



From the Pastor's Desk...

Our church drew the word *extravagance* as our congregation's 2023 Epiphany star word. There was an audible gasp in the sanctuary when the child who picked it out of the basket read it aloud. What does the word *extravagance* conjure up for you?

While the word can point to excess in negative ways, it also offers a rich theological meaning.

- *How does God's extravagant grace transform your life?*
- *What are ways to be extravagant in showing God's love?*
- *Are there moments in the church's life when a little extravagance is just what we need to fully communicate the gift of Jesus Christ?*

God's love for us is extravagant. That is a given. Anything we can do to let that knowledge sink in is a win!

When it comes to us acting with extravagance, I believe there are times when such action is called for. Extravagant, intentional hospitality can be a gift when it is given joyfully to those who receive it. It offers a true welcome, honors the recipients, and brings a group together in unity. But it goes too far when it's done only for show or shames those who receive it. How we act out extravagance is what matters most.

I also give thanks for our 2022 word — *brightness*! I think we shined the bright light of Christ into the world through efforts to support the Motakhasiv family from Afghanistan. It was bright and joyful when we celebrated Woman Composer Sunday and Black Composer Sunday last spring, learning about music and musicians that may be less familiar to us. I experience the brightness of Christ every time I watch the Sunburst Singers shine their light and love into the world as they share songs with us in worship.

- What Epiphany star word did you receive for the year ahead?
- Where have you placed yours so that you can be reminded of it throughout the year?
- What emotions does your word bring up and why? Can you imagine a different response to it by the end of the year?
- What has God said to you about your word already? What questions still remain?

May our journey with extravagance in 2023 be as rich as the path toward brightness was last year. I am looking forward to exploring our words together this year. I wonder how God will guide us?

Grace and peace,

Pastor Emma



extravagance

In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:
9 am in Evans Chapel,
and 10:30 am in
the sanctuary.
(Masks are welcome,
but not required.)

Livestream Worship

Sundays at 10:30 am
watch the livestream
of the worship service
on Vimeo, Facebook or
YouTube. (Or anytime
later in the day/week.)

Sunday school
for children pre-
kindergarten through
5th grade begins after
the Time with Children
in worship at 10:30.

The nursery is open for
infant-toddler care.

our staff

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newsletter editor **Tere Ryan**

baritone **Brian Clinthorne**

tenor **Brady DelVecchio**

soprano **Olivia Donnel**

soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

our soloists



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September through June. Email
contributions to newsletter@fpcro.org.
Deadline is the 15th of each month.

IS YOUR INFO CURRENT?

Please let Sally Gilreath (sgilreath@fpcro.org) know of changes to your contact information so we can maintain current and up-to-date records of your member information.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

FPCRO is a Stephen Ministry church. Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers trained to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting.



OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Barbara Geraldts, December 16, 2022

Stephen Weber, December 11, 2022



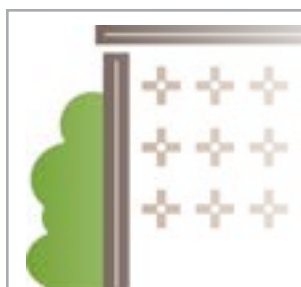
You've had your star word for a month. What struggles, challenges, and/or uncomfortable growing areas have you encountered through your star word?



SUB SANDWICHES FUNDRAISER—BUY A SUB FOR THE BIG GAME!

S.T.A.G.E. youth will be making delicious, fresh sub sandwiches for pick up on Super Bowl Sunday, **February 12**. Subs are \$10 for a 8-inch Italian (ham & salami) or turkey, and \$12 for a 8-inch three-meat (ham, salami, turkey). Add a bag of chips to your order for just \$1.

Pre-orders will be accepted through February 5, online or on the paper form. Payments may be made via check payable to "S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry" or via PayPal (stageyouth@gmail.com). Orders will be available for pick up on **Sunday, February 12** after the 10:30 am worship at FPCRO. Funds from the Super Bowl Sub Sale will help support S.T.A.G.E. summer mission trips. Thank you for your support!



COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN
 Contact Ken Bissey
 248.709.4849
 for an information packet

memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of

Barbara Geraldts, Isabelle Paterson, Bill Roberts, and Mark Sutton.

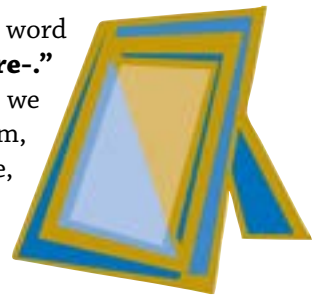
A gift was given in honor of Marilyn Sutton.

