



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

January/February 2022

*** Our Sunday worship service begins at 10 a.m. ***

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Pastor:

Sue Walters
(716) 983-5760
revst88@gmail.com

Office Hours:

Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Choir Director:

Bethyn Boni
(585) 396-2788
Bethyn.Boni@gmail.com

Organist:

Donna Messner
(585) 657-6579
dlmessner3169@gmail.com

Sexton

Robin Stewart
(585) 657-7574

Newsletter Editor & Web Master

Marilyn R. Shafer
(585) 935-1538
mshafer5@rochester.rr.com

God of new beginnings, you wipe away our tears and call us to care for one another. Give us eyes to see your gifts, hearts to embrace all creation, and hands to serve you every day of our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

FROM THE PASTOR

After King Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. "Get up," the angel said, "and take the child and its mother and go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead. Joseph got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But, when he heard that Archelaus ruled over Judea in place of his father, Herod, Joseph was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he went to Galilee. He settled in city called Nazareth, so that what was speaking through the prophets might be fulfilled: he will be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 2:19-23 NRSV



Did you ever wonder how Joseph, Mary and Jesus ended up in Nazareth? That town didn't appear in any of their genealogies. They had no acquaintances there, let alone relatives. And, in those days, you didn't just up and move. Your life was carefully planned. You didn't deviate from it. You spent most of your life in the same general area, where your family was. Unless, of course, you were raising the Son of God and directed by angels. Then, life took on a whole new meaning and purpose.

Can you even begin to imagine how Joseph felt? This whirlwind had descended on him. All because he loved a girl named Mary, and believed her when she said she would bear the Son of God. Because of his belief in her and his faith in

God, Joseph became the earthly father of Jesus. He was guided by angels. He moved around at their direction. He taught the basics of faith to the boy who would become the man on the cross. He was used by God.

This is a new year. It has to be better than the last year. But, didn't we say that about 2021? I suppose we did. The truth is, we don't know what 2022 will bring. But, we know what it will NOT bring: anything that can separate us from God. When we read of Joseph, Mary and Jesus moving around, we wonder: who was their support? Who did Mary talk to? Who did Joseph confide in? The answer to that question is the same for both of them: God. We don't know about the human side of those conversations, except Mary's Magnificat. We do know about God's side, as related to both of them through angelic messages. And, those messages, combined with their faith in the One who sent them, was enough to get them through: through Jesus' birth, through the flight to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath, through the return to Nazareth, through Jesus' childhood and adulthood, his ministry, his crucifixion and his resurrection.

We aren't all the recipients of angelic messages. But, we would certainly be open to them if God decided to send one! But, we are the recipients of God's grace, which is enough to see us through whatever 2022 might throw at us.

I do pray for all of you, that 2022 will be a year filled with good things. If it is that for you, God is there. If it isn't for you, God is there. God will always be there.

In peace,
Sue

Prayer Requests:

As we go through the next couple of months, please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers:

*Nick & Cheryl * Donna Magraw * the Eddy family* Mary Martin * Bev Clark * the Perkins family * the Tyler family * Jeremy * Eric * Al & Patty * Garret * Kay * the Salmon family * Peg * Alice * Larry & Donna * Helen * Don Shultz * Kathy * Russ * the Brien family * Carl & Nancy * Richard * the Salmon family * Arleen * Lujza * Russ * all places & people with Covid * school teachers, students & school administration * all those in the medical fields * our country*

Birthdays:

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



January:

11 Isaac Barton,
28 Don Shultz

February:

1 Lujza Rockcastle
14 Mick Eddy
17 Bob Sickmond
24 June Bartos
29 Nancy Stewart

*Light of life, you came in flesh,
born into human pain and joy,
and gave us power to be your children.
Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us,
so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness
and walk in the way of peace. Amen.*

Church News:

● Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the church will be Sunday, January 30, 2022. We will review 2021 church records, approve the 2022 budget, elect members to various committees and elect the council moderator for 2022 meetings. All church members and friends of the church are welcome & encouraged to attend. The meeting will start shortly after Sunday's worship service and replaces the regular January church council meeting.

