



*From the Pastor's Desk...*

Two new seasons are almost upon us at the church. Thinking about these seasons helps me feel excited about the rest of this tough, cold, COVID winter that has been so much harder than we had hoped. I hope you'll join me and the rest of our church family in worship and in the other activities that heighten the meaning of our spiritual lives.

We're settling into our pattern of enjoying the stewardship season during February. And I do mean enjoying it. I love stewardship season because it invites us to think so fully about all that God has given us. And, as is our practice here, we get to hear from one another about why we give and how we live out our faith. Those personal connections are everything. Our relationships deepen as we share and hear those stories. This year, we have the treat of hearing not from just one person each week, but from a bunch. We'll be enjoying short, person-in-the-pew (like person-on-the-street) videos each week in worship to hear from many church members about why they love this church, what they are willing to 'dig deeper' for, and what legacy they want to leave. I felt honored to hear each person's ideas and I bet you will love watching them in this engaging format, too.



Lent begins March 4 and takes us to Easter on April 17. But I want to invite you to get ready for it during February, by purchasing our devotional book and signing up for a short, weekly small group meeting. Our theme is *Good Enough*, inspired by the new devotional book by Kate Bowler and Jessica Ritchie, *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection*. We'll be embracing the imperfections of life and faith during the season, as we hear the stories of Jesus in Luke's gospel.

Do these two things to prepare now so you don't forget:

**1. Pre-order your copy of *Good Enough*** by Kate Bowler and Jessica Ritchie from your favorite bookseller; or get a Kindle copy from Amazon. Learn more about the book: <https://katebowler.com/good-enough/>. Or order on Amazon: <https://tinyurl.com/2zfsctah> or Cokesbury: <https://tinyurl.com/4bhkn9d5>. Check sites for the best pricing as of your order date, or contact the church if you need help getting a copy.

**2. Sign up to participate in a weekly Zoom small group discussion during Lent**, led by fellow church members. These will meet once a week on Zoom for about 30 minutes from the week of March 6 through the week of April 10. Please sign-up ahead of time to participate.

- Sundays at 7 pm, led by Derek Helenberger
- Wednesdays at 7 pm, led by Kevin Ball and Krispen Carroll
- Thursdays at 10:30 am, led by Chris Klein

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/2p8c5r5h> to sign-up for a group or call the church office if you need assistance.

May these seasons deepen our faith and point us toward God,

*Pastor Emma*

## In-Person Worship

At 9 & 10:30 am  
Sunday, join us  
for worship in the  
sanctuary.  
Masks are  
required indoors.

## 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.

The nursery is open for  
infant-toddler care.

## our staff

*pastor/head of staff*, [enickel@fpcro.org](mailto:enickel@fpcro.org) **Rev. Emma Nickel**  
*director of music ministries & organist*, [jjackson@fpcro.org](mailto:jjackson@fpcro.org) **Joseph Jackson**  
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*preschool music director*, [afrieberg@fpcro.org](mailto:afrieberg@fpcro.org) **Audrey Frieberg**  
*director of christian education*, [jjarrait@fpcro.org](mailto:jjarrait@fpcro.org) **Joelle Jarrait**  
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*wedding coordinator*, [weddings@fpcro.org](mailto:weddings@fpcro.org) **Ginny O'Brien**  
*newsletter editor* **Gretchen Hirsch**

*tenor* **Dawson Trotman**  
*baritone* **Noah Rogers**  
*soprano* **Audrey Frieberg**  
*soprano* **Olivia Donnel**

## our soloists



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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:

Hazel Calkins, December 19, 2021

Rosemary DiDomizio, December 21, 2021

Lisa Janney Vanderham, January 10, 2022

*Daughter of Mel and Jackie Janney.*

*Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the Janney's, in care of Sheryl Hunter.*



## memorials & gifts

*Memorial gifts were given in memory of Tom & Ruth Kirkman, Russell Vahlbusch, and Roger Van Dyke.*

Dear Church Family & Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous gifts of warmth as you decorated the mitten tree during the Advent and Christmas season! There were more than 500 gifts of socks, hats, gloves/mittens, scarves and several small blankets. Our gifts were given to 2nd Mile Center in Detroit, SOCH-Welcome Inn in Royal Oak, Help in the Midst of the Storm in Detroit, Crossroads in Detroit and three Royal Oak elementary schools. Many people will be warmer this winter because of your gifts! Thank you.

*Thank You!*



*Peace and Blessings to you,  
-Julie Matthews*

The Epiphany star word for FPCRO in 2022 is **Brightness**. What do you think this word means for our congregation right now? How does it connect with your personal star word?