RE-FRAMING LENT

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 22**. We'll worship together at **7 pm in the Sanctuary**. If you can't make it to church, visit the parking lot between **12 noon and 1 pm on February 22 to receive Drive-up Ashes**. Then watch the livestream of worship at 7 pm.

Lent has often been viewed as a season to feel shame for our sin, or a time when the mood is very somber. This year, our theme is **Re-Framing Lent**. We'll hear Jesus in conversation with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man born blind, and Lazarus' sisters. Jesus asks them challenging questions, as he helps them reframe their understanding of faith, salvation, and God.

Each week, we will focus on a word that begins with the prefix "**re-**." We begin with repentance, but we quickly turn to resist, reclaim, reimagine, reveal, restore, revere, and resurrection. We'll rejoice on Easter together!



SHINING GOD'S LIGHT INTO THE FUTURE...

Sunburst Stewards honors members who have included the church in their estate plans with a gift to the endowment. Knowledge of future gifts offers the church an opportunity to thank donors and allows church leadership to plan for the future. The ultimate benefit comes from knowing that we have recognized the importance of God in our lives and have made a powerful witness of that love through a gift to the church.

For more information about Sunburst Stewards, please contact Rev. Emma Nickel or the chairperson of the Finance and Investment Committee. All information given will remain confidential.



Mission and Benevolence

Our February mission project is putting together bags for **Snack Pax**. Snack Pax is a program of The Song & Spirit Center in Royal Oak that provides snacks to children at or below the poverty level in our area. Every Monday, Song & Spirit delivers 400 bags to the following organizations: City Covenant Church in Detroit, Crescent Academy in Detroit, and two Head Start programs in Detroit.



You may participate in two ways! The first is to decorate the lunch bags. You may pick up bags at church starting on February 1, decorate and return them to church prior to the packing event on Sunday, February 26. The second is to come to the packing event on Sunday, February 26 in Kirkman Fellowship Hall following the 10:30 am service. Please join us!

HERE TO HELP FOUNDATION UPDATE

Here to Help, an organization who uses the FPCRO parking lot as a meeting spot, had another great year of helping returning citizens on their path of success. Here to Help has a big announcement for 2023—but first a few numbers:



- 15-1/2 years of helping people facing an emergency
- Over 20,000 people assisted
- Over 11 million dollars provided to help those in need

Here to Help has always been a flexible resource, moving toward areas of the greatest need. Such as focusing on flood victims in August 2014 with the 100-year flood, COVID-

related financial emergencies impacting individuals in 2020 and beyond, launching the “Returning Hope to Returning Citizens” program in August of 2020, when so many people were being released from prison.

Indeed, the greatest need right now is through the “Returning Hope to Returning Citizens” program. Here to Help is changing course, and will only be working with those who are coming back from prison.

Here to Help looks forward to this challenge and in making a tremendous impact during 2023 by helping returning citizens—a tremendously hard-working group, who are in desperate need, and who’ve usually never had anyone helping them.

Earla B. Smith Foundation

The Earla B. Smith Foundation was established several years ago when Earla Smith left a substantial bequest to the First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak and Troy School district. She was a long-time member at FPCRO and a teacher in the Troy Public Schools. Each year, money from this fund is distributed to both FPCRO and Troy Schools. Requests for funding of a project by the foundation can be made for music and educational ministries and missionary outreach. Forms for making a request are available from Kari Peruski. The requests can be made by committees or individuals. When completed, the forms can be given to Kari or Pastor Nickel and are due by April 21.

The requests are reviewed by the Earla Smith committee made up of Pastor Nickel, Kari Peruski, and foundation board members, Edie Watson, Anne-Marie DeVantier, and Marilyn Sutton. Those approved by the committee are then presented to the session in May and, when approved, go to the Foundation Board of Directors for final approval.

Examples of past support for different ministries include funding for the music scholars, H.O.M.E., S.T.A.G.E., and the purchase of a van for our refugee family.

—Marilyn Sutton for the Earla B. Smith Foundation





Our Church is **Strong, Open, Ready**. Yes, these are the words framing our Stewardship efforts for this coming year, but they are real and relevant in our congregation. We certainly have learned how STRONG we are when we work together. When we recognize where needs exist and make a concerted effort to meet those needs, we are a stronger community of faith. We have demonstrated that we are OPEN to new ideas and ways of “doing church.” Livestreaming worship has kept our congregation open and available. Who would have thought you could worship with the congregation, while in your robe on your couch?! We are open to supporting the marginalized, the hurting, the questioning, the needy. And we are READY for God to use us in so many different ways. Listening to God’s voice and being willing to embrace God’s plans brings us new ways to live and be.

