

THE BELL TOWER



“PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD
JESUS LIVES OUR GOD REIGNS”

Vol. 60 No. 5

East Rockaway, N.Y.

May 2020

WE ARE NOT IN THE SAME BOAT ...

I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be. Or vice versa.

For some, quarantine is optimal. A moment of reflection, of re-connection, easy in flip flops, with a cocktail or coffee. For others, this is a desperate financial and family crisis.

For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness. While for others it is peace, rest & time with their mother, father, sons and daughters.

With the \$600 weekly increase in unemployment some are bringing in more money to their households than they were working. Others are working more hours for less money due to pay cuts or loss in sales.

Some families of 4 just received \$3400 from the stimulus while other families of 4 saw \$0.

Some were concerned about getting a certain candy for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend.

Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money. Others want to kill those who break the quarantine.

Dates to Remember:

(When things get back to Normal.)

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

September 11...Patriot Day

September 13...Grandparents' Day

September 22...First Day of Fall

October 12...Columbus Day

Some are home spending 2-3 hours/day helping their child with online schooling while others are spending 2-3 hours/day to educate their children on top of a 10-12 hour workday.

Some have experienced the near death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it. Others don't believe this is a big deal.

Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this 2020. Others say the worst is yet to come.

So, friends, we are not in the same boat. We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different.

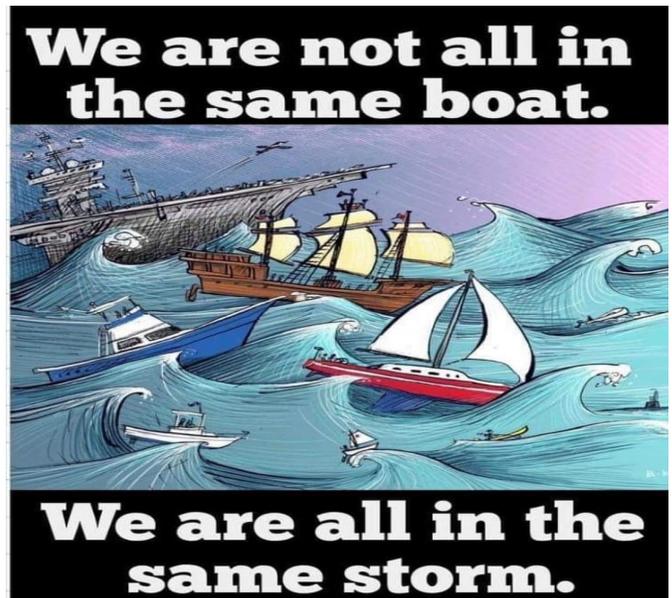
Each of us will emerge, in our own way, from this storm. It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance. Not just looking, actually seeing.

We are all on different ships during this storm experiencing a very different journey.

Realize that and be kind.

Unknown author

Submitted by Diana Harrison



Pentecost is Upon Us!

Pentecost seems to get short shrift even in a good year. Fifty days after Easter, having the misfortune of coming at about the same time as the Memorial Day with the closing of schools and the beginning of summer, a lot of us simply know it as “Confirmation Sunday” because it is the day we generally do confirmations. Often, because it falls on Memorial Day weekend, attendance is often low and I have heard more than one muttered complaint when families do not understand why we do confirmation on a “holiday weekend.”

Well, it is a holiday weekend, but the holiday is not Memorial Day. Actually, like Christmas, Pentecost is a birthday party, only this time, the birthday is that of our church. On the feast of Pentecost, as God’s people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate, the Holy Spirit broke through the locked doors where the disciples were gathered, filling them with hope, faith and love and sending them forth to begin to make disciples of the nations, and to share the light of God’s love and grace with the world.

