

Vol. 63 No. 8

East Rockaway, N.Y.

November-December 2023

Bethany Congregational Church is opening their doors to the Community for their Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. All are welcome to join us for fellowship and a delicious feast!

Please call (516) 599-5768 in advance to make reservations to join us for a warm "in person" meal with all the trimmings or to arrange for pick-up or home delivery.

> Where: Bethany Congregational UCC 100 Main Street Fellowship Hall East Rockway, NY 11518

> > Telephone No.: (516) 599-5768

When: Thanksgiving Day November 23, 2023

Time: From 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

### Dates to Remember:

November 5...End Daylight Savings November 7...Election Day November 11...Veterans' Day November 12...Party for Kate Whitney **November 18...Hurricon** November 23...Thanksgiving Day December 2...Christmas Fair December 3...First Sunday of Advent December 7...Pearl Harbor Day December 7...Channukah begins December 7...Childrens' Christmas Pageant December 24..'Christmas Eve December 25...Christmas Day January 1...New Year's Day



## Bethany A.M.

### Matthew 10:40-42, Listen for the word of God

hoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

I n this reading *He that receiveth you, receiveth me* is said to comfort the disciples, Christ is suggesting, that there would be some that would embrace the Gospel preached by them, and receive them kindly into their houses, and entertain them in a very hospitable manner: and, for the encouragement of such persons, who would risk their own goods and lives by so doing, he lets them know, that receiving of his disciples, was a receiving of himself; and what they did to them, would be taken as kindly, as if done to him, Christ, personally; and, in like manner, would it be understood and accepted by his Father:

S o, my brothers and sisters of Bethany Congregational Church of East Rockaway, WE have to be that person, WE have to welcome anyone who enters these doors and make them feel right at home here at Bethany. Remember whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me, the Father! Kind of heavy right? And sometimes not so easy!

Bethany A.M., today's sermon's title. Bethany, *AFTER MARK!* 

N o doubt, Pastor Mark Lukens has had a tremendous impact on our lives here at Bethany Church and in East Rockaway for the past 25 years and that is nothing to sneeze at!

He kept on preaching to us even through the pandemic, and he even stuck around a little longer then he planned to perform the marriage ceremony of Jack and Maria Donovan!

And now we are charged with continuing without him and to find a new pastor to lead us. I can tell you that the Pastoral Search Committee is working very hard on this and I know that for many of you this change will be very hard, I am asking you for patience in our search. You all were involved with the pastoral survey and that was a good start, a good indicator on what we are all looking for in a new pastor here at Bethany! Please bear with us.

Please have patience. Please believe the God will provide ...and keep praying!

I have seen change here at Bethany in the past! Bethany is part of my history here in East Rockaway and as I'm sure you are aware, I am the East Rockaway/Lynbrook Herald Person Of The Year, I have the link right here to prove it!

#### https://liherald.com/stories/hes-deeplycommitted-to-helping,155785

I 'm sure you know the story of how my family ended up at Bethany? The Reverend Maculdary of Bethany Church was walking down Fifth Avenue in his straw hat one summer evening, stopped at 17 Fifth Avenue and invited us to attend the Bethany Church Sunday School. For my mom and dad, getting a break from three boys for an hour on Sunday was too good a deal to pass up! And we stayed!

#### Some Memories of Bethany Church for me?

W ho remembers Wally Merna's sermon about his dad who was a Boar's Head delivery driver and Wally wanted to know why he had to go out on that snowy day! He told Wally he HAD to go out and get the provisions to the stores, so that people could eat.

#### More memories:

White Gift Sunday with my dear friend Mildred Roemer dressed in authentic Native American garb while we collected warm clothing for our brothers and sisters on the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. Does anyone remember Mrs. Roemer's Native American name? Extra credit if you remember Mildred's seeing eye dog's name. Anyone? BRANDY!

H ow about Men's Club Sundays? Bob Dever would deliver the sermon and the choir would be made up of men like Art Harding, James Fried, Bill Lewald, and Andy Durso. Time to bring that back!

