



## 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)

**January/February 2023**

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

### **CHURCH STAFF**

#### **Interim Pastor:**

Sue Walters  
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[revst88@gmail.com](mailto:revst88@gmail.com)

#### **Office Hours:**

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#### **Choir Director:**

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#### **Organist:**

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*\*\*\* Unexpected God, your advent alarms us. Wake us from drowsy worship, from the sleep that neglects love, and the sedative of misdirected frenzy. Awaken us now to your coming, and bend our angers into your peace. Amen. \*\*\**

## ✦ From the Pastor ✦

*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid for see –I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is the Messiah, the Lord.....So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about the child; and all who heard it were amazed. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.*

*Luke 2:10, 16-19*



It does not seem possible it is time to write the January-February pastor's column. We are not through celebrating the birth of the baby! We rejoice over that gift of God's love Incarnate. We want that rejoicing to last a little longer; we don't want to let go of the baby just yet. We want to gaze at that infant in his stable, and picture Mary, Joseph and the barnyard animals hovering over him. Yes, it's a smelly place...no barn is ever neat. But in the midst of sheep, cattle, goats and who knows what else, the Savior of the world is cooing. He is gazing at his mother and at Joseph. He turns his eyes to the animals and sees within their eyes the knowledge that he is special. Then, the shepherds enter.

They tell Mary and Joseph what had been told them by the angels. Jesus listens, enjoying the sound of their voices. How much does he comprehend? He's a newborn, so probably not much. But he can sense that these visitors have come to see him, and that he is special to them as well.

Jesus may not understand all that is happening, but Mary is capturing the words of the shepherds in her heart. Her thoughts center on her son, and what it means that he is the Messiah, the Lord. She is a faithful young woman; she knows the teachings that God would send a Savior to his people. This baby is he. How much does she understand about the extent of this? It is hard to know. In her Magnificat, she proclaims that God will bring down the powerful and uplift the lowly, feed the hungry and send the rich away empty. None of these things had happened in her lifetime. For her to proclaim that God would do this means she believed that God would use His (her) son to do this. Did she grasp that her son, the Son of God, would be put to death because he threatened those in power? Maybe those were not her thoughts as she held Jesus in that stable, but as his life unfolded, she could sense the hostility that the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Roman rulers had towards him. You have to wonder if then, she realized the full scope of what it mean that Jesus was the Son of God.

For now, we can remain in the manger. But we cannot stay there for long; because he didn't. He left the safety of his mother's and Joseph's arms to travel to the Temple and begin to grasp who he was ("Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?"). From there, after several more years of learning and growing, he began his earthly ministry when he was baptized by John in the Jordan and his identity was revealed for all to see (And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.) The

journey to the cross had begun, and that is where we find ourselves during the season of Lent.

It is all right not to want to face the cross immediately. We want to revel in the innocence of the baby, as if, by doing so; we can retain some of ours. But that also does not last forever. We face those who threaten us as much as Jesus faced those who threatened him. We walk with him, finding the courage to stand up to the same types of injustice and oppression that eventually took his life (temporarily). We feel the strength of the Spirit as we listen to his directions;" Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." We can walk the path to the cross, but first, we can kneel at the manger and welcome this baby into our world.

Blessings,

Sue

### ✦ Prayer Requests ✦

As we go through the next couple of months, please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers: Nick \* Bev \* Patty \* Nancy & Carl \* Richard & Bessie \* Donna \* Dean & Joanne \* Wilma \* Phyllis & Jim \* Scott \* Shannon \* Autumn \* Jay \* Jacquie \* Nancy & Rich \* Ann \* Chris \* Connor B \* Bonnie

### ✦ 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

*\*\*\* Bright Morning Star, your light has come, and the birth of Jesus has overwhelmed us with joy. Like the magi of long ago, may we be drawn to you and offer you such gifts as we are able. Amen.\*\*\**

## ✦ Church News & Updates ✦

● **In Memorium: Donald R. Shultz:** Donald R. Shultz, age 88, of Mansfield, MA previously of Bloomfield, NY passed into eternal rest on December 19, 2022, surrounded by his loving family. Don was born on January 28, 1934 in Rochester, NY to the late Herbert and Merle (Ellenfield) Shultz. Don graduated from East High in Rochester, NY before pursuing his degree in forestry at West Virginia University graduating in 1957.