In a way, Pentecost is the most human-centered of our great celebrations because its focus is not the figure of Christ, or of God, but rather, on the work of the Holy Spirit through human beings and Christ’s disciples. On Christmas, we celebrate the inbreaking of God into our human story as Jesus the Man of Nazareth. On Easter we celebrate the conquest of death by God’s love made manifest in Jesus. But on the day of Pentecost God’s promise that we would always live and move and have our being in the presence of God is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit, as the mission of Christ’s church was passed on to us. Suddenly, the hiding had come to an end, the preparation had come to an end, their sins and failures behind them, and it was time to go out and start life as the Spirit filled people of God that they had become.

The events of Pentecost didn’t just suddenly happen, though, as dramatic as they were. The disciples were locked down in self-imposed quarantine for fifty days, praying, staying mostly together as a community as they tried to make sense of all that had happened to them in these re-

cent weeks, even years; trying to sort out all that their teacher had taught them, all they had been through together, and the terrible price they paid for their fidelity, (however wavering), to their master, Jesus. They didn’t go charging straight out after Mary discovered the empty tomb, declaring the victory that is in fact the most earth-shaking thing since the Creation and Incarnation to everyone they saw. They had seen and heard too much for that. Instead, they called upon every resource they could muster, the power of prayer, of scripture, of worship and discernment were employed as they struggled to find the means by which to fulfill the great commission that they had been given and to fulfill the promises made by the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ. And yes, they had seen their Savior since then, caught glimpses of the wounds in his body, even broke bread with him and yet they knew they still weren’t quite there yet, weren’t quite ready. They after all, weren’t orators, or preachers or scholars or priests, they were simple people, everyday people, and yet they were called to a purpose greater than any ever known, and they wisely knew that only with God’s help that they would be up to the task.

God knew that too, I suppose, because on the day of Pentecost, in God’s own time, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, like a rushing wind. Tongues of flame appeared above their heads and they were sent out into the crowds to speak a truth so universal, so redemptive that it could be understood in every language in the world. God gave them what they needed to do, what they needed to do, for all of us. God created from these simple men, many of them whose various failures and sins were all too well known, the shepherds of salvation, not just for us who have been blessed to follow in their footsteps, but for all of the Creation, especially those who still wandered in the darkness of fear, sinfulness and despair. Simon Peter, the often tongue-tied fisherman, was empowered to preach the eloquent grace of the Christ story even before the High Priests, holding his own before the council, healing the injured and the sick, bearing the light of the Son into the dark corners of the world, becoming a founder of Christ’s church in the world.

I can relate to the story of Pentecost particularly well these days. We've been locked down for months, as the invisible enemy rages unseen around us. We do not know how to grapple most effectively with a challenge that most of us have never seen before. Along with the ever-present fear of infection and all that goes with it, is the fear of economic collapse, even of civil unrest. Our government officials were seemingly as unprepared as the rest of us and every day we turn on our TV's and our "feeds" to a host of contradictory opinions and directions as we struggle to find a suitable means to go forward through this pandemic, to separate the things we want to have happen from the things we need to have happen, though we don't seem to agree on what those things are.

So, we pray. We pray for the guidance of the Spirit as they did on Pentecost, to empower us and show us the way to be Christ's disciples in this new reality in which we find ourselves. We stay in touch, if not physically, then certainly virtually, because our faith is not about "me" it is about "we," together, laboring in the vineyards of the Lord here on earth and determined to bring the gifts of that Lord, the good fruit to harvest, especially in this time of need. But we also know that we have to

wait on the Lord, as it says in the psalms, because God's ways are not our ways, and because God's plan, in God's time, is the way to the kingdom, the only way. Wait on the Lord, the psalmist said, everything in its time.

This quarantine is awful. It is made worse by all the anxiety that goes with it, and by the struggling around the quarantine. But this too shall pass and when it does, let it be a new beginning as on the day of Pentecost. Let us have used this time to learn a little more about self-sacrifice, generosity of spirit, of courage, compassion and kindness so that we can share that when the quarantine lifts and even if, it is imposed again, as some said it will be. In the meanwhile, we are in prayer, in worship, in communion, until the Spirit calls on us to once again blow open the doors, and step back out into the Son-light.

