



## Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

...Heralding the Good News to our neighbors...

**Website:**

[www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org](http://www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org)

**E-mail:** [1st.Cong.Church@gmail.com](mailto:1st.Cong.Church@gmail.com)

**November/December 2023**

✽ Our Sunday worship service begins at 10:00 a.m. ✽

### CHURCH STAFF

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Reverend Sue Walters

(716) 983-5760

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### ✦ **From the Pastor** ✦

*7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, 9 a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing....11 "Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes that I am commanding you today. 12 When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them 13 and when your herds and flocks have multiplied and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 14 then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, 15 who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous[a] snakes and scorpions.*

*Deuteronomy 8:7-9, 11-15*



These are the words of Moses reminding God's people (Again!) that God is providing for them, even when they do not see it. How did they lose their vision? They relied on themselves and their own perceptions. They questioned Moses, rather strongly. They turned their backs on his leadership. When he went up the mountain to receive the 10 commandments, they built and worshipped a golden calf. They did not follow Moses because they could not see where they were going. They looked back, and saw their slavery only in terms of the provisions they received: they had food and shelter. They forgot how badly they were treated by their masters. They only saw what they wanted to see.

We are not unlike them. While we are still and always will be God's people, we too tend to rely on our own vision. We see what we want to see and ignore the rest. Or, we twist the rest so it fits into our vision. We have been led by God as surely as the Israelites were. We are where we are supposed to be. It may not fit right; we may be somewhat uncomfortable at the present moment. Maybe we had plans for our lives that haven't worked the way we thought they would. Perhaps our children or grandchildren are struggling, and we don't know how to help. Perhaps we ourselves are facing obstacles that are challenging the way we thought our lives would be. We wanted things to be perfect and they aren't.

If this is your circumstance, maybe it's time to refocus. As Moses instructed the Israelites, we cannot forget our guide. We cannot forget His commandments, statutes and ordinances. We cannot forget that as surely as he was leading the Israelites into a land of milk and honey, He will also lead us. Rather than looking at what we see as not being right with our lives, let us be thankful for what we do have. As the Israelites built fine houses, so we also have solid roofs over our head. We do not go hungry. We have enough to share. We have a community of faith for support and encouragement ...to both give and receive. And, in just a short time, we will again be the season of Advent. This is the time leading up to Christmas, where we prepare ourselves to receive the greatest gift ever given to humanity: Jesus, the Christ. This gift of God's most precious Son, dispels any doubts we have about the love of God for us and all creation. It firmly directs us to see God's intervention in our lives, to bring good that triumphs over evil.

We have much to be thankful for, if we" turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full in his glorious face...then the things of life will grow strangely dim...in the light of His glory and grace."

Blessings,

Sue

*\*\*\* O God, your Spirit speaks through your prophets, protecting your people from those who would lead them astray. Raise up new voices in our time to speak with justice and power and to challenge the complacency that would have us rest easily with sin. Amen.\*\*\**

## ✦ Church News & Updates ✦

### ● **In Memorium: Beverley A. Clark (Rymer)**

Beverley A. Clark (Rymer), 92, of Bloomfield, NY, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

Bev was a worker in every way. She was always busy with things of importance to her. She loved her family, her work, her church, and her God!

She was proud of her four boys and, as they came along, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved them all, dearly. She loved and supported her husband, Ken, often working side by side with him in their greenhouse. Her knowledge and love of flora was so detailed.



Bev was a dedicated nurse at Thompson Health for many years. She held an RN degree and in her later years served as charge nurse in the hospital.

As a faithful member of the First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield, she served on many boards of the church. She was the organizer of the rummage sale for several years as well as organizing the pie bake sale for the church at the Bloomfield Bazaar.

Bev loved music. She said singing was what brought her to a church when she was young! She was a long-term member of the choir of the Congregational Church. The church was so blessed by her beautiful alto voice! She also was a member of the Voices of Faith vocal band that formed for a period for the third Sunday service.

Bev also loved books. She had a mini library in her house. She was a member of the Bloomfield Library Book Club as well as the church's book club.

Bev will always be remembered for her willingness to join in the work of the church. She volunteered her time whether it was painting or cleaning the building, singing praises to God, helping with many fundraisers, but most of all for being a great friend to all. We will sorely miss her.

### ● **Blue Christmas Service:**

Pastor Sue will be conducting a Blue Christmas service Sunday, December 17th at 4 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The intended congregation for this service is people for whom this is not "the most wonderful time of the year." It is for those who grieve, for those who struggle, for those who find themselves alone and/or lonely. This quiet, reflective service will gently and quietly proclaim that the Son of God came to bring light into whatever darkness is

being faced. Please share this service with anyone you know who may be facing these or other issues. All are welcome, even if you just want to sit in peace and quiet.

