



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

Website:

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

E-mail: 1st.Cong.Church@gmail.com

January/February 2025

*** Our Sunday worship service begins at 10:00 a.m. ***

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor

Reverend Sue Walters

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Office Hours:

Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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✦ From the Pastor ✦

"In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."
John 1:4-5



It is January. All the holiday glitter has been taken down and packed away. The meals with family and friends have all been eaten, and the leftovers are either in the freezer or have been fed to the dog (that's what happens in our house). We look ahead at the

rest of the winter, maybe embracing it, maybe dreading it. I say embracing it because I look forward to the early darkness (well, maybe not 4 o'clock). I like to snuggle in with a good book, and bask in the glow of the lights that dispel the gloom. Of course, there is also the frustration when you drop something and there isn't enough light to find it....or the cat or the dog finds it first.

There are those for whom the darkness is not something to be embraced, but to be dreaded. Perhaps this is the first winter you are spending alone. The lights come on, but the person who has been next to you to share the coziness is no longer there. Or, your vision has diminished and driving after dark is now forbidden by your ophthalmologist. You might feel confined or isolated. The darkened hours drag. The corners might seem to develop moving shadows. It's not pleasant. You might crawl into bed and pull up the covers, just wanting light to return.

The good news is the light has never left. Yes, it's dark. But that is the external darkness. The interior darkness has already been dispelled by the light of the One who came into the world to conquer the darkness. This is the darkness of despair, doubt, grief, loneliness, ill health. He stands in the midst of that darkness and says: "Be Gone! I have entered this world to rid it of your power!"

So, he has. He has overcome the darkness. Those types of insidious darkness never win. They are banished by the light of Christ!

So, in the winter, when the air turns cold and it starts getting dark at 4 o'clock. Fear not! We are already past the winter solstice. We are gaining day light every day. And, there is the light of Christ which remains with us regardless of the season. May you bask in His light always.

Blessings,

Sue

✦ **Upcoming Events** ✦

● **Annual Church Meeting (2024 Review):** The church council will meet after the worship service on **Sunday, January 26th** to discuss church business and accomplishments from 2024. In addition, the council will hold elections for various committees, discuss the upcoming new year and elect someone to the position of council moderator.

✦ Church News & Updates ✦

● **New Church Clerk Needed:** Phyllis Rechtin is retiring as Church Clerk following the January 2025 Annual Meeting. The council will need to select a new Church Clerk beginning February 2025. The following excerpt describes the responsibilities of the Church Clerk:

The clerk shall be appointed by the church council to keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church; keep a register of addresses of church members, with dates and modes of their reception and removal; keep a record of baptisms and marriages [and deaths] (added); issue letters of transfer notifying the churches to which they are addressed; preserve on file all communications and written official reports; notify all persons elected to offices and committees; give legal notice of all meetings when such notices are necessary; conduct all correspondence so far as this is not otherwise provided for, and perform such other duties as are described by law or as usually pertain to the office of a clerk or secretary of an assembly.

If anyone is interested in becoming the next Church Clerk, please contact Will Tyler, our church council moderator, for consideration. Thank you.

● **New Memorial Gifts Secretary Needed:** The current secretary for Memorial Gifts, Jim Rechtin, is retiring effective at the annual meeting in January 2025. Below is a description of the duties. If you are interested in this position please contact Will Tyler, Moderator.

Memorial Gifts Secretary: One of three members appointed by the church council; shall serve for an indefinite term or until replaced by the council. Aids in upkeep of the Book of Remembrance and the Abiding Memorials Register for a separate memorial gifts bank account. Accepts donations for the gift fund and aids committee members in determining gifts or following through with specific donated gifts requests.

● **Trustee News:** The trustees installed new lights in Fellowship Hall and it is now nicely bright. It is wonderful and the church congregation is very thankful.

*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.*

✦ Birthdays ✦

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



January:

11 Isaac Bartos

February:

1 Lujza Rockcastle

29 Nancy Stewart

✦ Reoccurring Calendar Events (Monthly) ✦

● **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. The offering basket will be available at our live service. For this period, the special offerings will be on **January 5th**, and **February 2nd**. 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 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.

● **Council Meeting:** The church normally has monthly council meetings. Since the Annual Meeting will be on **January 26th** there will be no regular church council meetings for this period.

● **Woman's Breakfast:** meets the first Monday of every month at **Brady J's** restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at **9:00 a.m.** All interested women are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the breakfasts will be on **January 6th**, and **February 3rd**.

● **Choir Practice:** The choir has weekly Wednesday rehearsals at 7:30 p.m. For those who cannot make it Wednesday evenings, there is a short rehearsal at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays. 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 **7:45 a.m.** All interested men are invited; being a member of the church isn't a requirement. For this period, the men will meet **January 26th**, and **February 23rd**.

✦ January and February Specific Calendar Events ✦

● **Wednesday, January 1:** New Years Day

● **Monday, January 6:** Epiphany

● **Monday, January 6 (9:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's

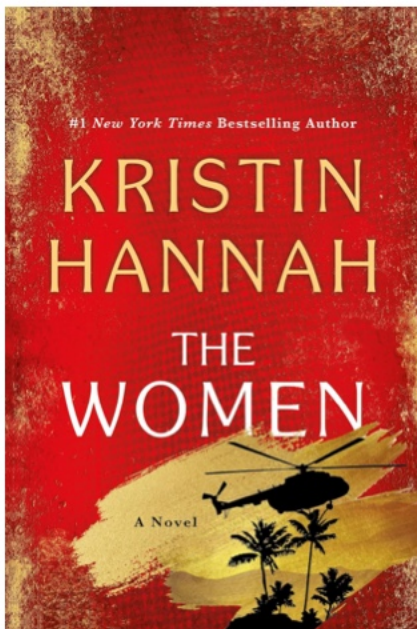
● **Sunday, January 12:** The baptism of Jesus

● **Thursday, January 16 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *The Women* by Kristin Hannah.