Don began his Earth Science teaching career at Red Jacket School District. He finished his teaching career in the Rush Henrietta School District. He received a National Science Foundation grant in 1981 allowing him to take his family across the country visiting many of our country's National Parks.

Don's passions in life were many. His favorite interest was his prized mineral and fossil collection, many of which he collected himself. He had a deep appreciation for nature and found so much beauty in the world around him. He loved rooting for his beloved Mountaineers, reading British mystery authors, traveling, and most of all spending time with his family. He also loved his cherished cottage on Cole Lake in Godfrey, Ontario, Canada visiting with relatives and friends that were dear to his heart. Another star shines bright above Cole Lake now.

Don had a knack for finding something in common with everyone he met. He loved learning about the person and took a lively interest in their life. He had a gentle soul, loved having a glass of scotch with friends and loved to talk about sports. Watching and hearing about his grandson's soccer games made him so proud. We will dearly miss his stories, his wisdom, and most certainly his company. His greatest gift was letting people know how special and loved they were.

Don was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend to many people. He is survived by his loving wife, Jacqueline (Gilleland) Shultz, son Robert (Ingrid) Shultz of Fulshear, TX, daughter Aimee (James) Pfeiffer of Mansfield, MA., grandchildren Parker and Cooper Shultz, Jack and Matthew Pfeiffer and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Relatives and friends are cordially invited to attend a Celebration of His Life on April 30, 2023 at 2:00 pm with a reception to follow at the Congregational Church in Bloomfield, NY.

● **2023 Annual Meeting:** The church will have it's annual meeting on **Sunday, January 29th**, after the worship service. We will review the past year and set up preparations for the upcoming year. All members and friends of the church are welcome to attend.

● **Calling Our New Pastor:** We are calling Reverend Susan Walters to be the pastor of our church. This will need to be approved by secret ballot. The vote will take place at the 2023 Annual Meeting on January 29th. If you would like to vote and are unable to attend the meeting, please contact Marilyn R. Shafer at (585) 935-1538 (or email her at [mshafer5@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mshafer5@rochester.rr.com)) for a ballot.

- **Free Friday Suppers Resume:** The church will host a free dinner on the last Friday of the month January through April. For this period, the dates are **January 27th** and **February 24th**. We will be serving from 5 - 6:30 P.M. The meal is free and open to all in the community, so come and enjoy some good food and fellowship.

- **Ash Wednesday:** Lent begins on **Wednesday, February 22nd**. The church will hold an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 P.M. All are welcome.

- **Lenten Bible Study:** Pastor Sue will lead a Bible study for the five weeks during Lent, beginning on **Sunday, February 26**. The group will meet after the worship service and will be about an hour. The book for the study is *He Chose the Nails* by Max Lucado and it focuses on Jesus' journey to the cross. The book contains fifteen short chapters; the study group will look at three chapters each week. The book can be purchased through Amazon (paperback or Kindle version) or Christian Book Distributors (paperback only). It also can be borrowed from the Pioneer Library system (as a physical book or an electronic e-book). There is no sign-up list for the Bible study, please feel free to just come after the service. Pastor Sue hopes to see you there and looks forward to joining in the study and discussion. Please let her know if you have issues getting a copy of the book.

- **News From the Trustees:** The lights at the handicapped/overflow parking lot, the porch light (by State Routes 5&20) and the lighted sign have been updated to a photo eye light. The lights will come on and turn off automatically by sensing periods of daylight and night. In addition, the trustees arranged for a leak repair around the flat roof (please note this area was not part of our new roof project).

- **Christian Education News:** On Saturday, December 17, 2022, several people from our church went to the ARC home in Bloomfield to fellowship with the folks who live there.

The residents of the ARC home were enthusiastic, friendly and helpful. Thank you to Bethyn Boni who led us all in the singing of Christmas carols and songs. She offered the residents the opportunity to ask for their favorite song and they were not shy to do so! They sang along with us and impressed us that they knew every word. (We had to rely on song books for some of the songs!) We missed Richard this year with his always cheerful face and his enthusiastic "Ho, ho, ho."