Happy Pentecost!

Pastor Mark



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Statements made in editorials, signed articles or letters, do not represent an official position in this church.

Persons with differing opinions are invited to express their views in letters to the editor.

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



Greetings from your Bethany Moderator

In peace, Janet Moser, Bethany Moderator

It's May and we are still stuck in our houses practicing social distancing and weary with the whole thing. Yup. So what's to be done about it? Plenty!

As you might recall, I am a teacher librarian. Like all teachers right now – boredom is NOT a problem. We are putting in more hours than ever with little separation between personal and work time. But that is not what I'm writing about today. No whining here.

I hear that many people, adults and kids, are feeling bored. It's hard to cold turkey from all our activities and involvements. But that little curse may well be our blessing. I read a very interesting article from Edutopia this week about how some kids are truly thriving during this distance learning period and examining why. It appears that for some students, simply getting more sleep is a boon. Others appreciate the opportunity to structure their days in ways that work for them. Shy students are able to have their voice heard without the intimidation of a classroom filled with kids. The bullied children are feeling safe. Fidgeters and class clowns are able to focus on learning instead of distractions. The list goes on.

There are more positive reactions outside of education as well. The many children, (and their parents), whose time schedules looked like a choreographed production suddenly don't have to run to this activity after school, or the one after, or eat dinner in the car on the way, or do homework exhausted at 9pm. The pressure is off. Instead, some of these kids are learning how to be a full member of their family, learning to cook, do laundry, and enjoy meals together and proud of it. They are learning who they are and exploring interests there was never time for before. Many of my students tell me they learned to ride a two wheeler! Some are pursuing new hobbies or learning to play guitar.

We have those same opportunities. Let's use this time to get to know ourselves better. Be bold and start a new hobby. Learn a new language (public libraries have great programs free for you), take up gardening or bird watching, maybe even astronomy. The possibilities are endless. Don't miss it. You know, given the right perspective, we just might enjoy this quarantine.



FROM THE EDITOR:



Our Sincerest Condolences to **Dot Cozine** and her entire family on the passing of Dot's daughter, **Linda Greco**.

Get Well Soon!



To **Bill Lewald, Sr.** We hope you are better soon!

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 ***The Bell Tower*** 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: **cjdagostino@gmail.com**. It is in PDF form and that is how we get to the printer each month. The pictures are in color!

Write for The Bell Tower

The Bethany *Bell Tower* 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 variety 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 www.liccdoante.org. Thank you for your continuing generosity.

USHERS NEEDED — 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.

COFFEE HOURS — 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!

Greetings Members & friends of Long Island Council of Churches,

Thank you to all of those who have donated to the LICC Emergency Food Pantry through our LICCDonate.org website during this urgent time. WE have raised almost \$6,000.00 for direct food purchase. With all of the gracious donations we have received, we still your help as the need for food grows with all of our Neighbors. Please read the following message and support the LICC in combating food insecurity in our communiutes. Thank you.

During this time of uncertainty with many of our *Neighbors* facing times of unprecedented closings and layoffs the Long Island Council of Churches (LICC) needs your support in keeping our shelves stocked so we may keep our doors open to continue in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need*.

While many of our religious institutions are practicing social distancing with closings, the LICC Emergency Food Pantry **WILL CONTINUE** to stay open. However, we have seen a sharp decline in direct delivery food donations from Churches and Congregations. At this time of social awareness, in an effort to support social distancing and promote healthy living, we are asking for your support to continue in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need* with donations by alternative means, please see below:

LICC website, LICCDonate.org. OR Amazon.com and have items shipped directly to: (OR Mail a check to:)

**Long Island Council of Churches
Attn: Emergency Food Drive
230 Hanse Avenue
Freeport, New York 11520-1009**

Emergency Items Needed:

Dry Cereal (Cold); **Hot Cereal** (Grits; oatmeal); **Vegetables** (Canned corn; carrots; spinach, collard and green beans, etc.); **Jelly** (plastic bottles preferred); **Soup** (any kind); **Pasta** (any kind); **Pasta Sauce**; **Rice** (1- or 2-pound bags); **Shelf stable milk**; **Canned meats** (Chicken; spam; Vienna sausage), **Toiletries** (Toothpaste; Toothbrushes; soap; deodorant; feminine products; razors; shampoo; conditioner); **Baby diapers** (All sizes)

If you have any questions, please contact the Freeport Emergency Food Pantry at 516-868-4989.

Thank you from the hungry Long Islanders we serve, staff, and Long Island Council of Churches' Administrative Board for your support in helping us in *Serving Our Neighbors in Need*.

Anthony Achong, Director of Administration and Operations

Heaven's Surprise

I was shocked, confused, bewildered as I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all, nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven who made me sputter and gasp—
The thieves, the liars, the sinners, the alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade who swiped my lunch money twice.

Next to him was my old neighbor who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought was rotting away in hell,

Was sitting pretty on cloud nine, looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal? I would love to hear your take.

How'd all these sinners get up here? God must've made a mistake.

'And why's everyone so quiet, so somber – give me a clue.'

'Child,' He said, 'they're all in shock. They never thought they'd be seeing you!'

Submitted by Cathy Clarke

Dear Brethren,

Wow! What a challenging time for us all. Like the Israelites in Egypt, most of us are hunkering down, social distancing and hoping for the best as this sickness passes slowly over our country. Others are going to work at jobs that are deemed “essential” or “first responder” or “front line” from nurses to grocery store workers. Still others, like teachers and business people and pastors, are struggling to adapt the work we do to meet the challenges of this time of quarantine. For most of us, money is uncertain and tight, and we must prioritize our spending.

That is why we are writing. Bethany is working to be the place of grace that it has always been both for its members and for this community at large. Our tiny staff is still working as hard and long as ever. We thank those who have been sending in pledges and gifts and we ask that all of our members to please try and do the same or even think about increasing your giving if you can. Pastor Mark and the rest of our staff are struggling to make sure that Bethany is what it has always been— a little church with a great, holy and loving Spirit. Please help us if you can. Every small bit helps to keep our ministry afloat and our essential staff working.

To that end, we have adopted several methods of online giving: Get tithe.ly and www.venmo.com. [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly) was created for churches. By simply downloading the app on your smartphone or creating an account on the very user-friendly website, you can give to your church by the click of a button. Simply create an account and find Bethany Congregational's name. It asks for a credit or debit card for your donations. This service does charge the recipient, Bethany, a fee. It offers the giver an option to include that fee in the donation but that is up to you. It is rather easy to set up and start.

Venmo is another option for online donations. Venmo is an app for your smartphone or can be accessed on your computer at [Venmo.com](https://venmo.com). You will need to set up an account which will be securely linked to your bank account. Please check the privacy settings. There are three levels. One is totally public (NO), another shows your name as donating without a monetary amount shared (Better), and the third is totally private between you and Bethany (my personal choice). It may ask for the last four digits, 7350, of the Bethany Venmo phone number. The benefit of **Venmo** is, unlike tithe.ly, there are no fees involved. Whatever you are comfortable with - the choice is yours.

Of course, you may still mail your donations and pledges to:
Bethany Congregational Church - 100 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518

If you need us, of course, we're still maintaining our regular office hours (9am-noon, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 2pm to 5pm on Thursday) and Pastor Mark is available as always at 516 599-5768 and 516 458-1622 respectively or by e-mail at Bethanyoffice@optonline.net or e-mail pastor directly at revlu@aol.com. Remember that even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil, because God is with us always! We will get through this together!