- **Christmas Eve Service:** There is a Christmas Eve service, in the sanctuary, on Sunday, December 24th at 7:00 p.m.

- **Women's and Men's Breakfast Dates and Times:** The [changed] dates & times remain the same for both the men and women's breakfast - the women meet on the first Monday of the month at 9:00 a.m. and the men meet on the last Sunday at 7:45 a.m. Both groups will also continue to meet at Brady J's restaurant here in Bloomfield (at 24 Maple Avenue).

- **Advent Sermon Series:** The pulpit focus this Advent will be a little different. Since the Gospel of Mark, which is the gospel to be read during Year B, contains nothing, not even a single verse, about Jesus' birth, Pastor Sue will do a sermon series focusing on the Psalms appointed for each of these Sundays. She will still be lifting up the traditional Advent words of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, just from the perspective of the Psalms. Therefore, the first Sunday of Advent (which starts December 3rd) will feature Psalm 80: 1-7,17-19; the second Sunday will feature Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13; the third Sunday will feature Psalm 126 and the the fourth Sunday of Advent (Christmas Eve) will feature Psalm 89:1-4,19-26. Hope you enjoy this slightly different focus during this season of Advent.

- **From the Trustees:** The trustees oversaw the work to conduct repairs to the church building foundation. Most of the work was on the outside of the building but there was one room inside where extensive work had to be done due to the foundation crumbling. The church thanks the trustees for taking care of the building and many thanks go to Brian Cameron, the stone mason who did the repair.

- **Annual Stewardship Campaign:**

The letters for pledges for 2024 went out the last week in October to church members and friends. Hopefully, you have received your letter from the church asking for your pledge to support the work and mission of the church.

As you consider what your stewardship offering is for 2024, please remember these words by the Rev. Dr. Justin Gilreath (a church pastor in SC):

*"Stewardship can be confusing. It's sometimes mistaken for fundraising, but stewardship is not about the church budget or paying for a new roof for the church building, it's about recognizing God's work in our lives and responding to God with gratitude. Stewardship is the prayerful work of managing our time, talent and treasure to bring about God's kingdom on earth. At our church, we believe that stewardship is a part of our spiritual journey and our relationship with God."*

The pledges from the congregation will be officially welcomed (placed in the offering plate) on Stewardship **Sunday, November 12, 2023**, though you may provide your pledge to a trustee in the weeks after.

If you have not received a pledge request and wish to donate, please call the church at (585) 657-7755 and the pastor or a trustee will assist you.

● **Sanctuary Decorating:** Please join us on **Sunday, November 26th** as we decorate the church for the Christmas holiday season. The decorating will start after our normal church service.

### ✦ Birthdays ✦

These people are celebrating birthdays during these two months. When you see them, please wish them a Happy Birthday!



November	December
29 - Noah Bartos	13 - Jacquie Walters

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*Shepherd of Israel, hear our prayer as your Son heard the plea of the criminal crucified with him. Gather into Christ's holy reign the broken, the sorrowing, and the sinner, that all may know wholeness, joy, and forgiveness. Amen.*

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### ✦ Reoccurring Calendar Events (Monthly) ✦

● **Special Offering:** An extra offering plate is passed on the first Sunday of every month. This special offering supports church outreach to the local community and local missions and is kept in the Benevolence Fund for future distributions. The offering basket will be available at our live service. For this period, the special offerings will be on **Sunday, November 5th**, and **Sunday, December 3rd**. If you are unable to attend, please contact Janice Kelly, our Benevolence Secretary, to make arrangements for your gift.

Please note that if you are unable to attend worship service yet wish to make a donation to the church (pledge, benevolence or faith), you can mail your donation to Marilyn Shafer at 12 Howard Avenue, Bloomfield, NY, 14469.

- **Church Council:** The church council meets the first Sunday of each month after regular church services. For this period, meetings are on **Sunday, November 5th**, and **Sunday, December 3rd**.

- **Woman's Breakfast:** meets the first Monday of every month at **Brady J's** restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at 9:00 a.m. All interested women are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the women will meet on **Monday, November 6th**, and **Monday, December 4th**.

- **Choir Practice:** The choir rehearses every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. In addition, the choir meets on Sundays at 9:15 a.m. for rehearsal. As always, they are looking for singers and all are welcome.