I remember Andy Durso! I am friends with his daughters on Facebook and have told them that when I am up here, I think of him and feel his presence! He always made this look so easy!

nd there was Reverend George E. Hardy. What a Special man he was for Bethany Church for so many years. His wife Marion ran the Sunday School. I remember Reverend Hardy at Bethany's 100 year celebration down the street at the Colonial Room as it was called then back in 1985, where I dressed up as Darth Vader and used the force to choke Bob Dever!

remember seeing a photo of Rev Hardy burning the I mortgage for the Parsonage. He also co-officiated my brother Dennis and sister in law Joan's wedding at Saint Raymond's Church!

nd Reverend George E. Hardy was the first pastor at Bethany to coin the phrase, "God Loves You, He Really Really Does"! And when he said it, he really really meant it!

ventually, Reverend Hardy retired and Bethany had to search for a new permanent pastor. In those days, there was no internet, so members had to travel to see potential candidates preach. I think Ethel Gilloon made a few of those trips. We have been through this before and I am sure that God will provide us with the pastor that Bethany needs.

C o here we are again, in search of a new pastor! And it  $\mathcal{N}$  is up to us! Remember one of our basic beliefs as Protestants is that every believer is a priest and obtains reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus alone. The emphasis is on us!

met a woman in the Bethany parking lot who asked L about our church and also asked if we did an Ash Wednesday service. Pastor Lukens initiated this and many of you took part! I told her yes we do that service and then she asked about confession! We do not do confession here at Bethany Church, why? Because another of our basic beliefs is Solus Christus: Christ alone, Only Christ is a mediator between God and man, that puts the emphasis on us in our relationship with God. We don't go through a priest, it is up to us. It is our responsibility! We speak directly through the father!

id you know that there are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church, do you know what they are?

Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Confession, Last Rites, Marriage, and Ordination. What are the sacraments of our Protestant faith? The only two that Jesus actually performed, Baptism and Communion. That's a great answer for Jeopardy! If you want I'll repeat them so you can write them down, I'm running a little short here!

herefore, I had to tell this lady, that no, we do not do confession here at Bethany, but I did invite her in to see what we are all about, and that is what I am leaving you with today and charging you with. As Pastor Mark told me years ago, a person will be more likely to come and attend church for the first time, if they are invited by a friend or a parishioner, not by the pastor!

s we look for a new spiritual leader, let's all make it s we look for a new spiritual leader, let 5 an indirect solution own search to find those who really need us, invite them in, make them feel welcome at Bethany! This is a safe place for all!

And don't forget HurriCon, Saturday, November 18, right here at Bethany Church. HurriCon, "The little comic art convention right here on Main Street".

Yours in Christ, David Donovan



Bethany Bell Tower ... is a bi-monthly publication of

#### **BETHANY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

100 Main Street, East Rockaway, New York 11518 (516) 599-5768 Maryanne Walling, Secretary, <u>bethanyoffice@optimum.net</u>, <u>www.bethanycong.org</u>

Mildred and Art Roemer, Editors Emeritus and Guiding Lights Charles D'Agostino, Editor, Jennifer Valis, Assistant Editor Reach us directly at: cjdagostino@gmail.com or 516-721-8885 Statements made in editorials, signed articles or letters, do not represent an official position in this church. Persons with differing opinions are invited to express their views in letters to the editor.

Are you less than perfect? Welcome! We are a community or imperfect people (including but not restricted to): squirming children and their harried parents, happy and sad people, people with challenges, seniors, young people, middle aged folks, people of every race, poor people, rich people, in between people, LGBT and straight people, true believers, seekers, agnostics, odd and ordinary people, extraordinary people, un-churched and unsure people, people with disabilities, hypocrites, saints, sinners and everybody else. Because no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here just as you are!



## Greetings from your Bethany Moderator

In peace, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

November/December 2023 Greetings,

Thanks to all who attended our September Corporate Meeting and to all those whose reports we shared. It was a joy to hear of all the wonderful activities, events, and plans of our small but powerful church.

