



Pastor's Page



The Stepping Stone **September 2024**

Early on in my ministry career I served a church with a Finance Committee that asked me to cut the office budget from \$10,000 a year to to \$5000. It seemed like a reasonable request. Money was tight and they were trying to be good stewards of the resources that they had period. One of the biggest expenses in the office was a color copier. To replace all four toners' costs over \$250. We were spending close to \$500 a month on toner. The drums for that machine were \$100 — there were four of them and they had to be replaced monthly period. Remember this is the early 2000s And color copier technology was not what it is today. At a trustees meeting following the Sunday service one of the trustees flipped his lid as I explained the cost saving measures of replacing the color copier with a mono-chrome one.

He ranted and raved and cursed like a sailor at me for even suggesting the idea. He got up from the table with his fist clenched. At this point I was fearful that he was going to hit me. I could not understand why this was such a volatile issue. I was only doing what the Finance Committee asked me to do. This individual was so out of control that I had to ask him to leave the meeting. Upon his exit from the room, he put his fist through the drywall. The committee was so shaken by his behavior that there was nothing else I could do but to end the meeting. A few days later I went to his home and talked to him about his behavior. His reasons for being so upset were that he had bought that copier for the church out of money left him when his dad died. He was also drunk at the meeting. His elderly mother who was a former clergy that had served that church had just moved in with him and his wife as she could no longer live on her own. Remember these are reasons they are not excuses. He apologized profusely and asked to be able to come to the next trustees meeting and apologize for his behavior. I agreed and we prayed together about the situation. Remember it is never about the copier!

We have all been there in the middle of a grief bomb losing our minds. Our actions often do not reflect a Christ like behavior. I know that I can get pretty torqued up when somebody pokes a hole in the dam of my emotions. I will often do things that are not Christ like and regret them the next day. None of us are perfect. We do not come with nail prints in our hands. And the title of Messiah. Controlling our emotions and our responses to the things that take place around us is paramount. The last thing that I ever want to do yes is to hurt someone with my words and actions. When we do hurt someone, it is our job to make amends. The amends is not about us it is about the other person. When you mend a garment, you do not just put a patch over the hole. You try to make the garment like new as if the tear never happened.

God does not want us to be at one another's throats over a copier. God wants us to work together through our differences and ideas that we may be good stewards of the resources that have been given to us. There are times when this works perfectly and other times when it is a complete disaster. Part of being the church is recognizing that none of us are perfect and we are all in need of God's grace.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” Titus 2:11-14

Over the years we have had some tough and tense meetings. There were large decisions to be made, and questions about how to fund ministry during COVID and after we reopened. A lot of churches did not survive COVID they simply shuttered their doors and called it quits. I am proud to say that we are far better off than we were seven years ago. We have an increased number of individuals on Sunday morning and have received new members and baptized a lot of individuals. We are a vital congregation. Are there issues we need to continue to work through? Absolutely, but what gives me hope is I know that everyone who serves in leadership wants the best for this church and we will do anything to make it happen. This church is not about you or me. It is God's idea and plan for salvation in the clay and north Syracuse, NY communities.

The cradle and beyond building has become so much more than a thrift store. It is our mission hub in which we reach out to individuals who will never grace the doors of our church. With every donation and every prayer that is lifted in that store with individuals who are dealing with grief and loss of a loved one we show the love of Christ. We operate in a world that does not see a need for God. But the moment they set foot in that store they are on holy ground. They have a burning bush the moment when the grace of our volunteers shares the love of Christ. The actions of the volunteers in offering a word of prayer or just a hug can make the difference in someone's day.

People do not need to be browbeat with scriptures or made to feel bad because of their actions. They know when they have blown it, it is our job to listen to them and when the time is right simply offer to pray for them period. Their offense while it may be great is not against you or me. It is against God and God deals with such offenses by offering grace and mercy. We need to do the same because lives depend on seeing the tangible grace of God expressed through our actions.

Following that ordeal in the trustees meeting made me realized that I needed to spend more time with this individual. We began to meet for lunch once a week and talk to all about what was going on in his world. Because of his blow up at that meeting he entered a recovery program. He was able to connect with a therapist and face his anger issues. When I left that church, he was a different person. He died some years ago and I wish that I had been able to attend his funeral. So many times, I experience the grace of God through the shortcomings of others. When I stop getting offended over someone's actions that is when God can work threw me, because of me or despite me.

I have been that guy in the meeting who has flipped his lid. I have taken things personally that have nothing to do with me. My actions do not always stand for Christs intentions. It is part of the human condition again reasons do not excuse injurious behavior, I need to be accountable for my actions and when it is time to make amends, I need to be prepared to do that. It is part of doing the next right thing.

