



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

Website: www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org
E-mail: 1st.Cong.Church@gmail.com

March/April 2023

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

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Pastor:

Sue Walters
(716) 983-5760
revst88@gmail.com

Office Hours:

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

Choir Director:

Bethyn Boni
(585) 396-2788
Bethyn.Boni@gmail.com

Organist:

Donna Messner
(585) 657-6579
dlmessner3169@gmail.com

Sexton

Robin Stewart
(585) 657-7574

Newsletter Editor & Web Master

Marilyn R. Shafer
(585) 935-1538
mshafer5@rochester.rr.com

**** God our strength, we lift to you the deepest prayers of our hearts that you will save us from the time of trial and comfort us in tribulation. Amen. ****

✦ **From the Pastor** ✦

"We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead."
Acts 10:39-42



March and April are very different, in many ways. Historically the weather in March involves ice in its many forms: snow, sleet, hail, freezing rain. Life can be treacherous to navigate if any forms of transportation are involved. We eagerly long for April sunshine and its warmth to thaw the frozen ground. As we drive around, we see farmers preparing their fields for planting. The richness of the earth is being cultivated to produce new life.

In the church year, there are also significant differences in these months. In March, we are mired in Lent. It is a somber time, when we reflect on how much we have fallen short of God's expectations of us. We face our sin head on. We may be looking towards the cross, but it seems to be a long way off. We listen to the accounts of Jesus' ministry among all the people, but also observe the machinations of the Pharisees, as they plot to get rid of him. We know what is coming.

The first week in April brings these events to a head. During that Holy Week, we see Jesus' progression towards the brutal instrument of death: the cross. We read of Judas' betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane....but, before that, we see Jesus institute one of the ways in which we are to remember him: the Last Supper; the sharing of the symbols of his body and blood which will very shortly be broken and poured out for those with whom he shares this final meal. We listen to his prayer to his Father, as he grapples with his looming suffering and death. His agony is evident. He is giving himself up to death FOR US. We are humbled. We feel inadequate that Our Lord should die to save us. It's Friday. But, Sunday's coming. That is the truth. Nothing can keep God from acting. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead on that first Easter morning. The Pharisees' plotting didn't work. Jesus broke the bonds of death, and so destroyed the last obstacle to our life with God, both on this Earth and in Heaven. The sin that we each manifest was forgiven by His death on that tree.

Now we go as Peter described the disciples as going, to share the news that God loves us. There are no barriers left, Jesus broke them in pieces.

Don't let the obstacles of life keep you from this truth: you don't have to be perfect. You are forgiven. That is enough.

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!



March:

6 Robin Stewart
12 Joe Walters, Jr.
28 Will Tyler

April:

12 Bob Kelly

**** Christ our God, your love is poured out in death for our sakes. Hold us in your embrace as we wait for Easter's dawn. Comfort us with the promise that no power on earth, not even death itself, can separate us from your love; and strengthen us to wait until you are revealed to us in all your risen glory. Amen..****

✦ Church News & Updates ✦

● **Calling Our New Pastor:** We have called Reverend Sue Walters to be our pastor and are in the process of a congregation-wide vote. These votes will be tabulated and the results will be presented to the council on **March 5th** at the general council meeting (which is held after the worship service).

● **Free Friday Suppers:**

Free Friday suppers continue. For this period, we will host a free community dinner on Friday, **March 31** and **April 28**. Our volunteers will begin serving at 5:00 p.m. and the dinner will conclude at 6:30 p.m. (or until the food is gone). All are welcome!

- **Fundraising:**

We are hosting two BBQs from Gale-Wyn Catering this year. The first one is Sunday, April **24th**. The second will be Saturday, July 23, 2022. Both will begin at 11:00 a.m. and will go until 4:00 p.m. (or until sold out). The sale venue will be in the parking lot of Runnings (3191 County Road 10, Canandaigua; off of Eastern Boulevard).

Please note our worship service on Sunday, **April 24th**, will begin at 9:00 a.m. so that church members will be able to get to the BBQ in time to start sales.

- **Lenten Bible Study:** Pastor Sue will lead a Bible study for Lent. The group will meet after the worship service and will be about an hour. The first meeting was February 26, and the next meetings will be on **March 12th, 19th** and **26th**.

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.

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.

- **News From the Trustees:** The trustees have hired a company to upgrade the sound system in the sanctuary. We will be getting new speakers and microphones. Work will begin soon.

- **Worship Services:** Remember, 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/>).

If you don't use Facebook yet still wish to hear the message, please call Marilyn Shafer at (585) 935-1538, or e-mail her at 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 are 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.

**** Creator of the universe, you made the world in beauty, and restore all things in glory through the victory of Jesus Christ. We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed, the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace, to the glory of your name. 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 **March 5th** and **April 2nd**.

- **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 **March 5th** and **April 2nd**. 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 meet on **March 5th** and **April 2nd**.

- **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.

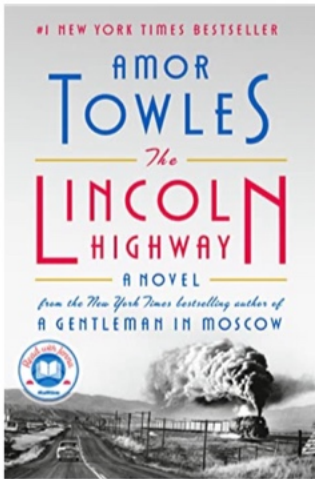
- **Men's Breakfast:** The men meet the last Sunday of every month at **Brady J's** restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at 8 a.m. All interested men are invited; being a member of the church isn't a requirement. For this period, the group meets **March 26th** and **April 30th**.

