

From the Pastor's Desk...

Friends,

When I interviewed with the Pastor Nominating Committee five years ago, I asked them what, in the last few years, this church was most proud of in its life together. One of their main celebrations was the installation of the Centennial Organ in 2013. We have now gotten to enjoy that beautiful instrument for a decade, through the wonderful gifts of Joseph Jackson, our Director of Music Ministries and Organist. Many faithful saints generously contributed to make the installation of the organ possible. And I know that those contributions have helped many of you to feel a deeper connection to our church's music ministry and to the sound of praising God in this place.

We now have a new opportunity to strengthen our individual connections to our church's music program, as well as our relationships with young people in our community. **The Choral Scholar program**, which will be entering its fourth year this fall, brings talented high school and college-age musicians to our Chancel Choir where they receive mentoring from our talented music staff. Our church receives the beauty of their voices added to the choir in worship each week, as well as the joy of knowing them as individuals. The Scholars receive a small stipend for their participation.

As other sources of funding are expiring, our church feels called to raise funds to extend the Choral Scholar program into the future. *Can you join this effort to help us ensure we retain Choral Scholars for at least two more years?*

On **Sunday, May 7 at 1pm** we hope you will join us for a **fundraising concert** in the sanctuary, featuring our Chancel Choir soloists and current Choral Scholars. Beforehand, we hope you can come to a **special Celebration Brunch** beginning around 11:30am, for a suggested donation. Please sign up for the brunch <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d4fafad2ca7fd0-choral> or at the reception desk. You can make a gift of any size to support the Choral Scholar program at the concert or mail it to the church ahead of time.

An unanticipated celebration of the Choral Scholar program has also been the opportunity to share God's grace with these young people who are hearing the Word proclaimed and sung each Sunday. Some have their own church homes. Others were unaware that churches could be an inclusive, welcoming place for people like them. Some Scholars have shared with me how they have come to understand God's love for them in a new way through their participation at FPCRO. That is a testament to the hospitality you offer and the way you enact God's grace each day. While the goal of the program is not membership in our church, we have been able to play a part in sharing the good news of God's grace with these students. As they go out into the world, who knows how they may encounter God in the future or what small role we may have played in opening each of them to the presence of the Spirit in their own lives?!

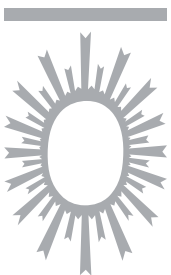
A few years from now, I hope that many in our church will lift up the Choral Scholar program as something that they are most proud of in the life of our congregation. Perhaps what we feel will be even more than pride, but something more like gratitude: Gratitude for the commitment and growth of the Scholars. Gratitude for the relationships that have blossomed among the Scholars, choir, and church members. Gratitude for this special way to praise God, to share our faith, and to support young people as they live into their vocations.

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.

One worship service on Sunday, May 28 at 10:30am. (No 9am service.)

our staff

pastor/head of staff, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**

parish associate, nnichols@fpcro.org **Rev. Neeta Nichols**

director of music ministries & organist, jjackson@fpcro.org **Joseph Jackson**

chancel choir director, kwattleworth@fpcro.org **Kent Wattleworth**

preschool music director, afriberg@fpcro.org **Audrey Frieberg**

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wedding coordinator, weddings@fpcro.org **Ginny O'Brien**

newsletter editor **Tere Ryan**

baritone **Brian Clinthorne**

tenor **Brady DelVecchio**

soprano **Olivia Donnel**

soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

our soloists



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The **Church Bell** is published monthly
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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:

Millie Brissette, April 12, 2023

Maryjane Jarman, March 20, 2023



As we prepare for Pentecost, how has the Holy Spirit lit a fire in you through your star word? What new thing has it inspired you to do?



H.O.M.E. FOR MAY

The H.O.M.E. project for this spring will be **Birthday in a Bag** as we anticipate the birthday of the church at Pentecost. Bags are due **May 21**, and will contain a guideline sheet and a list of items to include in the bag—cake mix, frosting, candles, birthday napkins, plates, etc. There will also be a blank card which you and your family may use to create a birthday card. If you want to add any other birthday treats, please feel free to do so! In the past, these bags have been donated to The Salvation Army and the Royal School District. Help to celebrate the birthday of the church by donating a bag for a child who will enjoy a Happy Birthday!



memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of

Maryjane Jarman. A gift from the estate of Vicki Dickinson was received.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

On **Saturday, May 13, at 10am**, we will be hosting the Community Programs Ensemble from Detroit Opera in a free performance of Little Red Riding Hood. This 40 minute Opera for Children of **all** ages tells the classic story of Little Red, her grandmother, and a not very bright wolf whom they outsmart. This delightful production is full of humor and teaches important lessons about keeping promises.



