

Sunday Service @ 10:00 A.M.
March-April 2016

<http://www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org>

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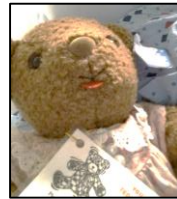
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A note from the editor...



I would like you to meet my special friend. She had been sitting patiently on the shelf in Fellowship hall for a long time. When I went to the hospital recently for a procedure I asked her if she would go with me to keep me company. And guess what—she said “Yes!” I was so happy. She stayed right on my bed and everyone who came into the room said, “Who’s this little sweetie?” Well we heard that so much that she now wants to be called “Sweetie!”

Sweetie is one of many bears in our church that are a part of the Teddy Bear Ministry! We recently received several new bears from our friend, Joyce, who comes regularly to our Friday night suppers. Thank you Joyce! Sweetie will come back to church soon and will be anxious to go along with someone else to give comfort and love!

If you know someone who is in the hospital or feeling blue and needs a reminder that they are never alone, won’t you take one of our bears to lend to them for their time of need?

Rejoice greatly that Jesus has conquered sin and death for us! Live your life as an Easter person!

Happy Easter all you Easter people!

Phyllis



PASTORS' COLUMN

Just A Thought.....



First, I would like to start by thanking Phyllis for getting this edition of Gabriel's Horn out so soon after her medical procedure. Her efforts and the wonderful job she does on the newsletter are

greatly appreciated by us all.

Yesterday I was filing some miscellaneous things in my office and one of them was last year's Annual Report. Before putting it away I re-read my message and felt like I wanted to share some of those sentiments with you again. Besides, not everyone gets the opportunity to read our annual report like they do the newsletter.

Although I just broke one of my rules by thanking Phyllis, I usually don't mention folks by name when thanking people in our congregation who do something for our church. Because, no matter what you have done or shared with us, whether it was big or small....in one way or another almost everyone in our congregation has made some sort of contribution. Whether you organized an event or a dinner, washed a dish, presided over a meeting, organized the Blood Drives, copied off the bulletins, baked a pie, donated something, helped put up or take down decorations, played bingo, taught our children, hosted a Last Friday Supper, collected back packs and clothing or even served on a committee, you did something significant to help our church. Oh wait, I think we would all agree we should thank Deacon Molly (and the guy she brings with her) for her wonderful contribution to our church family by her presence with us on Sunday mornings. The greater meaning of all that is that through your contribution, God was served and glorified. And isn't that why we all show up on Sunday morning and gather as a community of believers?

As a small congregation we need to be frequently evaluating and discerning how we are doing. We should question if God is calling us to journey in other directions. This is good for the health and vitality of our congregation. It is not written in stone (at least nowhere I know of) that we are required to engage in the same activities and events year after year.

Several of us have begun a Lenten study called "John, The Gospel of Light and Life" by Adam Hamilton. This study was chosen because almost all of our Holy Week and Easter morning readings will come from John's gospel.

So far in our study we have learned John is not a synoptic gospel and we are discussing the nuances of John. Characteristics like how John used figurative language, metaphors, irony and two fold meanings in his writing. At the end of our study we will talk about the role the redactor played in contributing to the evangelist's work.

The importance of reading and studying the Bible cannot be overstated. It is in and through our familiarity of the Word that our Easter celebration becomes that much more meaningful. As Easter people that is what we strive for.

As our world becomes filled with more and more senseless and random acts of violence, there is no better time or opportunity for us to invite the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts and lives. There is no better time to be present with the Lord in prayer. Not sure what to pray for? Why not just start each and every morning by asking God to make you an instrument of His peace. Pray that someone you meet during the day will feel God's presence through your words, deeds, or the faith you exude. Most especially, pray for peace on earth.

