East Rockaway, N.Y.

March 2022



# EASTER SUNDAY

## We're Baaaaaaack!

Our Grand Re-Opening will be Palm Sunday! Sunday April 10th! 10:30 AM

Join us in person to welcome Jesus to the Holy City!

- Sunday School Pageant!
- Special Cake and Coffee Hour!
- Welcome back the choir!
- Come home for the Holidays!

Also, Easter Sonrise Service is back at

Approximately 6:00 A.M.

at Bay Park Civic Center

Sunday April 17th!

**Regular Easter Service** 

10:30 am at Bethany

Join Us! We miss you!

#### **Dates to Remember:**

March 16...Vespers *every* Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. (also Livestreamed) March 17...St. Patrick's Day March 20...First Day of Spring April 10...Palm Sunday April 13...Prayer Vigil April 15...Good Friday April 16...Begin Passover April 17...Easter Sunday May 8...Mother's Day



### "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hands double for all her sins." Isaiah 40:1-2

ent is generally a time of reflection, of look-⊿ ing at one's life, one's relationships, and one's faith with fearless honesty, as we examine our commitment to discipleship in the light of our behavior over the past year. It is a solemn time as we seek to shine the light of day on our own broken places as well as those of the world around us, at the things in ourselves that we would rather not see. We have traditionally been very blessed in our lives and during this walk with Jesus in the wilderness, we experience the temptations of the world, as Jesus experienced them and seek his help, knowing that even our most noble intentions are sometimes the pavement on the road to somewhere other than where we hoped they would go. That's part of why we give up things we enjoy at Lent, so that we who are so privileged can get a small sense of the price paid for our sins and our failures.

But this year is different. Like the Israelites of Isaiah's time, we have seen our once mighty nation brought low, not by a foreign despot or conquering army, but by a tiny strip of RNA that roared across our world taking with it 6 million lives worldwide and attacking us not only through our bodies, but through our already failing civic and social contract as well, ripping at seams frayed by misinformation, dissension, and the politicization of virtually everything in our lives. All of that has helped to spread this hellish disease and prevented us from working together to protect ourselves from its onslaught. Like the armies of Nebuchadnezzar who struck the kingdom of Judah as it too was undergoing a national crisis of faith and values, COVID swept across the world, sent us all indoors, and cemented the divisions that were already tearing us apart. Add to that, floods, forest fires on a scale never before envisioned, war, the economic hardships, combined with a profound disunity and loss of confidence in our institutions and even our neighbors, and we have been living in a time of great suffering and of great danger. Depression is hardly even classifiable as a mental illness these days; it is so common as to have become just the way things are with too many people.

f course, like the nation of Judah at the time of Isaiah, we have been the author of much of our own suffering. We have failed to care for each other the way we have to do if we are going to live, love and grow together toward the kin-dom. We have hurt our planet out of ignorance, but also greed and indifference and we have believed too often what we want to believe and not what we know to be true. But like the people of Judah, we have paid the price. We have suffered, we have wept, and we have slogged through each day, bloodied but determined to keep the faith and to do what the Lord calls us to do. At Bethany, even as we have disagreed, we have not failed to remember that we are neighbors, friends, family. We held it together, we gave in on strong opinions because we recognized the greater good and we are still here, still holding out an outstretched hand of welcome and still praising our sovereign God for her providence, her grace, and the hand of Jesus Christ, leading us through this wilderness. With apologies to John Calvin for our pride, we have weathered the storm and we are still standing.

 $\mathbf{N}$  o, this Lenten season, as we look forward to re -building our community for this brave new post-pandemic world in which we now find ourselves, it might be time to focus not on our sins and our failures, at least not right now, but on gratitude, grace, and the task at hand: the renewal and revival of Christ's church here at Bethany. Maybe it's time to shake the cobwebs out of our hair and to come back out into the light of day. Maybe, instead of thinking of something to "give up" for Lent, can start our lives again as disciples of Christ. Like the people of Judah did after they were freed from Babylon, we can begin to rebuild our community, fashioning a new and redemptive faith together from what came before, always learning and listening for the still small voice of God. Maybe now is the time to dream instead, to prophesy about what can be now that God has led us through yet another wilderness and deposited us on the shores of the promised land. Our faith, after all is about nothing so much as it is about resurrection, not just the resuscitation of what was, but the emergence of something new and better, something unique and life-giving out of the suffering and sadness that went before.

herefore, let's not give up the coffee, or the - sweets or even the swear words. Rather, let's bring them back to Bethany so that we can use them for the glory of God and the joy of God's people as they revel once again in the fellowship that is key to living our faith in this world we share. Let's instead put down our shields, open our arms and thank God together for bringing us through this pandemic, and then, let's get back at it, for the Kingdom is yet to be.

ave a blessed Lent!