Well, the seasons are changing and so are we. The pulpit has been filled by all sorts of people from all different backgrounds. What a wonderful opportunity for us to be exposed to so many varied styles and perspectives! Bethany is now experiencing the same with our music ministry as we try to find a new person to fill Kate Whitney's shoes. Not an easy task.

Back to the seasons. The weather is changing too (although as I write this, it is 75 degrees out there - crazy!) Regardless of the temperature, I'm calling these next two months the "Season of Gratitude and Giving". November is sure to bring some cooler weather. We'll spend more time indoors and less time in that summer manic mode of "doing." We can slow down a bit and enjoy simple pleasures. I'm thinking a cup of tea and good conversation with a friend, hot chocolate with the kids, sharing the latest great book you read, whatever gives you that *aaah* – relaxed feeling. It's all good and all activities to be mindful of and grateful for. Of course, Thanksgiving is the ultimate gratitude day. It's says so right in the name – THANKSgiving!

Let's not wait that long. We can start right now by bringing to our awareness some of the wonderful things in our life or environment we feel grateful for. Ooh – let's even make it our job to give other folks reasons to be grateful as well. A smile, a card, a door held, a "you go first" moment, a hug for a friend or family member. You got this!

That brings me right to December – the giving month. Now Christmas doesn't have it in its name like Thanksgiving but it's there just the same. The kids may not get it yet but we know that Christmas is all about the love and the giving. I know I've shared this before but it's so true. The volunteer, the gift giver, receives as much if not more benefit from their actions as the recipient! Imagine that. We can be good to ourselves by giving of ourselves

to others. What a win-win situation! It doesn't have to involve money either. Sharing your time and talents can be invaluable. Often, the greatest gift to a person is simply being there and listening. Once again, we need not wait for Christmas. We can start practicing that right now with our families, our work environment, our friends, our Bethany family, our communities, and more. We can be the proverbial "butterfly that sneezes" and start a wave of good in our troubled world. How awesome is that?



STILL WANTED! Bethany is in need of a new music minister. Our beloved Kate is retiring on November 12<sup>th</sup>. We are having trouble filling her shoes. Please feel free to share this posting as you see fit.

Bethany Congregational Church of East Rockaway, NY, a UCC member, is seeking a pianist to provide music for our Sunday morning church services, other services as needed (Holy Week...), and direct our small but enthusiastic choir. The stipend is \$220 per service which includes choir practice before Sunday service (9:00 am with service at 10:30). For more information, please email us at bethanyoffice@optonline.net using the subject line - music. Thank you. We can't let her leave without a bit of a party! Join us after Sunday's service on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> for some tasty treats as we celebrate our dear friend and music minister, Kate Whitney!

If you would like to donate toward Kate's retirement gift, please see me (Janet Moser), submit a check, cash, Venmo... with a notation "Kate's Gift", or give to Maryanne in the office. Thanks!



# The Evolution of The Thriftique and Christmas Fair

In the many years that I have been a member of Bethany, I have seen many changes take place and I am sure many of you have also. I don't remember when I started volunteering at the Thrift Shop. Olive Benardello was in charge, and we only had one room. Donations consisted of a few bags of clothes per week. Eventually, Dot Cozine replaced Olive. Sports equipment and toys were donated and there was not enough room for them. We received permission to use the front of what was called the AA room but only on the weekend. Every Friday morning, I would meet a customer, Eric, who would help me move the large items out of the Thrift Shop and into the AA room and on Saturday afternoons, Bill Lewald senior, would help move the items back into the aisles of the Thrift Shop.

I remember the Christmas Fairs consisted of beautiful handmade items made by the Women's Circles. Heidi also had a table of sample children's clothes from the company she worked for.

