

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROYAL OAK

SEPTEMBER 21, 2025 | 10:30AM

15th 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:

- The *Prayground* in the back of the sanctuary, where children may do quiet activities, with you nearby to assist, as they absorb the worship service. Third graders and older are encouraged to sit with their family in the pews.
- The **Backyard Playroom** is a free program offering a safe, indoor environment for children ages five (5) and under to play under parental/guardian supervision, and is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to 12pm.
- 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 10:30am 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 fast and easy! Click GIVE at www.fpcro.org to make a one-time gift. Recurring gifts may be 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

“Cantabile”

César Franck
Public Domain

Welcome & Announcements

♦ Call to Worship

One: We gather in the name of the living Christ to worship God.

All: Surely God is in this place calling us to worship in spirit and in truth.

One: God's love is for us and for all people everywhere.

All: Surely God is in this place seeking to renew us in faith.

One: The living Christ is with us!

All: Praise the Lord!

♦ Hymn #502

“Be Thou My Vision”

Public Domain

Call to Confession

One: Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.” Trusting that God can unburden us from our sin and make us new, let us confess the wrongs we have done against God and our neighbor. Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: Christ, have mercy upon us.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Prayer of Confession¹

All: Lord, we are frail and fickle. Sometimes we play tricks on others to get what we want. Or we play tricks on ourselves so that we do not have to face the truth. We are sorry for all the times we let you down and for the times we let ourselves and others down. Forgive us. Help us to be humble and honest. Help us to reconcile with our brothers and sisters.

[silence for individual prayer]

One: By the power of the spirit, we pray,

All: Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

One: God is merciful and full of steadfast love. God will not forget us. God will wash us clean, and lead us on paths of steadfast love and faithfulness.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. 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: As forgiven people, we can share the peace we find in Christ. So may the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Time with the Children

After the Time with the Children, kids may go to Sunday school classes with their teachers. Those attending Sunburst Singers will then be taken to rehearsal. Others will return to the sanctuary at the conclusion of the service.



PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

All: Light of the world, shine on us as we read your scriptures today. Light of the world, illuminate the truths we will read so that they impact our hearts and lives. Let your light shine through us as we live in the world this week. Amen.

Psalm

“Psalm 91”

Sung to the Hymn-tune *Eventide*, #521 “Abide with Me”

“Since I have made the Lord my dwelling place, home of my care and harbor for my praise; Great hosts of angels, messengers of grace, God sends to keep me safe in all my ways.”

Paraphrase of Psalm 91 ©1999 Michael Morgan, The Psalter for Christian Worship, Witherspoon Press

Scripture Reading Genesis 27:1-4; 15-23 and Genesis 28:10-17 *Pew Bible, OT pg. 25 & 27*

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

“Have You Not Heard?”

Craig Courtney

~Chancel Choir

“Who tends to his children like a shepherd and who gently gathers them as lambs? Whose breath blew the stars across the heavens from the palm of his almighty hand? Whose wisdom defies our understanding? Whose mind knows our secret thoughts and plans? Who is and will ever be eternal, and who was before all time began? Do you not know? Have you not heard who spoke you into being with a word? That word endures forevermore: The Everlasting God, he is the Lord! Like grass, you will wither and fade. Without him, you will stumble, fall and faint. But all those who wait upon the Lord, will be renewed, their strength will be restored. We will run and we will not grow weary, we will hope in the Sovereign God of all. He who watches will not sleep or slumber. He steadies our feet against the fall. It was told to us from the beginning: One day we will rise to meet the Lord. He will lift us on his wings like eagles. We will walk, we will run, we will soar. Amen.”

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Sermon

“A Chatbot God?”

Rev. Emma Nickel



THANKSGIVING

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

“Jacob’s Ladder”

arr. Richard Walters

~Bryan Clinthorne

“We are climbing Jacob’s ladder, follower of the cross. Every rung goes higher, higher, follower of the cross. Do you think I’ll make a good follower, follower of the cross? Rise, shine, give God the glory, follower of the cross.”

©2005 Hal Leonard Music Corp.

◇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

◊Affirmation of Faith — Apostles' Creed

All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

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 #719

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Text ©1983 Jaroslav Vajda

◊Benediction

Postlude

“Praeludium in C Major”

Georg Boehm
Public Domain

1 Prayer of Confession adapted from *Spill the Beans: Worship and Learning Resources for All Ages*, Issue 24, 2017, p.25.

