



## Pastor's Page



## The Stepping Stone April 2026

This is the beginning of a new day.  
You have been given this day to use as you will.  
You can waste it or use it for good.  
What you do today is important because  
you are exchanging a day of your life for it.  
When tomorrow comes it will be gone forever.  
In its place will be something you have left behind.

*Let it be something good*

**T**here, are moments in our lives that define who we are, who we have become, but the one thing that is not written in stone is who we will be in the future. The past does not define us; the present does not alter the course laid before us, but it does give us a perspective on what the future might hold if we walk the path before us. Still, the future is not set until it happens, for it is in the present, which quickly becomes the past.

The great writer T.S. Eliot wrote, “Every moment is a fresh beginning.” A fresh beginning in my understanding is that no matter how dire the circumstances are before us, there is

always hope. Hope that reminds us to keep moving forward despite our desire to give up and quit before we reach the finish line. T.S. Elliot also wrote, “This is the way the world ends, not with a bang, but a whimper.” The whimpers of billions of people crying out for an end to war, suffering, and every other blight that exists in this world. They are people of all faiths praying to a God of their understanding for hope and grace. It is the ardent prayers of billions that, through the expression of gut-wrenching circumstances, find a way to God—and perhaps not the way I understand God, but still they offer their tears and pain that somehow, they will not be forgotten. At some point, the end of the world will come, but with that end will come a new beginning.

I often wonder which statement by T.S. Elliot is true; Is it possible they both are true? Is every moment a new beginning, or is the end of the world closer than we think? I see these thoughts to be juxtaposed, and it perplexes me as a human being. However, what I have learned is this: Life is messy; it's not for the weak of heart. It is not about ‘sunshine and rainbows’; it is about slogging through the mud and muck of the trenches to get to the freedom that God gives. We are not only given grace to survive, but to thrive in the reality that has been given to us time and time again. We live in a world of cynicism, damning sarcasm, and the darkest of humor and satire, thinking it will help us cope. Yet what I have found is that it breeds more hate, anger, discord, and a lack of civility with one another when we should be looking or ‘whimpering’ to the God of our understanding with ardent prayers.

A new day was dawning when the women, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Salome, went to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body after his crucifixion. The overarching question was, “Who will roll away the stone?” I must wonder whether they might have been curious about whether the resurrection had happened the way Jesus had foretold. The garden where Jesus was buried was not like the gardens, we have today; it was filled with grapevines and a wine press at its center. It reminded them of the Passover meal, which was eaten before Jesus' betrayal, trial, and execution.

The words that were spoken over the bread were, “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When he shared the cup of wine, he said these words, “Drink from this, all of you; this is the blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The new covenant is this: God isn't finished with this world. The resurrection was just the beginning of faith's perfection by the power of the Holy Spirit. The tomb could not hold Jesus, and it was God who rolled the stone away. There will come a day and time when the world will end, but this is not that day. At times it will seem as though evil will triumph—but God gets the final say. Just as it was God who raised Christ from the dead, so shall we be raised.

Treat today as a new beginning, a chance to start over in faith. To walk humbly and justly with God and tell the world that the stone has been rolled away and Christ the Lord is risen from the dead! That is why we keep putting one foot in front of the other to tell the story.

We've a story to tell to the nations  
That shall turn their hearts to the right  
A story of truth and mercy  
A story of peace and light, a story of peace and light

For the darkness shall turn to dawning  
And the dawning to noonday bright  
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth  
The kingdom of love and light

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--We've a Story to Tell the Nations, lyrics and music written by Ernest Nichol, 1896

I welcome you to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, this Easter Sunday and embrace the new day that God has already given to you. I know it's scary out there in this world; however, if Mary Magdalene and the other women could risk their lives and that of their families to anoint the body of Jesus, coming to worship is far easier. The stone has been rolled away, and you will see the risen Christ.

God bless you and your family as you remember all that God has done in your life, will continue to do, and lead you into a new day. Tell your story to the nations of what God has done in your life.