I'm not sure what year, but several of my daughters gave me new clothes with the price tags still on them to donate to the Thrift Store. Instead, I ask the person in charge of the Fair if we could sell them at the Fair. The items were a big success.

s more and more donations came into the Thrift Shop and many were new with tags still on them, I ask Dot if I could put them away for the Fair. She agreed. At first, we would receive five or six new items per week, and I was able to immediately price them and put them in an appropriately marked box. As the Women's Circles began to disappear, the handicraft items became less, and new merchandise took over the Fair.

Getting back to the Thrift Shop—Instead of a few bags of donation per week, we were blessed with an overwhelming amount of donations. We were able to permanently use the front of the AA room, then half the AA room and now the entire AA room. We were also blessed with a shed donated by Janet Moser, for people to leave their donations during the week.

Every Friday morning, volunteers, most of whom do not belong to our church, empty the shed and sort the many items. New items are put aside for the Fair but there is no time to price them. Chris Padjus, who took over after Dot Cozine, takes care of the banking, and you will hear her announce every few weeks a check for the church from the Thrift.



# PARISH RESOURCE CENTER

November 14 ....10am Workshop-Discussion: Rebuilding & Renewing Churches December 2 ... 11am Festival of Christmas Tree, Cookie Walk, Holiday Boutique Phone us at: 516-285-0919 Email: <u>consultant@cpr4church.org</u> Visit our web-site <u>www.cpr4church.org</u>

#### Rebuild and Renew Church Workshop & Roundtable

November 11th 10am—12noon Cost: \$10 for PRC Subscribers - \$20 for non-subscribers

The new Director, Pastor Stephen will lead a workshop and roundtable discussion on the challenges and strategies for rebuilding and renewing churches post-Covid. Topics will include in-person vs. remote attendance, technology, effects on culture and relationships, how to do ministry, and more. Bring your questions, experience, and your hopes for renewal.

A s you know, the PRC's existence and purpose is to benefit and help support local churches in their ministries and efforts, by providing shareable resources, training workshops, ministry consultations, meeting space, fellowship events, and more. As always, we continue to work hard to meet the diverse needs of congregations and their leaders, especially in these challenging times, but at the same time have needs ourselves. The important work of the PRC is sustained through the financial support of donations also, as subscriptions and discounted workshop fees cover less than half of the PRC's annual budget. So, we are asking for your help in this Fall Appeal. For those who gave during the Spring Appeal, we are very grateful for your donation and generosity!

For those who may ask, "What difference will my donation make?" Here are just a few:

- will help many struggling congregations that need cooperative ministry support
- supply materials that churches and individual members can borrow instead of buying
- develop and offer free or low-cost training workshops, webinars, and retreats
- provide a place where resources can be seen, touched, and evaluated in person
- supply over 120 congregations with over 2400 hours of consulting time per year

Donations can be made through our website with credit card or a Paypal account by clicking on this link <u>Donation</u> <u>Support (cpr4church.org)</u>, or by calling us at 516-285-0919, or mailing a check to Parish Resource Center LI West at 919 Elmont Rd. Valley Stream, NY 11580. We thank you in advance!

# **BOOK REVIEW:** by Barbara Valis for Lou

Gaspari

### The River We Remember By William Kent Krueger

(This is the last book that Lou Gaspari read before his passing. It was a story that he truly found touching.)

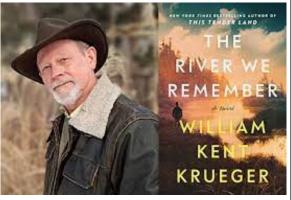
The setting of the story is a fictional place called Black Earth Country in southwestern Minnesota in 1958.

n Memorial Day, as the people of Jewel, Minnesota gather to

remember and honor the sacrifice of so many sons in the wars of the past, the half-clothed body of wealthy landowner Jimmy Quinn is found floating in the Alabaster River, dead from a shotgun blast. Investigation of the murder falls to Sheriff Brody Dern, a highly decorated war hero who still carries the physical and emotional scars from his military service. Vicious rumors begin to circulate that the killer must be Noah Bluestone, a Native American WWII veteran. As suspicions and accusations mount and the town teeters on the edge of more violence, Dern struggles not only to find the truth of Quinn's murder but also put to rest the demons from his own past.