The hymns, congregational responses, and choir anthem in this mornings worship service will be played by our Organ Scholar, John Etsell.

LITURGIST

Joe Huebner

FPCRO STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Emma Nickel

Dir. of Christian Education: Joelle Jarrait

Dir. of Music Ministries/Organist: Joseph Jackson

Organ Scholar: John Etsell

Chancel Choir Dir.: Kent Wattleworth

Sunburst Singers Dir.: Audrey Frieberg

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

Backyard Playroom Coordinator: Ashleigh McKnight

Nursery Care Worker: Abby Pochron

SOLOISTS

Bryan Clinthorne, *baritone*

Olivia Donnel, *soprano*

Audrey Frieberg, *soprano*

Kayvon Kashani-Gharavi, *tenor*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chancel Flowers

Today's flowers are given by Don & Adair Calder in honor of our wonderful staff.

Upcoming S.T.A.G.E. Meetings

S.T.A.G.E. (*Somewhere To Ask God Everything*) is a collaborative youth group which strives to build lifelong relationships, impact the communities we live in, and learn about and share the love of Christ! Join our newsletter by emailing **stageyouth@gmail.com** for all the details on our meetings, added service events during the year, and summer mission work! Meetings are open to all Middle and High School Students (6th-12th grade). Meetings are from **6-8pm** unless otherwise specified.



- Regular meeting at First Presbyterian Church Birmingham **today, September 21**
 - Care Packages Service Project at Greenfield Presbyterian Church **October 12**
 - Regular meeting at FPCRO on **October 26**
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Presbytery of Detroit Event at FPCRO

This September, the Presbytery of Detroit will host a visit from Co-Moderator of the PC(USA), the Rev. Cece Armstrong, who was raised in Detroit. On **Saturday, September 27, from 10am until 1pm**, FPCRO is honored to be hosting Rev. Armstrong at a Presbytery-wide event, with lunch included, in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend! A few volunteers from FPCRO will be needed during the event to greet guests and help with the boxed lunch. Questions? Contact Suzanne Lewand.

Annual Meeting September 28

The annual meeting of the congregation and corporation of First Presbyterian Church will take place immediately following worship on **Sunday, September 28 at 11:30am** in the sanctuary. Printed copies of the annual reports are available at the reception desk in the CE Lobby. Members are encouraged to attend and to vote; visitors are welcome to be present.

Vision Event and Coffee Hour

FPCRO is called to be a beacon of hope and constancy in an uncertain world. To fulfill our vision, over the next three years we are **Building Hope** through a capital campaign. On **Sunday, October 5**, join us after worship in Kirkman Fellowship Hall to learn more about the vision and the campaign. Children and families are encouraged to attend, along with members of all ages!

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

Teen Clean Closet

After worship on **Sunday, October 12**, please join us in Kirkman Fellowship Hall where we will assemble Hygiene Kits for the Teen Clean Closet. Their mission is to supply free new toiletry and hygiene items to young people and adults in the community who are in need. Royal Oak schools, YMCA, Youth Club, Mahany/Meininger Senior Center, have mini closets in their facilities. They also supply nearby cities. Come and help support their mission. Thank you!

Men's Contemplative Group

This October, Rev. Matt Nickel will offer guided practices to increase mindful awareness of self, body, and connection to others. The practices will engage contemplative spirituality, breath work, mind-fullness, and nervous system regulation. No previous experience is required. Men of FPCRO and friends from the community are invited to participate on **Mondays, October 13, 20, 27 at 7:30pm** in the Fireside Room. Participants are encouraged to sign-up online using Sign-Up Genius: <http://bit.ly/4nkUCp4>

Save the Date—New Member Classes on October 12, 19, and 26

For those interested in learning more about the church or who are ready to join, our classes meet Sundays from **9-10am in the Fireside Room** and conclude October 26 with breakfast and a brief Session meeting to receive new members. We'll welcome you in worship at 10:30am that day! Childcare is provided upon request. Please RSVP to Pastor Emma at enickel@fpcro.org or call the church office at (248) 541-0108.

