

*From the Pastor's Desk...*

What happens when spirituality collides with life? Like when a marriage ends in divorce, an adoption doesn't go as planned, or a cancer diagnosis upends your life. Often, our faith is stretched, challenged, and re-shaped.

FPCRO's new podcast explores these experiences! ***Forging Faith: when spirituality collides with life*** will be available for listening in mid-January on our website and on all podcast platforms including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and iHeartRadio.

I am SO excited about *Forging Faith*! With support from the Evangelism and Communication committee, church members, staff, and the Earla B. Smith Foundation, we are finding a new way to share faith with our community and the wider world. I interviewed seven folks who have diverse stories and experiences. Each one is living into their faith with openness and is exploring spirituality with integrity. You won't agree with every perspective they share. But I hope their stories help you consider your own connection with God and how your faith has been forged, especially in the challenges you've faced.

Listen to the podcast this January. Share your feedback and tell us what you think.

Join us for a **Podcast Launch Party during Fellowship Hour after worship on Sunday, January 29**. Our producer, Seth Resler of Community Marketing Revolution, will present clips from the show and celebrate this new ministry with us.

Are you new to podcasts and wondering what this is all about? Here's some more info!

***What is a podcast?***

A podcast is like a radio show. It's a digital audio file that you download to your computer, phone, or tablet to listen to on your own schedule. Many podcasts come in a short series of six to eight episodes. Some people listen to podcasts while driving in the car, doing housework or gardening, or just while hanging out at home.

***Who will be on Forging Faith?***

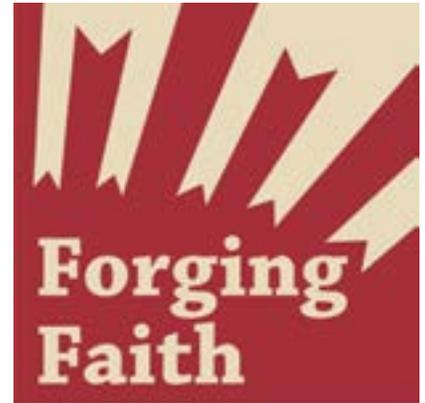
Our podcast is hosted by Pastor Emma and features one-on-one interviews with church members, friends of the church, and others in our orbit whose compelling stories illustrate the way our congregation lives and talks about faith in God. Each episode will be around 30 minutes long. We'll release eight episodes for this pilot season in mid-January.

***Why is the church creating a podcast?***

To offer faith-related content that goes beyond worship and other in-person activities. This is a way visitors and "church shoppers" can find out more about us in a convenient way. The podcast will not be *about* the church per se, but it will show how people like us *live out* their faith, especially through challenging experiences. God calls us to proclaim good news and love, and to invite people into a life of faith. Using a newer media like podcasting is one other way we can tell the world about the goodness of Jesus Christ while inviting folks into a faith that asks questions, welcomes doubts, and isn't afraid of dealing with challenges.

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Emma*



Church Bell



fpcro

## 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.

**Please note: 9 am worship service will only be on Jan 8, 22 & 29. No services at FPCRO on Jan 15—Worship at Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley.**

---

*pastor/head of staff*, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**  
*director of music ministries & organist*, jjackson@fpcro.org **Joseph Jackson**  
*chancel choir director*, kwattleworth@fpcro.org **Kent Wattleworth**  
*preschool music director*, afrieberg@fpcro.org **Audrey Frieberg**  
*director of christian education*, jjarrait@fpcro.org **Joelle Jarrait**  
*church administrator*, kperuski@fpcro.org **Kari Peruski**  
*administrative assistant*, sgilreath@fpcro.org **Sally Gilreath**  
*evening reception/security*, tcrawford@fpcro.org **Todd Crawford**  
*preschool director*, preschool@fpcro.org **Sarah Gibson**  
*preschool teacher* **Beth Heitchue**  
*facility manager*, aglasel@fpcro.org **Alan Glasel**  
*wedding coordinator*, weddings@fpcro.org **Ginny O'Brien**

*baritone* **Brian Clinthorne**  
*tenor* **Brady DelVecchio**  
*soprano* **Olivia Donnel**  
*soprano* **Audrey Frieberg**

## our staff

## our soloists



First Presbyterian Church  
of Royal Oak

529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak MI 48067  
248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859  
www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro



The **Church Bell** is published monthly,  
September through June. Email  
contributions to [newsletter@fpcro.org](mailto:newsletter@fpcro.org).  
Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### IS YOUR INFO CURRENT?

Please let Sally Gilreath ([sgilreath@fpcro.org](mailto: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:

Lois Schenk, November 19, 2022

Isabelle Paterson, November 17, 2022



What initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers do you have for your star word?



### EPIPHANY STARS

How did your 2022 Epiphany star word speak to you? If you have a few words to share about your experience, please contact Pastor Emma. We would love to have you share it with the congregation in worship on Sunday, January 8. On

that day, we'll distribute 2023 Epiphany star words. The stars represent the star that the Wise Ones—the Magi—followed in the sky to find Jesus in Bethlehem. Our words guide us and speak to us in many ways throughout the year. Stars will be available in the office after January 8 if you miss getting yours in worship.