We recognize that ministry and the work of the church happens 24 hours a day, seven days a week...from inside and outside our church walls. Our church invests \$87 every hour to fund all the ministries we do. When you choose to include additional hours in your 2023-2024 pledge, you can empower us to create new opportunities for service, spiritual growth, and community

connections. We are strong, open, and ready to follow God’s leading!

Look for your Stewardship packet in the mail in the first week of February. Bring or mail your pledge card to the church on or before February 19, Dedication Sunday.

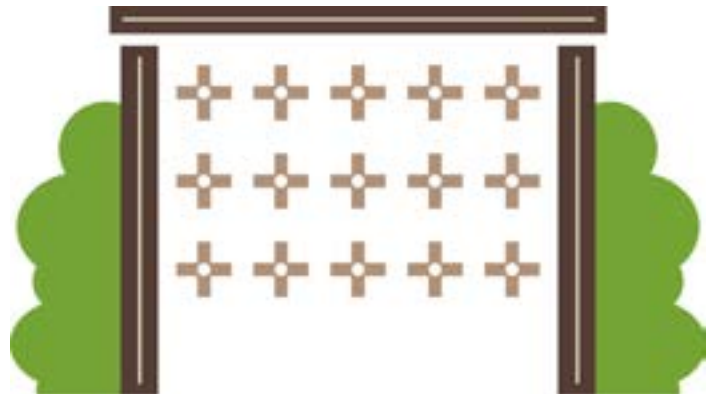
Columbarium News

Your Finance and Investment Committee is pleased to announce that, as of December 2022, our Columbarium project is **debt free**. Part of the construction cost of the Columbarium was paid with a \$50,000 loan from our Endowment Fund. With the most recent purchase of niches, we now have completely covered the initial cost of the project and are able to replenish our Endowment Fund.

The idea for the Columbarium and Memorial Garden came from Helen Dusenbury in 2003. A petition expressing interest was signed by forty-six FPCRO members, and the Trustees and the Session approved the project. Helen, along with Mike Lindblom, and Roseann Gregory, took on the task of planning and supervising construction. After visiting Columbaria at other churches, the location in our upper courtyard was chosen for our site, and design and construction contracts were issued. Ken Bissey and Bruce Castle were added to the committee to help market and administer the project.

Many supported the project with their ideas, guidance and prayers. Financial support came when fifteen church members made pre-construction purchases, and other individuals paid for pavers, landscaping, and the inscription.

On April 30, 2006 the completed project was formally dedicated with the support of Pastor Tom Rice. We are grateful for the members and their families who have entrusted their loved ones to the church as a final resting place. Currently 61 members are interred at the site under the inscription **“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”** If you are interested in learning more about our Columbarium, contact the church office.



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



Love is in the air at Sunflowers Preschool! We so enjoy the month of hearts and happy sentiments, especially as winter weather keeps us inside. God's love keeps us warm on the coldest of days! This month, our preschoolers will paint with pink paint and wear pink clothing on "pink" day. Special valentines for Moms and Dads will also be carefully crafted in each class. We will share valentines with all of our classmates.

Our three-year-old class will be practicing more with scissors this month, and working on printing our names independently. It's not easy!

Our four-year-old class continues alphabet study and 'Friday Centers' which get us ready for the routine of kindergarten. We will do a group science project during our Friday Centers to help prepare us for kindergarten.

Registration for the 2023-24 school year opens early in February. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call 248-541-0108, x220 so that we may mail out registration information to you. There will also be scholarship applications available, if needed, this year. Our three-year-old class meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 am to 11:45 am. Our four-year-old class meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:15 am. to 12 noon. Please spread the word to family and friends.

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue



YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD! KNOW IT! LIVE IT! LOVE IT!

Our congregation is blessed to have wonderful children in the life of our church. We see them each week and now we have opportunities to get to know them a little bit better.

February Child of God—Charlie Shepard

Charlie Shepard and his family are a meaningful part of the life and ministry of FPCRO. Charlie's parents are Glenn and Tamara, and he has an older brother, Nathan. Charlie has a dog named Tanner. "Tanner is very energetic, intelligent, cute, and so much fun. I got him August 2, 2022 when he was almost two-and-a-half years-old. His birthday is on March 13 and he will three years old."

