



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

November/December 2021

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

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Source of all being, beginning and end, we praise you for those who have served you faithfully. For the sake of Jesus Christ, replenish our hope in your eternal kingdom, that we may have life in all its fullness, unfettered by the fear of death. Amen.

FROM THE PASTOR

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of those who hate us. Thus he has shown his mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all our days. And, you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:68-79



I love Advent. It is my favorite time of the church year, because we are waiting. You might not like waiting; most people get impatient and want what they are waiting for to happen immediately. But, there is much value in waiting. This value is highlighted in the Scripture above. These words are spoken by Zechariah, and are referred to as a prophecy. They reflect his joy at the birth of his son, John, but they also reflect the waiting that was happening for many years. God's faithful people had been waiting for the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant that God spoke to Abraham: that God might rescue God's people from their enemies and create a way for them to worship God in holiness and righteousness forever. Zechariah recognized that his son, John, was chosen by God to prepare the way for that to happen: through the person of his cousin Jesus. This preparation involved calling God's people to repent of their sins, so they could receive forgiveness. They were to be led by John out of the darkness of their sins into the light of God as shown through the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Advent is the time when we wait again to celebrate the birth of our savior. We have this time to prepare our hearts and minds to receive him anew. This preparation is not something that happens overnight. We have time: time to reflect on our darkness. We all have it: darkness, that is. Maybe it is fear, maybe it is judgement (either given or received), maybe it is the desire for vengeance, and maybe it is pride. All these things are darkness; the darkness of sin. How am I defining sin? As something that interferes with our relationship with God. All these things I mentioned do just that. There are countless others. This is the time to address them. In the midst of the hustle and bustle of what society says is the way to celebrate this season, let us take the time to mark this season the way we are Biblically instructed to: by asking God to shed His light on the darkness of our sins so we can face them squarely, examine them, then ask forgiveness for them. Once we have heeded John's call to

repentance, and allowed God's dawn to break over our darkness, we will truly be ready to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Blessings on your Advent journey, my friends. Take all the time you need.

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 * Jeremy * Eric * the Gliewe family * Garret * Kay * the Salmon family * Peg * Alice * the Messner family * Helen * Don Shultz * Kathy * Russ * the Brien family * the Stewart family * Richard * the Salmon family * Arleen * Lujza * Russ * 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!

November :

29 - Noah Bartos

December:

13 - Jacquie Walters



God of the living, with all your creatures great and small, we sing your bounty and your goodness. For in the harvest of land and ocean, in the cycles of the seasons, and the wonders of each creature, you reveal your generosity. Teach us the gratitude that dispels envy, that we may honor each gift as you cherish your creation, and praise you in all times and places. Amen.

Church News:

● Stewardship Campaign

This is the time of year that the trustees plan our church finances for the next year. Part of the process is our stewardship campaign to ask members for support. Pledge cards have been mailed to church members and friends of the church. If you received a pledge request, please keep these words in mind: "It's not always about how much we have but how we use what we have to serve God. As Christian stewards, we are expected to give back to the Lord our time, money and talent in order to expand His work." Please prayerfully reflect on how you can give back to God a portion of what you have received.

Please have any pledges to the church by November 7, so the trustees can finalize the 2022 budget. If you have not received a letter from the church trustees and wish to contribute to the mission and outreach of the church, please contact the church at (585) 657-7755 to make arrangements.

● All Saints Sunday

We will celebrate All Saints Day on Sunday, November 7th, with a special service. All Saints Day is a day to honoring departed members of the Church and local congregations. To personalize the service, please bring photos of your loved ones who have gone on to their heavenly home. If you do not have a photo of your loved one(s), please bring a candle that can be lit at the beginning of the service.

● Preparing for Advent and Christmas

The church will have a potluck after the service on Sunday, November 28. After the dinner, we will be adorn the church with Advent and Christmas decorations. Please come join us in food and fellowship as well as in the preparation of the church for the Christmas season.

