



Gabriel's Horn Newsletter

Heralding the Good News to our neighbors

Sunday Service @ 10:00 A.M.
November/December 2019

<http://www.eastbloomfieldcongregationalchurch.org>

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A note from the editor...

It has been an exciting adventure these last several years planning and producing our newsletter. This is now my last newsletter publication! Thank you to everyone who offered help along the way, who expressed appreciation for the newsletter and who contributed to it via articles and announcements. All the pictures of the happenings over the years added to the interest of the publications and serve as a pictorial history of our church! It has been fun!

Beginning in January 2020 Marilyn Shafer will be your editor. Please give her your announcements and articles in a timely manner. Give her support for getting the job done! Her contact information is: mshafer5@rochester.rr.com. Phone: (585) 935-1538.

Now, as Sandy says in her article, we have come to a fork in the road. We thank Sandy and Andy for their faithful leading of this congregation over the last years. We pray for each of them as they move into new directions. We pray that God's guidance and love will be evident in their lives in the years to come.

We rejoice in our relationships and will hold dear the good memories we have built together. God bless Sandy and Andy!



Peace, love and joy!
Phyllis

PASTORS' COLUMN

From the pen of Reverend Sandy Porrey



Just a thought...

This will be the last time I can say, "Just a Thought". I remember very vividly interviewing during the fall of 2004 to be your pastor and meeting you all for the first time. After moving into the parsonage, my first official activity was the senior's Fall Dinner. Roast pork, dressing, squash, mashed potatoes and homemade desserts! I remember thinking, "I love these people!" There have been many dinners and other activities since November 2004. Some were more fun than others, but what I will remember about each of them is the fact that we shared those times with each other and with our Bloomfield Community. Speaking of community, do you recall the pushback I got when we would recite the Nicene Creed and it came to the part, "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church"? There were some of you who would not say the word "catholic" out loud. It became an opportunity for us to learn that Catholic with a small "c" means Universal and what the sentence really meant was that we believe in and are members of a global Church. There have been many learning opportunities in 15 years. It would be silly and naive to think every sermon I've shared with you has been a home run, but I do hope you know I tried my best to provide Christ-centered, biblically based, thought-provoking and insightful messages.

When I first became your pastor I told you I was not here to lead you to the Promised Land but instead we will take this journey together, arm and arm, hand in hand. To this day, it is still my belief each and every one of us has the responsibility to cultivate our personal relationship with and to Jesus Christ. As Dr. Charles Stanley says, it is impossible to have a relationship with God or know his will for your life if you do not read and know his word.

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know many church members who have since gone home to the Lord. Dorothy Chapman, Lillian Carver, Ethel Bradford, Edythe Walters, Bob McConnell, Bill Hall, Norma Glamack, Gladys Desain, Blanche Young, Roger Silvernail, Jean Webb, Rosalie Munson and Mary Gliewe, just to name a few. I hesitated putting names in this message because I was afraid I would forget someone. My apologies if I have.

Of course in 15 years there have been some misunderstandings or difficult situations. If I could go back in time and handle a difficult situation differently, I would. I can only tell you I am sorry if anyone has been hurt by something I have said or done.

We have reached the fork in the road where our journeys must now take different directions. I have been forever changed and give thanks to God for having known each and every one of you. May God bless us all as you continue on your journey and I on mine. And please, remember always to give thanks and praise to God from whom all blessing flow!

Faithfully yours,

Sandy

From the pen of Pastor Andy Schaefer



"The Lord watch
between you and me,
when we are absent one
from the other."

Genesis 31:49

Back in the early 80s, in my youth group there was a little trinket popular among couples called a Mizpah Coin. It was a small medallion stamped with two hearts and the above quote. The coin was split in two, and each of the young, besotted couple would wear one half on a necklace.

Awwwwwwww! Imagine my surprise and amusement when, years later, I read the verse in context and found that it is not exactly romantic in nature. It is spoken by Laban to his son-in-law, Jacob, at the close of their acrimonious relationship. He

was saying, basically, “treat my daughters right or God will get you!” Talk about taking scripture out of context!

