

Vol. 60 No. 4

East Rockaway, N.Y.

April 2020



It's wondrous what a hug can do. A hug can cheer you when you're blue. A hug can say, "I love you so," or "Gee, I hate to see you go."

A hug is "Welcome back again," and "Great to see you! Where've you been?" A hug can soothe a small child's pain, And bring a rainbow after rain.

The hug! There's just no doubt about it... We scarcely could survive without it! A hug delights and warms and charms It must be why God gave us arms.

Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,

### Dates to Remember:

(When things get back to Normal.) April 26...Deadline for Mother's Day booklets May 10...Mothers' Day...Blankets May 16... Armed Forces Day May 17...Corporate Meeting (after service) May 25...Memorial Day May 31...Strengthen the Church Mission June 14...Flag Day June 20...First Day of Summer! June 21...Father's Day July 4...Independence Day September 7...Labor Day Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers. And chances are your favorite aunts Love them more than potted plants.

Kittens crave them; puppies love them; Heads of state are not above them. A hug can break the language barrier And make your travels so much merrier.

No need to fret about your store of 'em; The more you give, the more there's more of em! So stretch those arms out without delay, and

### GIVE SOMEONE a HUG TODAY!

Submitted by Maryanne Walling



# Easter in the Time of Corona

s I am writing this, I am looking outside at  $\mathbf{\Lambda}$  a truly beautiful day. The daffodils are blooming, birds are returning that feeling of Spring is in the air. Still, there is an eeriness about everything, traffic is unusually light and the few people you see on the street rush by, heads down, as if it were a windy day in January instead of a beautiful day in April. Welcome to the age of corona virus. Here we are, on the edge of the largest city in the United States, and it's as if we had been transported to a weather station in the Arctic; we can talk to people on the phone, watch TV, get on social media, but we can't be near them, or touch them, we can't do what New Yorkers do best, which is to navigate crowds, and launch colorful idioms in each other's faces because there are no crowds. Suddenly, even in the midst of this election year, life is less about grand concepts and more about how to get fresh fruit or toilet paper. People are getting laid off, and others are getting sick and even dying from this virulent flu. Our leaders seem to be having trouble figuring out what to do, or how to work together which leaves us frightened and unsure, on our own in this strange new land. Even our church is limited in its ability to do what it does best, which is to bring us together and point us to the hope and the promise of Jesus Christ; because physical presence is just not safe.

S o with apologies to the psalmist, how do we sing the Lord's song in this foreign land? How do we keep our faith, deepen our relationship with God in Christ when we can't leave the house? What does the challenge of this social distancing mean for us, especially when it has become abundantly clear that we will not be able to be together, even for Easter and probably for quite a long time?

Remember first that it is at a time like this when our faith matters most. When the apostle Paul counseled us to put on the armor of God, this is the time. It is in times of crisis that the Great Commandments mean the most, as we

decide whether, for example, we will be hoarders or sharers, whether we will work together for the benefit of all, or let our fears divide us, pull us apart and diminish us as human beings and children of God. The little things become important as we struggle to model Christian grace in this difficult and scary situation in which we find ourselves. Our faith gives us the courage to be selfless and generous at this pivotal time, even as it calls us to care for each other as we would want to be cared for ourselves. We are not competitors in a mad race for survival, after all, we are brothers and sisters, facing a storm together, confident in God's grace and God's power, working to make sure that all of us get through this as best we can together. Others hoard, we share. That's who we are.