Building Hope Book Study

This fall our congregation will consider how God is building hope among us and how we can join God in that work. We'll read *Hope: A User's Manual* by MaryAnn McKibben Dana during October and talk about where we see hope, how we understand it, and how our faith helps us live into it. Join the book discussion in one of two ways:

- Either meet weekly on **Wednesdays at 1pm** at the church during **October (October 8, 15, 22, 29)** to discuss portions of the book each week.
- Or, come for a one-time discussion of the whole book on **Tuesday, October 28 at 7:30pm**. All events will take place in the Fireside Room.

The church has 25 signed copies of the book available for purchase for \$16 each. Visit the reception desk to get yours. Or order your own copy online in paperback or Kindle version. An audio version is also available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

Volunteer at Forgotten Harvest—Weekday and Weekend Opportunities

The Mission in Service committee is offering two kinds of opportunities to volunteer at Forgotten Harvest (15000 W Eight Mile, Oak Park). FH collects and delivers thousands of pounds of surplus food weekly to alleviate hunger and end food waste by providing nutritious food to families facing food insecurity. The Warehouse on 8 Mile is where we help pack rescued food from businesses to prevent food waste. We bundle food into sizable portions for food pantries, soup kitchens and individual families. The second opportunity is Client Choice Mobile Pantry (next to the Warehouse) This is a small venue where the volunteers help guests make food selections, much like shopping in a grocery store!

- **Weekday:** Six volunteers needed in the Client Choice Pantry **Thursday, October 23 from 8:45am-12pm**. Volunteers must be 18 years and up. To signup, please contact Dave Keener at dakeener00@gmail.com.
- **Weekend:** 25 volunteers needed in the Warehouse **Saturday, November 1, from 9am-12 noon**. Volunteers 10 years and up must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Sign up online at <http://bit.ly/4mRLmcj>. You will then receive an email from Dave Keener inviting you to pre-register on the Forgotten Harvest website.

Sign up online, or on the Mission in Service bulletin board. Volunteer slots may be added if necessary. Questions? Contact: Dave Keener 248-660-7897 or Denise Huebner 248-821-2419

Trunk or Treat Volunteer Opportunities

Our Trunk or Treat is a great time to be with children in our community. To make the event a success, we need volunteers to help with activities as well as decorated cars. Choose a fun theme for your car and join us! Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/4upv454h> or call the church office. The event is **Friday, October 24 at 5pm**. Your theme can be as simple as you'd like it.

Candy Donations for Trunk or Treat!

Our exciting Trunk or Treat event is **Friday, October 24**. To make the event a success, we need candy donations. In the CE lobby there's a kiddie pool for candy collection. Our goal is to fill the pool so we have enough for over 250 children we expect to attend. We would appreciate all candy donations by **Sunday, October 12** to allow time for preparation. If you would like to make a monetary donation, you may include "trunk or treat" on your donation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

Chancel Flower Dedications

A flower dedication is a special opportunity to celebrate, remember, or honor a member of our church or your family. Please consider signing up for a dedication in the coming year, plenty of dates are open! Contact Chris Klein if you have any questions.

Opportunity to Usher on Sunday Mornings

The Worship and Nurture Committee is looking for ushers. Simply arrive 20-25 minutes ahead of the worship service to greet folks and hand out worship bulletins. After worship, retrieve the completed friendship pad forms from the pew racks. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the Narthex. Questions? Contact Gail Meengs.

Church Directory

Need an updated Church Directory? Printed copies are available at the reception desk in the CE Lobby. If you would prefer a PDF version, contact Sally Gilreath at sgilreath@fpcro.org for one to be emailed to you.

Little Free Pantry

FPCRO's Little Free Pantry serves unhoused neighbors as well as those who may be running short on funds. Below is a suggested list of non-perishable items which may be dropped off during church office hours. For cash or check donations, please indicate the "Little Free Pantry" on the check or note. **Pull-Tab Cans:** stew (beef and chicken), fruit (cocktails, peaches, pears, etc.), vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, etc.), baked beans, soup (any variety), beefaroni/ravioli (ready-to-eat), canned tuna, chicken, or turkey. **Non-perishables:** granola bars (soft/chewy, any flavor), cereal (small individual boxes), tuna/chicken (ready-to-eat pouches), Knorr rice/pasta sides, peanut butter, snack crackers/cookies, small bottled waters, juice boxes, Easy Mac and Cheese (pouches/cups).



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.