



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

November/December 2020

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

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Ever-living God, you inscribe our names in your book of life so that we may share in the first fruits of salvation. Grant that we may acknowledge Christ as our redeemer and, trusting in him, be confident that none of your own will be lost or forgotten. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

FROM THE PASTOR

Give Thanks to the Lord

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
For his steadfast love endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
Those he redeemed from trouble,
And gathered in from the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south."*

Psalm 107:1-3



This is a Thanksgiving like no other we have experienced. Even as I write this, at the end of October, medical experts are already warning about the dangers of gathering to celebrate Thanksgiving. Having large family gatherings has been discouraged. Thanksgiving has always been about family, will the holiday be the same if we cannot have them over, or go to their homes? What about if we are alone?

In any of these circumstances, Thanksgiving may not be the way it has always been. But, it is our attitude that will determine how we mark this special day. Giving thanks does not depend on where we are or who we are with. While it might be easier for us to have an attitude of gratitude if we can be with those we love, we can cultivate this attitude by focusing on God. God's love and faithfulness to us has never been limited.

The passage from Psalm 107 was written centuries ago. It reflects the psalmist's recognition that gratitude is what we owe to God. God's steadfast love to us has been given without reservation. This love endures forever, despite the times we have not reciprocated. We have been surrounded by this love all the days of our lives. Nothing can separate us from this love. We have been redeemed by this love. It is the greatest and most undeserved gift we have ever received. If we focus on this love and recognize it is not about who we are

with, or what we have, this Thanksgiving could be the best we have ever had..because we recognize that we have much to be thankful for.

May you recognize God's love for you during this season, and every season of your lives.

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 * the Pastor Search Committee * Bev Clark * Doc Perkins * the Tyler family * Jennifer * Terry * the Gliewe family * Lori * Sandy Straub * Kay * the Messner family * Helen * Don Shultz * Autumn * Denise * Joan * the Stewart family * all places & people with Covid-19 * school teachers & administration * all the medical fields

Pastor Search Committee News:

The committee is continuing their search for our new pastor. As always, please continue to keep the committee in your thoughts and prayers during their search.

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



Church News:

● **Worship Services:** We are back 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.

It does look different as we've got the pews set up for social distancing. But we are using the church hymnals and bibles and singing along with the music. Yes, 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.

● **Parsonage Remodel:** With the exception of a few niggling bits, the parsonage is remodeled! The crew is finishing up and the house is being readied for the winter.

● **Stewardship Sunday:** Stewardship is about being grateful, responsible stewards of the gifts we receive from God. The tradition of giving back to God and to the church comes from the Biblical practice of "tithing," which means to give back a tenth of our earnings to God (Numbers 18:26). We see stewardship as more than simply contributing money to the church; it's also about contributing time and talents, and volunteering for ministry and mission. It's about reaching out to build relationships from a perspective of abundance instead of scarcity.

We have begun our annual stewardship drive. If you are a church member or a friend of the church, you should have received a mailing asking for a contribution to the church, whether it be monetary or with your time. Please consider supporting the church in its mission.

While we will accept your pledge from now until the end of the year, we announce Sunday, November 8 as the official Sunday for receiving pledges. They will be gathered up with the week's collection. Thank you in advance for your support.

● **Food Cupboard:** As a 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.

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 **November 1st** and **December 6th**.

● **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 1st** 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 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 next meeting will be **November 1st** after regular worship service. Now that the summer hiatus is over, council will meet the first Sunday of every month.

● **Choir Practice:** The choir is not rehearsing on Wednesday evenings or Sunday mornings. However, our choir director, Bethyn Boni, has been working hard to come up with songs the choir can sing in church with masks on (socially distanced, of course). Bethyn is hoping the choir can begin presenting live music to the congregation when Advent starts. Please stay tuned to our Facebook page or web site for updates. And, as always, we will notify everyone when the choir resumes Wednesday night rehearsals.

● **Men's Breakfast:** The men's breakfast will be on hiatus until further notice. We will notify all when the men begin regularly meeting again.

November & December Specific Calendar Events:

● **Sunday, November 1 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield)

● **Sunday, November 1:** All Saints Day. To pay tribute to loved ones who have passed on, please bring photos of your loved ones who have gone on ahead to Sunday's worship service. There will be a table available at the front to place these photos and we will celebrate their lives in service.