## FEBRUARY 2022

### FEBRUARY SPECIAL DATES

- African American History Month
- Groundhog Day, February 2
- Valentine's Day, February 14
- Presidents Day, February 21
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 27

### 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.



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

### Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

# Stewardship

## OUR WELL OF FAITH

We all have a well of faith from which we draw. Some of us go to the well once a day, once a week, or once a year. Others of us visit more often, take a shallow dipper, and skim the surface of the water for a renewal. And sometimes, no matter how often we go to our well of faith, we need to delve deeper.

I'm usually a skimmer. I visit my well multiple times a day and feel confident of God's presence. Recently, however, I've had to look deeper to find God in the midst of our crazy world.

As I struggle to make sense of all the chaos, clashing, and conflict, I see God in the kindness of others, and this fills my well.

Whatever your faith journey has been, I pray you go to the well of faith when necessary and receive nourishment from God. Our church has been blessed throughout the



pandemic. While other churches have experienced conflict, ours has been steeped in gratitude. I know the church is grateful for everyone's outreach, participation, and giving. This year, the Stewardship Committee is asking you to delve a bit deeper as you consider your pledge for the upcoming year. Can you join me in adding \$25 per month to your regular pledge? That's roughly an additional \$6.25 each week. Your gifts make all our programs and mission work possible.

Look for your stewardship packet in the mail the first week of February, and please return the pledge card to the church by **February 27**. We

are united as we go to the well of faith for God's blessings, and every member of our church is vital in keeping our well filled and reinforcing each other's faith.

Blessings and peace.

—Theresa Henige,  
Chair, Stewardship Committee

As we explore **A Deeper Well** throughout February, plan to participate in worship in these special ways:

- February 13** — Bring a rock or stone from home to place at the well in our sanctuary. The stones will symbolize bringing our lives to God's deep well of faith. (Be sure it's a rock you're ok parting with.)
- February 21** — Plan to stay after worship for a few minutes to paint stones in the Christian Ed lobby.
- February 27** — After bringing your pledge to God, receive a painted stone to take home as a reminder of God's grace that overflows.

## MISSION GRANT UPDATE

FPCRO received a generous grant from a friend of the church to serve God's mission in the world during 2022. We want to keep you updated on the three projects and invite you to get involved with whichever one most speaks to you.

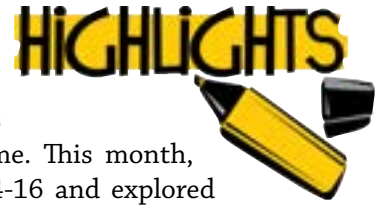
**1. Refugee Resettlement**—Samaritas is matching FPCRO with an Afghan family who is already in Michigan. Activities should be gearing up in February as our team seeks out suitable housing for their family in a location that makes sense for them (culturally, access to public transportation, etc.). Then we'll help furnish the home and stock the kitchen and cupboards. We'll ensure their children are enrolled in school, they're getting to doctor's appointments, and seeking out next steps toward creating their new life in the United States. Contact Benny Rediers or Ted DeVantier to get involved. Opportunities are available for driving the family to appointments, tutoring, English conversation and lots of other ways to love these new neighbors.

**2. Children's Library and Play Space**—A team of folks met at the end of January to begin dreaming up the specifics of this project (location in the church, furnishings, contents of library, etc.). They will continue to put their plans down on paper and then move toward build out of the space and purchasing the appropriate items. There's still time to get involved and share your ideas! Contact Pastor Emma for more info.

**3. South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless**—In February, we expect to disburse funds to SOCH to help support their social worker in a 12-month contract (instead of just a four month contract during the winter). The social worker is instrumental in the roll-out of their new Welcome Home program which seeks to transition a small number of well-qualified Welcome Inn guests into permanent housing. As the program develops, we anticipate opportunities for church members to help participants with life skills such as budgeting, cooking, and searching for jobs.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- The elders continued their discussion of scripture passages that represent our church's story in our current time. This month, they read Matthew 5:14-16 and explored what it means to be the light of the world.
- A proposal from National Restoration was approved to restore, clean, tuckpoint, and repaint the lettering on the large stone sign on the Hendrie side of the church.
- An updated version of the FPCRO Comprehensive Investment Policy was approved.
- Elders reviewed the Annual Statistical Report for the PC(USA). Among other data, it includes information on our membership, finances, and mission giving. Current membership stands at 385.



# Christian Education

## 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. Award checks will be mailed to the school later in the year. Beginning **February 15**, applications are available on our church website at [www.fpcro.org](http://www.fpcro.org). If you would like more information, please contact Joelle Jarrait at [jjarrait@fpcro.org](mailto:jjarrait@fpcro.org).

## SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

On **Sunday, February 13**, 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."

## JOYFUL JOURNEYS SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday school children have enjoyed being together for fellowship and stories of Jesus. During February we will explore stories that Practice Joy!