● Christmas Eve Service

There will be a Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve at 6:00 PM followed by a festive potluck. All are welcome.

● New Roof

The trustees are pressing on with replacing the church roof. 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 keep all informed of the results of this grant.

● **New Time for Book Club**

Please note the book club now meets in the Fellowship Hall at the church at **9:30** on the third Thursday of the month. Please join us; we have great discussions and all church members and friends of the church are welcome.

● **Pastor Sue Office Hours**

Pastor Sue continues to have open door office hours every Thursday. She leads morning prayer from the office beginning at 9 a.m. and will be there 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.

● **Worship Services:**

We still are not requiring 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/>).

● **Thursday Prayer Sessions:** Pastor Sue continues to lead a weekly prayer session. These will be live-streamed on our Facebook page on Thursdays at 9:00 am. Please note this is a **new time** (thanks to Pastor Sue getting an office). The prayer service can be viewed live or accessed at your leisure by going to our Facebook page’s Video section.

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 **September 5th** and **October 3rd**.

● **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, **November 7th** and **December 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 PM. In addition, the choir also meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM. 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.

November & December Specific Calendar Events:

- **Sunday, November 7 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield).
- **Sunday, November 7:** All Saints Sunday. Please bring photos of departed loved ones for celebrating and honoring.
- **Sunday, November 7 (11:30 AM):** Church council meets after Fellowship Coffee.
- **Thursday, November 18 (9:30 AM):** The book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the novel *The Gray Man* by Mark Greaney.

Amazon synopsis: *The first in the Court Gentry all-action thriller series, from Tom Clancy's co-writer Mark Greaney.*

To those who lurk in the shadows, he's known as the Gray Man. He is a legend in the covert realm, moving silently from job to job, accomplishing the impossible and then fading away. And he always hits his target.

But there are forces more lethal than Gentry in the world. Forces like money. And power. And there are men who hold these as the



only currency worth fighting for. In their eyes, Gentry has just outlived his usefulness.

But Court Gentry is going to prove that, for him, there's no grey area between killing for a living and killing to stay alive...

● **Thursday, November 25:** Thanksgiving Day



● **Sunday, November 28:** First Sunday in Advent; we prepare for the season with a potluck followed by Advent and Christmas decorating after the service.

● **Sunday, December 5 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield).

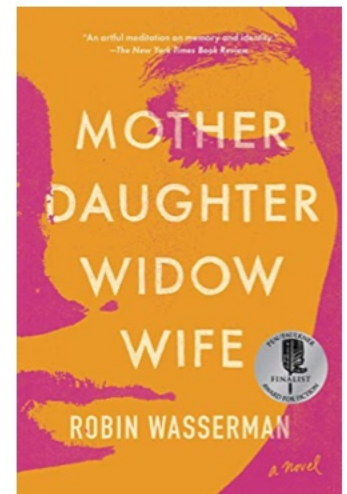
● **Monday, December 6 (2:00 - 7:00 PM):** Red Cross blood drive in the Fellowship Hall at the church. We accept donors with appointments and those who just walk-in. Please help support the Red Cross by donating this day.



● **Thursday, December 16 (10:30 AM):** Book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the book *Mother Daughter Widow Wife: A Novel* by Robin Wasserman.

Amazon synopsis: *From the author of Girls on Fire comes a "sharp and soulful and ferociously insightful" (Leslie Jamison) novel centered around a woman with no memory, the scientists studying her, and the daughter who longs to understand.*

Wendy Doe is a woman with no past and no future. Without any memory of who she is, she's diagnosed with dissociative fugue, a



temporary amnesia that could lift at any moment—or never at all—and invited by Dr. Benjamin Strauss to submit herself for experimental observation at his Meadowlark Institute for Memory Research. With few better options, Wendy feels she has no choice.

To Dr. Strauss, Wendy is a female body, subject to his investigation and control. To Strauss's ambitious student, Lizzie Epstein, she's an object of fascination, a mirror of Lizzie's own desires, and an invitation to wonder: once a woman is untethered from all past and present obligations of womanhood, who is she allowed to become?

