



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

Heralding the Good News to our neighbors

Sunday Service @ 10:00 A.M.
January/February 2019

<http://www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org>

STAFF

Pastor: Sandy Porrey
(585) 773-8512
Sanders74@juno.com

Associate Pastor: Andy Schaefer
(585) 657-4679
ajschaefer1@live.com

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

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

Sexton: Bev Clark
(585) 657-6586

Newsletter: Phyllis Rechtin
(585) 657-7018
rechtin@rochester.rr.com

Web Masters: Phyllis Rechtin
(585) 657-7018
rechtin@rochester.rr.com
Marilyn Shafer
(585) 935-1538
mshafer5@rochester.rr.com

A note from the editor...

"In his book *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth* (Fortress Press), Walter Brueggemann writes in an Epiphany poem:

... this is a time to be born.
So we turn to you, God of our life
God of all our years,
God of our beginning....
We dare pray that you will do for us
and among us and through us
what is needful for our newness.
Give us the power to be receptive,
to take the newness you give
There is a time to be born, and it is now.
We sense the pangs and groans of your
newness.
Come here now in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

How fitting that the Epiphany season and the new year coincide! Epiphany reveals a new King, the beginning of his ministry, his new disciples, his first healings, his "new teaching — with authority" (Mark 1:27). We, too, experience newness, now and year-round. But newness can be tough. So we trust that God, who "[makes] all things new" while banishing "mourning and crying and pain" (Revelation 21:4-5), walks with us in this new year — and always."

__From the NewsletterNewsletter

May the New Year be filled with blessings
of new birth!

Phyllis

PASTORS' COLUMN

From the pen of Rev. Sandy Porrey



I hope your holiday season was peaceful and filled with God's grace. I must admit as I pen this message right before Christmas, my energy fuel tank is running a bit low. I am always amazed at how

much "stuff" can fill the hours of our days and rob us of precious time.

In the month of December I had several home projects completed. They had to be done but as the work was underway, I couldn't help thinking about all the other things I could be doing with my time. I think it's a safe bet we all feel that way at one time or another.

As we continue to bask in the glow from the birth of the Christ child, we look forward to 2019.

I know you have been busy with the holiday season, but have you had a chance to discern how the New Year might be different for you? Have you pondered if there are changes you would like to make? Maybe dropping some old habits and taking on new, more healthier or productive ones? Of course we have! Isn't that something we all do at the start of every New Year?

Maybe the secret to change is to start out small. If you are going to stop smoking, cut back. If you are going to lose weight, try just eating less. Maybe we should all think about getting more exercise. You know how this goes....we all have something we would like to change about ourselves. I'm wondering if the key to our successful commitment to change might just start with asking God for some help. We've never gone wrong starting there before. When I am faced with a challenge I like to read Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

My prayer for all of us as we begin 2019 is simple. May the good Lord show us how to take time out of our busy schedules

and make time to invite Christ Jesus into our lives. If we remember to do that...oooooh how much better our lives will be.

May God bless you all with health and happiness in 2019.

See you in church!

Sandy

From the pen of Pastor Andy Schaefer



The Bible is not necessarily an instruction book. There are things Jesus said that seem to be instructions, but upon deeper study, seem more

intended to inspire us to deeper thinking; "outside-the-box" as it were.

That said, there are some parts of the Bible that are, indeed, instructional. Take, for example, Colossians 3:12-13: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

I see no reason why we should not strive to fulfill this scripture to the letter. Yes, we love one another, but regardless, there seems no end to the ways that we can irritate each other to one degree or another – that is just a fact of being human. I have tried to get myself in the habit of, when someone does or says something that gets under my skin, asking myself, "have I ever done the same kind of thing?" More often than I care to admit, the answer is "Eeeeeeeeyup!"

That is why, when Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "Not seven times but, I tell you, seventy times seven." (Mt. 18:21-22) Jesus was not giving an equation; he was wildly exaggerating. That is not to say he was

minimizing the need for forgiveness, but that the need is so great - beyond counting.

Our capacity to sin against, and hurt each other, in ways great and small, cannot be exaggerated; the length to which God in Jesus went to heal our hurt and forgive our sin cannot be exaggerated; the need for us to extend to one another the grace that Jesus has extended to us cannot be exaggerated. I suggest we all resolve in the coming year, to better fulfill Paul's instruction to the Colossians, which I will reiterate here:

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

May God bless us all with gladness and joy, strength and perseverance, compassion and grace, in the coming year. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all for all you do!