God Bless,



Rev. Daniel J. Bradley

# What's Happening

## APRIL:

**March 28th—April 4th—PLINKO Sale @ C&B 2.0**

**April 2nd—Holy Thursday, 6:30pm**

**April 3rd—Good Friday Concert, 3pm**

**April 5th—Easter Sunday, 10:30am**

**April 18th—Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ FJUMC Cafe**

**April 19th—Native American Ministries Sunday**

**April 29th—New Member Classes, 12-1pm**

**May 1st—GNAC, Leading Ladies, 7pm**

**May 2nd—GNAC, Leading Ladies, 7pm**

**May 3rd—GNAC, Leading Ladies, 2pm**

**May 6th—New Members Classes, 12-1pm**

**May 13th—New Members Classes, 12-1pm**

**May 20th—New Members Classes, 12-1pm**

### *From the Treasurer:*

March 31st marks the end of the 1st quarter of 2026. How time flies when you're shoveling snow! Below is the summary of the church finances. The "Offering, rentals, interest" category is almost identical to 2025 – considering the bad weather keeping some people at home, this is truly a testament to the commitment of support from our congregation. Thank you to all who contribute on Sunday mornings as well as through our Vanco online giving site.

	Jan-Mar
Offering, rentals, interest	\$34,375
Support from C&B 2.0	4,000
Missions (includes Shared Ministry)	2,370
Miscellaneous	<u>200</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$40,945</b>
Payroll	\$24,528
Upper NY Conference	6,509
Facilities expense (utilities, etc.)	5,958
Insurance	189
Office Expense	2,148
Missions	1,716
Miscellaneous	<u>1,042</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$42,090</b>

Respectfully submitted, Linda Raulli, Treasurer



Classes will be held on the following dates from 12:00-1:00 at FJUMC.

*April 29th, May 6th, May 13th, May 20th.*

*Reception of new members will be on Sunday, May 24th (Pentecost) —Even if you are transferring in from another church you must attend all the sessions.*

## KEN LUDWIG'S LEADING LADIES



### **GNAC PRESENTS: Ken Ludwig's *Leading Ladies***

**Fri., May 1st (7:00—9:00 pm)**

**Sat., May 2nd (7:00—9:00 pm)**

**Sun., May 3rd (2:00—4:00 pm)**

**Get your tickets now!**

**Visit [TICKETOR.COM/GNAC](https://TICKETOR.COM/GNAC)**

**General Admission—\$15**

**Student & Senior—\$10**

**Great Northern Artists Collaborative  
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 April

As I write this newsletter, we are getting ready for another PLINKO sale 3/28 - 4/4 our customers are so excited!

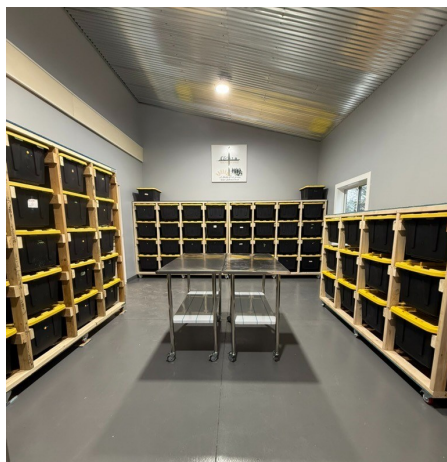


However, the most exciting news is that our new donation center is officially open. This has already made a big difference in streamlining merchandise drop-offs and organizing inventory. The newly improved sorting room is providing much-needed elbow room, making it easier to sort and prepare items for the sales floor. All in all, what a great success!



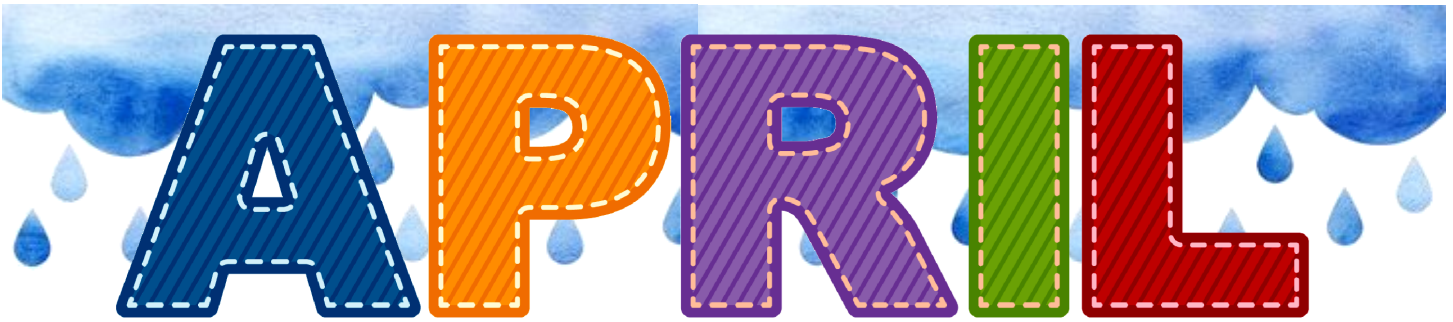
I would like to formally recognize and thank the many individuals who dedicated countless hours to making this possible: Mike Jordan, Gordon Bylsma, Steven Converse, Butch Remington, Duane Simmons, and Frankie Mills, along with Judy Bylsma, Beth Jordan, Sandy Humphrey, Sandy Remington, and Donna Mills. Since Christmas, approximately 788 work hours have been contributed to the new addition / sorting room and store clean-up—an incredible testament to commitment and teamwork.

To further streamline operations, we have introduced the use of a cash register. Also, as we prepare for the spring, we will begin pulling winter clothing from the sales floor.



Lastly, wishing a warm welcome back to all of our snow-birds—you were missed! We are looking forward to a long-awaited spring... bring it on! We also want to congratulate Kyle and our own Sara Mertz on the birth of their beautiful baby boy :)

Thank you all for your continued dedication and support!



**SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH - APRIL - "BLANKET OF BLESSING"**

*"So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him." - 1 Kings 19:19*



**APRIL**

**I'M HAPPY TO BE BACK!**

I've been on maternity leave for the past 6 weeks to bond and care for my newborn. Kyle and I have taken the transition into parenthood fairly well and we were able to get into a daily routine with him. We make a great team! I'm going to miss having his help during the days while he goes back to work, but I'm going to work majority remotely for a few weeks while adjusting to returning. I will have help from my mom and mother-in-law moving forward so I can be more present in-office. He's been such a sweet boy, we are so blessed to have a beautiful and healthy baby. Thank you so much for all the well wishes and kind words the past month! I can't wait for you to meet little AJ!



**"Change for Change" Mission**

**For March, we collected \$20 for the Samaritan Center.**

**April's mission will be collecting funds for the purchase of raincoats and rubber boots to assist Health Home Promoters during the rainy season in Southern Sudan.**

Greetings! May begins the rainy season in South Sudan. This challenges our eight Home Health Promoters as they address the health needs of between one and two thousand individuals every month in the four communities they serve.

A recent study of the project indicated that raincoats and rubber boots would make a big difference to the Home Health Promoters ability to serve their communities. We are asking you to help support the HHP's not only with their monthly salaries, but to supply them with raincoats and boots. They will need an extra \$1,000 to purchase rain gear.

As Easter approaches, this may be a good time to help celebrate this season with support for the eight Home Health Promoters and the thousands that they serve.

It just might be a grand way to celebrate the new life offered to us, as we help those in South Sudan to assist one another in their development.

Thank you for your consideration and support for this amazing mission.—Rev. Bradford Hunt



*"For the Glory of God, we will strive to enable the development of Community Based Systems for the health and holistic quality of life in Southern Sudan."*