- **Men's Breakfast:** The men meet the last Sunday of every month at **Brady J's** restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at 7:45 a.m. All interested men are invited; being a member of the church isn't a requirement. For this period, the men will meet on **Sunday, November 26th**, and **Sunday, December 31st**.

### ✦ November and December Specific Calendar Events ✦

- **Wednesday, November 1:** All Saints' Day
- **Sunday, November 5:** Daylight Saving Time ends (set your clocks **back**)
- **Sunday, November 5 (after the worship service):** Council meeting
- **Monday, November 6 (9:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Friday, November 10:** Veterans Day (observed)
- **Saturday, November 11:** Veterans Day
- **Thursday, November 16, 2023 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *The Book Woman's Daughter* by Kim Michele Richardson.



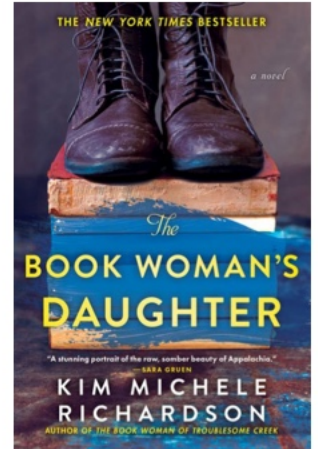
## Amazon synopsis:

Bestselling historical fiction author Kim Michele Richardson is back with the perfect book club read following Honey Lovett, the daughter of the beloved Troublesome book woman, who must fight for her own independence with the help of the women who guide her and the books that set her free.

In the ruggedness of the beautiful Kentucky mountains, Honey Lovett has always known that the old ways can make a hard life harder. As the daughter of the famed blue-skinned, Troublesome Creek packhorse librarian, Honey and her family have been hiding from the law all her life. But when her mother and father are imprisoned, Honey realizes she must fight to stay free, or risk being sent away for good.

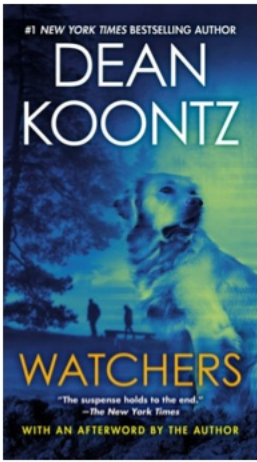
Picking up her mother's old packhorse library route, Honey begins to deliver books to the remote hollers of Appalachia. Honey is looking to prove that she doesn't need anyone telling her how to survive. But the route can be treacherous, and some folks aren't as keen to let a woman pave her own way.

If Honey wants to bring the freedom books provide to the families who need it most, she's going to have to fight for her place, and along the way, learn that the extraordinary women who run the hills and hollers can make all the difference in the world.



- **Thursday, November 23:** Thanksgiving Day
- **Sunday, November 26 (7:45 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's.
- **Sunday, November 26 (after the worship service):** We decorate the church for the Christmas season
- **Sunday, December 3:** First Sunday of Advent
- **Sunday, December 3 (after the worship service):** Council meeting
- **Monday, December 4 (9:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Sunday, December 10:** Second Sunday of Advent
- **Sunday, December 17:** Third Sunday of Advent
- **Thursday, December 21 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the book *Watchers* by Dean Koontz.





### Amazon synopsis:

On his thirty-sixth birthday, Travis Cornell hikes into the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains. But his path is soon blocked by a bedraggled Golden Retriever who will let him go no further into the dark woods.

That morning, Travis had been desperate to find some happiness in his lonely, seemingly cursed life. What he finds is a dog of alarming intelligence that soon leads him into a relentless storm of mankind's darkest creation...

- **Sunday, December 24:** Fourth Sunday of Advent
- **Sunday, December 24:** Christmas Eve
- **Monday, December 25:** Christmas Day

*Merry  
Christmas*



- **Sunday, December 31:** New Year's Eve
- **Sunday, December 31 (7:45 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's.



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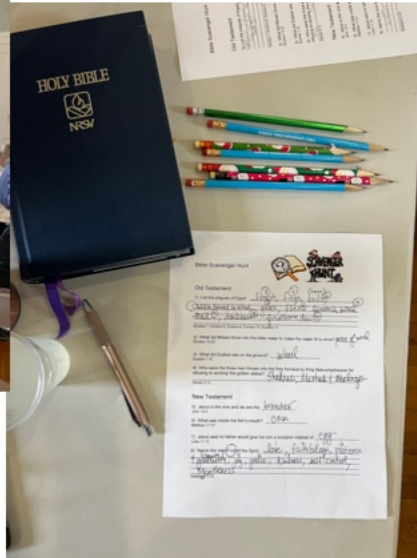
*Brothers and sisters,  
as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ,  
let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.  
Make us grateful for the good news of salvation  
and keep us faithful in your service  
until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## ✦ Picture Us ✦

● **Rally Day:** The congregation celebrated Rally Day on Sunday, September 10th; we had a really good turn out. Everyone seemed to enjoy the lunch put on by the committee. Following that we played a Bible "scavenger hunt" at the tables which was teamwork in action; it involved finding things in the Bible.