Peace,
Andy

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER, MINISTRY AND HUMOR

Church Membership

Please contact Rev. Sandy Porrey at (585) 773-8512 or Sanders74@juno.com for information on joining the First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield or arranging for Home Communion for a shut-in.

Help Needed—Help Needed
Check out the signup sheets
in Fellowship Hall





January

11 Isaac Bartos
28 Don Shultz

February

1 Lujza Rockcastle
14 Mick Eddy
17 Bob Sickman
24 June Bartos
29 Nancy Stewart

Upcoming Events

Choir Everyone is welcome to sing.	Wednesday night rehearsals resume at 7:30-9:00
Jan 6	-Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. - Epiphany
Jan 12	Reports for the annual report are due to Alice McConnell.
Jan 13	Baptism of the Lord
Jan 17	Book Club, 2:30 – 3:30, Insidious Intent, Val McDermid
Jan 20 	Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Jan 21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan 27 	-Men's Breakfast 8:00 @ Brady J's. -Annual Meeting after the service. A light lunch will be provided.

Feb 3	-Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday in Advent -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council meeting
Feb 14	Valentine's Day
Feb 18	Presidents Day
Feb 19	Newsletter Deadline for Mar/Apr 2019
Feb 20	Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Feb 21	Book Club 2:30-3:30, The Last Days of Night, Graham Moore
Feb 24	-Men's Breakfast 8:00 @ Brady J's.



PEWPOINTS

Lectionary Readings Nov/Dec 2018

Nov 4 Ruth 1:1-18, Psalm 146, Hebrews 9:11-14, Mark 12:28-34
Nov 11 Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17, Psalm 127, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44
Nov 18 1 Samuel 1:4-20, Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18), 19-25, Mark 13:1-8
Nov 22, Thanksgiving Day, Joel 2:21-27, Psalm 126, 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Matthew 6:25-33
Nov 25 2 Samuel 23:1-7, Psalm 132:1-12, (13-18), Revelation 1:4b-8, John 18:33-37
First Sunday in Advent Dec 2 Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-36
Second Sunday in Advent Dec 9 Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79, Philippians 1:3-11, Luke 3:1-6
Third Sunday in Advent Dec 16 Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

Fourth Sunday in Advent Dec 23 Micah 5:2-5a, Psalm 80:1-7, Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Dec 30 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26, Psalm 148, Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 2:41-52

How to advertise your church event

To advertise any church event contact Alice McConnell, 8291 Wesley Road, Bloomfield, 14469; 703-1449 or beehive270@gmail.com. Please give the written details to Alice 4 weeks before the date of the event.

Phyllis Rechten will handle information for the Newsletter, the website and Bloomfield Buzz. Keep in mind our issues are published every 2 months, so you should think ahead to have the event included in the correct newsletter. (Phyllis Rechten, 6700 Rice Rd., Victor, NY 14564; rechten@rochester.rr.com or 657-7018).

The Ties That Bind



"Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night."

During January and February, the congregation prays for The Glamack family, Beverley Clark, Albert & Patty Gliewe, and Don & Jackie Shultz.

Remember our members and friends who cannot be with us on Sunday morning: Dorothy and Bob Hodges and Richard Gladding, Mona Eddy's brother, Norma, Nick Glamack's mom and Kathrine, Donna Messner's mom.

Men's and Women's Breakfast

The first of the calendar year is a good time to review some of the ongoing events offered each month.

Women's Breakfast is the first Sunday of the month. You do not have to join the group. Just attend when you can. Often

a short devotional or inspirational reading will be presented with a question to think about. We meet from 8:00 to 9:00. Each person orders their own breakfast.

Men's Breakfast is much the same except the meeting is the last Sunday of the month from 8:00 to 9:00. The format is much the same.

The breakfasts take place at Brady J's. If you enjoy eating out with good fellowship, then join in on the fun!

Last Friday Suppers

Our last Friday suppers will resume on January 25, 2019 and continue through April 2019. These meals are open to anyone who enjoys a night out!

The meals are free to all. Donations, if given, are passed on to the Blessings Food cupboard and the Hands of Hope lunches, alternately.

Book Club

January 17th, we're reading *Insidious Intent*, Val McDermid.

