out into the light of the promised land.

That same God is calling us now as well. Calling us to raise our eyes up over the walls we have built these past few years and to begin to step back out into real life again. We are no longer slaves to this virus. We have vaccines that are proven effective, reducing the risk of life-threatening disease for those willing to take them. In our last newsletter, I railed against what I continue to see as an ill-informed and often selfish choice. I stand by those opinions, but perhaps it’s time to let those who refuse vaccination accept the risks they have chosen, (as well as the consequences), to shake the dust off our sandals and begin to live fully again. As mask mandates are abating in states across the nation, it might be time for us to begin to poke our heads up over the walls of the bunker we’re hunkered down in and to greet the neighbors, time for us to begin rebuild our communities and restoring some sense of unity and hope in a nation in which the only thing costing us more than this pandemic is the way we have allowed it to tear us apart. It

isn't going to be easy, but Christ calls us to the kingdom, and we've got a long road to travel. Our world needs our witness to remind it that we all matter, we are all important, all needed, because we become the kingdom of God only when we do it as God commanded; together. That the love we are called to transcends the things that divides us, pulling us into the arms of grace as we go about the business of our daily lives in communion with the grand symphony of humanity, the noise and needs of our fellow human beings, so like our own,

The other day I spent several hours chatting in a car with someone I really didn't know. We were on our way to a funeral, and we talked about our families, our worries for the future; we even talked about the engine displacement of the new Cadillac hearse (did you know those huge things have four-cylinder engines and get twenty-five miles to the gallon?). It was clear to me that this was good man, that we had a lot in common, and vastly different views about things like politics. It was also clear that we shared the most important things in common: concern for our kids and their future, a love of this land we shared, the camaraderie of working stiffs doing the best that we can. I'm may not be going over to his home for dinner anytime soon, but I could and more importantly, I was reminded that I live in a community full of people who hold many opinions, look or talk different than I do, but who are doing the best they can and to get there, nonetheless. Just like me.

We're hurting in part, I think, because we can't see past our silos and symbols to the basic humanity and decency that are inherit in our common

humanity. We live in a world in which the tragic death of two young men who sought to serve their community is too easily lost in a cloud of agendas, issues and witnesses, just the tragic and all too common death of an innocent young man at the hands of other young men is lost when we cannot bring ourselves to agree that their respective lives not only matter, but are a call upon us, a prophetic call to do what we need to do to make sure that in the reality of our lives together they really do. That's what our God and our faith call us to because that is the way to the kingdom, because that is who we are as disciples of Christ.

I'm hoping (and advocating) that we try to get back to full worship very soon. I'm hoping we make a grand reopening of it, bring as many of us back together in person as possible, have our coffee hours and our choir making a joyful noise unto the Lord. We may have to shut down again, but then again, we may not and anyway, it doesn't matter. God had led us out of exile and brought us here once again to our piece of the blessed community with the commandment (as per Isaiah) that we make straight the way of the Lord. Let's take off the masks, and not just the N-95's, open the doors up wide and get down to the business of spreading the Good News with a bit more joy, a bit more wisdom, and a bit more empathy for all that we've endured. It's time to get up, get out and get ready, because "the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God will stand forever." God has not abandoned us in the wilderness, he gave us each other!

Yours in Christ

Pastor Mark



Bethany Bell Tower ...is a monthly publication of

BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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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 expres 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 Moderator

February Greetings

On February 2nd, for the 135th year, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania hosted Groundhog Day. Once more, our favorite groundhog, Phil, was to let us know if we could expect an early spring or a continuation of winter weather. Supposedly we are in for six more weeks of winter. I can believe that! It is winter and only February – early February as I am writing this.

These days, I can't think of this holiday without thinking of the Groundhog Day movie starring Bill Murray. Every morning he awoke to February 2nd and Groundhog Day all over again. Day after day after day. He is doomed to repeat this day until finally he grows in maturity, responsibility, morality, and compassion. Once he finally redefines his life he is then able to step out of that loop and into a changed existence, one filled with new relationships and opportunities.