It is funny, then, how this verse keeps coming back to my mind now. We may have had moments of difficulty between us over the past ten years, but nothing remotely close to Jacob and Laban! I hope, on the whole, you will look back on those years with fondness, as I know Rebecca and I will. We are grateful for the home you have provided as our children grew up, as well as for the opportunity to rediscover my gifts and my calling. As we reach the end of our present relationship, I hope each of you will afford me a chance to express my gratitude, ask your forgiveness, and, if you feel it necessary, offer you mine.

We all have an uncertain future ahead of us. For all of us, the road ahead is foggy and unsettling. I know would prefer the safety of remaining with you, but that does not seem to be what God has in mind. If scripture tells us one thing about frightful times, it is that in such times God does the most amazing work.

May we all move ahead, and be amazed by what God will do.

On behalf of my whole family, I leave you with my love and thanks.

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 sign up sheets
in Fellowship Hall



Nov.

Dec.

29 Noah Bartos

13 Jacquie Walters

Upcoming Events

Choir Everyone is welcome to sing.	Wednesday evening 7:30-9:00
Nov 3 	-Daylight savings time ends. -Women’s Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J’s -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council Meeting
Nov 7	Election Day
Nov 11	Veterans Day
Nov 16	Holiday Fair at the High School 9-3
Nov.. 17 	Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Nov 21	Book Club, 2:30-3:30, American Marriage, Tayari Jones
Nov 24	Men’s Breakfast 7:45 @ Brady J’s.
Nov 28	Thanksgiving

Dec 1 	-Women's Breakfast, 8:00 @ Brady J's -First Sunday Food Basket & special offering. -Council meeting
Dec 8 	Second Sunday in Advent
Dec 15  	-Third Sunday in Advent -Contemporary service at 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall
Dec 17	Newsletter Deadline for Jan/Feb 2020
Dec 22 	Fourth Sunday in Advent
Dec 19	Book Club, 2:30-3:30, Dark of the Moon, John Sandford
Dec 24 	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 25 	<i>Merry Christmas!</i>
Dec 29	-Men's Breakfast 7:45 @ Brady J's.

Nov 10 Haggai 1:15b-2:9, Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17, Luke 20:27-38
 Nov 17 Isaiah 65:17-25, Isaiah 12, Psalm 98, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, Luke 21:5-19
 Nov 24 Jeremiah 23:1-6, Psalm 46, Colossians 1:11-20, Luke 23:33-43
 First Sunday of Advent
 Dec 1 Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44
 Second Sunday of Advent
 Dec 8 Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12
 Third Sunday of Advent
 Dec 15 Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, Luke 1:46b-55, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11
 Fourth Sunday of Advent
 Dec 22 Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25
 Dec 29 Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148, Hebrews 2:10-18, Matthew 2:13-23

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.

Marilyn Shafer will handle information for the Newsletter. See her contact information above.

Phyllis Rehtin will continue with the website and Bloomfield Buzz. (Phyllis Rehtin, 7453 State Route 5 & 20., Bloomfield, NY 14469; rehtin@rochester.rr.com or 657-7018).

The Ties That Bind



"You don't know how to pray? Put yourself in the presence of God, and as soon as you have said, 'Lord, I don't know how to pray!' you can be sure you have already begun."
 —St. Josemaría Escrivá

PEWPOINTS

Lectionary Readings Nov/Dec 2019

Nov 3 Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4, Psalm 119:137-144, Isaiah 1:10-18, 2, Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12, Luke 19:1-10

During November and December, the congregation prays for Lynn & Will Tyler, the Schaefer family, Alice McConnell, Mary Martin, Carl & Nancy Stewart, and the Robin Stewart family.

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

Pray for Rachel Schaefer, Lujza Rockcastle, Mick Eddy, Anne Lincoln and Cheryl Glamack and family.

Book Club

Our November reading is *American Marriage*, Tayari Jones.

From the Back Cover: Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. Though fiercely independent, Celestial finds herself bereft and unmoored, taking comfort in Andre, her childhood friend and the best man at their wedding. As Roy's time in prison passes, she is unable to hold on to the love that has been her center. After five years, Roy's conviction is suddenly overturned, and he returns to Atlanta ready to resume their life together.