Christian Education thanks everyone who contributed gifts and/or cookies to make this event the best! We asked for 12 pairs of Christmas socks. We received enough socks from you to give each resident a pair of Christmas socks and a pair of Christmas lounging socks. We are amazed again at the generosity of this church! And the cookies! As always there was such a great variety and



plates were full! We left all of them at the home for the residents to enjoy. As we all ate, we continued to mingle and chat with our friends at the ARC home!

We look forward to continuing our relationship with the ARC home.

- **Stewardship Campaign:** The campaign was a great success this year; we gained four new pledgers, a great start to the new church year. If you still wish to pledge, you're more than welcome to contact the church (585) 657-7755 to make arrangements.

- **Worship Services:** Remember, for those who cannot attend the in-person service, we continue to tape and post the the worship 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/>).

If you don't use Facebook yet still wish to hear the message, please call Marilyn R. Shafer at (585) 935-1538, or e-mail her at [mshafer5@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mshafer5@rochester.rr.com), to make arrangements to get a personal digital copy of each Sunday's service.

- **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. The prayer service can be viewed live on our Facebook page or accessed at your leisure by going to our page's Video section.

- **Food Cupboard:** As a continuing reminder, the food cupboard's most needed items are toilet paper, hand soap, detergent, dish soap and hearty soups. Please buy extra items on your next shopping trip and leave it in the box in the church entryway. Donations are welcome at any time.

*\*\*\* God of grace and glory, you call us with your voice of flame to be your people, faithful and courageous. As your beloved Son embraced his mission in the waters of baptism, inspire us with the fire of your Spirit to join in his transforming work. We ask this in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen. \*\*\**

## ✦ Reoccurring Calendar Events (Monthly) ✦

- **Woman's Breakfast:** meets the first Sunday of every month at **Brady J's** restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, 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 **February 5th** only.

- **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. For this period, the offerings are on **January 1st** and **February 5th**. 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 church council meets the first Sunday of each month after regular church services. For this time, the council will not meet on the first Sunday of January or February due to the annual meeting.

- **Choir Practice:** The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings 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 8 a.m. All interested men are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the group meets **January 29th** and **February 26th**.

## ✦ January & February Specific Calendar Events ✦

- **Sunday, January 1:** New Year's Day 2023

- **Friday, January 6:** Epiphany

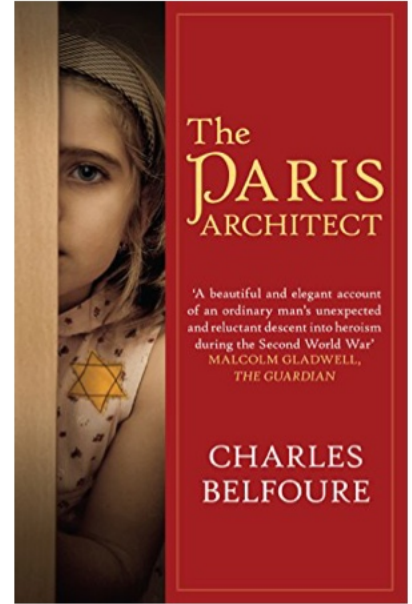
Epiphany is a celebration of God manifesting as the baby Jesus and revealing Himself to the world. The holiday also marks the day the Magi, or the three kings, visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Jesus' baptism is also celebrated during Epiphany. This holiday is also known as Three Kings Day.

- **Monday, January 16:** Martin Luther King Day

- **Thursday, January 19, (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *The Paris Architect* by Charles Belfoure.

**Amazon synopsis**

1942, Paris. Architect Lucien Bernard accepts a commission that will bring him huge wealth - and maybe a death sentence. He has to design a secret hiding place for a wealthy Jewish man, a space so invisible that even the most determined of Nazi soldiers won't discover it. When one of Lucien's designs fails horribly, the problem of hiding a Jew becomes personal, and he can no longer deny the enormity of his project. What does he owe his fellow man, and how far will he go to make things right?