● **Stewardship Campaign**

The campaign went very well. The trustees thank all those that pledged for calendar year 2022. Here's to a successful and fruitful church year!

● **Red Cross Blood Drive**

We are hosting a Red Cross blood drive in the Fellowship Hall of the church on Monday, February 7 from 2 - 7 p.m.). Please note that while we encourage appointments (makes for less waiting for you ... and appointments have priority), walk-ins ARE welcome. Also, please come into the church with your mask already on. Thanks. Hope to see you there!

● **New Roof**

UPDATE: The trustees are continuing the work to replace the church roof. They are hard at work finalizing the grant application.

Although the present roof is in no immediate need of repair, it **is** 35-40 years old. A "roof fund" was set up over the summer and we've received some donations for it. We thank all who have contributed to this fund and any additional contributions will be greatly appreciated. The trustees will be applying for a grant in January 2022 to cover some of the cost. Moving ahead with roof replacement next year would be contingent on obtaining a grant. We will continue keep all informed of the results of this grant.

● **Worship Services:**

We continue to not require the wearing of masks. Depending on each person's comfort level, we even dispense hugs to our fellow congregation members - or accept them! There is no more special pew markings and members and visitors are welcome to sit where they wish. There are masks available should you choose to wear one (and have forgotten yours).

We understand the hesitancy and safety concerns of some folk. Therefore, for those who cannot attend, or who are still not yet comfortable attending public services, we are continuing to tape and post Sunday's service that Sunday afternoon on our Facebook page. However, the tapes are audio only (similar to a podcast) and we are recording only the scripture readings and Pastor Sue's sermon. 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/>).

Reoccurring Calendar Events (Monthly):

● **Woman's Breakfast:** meets the first Sunday of every month at Brady J's restaurant (Bloomfield) at 8 a.m. All interested women are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the group meets **January 2nd** and **February 6th**.

● **Special Offering:** An extra offering plate is passed on the first Sunday of every month. This is a special offering to support church outreach to the local community and local missions and is kept in the Benevolence Fund for future distributions. For this period, the offerings are on Sunday, **January 2nd** and **February 6th**. The offering basket will be available at our live service. However, 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 you 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 council holds regular meetings on the first Sunday of the month.

● **Choir Practice:** The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. In addition, the choir also meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. Please, come join them as they are always looking for singers.

● **Men's Breakfast:** The men's breakfast is on hiatus until further notice. We will notify all when the men begin regularly meeting again.

January & February Specific Calendar Events:

● **Saturday, January 1:** New Year's Day



● **Sunday, January 2 (8 a.m.):** Women's breakfast

● **Sunday, January 2 (11 a.m.):** New Year's Celebration Potluck. Join us as we celebrate the start of a fresh new year! All are welcome.

● **Thursday, January 6:** Epiphany

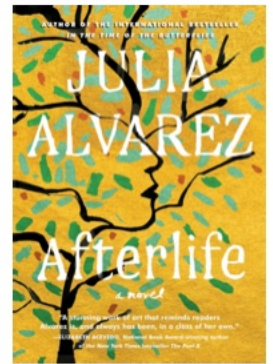
Epiphany commemorates the first two occasions on which Jesus' divinity, according to Christian belief, was manifested: when the three kings (also known as wise men or Magi) visited the infant Jesus in Bethlehem, and when John the Baptist baptized him in the River Jordan.

● **Monday, January 17:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day

● **Thursday, January 20 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the novel *Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez.

Amazon synopsis:

Antonia Vega, the immigrant writer at the center of *Afterlife*, has had the rug pulled out from under her. She has just retired from the college where she taught English when her beloved husband, Sam, suddenly dies. And then more jolts: her bighearted but unstable sister disappears, and Antonia returns home one evening to find a pregnant, undocumented teenager on her doorstep. Antonia has always sought direction in the literature she loves—lines from her favorite authors play in her head like a soundtrack—but now she finds that the world demands more of her than words.



Afterlife is a compact, nimble, and sharply droll novel. Set in this political moment of tribalism and distrust, it asks: What do we owe those in crisis in our families, including—maybe especially—members of our human family? How do we live in a broken world without losing faith in one another or ourselves? And how do we stay true to those glorious souls we have lost?