Yours in Christ,

Richard Eaves – Board of Trustees – chairperson

Janet Moser – Bethany Moderator

How a Bethany Choir Director Saved My Brother

At least a year ago, John Diver wrote a tribute for the *Bell Tower* to my eldest half brother Lynn H. Wilke, who passed away on March 5, 2018. He was 87. The Sunday school teachers and Reverend Wilson certainly influenced Lynn, but it was the Choir Director, Henry Fordham, who changed his life.

Lynn was a weak student at Rhame Avenue School and in his middle school years at East Rockaway High School. I'm sure the low point in his academic career was the day my mother, Mildred Roemer, and Lynn had to meet with a middle school teacher at ERHS. With Lynn standing right next to my mother, the teacher proclaimed that Lynn "was so stupid that he would never graduate from high school." That brutal judgment undermined the minuscule amount of confidence Lynn had in himself. (It wasn't until Lynn was in his 40s that he was diagnosed with dyslexia.)

In music classes at ERHS and in choir rehearsals at Bethany, Mr. Fordham noticed Lynn's dejection. He also spotted a talent that Lynn's teachers had missed. He took a chance—gave Lynn a college music aptitude test. This was indeed a gamble that could have further sabotaged Lynn's self-esteem. Lynn scored 98%. I'm sure he and Mr. Fordham were shocked and pleased. There was something Lynn was good at, very good. That test, and Mr. Fordham's encouragement, transformed Lynn's in-class and extracurricular musical performance.

In his senior year, he was inducted into the National Honor Society. (The only embarrassing drawback to the induction ceremony was that he had a hole in the back of his pants, and he was afraid that his classmate, the beautiful Julie Isakson, would notice.) Lynn went on to get his bachelors at Fredonia and his master's at Columbia. For 50 years, he was the organist for St. Augustine Church in Peru, NY, and for more than thirty years the band Director and music Director at Peru Central High. One of his students went on to perform at the Met, and Lynn's band was so good that it was selected to help open the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid in 1980.

My mother firmly believed that if Mr. Fordham hadn't spotted and encouraged Lynn's musical talent, he might not have graduated from high school and certainly wouldn't have had a Columbia master's and star students and bands.

Ken Roemer

TROOP 121

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all scouting activities have been put on hold. The boys will be able to work online toward some of their merit badges. They have begun holding virtual meetings.

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

<http://troop121ny.org>

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

Bethany Annual Corporate Meeting

How do you have an annual corporate meeting in the midst of a pandemic?
You cancel the previous date and make a new plan!

The New Plan

**Our Bethany Annual Corporate Meeting will be held on
June 14' 2020 at 1:00pm.**

This will be a virtual meeting keeping us all safe and sound in our homes. We will use a program called Zoom which enables us to see and hear each other. I will send out the packets digitally prior to that date. You will receive the proposed budget for the next fiscal year and the proposed slate of church officers. Both of these items must be voted on at our meeting. Other business may be discussed as needed.

To Join the Zoom Meeting.

First go to zoom.us and download the program. It's easy!

Then click on this link. Once in, please mute your microphone.

**[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78536497318?
pwd=TERaRVMzc1ZLaENnSFJ6VCtDMzBPQT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78536497318?pwd=TERaRVMzc1ZLaENnSFJ6VCtDMzBPQT09)**

Meeting ID: 785 3649 7318

Password: 8YMZ46

If you do not have internet access, neither computer nor smart phone, you may join this meeting via your regular telephone. **Dial 1-408-638-0968.** You will be asked for the meeting ID and password which is above.

Any problems, call me at 516-603-3972

I look forward to seeing you all there!

Janet Moser

Bethany Moderator

Change In Thrift Shop Hours:

As a preventive precaution against the Coronavirus, Bethany's Thriftique will be closed as of Friday, March 13, 2020 until further notice.

We thank you for your patronage, apologize for any inconvenience and hope to reopen soon.

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 :

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Bethany Congregational Church

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Mural in the Fellowship Hall

Courtesy of Diana Harrison and Anthony Claverie

