



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

Website:

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

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

May/June 2023

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

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor:

Sue Walters
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Office Hours:

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

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✦ From the Pastor ✦

"He healed the darkness of my mind the day he gave my sight to me. It was not sin that made me blind. It was no sinner made me see."

"He Healed The Darkness of My Mind" Gregory Dale Schultz, composer

Much of the music that the choir director, Bethyn Boni, chooses for the choir to sing is moving. I found that particularly true of this piece that we sang during Lent. It is based on the story of Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52. Bartimaeus was a man who was born blind. At that time, people believed that such an infirmity was caused by sin, hence the first verse of this piece of music. The music reflects Bartimaeus' journey from a faithless beggar on the street to a sighted man filled with faith. The words, the music, take us through his journey, one that would pit him against the religious

authorities of the day. He would confront them, and proclaim his faith clearly and simply: "I once was blind, but now I see." He was healed; he was made whole, by the touch of Jesus. An entirely new world was opened to him. He looked at that world through the eyes of faith.



This song, and its Biblical basis, made me think. How do we see the world? With what eyes do we look around us? Bartimaeus had his eyes opened; he went from darkness to light. When that light was revealed, he knew who had given him that gift. It was from Jesus, the Son of God. He was not afraid to proclaim either his new vision or its giver. We have never known the darkness of the blind. Light, and the ability to see it, is something we take for granted. But, put yourself in Bartimaeus' place for a moment. When the light was revealed to him, he rejoiced not only in the gift, but in the giver. The gift of light also became the gift of faith. We take the light for granted. Do we do the same with our faith? Can

we look at our world through eyes of faith? Can we see it, and those that occupy it, as creations of God? How would altering our thoughts to follow this line of thinking change the way we view the beauty around us?

As I write this, the evidence of spring is all around. It seems that overnight the grass has gone from brown to green and the trees are budding. Daffodils and crocuses are blooming, and there are birdsongs that were not present during the winter. New life is taking hold. This is God's doing, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. New life comes to the natural world through Him. New life is also offered to us. Let us embrace it as Bartimaeus did, and not be afraid to proclaim and worship its author: God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Sue

**** 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. ****

✦ Birthdays ✦

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



May:

28 Judd Rockcastle
30 Marilyn Shafer

June:

16 Nancy Walters
17 Mona Eddy
19 Jackie Shultz
20 Janice Kelly
26 Joan Hall
30 Bethyn Boni

✦ Church News & Updates ✦

- **A New Pastor:** The Reverend Sue Walters has been voted into our church as our new pastor. Congratulations! When you see her, please be sure to welcome her to her new position.
- **Free Friday Suppers:** The free Friday suppers are complete for the year. They will return at the end of this year and carry into 2024. Please stay tuned to this space for specific dates (and meal selections).
- **Scripture Pot Luck (May 21):** It's time to be creative. Christian Ed will host a pot luck lunch and ask that the food you bring include an ingredient mentioned in the Bible. In addition, there will be a hidden word search of books in the Bible to be worked on as we eat. So come out and enjoy good food, good company and Bible study.
- **New Sound System:** We have a new sound system! Bob Sickmond & Bethyn Boni were instrumental in coordinating the work of the contractor. The [very] old speakers have been updated to smaller, more efficient speakers. The system further integrates the service so all can hear and appreciate the message.
- **Recognition Sunday (June 11):** We will recognize the special accomplishments of those in the church. After the church-wide recognition ceremony and celebration, the Christian Ed committee will host a picnic for the honorees and the rest of the church.
- **Fundraising:** A look ahead - our second fundraiser for the year will be another chicken BBQ on **Saturday, July 22, 2022**. We will start 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).

**** Holy God, the earth is full of the glory of your love. May we your children, born of the Spirit, so bear witness to your Son Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, that all the world may believe and have eternal life through the One who saves, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for 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.
- **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. 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 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.

- **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.

Please note the choir will go on summer hiatus after **Wednesday, June 28**. They will resume Wednesday night rehearsals on **Wednesday, September 6th**. Please note the choir will continue to meet at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings to rehearse for that day's service.

- **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.

✦ May and June Specific Calendar Events ✦

- **Thursday, May 4:** National Day of prayer. People from different faiths are called to pray for the United States and its leaders.

- **Sunday, May 7 (8:00 a.m.):** Women's breakfast at Brady J's.

- **Sunday, May 7:** Church Council meets after the worship service.

- **Sunday, May 14:** Mother's Day.

- **Thursday, May 18:** Ascension Day.

- **Thursday, May 18, (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the novel *The Children's Blizzard* by Melanie Benjamin.



Amazon synopsis:

The morning of January 12, 1888, was unusually mild, following a punishing cold spell. It was warm enough for the homesteaders of the Dakota Territory to venture out again, and for their children to return to school without their heavy coats—leaving them unprepared when disaster struck. At the hour when most prairie schools were letting out for the day, a terrifying, fast-moving blizzard blew in without warning. Schoolteachers as young as sixteen were suddenly faced with life and death decisions: Keep the children inside, to risk freezing to death when fuel ran out, or send them home, praying they wouldn't get lost in the storm?



Based on actual oral histories of survivors, this gripping novel follows the stories of Raina and Gerda Olsen, two sisters, both schoolteachers—one becomes a hero of the storm and the other finds herself ostracized in the aftermath. It's also the story of Anette Pedersen, a servant girl whose miraculous survival serves as a turning point in her life and touches the heart of Gavin Woodson, a newspaperman seeking redemption. It was Woodson and others like

him who wrote the embellished news stories that lured northern European immigrants across the sea to settle a pitiless land. Boosters needed them to settle territories into states, and they didn't care what lies they told these families to get them there—or whose land it originally was.