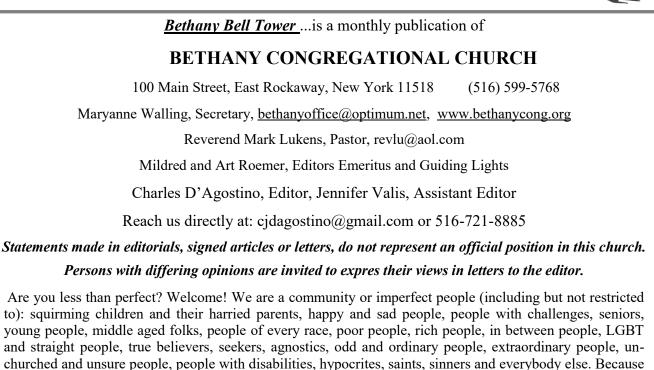
emember as well that the first Easter was Inot a time of parades or egg hunts or grand services in great cathedrals. No pretty dresses or new suits. Instead it was a miracle witnessed only by those considered unimportant in the world they lived in. It was a cause as much for fear as rejoicing even among Christ's disciples whose response to this great news was to hide, but also to pray without ceasing as they struggled to make sense of what had happened, and ultimately, as they were filled with the spirit on the day of Pentecost, to rise and become the prophets, evangelists and disciples that God had created them to be. They did this as they struggled, failed and struggled some more to become the people Jesus had called upon them to be, the people they truly were. With his rising on Easter Sunday, Jesus tore up the rulebook, reaching out to the least, the last and the lost, the people who don't matter in the world because they are the first in the eyes of God, his gift of salvation wrapped in the difficult clothing of suffering and need, offered to those who can see beyond their preconceived notions and their fears for their own safety well enough to grasp it and be grateful for the opportunity.

The point is, that at the darkest hour God is at work to bring about the dawn of a new day. When humanity has become blinded by the complexities of the world we have made, or when we are facing something that is as frightening as this virus has been for so many of us, the Gospel reminds us that human life and the alleviation of human suffering are our prime directives and that as we struggle together to get through this, the Gospel as our guide, we will emerge better, stronger people on the other side. We are resurrection people. We believe that out of the refining fire of struggle and suffering for the benefit and in the name of God's love for God's people, comes not simply a resumption of business as usual, but a new and better way of doing and being together. It is not enough to simply survive, we are called to fashion something new and redemptive out of our trials, to take another step toward the kin-dom of God and as we work together to be the church in this time of Covid-19, we are doing precisely that, even if we are doing it from our sofas rather than the pews.

his is not going to be a traditional Easter, I we know that already. Despite the hopefulness of some predictions, we are pretty sure we will be live streaming from Facebook on that most sacred of days. We will not be able to share the bread and the cup nor offer each other the sign of Christ's peace. But we can still be hard at work, as God is, taking precautions, praying without ceasing, reading scripture, dropping off food, doing our jobs, whether that is at work, or simply in looking out for each other, confident that whether celebrated in the grandest of cathedrals or witnessed by just a few women and a couple of fisherman, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Coronavirus will pass. The economy will do what it will do, but God's love is reaching out, hard at work, changing everything!

Happy Easter!! Pastor Mark





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 is a special time of year. The chirps and trills of returning birds fill the air. Bright yellow daffodils smile up from winter garden beds. Trees are budding. Lawns are turning green. The familiar sounds of gardeners at work are everywhere.

But wait a minute. You knew all that would happen, right? Even in the dark cold of winter, you believed spring would return. You had full faith that the air would warm and Mother Nature would bring life back into our world. Yes, spring is a very special time of year.

### Spring is faith fulfilled.

And so it goes with us as well. As I write this, the pandemic spreads. We hear the worst for us is yet to come. I pray when you are reading this, the curve has flattened and normalcy is headed back. But it may not be so. Whatever the case, know that this pandemic "winter" will not be forever. Have faith. Just like you knew that spring would return and the earth would be filled with life once again, have faith that this too shall pass. Have faith.



# FROM THE TRUSTEES:

We hope that everyone is safe at home and doing the right thing. We have been working with Pastor Mark to do a "virtual" service on the Internet. Please follow Bethany Congregational on Facebook and YouTube for the services that have been presented and will continue as long as necessary.

Since there are no in-person services, the church has not been able to operate the Thrift Shop or make donations to the Long Island Pantry. Sunday School has been suspended. However, we still have operating expenses. If you can, please mail a check to the Church Office at 100 Main Street, East Rock-away, NY 11518. We are also working on setting up a Venmo account so that folks can make donations directly from their smart phone. If you want more information on any of this, please email our editor, Charles D'Agostino at cjdagostino@gmail.com\_and/or the church office at <u>bethanyoffice@optimum.net</u> and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

The trustees are in constant phone communication and hope to set up a Zoom meeting if this quarantine continues much longer. There will be a full update in the ensuing issues of The Bell Tower.