Cute movie, right? But perhaps it has a little something more for all of us. We may not be stuck in a Groundhog Day loop but we may indeed be stuck. Are we victims of our own deeply imbedded routines to the extent that one day very closely resembles any other? Are we even aware of those routines that govern our daily activities? Truth be told, the pandemic has not helped this one bit. Lock down and quarantine really did force us into isolated patterns of sameness. I know I struggled to keep a grip on what day of the week it was!

Well, I think we should shake it up a bit. Check out your routines, how you spend your day. Really think about it. How often do we just go through the motions not even truly noticing the world around us and the people in it? Change it up a bit. It doesn't have to be drastic, just enough to notice the difference and really be in the moment. Maybe put on some music (or turn off the music). Put down the phone or paper and talk to the people around you. Talk to your pets or plants! They'll appreciate it too. Take a different route to work or on errand trips. Leave the car and take a walk. Notice the neighborhood or stores. Talk to someone different. Compliment a stranger. Surprise yourself!

If you want your brain to keep up with the passing years, it needs a shake up too. Take up a new hobby. Learn a new language. Studies show that by doing something new and challenging you can actually grow your brain. Boy, do I need that...

The bottom line is this. If we keep on doing the same things, we will keep on getting the same results. Let's break out of our Groundhog Day loop and seize the day!



FROM THE TRUSTEES:

A little update from The AV side of Bethany...John-Paul D'Agostino has finished updating the Thriftique Shop on our Facebook page so that we can get more people to come to the Thriftique. He will continually update the page with new additions. All prices are negotiable and the products must be picked up. There are NO shipping options. Plenty of inventory...clothes, housewares, knick-knacks, fixtures, jewelry, et.



The Thriftique has turned out to be a Bethany Savior and all of the people who give their time to run the Thriftique are Bethany Heroes.

The Thriftique has made a contribution toward Bethany's day-to-day operations in terms of our financial goals every month. We would like to thank everyone who works there and everyone who patronizes it. Please friend us on Facebook.



We are still looking to place a non-profit or not-for-profit in our downstairs space. It does not have to be a day care. Any type of charitable organization would work.

Please reach out to Charlie D'Agostino at 516-721-8885 with any and all questions.

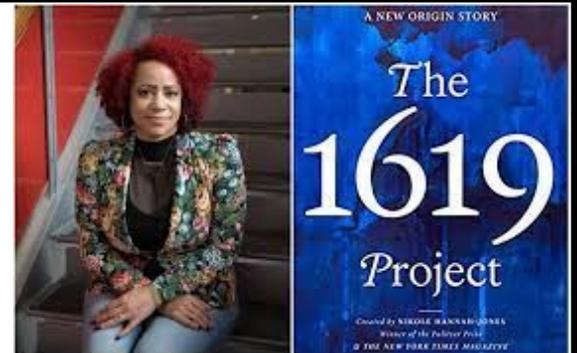
In regard to building maintenance, we have had to change a thermostat for the Parish Hall.

BOOK REVIEW

By Lou Gaspari

1619 PROJECT: A NEW ORIGIN STORY

by Nikole Hannah-Jones



History is written by the victors and, therefore, it is usually prejudiced and almost always one-sided. This book offers a different version of American history and it is viewed through the history of slavery and the great prejudice perpetuated against the black population. You will not like what it states because it differs a great deal from what you have been taught.

The 1619 Project is a journalistic endeavor developed by Ms. Hannah-Jones from the many essays from the writers of The New York Times and Time Magazine. Its aim is to show the history of United States through slavery and the great contributions of Black Americans. Read it and become enlightened about our history.

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

FROM THE EDITOR:



We are saddened to report the passing of Auburn Barkman, whom some of you may remember.

Her services were February 2nd and she was interred in Calverton.