This stirring love story is a profoundly insightful look into the hearts and minds of three people who are at once bound and separated by forces beyond their control. *An American Marriage* is a masterpiece of storytelling, an intimate look deep into the souls of people who must reckon with the past while moving forward—with hope and pain—into the future.

In December we will read *Dark of the Moon*, John Sandford.

Headed to rural Bluestem to assist local law enforcement with the seemingly

motiveless murder of an elderly couple, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension investigator Virgil Flowers happens upon a raging house fire on the edge of town. The house's owner, Bill Judd, killed in the blaze, was an elderly recluse who, back in the day, ran an elaborate pyramid scheme and simultaneously bedded half the women in town. He escaped conviction on the fraud charge, and the money was never recovered. There have been no murders in Bluestem for a half-century, and now there are three in a couple weeks. Virgil is not an advocate of coincidence and so begins digging for a connection between the victims. Complicating matters is his affair with the sister of the local police chief. Sandford's plotting and dialogue are as crisp as ever, and the emergence of Virgil Flowers gives the author another idiosyncratic, thoroughly ingratiating hero to alternate with the ever-popular Lucas Davenport. Flowers, who made his debut as a secondary character in the Davenport thriller *Invisible Prey* (2007), is a low-key loose cannon whose wardrobe consists of alternative-rock t-shirts carefully chosen to match his agenda of the day. The appeal of the Davenport series is mainly tied to the hero's wit and self-deprecating humor, but this first Flowers entry is more about action: an adrenaline rush peppered with laugh-out-loud moments. Lukowsky, Wes

Present tense

After "turkey day" came and went last year, a pastor challenged church members to ask one another not "How was your Thanksgiving?" but "How is your Thanksgiving?" After all, giving thanks should be an ongoing act.

That doesn't always need to be profoundly deep, either. A.J. Jacobs, author of *Thanks a Thousand*, once asked a philosophy-professor friend what he was grateful for. The shockingly simple reply? "Sometimes I'm just grateful I have arms." That odd but spot-on answer shows the importance, Jacobs says, of being "thankful

for things so omnipresent that they can escape our notice.”

So ... how is your Thanksgiving?

Taking it slow

Not only did God model rest — specifically sabbath rest — during the Creation process, but he also showed the value of under-commitment, even working under his potential.

“God modeled for us how to choose one or two things to focus on each day,” writes Monica Wilkinson in *Slow Lane*. “If he wanted to, he could have spoken the entire world into existence in less than a fraction of the blink of an eye.” Instead, God “went about it methodically, slowly, with balance and moderation.” What a contrast to our modern-day multitasking craze!

“God was not looking to maximize every productive waking moment of every single day,” Wilkinson adds. “He chose to focus on one or two things, do them well and with excellence, and then enjoy the accomplishment and reflection of a job well done.”

Learning to give thanks

Last December I had my second knee replacement. Expecting this recovery to mimic the first, I went home to heal quickly. Instead, 10 days later one normal step led to the vertical splitting of my femur, an ambulance ride and surgery to insert screws and a long metal plate. I spent Christmas in the hospital and New Year’s in a rehab unit, feeling anything but thankful. Nearly a year later, the slow recovery continues.

Yet I see much to be thankful for: my caregiver cousin, who lengthened her stay considerably; my family; church friends who provided meals, prayers and love; and doctors and therapists, who put me back together and continue to encourage me.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I continue to work on patience but am learning — with God’s help — to “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

—Sandy Hyland

A much-needed message

National Bible Week, now observed every Thanksgiving week, got its start on a turbulent day. Founders of the National Bible Association were reading Scripture over the NBC radio network on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Because of the traumatic events, the network asked that the Bible-reading continue all day, in between news updates. Radio stations throughout America picked up the programming, allowing countless listeners to receive words from God — “who comforts you” (Isaiah 51:12) — when they needed it most.

Reflections on gratitude

- God is in control, and therefore in everything I can give thanks — not because of the situation but because of the One who directs and rules over it. —Kay Arthur

- It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It’s gratefulness that makes us happy.

