



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

March/April 2021

*** Our Sunday worship service is at 10:00 AM ***

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God of wilderness and water, your Son was baptized and tempted as we are. Guide us through this season, that we may not avoid struggle, but open ourselves to blessing, through the cleansing depths of repentance and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit. Amen.

FROM THE PASTOR

"One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then, he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:39-43 NRSV



This newsletter covers the end and the beginning...the before and the after. It takes us from the season of Lent to the joy of the Resurrection and beyond. We begin with the time of repentance, as we walk with Jesus through the last days of his life. It is seeing ourselves in the faces of those who surround Jesus; maybe in the crowd, maybe in the disciples, maybe in the women. What perspective do you have as you journey towards the cross? Are you like the first criminal on the cross, who mocked Jesus? Or are you the second criminal, who understood the difference between their just sentences and Jesus' unjust one? Do you see and believe?

Then, do you not see and yet believe? What does the empty tomb mean to you? Some suggested that grave robbers took his body; that he was still dead. Even John wasn't quite sure when he saw the empty tomb. Mary was the one who accepted that Jesus wasn't there...but even she wasn't quite sure what that meant. Only after he came to her, and called her by name did she know that her Lord wasn't dead, but alive!

We don't know what Mary did with this knowledge after that day. We know what some of the disciples did. We know what others, who came to faith later, like Paul, did. They spread the truth and proclaimed the faith. They took their faith to the ends of the earth (as they knew it) and it has spread because of their belief.

When you first read this article, we will be just into Lent. We will still be on our journeys with Jesus. Let that journey affect you. Walk through this time, seeing what Jesus does and doesn't do. Listen and learn what was important to him, and what wasn't. Then, when we get to Palm/Passion Sunday, and Holy Week, keep paying attention. Listen to the dialogues. Hear the crowd. Put your ear to the door as Pilate questions Jesus. Then walk with Jesus through the streets, as he carries his cross. Feel those nails. Listen to his broken voice as he implores God for forgiveness for those who "know not what they do." Finally, watch him give up His spirit. Watch him give up his very life for us.

And LIVE!! Celebrate that triumph over the grave. Rejoice in the Resurrection. Let that empty tomb open up our lives, bring us to the place of new life. Look forward to a life with the resurrected Lord, through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Lean on the Counselor. Walk in fullness of life.

Blessings,

Sue

Prayer Requests:

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

The Glamack family * Donna Magraw * the Eddy family* Mary Martin * Bev Clark * the Perkins family * the Tyler family * Jennifer * Terry * the Gliewe family * Lori * the Sickmond family * Kay * the Messner family * Helen * Don Shultz * Autumn * Catherine * the Brien family * the Stewart family * all places & people with Covid-19 * 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!

March:

6: Robin Stewart, 12: Joe Walters, Jr.,
28: Will Tyler, 29: Larry Messner, 31: Cheryl
Glamack

April:

12: Bob Kelly



Church News:

● Annual Church Meeting:

The annual meeting of the church was held on Sunday, January 24, 2021. Normally, during the meeting, the Nominating Committee recommends new members to fill upcoming committee vacancies due to time limits. However, since most of the business of the church (in 2020) was on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was determined that the slate of officers for 2020 be repeated for 2021. All members were contacted and agreed to this change. Please note this decision also includes the position of the Church Council moderator.

● **Worship Services:**

We continue to be in the sanctuary for our Sunday worship service! It has been going well (we've been worshipping in the sanctuary since the beginning of September). Such a comfort to be back in our familiar surroundings. We're still wearing masks and keeping social distancing. But, we're here! Please consider joining us. All are welcome.

For those who cannot attend, or who are still not yet comfortable attending public services, we continue to tape and post Sunday's service that Sunday afternoon on our Facebook page. The videos can be viewed 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/>).

In addition, Pastor Sue continues to lead a weekly prayer session. These will be live-streamed on our Facebook page on Thursdays at 8:30 am. The prayer service can be viewed live or accessed later by going to our Facebook page's Video section.

● **Pastor Search Committee:**

With the concurrence of the trustees and the church council, the committee has decided to stop the search for a new pastor and dissolve. With the restrictions imposed by the state due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was difficult to scout for and interview potential pastors. The committee's last official act was to work with the trustees to hire Pastor Sue for another year as interim pastor. When we, as a church, are able to meet and move about freely, a new search committee will be created and begin, once again, the search for a new pastor. All committee notes have been archived and will be available should the new committee and its new members decide to use them.

● **Choir:**

Continuing on with their successful return during Advent, the choir continues to sing every Sunday. So, Wednesday night choir rehearsals are back on! The choir, appropriately masked and seated at a proper social distance, now meets at 7:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. Come join them!

● **Food Cupboard:**

As a continuing reminder, the food cupboards most needed items right now are toilet paper, hand soap, laundry detergent, dish soap and hearty soups. Because of shopping & purchasing restrictions (rationing), these are the hardest items to keep stocked. So please, buy an extra item on your next shopping trip and leave it in the box in the church entryway. Your donations are always well appreciated.

● **February Blood Drive Results:** We had a successful blood drive February 15, 2021. We met our goal and collected 35 units. These units will go on to help as many as 105 patients in need of a blood transfusion. Our thanks to the volunteers and donors who donate time or blood. Our next drive is Monday, April 12, 2021, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM.

● **Fundraising:**

We are hosting two BBQs from Gale-Wyn Catering this year. The first one is Sunday, April 25th, the second is Sunday, July 11th.

