



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

Heralding the Good News to our neighbors

Sunday Service @ 10:00 A.M.
January-February 2018

<http://www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org>

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A note from the editor...

Happy New Year! New beginnings, a gift that happens not only at the New Year but with each new day or the awakening of the earth at spring! God is good. He tells you time and again to come to Him no matter where you are! And He offers peace and hope! Why do you resist His call and choose to be frightened, lonely or restless? Here is a modern prayer to help us remember that God has a good plan for each of us!

From www.lords-prayer-words.com

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.

Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the
wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious
name. Amen

Any time you feel discouraged pray
this prayer and be renewed.

May the New Year bring you happiness that
only comes from God.

Blessings, Phyllis

PASTORS' COLUMN



Happy New Year friends!
A consideration of Bible quotes appropriate for this time of year brought to mind this one:

For he says 'at an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see now is the day of salvation. -2 Corinthians 6:2

Our organizing of time and the marking of its passage is useful, but to God, it often seems what really matters is right now – determining what we do with the moments we have now. How do we live up to our promises in the time we have?

It was some twenty years ago, I was at a phone company business office on West Henrietta Road. I was next in line, and at the window in front of me was a young man, early twenties, who was clearly incensed at the injustice he perceived being done to him – the cutting off of his service and the late fees required in order to get it restored. The woman behind the counter, who deserved an award for how she handled the situation, stated calmly, “Well, you should have paid your bill on time.”

The young man’s fit reached its peak as he responded, “I was going to, but I’ve been **BUSY!!**” Part of me still regrets that I did not interject, “Welcome to the adult world, kid. We’re all busy. Now pay your bill so I can get on with my life.”

I walked away that day reflecting on my own use of that rational; how I had attempted to squirm out of my commitments by saying, “I was going to, but I’ve been **BUSY!!**” I learned that part of being a grown-up (I was still pretty young myself) means, yes, life is going to crowd me with things that must be done; and, no, simply being **BUSY** is not an all-purpose escape hatch from my responsibilities.

In that ever-befuddling speed ride we call The Passage of Time, I have gone from my early 30s to my mid-50s, (“Still pretty young!” I can hear some of you saying) and I have only made limited progress in

applying what I learned in that moment. At the very least, I hope I have managed to avoid whining like that young man. At best, I have attempted to prioritize my commitments, ensuring that when others are really depending on me, I can come through. Again, limited progress, I confess.

We often take the first of the year as a time to evaluate the last twelve months: How did I do well, how could I have done better? We also look at it as a time to plot a rough course ahead: What would I like to accomplish, what pitfalls do I want to avoid?

What Paul reminds me of in the text above is, every day is like New Year’s Day. Every day is a new opportunity to start fresh and to strive to do better. Every day, God gives me the opportunity to ask forgiveness from God and from my neighbor, my family, all those whose lives are linked with mine. Every day, God gives me the opportunity to extend that same grace to others.

As we begin 2018, let us rededicate ourselves to discipleship. Let us remember the vows of our baptism and confirmation – to reject evil and strive, by God’s grace, to serve one another and our neighbors in the name of Jesus. For me, that means re-examining my priorities, how I allocate and use my time to best meet the commitments I have made to you and to others in my life. It means I will have to forgo comforts and indulgences in order to meet those priorities. It means, when I fail, I must own up to it and not stamp my feet, crying, “but I’ve been **BUSY!**”

What does it mean to you? What has God looked at in your life and said, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” and where has God said, “Go, and sin no more.”? What struggles and challenges lie ahead for you?

Naturally, we have these questions to put to ourselves as a branch of the vine that is Jesus Christ. You don’t need me to tell you that we continue to travel a rough road, and I thank you for all you do to make the journey a great blessing. It is my goal to better do my part. I look forward to working for and with you to extend that blessing into the world.

I close with another passage from Paul that seems appropriate for the beginning of the year:

...this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind me and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:13-14

May we all know God's grace, peace and strength. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do in and for this church.