Charlie is in the 5th grade at Kenwood Elementary in Clawson. When at school, he enjoys seeing his friends and learning about history and social studies.

Charlie's hobbies are playing with his dog, playing baseball and basketball, drawing and more. Charlie says, "My favorite things to do with my family are going to baseball games, skiing, playing board games and more."

What does Charlie love about church? "One of my favorite things about church is when the kids act out the very first Christmas. I have played the role of a shepherd and the inn keeper. I also like to watch the baptisms. Another one of my favorite things about church is when I sing about Jesus with the Sunburst Singers."

Some fun facts about Charlie: "I am great at drawing. My best friend since kindergarten and I love to draw together. I have been playing baseball since I was three years old. This past year I was on four baseball teams and two basketball teams. I ran some races with the middle school cross country team and placed 4th for a lot of them before I was even in middle school."

TOM AND RUTH KIRKMAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Are you discerning higher education for yourself? Church members who are high school seniors and older are eligible to apply for a one-time scholarship through the Kirkman Scholarship Fund. This fund allows us to award members who are seeking higher education. Most forms of higher education are eligible for scholarships. They are not limited to colleges and universities. It is not necessary to name your place of learning at the time you apply. Awarded checks will be mailed to the school later in the year. Applications are available on our church website at www.fpcro.org. If you would like more information, please contact Joelle Jarrait at jjarrait@fpcro.org.



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

On Sunday, **February 12** we are participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring. You are invited to bring a non-perishable item for our Little Free Pantry. Cans with pull-tabs are very useful. Fruit cups and cereal bars are also great to include. (Please, no glass containers)



Since its installment, and especially during the pandemic, the Little Free Pantry at FPCRO has been a truly helpful source for people in our neighborhood.

If you prefer to make a monetary donation, you may do so by labeling it "Souper Bowl of Caring" or "Free Pantry."

LOCKING UP THE ALLELUIAS

On Sunday, **February 19** our Sunday school children will lock up the Alleluias for the Lent season. For children, this is a symbolic way to recognize the sadness of learning about Jesus' death. However, we also recognize how we know what follows the sadness. That is the exciting news of Jesus' resurrection. It's important for children to remember what Lent is about as well as what comes after it. Though we lock those alleluias away, let's not forget what is to come on the other side of the wilderness. May those alleluias represent the hope that comes from Resurrection Sunday when we will shout and sing alleluia once again.



VBS 2023—MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR A STELLAR VBS

Our 2023 STELLAR VBS is **June 26-30 from 9 am-12 noon**. Registration begins March 1! Be sure to mark your calendars for a week of finding Jesus' light!

VOLUNTEER FOR STELLAR VBS!

Our 2023 VBS is June 26-30! This is a wonderful week of sharing God's word with our church children and the children of our community. We are looking for volunteers for a variety of areas. Not only do we need helpers during the event, but also helpers for planning and designing sets and props. Please visit our sign-up genius at <https://tinyurl.com/ycka7hwf> to join in on the fun!

Thank You!



Dear Church Family and Friends,

Thank you so much for all your gifts of warmth you shared on the mitten tree and out into the world! There were close to 400 gloves/mittens, hats, scarves, socks, long underwear, and hand and foot warmers to share. These gifts went to: Second Mile Center in Detroit, Welcome Inn day shelter in Royal Oak, Royal Oak school children, Love in the Midst of the Storm in Detroit, and some into our own Little Free Pantry!

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness!
Julie Matthews



**Worship with us at 9 & 10:30 am,
or online anytime at www.fpcro.org**

www.fpcro.org • [facebook.com/fpcro](https://www.facebook.com/fpcro)

248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859

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fpcro

opportunities for all ages!
servicing • learning • growing

find us on:



Special Dates in February

February is African-American History Month

February 5 • Sunburst Singers, 11:30am-12:15pm

February 5 • Orders Due for S.T.A.G.E. Sub Sale

February 12 • S.T.A.G.E. Sub Sale Order Pick-Up after 10:30am service

February 14 • Valentine's Day

February 19 • Stewardship Pledge Sunday / Transfiguration of the Lord

February 19 • Sunburst Singers, 11:30am-12:15pm

February 20 • Presidents' Day

**February 22 • Ash Wednesday, Drive Up Ashes from 12pm-1pm,
Worship at 7pm in the Sanctuary**

February 26 • First Sunday in Lent

