



Church Chat
April 2025

Dear Friends

I greet you warmly in the name of our Risen Savior as I commend this spring or Easter publication of the Newsletter. "I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe in him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 1:19-20).

It seems appropriate that with the Festival of the Resurrection being a major event this month that we should reflect on what it means that Christ was raised from the dead.

First, there is the Resurrection mystery. No one can fully grasp or explain the Resurrection. The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give us a version of what took place on the first day of the week following the Crucifixion. Matthew tells us that as the women were going to look at the tomb in which the body of Jesus was placed after it had been taken down from the cross, "There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it" (28:2). Mysteriously the Risen Christ appeared to several of his disciples on various occasions over a period of time. He seemed unrecognizable to those who knew him and they even treated him like a stranger. He seemed tangible preparing a meal for them and eating with them. On the other hand, he seemed ghostlike being visible then vanishing from sight. The mystery is what makes the resurrection such a wonder, a glorious act of God, and the centerpiece of Christian faith.

The Resurrection of Christ helps us rewrite our story. It gives us a new script to follow. There are so many things that can be viewed differently because of Christ's Resurrection. For example, we can have a different attitude to those who insult us, and treat us badly because Jesus was able to forgive those who spat on him, beat him, mocked him and crucified him. He was able to rise above that treatment, above hatred and sin. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it, "Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls or lose heart" (12:3). We can have faith in God through our painful experiences when we look to Jesus who drank the bitter cup of suffering to its final dregs, endured the cross, and in his darkest hour trusted God to whom he committed his spirit.

The Resurrection signals victory. It is the victory in the war against evil where Christ who was the victim of a cruel death on a Roman cross is now the victor. As the hymn writer puts it, "The strife is o'er, the battle done; the victory of life is won". All who thought the Crucifixion meant defeat and the end of Jesus could take heart and rejoice at the victory he secured. The victory that Jesus won is over death. As the Apostle Paul writes, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). Paul writes further, "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54 see also Isaiah 25:8; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 20:14 and 21:4). The victory is what makes the resurrection such a powerful act of God and enables believers to live victoriously and without fear.

Have a blessed Easter,

Handwritten signature of Jefferson C. Niles.

Jefferson C. Niles, EdD, MAE, BA
Pastor
Email: pastor@ciceroumchurch.org

God's Country Jamboree

Sunday
April 13, 2025
6:00 PM

Featuring
God's Country Ramblers



Cicero United Methodist Church
8416 Brewerton Rd, Cicero, NY

Lenten Offering

You are invited to participate in our Lenten Sacrificial Offering for 2025 by setting aside one dollar for each of the forty days of Lent. The amount raised will be donated to Will's Angels, Inc. Below you can read about all the things your \$40 can do for the children who receive a care package from Will's Angels Inc.

Will's Angels is named in honor of a young Chittenango student, William Clark, who lost his battle with a rare neurological degenerative disease in early 2023. Throughout his lifetime, he inspired those around him to be the best they could be. During his 18 years, Will's health struggles were immense and we came close to losing him many times. But, with the blended support of family and community, he persevered, exceeding expectations and became well known for his contagious smile.



Toys for Will

Will's Angels, Inc.
Toy Drive

Carepackages for children.



Will's Angels, Inc. is a local nonprofit founded to help families in crisis. We provide basic essentials for families in need as well as packages of "Hope" for medically fragile children.

William often received care at the Golisano Children's Hospital and his parents would bring silly patterned socks to distract him. As a result, **Wiggle Will's Sock Bin** has now found a permanent home at the Golisano Children's Emergency Room to share a "smile" with other children. Will's silly socks are also included in every care package given to caregivers by David's Refuge

Will Clark was a young Chittenango School student who lost his fight to a rare neurological degenerative disease in 2023. Throughout his whole life, he challenged those around him to be the best they could be. Will inspired everyone to live their lives in joy while embracing hope for the future.



Finance Notes:

Happy Spring! This morning, I heard mourning doves and saw robins in our yard. We've also had a brief stint of beautiful weather in the last few days reminding us of what is yet to come. Things are finally looking up after a tough winter!

Here at CUMC, March and April are very important months with Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. It is a very special time of year for all of us on our faith journey together.

Our Finance Committee met on March 19th and reviewed the first quarter of the year. We discussed the idea of providing quarterly financial updates in addition to our typical year-end reporting. We are currently projecting that as of 3/31/2025 we will show a year-to-date deficit of approximately \$16,000.

As you all know, household expenses continue to increase and here at CUMC we are also feeling the pinch. We've tried to come up with ways to offset these rising costs, such as our Fuel Sunday offering. We're pleased to report that as of 3/17 we have received \$2,095 to assist with the utility costs at CUMC! Thank you for your continued support, it is very much appreciated.