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

### 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.

## memorials & gifts

Gifts were given in memory of Mark Sutton and to the Special Projects Memorial Fund for the House and Grounds Committee in memory of Barbara Luttrell. A gift was given in honor of Ron and Shirley Gillham

### NO SERVICES AT FPCRO ON JAN 15

Youth Sunday is coming! Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley is hosting **S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sunday** worship services on **January 15 at 9 am and 11 am**. We want to **boldly** support our youth,—so there will be **no worship services in the FPCRO church building on January 15, 2023**.



The whole congregation of FPCRO is invited to worship at Greenfield Presbyterian, 2312 Greenfield Road, Berkley at 9 am or 11 am to hear our youth preach, offer music, and lead us in prayer. S.T.A.G.E. stands for *Somewhere To Ask God Everything* and is a collaborative ministry among FPCRO, Greenfield Presbyterian, Drayton Presbyterian, and Cana Lutheran Church.

### STAYING WELL THIS SEASON

With the “triple-demic” of respiratory viruses upon us—COVID-19, flu, and RSV—we want to encourage congregation members to be wise and to make efforts to stay healthy.



- Masking is always welcome inside the church.
- We request that you stay home when you are sick. Worship online on Sundays and make other arrangements for mid-week ministry and visits.

The Session of FPCRO strongly encourages members of the FPCRO community to stay up to date with all of their CDC-recommended vaccinations and boosters, including the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. If you need assistance getting a vaccine or other support, please contact the church office.

# Congregational News

## MISSION GRANT UPDATE

In 2022, FPCRO received a mission grant of \$25,000 from an anonymous friend of the church. With guidance from Isaiah 58:6-10, a plan was approved to use the funds in support of refugee resettlement, the Good Book Nook, and South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless/Welcome Inn. The following infographics show how the funds were put into service for God's realm.

We are humbled and excited to announce that the donor is offering another grant to FPCRO for 2023 in the amount of \$32,500. In January, the Session will approve a plan, in coordination with the donor, for using these funds to serve our neighbors and community. We anticipate additional intergenerational, hands-on mission projects and opportunities for learning and education. If you have ideas, please submit them for consideration right away to Pastor Emma ([enickel@fpcro.org](mailto:enickel@fpcro.org)).

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear-guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”*

–Isaiah 58:6-10

**Mission Grant 2022**  
Isaiah 58:6-10  
Afghan Refugee Resettlement

*“to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free.”*

The church mobilized to resettle the Motakhasiv family. Four teams of members were formed to offer support. A congregational effort helped them move into their home. Cultural activities were shared with the church, including a zoo trip and picnic at Belle Isle. A van was purchased for the family after herculean efforts to help Abdul Basir pass the written driving test.

The church furnished the family's four bedroom home in Detroit.

Members cleaned and celebrated as they moved in.

The family visited the church for a picnic in June.

**Project in Summary**

1. Church members across the spectrum served in mission and continue to support the family.
2. A family of eight was housed, fed, and cared for in their new country.
3. We helped establish the basics for daily living: bank account, grocery shopping, school work, driving, doctor visits, immigration needs.
4. Friendships were formed and understanding increased.

**What happens next?**

- Work continues to receive a full driver's license, master their finances, and for parents to learn English
- Family medical needs continue to be met, including surgeries. Partnership with the Arab American and Chaldean Council is ongoing and a vital support.
- Remaining grant funds will pay for rent and utilities as other support expires in 2023.



## Mission Grant 2022

Isaiah 58:6-10  
Children's Reading Space



"...your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly."

A team formed to create a reading space for young children and families. An empty office was renovated to become the Good Book Nook! New lighting, flooring, paint, and furnishings made it a welcoming and calming space.



The space is used every day by preschool and church children.



The Grand Opening celebration took place in October.



New books were donated, in addition to the hundreds of books purchased.



## Project in Summary

1. Eight thousand dollars paid for the renovation and purchase of books.
2. Younger church members performed much of the planning and labor for the space.
3. Collection includes classic titles, new favorites, and stories that illustrate diversity and God's love for all.
4. Featured in the Royal Oak Review in October.



## What happens next?

- Promotion of the GBN continues through marketing to the wider community and to church neighbors.
- Storytimes and other events will be offered in 2023.
- Seasonal titles will rotate through the space during the year.



## Mission Grant 2022

Isaiah 58:6-10  
Homeless Ministry



"...share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house..."

Funds were given to South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless to support their ministry with unhoused individuals in the RoyalOak area.

## Spread the Laughs

Our 16th Annual!

# LAUGH

Meals were provided for the summer day program.

Tickets were sold to promote the annual Spread the Laughs fundraiser for SOCH.

Items were collected to support the clothing closet and guests' needs.

## Project in Summary

1. Funds of almost \$4000 were given to Starr Presbyterian Church to support a laundry and shower facility in their building for guests use.
2. Funds in the amount of \$6000 supported a 12 month contract for an SOCH social worker to support guests' needs in the long term.
3. TPCRO leaders met with SOCH leaders during the year to promote new relationships and understanding.