Andy

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER, MINISTRY AND HUMOR

Church Membership

Please contact Rev. Sandy Porrey at (585) 773-8512 or Sanders74@juno.com for information on joining the First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield or arranging for Home Communion for a

Help Needed—Help Needed
Check out the signup sheets
in Fellowship Hall



January


11 Isaac Bartos
11 Chris Bartos
28 Don Shultz





February

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

Editor's note: The Birthday wishes were omitted last issue. Happy belated birthday to Noah Bartos, Terry Silvernail and Jacquie Walters.

Upcoming Events

Choir Everyone is welcome to sing.	Rehearsal, Wednesday evenings: 7:30-9:00
Jan 6	Epiphany
Jan 7	-Baptism of the Lord -Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -council meeting
Jan 14	All reports for the Annual Meeting are due today. Please send or give to Alice McConnell
Jan 18	- 1-18/1-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity -Book Club, 2;30 – 4:00 The Garden of Letters, Alyson Richman
Jan 21	 Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Jan 26	Last Friday Supper 5-7 pm.
Jan 28	-Men's Breakfast 8:00 @ Brady J's. - Annual Meeting following a light lunch. All members and friends are invited to attend.
Feb 4	-Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council meeting
Feb 11	- Transfiguration of Our Lord, -First Congregational Church February Follies (See announcement on p. 5)

Feb 14 	-Ash Wednesday -Valentine's Day
Feb 15	Book Club 2:30-4:00, The Road to Little Dribbling, Bill Bryson
Feb 18  	-First Sunday in Lent -Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Feb 20	Newsletter Deadline for Mar/Apr 2018
Feb 23	Last Friday Supper 5-7
Feb 25 	-Second Sunday in Lent -Men's Breakfast 8:00 @ Brady J's.

PEWPOINTS

Lectionary Readings Jan/Feb 2018

Jan 6 Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12
 Jan 7 Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11
 Jan 14 1 Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51
 Jan 21 Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Psalm 62:5-12, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

Jan 28 Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Psalm 111, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28
 Feb 2 Malachi 3:1-4, Psalm 84, Hebrews 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40
 Feb 4 Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, 20c, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39
 Feb 11 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9
 Feb 18 Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15
 Feb 25 Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38

How to advertise your church event

To advertise any church event contact Alice McConnell, 8291 Wesley Road, Bloomfield, 14469; 703-1449 or beehive270@gmail.com. Please give the written details to Alice 4 weeks before the date of the event.

Phyllis Rehtin will handle information for the Newsletter, the website and Bloomfield Buzz. Keep in mind our issues are published every 2 months so you should think ahead to have the event included in the correct newsletter. (Phyllis Rehtin, 6700 Rice Rd., Victor, NY 14564; rehtin@rochester.rr.com or 657-7018).

The Ties That Bind



"Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night."

During January and February, the congregation prays for The Glamack family, Beverley Clark, Albert & Patty Gliewe, and Don & Jackie Shultz. Remember our members and friends who cannot be with us on Sunday morning: Terry Silvernail, Dorothy and Bob Hodges and Doris Virkus.

Continued prayers for Terry Silvernail and Phil and Elsa Schaefer.

Let us also pray for Norma, Nick Glamack's mom and Kathrine, Donna Messner's mom.

February Follies

Fabulous-Fun-February-Festivities!

Beat the February blahs!

On **February 11, 2018, at 3 pm**, the First Congregational Church in East Bloomfield will present "February Follies" - a fundraiser for the food pantry in Bloomfield. Suggested donation is \$5 per person. Donations of canned goods are also appreciated.

There will be singing, jokes, puppet shows, and a brief demonstration of the pipe organ.

Fun for the whole family!

Snow date, March 4.

Book Club

The reading for January is *The Garden of Letters*, Alyson Richmond.

"Richman seamlessly weaves together the languages of music and love, reaching into the heart of the reader with artful portraits of heroism, sacrifice and redemption. Fans of *The Lost Wife* will again savor Richman's ability to tell a remarkable story about people who are unforgettable and real."-- Pam Jenoff, International bestselling author

Alyson Richmond is the nationally bestselling author of *The Lost Wife*, *The Rhythm of Memory*, *The Last Van Gogh*, and *The Mask Carver's Son*. Her novels have been published in more than fifteen languages and have received both national and international acclaim. She is currently working on a novel about Marthe de Florian and her relationship with the artist Giovanni Boldini.

