



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

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

Website:

www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org

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

January/February 2026

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

* We are located at 10 South Avenue, Bloomfield, NY, 14469

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Pastor

Angela Barrett
Pastor.FCCEB@outlook.com

Music & Choir Director

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

Organist

Donna Messner
(585) 657-6579
dimeessner3169@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor & Web Master

Marilyn R. Shafer
(585) 935-1538
mshafer33@gmail.com

Sexton

Robin Stewart
(585) 657-7574

*O God of light and peace,
whose glory, shining in the child of Bethlehem,
still draws the nations to yourself:
dispel the darkness that shrouds our path,
that we may come
to kneel before Christ in true worship,
offer him our hearts and souls,
and return from his presence to live as he has taught. Amen.*

✧ From the Pastor ✧



Dear Members and Friends of The First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield,

Grace and Peace to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I write with a humble and grateful heart to share that I have accepted the call to serve as your long-term Interim Pastor. It is a deep honor to be entrusted with this season of ministry at The First Congregational Church of East Bloomfield, a congregation with a rich history and a faithful witness in this community.

For many years, my vocation took me across the country as a flight attendant. In this new season, I begin a different kind of journey—one rooted in God's call to pastoral ministry and grounded in walking alongside you in worship, prayer, and service. I look forward to listening, learning, and discerning together where God is leading us during this time.

I am deeply grateful for the support of my husband and children, whose love and encouragement make it possible for me to answer this call. I am also thankful for the leadership and faithfulness of this congregation and the opportunity to serve among you.

Please know I welcome the opportunity to connect with you. You are always welcome to reach out to me whether for prayers, conversation, or pastoral care. As we begin this season together, I ask for your prayers, just as you will remain in mine.

I trust God will be faithful to guide us, strengthen us, and use us for His glory.

With gratitude and hope,

Angela

Angela Barrett
Interim Pastor

✿ Church News ✿

● **Pastor Search Committee News:** The committee continues to be hard at work finding our new pastor. We are very fortunate and happy to announce that they have hired an interim pastor for the church until that search is complete. We welcome Pastor Angela Barrett to our congregation.

Pastor Angela is a student at United Theological Seminary and is also currently working on a Certificate in Theology and Ministry. She has extensive ministry experience as an interim pastor, in special needs Bible school curriculum writing and implementation, a Youth Choir director, peer-to-peer counseling and a nursing home worship leader. Pastor Angela also serves as a National Representative for Safety and Security for the Association of Professional Flight Attendants and is a 12-step Coordinator and Recovery Coach.

Please welcome Pastor Angela to our congregation and community. We look forward to working with her in our worship and community services.

● **Stewardship Sunday:** We had a very successful Stewardship drive. The church and the trustees thank everyone who pledged a donation to the church for 2026. With God's help, the money will help to in spread the gospel to the congregation and the community.

✿ Birthdays ✿



January:

1 - Rodney Tyler

February:

1 - Lujza Rockcastle

2 - Michele Mazzola

17 - Doug Green

29 - Nancy Stewart

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

✿ Upcoming Events ✿

- **Annual Church Meeting (2025 Review):** The church will meet after the worship service on **Sunday, January 25th** to discuss church business and accomplishments from 2025. In addition, the council will hold elections for various committees, discuss the upcoming new year and elect someone to the position of council moderator. All members and friends of the church are invited to attend.

- **Ash Wednesday Service :** Ash Wednesday marks the start of the 40-day Lenten season - a time in which Christians are called to prayer, fasting, and repentance before celebrating Easter. An Ash Wednesday service will be held in the sanctuary on **Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 p.m.** to prepare us to enter into the season of Lent.

✿ Recurring Calendar Events (Monthly) ✿

- **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. For this period, the special offerings will be on **January 4th** and **February 1st**. 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.

- **Woman's Breakfast:** Meets the first Monday of every month at Brady J's restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at **9:00 a.m.** All interested women are invited; being a member of the church is not a requirement. For this period, the breakfasts will be on **January 5th** and **February 2nd**.