✦ March and April Specific Calendar Events ✦

- **Thursday, March 2:** Read Across America Day. Also the birthday of Dr. Seuss, beloved author, this is a day to celebrate the privilege of being able to read. So head to the library, or curl up on the couch and just be a bookworm!



- **Sunday, March 5 (8:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Sunday, March 5:** Church Council Meeting (after the worship service)
- **Sunday, March 12:** Daylight Savings Time starts (clocks go forward)
- **Thursday, March 16, (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles.



Amazon synopsis

In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother, Billy, and head to California where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take them all on a fateful journey in the opposite direction—to the City of New York.

Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.

- **Friday, March 17:** Saint Patrick's Day



- **Sunday, March 26 (8:00 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Friday, March 31 (5-6:30 p.m.):** Free Friday supper

- **Sunday, April 2: Palm Sunday**



- **Sunday, April 2 (8:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's
- **Sunday, April 2:** Church Council Meeting (after the worship service)
- **Thursday, April 6:** Maundy Thursday
- **Friday, April 7:** Good Friday. The church will host a 7:00 p.m. service on this day



- **Sunday, April 9: Easter Sunday**

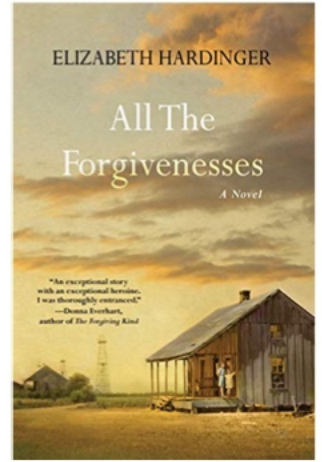
*He is Risen...
Hallelujah...
He is Risen Indeed!*



- **Thursday, April 20 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue’s office; they will discuss the book *All the Forgivenesses* by Elizabeth Hardinger.

Amazon synopsis:

Growing up on their hardscrabble farm in rural Kentucky, fifteen-year-old Albertina “Bertie” Winslow has learned a lot from her mama, Polly. She knows how to lance a boil, make a pie crust, butcher a pig, and tend to every chore that needs doing. What she doesn’t know, but is forced to reckon with all too soon, is how to look after children as a mother should . . .



When Polly succumbs to a long illness, Bertie takes on responsibility for her four younger siblings and their dissolute, unreliable daddy. Yet the task is overwhelming. Nine-year-old Dacia, especially, is resentful and stubborn, hinting at secrets in their mama’s life. Finally, Bertie makes the only choice she can—breaking up the family for its own survival, keeping the girls with her, sending the boys off to their grown brothers, long gone from home.

Ever pragmatic, Bertie marries young, grateful to find a husband willing to take on the care of her sisters, and eventually moves to the oil fields of Kansas. But marriage alone cannot resolve her grief and guilt over a long-ago tragedy, or prepare her for the heartaches still to come. Only by confronting wrenching truths can she open herself to joy—and learn how to not only give, but receive, unfettered love.

- **Sunday, April 24 (11:00 a.m.):** Chicken BBQ sale (Runnings parking lot). Remember that the worship service begins at **9:00 a.m.** this day
- **Sunday, April 28 (8:00 a.m.):** Men’s breakfast at Brady J’s
- **Friday, April 30 (5-6:30 p.m.):** Free Friday supper

**** 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. ****

✦ **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 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.

✦ **Lectionary Readings for March & April** ✦

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
March 5, 2023	Genesis 12:1-4a	Psalm 121	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17 <i>or</i> <i>Matthew 17:1-9</i>
March 12, 2023	Exodus 17:1-7	Psalm 95	Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42
March 19, 2023	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Psalm 23	Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
March 25, 2023	Isaiah 7:10-14	Psalm 45 <i>or</i> <i>Psalm 40:5-10</i>	Hebrews 10:4-10	Luke 1:26-38
March 26, 2023	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalm 130	Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
Palm Sunday April 2, 2023		Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29	Matthew 21:1-11	
Holy Week	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalm 31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Matthew 26:14-27:66 <i>or</i> <i>Matthew 27:11-54</i>
	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 36:5-11	Hebrews 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 71:1-14	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	John 12:20-36
	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalm 70	Hebrews 12:1-3	John 13:21-32
Maundy Thursday April 6, 2023	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday April 7, 2023	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Psalm 22	Hebrews 10:16-25 <i>or</i> <i>Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9</i>	John 18:1-19:42
Easter Vigil April 8, 2023	Job 14:1-14 <i>or</i> <i>Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24</i>	Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	Matthew 27:57-66 <i>or</i> <i>John 19:38-42</i>
Easter Day April 9, 2023	Acts 10:34-43 <i>or</i> Jeremiah 31:1-6	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	Colossians 3:1-4 <i>or</i> <i>Acts 10:34-43</i>	John 20:1-18 <i>or</i> <i>Matthew 28:1-10</i>
Easter Evening April 9, 2023	Isaiah 25:6-9	Psalm 114	1 Corinthians 5:6b-8	Luke 24:13-49
April 16, 2023	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
April 23, 2023	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
April 30, 2023	Acts 2:42-47	Psalm 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10

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

*** *Holy Shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, where we celebrate with you forever. Amen.* ***

First Congregational Church
of East Bloomfield
Post Office Box 5
East Bloomfield, NY 14443



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