See Joy in God's Creation (Psalm 98:4-9)

Feel Joy in God's Mercy (Luke 17:11-16)

Share Others' Joy (Luke 15:4-10)

Practice Joy at All Times (Philippians 4:4-9)

## FEBRUARY H.O.M.E. PROJECT

In February the H.O.M.E. Project is a Diaper Drive to collect diapers for *The Natural Momma Me Initiative*, a local affiliate of the National Diaper Bank Network which serves the Metropolitan Detroit area. Project bags will be ready for pick up **Sunday, February 6** and should be returned to the church by **Sunday, February 27**. Diapers of all sizes may be purchased, and wipes may also be included. The bags will contain in addition to the guidance sheet with scripture, discussion topics and prayers, and information about The Natural Momma Me organization.



Having an adequate supply of clean diapers is essential in supporting the health, wellness and quality of life of babies through toddler-aged children. Due to the cost, many families are not able to keep an adequate supply of diapers. This is one way we can reach out to others and help. Other ways to help will be included in the information sheet. Thank you for helping to provide for this need!

—Marilyn Sutton, Christian Education Committee

**PUZZLE**

**The heart of a friend**

Big-hearted friendliness comes from generously serving others.

Directions: Start with the first D and move according to the arrows beneath the blanks. Then fill in the letters to complete 1 Peter 4:8-10.

Above all, love each other **D** because love  
over a multitude of Offer  
to one another without  
Each of you should use whatever  
you have received to others, as faithful  
stewards of God's in its various forms.

1 PETER 4:8-10, NIV

## Friendship SOUP

Make jars of Italian barley soup to share love and warmth with friends.



### What you need:

- 1 cup pearled barley
- ½ cup sundried tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp dry minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp dry minced onion
- 1 veggie bouillon cube
- Glass pint jars with lids
- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Pen

### What you do:

1. In order, layer the first five ingredients into the jar.
2. Trace the outline of the lid onto cardstock. Cut out.
3. On the card, write these directions: Remove wrapper from bouillon cube. Add contents of jar to saucepan. Add 4 cups water and a can of diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce to low. Simmer about 20 minutes, until barley is tender. Serve with parmesan cheese.
4. Place the card atop the lid. Screw on the canning ring to keep it in place.



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, and make a delicious dessert for our Valentine party.

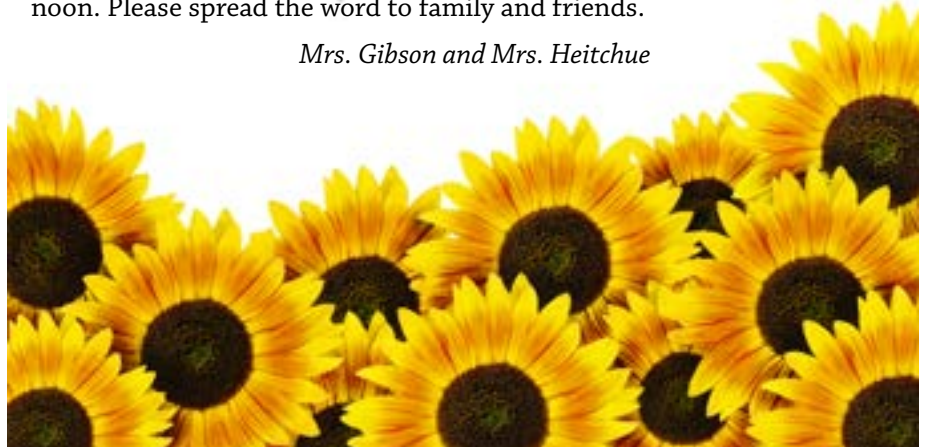
Our three-year-old class will be practicing more with scissors this month, and working on printing our names independently. It's not easy!

Our four-year-olds continue alphabet study, and the 'Friday Centers' that get us ready for the routine of kindergarten. Due to Covid, we will not be able to start our extended day on Wednesdays. Instead, we will do a group science project during our Friday Centers.

Our January monthly mission was a success with collecting puzzle books for our troops with Operation Paperback.

Registration for the 2022-23 school year opens in early February. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call 248-541-0108, x220 so we may mail registration information to you. If needed, scholarship applications will be available this year. Our Three-Year-Olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 am to 11:45 am. Our-Four-Year Olds meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:15 am to 12:00 noon. Please spread the word to family and friends.

*Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue*



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

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## February Events at FPCRO

February 6 • H.O.M.E. Project bag pick up

February 13 • Sub Sale Sandwich pick up

February 13 • Souper Bowl of Caring

February 13 • Bring a rock/stone to place  
at the well in our sanctuary

February 21 • Stay after worship to paint  
stones in the CE lobby

February 27 • After bringing your pledge  
to God, receive a painted  
stone as a reminder that  
God's grace overflows

February 27 • H.O.M.E. Project Diaper  
Drive items due