Amazon synopsis:

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.



As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often

been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

- **Monday, January 20:** Martin Luther King Day
- **Sunday, January 26 (7:45 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Sunday, January 26 (after the worship service):** Annual Meeting
- **Sunday, February 2:** Groundhog Day
- **Monday, February 3 (9:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Wednesday, February 12:** Lincoln's birthday
- **Friday, February 14:** Valentine's Day
- **Monday, February 17:** President's Day

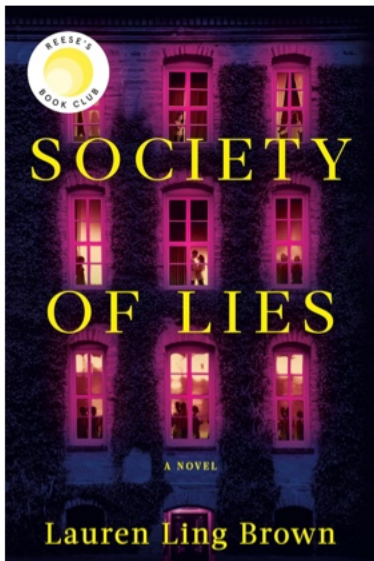


- **Thursday, February 20 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *Society of Lies* by Lauren Ling Brown.

Amazon synopsis:

How far would you go to belong?

Maya has returned to Princeton for her college reunion—it's been a decade since she graduated, and she is looking forward to seeing old faces and reminiscing about her time there. This visit is special because Maya will also be attending the graduation of her little sister, Naomi.



But what should have been a dream weekend becomes Maya's worst nightmare when she receives the news that Naomi is dead. The police are calling it an accident, but Maya suspects that there is more to the story than they are letting on.

As Maya pieces together what happened in the months leading up to her sister's death, she begins to realize how much Naomi hid from her. Despite Maya's warnings, Naomi had joined Sterling Club, the most exclusive social club on campus—the same one Maya belonged to. And if she had to guess, Naomi was likely tapped for the secret society within it.

The more Maya uncovers, the more terrified she becomes that

Naomi's decision to follow in her footsteps might have been what got her killed. Because Maya's time at Princeton wasn't as wonderful as she'd always made it seem—after all, her sister wasn't the first young woman to turn up dead. Now every clue is leading Maya back to the past . . . and to the secret she's kept all these years.

- **Sunday, February 23 (7:45 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's

✦ **Picture Us** ✦



- **Christian Education Sponsored Fellowship & Game Day:** The Christian Education committee sponsored a Fellowship and Game Day for the congregation after the worship service. After a light luncheon provided by the committee, members of the congregation broke into groups to compete in lighthearted game play. We're not sure whether anyone knows who won what game, but we do know the members who played had a great time. Our thanks to the committee.



● **Joan & Bob's 50th Anniversary Celebration:** We were honored when Bob and Joan Chase invited us to share in the celebrations of their 50th wedding anniversary. They threw a party at the church and we were thrilled to be a part of their happiness. Congratulations, Joan and Bob - here's to many, many more anniversaries!



God, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, mark us with your images, and raise us to live our baptismal vows empowered by the Holy Spirit and the example of Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

✦ **Miscellaneous** ✦

● **Pastor Office Hours:** Pastor Sue has open door office hours every Thursday. She leads morning prayer from her office beginning at 9:00 a.m. which is streamed live on the church's Facebook page. Pastor Sue will remain in her office until 1:00 p.m. and, as always, drop-ins for a cup of coffee or tea are welcome. She is also available at other times by appointment; please call (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) 402-5397 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.

● **Worship Services:** For those who cannot attend the in-person service, we continue to record and post portions of the worship service 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/>).

● **Food Cupboard:** As a continuing reminder, please keep the food cupboard's needs in your minds and hearts. We collect/deliver for the cupboard on a monthly basis, however, donations are welcome at any time.

✦ November/December Lectionary Reading ✦

Calendar Date	Liturgical Date	First Reading	Psalms Reading	Second Reading	Gospel Reading
January 1, 2025	New Year's Day	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Psalms 8	Revelation 21:1-6a	Matthew 25:31-46
January 5, 2025	Second Sunday after Christmas Day	Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12	Psalms 147:12-20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
January 6, 2025	Epiphany of the Lord	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
January 12, 2025	Baptism of the Lord	Isaiah 43:1-7	Psalms 29	Acts 8:14-17	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 19, 2025	Second Sunday after the Epiphany	Isaiah 62:1-5	Psalms 36:5-10	1 Corinthians 12:1-11	John 2:1-11
January 26, 2025	Third Sunday after the Epiphany	Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10	Psalms 19	1 Corinthians 12:12-31a	Luke 4:14-21
February 2, 2025	Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Psalms 71:1-6	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30
February 2, 2025	Presentation of the Lord	Malachi 3:1-4	Psalms 84 or Psalms 24:7-10	Hebrews 2:14-18	Luke 2:22-40
February 9, 2025	Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany	Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)	Psalms 138	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
February 16, 2025	Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany	Jeremiah 17:5-10	Psalms 1	1 Corinthians 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
February 23, 2025	Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany	Genesis 45:3-11, 15	Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40	1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38

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