Yours in Christ Pastor Mark



<u>Bethany Bell Tower</u>...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 March Greetings

O ur next full moon will be March 18<sup>th</sup>. That may have passed by the time you are reading this. If so, let me tell you what you missed. That moon is known by several interesting names. It is the "worm moon," presumably because the worms and grubs in the soil start appearing and doing their thing. Sounds a little icky but just try growing anything without those little squirmers. The beautiful birds like them too – for lunch! By the way, the increased sunlight of this season also inspires the birds to sing. Slow down and listen.

O ne of the Native American names for the March full moon is the "sap moon". Those tribes that live around New England can tell you about that. That's when the maple tree sap begins to flow again. Christianity also has a name for this moon, with qualifications. If the March full moon is before the vernal equinox, then it is the "Lenten Moon". If it is after the equinox, it is the "Paschal Full Moon". I bet you were wondering why Easter is so late this year. Glad you asked. Easter is always the first Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon. Our March full moon is just two days before the vernal equinox, therefore the Lenten Moon. That puts the Paschal Moon off until April 16<sup>th</sup>!

The vernal equinox. An SAT vocabulary way of saying the first day of spring. The day that the earth's axis tilts our part of the world toward the sun (and you thought you just had balance). The equinox also means the fastest sunrise and sunset due to its steep angle of ascent and descent. Check it out. Time it. See if <u>al-</u><u>manac.com</u> had this right.

But spring is so much more that these scientific facts. The glorious awakening of nature, the longer and stronger sunlight, the return of the birdsong; all these events give us such joy after a cold dark winter. We are filled with renewal and hope for the future. (Boy, do we need that). In fact, let's **be** the embodiment of spring. Like the crocus pushing out of the dark earth into the light, let's push ourselves out of the darkness of cold and covid. Let's use this time of renewal to be the "spring" in our worlds. Smile more. Hold the door for others. Say hello to a stranger. Don't forget to say hi to those you know too! Practice random acts of kindness. It really takes so little to create a "spring" bright spot in someone's day. Be the crocus, that unexpected colorful surprise in an otherwise bleak land.



prin

Happy Spring!

## WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The Women's League and Thriftique will be participating in the East Rockaway Village-Wide Yard Sale on Saturday, May 21, 2022 from 9am-3pm. We will take donations the day of the sale. Hope to see you there!

Any questions, please contact Cathy Clarke.

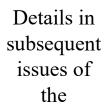
## FROM THE TRUSTEES:

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.

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

In regard to building maintenance, we need a new furnace. David Donovan has stepped up again and will run another comic convention. This time he is calling it FurnaceCon. (HurriCon was named to pay for the damage to the gymnasium from the relief efforts after Hurricane Sandy).

#### Saturday, June 4, 2022. 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.



<u>The Bell</u>

Tower.

SCOTT

ERSONA

## **BOOK REVIEW**

JUST CAN'T BE THERE

24-7 USING MY HEAT VISION. THERE'S ALWAYS AN EMERGENCY SOMEWHERE ELSE.

By Lou Gaspari

Personal Injuries

by Scott Turow

If you enjoy court room dramas, then Turow is absolutely the author to read. His newest novel returns to the fictitious Kindle County which I believe is modeled after Chicago. Turow brings us a story of an FBI sting operation investigating, of all things, judicial malfeasance.

There are many shocking plot twists throughout the book and his characters are beautifully drawn. My only negative comment is that the novel is too long and too descriptive about homes, furniture, artifacts, roads and places that seem to slow the plot and, in my opinion, are unnecessary.

In conclusion, the story is a good one and it keeps its pace as a least legal drama and one can call it an interesting and educational page turner.

