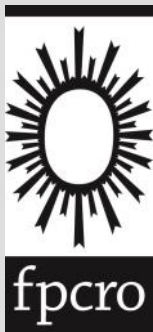


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROYAL OAK

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 | 9 & 10:30AM

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



Spirituality | Service | Sharing

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

We hope you sense an authentic community here! This church is *not* for people who have everything about their faith figured out. It's not for people whose lives are neat and tidy. *This is a community gathered in Christ.* Together, we are seeking a world made whole. The Holy Spirit draws us together with our doubts, struggles, *and* our celebrations. God is at work transforming us and showing us glimpses of Christ's light in the world!

Our worship service follows a traditional format. Our prayers and preaching put the Bible in conversation with practical questions to help us live faithfully in our daily lives. Our community is made up of people who bring different experiences and perspectives. Together, we trust in God's grace and love, which are free gifts to us, no matter what life brings our way. We don't need to earn that love, yet we can always rely on it.

If you are seeking to be comforted, challenged, or to grow in your faith, we would be honored to accompany you on that journey. You are welcome here just as you are.

Rev. Emma Nickel

Pastor

Children Belong Here

There is a place for families and children of all ages here! We believe children who worship with their church family stick with their faith for a lifetime. Choose what works best for your family:

- *Playground* in the back of the sanctuary, where children may do quiet activities, with you nearby to assist, as they absorb the worship service.
- *Pew Pouches* with children's Bibles to help guide children who sit with their family during the worship service. Find these in the back pew.
- *Sunday School: Following the Time with Children*, kids may go with Sunday school leaders to class, which ends at the conclusion of the worship service.
- *Nursery: Childcare* for infants and toddlers during the 10am service, with background-checked staff and volunteers.

Finding Your Way

Kirkman Fellowship Hall: Use either staircase in the lobby to go downstairs into the Hall. *Nursery:* Located to the right of the lobby, down the hallway across from the Sunflowers Preschool classroom. *Elevator:* Down the hall, left past the Sunflowers Preschool classroom. *Restrooms:* Women's & Men's are at the top of the short stairwells in the lobby; All Gender/Single in the narthex outside the sanctuary; Accessible is at the end of the hallway near the Fireside Room. *Hearing-assist devices:* Ushers near the sanctuary doors are available to assist you.

Interested in Joining?

For those interested in exploring the possibility of membership or learning more about who we are and what we do, new member gatherings take place several times a year. To get connected, contact Rev. Emma Nickel at enickel@fpcro.org



Giving

Giving online is a fast and easy! Click GIVE at www.fpcro.org to make a one-time gift. Recurring gifts may set up using a debit/credit card, or a PayPal account using the QR code. Cash/checks may be placed in the offering plates by the side aisle doors or in the basket in the narthex entry. Thank you for sharing your gifts with God and the church!



GATHERING

At the ◊ you may stand in body or in spirit. Bold text is read or sung in unison.

Prelude

9:00

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

arr. Mark Dorian

10:30

“Trio in E Flat Major”

J.S. Bach

Public Domain

Welcome & Announcements

◊ Call to Worship¹

One: Friends! Let us draw close to God and live, laugh, and love:

All: Living to the fullest in the life we have been granted.

One: Laughing with joy at the blessings we have been given.

All: Loving this day, this place, these people around us.

One: In the name of our living, laughing, loving God, the Holy Trinity, we join in worship.

◊ Hymn (see insert)

“Come Sing to God”

Text: ©1986 Fred Anderson

Call to Confession and Kyrie Eleison

One: We have trouble believing God’s promises. And yet, God is faithful and forgives.
Trusting in that good news, we can be honest with God and each other in prayer.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: Christ, have mercy upon us.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Prayer of Confession

All: Forgive us, God. Sometimes your promises of life in Christ seem so slow, or so outrageous, or so different than we expect that we choose not to invest in them. We put our energy into saving ourselves by our own hard work. We devote our time to self-improvement at the cost of community-building. We focus on what new products and influencers claim to offer, instead of all the grace you have already given us. Lead us to a new way of living. Show us how to laugh with joy at the goodness of your gifts.

[silence for individual prayer]

One: In the name of God—Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,

All: Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

One: Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

All: Thanks be to God!

◇Gloria Patri

Hymn #734

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

◇Passing of the Peace

One: Jesus offers us the gift of peace by the power of the Holy Spirit.
May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

(10:30am)

Time with the Children

Afterward, children will be taken to Sunday school classes and those participating in Sunburst Singers will go to music time and be finished at 12:15pm. Others will return to the sanctuary at the conclusion of the service.