As part of Rally Day, the Christian Education committee did a fundraiser to benefit Bloomfield's elementary school students with snacks and or extras for the Friday Backpack program. We had a really good response from our church family in attendance and will be forwarding the funds raised to the Bloomfield school officials.



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*Merciful God of peace, your work, spoken by the prophets, restores your people's life and hope. Fill our hearts with the joy of your saving grace, that we may hold fast to your great goodness and in our lives proclaim your justice in all the world. Amen.*

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## ✦ Miscellaneous ✦

- **Pastor Office Hours:** Pastor Sue has open door office hours every Thursday. She leads morning prayer from her office beginning at 9:00 a.m. which is streamed live on the church's Facebook page. Pastor Sue will remain in her office until 1:00 p.m. and, as always, drop-ins for a cup of coffee or tea are welcome. She is also available at other times by appointment; please call (716) 983-5760 to make arrangements.
- **Church Membership:** Please call Pastor Sue Walters at (716) 983-5760 or e-mail her at revst88@gmail.com for information on joining the First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield or to arrange Home Communion for a shut in.
- **Advertising A Church Event:** To advertise any church event, please contact Alice McConnell, 8291 Wesley Road, Bloomfield, 14469; (585) 402-5397 or e-mail her at beehive270@gmail.com. Please ensure you get the written details of the event to Alice 4 weeks before the date of the event.
- **Worship Services:** For those who cannot attend the in-person service, we continue to record and post portions of the worship service on our Facebook page. Please note the posts are audio only (similar to a podcast) and we are recording only the scripture readings and the sermon (and sometimes the song offering from the choir). The podcasts can be listened to at any time (along with all the other videos we've posted) by accessing the Video tab on our Facebook page (link: <https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-Bloomfield-NY-357770224341588/>).
- **Food Cupboard:** As a continuing reminder, please keep the food cupboard's needs in your minds and hearts. We collect/deliver for the cupboard on a monthly basis, however, donations are welcome at any time.

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*God of joy and exultation,  
you strengthen what is weak;  
you enrich the poor  
and give hope to those who live in fear.  
Look upon our needs this day.  
Make us grateful for the good news of salvation  
and keep us faithful in your service  
until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## ✧ Lectionary Readings for November & December ✧

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
<b>All Saints Day November 1, 2023</b>	Revelation 7:9-17 Psalm 34:1-10, 22		1 John 3:1-3	Matthew 5:1-12
<b>November 5, 2023</b>	Joshua 3:7-17 Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37	Micah 3:5-12 Psalm 43	1 Thessalonians 2:9-13	Matthew 23:1-12
<b>November 12, 2023</b>	Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Psalm 78:1-7	Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 <i>or</i> Amos 5:18-24 Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 <i>or</i> Psalm 70	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Matthew 25:1-13
<b>November 19, 2023</b>	Judges 4:1-7 Psalm 123	Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Matthew 25:14-30
<b>Thanksgiving Day November 23, 2023</b>	Deuteronomy 8:7-18 Psalm 65		2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Luke 17:11-19
<b>November 26, 2023</b>	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 100	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 95:1-7a	Ephesians 1:15-23	Matthew 25:31-46
<b>December 3, 2023</b>	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37
<b>December 10, 2023</b>	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
<b>December 17, 2023</b>	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126 <i>or</i> Luke 1:46b-55	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
<b>December 24, 2023</b>	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:46b-55 <i>or</i> Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
<b>Christmas Eve &amp; Christmas Day December 24 &amp; 25, 2023</b>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
	Isaiah 62:6-12	Psalm 97	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20
	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)	John 1:1-14
	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

\* "First" OT readings, read semi-continuously, follow major stories/themes, beginning in Year A with Genesis and ending in Year C with the later prophets. *Italicized readings may be used with, or in place of it.*

\* "Alternate First" OT readings follow the complementary historical tradition of thematically pairing the OT reading with the Gospel reading. *Italicized readings may be used with, or in place of it.*

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God,

*you spoke and your Word became flesh,  
breathing a new song of joy and praise  
into the world.*

*Grant that we may bear the good news of your salvation,  
proclaiming your promise of peace  
to the ends of the earth. Amen.*

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of East Bloomfield  
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