



Pastor's
Page



The Stepping Stone
December 2025



*Joy-filled endings
and new beginnings...*

I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I keep your commandments. My soul keeps your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you. - Psalm 119:166-168

AS children, we are taught from an early age that there will always be a ‘happy ending.’ In most cases, it comes at the end of a fairy tale, “and they lived happily ever after...” With all that has taken place in our world in the past twenty-five years, it can be hard at times to see a ‘happy ending’ in sight or perhaps a ‘joy-filled’ ending. My wife, Mary, watches the Hallmark channel constantly.

I often remind her that a Hallmark movie is usually made up of the same five actors and actresses with ten different scripts in a dozen or so locations. When Mary is watching them, I sometimes tease her by adding unwanted, humorous commentary; at least, I think so. She lets me know this with a roll of her eyes; however, I realize that, for her, it is a way to escape the darkness of this world. I think about how we all need an escape from the darkness of this world.

90% of all television programming today revolves around crime dramas. In forty-two minutes of the allotted sixty-minute television program (eighteen minutes for commercials), the bad guys are caught and arrested or killed by the police or some other agency tasked with keeping us safe. Then there are the ridiculous conspiracy television programs that involve the CIA, FBI, and other unnamed agencies on the lookout for space aliens. But never forget, there are always the far-fetched television programs and movies that deal solely with the end of the world and humanity's fight for survival by using nuclear weapons. Ugh! I need to stop watching television, except maybe for Hallmark!

As we begin the Advent season, working with the theme: “Living into Hope, filled with Grace and Salvation.” I am reminded that this is a time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the Messiah. Jesus was born into a world that was plunged into sin. It was a time of many wars, violence, and oppression. The Roman Empire ruled the known world with an iron fist at the time and occupied all of Israel.

The religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, turned faith into a product to be bought and sold through temple taxes, laws, and regulations. They forgot that the very ones they were oppressing were God’s people and had a claim to a relationship with God. Yet God does not enter this world as a warrior cutting down the system, but as a baby born into poverty with humble earthly parents who said, ‘YES!’

The greatest strength in this world is family and the belief in God and God's Son, Jesus. Mary and Joseph, Jesus' earthly parents, could have said 'NO!' to God, but they said 'YES!' to the unknown. As a family in the direst of circumstances, from the poorest of towns, they held together and believed. They did this despite all logic and reason telling them otherwise. There is no logical reason to believe in God; there is, however, an illogical reason, and that is that God has believed in us before we were born.

At this time of the year—in this season of preparation, we need to respond to the call of God on our lives. We need to do the hard work of being the light of Jesus shining in the darkest corners of the world. We need to hold fast to Jesus and resist oppression, violence, and evil in whatever form they present themselves. I know it seems like a tall order, but through Jesus, all things are possible. Advent is the beginning of a new story written by God, and we are invited to join with God in the story of living into hope, full of grace and salvation.

I extend this invitation to you and your family: if it has been a while since you last attended church, this is the time for a new beginning with God. It is the perfect season for preparing and anticipating the birth of the Messiah, with a trip to church. Come and bring your family and friends. Experience God's message through music, prayer, liturgy, preaching, and Holy Communion. Let this Advent be a joy-filled beginning with God.

Rest assured that at every Advent service, you will not be watching a Hallmark movie but experiencing a God moment in which we will pause and reflect on what this season of preparation and anticipation is all about. This world may seem like it is coming apart at the seams; however, have faith in the illogical: God entering God's story in poverty and humility.

I pray that God would give you a joy-filled Christmas as you gather with family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers—may you live in hope, grace, and salvation in the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, the Messiah.

Merry Christmas to you and your family!

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Daniel J. Bradley". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Rev. Daniel J. Bradley

GNAC PRESENTS:

**A Hauntingly Whimsical
Victorian Christmas**

Friday, December 12th

(7:00-9:00 PM)

Saturday, December 13th

(7:00-9:00 PM)

Sunday, December 14th

(2:00-4:00 PM)



'Tis the Season to Give Back! Because of your continue support this season, we're able to offer a special holiday price!

ALL TICKETS ARE JUST \$10 (+tax).

Visit [Ticketor.com/GNAC](https://www.ticketor.com/GNAC) to purchase your tickets today!

If you'd like to join us in our continued efforts to give back, please consider bringing a non-perishable food item, like toiletries, or warm clothing (jackets, hats, gloves) to donate at the door.

GNAC THEATER—8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041

What's Happening

DECEMBER:

December 7th—Make & Take Ministry, Turkey Casserole, Noon @ FJUMC
December 10th, 11th & 13th—Christmas Gift Wrapping @ C&B
December 17th, 18th & 20th—Christmas Gift Wrapping @ C&B
December 13th-22nd—Plinko Sale @ C&B
December 12th & 13th—GNAC, A Hauntingly Whimsical Victorian Christmas, 7PM @ FJUMC
December 14th—GNAC, A Hauntingly Whimsical Victorian Christmas, 2PM @ FJUMC
December 14th—Buffalo Bills Football Sunday, 1pm @ C&B
December 20th—Monthly Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ FJUMC
December 20th—Annual Holiday Party, 2:30-5:30pm @ Faith Journey UMC, Fellowship Hall
December 24th—Christmas Eve Worship Service, 6pm @ FJUMC
December 25th—Christmas Day
December 28th—Laity-led Worship Service, 10:30am
January 1st—New Years' Day
December 24th-January 1st—C&B Closed for Holidays, reopening on 1/3/2026

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN US FOR OUR

Christmas EVE SERVICE

DECEMBER 24TH 2025 || 6:00 PM

AT FAITH JOURNEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Faithful Meals: Make & Take Ministry

When: Sunday, December 7, 2025

Time: Noon (after worship)

Where: FJUMC kitchen
(8396 Morgan Rd. Clay, NY 13041)

What's on the Menu:

In-Between Turkey Casserole

All ingredients, supplies, and the recipe will be provided.

Cost: No charge — a free-will offering will be accepted.

To ensure we have enough supplies, please RSVP by 12/5

Email: FJOFFICE @ FJUMC.ORG or
Text Beth at (315) 657-5701

A SEASON TO SERVE & CELEBRATE



Annual Christmas Party

Save the Date!

Our Annual (CB/FJUMC) Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, December 20 from 2:30–5:30 PM at FJUMC. We can't wait to celebrate with you and share our Annual End of Year in Review. Please RSVP to Beth or FJUMC church by 12/14/2025

Christmas Gift Wrapping

AT CRADLE & BEYOND 2.0
7778 BREWERTON RD. SYRACUSE, NY 13212

BRING YOUR GIFTS AND WE WILL WRAP THEM FOR YOU!

AVAILABLE THESE DATES:

Wed. 12/10 (10am–4pm)

Thurs. 12/11 (10am–4pm)

Sat. 12/13 (10am–2pm)

Wed. 12/17 (10am–4pm)

Thurs. 12/18 (10am–4pm)

Sat. 12/20 (10am–2pm)





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



What an incredible month November turned out to be! We had two weeks of record sales, and although our Black Friday and Saturday 50% off events came in a bit below last year, they were still the third-highest sales for this timeframe—a huge success thanks to all of you.

Exciting Progress on the Donation Room Addition: We've been incredibly busy, and the new donation room is really taking shape. We are beyond grateful for the many hands that made this possible. A special thank-you to Joe and Sam (our talented Amish team) for installing a new metal roof—no more leaks and virtually maintenance-free—and for putting up the addition's shell in just three days. Thanks also to Chuck (concrete) and Billy (excavation) for their flexibility and quality work.

A huge shout-out to Mike, who took time off work to be an extra set of hands for all the contractors and meet with the code enforcer. We appreciate our sorters, who have been working hard to create space and showcase our holiday merchandise and to everyone who stopped by to say hello, check our progress, and even serve as “traffic cops” to keep shoppers (and the curious!) safely out of the work zone. Truly—it took a small village to make everything work, and we are so grateful.

Looking Ahead: December Excitement— December is going to bring even more progress as Mike, Butch, Terry, Duane, and other friends will put in extra hours to get the donation center fully up and running.

Holiday Sales & Events:

- Plinko Sale: December 13–22
- Holiday Meal-in-a-Bag Giveaway: One winner each day from December 13–22; such a fun and meaningful way to share holiday cheer!

Holiday Hours:

- ⇒ Closed Wednesday 12/24/2025 - Saturday 1/2/2026
- ⇒ Reopening Saturday, 01/03/2026

Save the Date! Our Annual (CB / FJUMC) Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, December 20 from 2:30–5:30 PM at FJUMC. We can't wait to celebrate with you and share our Annual End of Year in Review. Please RSVP to Beth or FJUMC church by 12/14/2025

**Thank you all for your continued support, energy, and community spirit.
Here's to a joyful and productive December!**



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH - DECEMBER - "THE GIFT OF LOVE"

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest rooms available for them." - Luke 2:6-7

Believe like *Mary*
Trust like *Joseph*
Hope like *Shepherds*
Seek like *Wise Men*
Praise like *Angels*
Love like *Jesus*



DECEMBER

MERRY CHRISTMAS! I'm excited for this Holiday season, I've been planning for the arrival of my baby boy, getting the nursery together and happy to see family that will be coming into town at the end of the month. It's my last holiday before welcoming the baby in February, so I'm trying to enjoy the sleep, quiet and peace now before the chaos of motherhood starts! I feel like I'm ready to begin the next journey in life and looking forward to meeting my little bundle of joy! It's been a whirlwind so far, but I feel so blessed, and surrounded by such love and support! Wishing you all the happiest of holidays and the best NEW YEAR 2026!

"Change for Change" Mission



NOVEMBER CHANGE FOR CHANGE COLLECTION WAS \$30. OUR CHRISTMAS PROJECT will be gift bags given to children at Brown Memorial and also C&B. The kids from FJUMC's Sunday School will be gathering in early December to fill bags and enjoy some Christmas fun of their own.



CHANGE FOR CHANGE FOR DECEMBER:
We will be collecting for Tina Nguyen's 'Harvest for Asia' Mission.

MISSION: Harvest for Asia, Inc. seeks to empower marginalized communities across Southeast Asia and in the heart of Syracuse... through grassroots programs in education, vocational training, and sustainable development.

CAFÉ & BAKERY: Our café ministry is a practical umbrella to help save a daughter or son from the detrimental cycle of human trafficking; a means to preserve life's dignity and a refuge to protect their faith.

Our organization is made up of volunteers here at home who make sure all of the money donated makes it into the mission field to help those in need. 100% of the money goes to the Southeast Asian communities. Our Executive Director does not have a salary or

DECEMBER 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 95:2 | Day 17 - Roman 6:20-23 |
| Day 2 - Isaiah 9:2-7 | Day 18 - 1 Timothy 1:15-17 |
| Day 3 - Isaiah 11:1-5 | Day 19 - Titus 3:3-7 |
| Day 4 - Isaiah 7:10-14 | Day 20 - Galatians 4:1-7 |
| Day 5 - Micah 5:1-5 | Day 21 - Philippians 2:6-8 |
| Day 6 - 2 Samuel 7:12-16 | Day 22 - Psalm 103:1-5 |
| Day 7 - Psalm 150 | Day 23 - John 14:1-6 |
| Day 8 - Luke 1:26-33 | Day 24 - Daniel 7:13-14 |
| Day 9 - Luke 1:34-38 | Day 25 - Revelation 1:4-7 |
| Day 10 - Luke 1:46-55 | Day 26 - Revelation 3:20-22 |
| Day 11 - Matthew 1:18-25 | Day 27 - Rev. 22:12-13 |
| Day 12 - Luke 2:1-7 | Day 28 - Rev. 22:16-17 |
| Day 13 - Luke 2:13-20 | Day 29 - Rev. 22:14-16 |
| Day 14 - Matthew 1:1-16 | Day 30 - Rev. 22:17-19 |
| Day 15 - Matthew 1:1-16 | Day 31 - Rev. 22:20-21 |
| Day 16 - Psalm 100:1-5 | |

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



CHICKEN STUFFING CASSEROLE

“Chicken and Stuffing Casserole is an easy, one dish dinner that’s a family favorite, even for picky eaters! Made with pantry staples—it’s super filling and delicious! It can be made with leftover turkey and stuffing from Thanksgiving or grab a rotisserie chicken from the store for easier preparation!”

Recipe by: Brandie Skibinski

www.thecountrycook.net/chicken-stuffing-casserole/

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds chicken tenderloins
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (if you are sensitive to salt, choose a low sodium option)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 10.5 ounce can cream of celery soup
- 10.5 ounce can cream of chicken soup
- 1/4 cup milk
- 6 ounce box Stove Top Chicken Stuffing Mix
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- Fresh or dried parsley for garnish (optional)

Prep Time: 15 mins.
Total Time: 45 mins.
Yields: 6 servings

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375F degrees. Spray an 11x7-inch baking dish with cooking spray, and set aside.
2. Cut 2 pounds chicken tenderloins into bite-sized pieces and place them into the baking dish.
3. Toss the chicken pieces with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together 10.5 ounce can of cream of celery soup, 10.5 ounce can cream of chicken soup and 1/4 cup milk until smooth.
5. Pour the sauce over the chicken pieces and smooth it out, so all of the chicken is covered.
6. Evenly sprinkle the 6 ounce box Stove Top Chicken Stuffing Mix on the top.
7. Pour 1 1/2 cups of chicken broth on top of the stuffing mix, and make sure that all of the stuffing is moistened by the broth.
8. Cover with foil and bake for about 40-45 minutes. Take the foil off and bake for an additional 5 minutes to lightly brown the top. NOTE: Oven times can vary for many reasons, it may take longer or quicker in your particular oven. The chicken is done when the internal temperature reaches 165F degrees.
9. Garnish with fresh or dried parsley (optional) and serve. When serving, scoop up some of the gravy at the bottom and drizzle over each serving.

Can you use raw chicken? Yes! It’s safe to use raw chicken in this dish, as soon as your contents reach 160F degrees, it will kill any bacteria that might be on the raw chicken.

Do I have to use chicken tenderloins? Nope! You can use boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs in place of tenderloins. Leftover turkey from Thanksgiving or even rotisserie chicken from a store!

Can I use other stuffing? Yes! We use the chicken stove top mix because it pairs nicely together, but you can swap it out for other variations and brands.

Can I add some vegetables? Yes! Vegetables can be easily added, especially a mixed vegetable melody or some frozen peas! Or try serving with a side of veggies or salad. It’s super easy to bring some healthier elements to this dinner.

Can I use other soup options? Yes! Cream of mushroom soup would also work in place of cream of chicken or cream of celery.

What to do if I don’t have a 11x7 baking dish? You can make this in a 9x13 baking dish, it will just be thinner, but I wouldn’t go with a smaller dish as it might not cook evenly.

How do I store the leftovers? Transfer leftovers into an airtight container once they’ve cooled to room temperature. Then keep them in the fridge for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months. Reheat leftovers in the oven covered with foil or in the microwave until warmed through.

DECEMBER 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <i>Make & Take Ministry: Turkey Casserole, 12PM</i>	8 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	9	10 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-4pm @ C&B</i>	11 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-4pm @ C&B</i> <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Build-</small>	12 <i>GNAC—A Hauntingly Whimsical Victorian Christmas, 7PM</i> <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	13 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-2pm @ C&B</i> <i>GNAC— A Hauntingly Whimsical Victorian Christmas, 7PM</i>
14 <i>Buffalo Bills Football Sunday, 1pm @ C&B</i> <i>GNAC— A Hauntingly Whimsical Victorian Christmas, 2PM</i>	15 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	16	17 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-4pm @ C&B</i>	18 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-4pm @ C&B</i>	19 <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	20 <i>Christmas Gift Wrapping, 10am-2pm @ C&B</i> <i>Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ FJUMC</i> <i>Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall, 2:30-5:30pm</i>
21	22 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve Worship Service, 6pm</i> <i>C&B Closed until 1/3</i>	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	26 <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	27 <i>C&B Closed</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>
28 <i>Laity-led worship service, 10:30am</i>	29 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	30 <i>C&B Closed</i>	31 <i>C&B Closed</i>			



For the month of **DECEMBER** Food Pantry, we will be collecting **any size (Men, Women & Children) Socks, Hats, Mittens and Scarves for our Annual Hat & Mitten Tree.** They will be distributed to several different missions and organizations at the end of the month to keep those in need warm and cozy this holiday season!

Share the warmth



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 Hours & Location:

Tuesday—Friday
 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
 8396 Morgan Road
 Clay NY 13041

Contact Information:

Phone: (315) 652-9186
E-Mail: fjoffice@fjumc.org
Website: www.fjumc.org

Faith Journey UMC Staff:

Pastor Rev. Daniel J. Bradley
 Maryna Mazhukhova - Musician
 Jake Melnyk - Musician
 Sara Mertz - Office Manager
 Sean Townsend - Custodian