*He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*May the Christ who is the Light and
Life of the world, bless you and your families
this Easter season.*

Sandy

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER, MINISTRY AND HUMOR

Church Membership

Please contact Rev. Sandy Porrey at
(585) 354-7065 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



Mar. Birthdays







2 Rebecca Schaefer
Hallie Stewart
6 Robin Stewart
28 Will Tyler
29 Larry Messner
31 Cheryl Glamack



Apr. Birthdays

10 Rachel Schaefer
12 Bob Kelly

Upcoming Events

Choir	Rehearsals Wednesday evenings 7:30-9:00 Everyone is welcome to sing.
Mar 4	-World Day of Prayer -Church Women United, 12 Noon @ St. Peter's Church, bring sandwich. Program by Ionia UMC.

Mar 6 	-Forth Sunday in Lent -Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council meeting -Girl Scout Sunday
Mar 6	Community Christian Choral Festival @ West Bloomfield Congregational Church, 4:00 PM.
Mar13 	-Fifth Sunday in Lent -Daylight savings time begins
Mar 20  Palm Sunday 	-Palm Sunday -Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall -First Day of Spring
Mar 24 	-Book Club, 2:30-4:00. Once a Crooked Man, David McCallum -Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 PM
Mar 25 	-Last Friday Free Supper: 5:00-6:45 -Good Friday Service 7:00 PM

Mar 27	Easter Sunday
	
Apr 3	-Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council meeting
Apr 17	Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
	
Apr 20	Newsletter Deadline for May/June 2016
Apr 21	Book Club, 2:30-4:00. Not My Father's Son, Alan Cumming
Apr 24	Men's Breakfast 8:00 at Brady J's
Apr 29	Last Friday free supper 5:00 to 7:00

PEWPOINTS

Lectionary Readings Mar/Apr 2016

Mar 1 Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

Mar 8 Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, John 2:13-22

Mar 15 Numbers 21:4-9, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:14-21

Mar 22 Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 51:1-12, or Psalm 119:9-16, Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33

Mar 29 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Mark 11:1-11, or John 12:12-16

Mar 29 Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)

Holy Week

Monday, Mar 30 Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 36:5-11, Hebrews 9:11-15, John 12:1-11

Tuesday, Mar 31 Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 71:1-14, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, John 12:20-36

Wednesday, Apr 1 Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 70, Hebrews 12:1-3, John 13:21-32

Maundy Thursday, Apr 2 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, Apr 3 Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9, John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday, Apr 4 Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24, Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16, 1 Peter 4:1-8, Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42

Easter Day

Apr 5 *Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43, John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

Apr 12 *Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31

Apr 19 *Acts 3:12-19, Psalm 4, 1 John 3:1-7, Luke 24:36b-48

Apr 26 *Acts 4:5-12, Psalm 23, 1 John 3:16-24, John 10:11-18

Community Christian Choral Festival

March 6, 2016 is the Community Christian Choral Festival. It will be held at the West Bloomfield United Church of Christ at 4:00 PM.

You will hear presentations from the West Bloomfield United Church of Christ, East Bloomfield United Methodist Church, First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield and the Grace Choir, formerly the Mendon Gospel Choir. You will also be treated to a presentation by all the choirs lifting their voices as one.

A free will offering will be collected for the benefit of the Hands of Hope kitchen in Ontario County.

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 have to 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



"Faith is to the soul what life is to the body. Prayer is to faith what breath is to the body. How a person can live and not breathe is past

my comprehension, and how a person can believe and not pray is past my comprehension, too."—J.C. Ryle

During March and April, the congregation prays for Judd & Lujza Rockcastle, Janice & Bob Kelly, Sandy Porrey, William Bacon and Marilyn Shafer.

Remember our members and friends who cannot be with us on Sunday morning: Joanne Paterson, Rod & Terry Silvernail, Dorothy and Bob Hodges and Doris Virkus.

Continue prayers for Larry Messner, Phyllis Rechten and Chub Stewart as they continue in their healing.

Taking up the cross

"That's her cross to bear," it's said of someone's hardship or inconvenience. The challenge might be as serious as poverty or as trivial as crabby neighbors. However, when Jesus called people to "take up their cross," he didn't mean it that way. Nor was he referring to anyone imposing suffering on another.