Knowing that the current projected deficit will likely continue to grow, we would like to ask each of you to please prayerfully consider increasing your current monthly giving by just 10% per month. If we all try to do this, then we may be able to finish out the year in better shape.

Please note that we have many ways in which to donate to CUMC. In addition to the weekly offering, we have a QR code that you can scan with your phone's QR reader to donate electronically, or you can also give online using EZ Tithe. Please reach out to the church office, or a member of the Finance Team if you have any questions.

I would like to conclude by letting you all know that the Finance Team has voted on which charitable organization will be the beneficiary of this year's Lenten Offering. As you may remember, last year we chose Sleep in Heavenly Peace and successfully raised \$5,200! Let's hope we can have the same success in 2025!

This year we have chosen Will's Angels. This is an organization that was founded when the coordinator's son passed away from a neurological degenerative disease. He was nonverbal and nonmobile, but he brought joy to many with his smiles. Karen from Will's Angels will be coming to speak to the congregation soon about this special organization and the many ways we can help! Their website is <https://willsangels.org> - check it out!

Thank you for your continued support of our church and may you be blessed with a beautiful spring!

Barbara Forleo, Finance Chairperson



Rummage Sale 2025 - WE'RE BACK!!

SAVE THE DATE! The sale will take place on Friday and Saturday, August 22nd and 23rd. We will begin accepting donations from July 28th through August 18th. If you're cleaning out, downsizing, or deciding what brings you joy, the Rummage Sale is a great opportunity to ensure your treasures find a good home. Consider sorting your items as you declutter—set aside a box for

clothes, one for housewares, and another for decor. Pre-sorting helps us tremendously during the busy weeks leading up to the sale!

This is a large event that uses nearly every space in our building, and it requires significant effort to organize. However, it's also a fantastic chance to come together as a church family! (Just ask anyone who has volunteered before!) While it is a busy time, it's filled with fun activities!

The preparation begins on July 28th and continues gradually until the sale. The final days leading up to the event, from August 18th to 21st, are what we call "crazy time," when everything comes together. There are virtually limitless opportunities for you to volunteer, and we truly need your help. We encourage every member of our church to consider how they can contribute to this effort. Stay tuned for more details about how you can join our team and be part of the fun! If you have any questions, please call the Irwins: Mike at 315 727-9483 or Deb at 315 727-0190, or email us at mirwin1220@gmail.com.

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CUMC'S (OCRRA'S) Earth Day Cleanup
Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 9AM

Everyone who would like to participate please meet at the church. We will be cleaning up a section of Route 11 between the church and Meltzer Court, as well as the area surrounding the church parking lot.

Trash bags, gloves, hard hats, orange vests, and grabbing tools will



Easter reminds us that hope should never be lost for as dark the road may seem, there always lies light at the end of it. May all your prayers be fulfilled and may wonderful blessings be upon you and all your loved ones on this very special day. Happy Easter.



Read, Love and Learn

Save the Date:
Golden Christian Luncheon
"Your Stories of Jesus"
You can share your favorite bible, worship,
or Sunday school story.
May 18, 2025

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)





**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 per person

\$950.00 double

\$250.00 deposit needed ASAP.

Don't miss out on this fantastic trip!



Summer Camp 2025

It's that time of year when we start planning for summer! Have you considered sending your children, grandchildren, or neighbors to church camp? There are four Methodist camps in up-state New York, each offering different programs and retreats for our youth. We have found that those who attend church camps often return excited with many stories to share about their experiences. This year, thanks to the generosity of many contributors, campership funds are available to cover 50% of the cost for attending summer church camps. We encourage you to think about sending a child to camp this summer. For additional information or if you have any questions, please reach out to a member of our Christian Education Team or Mike Janisch at 315-663-6126. We look forward to hearing from you! UNY Conference camp information- www.unyumc.org Click on ministries and then Camp and Retreat

Camp Websites

www.skyfarmcamp.org

www.skylakecenter.org

www.aldersgateny.org

www.asburyuny.org





GIVE HOPE THIS SPRING.

Give blood.



Cicero United Methodist Church

Welcoming Room
8416 Brewerton Rd. Cicero, NY 13039

Tuesday, April 8th
12:00p – 4:30p



Come to give blood April 8th and receive a \$15 Amazon gift card by email. PLUS, get a chance to win a \$5,000 national prize (3 winners)!

To sign up, scan the QR code or visit redcrossblood.org and enter keyword:

Cicero UMC

Multiply your life-saving impact by signing up for Power Red (types A-, B-, O-, O+) or by encouraging a friend to sign up with you!



1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

OVERVIEW

WELCOME TO THE WEST



YEE-HAW!

Howdy, partners!