TROOP 121

This month, two of our scouts attended cold weather camping training. Ethan G. and Kenny A. attended this course that is a required training to go winter camping at our home camp, Onteora, in Livingston Manor, NY. The annual cold weather camping trip is a way for scouts to learn how to dress properly and learn safety precautions to be able to have fun in cold weather and survive the elements for a weekend in a tent comfortably. They learn skills to provide them with a lifetime of knowledge to enjoy the cold weather safely.

We had an exhilarating presentation from Mr. Sincinito about Dutch ovens. He taught us how to care for the oven and we learned about the process of “seasoning” a Dutch oven, where certain oil is cooked into the pores inside the cast iron to create a non-stick surface. We learned how you have a specific amount of coals on the lid and on the bottom of the oven to reach a specific temperature. We were given a chart that explains the correct number of coals needed to reach the desired temperature. We learned the possibilities of what could be made in a Dutch oven and even ate a dessert made in a Dutch oven during our meeting with Mrs. Reiter.



To enhance our skills, we are learning how to make shear lashings and floor lashings. We are practicing these lashings for our Camporee coming up in the Spring. Camporee is a competition weekend and one of our competitions is to make a gateway for the entrance to our campsite using these lashings, which Troop 121 won a few years back. We are also going to make a gateway for our Pancake Breakfast on March 6th, so come join us and see what we've learned!

Sunday, March 6th is our Pancake Breakfast fundraiser (see flyer on the next page) that helps us to be able to buy supplies and go on trips and earn merit badges and other things necessary for the scouting program. We will be making the pancakes, sausage, and coffee for you to enjoy. We will also have many raffles that you can buy tickets for and take a chance on winning. It's a fun day for everyone brought to you by the Friends of Troop 121 and we are hoping to see all of our Scout families, Church families and friends. Thank you to all who are planning to come out and support our troop and have a fun-filled morning with us.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 121
TODAY'S YOUTH... TOMORROW'S LEADERS

FRIENDS OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 121

**22nd ANNUAL
PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

Sunday March 6, 9AM-12PM

Bethany Church

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volunteers and see the amazing
program they provide for our scouts!!**

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Snow Day...

By Jo Schneider-Leonsky

The fourth week in January brought some pretty interesting weather predictions. It got me thinking about how wonderful it is that in this day and age we often have accuracy relative to major weather events, allowing us to prepare for whatever is coming. Long Island was scheduled to have a Nor'easter involving heavy snow and winds beginning overnight on Friday and due to continue full force for a good portion of Saturday.

Steve bought extra groceries while food shopping earlier in the week and since we would be stuck at home over the weekend, we arranged for some extra special meals at the house. Thursday evening I had developed cold symptoms and was feeling poorly. Thankfully, my Covid test turned out negative and within a few days my condition improved. After resting in bed all day on Friday, I was feeling a bit better by the time evening rolled around. We enjoyed a Chinese dinner served on our vintage restaurant dishes with the Kokeshi Doll napkin rings, the red Famille patterned teapot and our Asian centerpiece; the Egg Drop Soup really hit the spot! It's a rare thing that on a Saturday we have no pressing projects to do, so Steve and I and our three Snug Kittens spent the day together relaxing and watching the snow fall, while sheltering indoors at our "Fireside Cottage". We had a seafood supper and afterwards I decided to make a special dessert for that night. The snow was my "muse" and I came up with an original recipe using ingredients we had on hand at home that I want to share.

SNOWY STRAWBERRY LEMON SUNDAE



Cut up fresh strawberries and grind with a grater. Spoon into a mixing bowl and mash with a potato masher. Add a splash of vanilla and half and half; stir. Add two Dixie Cups (3/4 cup size each) of Lindy's Lemon Italian Ices and mash with a potato masher. Add freshly fallen snow to the two empty Lindy's Lemon Italian Ice cups and place in the bowl; mix everything together. Spoon contents into a plastic container and freeze. When ready to eat, dish out the frozen mixture into a Sundae Cup. Top with whipped cream and a cookie of your choice. What a delicious dessert for a snowy day!

By Saturday's end, a majority of the snow on our property had been cleared and part of Sunday was spent shoveling the last remaining flakes. We enjoyed our homemade Traditional Sunday Night Pasta Dinner and spent the night snuggled together watching TV.