Minute for Mission

Per Capita Giving

Anne-Marie DeVantier,
Generosity and Resources Committee



PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

All: Holy God, your word is a lamp to our feet. Let your message light our way. Let your love illuminate our lives. This we ask in humility and faith, by the power of your Spirit. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Genesis 18:1-15

Pew Bible, OT pg. 15

Psalm

“Psalm 116”

Sung to the Hymn-tune *Tallis' Canon*, #715 “Now Let Us from This Table Rise”

***“The recompense for what is mine is to exalt Thy name always;
My heart with thanks should ne'er run dry, nor tongue refuse to sing Thy praise.”***

Paraphrase of Psalm 116 ©1999 Michael Morgan, The Psalter for Christian Worship, Witherspoon Press

Scripture Reading

Genesis 21:1-7

Pew Bible, OT pg. 18

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

(10:30am)

Anthem

“We Are Held”

LaBarr & Wilson

~Chancel Choir

“As the sunset by the sky, and as the birds that fly, by his arms, both you and I, we are held. As the ship is by the sea, and the nest upon the tree, ever cradled, ever free, we are held. As the tune rung clear and fair, and the silence trailing there, as the music by the air, we are held. As our life is by its span, so we rest in God’s own hand, and are bold to sing again, we are held.”

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Sermon

“God has brought laughter”

Rev. Emma Nickel



THANKSGIVING

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

“My God, How Endless Is Thy Love”

Gordon Young

~Bryan Clinthorne

“My God, how endless is Thy love! Thy gifts are every evening new; and morning mercies from above gently distill like early dew. Thou spreadest the curtains of the night, great guardian of my sleeping hours; Thy sovereign word restores the light, and quickens all my waking powers. I yield my powers to Thy command, to Thee I consecrate my days; perpetual blessings from Thy hand demand perpetual songs of praise. Amen.”

©1986 Fred Bock Music Co.

◇ **Doxology**

Hymn #34

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

◇ **Prayer of Dedication**

◇ **Litany**¹

Left: May we laugh, O God, at the miracles that happen.

Right: *May we laugh with those who see beyond this world and beyond the idea that our work defines us.*

Left: May we laugh with those who stand on the margins, and whose worth is not wrapped up in prosperity gospels.

Right: *May we laugh with those who speak their mind in faith, to the powers who want us to believe half-truths.*

Left: May we laugh with those who have heard the words of heaven and who recognize what is everlasting, against words that are fashionable.

Right: May we laugh with those who have heard the impossible, trust it is true, and live within its promise.

Left: May we laugh with those who have once cried, and journey with them until they are able to share your joy.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.



SENDING

◇ Hymn #515

“Hymn of Promise”

Text & Music : Natalie Sleeth ©1986 Hope Publishing Co.

◇ Benediction

(10:30am)

Postlude

“Fanfare”

Kenneth Leighton

©1967 Oxford University Press

1 Portions of today's liturgy were adapted from *Spill the Beans: Worship and Learning Resources for All Ages*, Issue 16, 2015.

*Immediately following the service, the **Annual Congregational Meeting** will take place in the sanctuary. Members and visitors are welcome, and those who are members of EPCRO may vote.*

*As soon as the Annual Meeting ends, **parents of children in Sunburst Singers** are encouraged to attend a brief gathering in Kirkman Fellowship Hall to learn more about supporting the children's music program this year. If you cannot attend, please speak with Joelle Jarrait, Director of Christian Education. We plan to conclude this gathering when Sunburst Singers ends at 12:15pm.*

LITURGIST

Rev. Neeta Nichols

EPCRO STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Emma Nickel

Dir. of Christian Education: Joelle Jarrait

Chancel Choir Dir.: Kent Wattleworth

Church Admin.: Kari Peruski

Facility Manager: Alan Glasel

Admin. Assistant: Sally Gilreath

Sunday/Evening Reception: Todd Crawford

S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry Director: Jessica Gibbs

Nursery Care Worker: Julia Carroll

Parish Associate: Rev. Neeta Nichols

Dir. of Music Ministries/Organist: Joseph Jackson

Sunburst Singers Dir.: Audrey Frieberg

EPCRO SOLOISTS

Bryan Clinthome, *baritone*

Brady DeVecchio, *tenor*

Olivia Donnel, *soprano*

Audrey Frieberg, *soprano*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chancel Flowers

Today's flowers are given in honor of the walkers in the CROP Hunger Walk.