A 5-star review from a reader: "I am a big fan of the Tony Hill/Carol Jordan series by Val McDermid, and this one did not disappoint. This is the 10th book in the series and I am always amazed at McDermid's well crafted stories. This book's antagonist is a "wedding crasher" who preys on single women looking for "Mr Right", his modus operandi so to speak! Carol Jordan has been made the head of a new unit whose job it is to take the hard cases and solve them. Needless to say, this one presents a myriad of problems for them as the killer is very thorough and up to date on forensics. The team finds themselves on the ropes looking for answers and even Tony Hill can't help. The author has asked that readers not spoil the ending of the books and I certainly won't! You will be surprised by the twist and turns the book takes so I highly recommend it."

Feb 21 we discuss *The Last Days of Night*, Graham Moore. "Great inventors take the stage in this historical fiction/legal thriller

based on the lighting of New York City in the 1890s. The story is told by Paul Cravath, an attorney hired by George Westinghouse to take on Thomas Edison in a battle over lightbulb patents. The setup may sound dry, but Graham's pacing keeps the story driving forward. There are crimes. There's a mysterious woman. There's a mad genius in the form of Nikola Tesla. And it's all sets against the backdrop of the glittering Gilded Age. Every so often an historical fiction comes along that captures the imaginations of legions of readers. *The Last Days of Night* will join that elite group of novels." —Chris Schluep, *The Amazon Book Review*

Kingfisher faith

In a video on his publisher's website, Eugene Peterson tells of watching a kingfisher repeatedly dive for fish in a lake. Peterson counted 37 dives before the kingfisher caught its supper! "And he's the king fisher!" Peterson chuckles. From that bird-watching episode, he gleaned a ministry lesson: It may take a long time and many attempts — maybe dozens! — before something works out.

God calls us to live out his love faithfully, even when we don't seem to be accomplishing anything. Maybe we extend 36 invitations to worship, work 36 monthly shifts at a food bank or utter 36 prayers without seeing results. "What's the point?" we wonder. But the kingfisher urges us on: "Maybe number 37 is the charm!"

In the words of St. Paul (and mixing fishing and farming metaphors): "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9, NIV).

Lessons in wise faith

"The Magi teach us true faith," said Martin Luther. Given the obstacles they encountered, we would understand if they had given up altogether!

First, the travelers were "off the mark," coming to Jerusalem to seek a

newborn king in a “royal palace.” Then, directed to Bethlehem, the wise men found a sight “so utterly out of keeping with a king” — a poor young woman and child, in a “poor hut” — that one might expect them to head straight home. “But,” declares Luther, “with a great, strong and full faith they ... follow the word of the prophet and the witness of the star in all purity of heart,” bowing to worship and honor the Savior. —Based on Luther’s sermon for the Festival of the Epiphany (1522), Luther’s Works

Thine, not mine

Sheillah Sheldone Charles, an articulate 9-year-old Kenyan featured in a BBC News Africa video, attributes her artistic gifts to God. It’s comical to hear her say, “I also teach children,” but her rationale is profound: “If you have a talent, don’t just say: ‘It’s mine alone. I should not teach others.’ So you should also share your talent out there.”

Jesus’ parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 teaches us to share our God-given abilities for purposes larger than our own. Sheillah is a fine example: Besides teaching children, she often draws women to highlight their suffering and their importance. Surely the Master exclaims, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (v. 23, ESV).

Reading resolutions

Every January, many Christians resolve to read the entire Bible in one year. That’s a worthy goal, but God doesn’t require us to read a certain number of verses or chapters per day. Instead, he tells us to simply be in his Word — and thus be with him — so he can grow our faith, light our path and assure us of his love and forgiveness. God’s Word is a precious gift, but we need to “unwrap” it!

F.B. Meyer offers this helpful advice for a new year of discovering (and rediscovering!) Scripture: “Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter. If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within

reach, gather it. If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it. If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire. If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you. If the truth is revealed ... entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate ... your life.”

Enter in

Tired of making small talk at church about the weather or sports? Then follow Edward Welch’s advice to “enter in” to the lives of your fellow worshipers.

A churchgoer once asked Welch, author of *Caring for One Another* (Crossway), two simple yet profound questions: “What was the best thing about your week, and what was the worst thing about your week?” About a month later, when some issues were weighing heavily on Welch’s heart, he wondered who’d be willing to pray for him. Immediately, the person who’d asked him those two questions came to mind.

When worshipers are willing to enjoy one another’s blessings and be burdened by one another’s difficulties, Welch says, the body of Christ gets built up.

The church as mosaic

A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green, some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself.