At its heart, this is a story of courage, of children forced to grow up too soon, tied to the land because of their parents' choices. It is a story of love taking root in the hard prairie ground, and of families being torn asunder by a ferocious storm that is little remembered today—because so many of its victims were immigrants to this country.

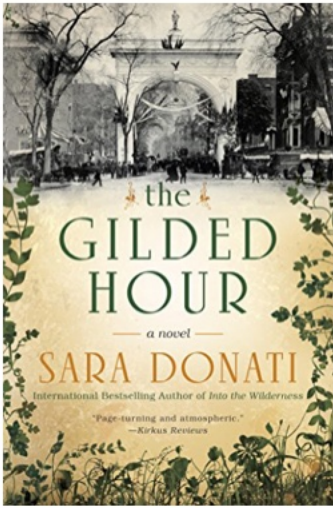
- **Saturday, May 20:** Armed Forces Day.
- **Sunday, May 21:** Scripture pot luck lunch after the worship service.
- **Sunday, May 28 (8:00 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's.
- **Sunday, May 28:** Pentecost.
- **Monday, May 29:** Memorial Day.
- **Sunday, June 4:** Women's breakfast at Brady J's.
- **Sunday, June 4:** Trinity Sunday.
- **Sunday, June 4:** Church Council meets after the worship service.



- **Sunday, June 11:** Recognition Sunday. Ceremony & picnic to follow worship.
- **Wednesday, June 14:** Flag Day.
- **Thursday, June 15 (9:30 a.m.):** The church book club meets in Pastor Sue's office; they will discuss the book *The Gilded Hour* by Sara Donati.

Amazon synopsis:

The year is 1883, and in New York City, Anna Savard and her cousin Sophie—both graduates of the Woman's Medical School—treat the city's most vulnerable, even if doing so puts everything they've strived for in jeopardy...



Anna's work has placed her in the path of four children who have lost everything, just as she herself once had. Faced with their helplessness, Anna must make an unexpected choice between holding on to the pain of her past and letting love into her life.

For Sophie, an obstetrician and the orphaned daughter of free people of color, helping a desperate young mother forces her to grapple with the oath she took as a doctor—and thrusts her and Anna into the orbit of anti-vice crusader Anthony Comstock, a dangerous man who considers himself the enemy of everything indecent and of anyone who dares to defy him.

With its vivid depictions of old New York and its enormously appealing characters, *The Gilded Hour* is a captivating novel by an author at the height of her powers.

- **Sunday, June 18:** Father's Day.
- **Sunday, June 25 (8:00 a.m.):** Men's breakfast at Brady J's.



*** *Friends in Christ, God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers as dear to us as our own needs. Loving our neighbors as ourselves, we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions on behalf of the church and the world. Amen. ****

*** *Your hand is upon your people, O God, to guide and protect them through the ages. Keep in your service those you have called and anointed, that the powers of this world may not overwhelm us, but that, secure in your love, we may carry out your will in the face of all adversity. Amen. ****

✦ Picture Us ✦



The Choir Celebrates Easter

As part of the Easter celebration, the choir sang a wonderful song to praise the joy and happiness of the day. He is risen; he is risen indeed!



April BBQ Fundraiser

We had the first of two fundraising BBQs for 2023 and had a phenomenally successful event; selling all the chicken! Although it was a cold, windy and sometimes rainy day, we had a great time in camaraderie and in service to the public.



Resurrection Eggs

The congregation had a small luncheon and then reviewed the resurrection story with the help of Easter eggs. With each egg was a scripture of the events from Holy Week to Easter. Once the scripture was read, the egg was broken open to reveal an object that tied to the verse. An ingenious way to have a hands-on and visual understanding of Easter.

**** Holy, holy, holy God, in calling forth creation from the void, revealing yourself in human flesh, and pouring forth your wisdom to guide us, you manifest your concern for your whole universe. You invite us, as your people, to gather the world's needs into our hearts and bring them before you. 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 Food cupboard on a monthly basis, however, donations are welcome at any time.

**** 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. ****

✦ Prayer Requests ✦

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

✦ Lectionary Readings for May & June ✦

	First* Reading and Psalm	Alternate* First Reading and Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
May 7, 2023	*Acts 7:55-60	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
May 14, 2023	*Acts 17:22-31	Psalm 66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
May 18, 2023	*Acts 1:1-11	Psalm 47 or Psalm 93	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
May 21, 2023	*Acts 1:6-14	Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35	1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11	John 17:1-11
May 28, 2023	*Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21	John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39
May 31, 2023	*1 Samuel 2:1-10	Psalm 113	Romans 12:9-16b	Luke 1:39-57
June 4, 2023	Genesis 1:1-2:4a Psalm 8		2 Corinthians 13:11-13	Matthew 28:16-20
June 11, 2023	Genesis 12:1-9 Psalm 33:1-12	Hosea 5:15-6:6 Psalm 50:7-15	Romans 4:13-25	Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
June 18, 2023	Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7) Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	Exodus 19:2-8a Psalm 100	Romans 5:1-8	Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)
June 25, 2023	Genesis 21:8-21 Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17	Jeremiah 20:7-13 Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18	Romans 6:1b-11	Matthew 10:24-39

* "First" OT readings, read semi-continuously, follow major stories/themes, beginning in Year A with Genesis and ending in Year C with the later prophets. *Italicized readings may be used with, or in place of it.*

Alternate First" OT readings follow the complementary historical tradition of thematically pairing the OT reading with the Gospel reading. *Italicized readings may be used with, or in place of it.*

Hear our prayers, God of power, and through the ministry of your Son free us from the grip of the tomb, that we may desire you as the fullness of life and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

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