## What happens next?

- FPCRO is assisting with Starr Presbyterian's host week of the overnight rotating shelter in January 2023.
- We look forward to the completion of the laundry/shower facility project at Starr.
- We continue to seek ways to grow our support and involvement with SOCH and the Welcome Inn.

# Christian Education



## FAMILY WORSHIP JANUARY 1

On **Sunday, January 1**, Children are invited to wear their pajamas to worship! Join us as we welcome in the new year offering praise to God in family worship.

## JANUARY 15 • WORSHIP AT GREENFIELD PRESBYTERIAN



On **Sunday, January 15** our congregation will worship at Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley. **There are two worship services at 9 am and 11 am**, with Sunday school during the 11 am service. Children will begin in worship and then move to Sunday school. We want to **boldly** support our youth,—so there will be **no worship services in the FPCRO church building on January 15, 2023.**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR A STELLAR VBS 2023



Be sure to mark your calendars for a week of finding Jesus' light! Our 2023 Stellar **VBS is June 26-30, from 9 am to 12 pm**. Registration and more details are coming soon!

## 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!



## 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.

### January Child of God — Henry Gibbs

Henry is four years old and lives with his parents Peter and Jessica, his sister Elizabeth, and his brother Samuel, along with their dog, Bailey. Henry says, "I love that Bailey gives kisses with her tongue. She sometimes begs for food when I eat. She likes to roll around on her back and we call that dancing. She can climb the fence in our backyard and jumps into our neighbor's yard." Henry's favorite family activity is "when we do family walks and I ride my scooter." He loves coming to church on Sunday and especially enjoys singing and the Playground. His hobbies include soccer, learning to ice skate, driving his Power Wheels, riding his scooter, and drawing. When asked what is something special about him? "I can see really far away with my far away eye power." Henry attends Sunflowers Preschool at FPCRO, and while there, he loves "snack because I love eating. I also love library, music and gym!"

# Sunflowers Christian Preschool



**H**appy New Year! The Christmas break ends on January 4, when we arrive back at school ready to learn. Winter, snow, and the color white will be our themes for the month, and we're hoping the weather will help us celebrate it all.

For our monthly mission in December, the children helped decorate the mitten tree. What fun they had hanging their gifts for other children. Our three-year-olds will work on independence skills this month and working hard to write their own name, while our four-year-olds will start rotating through "learning centers" to help them prepare for the routine of Kindergarten. If you see our children in their bathrobes and fuzzy slippers at the end of the month, you'll know it's pajama day at Sunflowers!

Enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year will begin in February. If you would like more information, or would like to visit our classroom, please call us at 248-541-0108, ext. 220.

*Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue*

## 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. The cost is \$10 for a 6-inch sub. Add a bag of chips to your order for just \$1. Italian (ham & salami) or Turkey subs are available. Or, order a Three-Meat sub for a small additional charge.

**Pre-orders will be accepted January 15 through February 5.** To order in person, attend the S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sunday at Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley on **Sunday, January 15**. In-person orders will be taken by the youth between the 9 am and 11 am services. Payments that day can be made via cash, check, PayPal,



and Venmo. Online orders and paper order forms will be available starting January 15 through February 5.

All sub 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!

## Stewardship



As 2023 approaches, people start to think about and plan for the new year. The Stewardship Committee hopes part of that planning will include *your* support of First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak in 2023-2024. This year's theme will focus on three words—**Strong • Open • Ready**. Our committee believes these words describe who our church is and how God is calling us to be in the world. The people who support the church with energy, time, and finances help us live into those callings even more deeply.

This stewardship season we will consider the hourly cost of keeping our church's ministries *strong, open, and ready* to serve our members, our community, and those in need.

If you have pledged in the past, we hope you will continue to do so and will choose to invest the equivalent of several additional hours for the 2023-2024 year. If you have not pledged in the past, we hope you will prayerfully choose to do so this year.

There will be opportunities to learn how we can be *strong, open, and ready* in equipping FPCRO to meet the ministries and needs of our church before Pledge Sunday on February 19, 2023. Look for your packet in the mail during the last week in January.

—Marilyn Sutton for the Stewardship Committee



Worship with us at 9 & 10:30 am,  
or online anytime at [www.fpcro.org](http://www.fpcro.org)

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

248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859

529 Hendrie Blvd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



**Please note: 9 am worship service will only be on Jan 8, 22 & 29. No services at FPCRO on Jan 15—Worship at Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley.**



fpcro

opportunities for all ages!  
*servicing • learning • growing*

find us on:



## January 2023 at a Glance

- Jan 1 • 1st Sunday of Christmas, *one worship service at 10:30 am*
- Jan 8 • Get your Epiphany Star in worship
- Jan 8 • Sunburst Singers, 11:30am-12:15pm
- Jan 15 • **No worship services in the FPCRO church building**—S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sunday 9 am & 11 am at Greenfield Presbyterian Church
- Jan 15 • S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sub Sale Kicks Off!
- Jan 22 • Sunburst Singers, 11:30am-12:15pm
- Jan 29 • *Forging Faith* Podcast Launch Party after worship during Fellowship Hour in Kirkman Fellowship Hall