The February reading is *The Road to Little Dribbling*, Bill Bryson.

The Road to Little Dribbling comes twenty years after Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Small Island*, in which he first described his

love affair with his adopted Great Britain. That first book was laugh-out-loud funny, and so is this one. It opens with Bryson describing (hilariously) the perils of growing older, eventually revealing the author's successful passing of the Life in Britain Knowledge Test (thus, making him a British citizen). The rest of the book follows that pattern: Bryson describes getting older, and he describes Great Britain via a trip he took across the 700 mile long island. While he tried to avoid places he visited in *Notes from a Small Island*—he does revisit Dover—those who read the first book will enjoy a welcome sense of the familiar—even if Bryson appears to have grown a little more cynical and angry with age. But give the guy a break: the world is changing, even his beloved "cozy and embraceable" island. And as he writes in the book, "I recently realized with dismay that I am even too old for early onset dementia. Any dementia I get will be right on time." --Chris Schlupe

Bill Bryson was born in Des Moines, Iowa. For twenty years he lived in England, where he worked for the *Times* and the *Independent*, and wrote for most major British and American publications. His books include travel memoirs (*Neither Here Nor There*; *The Lost Continent*; *Notes from a Small Island*) and books on language (*The Mother Tongue*; *Made in America*). His account of his attempts to walk the Appalachian Trail, *A Walk in the Woods*, was a huge *New York Times* bestseller. He lives in Hanover, New Hampshire, with his wife and his four children.

A penguin "parable"



During storms, emperor penguins huddle for warmth, taking turns at the center and on the perimeter of the group. While incubating eggs, up to 6,000 male penguins have been observed clustering for shelter against the harsh Antarctic winter. Partially grown chicks gather in protective "crèches" (French for "cribs"); often surrounded by a colony of adults, these groupings ward off predators and cold.

In stormy times, humans also need supportive groups; we can't survive alone. A church family allows us to take turns giving and receiving care. Amid social upheaval, injustice, illness, natural disaster and any loss or crisis, God invites us to gather for protection and warmth. In the church community, we support and strengthen one another and are empowered to go out again into the less-sheltered world.

Come back to Christmas

When January comes along, we can continue that sense of comfort and warmth that comes at Christmas by returning to the Christmas story, which gives us two great promises: God understands you, and God can redeem you.

I encourage people to make it a point to reread the Christmas story every month, and allow Christmas to be Christmas every month. We need to keep coming back to it.
—Max Lucado, Publishers Weekly interview

A new you

The object of a New Year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul and a new nose; new feet, a new backbone, new ears, and new eyes. Unless a particular man made New Year resolutions, he would make no resolutions. Unless a man starts afresh about things, he will certainly do nothing effective.

—G.K. Chesterton

Three questions

There's a tale of a traveling priest who was confronted by a soldier in pre-revolutionary Russia. Rifle in hand, the soldier barked, "Who are you? Where are you going? Why are you going there?"

Instead of answering, the priest asked how much the soldier was paid — and offered double if the soldier would challenge him with those three questions each day as he passed by.

Those three important questions can guide us on our journey through the brand-new year ahead. For Christians, thankfully, the answers are clear:

- Who are you? "I'm a child of God!"
- Where are you going? "I'm going out into the world!"
- Why are you going there? "I'm going out of love for Jesus, who died for me!"

Place these questions and answers in a spot where you can see them each day. Then go forward confidently, knowing "whose" you are and what your purpose is.

From the correct perspective

A child sat at his grandmother's feet as she embroidered. Looking up, he saw a mishmash of threads and ugly knots but no discernible picture or words. "Nana," he said with concern, "that's not very pretty."

"Come up here," Grandma invited, "and look at it from this side. You have to see it from my perspective."

"Oh!" the boy exclaimed then. "It's beautiful!"

Seeing the world from our human, earthly viewpoint, we can't grasp the masterpiece that God is completing. But when we finally see it from his perspective, we'll discover that the threads and knots all contribute to a beautiful work of art. That work won't be finished until Jesus returns, but in the meantime, may God grant us an occasional glimpse of the work in progress

— from God's side!