● **Sunday, January 30 (11 a.m.):** Annual Church Meeting

● **Sunday, February 6 (8 a.m.):** Women's breakfast

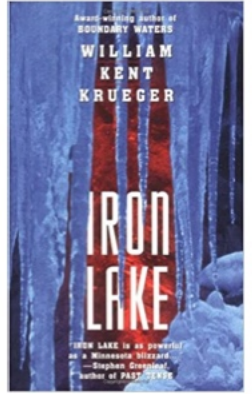
● **Monday, February 7 (2 - 7 p.m.):** Red Cross blood drive

● **Thursday, February 17 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the book *Iron Lake* by William Kent Krueger.

Amazon synopsis:

Cork O'Connor, the former sheriff of Aurora, Minnesota, is having difficulty dealing with the marital meltdown that has separated him from his children. Part Irish, part Anishinaabe Indian, he is getting by on heavy doses of caffeine, nicotine, and guilt.

Once a cop on Chicago's South Side, there's not much that can shock him. But when the town's judge is brutally murdered, and a young Eagle Scout is reported missing, Cork takes on this complicated and perplexing case of conspiracy, corruption, and a small-town secret that hits painfully close to home.



With white-knuckled suspense and unforgettable characters, Iron Lake demonstrates why “among thoughtful readers, William Kent Krueger holds a very special place in the pantheon” (C.J. Box, #1 New York Times bestselling author).

● **Pastor Morning Prayer & Office Hours**

Pastor Sue has open door office hours every Thursday. She leads morning prayer from the office beginning at 9 a.m. (which is streamed live on the church's Facebook page) and will remain in the office until 1 p.m. As always, drop-ins for a cup of coffee or tea are welcome. In addition, Sue is also available at other times by appointment; please call her on her cellphone at 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) 703-1449 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.

~ ~ ~ **Picture Us** ~ ~ ~

● **All Saints Sunday**



We celebrated All Saint's Day on Sunday, November 7th. Many members brought in pictures of their departed loved ones (or candles if they had no pictures).

● Remote Christmas Concert Viewing

Our choir director, Bethyn Boni, is a member of the Finger Lakes Camerata. They had their Holiday Concert on December 4, 2021. They offered a livestream viewing so several congregation members came to Fellowship Hall to watch (and listen). We even had snacks! It was a very good concert and put all into a holiday mood.



● Christmas Weekend

The church had a very eventful Christmas celebration. After a Christmas Eve service of Lessons & Carols, the congregation celebrated the birth of Jesus with a “birthday party” potluck.



Then, on Christmas Sunday, the choir presented a cantata that told of and celebrated the story of Jesus’ birth.



O God, you spoke your word and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ. Fill all creation with that word again, so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples, we may become one living body, your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen

Lectionary Readings for November & December

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
New Year's Day January 1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Psalm 8	Revelation 21:1-6a	Matthew 25:31-46
January 2, 2022	Jeremiah 31:7-14 or <i>Sirach 24:1-12</i>	Psalm 147:12-20 or <i>Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21</i>	Ephesians 1:3-14	
Epiphany of the Lord January 6, 2022	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
Baptism of the Lord January 9, 2022	Isaiah 43:1-7	Psalm 29	Acts 8:14-17	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 16, 2022	Isaiah 62:1-5	Psalm 36:5-10	1 Corinthians 12:1-11	John 2:1-11
January 23, 2022	Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10	Psalm 19	1 Corinthians 12:12-31a	Luke 4:14-21
January 30, 2022	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Psalm 71:1-6	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30
February 2, 2022	Malachi 3:1-4	Psalm 84 or <i>Psalm 24:7-10</i>	Hebrews 2:14-18	Luke 2:22-40
February 6, 2022	Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)	Psalm 138	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
February 13, 2022	Jeremiah 17:5-10	Psalm 1	1 Corinthians 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
February 20, 2022	Genesis 45:3-11, 15	Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40	1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38
February 27, 2022	Exodus 34:29-35			

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