—David Steindl-Rast

- Gratitude is the least of the virtues, but ingratitude is the worst of vices.

—Thomas Fuller

- A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. —Henry Ward Beecher

Change your spot

In the Old Testament, Jeremiah becomes so disgusted with his people’s unfaithfulness and idolatry that he almost believes they can’t change. He wonders whether a leopard can change its spots. When a Sunday school teacher posed that question, one student pondered before replying, “Yes ... If he doesn’t like the spot he’s in, he can change it.”

Jeremiah reached a similar conclusion: His people could change their evil ways — their “spots” — if they chose to. “You can do good who are accustomed to do evil,” he says (Jeremiah 13:23, NRSV). As another prophet later notes, God has shown us “what is good ... To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8, NIV). What spot — or spots — can you change?

“A little child will lead them”

Isaiah 11 prophesies hope for the world: wisdom, understanding, righteousness, justice, faithfulness, peace. In the words “a little child will lead them” (v. 6), Christians hear a foretelling of God’s coming to earth as the child Jesus. Today, children — Jesus’ examples of fitness for God’s kingdom (Mark 10:14) — often lead in showing love.

At age 11, avid baker Michael Platt opened a pastry shop in Maryland to benefit homeless people; for desserts sold, he gives an equal number to shelter residents. Eric Schubert, 18, of New Jersey, uses his genealogy research skills to help strangers — more than 1,000 so far — find long-lost family. In Pennsylvania, Neijae Graham-Henries became a certified barber at age 7 to give free haircuts to kids who couldn’t afford them. (Stories shared on GoodNewsNetwork.org.)

May these children inspire us to use our passions and skills for good, in the name of the Christ-child, who grew up and taught us to serve others in love.

Coming attraction

Advent, which marks the beginning of the church year is “the first gleam of Christmas,” writes W.E. Sangster. “It heralds the entrance of the Divine into human history; it is heaven descending to earth; it is a great event casting its brilliance before it.” Sangster adds: “It is as though a trumpeter had taken his stand upon the turrets of time and announced the coming of the King. ‘Get

ready,’ he seems to say. ‘Get ready. He is coming!’”

Light shines in the darkness

In Nepal, where blindness is prevalent due to under-funded medical care and a lack of eye doctors, ophthalmologist Sanduk Ruit has made it his mission to treat poor people. He’s performed more than 130,000 cataract surgeries to restore sight, sometimes walking for a week with surgical equipment in tow to reach patients. Dr. Ruit also found a way for replacement lenses to be made locally for less than \$3 each, rather than buying them internationally for 100 times as much. The physician brings healing to remote villages and celebrates “big eye-opening festivals” with people who “were blind yesterday, and ... are seeing today.”

At Christmas we celebrate the Word of God who came to live among us as Jesus, the light of the world. In countless ways since, God has brought light to those living in literal or figurative darkness.

We celebrate people, such as Dr. Ruit and the 650 doctors he has trained, whom God uses to cause “light [to shine] in the darkness” (John 1:5).

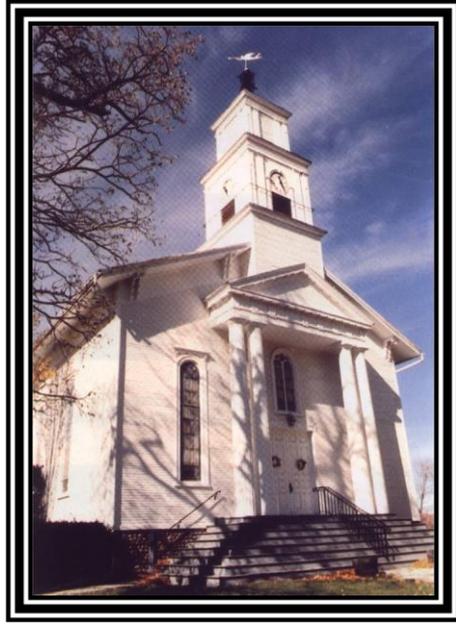
Perfect as is

Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that he gave his only Son. The only requirement is to believe in him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life. —Corrie ten Boom





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