S tay safe out there!

# Write for The Bell Tower

The Bethany <u>Bell Tower</u> is our newsletter. Let's make it really ours by submitting articles of interest. This can prove to be especially beneficial to writers and readers alike in this isolation. Following are some suggestions but feel free to improvise.

Do you know some Bethany history? A person of interest for a Spotlight article? Let's hear it. We know that some of our congregants are personally involved with a varieyy of charities. For example, "Locks for Love". If you are involved or know of someone, please drop us a note. Everyone would love to hear about it. Have you read a great book recently? Have you seen a great movie lately? Share a book or movie review. Perhaps a product review? How about having a recipe swap? A 30 minute meal for during the work week? Do you have a favorite poem or prayer? How about a nice clean joke? Do you have a favorite restaurant? Find a new one? Give us a review. Great vacation? Fun getaway place? Tell us.

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!* 

(While our church is physically closed, we left reminders below as to how we can all help when the doors finally re-open.)

# FREEPORT EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY

The pantry is always in need of non-perishable food items for families who do not have enough to eat. Please remember the pantry when you go food shopping. Here is a list of suggested items:

Canned Vegetables/Soups/Fruit/Beans, 100% Fruit Juice (not fruit drink) Dry Milk/ Parmalat, Pasta, Rice, Tomato/Spaghetti Sauce, Complete Pancake Mix/Syrup, Hot/cold Cereals, Canned Tuna/Chicken/Salmon (in water)/Stew, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Infant Formula — Enfamil w/Lipil/Simalac Advance, Shampoo/Soap, Toothpaste/Brushes toiletries, Diapers/Paper Towels/Toilet Paper. Low Sodium Items are needed as well

Help is needed to transport the food items collected to the Freeport Food Pantry. If you can do this once, twice or want to be a regular, please let the office know. This was Wally Merna's passion. Please donate in his name at <u>www.liccdoante.org.</u> Thank you for your continuing generosity.

<u>USHERS NEEDED</u> — Anyone who would like to be an Usher or Greeter on Sunday mornings, please give Maryanne a call at the church office, and she will add your name to the list. Being an usher is a good way to get involved with the Sunday morning worship service without incurring a big commitment. It is a good way to get to know other members of our church.

<u>COFFEE HOURS</u> — Help is really needed on Communion Sundays (the First and Third Sundays of each month). Our Deacons are extra busy with setting up and cleaning up the communion elements so if you can help serve and/or clean up afterwards, it would be greatly appreciated. Besides, coffee hour after morning worship is a great way to catch up with church friends and meet anyone new who comes to worship with us. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet posted in the hallway or speak with Ethel Gilloon. Thank You.

We are collecting *School Supplies* to be given to the children of the families served by our Long Island Council of Churches Food Pantry in Freeport. Please bring to the Church Office or leave near the sanctuary.

THANK YOU!

# Keeping Occupied While Sheltering In Place... A Loving Message For My Church Family:

Well, it's been a bit of time since we were advised to shelter in place due to the situation with the Coronavirus. At the beginning I spent time shopping for the important things for the family: Cat Food and Kitty Litter were the earliest purchases. Thereafter we bought things for us - the parents of the pussycats, filling in with additional items as needed.

It's been a long time coming - the desire to clear out years of clutter accumulated during the 27 years we've lived in our 1880s house in East Rockaway. Being stuck at home has helped me make a dent - but in between emptying the place - which I can only do for a few hours a day (I'm aging fast and don't have the stamina I used to), I have tried to come up with some fun things to keep myself busy.

S teve is a wonderful companion though our interests are not exactly the same. One thing we have done in the past when we've been snowed in was playing games - board games - card games and Mah Jongg which was taught to us by my beloved Mom (it's a challenge to play with the fascination the Kittens have with the vintage Catalin tiles - but distracting them with catnip toys seems to work every time)!