Look to your left—do you see the cattle over yonder stampeding across the plains? Look to your right—can your eyes make out the sun-covered buttes of the desert? Look behind you—the brand-new transcontinental railroad is rumbling along the tracks! From the Badlands of South Dakota to the high peaks of the Rockies, there is wonder to be discovered everywhere we turn in the Old West!

Join us as we gallop through the wonder-filled West, where our friends at Wonder Junction will teach us about the grandest wonder of all—Jesus Christ. Each day, we'll dig deeper into who this awe-inspiring Jesus is, answering questions such as:

- What amazing things happened surrounding Jesus' birth?
- What was Jesus like as a child and teen?
- What wonders occurred during Jesus' ministry years?
- How were Jesus' death and resurrection like no other?
- What should we be doing as we wait for Jesus' return?

Wonder and amazement await us each day at Wonder Junction, where kids will gather at the **All Aboard Assembly**, a high-energy beginning that includes wacky intros, lively songs, a mission moment, and prayer.

Then we're off to rotate through five fun sites:

High Point Bible Time, where God's Word is taught in creative, hands-on ways.

Carpenter Joe's Science and Crafts, where kids get their hands dirty as they make crafts and explore God's world through science experiments.

Sweet Sadie's Snacks, where kids munch on some downright tasty home-cooked vittles.

Gallop'n' Gabe's Games, the rambunctious rec time where kids might just get plumb tuckered out.

Miss Millie's Missions, Music, and Memory Verses, where kids sing songs, learn their memory verses, or go

in-depth with the mission moment featuring Children's Hunger Fund.

Finally, everyone is rounded up to head back to the **All Aboard Assembly** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama that highlights the shenanigans of two bumbling bandits who are transformed after learning about the wonderful life of Jesus Christ.

So dust off your boots, grab your bandana, and get ready for a rootin' tootin' good ol' time at Wonder Junction!

Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place, and why are we still at it, by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people. From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-chart, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!



Long-Range Planning for CUMC Has Begun!!

It's been over 20 years since CUMC last undertook a close look at our worship, missions, programs, outreach and facilities. That past effort led to additions to our ministries, worship services, property and facilities that we take for granted today. Considering the major changes that have occurred and are anticipated in our church and throughout the community over the next few years, it was determined that it was time to consider the future of CUMC in the near and long term.

A Long-Range Planning (LRP) Committee has been meeting and working with a team of experienced pastors from our Conference since last summer. On December 12, 2024, the Conference Team provided a report with feedback to the CUMC LRP team with seven focused recommendations. This report is available for anyone interested by calling the church office.

The Long-Range Planning Committee has been working on the first three (and most important) recommendations:

Review and revise a clear vision, mission and set of core values

Effectively roll out the new Vision/Mission/Core Values

Perform a comprehensive communication audit and develop a communications plan.

These efforts have been ongoing since last December and so far have resulted in:

- A set of church Core Values
- Discussions of Mission and Vision Statements
- A Draft Communications Plan
- A Communications Audit

The whole church family is invited to the next Long-Range Planning Committee meeting on April 27 directly after church (snacks will be provided) where updates to each of the above results will occur - finished by 1 PM. The input of the whole church is needed to finalize our suggestions to present to the CUMC Administrative Council – please join us!



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Bill and Jeff KEANE
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RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 1 TO 100 AND UP!

CUMC HOLY WEEK

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APR 13
9:30 AM

PALM
SUNDAY



MAUNDY HOLY
THURSDAY
PRAYER VIGIL

APR 17
7 PM

APR 18
7 PM

GOOD
FRIDAY



APR 27 EASTER
MUSIC
PRESENTATION
9:30 AM

EASTER
SUNDAY

APR 20
6 AM SONRISE
9 AM CONTEMPORARY
11 AM TRADITIONAL

2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 10 Forever Young 7 Alzheimer's Support Meeting	3 6 Community Outreach	4	5
6 9:30 Worship	7 6:30 Worship Team	8 11 Bible Study 12:00-4:30 Blood Drive Welcome Center 6:30 Bible Study	9 10:30 Memorial Team	10 2 Bereavement	11	12
13 Palm Sunday 9:30 Worship 6 God's Country	14	15 11 Bible Study 1:30 AM Cicero Christian Sisters 6:30 Bible Study	16	17 Holy Thursday Prayer Vigil 7 Love Fest	18 Cont. prayer vigil 7 Good Friday Worship	19
20 Easter Sunday 6 Sunrise Worship 9 Easter Worship (C) 11 Easter Worship (T)	21 6:30 SPPRC	22 6:30 Education Team	23 6 Finance Team	24	25	26 9-12 Earth Day Rt, 11 Clean Up
27 9:30 Worship Easter Special Music Presentation by the Prayer Singers 11 Long Range Planning	28 6:30 Administrative Council	29	30 6:30 Trustees			

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



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