## FROM THE EDITOR:



## TROOP 121

arch has just begun, and we have great things happening.

ruary 14, 2022.

First, we would like to thank Bethany and its parishioners for helping us have a successful Pancake Breakfast on March 6th. We flipped almost 800 pancakes and the gymnasium was full of fun and raffled baskets. The grand prize this year was a fire pit with comfy chairs and a few extras. It was won by one of our scouts, who was so excited to get it! We hope that everyone who attended had a great time and enjoyed the pancakes!



The 6th was also Scout Sunday when a few boys and the

Scoutmaster attended services. Part of the Scout Law is to be reverent, and we enjoyed the service, and the jokes, by Rev. Lukens.

We are saddened to report the passing of Mary Constance Willsten, wife of Jon Willsten, on Feb-

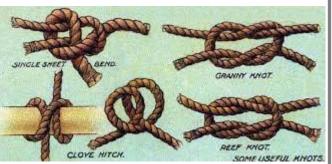
Prayers go out to Jon and their entire family.

Recently we have been working on Boy Scout knots. We learned how to tie the bowline and the two half hitch. We are also learning how to lash staves together to construct archways. We used those skills to lash together an archway for the pancake breakfast as you entered the gymnasium. We will also be making an archway for the Iroquois District weekend Camporee at Hempstead Lake State Park in May.

By the way, Troop 121 is always hoping to recruit. If you know of boys who would like to join our troop, we meet every Monday at 7:30 PM in the Bethany Church Gym. (Except school holidays)

(For more information, please visit the troop's website: <u>http://troop121ny.org</u>)

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





#### Dear Church Family and Friends of Bethany Congregational Church!

**W** ou are invited to be part of a very important Prayer Vigil as we prepare to fully open Bethany on Palm Sunday. On *Wednesday, April 13, 2022, from 10:00 am until 6:30 pm*, our church sanctuary will be open for an ongoing Prayer Vigil. We are inviting everyone to sign up for a 30 minute time slot anytime that day. There is no limit to people praying at any time. However, the goal is to have continuous prayer from 10:00 am – 6:30 pm and so we hope to fill every one of the time slots. <u>You DO</u> <u>NOT have to be praying in the church building during</u> your time slot!

The Lord hears our prayers no matter where we are praying! We will end with the Lenten service that Wednesday at 7:00 pm. A sign-up sheet will be available



at the church and you can also sign up by sending an email to <u>farrelljohnt@verizon.net</u> or by calling the church office. If you add your email to the signup list, a reminder notice will be sent to you as we get closer to the date. Feel free to pass the word to anyone who would like to pray that day.

W friends – we need to come together in unity as God's people to pray for one another, to pray for our community and our nation, and most of all for God to send a fresh revival among His people. We need to praise God for who He is and His faithfulness. We need our leaders in prayer, our members and friends in prayer; we need families to pray side by side; we need young and old to join in prayer seeking God together. We need to pray for God to move in all hearts; to strengthen believers; to unite the family of God anew; and to empower us to reach others for Jesus Christ like never before. We need to pray for the homeless and hungry. We need to pray for an end to the coronavirus pandemic. We need to lift up our healthcare workers and first responders in prayer. We need to pray that the racial discrimination, hatred, suffering and wars in the world end. We need to pray for one another.

Please mark your calendars! Please choose to be a part of this Prayer Vigil! Please pray that God uses it for His glory!

## God loves you, He really, really does!

In His Joy,

Pastor Mark Lukens

John Farrell

# Jeremiah 29:12 – "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you."

## **MAKE MEMORIES WITH SOME EASTER FAMILY FUN!**

#### Easter Egg Hunt Ideas

#### **IDEAS FOR TODDLERS:**

#### ALPHABET HUNT

Fill each plastic egg with a letter (or write on the outside of the egg with a Sharpie) and let your child organize the letters from A-Z after they've found them all.

**SNACKTIME HUNT:** Make snack time more fun with a food-themed egg hunt. Inside each plastic egg, include small edible treats.

**TOY HUNT:** Incorporate some of your child's favorite toys inside their Easter eggs. Some ideas include small figurines of their favorite characters or <u>toy blocks</u> that your child can build after they've finished the hunt.