This summer I have had to come to terms with the fact that I am not the same person I was prior to the strokes. I do not process information the same way anymore. It takes me longer to listen to individuals, to write sermons, and articles. I need to continually be in the presence of God and that means more times sitting without a phone, the internet, or the television. I need to retrain my brain and my spirit to continually reflect the grace of God. Lives are dependent on me showing grace to others in their time of need. This world does not know God and every time we flip our lids and act like unruly children, we show them another reason not to believe in God. I am continually reminded of our mission statement: "Seek God, Serve God and Share God with others.

As we enter fall our theme for worship is the stillness of God. Over the months that lie ahead we will explore the scriptures as they relate to individuals in the Bible that were still in the presence of God. It is my hope that as you read this article you are examining your own life and actions. If there are people you need to make amends to do not wait. Show others grace when they do not show you grace and kindness. Listen to their stories without judgment and condemnation and God will open opportunities for you to be the hands and feet of Christ.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Daniel J. Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Daniel J. Bradley

What's Happening

SEPTEMBER:

September 2nd—Labor Day

September 6th—Syracuse Mets Baseball Game, 6:35PM @ *NBT BANK STADIUM*

September 8th—9/11 Remembrance Concert with John Harnois and Special Musician Guests

September 11th—Patriot's Day—*Never Forget*

September 14th—Last Chicken BBQ Drive-Thru of the season, 11am-until sold out @ *FJUMC*

September 21st—Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ *FJUMC*

September 22nd—Guest Preacher for Sunday Service, Reverend Dr. Bonnie Bates, 10:30am @ *FJUMC*



IT'S THE LAST CHICKEN BBQ DRIVE-THRU OF THE SEASON!

We begin selling at 11:00 AM till sold out!

September 14, 2024

\$7.00—1/2 Chicken and roll

\$11.00—1/2 Chicken, salt potatoes, baked beans and roll

Faith Journey United Methodist Church
8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041

Pancake Breakfast



Join us for a delicious Pancake Breakfast at Faith Journey UMC on the 3rd Saturday of every month.

The next date is:

Saturday, September 21, 2024 at 9:00 am

REMEMBERING 9.11

9/11 Memorial Concert

Sunday, September 8th at 10:30 a.m.
featuring John Harnois and guest musicians

It's the 23rd anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the painful memories are seared into our minds and hearts as we continue to pray for the families and remember the victims. We hold fast to the hope that springs forth from the ashes even after all this time.

Sadly, we still experience the fear and violence that has permeated our world since 9/11 and as we look back at that tragic day, help us to be people of nonviolence, love and determined to heal wounds rather than inflict them.

We pray for those still suffering from loss or injury as a result of the tragic events of that day. Let us never forget those who risked or lost their lives to save others, for their sacrifices and love represented the best in humanity and the path to which

Christ still calls each of us, as we continue to mourn those who died, may we honor them by being loving neighbors to all toward building a lasting peace through Christ Jesus. God Bless the United States of America. Amen.



Cradle & Beyond 2.0

7778 Brewerton Road

Store hours:

Tuesday 4 pm - 7 pm
Wednesday 10 am - 4 pm
Thursday 10 am - 4 pm
Saturday 10 am - 2 pm

Contact Information:

Phone: (315) 980-8004
Email: Cradleandbeyond2@gmail.com
7778 Brewerton Rd. Syracuse, NY 13212

Happy September!

We've had a great summer at C&B. So many new customers have found out about us, we had three successful Craft & Hotdog Wednesdays, have identified new partners to donate merchandise to, have exceeded donations (including monetary memorial donations) received and weekly sales, have 'gifted' 109 students backpacks and school supplies and we have finally received preliminary drawings for our new 'storage' addition.



We just finished another fun Bucket Sale - we exceeded sales of 125 buckets in five days - this is huge. One family (of 7) came into C&B two times this week for the bucket sale - They live in the north country and heard about our store - the mother shared appreciation for being able to get her six children school clothes (along with getting a free backpack filled with school supplies)!

More
Than Just
a Store

We had a gentleman come into the store today donating things from his father, who passed away years ago; he had a change of life events and found himself needing to move into his fathers home - he was so emotional and overwhelmed and felt so comfortable sharing his story with someone who would listen and not judge him.

One of our Ukrainian families came into the store looking for something to give their grandson for his Christian confirmation, we looked and looked for something and eventually I was able to hand him a heart that had been prayed upon - the family was so emotional, cried and thanked us all. If you haven't realized it yet - Cradle & Beyond is so much more than a thrift store!