That is what our life in [the church] is about. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: “I make God visible.” But others who see us together can say: “They make God visible.” [Christian] community is where humility and glory touch.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen

Neighborly love

As an ordained minister, Fred Rogers harnessed the power of television to tell children they were loved — and to show them how to love others. In *You Are Special*, he writes, “When we love a person, we accept him or her exactly as is: the lovely with the unlovely, the strong along with the fearful, the true mixed in with the façade, and of course, the only way we can do it is by accepting ourselves that way.”

In a review of the touching documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* a writer for *Variety* notes: “Rogers’ real secret was ... that the call to love your neighbor as yourself isn’t a slogan to hang in your kitchen with flowers around it — it’s a decision you make at every moment, to view every man, woman and child on earth as your neighbor. If you don’t see and feel that, and act on it, then you’re just another narcissist with a kitchen slogan.”

Last October, when a synagogue shooting shattered the peace of Rogers’ real-life former neighborhood, residents of all religions embraced one another as neighbors. Afterward, the Fred Rogers Center stated, “We long for a day when there is no more tragedy born from hatred.”

Ripples of kindness

“I drop kindness pebbles in still water every day, and I watch the effect they have on other people’s lives. My favorite kindness pebbles are compliments. Drop a compliment and watch the ripple effect that it has in your life.”

Remarkably, these cheery words come from a father who has faced many dark, difficult days. In *6 Minutes Wrestling With Life*, John Passaro tells of his daughter’s heart-wrenching battle with meningitis. The struggles didn’t make him bitter; rather, he frequently offers uplifting words on social media.

What if we followed Passaro’s example and complimented people regularly? Philippians 4:8 (NIV) instructs us

to think about things that are noble, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. By extension, turning those positive thoughts into words causes “kindness pebbles” to spread God’s light in ripples throughout someone’s day — and, doubtless, through ours.

Loved and known

“Jesus knows me, this I love,” read the church sign. That twist on the classic children’s song emphasizes the importance of being both loved and known. “It’s not one or the other; it’s hard truth and ridiculous grace,” sings contemporary Christian artist Tauren Wells in “Known.”

Timothy Keller, in *The Meaning of Marriage*, describes the duality this way: “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.”

Affectionately yours

St. Valentine, a Roman priest, was martyred in 270 A.D. for loving Jesus. Some sources say he performed weddings after the emperor banned them; others say he rescued Christians from Roman prisons. Two centuries later, the pope declared February 14 St. Valentine’s Day.

According to legend, the priest signed his letters “Your Valentine.” Later, Christians followed suit to honor him. By the mid-1700s, friends and sweethearts exchanged heart-shaped trinkets or sent handwritten notes of affection on February 14.

Love and laughter go hand in hand!

Share these jokes with your beloved on February 14 — or whenever some humor can brighten a day!

Q: What valentine did the French chef give his wife?

A: A hug and a quiche

Q: What did the paper clip say to the magnet?

A: "I find you very attractive."

Q: What did the pencil say to the paper?

A: "I dot my i's on you!"

Q: How did the phone propose to his girlfriend?

A: He gave her a ring.

Q: What do you call a very small valentine?

A: A valentiny

Picture Us

Christian Ed invited all to display their creche scenes in Fellowship. It was fun to see the different sizes of the creches as well as the different ideas incorporated into the scenes. Thank you, Christian Education, and thank you to all who shared!





We had the annual hanging of the greens along with a potluck lunch. Many hands make light work. The sanctuary and Fellowship Hall looked beautiful!



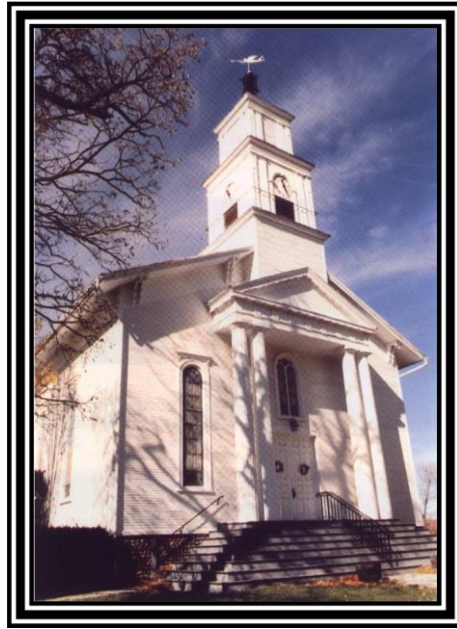
Christmas Eve service. Table of remembrance holds candles placed by the congregation in honor or memory of a loved one.



happy new year



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Post Office Box 5
East Bloomfield, NY 14443