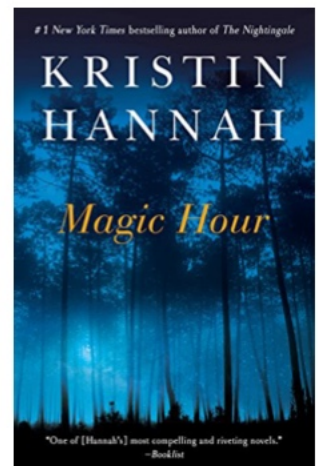
- **Sunday, January 29 (8 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Sunday, January 29:** 2023 Annual Meeting (after the worship service).
- **Wednesday, February 1:** National Freedom Day
- **Thursday, February 2:** Groundhog Day
- **Sunday, February 5 (8 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Tuesday, February 14:** Valentine's Day



- **Thursday, February 16 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the book *Magic Hour* by Kristin Hannah.

**Amazon synopsis:**

In the rugged Pacific Northwest lies the Olympic National Forest—nearly a million acres of impenetrable darkness and impossible beauty. From deep within this old growth forest, a six-year-old girl appears. Speechless and alone, she offers no clue as to her identity, no hint of her past.



Having retreated to her western Washington hometown after a scandal



left her career in ruins, child psychiatrist Dr. Julia Cates is determined to free the extraordinary little girl she calls Alice from a prison of unimaginable fear and isolation. To reach her, Julia must discover the truth about Alice's past—although doing so requires help from Julia's estranged sister, a local police officer. The shocking facts of Alice's life test the limits of Julia's faith and strength, even as she struggles to make a home for Alice—and for herself.

- **Monday, February 20:** Presidents Day

- **Tuesday, February 21:** Shrove Tuesday

The big hurrah before we start Lent, a season of prayer, penance and fasting in preparation for the Easter season. Also known as Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras (in French) and by many other nicknames.



- **Wednesday, February 22:** Ash Wednesday (Lent begins). The church will host a 7:00 P.M. service on this day.

- **Sunday, February 26 (8 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's

*\*\*\* O God of light, your searching Spirit reveals and illumines your presence in creation. Shine your radiant holiness into our lives, that we may offer our hands and hearts to your work: to heal and shelter, to feed and clothe, to break every yoke and silence evil tongues. Amen. \*\*\**

### ✦ Miscellaneous ✦

- **Pastor Office Hours:** Pastor Sue has open door office hours every Thursday. She leads morning prayer from the office beginning at 9:00 a.m. (which is streamed live on the church's Facebook page) and will remain in the office until 1:00 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Day Celebration**

We honored our loved ones who have gone on to their heavenly home with a beautiful service of memorials, remembrances and yes, celebration.

### ● **Christmas Celebrations**

We had marvelous Advent and Christmas celebrations this year. Chris Fuller and his wife, Dorothea Mertz played and sang for us at the start of our Christmas Eve service. Then, we had a Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve service that ended with the candlelit singing of Silent Night. We continued with a second lessons and carols service on Christmas Day, followed by coffee hour with “leftover” Christmas cookies. All in all, it was a great time we had celebrating the birth of Jesus. Merry Christmas!



## ✦ Lectionary Readings for January & February ✦

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
January 1, 2023	Isaiah 63:7-9	Psalm 148	Hebrews 2:10-18	Matthew 2:13-23
January 6, 2023 <i>Epiphany of the Lord</i>	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
January 8, 2023 <i>Baptism of the Lord</i>	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
January 15, 2023	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
January 22, 2023	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23
January 29, 2023	Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12
February 2, 2023	Malachi 3:1-4	Psalm 84 or <i>Psalm 24:7-10</i>	Hebrews 2:14-18	Luke 2:22-40
February 5, 2023	Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)	Psalm 112:1-9 (10)	1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)	Matthew 5:13-20
February 12, 2023	Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or <i>Sirach 15:15-20</i>	Psalm 119:1-8	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Matthew 5:21-37
February 19, 2023 <i>Transfiguration Sunday</i>	Exodus 24:12-18	Psalm 2 or <i>Psalm 99</i>	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
February 22, 2023 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or <i>Isaiah 58:1-12</i>	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
February 26, 2023 <i>First Sunday in Lent</i>	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11
* "Alternate First" OT readings follow the complementary historical tradition of thematically pairing the OT reading with the Gospel reading. <i>Italicized readings may be used with, or in place of it.</i>				

\*\*\* *Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, whose compassion illumines the world. Transform us into the likeness of the love of Christ, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity, the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.* \*\*\*

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of East Bloomfield  
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