With the record sales that we have had in 2024 - it is hard to fathom that we are getting into our 'busy season', be ready for holiday merchandise to start showing up and fun time. I was sharing with a few of our amazing volunteers today how lucky C&B is to have so many people, so passionate about what we do. Thank you for bringing your passion to work with you, each time you come in. Our sorters will be working most of the weekend to do a 'big switcheroo of merchandise' - therefore, when you come in, we will have tons of new merchandise.

Enjoy your holiday weekend!



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH - SEPTEMBER - "POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

"I stood in front of you with weakness, fear, and a lot of shaking. My message and my preaching weren't presented with convincing wise words but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

- 1 Corinthians 2:3-4



SEPTEMBER

SUMMER IS ALMOST OVER AND FALL IS UPON US!

Just a reminder that my mom, Kate, is getting hip replacement surgery on 9/11. I will be helping her recover, so my presence in the office will be very random, I will be working remotely for a few weeks and will pop in and out when I get a chance to print and etc. Please pray for my mom and Minnie Jordan, who are ironically getting surgery done by the same doctor around the same time! Please consider helping out at C&B this month since some volunteers will be out (including me), it's a great way to connect with the community, be social and shop at the same time!

Guest Speakers

Exciting News! Faith Journey will be hosting a guest speaker to preach at Sunday Services each month this Fall.

Reverend Dr Bonnie Bates, she is an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ and their conference executive officer. She is one of my colleagues at Colgate Rochester Divinity school. She is an amazing scholar and preacher, and I am thrilled that she will be ministering to my congregation on Sunday, September 22nd.

Reverend Todd Goddard, retired elder. Todd and I got to know one another when I was in Sodus New York. He is a trusted friend and colleague and when I turn to as a mentor, he will be preaching on World Communion Sunday, October 6th.

Alice Bowman is a lay speaker that shares her time between Liverpool, United Methodist Church and Faith Journey. She is a writer and author and soon to be published again. She will be preaching on All Saints Sunday, November 3rd.

BIBLE TRIVIA

Gates, Doors, and Other Openings

1. Whom did God speak to about the “gates of death”?
2. What gate of Jerusalem was rebuilt under Nehemiah’s leadership?
3. What faithful soldier, home on furlough, chose to sleep in front of the king’s palace door instead of going home to his wife?
4. Who removed the massive doors from the gate of Gaza and carried them to a hill at Hebron?
5. According to what Moses told the Israelites, where were the words of God to be written?
6. Who shut up the door of Noah’s ark?
7. What king removed the gold from the doors of the temple and gave it to the king of Assyria?
8. When Lot’s two angelic visitors blinded the lecherous men of Sodom, what were the men scrambling to do?
9. At the first Passover, what were the Israelites told to apply to their doorposts?
10. According to Psalm 24, what is to be lifted up so that the king of glory may enter in?
11. Who rolled back the stone from Jesus’ tomb?
12. According to Revelation, which of the seven churches in Asia did the Lord say that he had set before it an open door that no man could shut?
13. Who healed a lame man at the temple’s Beautiful Gate?
14. In John’s vision of the new Jerusalem, how many gates does the city have, and what are they made of?

⇒ *Answers are located on the bottom of Page 9*



Dear Faith Journey UMC,

On behalf of our entire Board of Directors, I wish to express our profound appreciation for your generous donation. Your contribution is crucial to our mission of achieving food equity for children in need within our community. Our belief is that every child should have access to food, irrespective of their circumstances, and your donation helps us edge closer to this goal.

Thanks to your kindness, we are providing meals to children throughout the summer, ensuring they have the sustenance they need to thrive. Your donation is not just a gift of food; it's a gift of health, hope and opportunity. It helps bridge the gap for many families struggling to provide three meals a day for their children when school is out.

Warmly, Sheila Dion, Founder & Director of Erin's Angels

FOOD DRIVE *of the* **MONTH**



As the new school year approaches, we are excited to announce our Back to School Cereal Cup Food Drive! We invite you to participate in this important initiative to ensure that every child starts their day with a nutritious breakfast.

Faith Journey is collecting Cereal Cups for Erin's Angels for our Monthly Food Pantry in September. They are currently experiencing a shortage of cereal cups and thought we could help them start the school year with a fresh supply of cereal cups!



Dear Faith Journey, Immanuel Lutheran Church would like to thank you for donating items for our food pantry!

Carol Montalto, Church Secretary

SEPTEMBER SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN

WHEN YOU NEED TO
Feel God's Love.