● **Sunday, November 1 (11:30 AM):** Church Council meets. We will have Fellowship Hour prior to the meeting start.

● **Thursday, November 19 (10:30 AM):** Book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the novel *Magic Hour* by Kristen 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.

● **Thursday, November 26:** Thanksgiving Day.



● **Sunday, November 29:** First Sunday in Advent.

● **Sunday, December 6 (8:00 AM):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield)

● **Sunday, December 6:** Second Sunday in Advent.

● **Sunday, December 6 (11:30 AM):** Church Council meets. We will have Fellowship Hour prior to the meeting start.

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

As before, we can only accept donors with appointments only, no walk-ins. So, please be sure you book an appointment if you wish to give blood. We hope to bring back our grilled cheese sandwiches and soup! Stay tuned...

● **Thursday, December 17 (10:30 AM):** Book club meets in Fellowship Hall; they will discuss the novella *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

Goodreads synopsis: *A Christmas Carol* is a novella by Charles Dickens, first published in London by Chapman & Hall on 19 December 1843. The novella met with instant success and critical acclaim. Carol tells the story of a bitter old miser named Ebenezer Scrooge and his transformation into a gentler, kindlier man after visitations by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present and Yet to Come.

The book was written at a time when the British were examining and exploring Christmas traditions from the past as well as new customs such as Christmas cards and Christmas trees. Carol singing took a new lease on life during this time. Dickens' sources for the tale appear to be many and varied, but are, principally, the humiliating experiences of his childhood, his sympathy for the poor, and various Christmas stories and fairy tales.

Dickens' Carol was one of the greatest influences in rejuvenating the old Christmas traditions of England, but, while it brings to the reader images of light, joy, warmth and life, it also brings strong and unforgettable images of darkness, despair, coldness, sadness, and death. Scrooge himself is the embodiment of winter, and, just as winter is followed by spring and the renewal of life, so too is Scrooge's cold, pinched heart restored to the innocent goodwill he had known in his childhood and youth.

A Christmas Carol remains popular—having never been out of print—and has been adapted many times to film, stage, opera, and other media.

- **Sunday, December 13:** Third Sunday in Advent.
- **Sunday, December 20:** Fourth Sunday in Advent.
- **Thursday, December 24:** Christmas Eve. We will have a Christmas Eve service starting at 7:00 PM (in the sanctuary).
- **Friday, December 25:** Christmas Day.

Merry Christmas!



- **Friday, December 31:** New Years Eve.

Lectionary Readings

Date	First Reading & Psalm	Alt. First Reading & Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Nov 1, 2020	Joshua 3:7-17 Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37	Micah 3:5-12 Psalm 43	1 Thessalonians 2:9-13	Matthew 23:1-12
All Saints Day Nov 1, 2020	Revelation 7:9-17 Psalm 34:1-10, 22		1 John 3:1-3	Matthew 5:1-12
Nov 8, 2020	Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Psalm 78:1-7	Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 or <i>Amos 5:18-24</i> Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 or <i>Psalm 70</i>	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Matthew 25:1-13
Nov 15, 2020	Judges 4:1-7 Psalm 123	Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Matthew 25:14-30
Nov 22, 2020	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 100	Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 95:1-7a	Ephesians 1:15-23	Matthew 25:31-46
Thanksgiving Day Nov 26, 2020	Deuteronomy 8:7-18 Psalm 65		2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Luke 17:11-19
First Sunday of Advent Nov 29, 2020	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37
Second Sunday of Advent Dec 6, 2020	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
Third Sunday of Advent Dec 13, 2020	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126 or <i>Luke 1:46b-55</i>	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Fourth Sunday of Advent Dec 20, 2020	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:46b-55 or <i>Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26</i>	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
Nativity of the Lord Dec 24 & 25, 2020 Christmas Eve, morning, or mid- day	Isaiah 9:2-7 or <i>Isaiah 62:6-12</i> or <i>Isaiah 52:7-10</i>	Psalm 96 or <i>Psalm 97</i> or <i>Psalm 98</i>	Titus 2:11-14 or <i>Titus 3:4-7</i> or <i>Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)</i>	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20) or <i>Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20</i> or <i>John 1:1-14</i>
Dec 27, 2020	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

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

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.



*God of glory,
your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem,
where the Light of the world is humbly born
into the darkness of human night.
Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world,
so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice,
and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Amen.*

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