A lthough the story is a murder that takes place, it is so much more. It is about the prejudice against a Native American who has returned to Black Earth with a Japanese wife. But, more importantly, it is the story of those men who have been deeply changed by the experiences in times of war. It shows how some cannot forgive themselves for the horror that they were a part of. Also, it concerns women who had to fight their own demons.

s William Kent Krueger has written, his "heart" is in this book.



# FROM THE EDITOR:

**Condolences** ...to Barbara Valis and the Gaspari family on the passing of Lou Gaspari. Barbara and Lou were together for 13 or so years. For a few years, Lou has been our resident book reviewer. He will be missed by those of us who knew and loved him.

<u>Get Well</u>...to Lora Fioramonti who is now at home recovering from a fractured leg. And to our very own editor, Charlie D'Agostino who will be undergoing quadruple bypass surgery on November 6th.

# TROOP 121

O n October 15th, Troop 121 embarked on a 10-mile hike at Belmont State Lake Park. The troop was expecting rain, but thankfully it was a relatively sunny day. The scouts took a 5-mile double back hike which meant they got to experience the same scenery twice. The scouts met earlier in the day, which allowed the troop to have lunch together. The scouts packed their own lunches and sat down near Argyle lake to enjoy their food. The scouts started on the north side of the trail, then looped around the lake on the south side. The average pace for the scouts was 2.8mph which wasn't terrible. The small change in elevation, only 100ft, aided in the short time. All in all, the scouts had a great time

and everyone enjoyed the hike!



A t the time of writing, the scouts are excited for the troop's next hike in the Hudson Highlands. The elevation is 3.000ft, so the scouts are expecting a much tougher trail.



Troop 121 is recruiting! Any boys interested in joining are welcome to join them at any scheduled meeting. They meet in Bethany's Fellowship Hall (Gym) every Monday 7:30– 9:00 P.M. For more information, please visit the troop's website: http://troop121ny.org)

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

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!

# FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

We had a Paint Party on September 23 at the Parsonage next door. We want to get the place ready for when we find a new Pastor. We had plenty of help. From Bethany, we had Rich Eaves, David Donovan, Maureen Meltzer, Quinn Meltzer, Kennedy Meltzer, Steve Richardson, Teddy Clarke, Charlie D'Agostino, Jon Willsten and donations from: Jo Leonsky...Dunkin' Donuts, Barbara Valis...Pizza, Jennifer Valis...Pizza and Munchkins. plus a nice monetary donation from the Calabrese Family. The biggest help was from JP D'Agostino who was able to get 36 student members of the *Lynbrook High School Key Club*:

John-Paul D'Agostino, Fabian Vanegas, Elias Vanegas, Ana Juarez, Skylar Wolkoff, Samantha Colarossi, Clara Larke, Olivia Ramirez, Jack Bourquin, Avery Milukas, Tamar Schelesinger, Olivia Bartash, Sabrina Ostroff, Delia Kirkpatrick, Kam Reis, Shameen Przada, Camila Montana, Dylan Salazar, Sami Horowitz, Kelsey Ambrosio, Lily DiMaio, Grace Clausen, Mia Daniels, Kenneth Curtis, Hope Alpert, J'Adwin Dumel, Brianna Garcia, Chloe Johnson, Anabel Ramsey, Amanda Amberly, Sydney Petrovic, Francesca Conepa, Charlene Liu, Shannon Kate Sanchez, Jaime Pereira, Amanada Ioannou. They all received 4 hours of Community Service! Plus a special thank you to their advisor, Dr. Tieniber. We are trying to keep the expenses down in making this house a home for our future Pastor it is important that the parsonage is up to date and appealing to get the type of Pastor that we're used to. The Board of Trustees is working towards this goal.

Also, we have new tenants downstairs. They are a part of United Hearts, a national charitable organization. They have an ad on page 11. Through the efforts of Charlies D'Agostino and Thomas Curry we were able to secure a 3 year lease!