Reading a good book is a fun way to transport yourself elsewhere - as is watching television - two pastimes we really enjoy. I love the old Westerns and Situation Comedies and Steve and I watch Perry Mason episodes regularly. There are some movies that we both like, so we often enjoy a matinee at home, sharing Popcorn served in a turquoise Pyrex bowl that matches our retro kitchen. I remember as a little girl watching cartoons with Mom and Daddy in their bed on Sunday Mornings before breakfast and it seems like Steve and I are doing this with the Kittens of late. But...we can't stave off feeding them for too long - or they start to circle the bed like "land sharks" agitating for breakfast 'til we HAVE to give in. At least they are finally aware that we will NOT feed them at the first sign of day break which took considerable reinforcing from us! Steve refers to Pussycats as the world's gentlest alarm clocks - waking us with the sound and vibration of their purring - gently massaging us by kneading while nestling close. Though not being able to socialize outside of the home - I am grateful to have Steve and our "Three Little Kittens" who stop me from feeling lonely and blue.

Trying to make things special for us keeps spirits uplifted. We often go out for Chinese Food on weekends but, this week we took out supper instead. I served on my vintage Jackson China Hummingbird dishes, complete with drinking glasses filled with soda topped with fruit and a paper umbrella. An instrumental Chinese music CD added to the "restaurant atmosphere" and we had a lovely time at home. Setting a theme to the meal made it feel almost like "in house" restaurant dining, helping to stave off "cabin fever"!

I miss my Tap Dancing class (though I'm terrible at it - like an elephant in a tutu) but the exercise and social aspects of getting out a night a week has been good for me. I also miss working at the Thriftique with "The Ladies of the Thrift", crocheting periodically with friends at the Library and spending time with my Bethany Church Family on Sundays. As the weather warms, I find walking outside and enjoying the miracles of Mother Nature waking up from her long Winter's nap an uplifting experience - something all of us can do on a day that is fair.



I hope that soon the Coronavirus will be a thing of the past. But...until it's over, staying in touch by phone and email will help us feel less isolated and keep us close at heart! Be strong, be calm and be well. Looking forward to seeing everyone REAL soon, xoxo Jo, Steve and Kittens

Submitted by Jo Leonsky-Schneider



### Six daily questions to ask yourself in quarantine

As we New Yorkers are On Pause, be sure to check in with your self. The sudden departure from familiar routines, as well as physical isolation, can have a jarring affect on each of us. These six daily quarantine questions can help you structure your days.

#### 1. What am I grateful for today?

Set a few minutes aside each day to contemplate that for which you are grateful. Share them with others, write them down, or pray over them; just be grateful!

#### 2. Who am I checking in on, or connecting with, today?

While we maintain physical distance from others, we can practice social solidarity. Try to pick three people each day to check in on. Telephone, text, FaceTime friends or family. Check in on a neighbor. Make a connection!

#### 3. What expectations of "normal" am I letting go of today?

Most of our Lives have drastically changed. Do not hold yourself to meeting all of the needs and demands and goals you usually accomplish. Decide what is most important to you in this moment and focus on that. Be kind to yourself.

#### 4. How am I getting outside today?

Nature, fresh air and sunshine are good for our nervous systems. Can you sit outside for 10 minutes? Go for a walk? Step outside and watch the sun or moon rise? If you can't be outside, sit by an open window and enjoy some fresh air.

#### 5. How am I moving my body today?

The more we can shift our attention out of our heads and bodies, the more grounded we will feel. Take a walk around the block or in your yard; participate in an online exercise program; March in place during TV commercials; massage the tension out of your jaw or shoulders.

#### 6. What beauty am I creating, cultivating or inviting in today?

Recognizing the beauty in this world is an affirmation of life. Do some gardening, cook Something delicious for yourself or a neighbor, draw, paint or write a story; sew, create or just SING!! Read poetry, explore a virtual museum online. Find JOY in each day

(Credit: Excerpts taken from an article at <u>greatergood.Berkeley.edu</u>-Plus some of my own ideas)

Wishing you a wealth of health! And I look forward to seeing you all again soon!!

