

The Stepping Stone May 2023

The depth of connexion: the means of grace

Lt's inborn in our humanity—the need to connect with people, places, and things. We have the desire to be more than we are as human beings. This can be a good thing or bad, depending on your perspective.

Bishop Al Wesley Goodwin said, "We are not human beings having a supernatural experience. We are supernatural beings having a human experience."



Let that sink in for a moment. The divine God, as we understand God created us for connection. However, it was not for connection one to another but to God. We are created in the strange vastness of the *imago Dei*. We were created and placed perfectly in this world as divine image bearers of God. That means that with all our shortcomings and imperfections, we bear God's image. Look in the mirror: "What do you see?" "Do you notice your beauty, or do you notice your imperfections?" Mirrors reflect our physical presence but cannot reflect our intellect or spiritual essence. They give us an incomplete picture of the 'whole' of ourselves. Only God can see the full picture of who we are and our potential in this world.

One of the disciples that gets the worst wrap in scripture is Thomas. We call him doubting Thomas, and we think that he has a weak faith because of his reluctance to believe the resurrection of Jesus has occurred. I don't believe Thomas was weak in his faith, but he needed empirical evidence. After all, don't we need empirical evidence at the time to believe the unbelievable? In examining Thomas' character, we need to take a look at John 11.

"Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake, I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." John 11:14-16

Thomas was a zealot for the Lord. He would have been the first to take Jesus's place on the cross if he could have. I love Thomas, and his quote, "Let us also go, that we may die with him," will be my epitaph on my gravestone. Thomas had not had the experience that the other disciples did of seeing Jesus in the flesh appearing to them in a locked room. He hadn't had the benefit of the Holy Spirit being breathed upon him. Thomas was grieving, and rightfully so—he had just seen Jesus tried, beaten, and executed. To say the least, Thomas had *post-traumatic stress syndrome*. Remember, I'm not a doctor, just an avid observer of biblical history.

During the Passover feast, Jesus gave the disciples bread which he referred to as his body, and wine, which he referred to as his blood. In this meal, Jesus gave of himself to his disciples for the journey ahead. The journey would be hard and painful and end in Jesus's death. If that were the end of the story, we wouldn't be here to tell it. Jesus's death was the beginning of God tearing open the heavens and restoring humanity in connexion to God and one another. Three days later, the event that would change the universe happened.

The stone was rolled away, the grave clothes were folded, and the first witnesses were women who carried the message to the disciples who dismissed them as 'mad.'

Death is the culmination of faith's perfection in Jesus Christ.

Death then becomes the beginning of new life in Jesus Christ. In the words of C.S. Lewis, "Death works back-ward." Life begets life, and the story continues with us as participants in a new story of faith.

Coming to the Lord's communion table to receive the body and blood of Christ binds us in faith to billions who have gone before us singing the great mystery of faith:

"Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna is the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

This great mystery of faith is complete with the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup of salvation. It is what John Wesley referred to as the means of grace. Grace is this divine means of help or strength given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It is a free unmerited gift that is available to all persons at all times. It is what God does at that moment when we approach the table and humble ourselves. It is one of the messiest of sacraments because as we meet Christ in this meal, we acknowledge:

- 1.) Our mortality and sin
- 2.) Our need for Jesus
- 3.) Our need to be in ministry to all the world.

Holy Communion is a call to respond to the grace of God given in Christ. It is an opportunity for us to experience God in a tangible way that cannot be duplicated by human hands.

For the past couple of years, I have been meeting with two of my parishioners in my office every Wednesday morning for Holy Communion and prayer. My coffee table becomes a makeshift altar. The bread is still warm from coming out of Harold's oven, and Howard reminds me, "I am doing pretty good for an old guy." We laugh, talk, solve the world's problems and then pray. We ask God's blessing in this time and space and share in the words of the institution. We break bread together and depart in the grace of God. I have been doing this every Wednesday for the past five years. The impact that it has had on the three of us cannot be explained.

All of us have changed spiritually, and we have become closer than I ever thought possible. It is the means of grace and thanksgiving that God has given at that moment that make all the difference.