**Our new tenants!** 

Thanks for your patience and understanding.,

Yours in Christ,

**Rich Eaves** 

Chair of the Board of Trustees

# **SUNDAY SCHOOL:** We're off to a great start to the school year!

or the upcoming holidays The Sunday school kids are excited to make cookies for Thanksgiving dinner at Bethany.

Iso, they will be making a miniature tree for the festival of trees at the Parish Resource Center.

ur Christmas pageant is on December 17th during church service.

Reach out to Jessie (516)860-4998 or Tina (917)270-6509 with questions or suggestions.

## WOMEN'S LEAGUE:

#### SAVE THE DATE!

BETHANY'S CHRISTMAS FAIR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023 10:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Join us for raffles, new clothing, toys, housewares, baked good and much more! Stop at our café for lunch. Please consider sending a donation to offset the cost of the raffle baskets.

Send it to 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518 and write 'Christmas Fair' in the memo. Thank you. *Hope to see you there!* 



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### THINK ON YOUR FEET !

#### To help improve the health of your BRAIN, take a walk!

The research on the *Benefits of Walking* has been extensive and the positive results very well documented! Many new research studies are finding scientific evidence that suggests that walking-*especially outdoors*-may be powerful medicine for your brain. Some of the findings:

**Walking may help you grow new brain cells~** "Moderately paced walks/aerobic forms of exercise likely help facilitate the growth of new neurons" (P. Smith, UNC Chapel Hill)

Walking may boost your creativity~ Walking increases the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the brain, which can open the gates to enhanced creativity. Studies show the simple act of getting up from your desk and taking a short walk can help trigger ideas. A Stanford University study found "creative output increased 60% when participants were walking."

**Walking may enhance your mood-** When you walk, a cocktail of feel-good neurotransmitters -serotonin, dopamine, endorphins-is released. Walking outdoors exposed to sunlight, our bodies manufacture Vitamin D which furthers production of serotonin. Even on a cloudy day, exposure to light elevates the mood. (J. Ratey, MD. Harvard University Medical School)

Walking may reduce the risk of cognitive decline- Research has indicated that aerobic exercise *increases* the size of the hippocampus, the region of the brain that is responsible for memory, learning and cognitive function. The hippocampus usually shrinks in late adulthood, leading to impaired memory and/or dementia, but aerobic exercise may reverse this.

**Walking may decrease brain-damaging stress-** Repeated exposure to stressful situations impairs memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility. Walking in nature has been shown to be particularly effective at reducing stress levels. The impact of being outdoors may have to do with "optic flow"- the perception that objects are maying past us as we walk, which guids the aircuits responsible for stress. (A Hu

moving past us as we walk, which quiets the circuits responsible for stress. (A Huberman, neuroscientist, Stanford Medicine) Just a 20-minute walk has been shown to reduce stress. (Source: AARP Bulletin, May 2023)

#### In addition to promoting Brain Health, regular brisk walking can help you:

Maintain a healthy weight and lose body fat, improve cardiovascular fitness

Prevent or manage heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cancer, type 2 diabetes

Strengthen your bones and muscles; improve muscle endurance

Increase energy levels; improve balance and coordination

Strengthen your immune system (Source: Mayo Clinic)

#### SO LACE UP YOUR SNEAKERS AND HIT THE ROAD!!

#### WISHING YOU A WEALTH OF HEALTH!

## Sharing Christmas Joy at Bethany!

The Outreach Committee is pleased to announce that once again our Church Family will share the joy with families from the Mary Brennan Inn!

### ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Details will be shared via Church Bulletin inserts and emails in the near future.



### ROSENTHAL CURRY & KRANZ, LLP

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George Washington "Rules of Civility"

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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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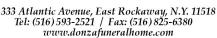
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(Non-profit Organization)

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**PERMIT NO 52** 

## **Bell Tower Boosters**

If you enjoy <u>The Bell 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 (dec.)