Our new home

A preacher who had always feared death felt powerless to comfort others who were facing it. Toward the end of his life, he moved to another house. When all the furniture had been packed, he lingered in the home where he'd raised his children and prepared many sermons. An assistant interrupted those reflections by saying, "Everything's gone, sir, but the new house is better than this one. Come away."

The preacher never forgot this lesson. God has prepared for his children a home infinitely better than earth — “an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands” (2 Corinthians 5:1, NIV).

10 biblical ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting. “To answer before listening — that is folly and shame” (Proverbs 18:13).
 2. Speak without accusing. “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).
 3. Give without selfishness. “The righteous give without sparing” (Proverbs 21:26).
 4. Pray without ceasing. “We have not stopped praying for you” (Colossians 1:9).
 5. Answer without arguing. “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife” (Proverbs 17:1).
 6. Share without pretending. “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of ... Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
 7. Enjoy without complaining. “Do everything without grumbling or arguing” (Philippians 2:14).
 8. Trust without wavering. “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:7).
 9. Forgive without punishing. “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).
 10. Promise without forgetting. “A longing fulfilled is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12).
- From various websites; all Scriptures NIV

The limited power of ashes

“The cross, with which the ashes are traced upon us, is the sign of Christ’s victory over death,” wrote Thomas Merton. “The words ‘Remember that thou art dust and that to dust thou shalt return’ are not to be taken as the quasi-form of a kind of ‘sacrament of death’ ... It might be good stoicism to receive a mere reminder of our condemnation to die, but it is not Christianity.”

Perhaps we should structure Ash Wednesday worship with the imposition of ashes early on. Then their dusty symbolism can be supplanted by the forgiveness-flavored bread and wine of Holy Communion. Yet even if the service you attend is laid out differently, remember that ashes mark you only temporarily. Jesus’ resurrection — and the empty cross of victory — assures you already of everlasting life, which begins now.

In awe of God

A feel-good gospel is attractive but not transformative, writes Michael Yaconelli in *Dangerous Wonder* (NavPress). “The nice, nonthreatening God needs to be replaced by the God whose very presence smashes our egos into dust, burns our sin into ashes, and strips us naked to reveal the real person within. A healthy, childlike fear should make us more in awe of God than we are of our government, our problems, ... our doctrines and agendas, or any of our other earthly concerns.”

Yaconelli urges Christians “to become people whose God is big and holy and frightening and gentle and tender and ours; a God whose love frightens us into his strong and powerful arms where he dares to hold us in his terrifying, loving presence.”



Picture Us

On December 13th we traveled to the ARC home to enjoy some Christmas caroling with our friends. Richard (left on the couch) knew all the songs and had great moves with them too! Bethyn brought her autoharp to accompany us. Trying it out was a lot of fun for our friends!





Decorating the church for the Christmas season is a group effort. Of course, we enjoyed a potluck lunch before we started!



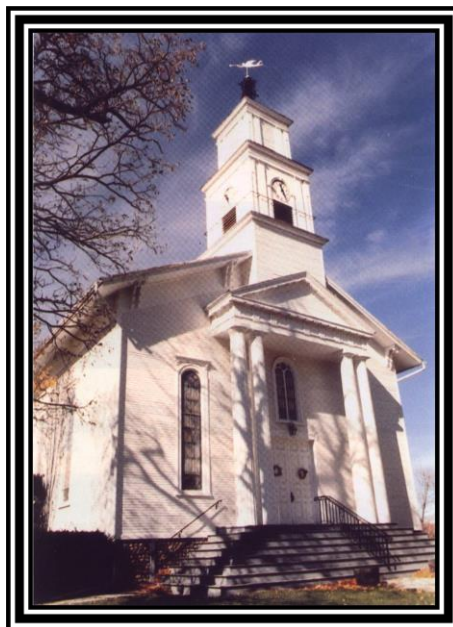
Christmas Sunday
contemporary service
in Fellowship Hall







Gabriel's Horn Newsletter



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