**CONFETTI EGGS:** Add an unexpected touch to some of your eggs with confetti. Best for outdoor egg hunts, confetti eggs will be a surprising treat for your child to discover.

#### **IDEAS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:**

**COUPON CARD EGG HUNT:** Add more than just candy inside your Easter eggs with a few coupon cards for your child to use in the coming weeks. Ideas include "30 minute of screen time"; "play one game of your choice"; "No chores for a day"; "Extra dessert treat"

**GOLDEN EGG HUNT:** Make the hunt extra special by creating a golden egg for your child to find. Try to place this egg in the hardest spot and fill it with a special prize like their favorite candy, money, or a coupon to their favorite place.

**COLOR-CODED EGG HUNT:** If you'll have multiple kids participating in an egg hunt and want to make sure that each child finds the same number of eggs, you can assign each child a different color to find.

**EXERCISE HUNT:** Get in a little workout before the candy consumption with an exercise-themed Easter egg hunt. Fill plastic eggs with a mix of candy and challenges like "do 5 jumping jacks" or "hop like a bunny to the next egg."

**RELAY RACE HUNT:** Encourage teamwork with a relay race egg hunt. Best for larger groups, have the children team up in twos and line up at the starting line. The children will take turns finding an egg and then running back to the starting line to "tag" their teammate for them to go find an egg. Award the winning team a special prize or toy.

**REVERSE THE ROLES:** Switch things up and let your child hide the Easter eggs for you. Set a few parameters (maybe only include a few rooms if it's an indoor hunt) and have your child write down where they hid the eggs so you can make sure they are all found.

#### FAMILY FUN GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR EASTER:

**EGG PUSH:** In this Easter family game, each player needs to roll the egg with his nose (without using any other parts of their body) from start to finish. Whoever reaches the finish line first - wins the race.

**EGG RACE:** Place two (or more) eggs on a plate and let the players walk from start to finish without dropping an egg.

**EGG TOWER:** Get some toilet paper (or paper towel) rolls and cut them in pieces. Instruct the players to build the tallest tower using cut up rolls and eggs: roll, egg, roll, egg, etc. Using hard boiled eggs is highly recommended!

**THE TREAT ROPE**: Tie a rope between two trees (or let two people hold it). String some donuts or cookies (or any other sweet treat that has a hole) onto the rope. Make sure the rope is above kids' mouth level. If adults are playing, let them adjust. The players must eat the entire treat without it falling on the ground. No hands!

**BUNNY HOP:** Have a dance party. Whether you're at a big family gathering or it's just you and your kids, there's nothing like some good old-fashioned dancing. Turn on some favorite tunes and everyone can show off their best moves. And you can YouTube "How to do The Bunny Hop"!

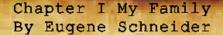
**EASTER PARADE:** Toddlers and preschoolers will love putting on their Easter bonnets, making fancy signs, decorating their ride-on toys, and walking, marching, riding, and scooting down the street for a neighborhood Easter Parade.

Wishing you a Wealth of Health!! Submitted by Carol Henck

Dear Church Family,

hen my beloved Father, Eugene Schneider, was in Long Beach High School in 1944, one of his English class projects was to write an Autobiography. The original project was typed on white paper that over the years turned buff. Each sheet was backed on red construction paper and the entire book was held together with brass paper fasteners. The project, comprised of XIII chapters, is the cherished story of our family history, involving many different subjects that offered a close and personal look into the way life was "way back when" . After recently viewing the horrors erupting in Europe, I decided to read Chapter I of Daddy's book again, which outlined the struggles of my Grandparents leaving their homeland to come to America. 1 thought it might be of interest to others, especially because of what is happening in the world at this time. Our thoughts are with those suffering from the terrors of war and our prayers for safety and healing are with them all.

Zears ago I read a quote in Ithe newspaper by Martin Luther King, Jr., a truly brilliant man. He said: "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools. " Let's hope, before it's too late, kindness instead of cruelty, love instead of hate, and good instead of evil will bring increased tolerance for others allowing us all to live without fear in a world that offers stability and peace.