When Jesus said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 and parallels), he spoke of a radical new way to engage a society that more often called people to take up swords and fight for self-preservation. He called people to peace, not violence — and from being self-focused to following him.

That is also Jesus' call today. The cross isn't a euphemism that lets us dismiss someone's suffering. We don't appoint someone else to bear it. When we choose the cross, we do so for ourselves in response to Jesus' invitation that, one way or another, ultimately leads through death to new life.

The waiting game

Life involves lots of waiting. We wait in groups, in lines, in cars. We wait for packages, for the bus, for the sun to rise. We wait in doctors' offices, at the post office, at the DMV. Waiting implies we're at someone else's mercy, but it's also usually linked to hope. Perhaps that's why Paul Tillich called waiting a metaphor for faith. Why would one wait if there weren't the firm belief that the object of one's wait will eventually materialize?

Waiting can be enervating, which is why Isaiah 40:31 is so promising: "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Yet waiting is tough if you have nothing to do while waiting. That's why Jesus, when talking about waiting, also talked about working — work for the night is coming. Sometimes it's less tiring to work than it is to wait.

There's a lot of waiting during Lent. You're waiting for a payoff. You're waiting for the Resurrection. You're waiting for spiritual growth. And then you realize this isn't waiting at all. It's life. It's joy. It's opportunity. It's blessing. —Timothy Merrill

Deliver us

We sing and say "hosanna" every Palm Sunday but hardly ever in between. So what does that word mean?

That first Palm Sunday, crowds spread their cloaks before Jesus as people had before Jehu to proclaim him king (2 Kings 9:13). They waved palm branches in greeting — a traditional sign of celebration (Leviticus 23:40). And, of course, they shouted, “Hosanna!”

This was an exclamation of “a people in distress [addressing] their king or their god,” explains Bible scholar William Barclay. Drawn from Psalm 118:25, hosanna is Aramaic for “save now.” By the time of Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Barclay says, hosanna may have “become to some extent only a cry of welcome and of acclamation, like ‘Hail!’; but essentially it is a people’s cry for deliverance and for help in the day of their trouble.”

“Hosanna!” is the plea of an oppressed people to the one they recognize as their true king: Jesus, their Savior.

No more sting

One spring day, a father and son were driving when a bee flew in the window and buzzed around. Because the boy was deathly allergic to bee stings, he panicked. But the calm father reached out and caught the bee in his hand, holding it tight.

After a few moments, the dad reached over, opened his hand and showed his son the stinger, stuck in his palm. “It’s okay,” the father said. “I took the sting, so the bee can’t hurt you.”

Likewise, people who know Jesus as their victorious Savior no longer need to fear the sting of death. “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, ESV).

Fools for Christ

April Fools’ Day isn’t a religious holiday, though it may date to Pope Gregory XIII and his new calendar. In 1582, he shifted New Year’s Day from April to January, and people who didn’t believe the change were called April fools.

April Fools’ Day may also be connected to the lightheartedness that

comes with warmer weather, as well as to medieval Christian festivals that involved pranks, disguises and a temporarily inverted social order.

Yet, in Scripture, such reversal characterizes the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, St. Paul writes that the gospel seems foolish to people who don’t know Christ, that God uses the “foolishness of our proclamation” to offer salvation to all and that God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Jesus “foolishly” inverted the social order, saying the last will be first and the first, last.

So if on April 1 — and every day — we live as “fools for Christ,” we’re precisely what he calls us to be!

Evangelism tip

We draw people to Christ not by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it. —Madeleine L’Engle

A love explosion

“Mommy, if Jesus comes to live inside my heart, will I explode?” One of missionary Katie Davis’ adopted daughters surprised her with that question as they headed to the Nile River for some baptisms.