The Community Programs ensemble is a part of the education wing of the company which performs in schools and community centers throughout the area. The performance will be followed by a brief question and answer period by the cast. Plan to bring a child, grandchild, neighbor, or just yourself, and enjoy the show!

SPRING GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

Please save the date of **Saturday, May 6, from 9 am to 12 noon** for this year's Spring Grounds Clean-Up. Plan to join us as we ready the church's flower beds and grounds for the growing season. *May 13 is the rain date.* Thank you!



—House & Grounds Committee

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.

COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN
Contact the church office for an information packet

Congregational News



WELCOME TO STARR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH VISITORS

On **Sunday, May 14**, we will welcome members from Starr Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak to our 10:30am worship service. Starr is planning to bring an end to their ministry as a congregation sometime later in 2023. This spring, they are visiting other congregations to discern where their members are called to join after their church ceases to worship together. We expect about 20 folks to join us as they listen for how the Spirit is leading them. Please wear your name tags on May 14 (and every Sunday!) and offer a warm and genuine welcome to our neighbors.



ALMOST SACRAMENTS

Our Easter season worship series continues through **May 21**. We'll explore everyday ways we experience signs of God's grace in our lives. Through walking/exercise, food, service, friendship, and music, God's grace and love are powerfully present to us, much as they are in baptism and communion. In these "almost sacraments" we encounter the presence of God in ways Jesus did, too. Join us on Sundays at 9am and 10:30am to explore these everyday ways we connect with God and make meaning in our lives.

Mission and Benevolence

CEREAL FOR SUMMER STARTS JUNE 4

No child should go hungry. However, many kids who rely on receiving a subsidized breakfast or lunch during the school year often face long summer days without



enough to eat. FPCRO will support the Cereal for Summer campaign at the Presbytery of Detroit again this year. **During the month of June**, bring a box or two of cereal to be donated through our regional Presbytery to help kids and families in need.

GIVING THANKS FOR OPERATION PAPERBACK

Our church's ministry with Operation Paperback is coming to an end.

Operation Paperback was a project to collect paperback books, and puzzle and game books to send to United States military service members around the world. At this time, with the rise in e-readers and other changes, the demand



for physical books is diminishing. So this is an opportunity to bring this mission to a close. We give thanks for a long mission that blessed many service members around the world, as well as members of our congregation who led it and participated.

For the last five years, Don and Adair Calder have led the effort to collect, sort, and mail boxes of books to U.S. armed services members and families. For the 14 years prior to that, Dave and Tillie Nelson spearheaded this ministry. For nearly 20 years, FPCRO has supported those who are serving and may have little access to recreation, movies, or reading material. This includes countless hours of volunteering and many trips to the post office to learn the ins and outs of overseas mailing!

In the last four years, we have sent 421 boxes, which held 9,705 books. We spent about \$4,000 in postage supplies to mail them, which was funded by our church's Hands-On Mission Fund. Prior to that, the Nelson's sent over 41,000 books. We are also grateful for the support of those in the church library over the years: Vicki Dickinson, Liz Mercer, Bev Moss, and Carol Weber. Thank you to all these folks for your faithful ministry!

Choral Scholars *Into the Future*



This program, which bring high school students into the Chancel Choir, has brought new energy to our choir, enhanced our worship, and created a place of welcome and support for these fine young people. **We hope you will consider adding your support for the future of the Choral Scholar Program and that you will join us for a brunch and fundraising concert of beautiful music on May 7 at 1pm.**

The Earla Smith Foundation offers funding to experimental programs for up to three years. As funding for Choral Scholars expires ahead of the 2023-24 year, **our goal is to raise \$18,000 to fund the program for the coming two years.** Each Scholar receives \$2,000 to sing with the choir for its season from September through mid-June. Additional funds cover taxes and potential extra services.

CONTRIBUTOR GIVING LEVELS

\$2000 — SPONSOR

\$1000 — MENTOR

\$500 — GUIDE

\$250 — SUSTAINER

Gifts of any size are welcome and will help sustain the program. Mark your gift “Choral Scholar.” If you have questions, please speak to Joseph Jackson, Director of Music Ministries, or Pastor Emma Nickel.



Join us at **1pm on Sunday, May 7**, for a **Choral Scholar Fundraising Concert** showcasing our Chancel Choir Soloists and current Choral Scholars.

The concert will be preceded by a **Celebration Brunch (RSVP online at <https://tinyurl.com/4d4up366>, or in person at the reception desk in the CE Lobby)** for suggested donations. A **free-will offering** will be received following the Concert.