By Eugene Schneider My father and mother lived in a country called Minsk. It was the latter part of the nineteenth century and this then backward country was lacking in most luxuries and, indeed, many of the necessities of life. Streets were unlighted, homes were practically unheated, automobiles were were an invention not yet heard of, medical knowledge was inadequate and many of the people suffered unaided. This city is located about thirty miles from the Russo-Polish border. Here my parents became friends and it was from here, at the tender age of fifteen, that my father left his home, parents and loved ones to come to this alluring country where everybody was free and had the opportunity to seek their own destiny.

A few years later my mother came to this country whereupon my parents immediately started a correspondence. My dad, at that time, was earning three dollars a week in a garment factory; two dollars of which he paid to his aunt who boarded him. My mother was also working and living with living with one of her aunts, but her aunt was very inconsiderate of her. Though the first few years in this marvelous country were trying for these two immigrants, as it had been for many before and after them, the knowledge, that they were part of such a grandiose country, though a diminutive part, nevertheless, this thought made them feel sublime.

In the year 1919 my parents were married and established themselves in a grocery store, working with great will-power and zest, they soon found themselves planning new occupations. My dad, thinking himself a good business man because of the initial success he encountered, concluded that by being in a business that dealt with commodities, he could acquire a larger profit in a shorter amount of time. This, seeming very logical, started my dad on his big career as a builder, and, although he was unaware at the time, it almost started him on the path to bankruptcy. As I had stated "they" soon found "themselves" planning new occupations, for it is around this time, that Mrs. Schneider took up her new occupation of mother, as well as house-wife.

With the aid of a brother in law in the lumber business my dad became a builder. In an uninhabited part of Richmond Hill in the county of Queens, my dad bought lots to place his houses upon. These lots were on a dirt road, that in the spring and fall, was turned into the stuff that stopped the German Army on its way to Moscow. "General Mud", as with the Germans, was against my father. This was not the only difficulty my dad had. Electricity had not yet been installed in the neighborhood and the electric company would not run lines just for my dad's convenience.

Laying all the obstacles aside he proceeded at his task. Soon the houses were completed, and the contractors were ready for their money. Try as he did, he couldn't find a customer who was interested in buying either of his masterpieces. Even the banks denied him a mortgage because of the location of the property. My dad was at the end of his rope; he had nobody to turn to. One day a big tall lanky gold miner just over from Australia walked up to the house and rang the bell. This was the D.A. coming for him, thought my father to himself. Many thoughts flashed through his mind as he reluctantly went to the door. What would become of his family? Was there any possible way to get out of this mess?

"Howdy partner", said the man, when my father opened the door. "Hello" answered my father, a bit relieved. "I hear you are interested in mortgaging this here place."Yes, yes".

Well, all I got is thirty two hundred. If you are interested meet me at my lawyer's office tomorrow," was the man's reply as he put down a card and left.

The next day at the appointed hour, in the appointed place, the stranger walked int with two sacks slung over his shoulder. It took my dad the rest of the day to count out the thirty two hundred dollars in single bills and gold and silver coins.



Love, Jo, Steve and Kittens Teddy, Cleo and Dolly

#### **ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS:**

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Contact our editor: Charles D'Agostino



Guy Donza SFD, Thomas Donza Call us to sit down and & Christine Donza Funeral Directors & Pre-Arrangement Counselors pre-arrangement.

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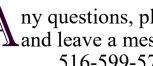
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## FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

V ou can drop food off at the church from 9 **1** 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.



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

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

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

## HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



#### **Charles D'Agostino** 516-721-8885

Lic. Associate Broker cjdagostino@gmail.com www.charlesdagostino.com Since 1994!!

## Thinking Real Estate? Buying? Selling? Renting? Relocating?

As a member of Bethany Church, I will gladly *donate* to the Church **25% of my earned income** (in your name) coming from a referral from any member of Bethany or reader of The Bell Tower, whether it is for yourself, friend, or relative! This includes any rental or the sale of any residential, condo, co-op, commercial or investment property.

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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, Lyn-

brook, NY 11563. Thank you!

## TBRIFtique

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!





#### American Cool Air

Marc Goldberg

21 Ryder Place East Rockaway, NY 11518 (516) 593-0888 (Office) (516) 593-0999 (Fax)



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## **Bell Tower Boosters**

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If you enjoy <u>The Bell</u> <u>Tower</u> 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