Although Davis immediately replied, “No!” she later realized: “That is exactly what we should do if Jesus comes to live inside our hearts. We will explode with love, with compassion, with hurt for those who are hurting, and with joy for those who rejoice. We will explode with a desire to be more, to be better, to be close to the One who made us.” —adapted from *Kisses From Katie*

A shepherd's role

While traveling in Iran, writer Eric Bishop asked a villager about an earthen enclosure topped with dry thorns. The man said sheep stayed in the round space at night for safety. “What are the thorns for?”

Bishop asked. "If a wolf tries to break in and attack the sheep," the man replied, "he'll knock against the thorns, and they'll make a noise, and the shepherd will wake up and drive off the wolf."

Pointing out the enclosure's doorless entrance, Bishop asked why a wolf wouldn't just enter there. Because, replied the villager, "that's where the shepherd sleeps; the shepherd is the door."

Suddenly Bishop understood why in John 10 Jesus calls himself first the door, or gate, for the sheep and then the Good Shepherd. Because Jesus is the shepherd, he's also the door that keeps us, his sheep, safe within his care.

Book Club

The reading for March 24, 2016 is *Once a Crooked Man*, David McCallum.

David McCallum is a Scottish actor and musician known for his roles in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and for his current role as NCIS medical examiner Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard

"Highly entertaining... McCallum respects the genres' tenets, supplying the right amount of intrigue, violence and sex for a well-plotted, action-packed tale. While occasional bits of humor add levity to the plot, McCallum keeps a near hard-boiled edge to the story. It seems McCallum had a lot of fun writing 'Once a Crooked Man,' as will his readers devouring his energetic novel." —Associated Press

Our reading on April 21, 2016 is *Not My Father's Son*, Alan Cumming.

Alan Cumming is an award-winning actor, singer, writer, producer, and director. He lives in New York and London.

From the Back Cover

Dark, painful memories can be put away to be forgotten. Until one day they all flood back in horrible detail.

When television producers approached Alan Cumming to appear on a popular celebrity genealogy show, he hoped to solve the mystery of his maternal grandfather's disappearance that had long

cast a shadow over his family. But this was not the only mystery laid before Alan.

Alan grew up in the grip of a man who held his family hostage, someone who meted out violence with a frightening ease, who waged a silent war with himself that sometimes spilled over onto everyone around him. That man was Alex Cumming, Alan's father, whom Alan had not seen or spoken to for more than a decade when he reconnected just before filming for *Who Do You Think You Are?* began. He had a secret he had to share, one that would shock his son to his very core and set into motion a journey that would change Alan's life forever.

With ribald humor, wit, and incredible insight, Alan seamlessly moves back and forth in time, integrating stories from his childhood in Scotland and his experiences today as the celebrated actor of film, television, and stage. At times suspenseful, at times deeply moving, but always incredibly brave and honest, *Not My Father's Son* is a powerful story of embracing the best aspects of the past and triumphantly pushing the darkness aside.

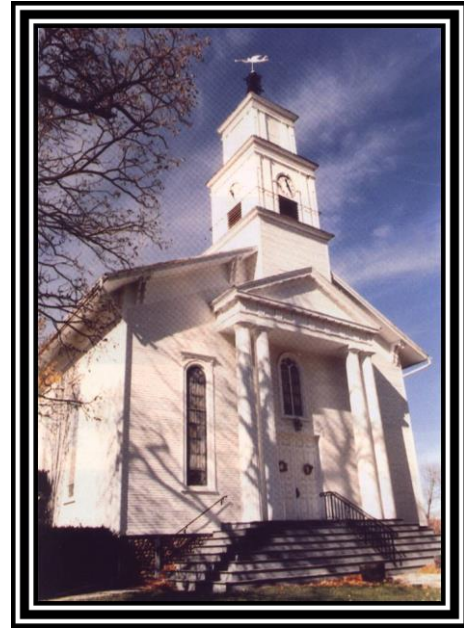
Picture Us

In January Nancy Stewart delivered our collection of clothes and backpacks to Ontario County's Foster care program. This is an ongoing project of our church providing children in foster care with a backpack filled with clothes and a toy to help them bridge the move to foster care.





Gabriel's Horn Newsletter



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