Today the tree in the sanctuary is displaying stars. These represent God's promise to Abraham and Sarah that their descendants would be as numerous as the stars. We read the story of the birth of their child, Isaac, today in worship.

Sunburst Singers for Children begins Today

Join our music program for children (preschooler-early middle schooler), following worship **today until 12:15pm**. Sunburst Singers meets after worship on the **first and third Sundays of each month**. Speak to Audrey Frieberg or Joseph Jackson with questions.

CROP Walk is Today

The 2023 Ferndale/Royal Oak CROP Walk is **today at 1:30pm**. Register online, make a donation, and sponsor the FPCRO team at: **<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/event/ferndalemi>**. Funds raised help people locally and worldwide overcome challenges of food insecurity.

Rise Against Hunger Mission Event—Register Online or at the Reception Desk

Sign up to pack meals on **Sunday, September 24**. Following lunch (between worship and the start of the event) this intergenerational event will run from 12:15-2:30pm, is high energy and open to all! We need 60 volunteers to pack food! To participate sign up at the reception desk or online: **<http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/FPCRO2023>**.

On the Rise Bakery

On **Sunday, October 1**, after the 10:30am worship service, On the Rise Bakery will be selling baked goods such as bread, cookies, muffins, pies, and cakes—price ranges from \$2-\$8. In purchasing their baked goods, you are helping make possible the provision of supportive housing, training, counseling services, educational opportunities, and self-help programs. On the Rise Bakery is a program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen where each person is responsible to reach back and support the newest member.

Grief Support Group

Starting **October 2**, FPCRO will offer an eight-week grief support group for those experiencing the loss of a loved one. Group sessions will consist of sharing, support, and resources. Sessions will be facilitated by Pat Johnson, who has served as a Commissioned Ruling Elder and chaplain, and has led similar groups for hospice families. Sign up confidentially using this link: **<https://tinyurl.com/feh3w36j>**. Please note: only eight participant slots are available. Questions? Please email Pat: **pjohnson71@gmail.com**.

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Worship services in FPCRO's sanctuary are now broadcast live and are recorded and posted on our website and social media platforms.

When you enter the sanctuary for a service, you consent to the recording and broadcast of your voice and likeness for such purposes without compensation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

Four-Week Bible Study in October “God and the Old Testament”

As Christians, we focus intensely on Jesus and the Gospels as the primary source for revealing God’s activity with humanity. But before the incarnation, God’s purposes for the earth and its people were taking shape. That activity is described in the Hebrew Scriptures. What can we learn about God from the Old Testament? Join Pastor Neeta for this four-week study **Wednesday evenings on October 4, 11, 18, and 25**. We will meet at **7pm** in the **Fireside Room**. Sign up using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/4e4wmjax>

Forgotten Harvest Volunteer Opportunity

FPCRO had reserved 15 spots to volunteer in the Oak Park Forgotten Harvest warehouse **Saturday, October 7** from **9am-12pm**. Volunteers must be at least 10 years of age. Please sign up on the link provided: <https://tinyurl.com/29yuzfcn> More information will then be provided about signing up on the Forgotten Harvest website. Contact Edie Watson or the church for more information.

Trunk or Treat Candy Donations!

To ensure our Trunk or Treat event (**Friday, October 20**) is a success, we need candy donations. In the CE lobby, you will find a kiddie pool for the candy collection. Our goal is to fill the pool so we have enough treats for the over 200 children expected to attend. We would appreciate all candy donations be made by **Wednesday, October 11**. If you would like to make a monetary donation instead, indicate “trunk or treat” on your donation. Thank you!

Spiritual Retreat Weekend October 13-15

Take part in the Great Lakes Pilgrimage weekend at Echo Grove Camp and Conference Center in Leonard, Michigan. This renewal weekend offers introspection, discussion, laughter, and singing. Participation can be life altering. Please see Norm Bayne for details.

Organ Concert & Pre-Concert Reception

Save the date of **Friday, November 3** at **7pm** for **Pulling Out All the Stops: An Organ Concert with Joseph Jackson**. The concert is free and open to the public. Session has approved a ticketed Wine & Cheese Reception prior to the event in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. Tickets are \$20 per person, or \$10 for those under 21. Purchase online here: <https://tinyurl.com/44jefh2s>



Our church is a Stephen Ministry church. Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who are trained to provide high-quality confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. Contact the pastor if you are in need.

S.T.A.G.E. (Somewhere To Ask God Everything) is a collaborative youth ministry for middle- and high-school youth. Meetings are on select Sundays at one of our collaborating churches. Scan the QR code for more information.



SCAN ME