- **Men's Breakfast:** The men meet the last Sunday of every month at Brady J's restaurant (24 Maple Avenue, Bloomfield) at **7:45 a.m.** All interested men are invited; being a member of the church isn't a requirement. For this period, the men will meet **January 25th**, and **February 22nd**.

- **Book Club:** The church book club meets every third Thursday at **9:30 a.m.** in the pastor's office. For this period, the club meets on **January 15th** to discuss the book *The*

Bridges of Madison County by Robert James Waller and on **February 19th** to discuss the book *Twice* by Mitch Albom. Please join us.

● **Choir Practice:** The choir meets every Wednesday evening for choir rehearsal at **7:30 p.m.** There also is a short rehearsal every Sunday (before the worship service); this rehearsal starts at **9:15 a.m.** As always, they are looking for singers and all are welcome.

✧ January and February Specific Calendar Events ✧

Thursday, January 1: New Year's Day

Monday, January 5 (9:00 a.m.): Women's breakfast at Brady J's

Tuesday, January 6: Epiphany

Thursday, January 15 (9:30 a.m.): The church book club meets in the pastor's office; they will discuss the novel *The Bridges of Madison County* by Robert James Waller.

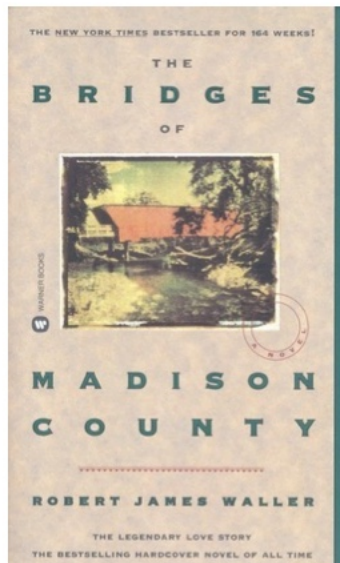
Amazon synopsis:

There are songs that come free from the blue-eyed grass, from the dust of a thousand country roads. This is one of them.

And so begins a story that you will never forget...

THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

...is the story of Robert Kincaid, a world-class photographer, and Francesca Johnson, an Iowa farm wife. Kincaid, fifty-two, is a photographer for *National Geographic*. A strange, almost mystical traveler of Asian deserts, distant rivers, and ancient cities, he is a man who feels out of harmony with time. Francesca Johnson, forty-five and once a young war bride from Italy, lives in the hills of south Iowa with flickering memories of her girlhood dreams. Each of them is content, yet when Robert Kincaid drives through the heat and dust of an Iowa summer and turns into her farm lane looking for directions, their illusions fall away, and they are joined in an experience that will haunt them forever.



As the photographer Kincaid uses light to reveal not objects, but rather his own kind of truth, what occurs by the old bridges of Madison County becomes a prism transforming the ordinary

emotions we think we understand into something rare and brilliant. The result is a passionate, deeply moving experience in lyrical prose, an achievement that puts Robert James Waller in the forefront of this country's fiction writers.

Monday, January 19: Martin Luther King Day

Sunday, January 25 (7:45 a.m.): Men's breakfast at Brady J's

Sunday, January 25: Annual Church Meeting to review 2025 (after the worship service)

Monday, February 2: Groundhog Day

Monday, February 2 (9:00 a.m.): Women's breakfast at Brady J's

Saturday, February 14: Valentine's Day

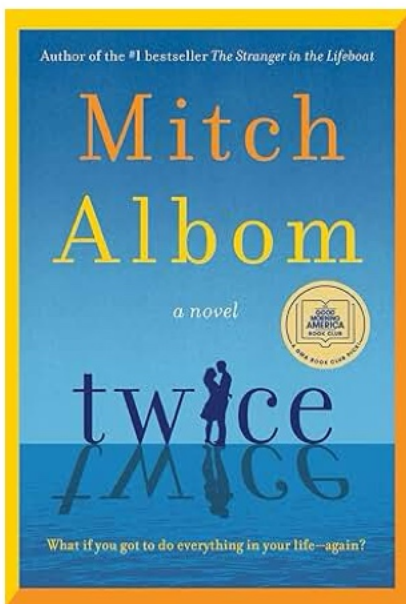
Monday, February 16: Presidents' Day

Tuesday, February 17: Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday

Wednesday, February 18: Ash Wednesday (Lent begins) - service at **7:00 p.m.**

Thursday, November 20 (9:30 a.m.): The church book club meets in the pastor's office; they will discuss the novel *Twice* by Mitch Albom.