Submitted by Carol Henck



The Bethany Thrift Shop is in desperate need of helpers. Please see Barbara Sobey or Chris Padjus at church any Sunday or call the office for more information.

# 516-599-5768

They are open Fridays and Saturdays between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM every week!

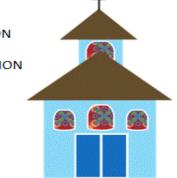




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PRAYER REDEMPTION REJOICE RESURRECTION RISEN SAVIOR SON THORNS TOMB



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## TROOP 121

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all scouting activities have been put on hold. The boys will

TODAY'S YOUTH... TOMORROW'S LEADERS be able to work online toward some of their merit badges. They are looking into holding virtual meetings.

For more information, please visit the troop's website:

http://troop121ny.org

# FROM THE EDITOR:

We are working from home as are many of you. We sincerely hope that everyone is healthy and safe and that we will all see each other in the not too distant future. We will publish <u>*The Bell Tower*</u> each month as long as the printer is working and the post office is operational. If anyone would like an issue emailed just send your best email to:

<u>cjdagostino@gmail.com.</u> It is in PDF form and that is how we get to the printer each month. The pictures are in color.

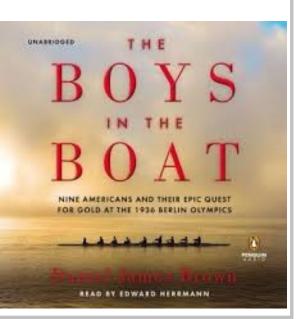
## **BOOK REVIEW** by Lou Gaspari

## <u>The Boys in the Boat</u>

By Daniel James Brown

This is the story of the U.S. rowing team's victory at Hitler's 1936 Olympics. It is an awe-inspiring book about courage and determination. It is a story that you will feel passionate about sharing with friends and, especially, young students.

<u>The Boys in the Boat</u> is about who we used to be and, hopefully, who we could still be. This is an astonishing story of the men of Washington's 9 man crew and its rise from obscurity to a gold medal. This is a must read, especially during these trying times.



# WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS:

C reetings from The Women's League. We hope that you are all doing well during this difficult time.

The Women's League is anxious to get back to their meetings and plans. Our plans for the Spring were halted. We had to cancel our potluck breakfast and our guest speakers. We hope we can have the travel agents to speak at our next breakfast. We are hoping to reschedule.

Our next event is our yard sale, which should be Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, if all goes well. If you're cleaning out your closets, garage, etc. at this time; think of us! We usually plan a paint night for the fall. We will keep you posted when we schedule that event.

For now, I've been working from home. I work at Nassau Community College. We were sent home on March 10<sup>th</sup>. I've caught up on Netflix and reading; I've been on virtual Disney rides and experienced the animal presentations on the Cincinnati Zoo Facebook page. I have been in touch with family and friends that I don't speak to often enough. I am enjoying my family dinners every night, while they last.

ope this finds everyone safe and well. Miss you all.

Cathy Clarke & The Women's League



Bethany is looking for a *Not-For-Profit* Organization to rent the space that we have downstairs. Unfortunately, **The Little School House** could not make their project work.

We are looking to rent the large room, smaller room and 3 small office size rooms plus two (2) large storage areas. If you know of any interested group, please have them contact :

### Charlie D'Agostino 516-721-8885

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EVERY MONDAY NIGHT

BEGINNERS MEETING 7:00PM , OPEN MEETING 8:15PM

Please support the goals at the Post!

### HELP ME HELP BETHANY!



Charlie D'Agostino 516-721-8885 Lic. Associate Broker, CBR, RSSC cjdagostino@gmail.com www.charlesdagostino.com



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

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 <u>*The Bell Tower*</u>, 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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God Bless America!



**CRUISE PLANNERS** 

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### **Bell Tower Boosters**

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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