S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry

S.T.A.G.E. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

May 7 – Activity/meeting TBD – We will meet!

May 14 – *No meeting*, Mother's Day

May 20 – Flower Sale set-up and distribution on Saturday

May 21 – *No meeting*, rest up after the Flower Sale

May 28 – *No meeting*, Memorial Day weekend

June 4 – End of Year Picnic at Cana/Drayton at 4:30pm

July 9-15 – High School Mission trip to Chicago

July 24-27 – Middle School Mission Week in Metro Detroit



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



My, how quickly the year has passed and we made it through! We can't believe there are only a few more weeks in the school year. It's been a fun year and our preschoolers have certainly grown by leaps and bounds.

For the three-year-olds, we will spend this sunny month painting with the color yellow, finishing our special handprint books, making Sunflower t-shirts, and creating Mother's Day gifts. Caterpillars turning into butterflies are in our plans. Our three-year-olds will finish the year with a fun outdoor day (hopefully) on the church grounds on May 23.

How sad we are to see our four-year-olds finish preschool! They have worked so hard all year to prepare for kindergarten; we are just not quite ready to say goodbye to them. This month, they will finish their alphabet study, learn

about insects—especially butterflies, make special gifts for Mom, plant beans in a bag and watch them grow, and prepare for our graduation ceremony to be held on May 24 at 10am, in Kirkman Fellowship Hall.

If you are interested in learning more about our preschool, please call 248-541-0108, x220. We would love to tell you all about Sunflowers!

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue

Royal Oak Community Development

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

From Joseph M. Murphy, Royal Oak Director of Planning: The City of Royal Oak has contracted with Legal Aid and Defender Association (LADA) of Detroit to help keep low- to moderate-income Royal Oak renters from being evicted for non-payment. Renters may be eligible for free financial assistance for unpaid rent and associated late fees, penalties, court costs, etc. dating back no more than six (6) months. Interested parties should contact LADA to inquire about their eligibility for rental assistance.



Legal Aid and Defender Association, phone: (248) 907-1427

email: royaloakcares@ladadetroit.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In the weeks leading up to Pentecost, our children will explore the act of prayer.

Pray Honestly (Matthew 6:9–13)

Pray Persistently and Humbly (Luke 18:1–14)

Pray with and for Others (James 5:13–16)

Pray with Your Whole Self (Psalm 22)



HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR VBS?



Families, be sure to register for our STELLAR VBS! Children ages four-years-old through 5th grade are invited to attend our STELLAR VBS where we will Shine Jesus' Light! The event is June 26-30, 9am-12pm. **Register at <https://form.jotform.com/223405660685054>**

VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH VBS!

We are still looking for volunteers to help during the week of VBS. The dates are June 26th – 30th 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Please visit our sign-up genius at <https://tinyurl.com/ycka7hwf> to join in on the fun! Be sure to talk to Joelle Jarrait for more information.



TOM AND RUTH KIRKMAN SCHOLARSHIP HONORS

Congratulations to our 2023 Kirkman Scholarship recipients!

Mackenzie Kirkwood

Ryan Pochron

Rachel Wattleworth

The Tom and Ruth Kirkman Scholarship is awarded to those in our church family who are pursuing higher education. The fund is named after Tom and Ruth Kirkman. Dr. Kirkman served as FPCRO pastor from 1955-1985. Congratulations to our recipients! May God continue to uphold you and may you feel the love of your church family as you grow in your journeys.



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.

May Child of God—Charlotte Kortlandt

Charlotte is a first grader at Jane Addams Elementary in Royal Oak. Her favorite part about school is that she “has a lot of nice friends.”

Charlotte lives at home with her parents, Megan and Scott, and her big brother Jack. She also has a pet rabbit whose name is Jasper. Charlotte says, “he likes to sit under the rocking chair. He likes nibbling on the carpet.” When asked what her favorite thing is to do with her family, Charlotte says, “snuggle.”

Charlotte’s hobbies include dance, gym, and bike riding. When asked what is special about her, she says, “I’m very unique. I like dolls. I am a Girl Scout.”

Charlotte has been a part of our congregation since birth, and her favorite part about church is Sunday school.

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

find us on:



May Dates of Note at FPCRO

May 6 • Spring Grounds Clean-Up, 9am-12pm

May 7 • Celebration Brunch, 11:30am

May 7 • Choral Scholar Fundraising Concert, 1pm

May 13 • Little Red Riding Hood, 10am

May 21 • Sunburst Singers, 11:30am-12:15pm

May 21 • H.O.M.E. Birthday in a Bag due

May 28 • One Worship Service at 10:30am

May 29 • Memorial Day, Church Office Closed

June 4 • Cereal for Summer Collection starts