Amazon synopsis: When he is eight years old, Alfie Logan discovers the magical ability to get a second chance at everything. He can undo any moment and live it again. The one catch: he must accept the consequences of his second try—for better or worse.



He grows up correcting his mistakes and saving himself from adolescent embarrassments. He even takes foolishly dangerous risks, just to see what it's like to come close to death, before tapping back to safety.

Eventually, Alfie turns his gift to his love life, studying his crushes and going back to make himself more appealing. In time, he falls deeply in love with Gianna, the woman he believes is the one. He seems to find contentment.

But as the years pass, Alfie's eye begins to wander. Which is when he learns a lone caveat to his power: once he undoes a love, that person can never fall in love with him again. Knowing if he gives into temptation, he will risk losing what he has with Gianna, Alfie makes a choice that changes his life forever.

The book begins many years later, after an ailing Alfie is arrested for allegedly cheating and winning millions at a casino roulette wheel. As a curious detective interrogates him, he slowly uncovers Alfie's incredible story, and its most unlikely conclusion.

In *Twice*, America's favorite storyteller, Mitch Albom, is at the top of his powers. A love story that is enchanting, probing, and clairvoyant in matters of the heart, *Twice* will make you think, weep, and overflow with love from beginning to end.

Sunday, February 22 (7:45 a.m.): Men's breakfast at Brady J's

✿ Miscellaneous ✿

● **Church Membership:** Please e-mail Pastor Angela at Pastor.FCCEB@outlook.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 cupboard on a monthly basis, however, donations are welcome at any time.

*O God,
you spoke your word
and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ.
Fill all creation with that word again,
so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations
and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples,
we may become one living body,
your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.*

✿ Picture Us ✿

● Farewell and Thank You to Pastor Sue

The deacons hosted a reception to say “thank you and farewell” to Pastor Sue. We will miss her - but we know she will have a great journey in retirement. Thank you, farewell and Godspeed, Sue. We all thank you for everything you’ve done With our congregation and the community.



● **From Puppets to Pew:** *From Puppets To Pew* troupe presented a play to the congregation explaining why the Baby Jesus is not in the manger scene before Christmas. They explained every time we celebrate Advent, we’re celebrating WAITING for the birth of Christ. He’s not “here” yet. In essence, Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago, but every time you let Him into your heart, it’s as if your heart were an empty manger, welcoming the Baby Jesus to come and warm it up. Advent is preparing to open our hearts again, allowing Jesus in.

✿ January/February Lectionary Reading ✿

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Sunday Jan 04, 2026	Jeremiah 31:7-14 or <i>Sirach 24:1-12</i>	Psalm 147:12-20 or <i>Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21</i>	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
<i>Epiphany of the Lord</i> Sunday, Jan 06, 2026	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
<i>Baptism of the Lord</i> Sunday, Jan 11, 2026	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
Sunday, Jan 18, 2026	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Sunday, Jan 25, 2026	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23
Sunday, Feb 01, 2026	Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12
Sunday, Feb 08, 2026	Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)	Psalm 112:1-9 (10)	1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)	Matthew 5:13-20
<i>Transfiguration</i> Sunday, Feb 15, 2026	Exodus 24:12-18	Psalm 2 or <i>Psalm 99</i>	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
<i>Ash Wednesday</i> Feb 18, 2026	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or <i>Isaiah 58:1-12</i>	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Sunday, Feb 22, 2026	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11
<i>Italicized readings, complementary to the standard reading, may be used with, or in place of it.</i>				

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



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