Bishop Al Wesley Goodwin said, "We are not human beings having a supernatural experience. We are supernatural beings having a human experience." That human experience of bread and cup is just what the church needs on a regular basis to stay in connexion with Jesus, our Lord, and Savior.

In Christ,

Rev. Daniel - Thudlig

Rev. Daniel J. Bradley



May:

May 13th - Chicken BBQ Drive-Thru, 11am @ FJUMC May 14th - Mother's Day, Care Net Baby Bottle Drive Begins May 18th - Memorial Committee Meeting, 10:30am May 20th - SPPRC Meeting, 9am-12pm @ C&B Building May 22nd - Youth Group Dance in Fellowship Hall, 10am-2pm May 23rd, 24th, 25th & 27th - Spin the Patriotic Wheel of Sales @ C&B 2.0 May 28th - Pentecost Sunday May 29th - Memorial Day

Commissioning & Ordination Service:

Friday, June 2, 2023 at 7:30 P.M. at SRC Arena at Onondaga Community College (4585 W. Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, NY)

If you can't attend in person, it will be livestreamed on the www.unyumc.org website

Also, join us for Pastor Bradley's Commissioning and Ordination Luncheon

Sunday, June 4th at 11:00 a.m., after worship service



Join us after worship on 6/4 for a luncheon to celebrate Pastor Bradley's big achievement. Please bring

a dish to pass and share, chicken BBQ will be provided.

Faith Journey UMC, Fellowship Hall, 8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041



Mary Circle is not going to be meeting for the winter months, stay tuned for future updates on Mary Circle Meetings

CHICKEN BBQ DRIVE-THRU



\$7.00 - Chicken ONLY (includes 1/2 bbq chicken) \$11.00 - Chicken Dinner (includes 1/2 bbq chicken, salt potatoes, baked beans and a roll with butter)

> FAITH JOURNEY UMC 8396 MORGAN RD. CLAY, NY 13041



Cradle & Beyond 2.0 7778 Brewerton Road

Location:

7778 Brewerton Rd. Syracuse, NY 13212 (Across from the Coppertop and next to Dunkin Donuts)

> Tuesday, May 23rd (4pm-7pm) Wednesday, May 24th (10am-4pm)

Thursday, May 25th (10am-4pm)

Saturday, May 27th (10am-2pm)

Store hours:

Tuesday4 pm - 7 pmWednesday10 am - 4 pmThursday10 am - 4 pmSaturday10 am - 2 pm

Contact Information:

Phone: (315) 980-8004 Email: Cradleandbeyond2@gmail.com



Keep doing what you're doing, Keep doing great things!



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH - MAY - "LOOKING AHEAD"

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." - Hebrews 12:1-2



<u>MAY</u>

April showers hopefully will bring us May Flowers! I am excited for this month because my mom and I have planned a weekend trip to go visit family friends and my Nana. A lot of my family has moved from PA to North Carolina, but we still have a few people living in Pennsylvania so we are planning a little weekend away together! It will be amazing to see my Nana again, she's in her 80's and I haven't seen her in person since before the pandemic. My mom is in the transition period of getting ready to retire, so it's going to be so great spending more time with her and having her involved in more things since she has the free time now! I hope you all have a wonderful month and a fantastic Memorial Weekend!

ARE NET.

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

We are collecting Baby Bottles for Care Net of CNY Baby Bottle Campaign 2023 starting on Mother's Day. There will be empty Baby Bottles that can be filled with loose change, bills and donations available on Sunday, May 14. They will be available in the lobby and will be collected after 6 weeks.

Thank you for supporting Care Net of Central New York, the premier "go to place" for women facing unplanned or unsupported pregnancies.

Here is how your support helped the local community over the last 12 months:

- We provided 800 free pregnancy tests and 437 free ultrasound scans to confirm a viable pregnancy.
- We helped parents struggling with parenting issues and soon-to-be parents prepare for the greatest adventure of their life and provided over 4,500 parenting and life-skill classes.
- We helped women and men who lost children to abortion, miscarriage, and still-birth, we provided over 115 support sessions to help ease their burden and restore the hope that was lost.
- And to encourage abstinence, over 3,000 students watched our sexual risk-avoidance videos, or had a Care Net presentation in their school.

Thanks again for supporting our mission, you are a vital part of this ministry because with every baby bottle filled, we are better positioned and equipped to help women and families during their time of crisis.

Thank you and God Bless, Paul Marshall (President and Executive Director)

BIBLE TRIVIA

Horns of the Altar

1. Who built the first altar?

2. What military leader was killed while holding on to the horns of the altar?

3. What book of the Bible mentions a talking altar?

4. Who almost sacrificed his much-loved son on an altar, but was stopped by an angel?

5. What king of Judah tore down Jeroboam's altar at Bethel and pounded the stones into dust?

6. Who built an altar and called it "The Lord is my banner"?

7. What kind of stone was, according to the Law, not supposed to be used in making an altar?

8. What was the altar in the tabernacle made of?

9. Which of the twelve tribes caused civil war when they built a magnificent altar on the banks of the Jordan?

10. What judge built an altar and called it "The Lord is peace"?

11. What king of Israel built a Baal altar to please his pagan wife?

12. What judge's parents saw an angel going up to heaven in the flames on the altar?

13. What judge and prophet built an altar to the Lord at Ramah?

14. What king was told to build an altar in a threshing place?

15. What rebellious son of David sought refuge from Solomon by holding on to the horns of the altar?

16. Who took bones out of tombs and burned them on an altar to defile it?

17. Who had a vision of the Lord standing beside the altar?

18. What king of Israel changed the religious institutions of the country by building an altar at Bethel?

19. What good king's birth was foretold hundreds of years before the fact by a prophet standing before the altar at Bethel?

20. What happened to Jeroboam's altar when he ordered his men to seize a prophet in front of it?

21. What leader was told to tear down his father's altar to Baal?

22. What god's priests danced around the altar while they cut themselves with knives and daggers?

23. What prophet triumphed when God consumed the offering on the altar and shamed the prophets of Baal?

- 24. What priest of Judah placed a money box near the temple's altar?
- 25. Who built an altar and named it for El, the God of Israel?
- 26. What evil king of Judah built an altar modeled on the altars of Syria?
- 27. Who rebuilt the Jerusalem altar when the exiles returned to Israel?
- **28.** Who had his lips touched by a coal from the altar in the temple?
- **29.** What prophet had a vision of an idol near the altar of God?

30. What prophet foresaw the destruction of the altars of Bethel?

 \Rightarrow Answers are located on the bottom of **Page 9**



We want to thank you for all of your support and help with the Lenten Pancake Breakfast and the Palm Sunday gift card donations.

Both benefit *Life House Ministry*, which is a new mission extension of *In My Father's Kitchen* that aims to help women rebuild, restore and relaunch their lives for the better.

We are excited to share that we collected \$930 from the various Lenten Pancake Breakfast we held and a total of 35 gift cards from assorted grocery stores, restaurants and retailers.

Thank you again for all the support!



Have you found your home Church yet? We would love to welcome you to ours!

Please contact us via email (fjoffice@fjumc.org) or phone (315-652-9186) if you are interested in becoming a member of Faith Journey United Methodist Church. All new members will be received on Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023.

MAY SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN



Scripture Writing Plan



Each of the scriptures below takes ten minutes or less to copy out. Commit to spending ten minutes each day listening to God's voice and Connect with the word!

Day 1 - Psalm 91:1-2 Day 2 - John 15:4-5 Day 3 - Galatians 5:22-23 Day 4 - 2 Peter 1:5 Day 5 - Psalm 46:1 Day 6 - 1 John 1:5-6 Day 7 - Psalm 46:1 Day 8 - Psalm 51:5-6 Day 9 - Psalm 25:21 Day 10 - Matthew 6:6 Day 11 - John 8:42 Day 12 - 2 John 1:5-6 Day 13 - Colossians 2:6-7 Day 14 - Galatians 2:15 Day 15 - 1 John 2:23-25 Day 16 - 1 John 2:24-25

Day 17 - Revelations 3:20 Day 18 - Ephesians 3:20 Day 19 - John 14:23 Day 20 - James 4:7-8 Day 21 - Job 22:21-22 Day 22 - Philippians 2:1-2 Day 23 - Hebrews 3:1-6 Day 24 - Matthew 7:21 Day 25 - James 1:22 Day 26 - James 2:18 Day 27 - Philippians 4:9 Day 28 - Titus 3:5-6 Day 29 - Luke 18:14 Day 30 - Deuteronomy 6:5-6 Day 31 - Acts 17:26-27

What are Scripture

Writing Plans?

Scripture Writing plans are something you can do every day and it will help you in your journey with God. Get your bible out and write out the scripture for that day. It is a proven fact that when you write something down is resonates more fully than just reading it. So, write it out and speak those words into reality, this will also help with memorization of the word of God and your daily walk with Him.

THEME:

Abiding in Christ



RecipeCorner

Do you have any recipes to share? I would love to feature your recipes in the monthly newsletter! Leave a recipe on my desk, in the offering plate or email the office at fjoffice@fjumc.org



Strawberry Jell-O Pretzel Salad

"Strawberry Pretzel Salad is more dessert than salad, it's sweet, salty, made with Jell-O, and topped with cool whip. It's easy to make ahead of any event and is an absolute winner at potlucks and parties!"



https://www.culinaryhill.com/strawberry-pretzel-salad/ Recipe by: Meggan Hill

INGREDIENTS

For the Pretzels:

- 2 cups crushed pretzels (about 8 ounces)
- 3/4 cup butter melted (1 1/2 sticks)
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the Filling:

- 8 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups whipped topping thawed (from one 8-ounce container)

For the Topping:

- 2 (3 ounce) packages strawberry gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water
- 32 ounces frozen sweetened strawberries thawed
- Whipped topping for garnish, optional
- Pretzels uncrushed, for garnish, optional

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2. In a medium bowl, add crushed pretzels, butter and sugar. Toss well to combine.
- 3. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Stir in whipped topping until combined.
- 4. Spread over pretzel crust and refrigerate until chilled (at least 30 minutes).
- 5. In a large bowl, dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Stir in strawberries and chill until partially set. Carefully spoon over filling. Chill until firm, 4 to 6 hours.
- 6. Garnish with additional whipped topping and pretzels if desired.

Recipe tips and variations:

- Protect the pretzels: Make sure you spread the cream cheese layer all the way to the edges of the baking dish. This will prevent the Jell-O from reaching the pretzels and making them soggy. Also, left out at room temperature, the pretzels will start to soften. But they will stay crunchy in the refrigerator, so serve this at the last minute.
- **Chill:** Chill between every step, and try not to rush. Also, allow the Jell-o to cool down to room temperature before pouring on the strawberries so the warmth doesn't soak in.
- Make ahead: Strawberry Pretzel Salad is best when made about half a day in advance. It will keep for up to three days in the refrigerator.
- **Raspberry:** Substitute frozen raspberries and raspberry Jell-O (or mix and match) for a new berry flavor.
- **Pineapple juice:** Some families swear by making the gelatin layer with hot pineapple juice. Use only 1 cup hot pineapple juice with the frozen berries, or it might not set correctly!
- **Pecans:** Some cooks love adding a handful or two of chopped pecans to the crushed pretzels.

Total Time: 3 hrs. Servings: 12 servings



GNAC Rehearsal Dates & Times:

Sundays (130 -430 pm) Mondays (6 to 830pm) Wednesday (6 to 830pm)

Upcoming Shows:

Great Northern Artists Collaborative 2023 Season



fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm in a wild, fastpaced extravaganza. To make it more difficult, they attempt to combine them into one gigantic fable using Rapunzel, Rumpelstiltskin, Hansel and Gretel, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and other more obscure stories like Lean Lisa and The Devil's Grandmother.

Two narrators attempt to recreate all 209 of the

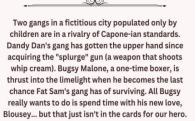
Director: Derek Potocki Show Dates: May 12th & 13th Dessert Theater

Great Northern Artists Collaborative 2023 Season



Director: Trevor Hill

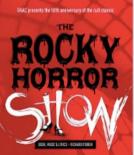
Show Dates August 4th - 6th, 10th & 11th



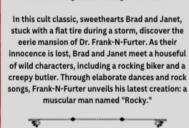
Audition Announcement Coming soon!

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Great Northern Artists Collaborative 2023 Season



Show Dates October 13th, 14th, 20th & 21st



Audition Announcement Coming soon! Great Northern Artists Collaborative 2023 Season



Director: Liz Ladd

December Audition Announcement 9th-10th, 14th-17th Coming soon!

Done in the style of Victorian Horror Troupe "Phantasmagoria" we are proud to bring you our version of their popular double feature "A Christmas Carol" and "The Canterville Ghost"

- Written by John DiDonna

<u>Bible Trivia Answers</u>: 1. Noah, 2. Joab, 3. Revelation, 4. Abraham, 5. Josiah, 6. Moses, 7. Cut stones, 8. Acacia wood covered with bronze, 9. Reuben, Gad and part of Manasseh, 10. Gideon, 11. Ahab, 12. Samson's, 13. Samuel, 14. David, 15. Adonijah, 16. Josiah, 17. Amos, 18. Jeroboam, 19. Josiah's, 20. It fell apart and the ashes scattered, 21. Gideon, 22. Baal's, 23. Elijah, 24. Jehoiada, 25. Jacob, 26. Ahaz, 27. The priest Joshua, 28. Isaiah, 29. Ezekiel, 30. Amos

The date for the Syracuse Mets Baseball Game has changed due to low attendance for the 5/26/23 game. The new date is Saturday, September 9, 2023.



CHANGE PLANS





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in	9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.		9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
*Communion			9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's Office	9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Build- ing		Chicken BBQ Drive-Thru, 11am @ FJUMC
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Mother's Day Care Net Baby Bottle Drive Begins			9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's Office	Memorial Com- mittee Meeting, 10:30 am @ FJUMC		SPPRC Meeting, 9am-12pm @ C&B Building
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Youth Group Dance in Fellowship Hall, 10am-2pm	Spin the Wheel Sale @ C&B 2.0, 4- 7pm	Spin the Wheel Sale @ C&B 2.0, 10am-4pm	Spin the Wheel Sale @ C&B 2.0, 10am-4pm		Spin the Wheel Sale @ C&B 2.0, 10am-2pm
			9:30 AM - Prayer &	9AM - 12PM - Workday		9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building
28	29	30	31			
Pentecost Sun- day, New Mem- bers Inducted	Memorial Day					
			9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's Office			
In-Person and Online Worship Service:						
Join us in-person or watch us live every Sunday at 10 am on Facebook						

Join us in-person or watch us live every Sunday at 10 am on Facebook www.facebook.com/faithjourneyumcclaynorthsyracuse

<u>Sermons also available on:</u>

Faithjourneyumc.libsyn.com or https://www.vimeo.com/channels/fjumc



For the month of **MAY**, we will be collecting Tuna & Chicken Snack Kits, Granola Bars and Crackers *for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church*. Thank you for your support!





We seek God's presence in our lives, to help others in their relationship with God and to strive to see God's work through all people.



We serve God through mission, encourage everyone on their spiritual journey and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

od [°]With Others



We create opportunities for all to share their gifts and talents and demonstrate openness, acceptance and hospitality.

Office Location:

8396 Morgan Road

Clay NY 13041

Contact Information:

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(315) 458-0890

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Website: www.fjumc.org

Faith Journey UMC Staff:

Pastor Rev. Daniel J. Bradley

Maryna Mazhukhova - Musician

Daniel Williams - Musician

Jake Melnyk - Musician

Sara Mertz - Office Manager

Sean Townsend - Custodian