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 63:3

Day 2 - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Day 3 - Isaiah 54:10

Day 4 - Proverbs 3:12

Day 5 - Psalm 146:8

Day 6 - Psalm 145:20

Day 7 - Proverbs 8:21

Day 8 - Psalm 86:15

Day 9 - Deuteronomy 7:9

Day 10 - Psalm 119:64

Day 11 - Galatians 2:20

Day 12 - Song of Songs 2:4

Day 13 - Isaiah 38:17

Day 14 - Isaiah 43:4

Day 15 - John 3:16

Day 16 - 1 John 4:9-11

Day 17 - 1 John 3:1

Day 18 - Ephesians 5:2

Day 19 - Isaiah 63:9

Day 20 - Jeremiah 2:2

Day 21 - Jeremiah 31:3

Day 22 - Ezekiel 16:8

Day 23 - Daniel 9:4

Day 24 - Hosea 14:4

Day 25 - Psalm 36:5-6

Day 26 - Psalm 107:8-9

Day 27 - Nehemiah 9:17

Day 28 - Zephaniah 3:17

Day 29 - 1 Chronicles 16:34

Day 30 - 1 John 4:18-19

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 it 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.





Honey Pecan Bars

"These deliciously chewy and soft Honey Bars are a healthy alternative to Brownies or Blondies. Made entirely in ONE BOWL for easy prep and clean-up, they make for the perfect dessert or anytime snack!"

Recipe by: Erin Clarke

<https://www.wellplated.com/honey-pecan-blondies>



INGREDIENTS

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/3 cup honey
- 3/4 cup packed light-brown sugar
- 1 large egg, *lightly beaten, at room temperature*
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup white whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup toasted chopped pecans, or mix-in option of your choice
- Flaky sea salt, *such as Maldon or fleur de sel, optional*

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt together the butter, applesauce, and honey in a saucepan. Stir in the brown sugar, then transfer to a mixing bowl.
2. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract until smooth. Add the white whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour and salt.
3. Let the batter cool 20 minutes, then stir in the chopped pecans or other preferred mix-in option.
4. Transfer to a greased, parchment-lined pan. Bake the honey bars at 350 degrees F for 24 to 28 minutes, until the edges are browned and center is set. Let cool and cut into squares. ENJOY!

Substitution Tips:

- Instead of white whole wheat flour, you may use entirely all-purpose flour instead with great results.
- Feel free to swap in other nuts or mix-ins of your choice. Walnuts, slivered almonds or toasted coconut would be a tasty option, or use raisins or dried cranberries for those with nut allergies.

Storage Tips:

- **To Store:** Honey Bars may be stored, at room temperature, in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
- **To Freeze:** Wrap the bars individually in plastic wrap and store in the freezer for up to 3 months. Defrost overnight in the fridge or on the counter for a few hours before serving.
- **To Reheat:** For a fresh-baked taste, warm leftover honey bars for a few seconds in the microwave until warm.

Prep Time: 15 mins.

Cook Time: 25 mins.

Total Time: 1 hr.

Servings: 16 bars; 1 (8x8-inch) pan

RECIPE



SEPTEMBER 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	3	4 9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's Office	5 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building	6 Syracuse Mets Baseball Game, 6:35pm @ NBT BANK STADIUM	7 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.
8 9/11 Remembrance Concert with John Harnois	9 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	10	11 <i>Patriot's Day</i> 9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's	12 9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building	13 <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	14 Chicken BBQ Drive-Thru, 11am -till sold out @ FJUMC 9AM - 12 PM - Workday
15	16 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	17	18 9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy	19 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building	20 <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	21 Monthly Pancake Breakfast @ 9am, FJUMC 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.
22 <i>Special Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, 10:30am @ FJUMC</i>	23 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	24	25 9:30 AM - Prayer & Holy communion in Pastor's	26 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building	27 <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	28 9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building
29	30 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>					

Bible Trivia Answers: 1. Job, 2. The Sheep Gate, 3. Uriah, the husband of the Bathsheba, 4. Samson, 5. On the doorposts of their houses and on their gates, 6. God, 7. Hezekiah, 8. Find the door to Lot's home, 9. Lamb's blood, 10. The gates and the everlasting doors, 11. The angel of the Lord, 12. Philadelphia, 13. Peter and John, 14. Twelve, made of pearl



For the month of **SEPTEMBER**, we will be collecting **Cereal Cups** for *Erin's Angels*.



As the new school year approaches, we are excited to announce our Back-to-School Cereal Cup Food Drive! Your contributions will make a significant difference in the lives of many children in our community.



**Thank you for helping us
Feed the Future of CNY!**

Seek

.....
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.

Serve

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

Share

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

God With Others

Office Location:

8396 Morgan Road
Clay NY 13041

Contact Information:

Phone: (315) 652-9186 or
(315) 458-0890

E-Mail: fjoffice@fjumc.org

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