To Alice, the daughter she left behind, Wendy Doe is an absence so present it threatens to tear Alice's world apart. Through their attempts to untangle Wendy's identity—as well as her struggle to construct a new self—Wasserman has crafted an “artful meditation on memory and identity” (*The New York Times Book Review*) and a journey of discovery, reckoning, and reclamation. “A timely examination of memory, womanhood and power,” (*Time*) *Mother Daughter Widow Wife* will leave you “utterly riveted” (*BuzzFeed*).

- **Sunday, December 5:** Second Sunday in Advent.
- **Sunday, December 12:** Third Sunday in Advent.
- **Sunday, December 19:** Fourth Sunday in Advent.
- **Friday, December 24:** Christmas Eve celebrated with a Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols (followed by a potluck).
- **Saturday, December 25:** Christmas Day



- **Saturday, December 31:** New Year's Eve

Ever faithful God, through prophets and angels, you promised to raise up a holy child who would establish a household of peace and justice. Open our hearts to receive your Son, that we may open our doors to welcome all people as sisters and brothers, and establish your household in our time. Amen.

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.

Picture Us:



Birthday Surprise

We surprised Alice McConnell with a birthday cake for her 85th birthday. She was truly surprised (and the cake was delicious). Happy birthday, Alice! 🎉 🎂 🎈

From Puppets to Pew

The puppets presented a song that emphasized that God is in the middle of everything; even chickens!



Christian Education Potluck and Games

The Christian Education committee hosted a potluck; the first one in a long time! Then, the committee challenged the congregation to a game of 20 questions. A hearty “thank you” to the committee members for organizing this - it was a great time of food and fellowship!



Gracious God, you have redeemed us through Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creation, whose birth we celebrate as the child of Bethlehem. Bless us with every spiritual blessing, that we may live as your adopted children and witness to your glory with unending praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Lectionary Readings for November & December

	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
All Saints Day November 1, 2021	Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9 <i>or</i> <i>Isaiah 25:6-9</i> Psalm 24		Revelation 21:1-6a	John 11:32-44
November 7, 2021	Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17 Psalm 127	1 Kings 17:8-16 Psalm 146	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
November 14, 2021	1 Samuel 1:4-20 1 Samuel 2:1-10 **	Daniel 12:1-3 Psalm 16	Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18), 19-25	Mark 13:1-8
November 21, 2021	2 Samuel 23:1-7 Psalm 132:1-12, (13-18)	Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 Psalm 93	Revelation 1:4b-8	John 18:33-37
Thanksgiving Day November 25, 2021	Joel 2:21-27 Psalm 126		1 Timothy 2:1-7	Matthew 6:25-33
First Sunday of Advent November 28, 2021	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Psalm 25:1-10	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	Luke 21:25-36
Second Sunday of Advent December 5, 2021	Baruch 5:1-9 <i>or</i> <i>Malachi 3:1-4</i>	Luke 1:68-79	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
Third Sunday of Advent December 12, 2021	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Isaiah 12:2-6	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
Fourth Sunday of Advent December 19, 2021	Micah 5:2-5a	Luke 1:46b-55 <i>or</i> <i>Psalm 80:1-7</i>	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Nativity of the Lord - Proper I December 24 & 25, 2021 <i>Christmas Eve, Morn, or Mid-Day</i>	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
Nativity of the Lord - Proper II December 24 & 25, 2021 <i>Christmas Eve, Morn, or Mid-Day</i>	Isaiah 62:6-12	Psalm 97	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20
Nativity of the Lord - Proper III December 24 & 25, 2021 <i>Christmas Eve, Morn, or Mid-Day</i>	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)	John 1:1-14
First Sunday after Christmas Day December 26, 2021	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	Psalm 148	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 2:41-52
<i>Italicized readings, complementary to the standard reading, may be used with, or in place of it.</i>				

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