Though the highly inclement weather, coupled with my brief cold symptoms forced us to sequester for a number of days, it gave us the rare opportunity to catch up on "Family Bonding". It really was nice to spend that cozy time at home with my dear Husband, Steve and our precious "Fur Babies". And, gratefully, our 1888 house protected us through it all, standing steadfast and strong against the harshness outside. We hope you enjoy the dessert recipe and that everyone remained safe and sound throughout the storm!

Love to all, Jo, Steve & Kittens Teddy, Cleo & Dolly

12 THINGS TO THROW AWAY RIGHT NOW!

In recent years, most of us have been spending a lot more time indoors, especially during the winter months. What an opportunity to use this time to declutter our homes and our lives! A trend towards Minimalism suggests that the best way to “organize your stuff” is to *keep the things that add value to your life* and get rid of any items that don't.

In the process, you may part with items that could become well used and/or treasured by another, as you may choose to give them to family or donate them (maybe to Bethany's “Thriftique?”)

Ready to start eliminating things to make room for what matters the most? This guide can serve as a starting point!

12 Things to Throw Away Right Now:

- ***Photos and papers** – Get rid of duplicate photos, coupons, old magazines/newspapers, bills and statements that can be found online
- ***Just-in-case items**- We tend to keep numerous items we will likely never need. (but hold on to emergency items like first aid kits)
- ***Actual trash**- Declutter, shred unneeded papers and empty storage baskets
- ***Damaged items**- If damaged, they probably do not have much value; if broken, will you ever actually fix it?
- ***Extras/duplicates**- Kitchen drawers are known for this!
- ***Stuff you never use**- Old shoes, unused spices, books you have read or never will! Knick-knacks, empty frames/containers, junk drawer items
- ***An abandoned hobby**- How many years have you not done this?
- ***Items from a past phase**- Retired? Some professional clothing and office supplies; Past pet items. Free up space for your new experiences and items that serve your current phase of life.
- ***Anything expired**- Medications, food, personal care products
- ***Things that bring up bad memories**- If unused, try selling it online! If it does not make you feel good let it go!
- ***Clothes that no longer fit**- How many sizes can we keep?
- ***Digital clutter**- Declutter your emails, unsubscribe and/or delete apps you don't use

Strive to own only things that serve a purpose or bring joy.

Adapted from an article by Nicole Pajer, [AARP](#), January 3, 2022

WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH!

Submitted by Carol Henck

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

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS:

- Space is now available for advertising. (No full or half pages)
- Reasonably priced.
- 1/8 page....\$200.00/year; \$25.00/month
- 1/4 page ...\$300.00/year; \$45.00/month
- 200+ circulation.
- Published monthly. (Except only one issue for July/August)
- Not just local...we mail all over.
- Send us camera-ready artwork or we will create your ad for you.
- Business expense deduction (Perhaps a charitable deduction?)

Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

You can drop food off at the church from 9 a.m. to Noon on Tuesdays and Fridays during July and August. If you would like to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to "The Long Island Council of Churches" with "food pantry" in the memo.

Any questions, please call the office and leave a message at 516-599-5768.

Now that school has started in person, we will also be collecting school supplies.

A big "Thank you" to all who have been faithfully donating food each week.

HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



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Write for The Bell Tower



You can email submissions to Charles D'Agostino at cjdagostino@gmail.com or drop them off to the Church office. You can even mail to him directly: 70 Sunrise Drive, Lynbrook, NY 11563. *Thank you!*



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THRIFTique

We are pleased to announce that the Thrift Shop at Bethany Congregational Church located at 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY, is open for business once again. Our hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Entry of people will be limited to few at a time, temperatures will be taken, hand sanitizer and masks must be used and social distancing will be put into practice to help keep both customers and staff healthy and safe.

We carry many items in our shop and there's something for everyone!

Looking forward to seeing friends
- old and new - real soon!



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Bell Tower Boosters

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



Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie