



Church Chat
January 2025
Happy New Year!

Dear Friends

I greet you with great joy as I commend this New Year publication of the Newsletter. As you receive it, I trust that you will continue to be encouraged and have a deep sense of fellowship and connection with this congregation. Since this is also our post-Christmas publication, I am praying that the season was a time of joy, rest and reflection for you.

As we enter this New Year, here are some realities that will confront us. First, the political reality of having a change in government as a result of last year's election. We don't know how the plans and policies of the incoming administration will shape and influence our national life and what challenges and opportunities they will bring. We must be prepared to face these with the knowledge that God is with us, Christ is our Emmanuel, as we were reminded during the Christmastide. Let us pray for one another. As we read in the first Letter to Timothy, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

Another reality we might face as we enter the New Year is the beginning of construction of Micron's chip plant in the Town of Clay, not far from us here in Cicero. This promises to be the nation's largest chip making complex that will provide thousands of high paying jobs. This will have a big impact on the socio-economic status of this area and throughout the state. Like so many plans we cannot be completely certain how those for Micron will turn out. There has already been a delay in the process since it was announced that the company was coming but since then significant steps have been made so that 2025 will likely be the year when the dream will become a reality. With the increased opportunities for jobs and economic success, I pray for spiritual prosperity as well and that the church will remain a beacon pointing individuals to Jesus who came that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

A third and important reality that we all face as the New Year dawns is that we are growing older. Since my birth month is January, this reality hits me as soon as we cross over from one year to the next and I find the Psalmist's words most relevant: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Not long ago I spent some time with Vivian Pennock who is featured in this newsletter as one of our most senior members and who will be celebrating her 98th birthday this month. I was inspired and encouraged by our conversation and her strong faith in God. Vivian has had her ups and downs but each struggle has strengthened her faith and each battle has increased her confidence that the God in whom she trusts will be with her and take care of her in every circumstance. I was touched by the joy that radiated from her during that visit and time of sharing. I pray that as we all grow older we will learn from our experiences how to become better and help make this world a better place.

On behalf of my family I wish everyone a blessed, bright, peaceful and prosperous 2025.

God bless you,

Jefferson C. Niles, EdD, MAE, BA

Handwritten signature of Jefferson C. Niles.

Pastor

Email: pastor@ciceroumchurch.org

Vivian Hyde Pennock is believed to be the oldest living member of the Cicero United Methodist Church. She was born on January 28, 1927, and lived in Clayton, NY, until 1944. After that, she moved to Watertown, NY, to attend business school and pursue employment opportunities.

In 1948, Vivian married Carl on May 29, and they later relocated to Syracuse. In 1957, they moved to Cicero and began attending the Cicero Community Methodist Church. Vivian and Carl officially became members of the church in February 1959, alongside Roger and Lucille Turk, who transferred their membership.

At that time, Reverend Wayne Hunter was the minister and encouraged the couple's involvement in church activities. Over the years, Vivian has contributed to various ministries, including Sunday School, VBS Methodist Youth Fellowship leadership, the choir, evangelism, membership, lay leadership, and serving as Church Secretary. She held the position of church secretary under both Reverend Claude T. Corbet and Reverend Steven Deckard.

Vivian was actively involved in many women's circles and was awarded Life Membership in the United Methodist Women. Additionally, she served as an honorary member of Boy Scout Troop 117, which was formed and supported by the Cicero United Methodist Church for many years.

Vivian feels incredibly blessed to have been associated with so many Christian individuals and considers Cicero United Methodist Church her home church.



77 Years at Cicero United Methodist Church
January 28th Vivian will be 98 Years Young!!

Facts about Christmas

1) Christmas is a **Christian festival** that celebrates the birth of **Jesus Christ**, who Christians believe was the son of God. For most people, it occurs every year on **25 December** – the day the **Roman Catholic Church** chose to mark Jesus' birthday. But, in fact, no one knows the exact date Jesus was born!



2) Did you know that not all Christians celebrate Christmas on the same day? In countries with large populations of **Orthodox Christians***, such as **Russia**, Ukraine, and **Romania**, Christmas Day falls on **7 January**. Some **Greek Orthodox Christians** celebrate Christmas on 7 January, too.

3) The name 'Christmas' comes from the old English phrase **Cristes maesse**, which means 'Christ's mass'. But what about 'Xmas'? Many people think this is just a modern-day abbreviation, but it dates back to the **16th century**! The 'X' is said to represent the **Greek letter 'Chi'** – the first letter in the Greek word for Christ, **Χριστός** (pronounced 'Christos').

4) Come Christmas, people worldwide enjoy all kinds of jolly-good fun! Many of the festive traditions we have in the UK today came about in the **Victorian era** – such as **Christmas cards**, **gift-giving** and **crackers**, and traditional foods like **mince pies** and **roast turkey**! **Queen Victoria** and her husband, **Prince Albert**, were huge fans of Christmas, in fact!

5) **Christmas trees** also became popular in Victorian Britain. But these were first seen in **16th-century Germany**, where, at Christmas time, people decorated fir trees with fruit and nuts—and later sweets, paper shapes, and candles. Amazingly, historians think the origins of this festive tradition may date back to the **Romans** and **Ancient Egyptians**, who used evergreen plants and garlands as **symbols of everlasting life**. Wow!

6) Check this out – every year, **Norway** sends a beautiful home-grown Christmas tree to **London**, where it is decorated with lights in **Trafalgar Square**. Standing a towering **20m tall**, the terrific tree is a gift to say thank you for the help the UK gave Norway during **World War II**. What a *tree-tremendous* gift!

7) We can't talk about Christmas without a mention to the big bearded, rosy-cheeked jolly man... **Father Christmas**! But have you wondered how he got the name **Santa Claus**? It's from **Sinterklaas**, which means **Saint Nicholas** in Dutch, the language of the **Netherlands**. St. Nicholas was a Christian bishop who lived in the 4th century – known for being kind and generous, he later became the **patron saint of children**.

8) But Santa isn't the only Christmas character – there are many more worldwide! In **Italy**, for example, a kind witch called **La Befana** is said to fly around on a broomstick delivering toys to children! And in **Iceland**, children leave shoes under the window for 13 mischievous trolls called the **Yule Lads**. If the child has been good, they'll find **sweets in their shoes** – but if they've been bad, the Yule lads will leave them a **rotten potato**!

9) We all love to sing along to **Jingle Bells**, but have you ever noticed that the song doesn't have the word Christmas in it? Or Jesus or Santa Claus? That's because it wasn't originally a Christmas song! In fact, the jolly anthem was written in 1850, entitled **One Horse Open Sleigh**, for the **American** holiday, **Thanksgiving**!

10) Now, imagine if there was no Christmas. Does it feel quite strange? Sad, perhaps? Well, believe it or not, in **1644**, Christmas celebrations were made illegal in England and, soon after, in the **English Colonies in America**, too! At that time, government members felt that the religious meaning of Christmas had been forgotten, so they banned the holiday festivities. However, some people still celebrated in secret until Christmas was once again legal... almost **20 years** later!



From the Outreach Team

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to everyone who generously purchased coats, hats, and gloves for local children or contributed funds to support this vital mission!

These carefully selected items, along with snow pants and boots, were thoughtfully delivered to Smith Road School, Cicero Elementary, Roxboro Elementary, and Main St. School, according to their specific needs and requests.

The teachers and counselors at these schools were genuinely amazed by our ability to provide for so many children in such a meaningful way. In two touching instances, a child was eagerly waiting for our delivery so they could finally have a warm coat to wear home that very day! We are truly blessed to be part of such a generous and caring Church family, whose compassion makes a tangible difference in the lives of our community's children!

Human Relations Sunday

On January 19th, a unique offering will be collected in honor of Human Relations Day, which falls on the Sunday before Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This offering is a significant step towards realizing Dr. King's vision of "the beloved community." The funds raised will support vital ministries focused on advocacy and community engagement. Among these initiatives are The Community Developers Program, United Methodist Voluntary Services, and the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs, all of which work towards fostering positive change and inclusivity within our society. See the Special Envelope and Card for Human Relations Day in the Pew.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

TOGETHER
OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways

YOUR DONATION CHANGES THE WORLD ONE LIFE AT A TIME

GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH:
Make checks payable to your local church or donate online via credit/debit card at ResourceUMC.org/SSGive

TO GIVE ONLINE SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

TOGETHER
OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE SPECIAL SUNDAYS?

United Methodists celebrate on specific days to unite and make clear the commitment of the church as the people of God, and to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to special programs approved and supported by the Church. For stories on how you make a difference visit UMC.org/yourimpact

HOW DO YOUR GIFTS SUPPORT HUMAN RELATIONS?

We are called to make an impact in communities where our brothers and sisters in Christ lack the resources or tools to reach their God-given potentials. Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. For more than half a century, United Methodists have observed this churchwide special Sunday in recognition of the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: **Each of God's children are equally important.**

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

Fuel Sunday is back for winter! On the 2nd Sunday of January,

February, and March, we will observe Fuel Sunday. You will find envelopes labeled "Fuel Sunday" in the pews. We would greatly appreciate any contributions you can make to help offset our utility costs this winter. You can mark your check as "Fuel Sunday" and place it in the collection plate. If you use online banking, you can select "Fuel Sunday" to make your contribution. Thank you for your support! The Finance Team



Unhanging the Greens

Save the Date. After the service on **January 5th** we will be taking down the Greens. It's always a bit faster to "take-down" than to "put up" but once again - the Worship Team is **VERY** grateful for any help we can get.



Pledge Forms

There is still time to complete and return your pledge form for 2025. If you have not accessed the form sent with the electronic newsletter, hard copies are available in the Narthex, Welcome Center, and the Office Information Area. If you need assistance, please let us know, and we can help you complete the form either in person or online. We are also happy to email you a new form if needed.



Dear CUMC,

ALEX

This Christmas season, we are thankful that you support our Pack and dens by letting us meet at CUMC.

Thank you,
Pack 117's
Lion and Tiger
Dens

TSYBEL 19

SOPHIA

VANESSA

Volunteer



Opportunities to use your gifts and talents:

Meal Shepherd: Prepare or purchase a meal and deliver to a church member who has returned from the hospital or is ill. (Reimbursement for the purchase of a meal is available.)

Transportation Shepherd: Provide a ride for a church member to a doctor appointment, pharmacy, or church.

Card Shepherd: Send cards to those members who are ill, in the hospital, going through bereavement, or just needing encouragement. (Reimbursement for postage/cards is available.)

This is a wonderful time to pray and seek God's guidance for serving in one or all these areas of much needed ministry of the church. The opportunity to oversee and manage an area would be very much welcomed.

For further information about these ministries, (don't be shy!), contact Ellie Stivers: 315-751-1156 or Elaine Ruckdeschel: 315-288-4757.



LANCASTER, PA BUS TRIP SIGHT AND SOUND THEATER June 3-6, 2025

The trip includes transportation and lodging, with three breakfasts, dinners, shows, driver gratuity, and more.

Cicero United Methodist Church Caring Support Group sponsors the trip.
For more information, contact Mary Alice Scheel at 315-699-7181.

The cost is \$875.00, double per person. \$950.00 Single
A \$250.00 deposit
needed ASAP.

Don't miss out on this fantastic trip!

God's Country Jamboree

**Sunday February 9, 2025
6:00 PM**

***Featuring
God's Country Ramblers***



**Cicero United Methodist Church
8416 Brewerton Rd, Cicero, NY**

On December 8th, 49 people came together for God's Country Christmas Jamboree, where we all enjoyed singing a variety of classic Christmas carols, including a lively round of the 12 Days of Christmas. We owe a heartfelt thanks to Candice for providing wonderful piano accompaniment throughout the evening. During the offering, Ken treated us to a lovely medley of trombone music that added to the festive atmosphere.

The event featured a special video clip from Charlie Brown, where Linus shared the Christmas story from the book of Luke, which resonated deeply with everyone present. Pastor Niles delivered an engaging message that revolved around the theme of traditions. He shared many cherished family traditions from his own home on Anguilla Island, highlighting the rich history and importance of December 25th, particularly in relation to Methodism in the Caribbean Islands.

Pastor Niles recounted an intriguing piece of history about Thomas Coke, an English preacher whose ship landed on Antigua Island on December 25, 1786, quite by chance. Upon his arrival, he met a local Methodist preacher named John Baxter, leading to an interesting story that many may want to look up.

Lastly, we extend a special thank you to Diane for her efforts in providing festive decorations and delicious goodies that enhanced our celebration. We invite everyone to join us for our next service on February 9, 2025. Be sure to wear your cowboy hat and bring a friend along—y'all come back now, ya hear?

Thank you for an incredible year! I eagerly anticipate the amazing journey that 2025 holds for you and your children. May you find strength and guidance as you embrace all the opportunities that lie ahead. Thank you for making this past year so wonderful!
 God Bless You!



Don't Miss Church!

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" John 20:19 (NIV)

Based on John 20:19-31



P S C G O E Y D D T S I G N S
 A K M Q K B E E F O H I R H O
 L T O O F H D R K G K A Y X S
 O U E F C R Y V S E X S N P S
 C V L U O J A E R T E S I D E
 K Q O C Y X L O J H H Q K A S
 E T E E S C E V J E D Z L T R
 D R N L A X U N Q R F U F A Y
 D C E R Q S B J E S U S N C I
 U O I D O U B T I N G B P N S
 E M O B J J B E L I E V E D H
 M W Z R O V E H H E F H Y I O
 M N P O S I M I A J K V U L W
 J O W M M T H O M A S L I F E
 V D I S C I P L E S T F J E D

DOORS
 MIRACLES
 BELIEVED
 SIDE

SHOWED
 SIGNS
 LIFE
 DISCIPLES

THOMAS
 JESUS
 DOUBTING
 TOUCHED

TOGETHER
 RECORDED
 LOCKED
 HANDS



Angels are Watching



PIC•COLLAGE

Thank You God's Children

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and dedication in making our Christmas pageant a remarkable success. Your commitment to nurturing the Sunday School kids and encouraging the parents helped create a warm and joyful atmosphere that was felt by all. The countless hours you contributed—whether through rehearsals, planning, or offering words of encouragement—truly brought our vision to life. It was a memorable experience that not only showcased the talents of our children but also strengthened our community bonds. Thank you for being such an essential part of this wonderful journey! We look forward to all that you will do to foster the love of God in our children throughout 2025.





The Blessings We call Church Family

As the enchanting Christmas season draws near, I feel compelled to take a moment to convey my heartfelt blessings to you and our cherished church family. This time of year presents a wonderful opportunity for us to pause and reflect on the profound joy, unwavering hope, and boundless love that accompanies the celebration of Christ's miraculous birth.

I pray that each of you feels the warm embrace of our community, the comforting presence of family, and the serene peace that this season bestows upon us. May our connections with one another deepen, and may we continue to lift each other up, providing support in both faith and friendship during this special time.

Wishing you all a wonderfully blessed and joy-filled Christmas season!



2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>Music Team</i>	2 6 Community Outreach	3	4 <i>MYF Rock a Thon</i>
5 <i>9:30 Am Worship</i> <i>MYF Rock A THON</i>	6 3 Missions Team	7 <i>10:30 AM Cicero Christian Sisters</i>	8 <i>10:30 Memorial Team</i> <i>7 PM Alzheimer's Support Meeting</i> <i>Music Team</i>	9 <i>2 Bereavement</i> 6:30 Education Team	10	11 <i>9 Cropper Circle</i>
12 <i>9:30 Am Worship</i> 1 PM Eagle Scout Ceremony	13	14	15 <i>6 Finance Team</i> <i>Music Team</i>	16 Trustees 6:30 Long Range Planning	17	18
19 <i>9:30 Am Worship</i> <i>Visit and Presentation from Kerri Green Alzheimer's</i> 1 PM Eagle Scout Ceremony	20 <i>Inauguration Day</i> <i>MLK Office Closed</i> 6:30 SPPRC	21	22 <i>Music Team</i>	23	24	25 <i>9 Faith Breakfast</i>
26 <i>9:30 Am Worship</i>	27 <i>Administrative Council 6:30 PM</i>	28	29 <i>Music Team</i>	30 <i>Education Team 6:30 PM</i>	31	

Cicero United Methodist Church
8416 Brewerton Road
Cicero, NY 13039
Phone: 315-699-2731
Website:
www.ciceroumchurch.org
E-mail:
Admin_Asst@ciceroumchurch.org

Church Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:00 am to 2 pm

Sunday Services:
9:30 AM



Cicero United Methodist Church
8416 Brewerton Rd
Cicero, NY 13039