# APRIL SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN

*He is Risen!*



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 3:14-15

**Day 2** - Genesis 12:1-3

**Day 3** - Numbers 24:17

**Day 4** - Psalm 22:16-18

**Day 5** - 2 Samuel 7:12-13

**Day 6** - Isaiah 9:6-7

**Day 7** - Isaiah 35:3-4

**Day 8** - Isaiah 35:5-6

**Day 9** - Isaiah 53:4-5

**Day 10** - Isaiah 53:6-7

**Day 11** - Isaiah 53:8-9

**Day 12** - Isaiah 53:10-11

**Day 13** - Isaiah 53:12

**Day 14** - Matthew 26:31-32

**Day 15** - Matthew 26:38-39

**Day 16** - Matthew 26:53-54

**Day 17** - Matthew 27:45-46

**Day 18** - Matthew 27:50-51

**Day 19** - Mark 15:46

**Day 20** - Luke 24:1-2

**Day 21** - Luke 24:3-4

**Day 22** - Luke 24:5-7

**Day 23** - John 20:11-14

**Day 24** - John 20:15-17

**Day 25** - John 20:26-27

**Day 26** - John 20:28-29

**Day 27** - John 20:30-31

**Day 28** - Romans 8:33-34

**Day 29** - 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

**Day 30** - Revelation 5:11-13

## 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.

**Love Boldly**  
**Serve Joyfully**  
**Lead Courageously**





## Chocolate Chip Peanut Butter Banana Oat Bars



*"Chocolate Chip Peanut Butter Banana Oat Bars are the perfect portable breakfast, healthy snack, or sweet treat, anytime! Made with 4 simple ingredients, they are vegan, gluten-free, oil-free, only 80 calories each and absolutely delicious!"*

**Recipe by:** Camilla at Power Hungry Website

[powerhungry.com/2015/05/21/healthy-chocolate-chip-banana-oat-bars/](http://powerhungry.com/2015/05/21/healthy-chocolate-chip-banana-oat-bars/)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup mashed very ripe banana
- 1/4 cup creamy peanut butter (*or any nut butter/seed butter of choice*)
- 1 1/2 cups, rolled oats
- 1/3 cup chocolate chips



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper (or simply spray with nonstick cooking spray).
3. In a medium bowl, combine the banana and peanut butter until smooth.
4. Add the oats and chocolate chips, stirring until completely blended.
5. Spread into prepared baking pan, pressing down firmly.
6. Bake in the preheated oven for 14 to 17 minutes until the surface looks and feels dry, and the edges are golden brown.
7. Cool in pan for 45 minutes to an hour before cutting into 16 bars. Enjoy!

**Prep Time: 5 mins.**

**Cook Time: 17 mins.**

**Yields: 16 bars**

**Storage:** *Store the cooled bars in an airtight container at room temperature for 2 days, the refrigerator for 1 week, or in the freezer for up to 2 month.*

# RECIPE



# APRIL 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 <i>Holy Thursday Service, 6:30pm @ FJUMC</i> <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	3 <i>Good Friday Concert, 3pm</i>	4 <i>PLINKO SALE @ C&amp;B, 10am-2pm</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.</small>
5 <i>Easter Sunday Service, 10:30am</i>	6 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	7	8	9 <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	10 <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	11 <small>9AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building</small>
12	13 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	14	15	16 <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	17 <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	18 <i>Pancake Breakfast, 9am @ FJUMC</i> <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.</small>
19 <i>Native American Ministries Sunday</i>	20 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	21	22	23 <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	24 <i>PSC Karaoke, 1:30-4</i>	25 <small>9AM - 12PM - Workday @ New Building.</small>
26	27 <i>PSC Group, 10-2</i>	28	29 <i>New Member Classes, 12-1pm @ FJUMC</i> <small>9AM-12PM - Workday @ New Building</small>	30		



**For the month of April, Faith Journey UMC will be collecting personal and self-care items for United for Moms/ Mother's Day Donation Drive.**

**ITEMS INCLUDE:** Feminine care, nail care, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes & floss, shampoo, soap & body wash, tissues, deodorant, hair accessories, hand & body lotion, lip balm and combs/brushes

*For more information please contact Lynn Hughes.*



## UNITED FOR MOMS

MOTHER'S DAY DONATION DRIVE

DONATE NOW THROUGH MAY 3<sup>RD</sup>

In honor of Mother's Day, United Way of CNY is collecting personal and self care items to be given to local women in need.

**ITEMS TO DONATE (NEW ITEMS ONLY, PLEASE):**

- Feminine Care
- Nail Care Items
- Socks
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush & Floss
- Shampoo
- Soap & Body Wash
- Tissues
- Deodorant
- Hair Accessories | Hand & Body Lotion | Lip Balm | Combs & Brushes



For more ways to get involved visit [UnitedForMoms.com](http://UnitedForMoms.com)

PRESENTED BY



### 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](mailto:fjoffice@fjumc.org)  
**Website:** [www.fjumc.org](http://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