The BBQ on April 25th is at Shivers, Shakes & Cones (6570 Rt. 5, Bloomfield; at the intersection of routes 5 & 20 and 64) and will start at 11:00 AM and go to 4:00 PM (unless we sell out).

Our worship service for that Sunday will begin an hour earlier (at 9:00 AM) so the BBQ workers can be ready to sell chicken at 11:00 AM. So, mark your calendars for both the change in the service time and the BBQ.

Reoccurring Calendar Events (Monthly):

● **Woman’s Breakfast:** meets the first Sunday of every month at Brady J’s restaurant (Bloomfield) at 8:00 AM. All interested women are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the group meets **March 7th** and **April 4th**.

● **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, **March 7th** and **April 4th**. 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 regular donation to the church’s mission, you can mail your donation to Marilyn Shafer (please call 585-935-1538 for her address).

● **Church Council:** The council will continue to meet the first Sunday of every month. The next two meetings will be **March 7th** and **April 11th** after regular worship service.

● **Choir Practice:** The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 PM. They are masked and, with the practice now held in Fellowship Hall, appropriately distanced. In addition, the choir also meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 PM. 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:

- **Sunday, March 7 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield)
- **Sunday, March 7 (11:30 AM):** Church council meeting (Fellowship Hall)
- **Sunday, March 14:** Daylight Savings Time starts
- **Wednesday, March 17:** Saint Patrick's Day
- **Thursday, March 18 (10:30 AM):** Book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the novel *The Giver of Stars* by Jo Jo Moyes.

Amazon synopsis: *From the author of "Me Before You," set in Depression-era America, a breathtaking story of five extraordinary women and their remarkable journey through the mountains of Kentucky and beyond*

Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve, hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically.

The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky.

What happens to them--and to the men they love--becomes an unforgettable drama of loyalty, justice, humanity, and passion. These heroic women refuse to be cowed by men or by convention. And though they face all kinds of dangers in a landscape that is at times breathtakingly beautiful, at others brutal, they're committed to their job: bringing books to people who have never had any, arming them with facts that will change their lives.

Based on a true story rooted in America's past, *The Giver of Stars* is unparalleled in its scope and epic in its storytelling. Funny, heartbreaking, enthralling, it is destined to become a modern classic--a richly rewarding novel of women's friendship, of true love, and of what happens when we reach beyond our grasp for the great beyond.

● **Sunday, March 28: Palm Sunday.** Pastor Sue has prepared a pageant-like celebration for Palm Sunday, just like the happy crowd did when Jesus came to Jerusalem. This day begins Holy Week so come help us remember and celebrate this special day.

● **Thursday, April 1: Maundy Thursday.** We will not have an in-sanctuary Maundy Thursday service this year. However, Pastor Sue will host her regular Thursday prayer service "in the Garden of Gethsemane." It will be streamed live on our Facebook page at 8:30 on that Thursday morning.

● **Friday, April 2: Good Friday.** There will be a Good Friday service in the sanctuary; it will start at 7:00 PM.

● **Sunday, April 4 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield)

● **Sunday, April 4: Easter Sunday**

He is risen!!



● **Sunday, April 11 (11:30 AM):** Church council meeting (Fellowship Hall).

● **Monday, April 12 (2:00 - 7:00 PM):** Red Cross blood drive (Fellowship Hall).

We accept donors with appointments and those who just walk-in. Please help support the Red Cross by donating this day.

● **Thursday, April 15 (10:30 AM):** Book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the book *Golfing With God: A Novel of Heaven and Earth* by Roland Merullo.

Amazon synopsis: Herman "Hank" Fins-Winston was a pro golfer destined for greatness. Now he lives in a condominium on the thirteenth fairway of one of heaven's glorious courses – a fact he finds surprising and amusing, since for one reason or another, a fair percentage of golfers never make it to paradise. Hank is having the time of his afterlife until he's summoned one idyllic morning to play a round with the Almighty. It seems that God is having some trouble with His game. As they play the heavenly courses, both in paradise and back on earth, Hank comes to realize that what began as a golf lesson has become a spiritual journey.

● **Sunday, April 25 (11:00 AM):** BBQ at Shivers, Shakes & Cones. 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

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 Your 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.

Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.

Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

Lectionary Readings

	First reading	Psalms	Second reading	Gospel
March 7	Exodus 20:1-17	Psalms 19	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 2:13-22
March 14	Numbers 21:4-9	Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
March 21	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Psalms 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16	Hebrews 5:5-10	John 12:20-33
March 25	Isaiah 7:10-14	Psalms 45 or Psalm 40:5-10	Hebrews 10:4-10	Luke 1:26-38
March 28		Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29		Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16
March 28	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalms 31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)
March 29	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalms 36:5-11	Hebrews 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
March 30	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalms 71:1-14	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	John 12:20-36
March 31	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalms 70	Hebrews 12:1-3	John 13:21-32
April 1	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
April 2	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Psalms 22	Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9	John 18:1-19:42
April 3	Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24	Psalms 31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42
April 4	*Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9	Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24	1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43	John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8
April 11	*Acts 4:32-35	Psalms 133	1 John 1:1-2:2	John 20:19-31
April 18	*Acts 3:12-19	Psalms 4	1 John 3:1-7	Luke 24:36b-48
April 25	*Acts 4:5-12	Psalms 23	1 John 3:16-24	John 10:11-18

* *Italicized readings, complementary to the standard reading, may be used with, or in place of it.*

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