



Pastor's
Page



The Stepping Stone
March 2025

The Roads We Didn't Take...

Throughout our lives, we replay the events of the past, which affect the present but also guide our future. They are the 'What ifs?' What if we didn't take that job or move to another city for family reasons? What if we didn't take our parents' advice and made choices that harmed us along the way? No matter what direction we go, God is always with us and shows us a road of grace that is present before us. Our purposes are not God's purposes. Sometimes, we must learn from our experiences to live in God's present and future.

Right after college, I received a fantastic scholarship to attend Claremont School of Theology. It seemed like the right move, and it came with a job at a United Methodist Church as a Youth Director. I was young and foolish, so I moved to Southern California. Three months later, I was out of a job and trying just to finish one semester at the seminary. I couldn't focus and had no job or money. Meals consisted of macaroni and cheese and whatever canned goods I could afford. I was in trouble.

One of my friends mercifully helped me get home to my parent's home three thousand miles away. At the time, I couldn't see that as a blessing, and I was confused about what God wanted of me. Truthfully, I wasn't sure I knew what I wanted of myself. I continued to make choices that weren't healthy for me and found myself with a spiritual life that was in the toilet.

I thought there was no way that God could ever use me. Had I not had those experiences, Mary and I would have never met, and we wouldn't have had Kiah and been in ministry all these years. I can look back on the train wreck of choices or appreciate the present, which will guide my future. The future is not written, and our choices are not an end but a beginning to a new reality of the love of God.

In my time off, I remembered that Jesus loved me. This Sunday School theology has stuck in my brain. I continue to learn that "Jesus loves all of me, the good, the bad, the ugly, and the things that I don't want to talk about." The roads that I took led me to where I am today. The streets I didn't take would have led me to a reality that had changed my life forever. God's love for all of God's children never fails. You have heard it said, "When one door closes, another one opens." Sometimes, we must let the past be in the past and walk away from it as a mistake but as an opportunity to learn from it. One of my friends told me, "Don't play around in the manure of the past, but live in the present to find out where you are going with what you now know."

This year presents an opportunity to learn about servant leadership in a new way that I never considered. It is also an opportunity for Faith Journey to grow in the grace. When I took leave, this fall, I thought it was the worst thing that could have happened to me, but I realize now that in that time away, God was doing work in my life that couldn't be done if I was still in active ministry. I said, "Jesus loves me, all of me, the good, the bad, the ugly, and the things I don't want to discuss." This is the essence of God's love; it is not that we loved God first, but that God loves us no matter our choices. Don't play in the manure of the past but look at your present as an opportunity to do it God's way and not our own.

In grace,

Rev. Daniel J. Bradley

Rev. Daniel J. Bradley



Winter Treasurer's Report

Thank you all for your continued support through the most challenging winter we've had in many years. Many thanks to our snow plower, Scott Duerr, for keeping the parking lot clear even though we are behind in our payment to him. As is often the case in the winter, we get behind on some of our bills due to weather keeping us from Sunday services and higher utility costs.

I have compared the utility bills for the first couple of months to those from 2024, and even though the usage is a little lower due to our system upgrades, the cost hasn't changed because of higher utility charges. At least the upgrades have kept our building comfortable while keeping the costs from getting any higher. I'm looking forward to an early spring and better news next month!

Linda Rauli, Treasurer

"Change for Change" Mission



It was exciting to count the change for February that will be donated to the Samaritan Center. There is \$79 that will be going to their food programs this month. It is surprising how quickly it adds up and how much good it will do.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:



As a reminder, we are getting together a crew to serve lunch at the Samaritan Center after church on March 30th (12:30-3pm). We need about 15 volunteers, and it is a great opportunity to see first-hand what a fantastic organization it is. Watch for a signup sheet with the details of times and rides.



March Change for Change will be donated to the Southern Sudan Health Project.

The 8 health care workers bring basic medicine and care to their villages with true dedication given their limited resources. United Methodist churches in our area have supported their work for many years. The workers typically counsel over 1500 villagers every month, for which we fund each worker \$1,500 for the year.

Thank you for your continued support!

Linda Rauli



Trustees Tidbits (from Mike Jordan):

Progress report on our heating system:

We've been working since early Fall 2024 with Chuck McKinnon (McKinnon Contracting) on updating our boiler zone valves (each phase includes electronic zone valves with programmable thermostats) this has been done in phases.

From our boiler replacement in the fall 2023, we received a \$3,000 national grid rebate in addition to generous donations from the congregation of \$7000 totalling \$10,000 that we were able to work with. The following phases have cost \$8703.

Phase 1: Sanctuary and classrooms below the sanctuary

Phase 2: Fellowship Hall / Theatre space

Phase 3: Finance office / Cafe side of building (facing front parking lot)

Phase 4: Church / pastor office / Christian ed rooms (back parking lot side of church)

Phase 5: The cry room and storage closet by popcorn machine and kitchen

That completes the updating of the zone valves.

Remaining planned repairs include replacing the back-up circulation pump (\$2850).

Of the initial budget of \$10,000, there is a remaining balance of \$1297.

The Memorial Committee has agreed to donate funds to cover the additional \$1500 needed to complete this project.

For future thought, we received a quote of \$2814 to replace the cabinet heater at the bottom of the stairs (just inside the back door). Currently it works; however, it is inefficient.



Connections Ministry Opportunity

To be a friend or connection to one of our older members (80+) or someone who needs to know they are not forgotten by their church whether or not they are active in church activities or no longer able to be out and about.

Connections ministry's mission is to identify such persons, get contact information and then connect by phone calls, cards, visits, and any creative ideas you may have.

We have a list of persons who qualify which is constantly needing to be updated. You can get started with the type of person you would be interested in connecting with by a phone call to Beth Schnipp ((315-447-2443)

What's Happening

FEBRUARY:

March 5th—Ash Wednesday Worship Service, 6:30pm @ *FJUMC*

March 9th, 16th, 23rd & 20th—Free-will Lenten Breakfast, 9:30am @ *FJUMC*

March 15th—Monthly Fellowship Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ *FJUMC*

March 14th & 28th—Circle of Friends Cooking Classes, 10-12pm @ *FJUMC*

March 21st, 22nd & 29th—Steel Magnolias, 7pm @ *GNAC*

March 23rd & 30th—Steel Magnolias, 2pm @ *GNAC*

March 30th—Special Sunday: UMCOR

March 30th—Samaritan Center Volunteer Day, 12:30-3pm

Steel Magnolias



By Robert Harling

Friday, March 21st @ 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 22nd @ 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 23rd @ 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 29th @ 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 30th @ 2:00 p.m.

GNAC presents Steel Magnolias, a classic play that explores themes of love, loss and mortality centered around a group of women who bond over gossip and friendship at a beauty parlor in Louisiana.

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW AT:

TICKETOR.COM/GNAC

\$20—General Admission

\$15—Senior/Student Discount

Great Northern Artists Collaborative
8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 5, 2025—6:30 p.m.

@ Faith Journey UMC

Come join us, as we mark the beginning of the Lenten Season.

Hungry for some Fellowship?
Join us for Breakfast at FJUMC

Lenten Breakfast

There will be a free-will Lenten Breakfast on Sundays in March (9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th) and April (6th, 13th) at 9:30am in the upper Café area

Monthly Pancake Breakfast

NEXT DATE—March 15, 2025 at 9am in the upper Café area

FUTURE DATES:

April 19, 2025 @ 9am

May 17, 2025 @ 9am



ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!
Bring family and friends with you!

Please note: There is no cost to attend this breakfast, but donations to continue ministry are very much welcome and appreciated

Faith Journey UMC
8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041



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 March

We hope that you survived February and are looking forward to when spring will arrive. We started 2025 with a bang - lots of donations, lots of sales and lots of new friends were made. January sales were just over \$300 more than we made in 2024; February was a little lighter in the sales / donations departments resulting in sales approximately \$400 less than 2024. The weather / illnesses kept people away and hopefully safe.

Our bucket sale was a success - as we have grown to expect. We sold 192 buckets (768 gallons) of merchandise during the third week of February. In typical fashion, customers are already asking when the next sale will be (haha). We'll monitor the merchandise and set a determination on the dates / type of sale we will likely have; be on the lookout for more details toward the end of March or early April.

In January, C&B customers brought in diapers, wipes and feminine hygiene items as well as donated \$ for the CNY Diaper Bank - this was amazing. We may look for another opportunity for our customers to be in mission with us :)



Pastor Dan Bradley will be hosting a book study again beginning 3/12 and continuing over lent. Book study will meet on Wednesdays from 4 to 6 pm at the Cradle & Beyond building. The book will be "Tell Me More" by Kelly Corrigan. There will be a free-will lenten breakfast at FJUMC 3/9 through Easter - breakfast will be served at 9:30 am each Sunday of Lent.

As a reminder, many customers who donate merchandise to C&B are dealing with losses of loved ones; this is often heartbreaking for the customers to part with items. I've witnessed this several times recently. I encourage you to take the time to 'read' our customers - if they need to share a story or two, please be there to listen to them. In addition, we have a container of stone hearts that have been 'prayed upon' sitting on the desk. If you feel comfortable, please share a heart with someone who you feel could use a sense of being heard, needs a hug or prayer. C&B is in the business of building relationships - not just selling merchandise. The sales of merchandise is a vessel to create relationships.



SPRING FORWARD
Set your clock an hour ahead

Lastly, we want to share a very heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who took on additional shifts and who shoveled or cleared the walkway. Because of this - we could keep the store open :) As I look out the window now and see it snowing - I recall that we were not expecting it to snow (lol) - but it is March, maybe it's coming in like a lion and it'll go out like a lamb! Looking forward to 'springing ahead' our time on March 9th. This will be super nice for the Tuesday evening crew - you'll be able to have daylight the entire time the store is open.

Keep being amazing - you all are so wonderful. I love hearing your stories and seeing you engage with others. This makes C&B truly a blessing to the community.

HELLO March



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH - MARCH - "FINDING ENCOURAGEMENT"

"David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." - 1 Samuel 30:6



MARCH

HAPPY SPRING! Let's hope the snow says goodbye to CNY, the flowers start to bloom and we can experience warm weather again! I'm officially OVER the snow and cold, plus the ice has been a dangerous addition this year—I've wiped out several times, luckily, no injuries! I know a lot of people have birthdays this month, including Pastor Bradley on March 26th and mine is on the 23rd. I'm planning a little stay-cation at the end of the month to celebrate, restore and refresh. Have a BEAUTIFULLY BLOOMIN' March!

UMCOR SUNDAY—MARCH 30, 2025

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

"For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
- MATTHEW 25:35



UMCOR SUNDAY

Life as a single parent can be challenging—but for a single parent living in Kamuli in eastern Uganda, it's even more difficult. Life can be overwhelming for the nearly 20% of the population living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda—one of the country's most underserved areas where affordable food, clean water, and medical care are scarce and access to education, transportation and local health care centers is often slim and unaffordable.

Thanks to Global Health's support of locally run economic training and assistance programming, participants have been trained in modern farming techniques for growing flourishing home gardens filled with nutritious staples like tomatoes, maize, and green bananas. They have also learned how to identify optimal seeds, plant in rows, use fertilizer, and were trained in small livestock husbandry. Participants were offered education in other marketable skills like tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, craft-making, and small business management.

Your gift to Global Health today will help young single parents overcome the stigma and health challenges of living with HIV and AIDS by learning skills that are marketable in areas of the world like eastern Uganda where local industry is scarce. When you support Global Health, you empower youth marginalized by HIV and AIDS to learn valuable farming and agricultural skills that might one day provide employment for others. Give securely online by visiting giveumcmis-sion.org/flourish or by placing your monetary donation in a Special Sunday Envelope (available at church).



MARCH SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN

Spiritual Warfare

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 - Genesis 3:1-4

Day 2 - Genesis 3:14-15

Day 3 - 2 Chronicles 20:15,17

Day 4 - Job 1:9-11

Day 5 - Isaiah 25:4-5

Day 6 - Matthew 4:9-11

Day 7 - Luke 10:18-20

Day 8 - John 1:3-5

Day 9 - John 1:10-13

Day 10 - John 8:43-44

Day 11 - John 12:30-32

Day 12 - John 14:30-31

Day 13 - John 16:32-33

Day 14 - Romans 8:6-8

Day 15 - Romans 8:37-39

Day 16 - 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Day 17 - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Day 18 - 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Day 19 - Galatians 5:16-17

Day 20 - Ephesians 6:11-12

Day 21 - Ephesians 6:13-15

Day 22 - Ephesians 6:16-18

Day 23 - 1 Peter 5:8-9

Day 24 - 1 Timothy 6:11-12

Day 25 - 2 Timothy 4:17-18

Day 26 - James 4:7-8

Day 27 - 1 John 3:7-8

Day 28 - 1 John 4:2-4

Day 29 - 1 John 4:5-6

Day 30 - 1 John 5:4-5

Day 31 - Revelation 12:7-9

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.





RecipeCorner



Slow Cooker Chicken Pot Pie Stew

"Kick off National Nutrition Month with this creamy and delicious slow cooker chicken pot pie! It's a great meal for busy families. It's a hearty stew that's so comforting served with buttermilk biscuits instead of a crust. Kids love it, too!"

Recipe by: [GourmetSoy on Allrecipes.com](#)

INGREDIENTS

- 10 medium red potatoes, quartered
- 4 large skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into cubes
- 2 (26 ounce) cans condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 (8 ounce) package baby carrots
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cube chicken bouillon (Optional)
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground black pepper, or to taste
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon celery salt, or to taste
- 1 (16 ounce) bag frozen mixed vegetables

Prep Time: 20 mins.

Cook Time: 6 hrs.

Total Time: 6 hrs. 20 mins.

Servings: 16

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine potatoes, chicken, condensed soup, carrots, celery, bouillon, pepper, garlic salt, and celery salt in a slow cooker; cover and cook on High for 5 hours.
2. Stir in frozen mixed vegetables; continue to cook on High for 1 hour more
3. Serve and enjoy!



RECIPE



MARCH 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	4	5 <i>Ash Wednesday Worship Service, 6:30 pm</i>	6 <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Build- ing</small>	7 <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	8 <small>9AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building</small>
9 <i>Free-will Lenten Breakfast, 9:30am</i>	10 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	11	12	13 <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	14 <i>Circle of Friends cooking classes, 10-12pm</i> <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	15 <i>Monthly Pan- cake Breakfast, 9am @ FIJMC Café</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.</small>
16 <i>Free-will Lenten Breakfast, 9:30am</i>	17 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	18	19	20 <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	21 <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i> <i>Steel Magnolias, 7pm</i>	22 <i>Steel Magnolias, 7pm</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>
23 <i>Steel Magnoli- as, 2pm</i> <i>Free-will Lenten Breakfast, 9:30am</i>	24 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	25	26	27 <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	28 <i>Circle of Friends cooking classes, 10-12pm</i> <i>PSC Group, 1:30-4</i>	29 <i>Steel Magnolias, 7pm</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.</small>
30 <i>Steel Magnoli- as, 2pm</i> <i>Free-will Lenten Breakfast,</i>	31 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>					



FoodPantry

In March, FJUMC will be collecting single breakfast items, such as cereal cups, granola bars, etc. for Erin's Angels Backpack Program.

Thanks so much for your support and helping to 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