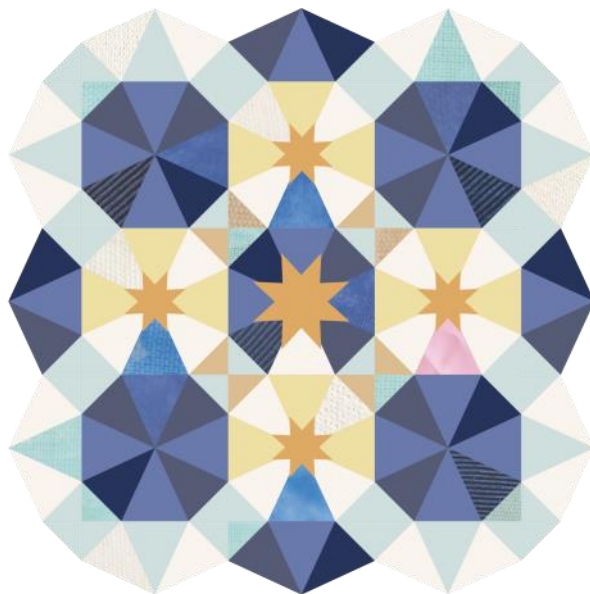


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROYAL OAK

DECEMBER 22, 2024 | 10:30AM

Fourth Sunday of Advent



WORDS
FOR THE **BEGINNING**



fpcro

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.
- 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



SCAN ME

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

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

arr. Gerald Near
©1997 Aureole Editions

Welcome & Announcements

◊Call to Worship¹

One: In this weary world, we sing of joy.

All: In this fragile world, we lift each other up.

One: In this beautiful world, we look for God.

All: In this tender world, we hold onto hope.

One: This is the invitation of faith. So in this time together may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our *with-us* God.

All: With hope in our hearts, we worship!

◊Hymn #154

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Public Domain

Lighting the Advent Wreath

The Jarrait Family

Response, v 1 & 2

“This Is a Day of New Beginnings”

(see insert)

Text: Brian Wren ©1983, 1987 Hope Publishing Co.; Music: Carlton Young ©1987 Hope Publishing Co.

Call to Confession and Kyrie Eleison

One: Hope can be hard to hold onto. Fortunately for us, God’s grace is not. No matter what we are able to hold, God is able to hold onto us. Trusting that God’s grace does not let us go, we turn to God in confession. Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: Christ, have mercy upon us.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Prayer of Confession

All: Gracious God, you paint pictures of what could be, but we declare those visions impossible. You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb, but we spout skepticism and uncertainty. You dream of a more just day, but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon. Forgive us for losing sight of hope. Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is. Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it. Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams, and to not be afraid of either.

[silence for individual prayer]

One: With gratitude, we pray,

All: Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

One: Hear and believe the good news of the Gospel: God is holding on to you. Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope! Today, we are forgiven! And the same will be true tomorrow.

All: Thanks be to God for a love like that!

◇ **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: This Advent, we await the gift of the Christ child, the one who is the Prince of Peace. In our waiting and preparation, 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 with their teachers. They will be taken to Sunburst Singers Christmas Eve pageant rehearsal following the service.



PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

All: Holy God, as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now through your Spirit. We are listening. We are hopeful. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46-55

Pew Bible, NT pg. 58

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm

“Psalm 80”

Sung to the Hymn-tune *Forest Green*, #570 “As Saints of Their First-fruits Brought”

“Thy lineage, like a vine, once spread and flourished in the land;

But now the vineyard fails, the fruit lies withered in the sand.

Restore to us a saving faith, the radiance of Thy face

To lighten and reveal the gift of Thy redeeming grace.”

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

Pew Bible, NT pg. 1

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

“O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort”

Johann W. Franck

~Chancel Choir

“O Jesus, grant me hope and comfort; O let me never in sorrow pine, my heart and soul, yea, all my being, O Jesus, trust alone in thee. Thou Prince of Peace, Thou Pearl from heaven, true God, true man, my Morning Star! **Refrain: O come thou precious Sun most radiant, thy beams illumine my heart and soul.** O Jesus, with thy advent quiet my restless soul and anxious mind. In true humility I welcome thee, Jesus Christ, my joy divine. My thoughts, desires, and all my longings I dedicate, O Christ, to thee. **Refrain.**”

©1939 ren. 1967 Paul a Schmitt Music Co. (Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp.)

Sermon

“Hope is Worth the Risk”

Rev. Emma Nickel



THANKSGIVING

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

“Dialogue from *Magnificat*”

Jean Francois Dandrieu

Public Domain

◇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 for Advent

One: We believe in God, robed in splendor, veiled in mystery, ruler alike of darkness and light.

All: We encounter God in Jesus Christ, who was tortured and put to death, but whose radiance could not be quenched; whose touch brings a blaze of color to a dull, drab world: reviving the weary, healing the wounded, dazzling the unsatisfied.

One: We walk with God guided by the light of God's loving spirit who enters the shadowed places of our hearts and leads us into truth and life.

All: We wait for God, and for the fulfillment of God's promises, for the time when the darkness will hold no fear and the light will no longer blind, but creation will be made whole once more and God's peace will reign forever. 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 (*see insert*)

“My Soul Gives Glory to My God”

Text: Miriam Therese Winter ©1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters; Music: Harm. ©1943, 1961, 1985 Church Pension Fund

◇ Benediction

Postlude

“Fugue on the *Magnificat*”

J. S. Bach
Public Domain

1 Today's prayers and liturgy are adapted from Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.”

LITURGIST

Linda Batcheller

FPCRO STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Emma Nickel

Dir. of Music Ministries/Organist: Joseph Jackson

Chancel Choir Dir.: Kent Wattleworth

Church Admin.: Kari Peruski

Admin. Assistant: Sally Gilreath

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

Nursery Care Worker: Abby Pochron

Dir. of Christian Education: Joelle Jarrait

Organ Scholar: John Etsell

Sunburst Singers Dir.: Audrey Frieberg

Facility Manager: Alan Glasel

Sunday/Evening Reception: Todd Crawford

Backyard Playroom Coordinator: Ashleigh McKnight

SOLOISTS

Bryan Clinthorne, *baritone*

Olivia Donnel, *soprano*

Brady DeVecchio, *tenor*

Audrey Frieberg, *soprano*

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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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chancel Flowers

Today's flowers are given by Todd Crawford in loving memory of his parents, Marge and Ray Crawford.

Join us for Fellowship Coffee Hour following worship in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. Thanks to the Gibbs and Curry families for hosting!

Advent Study: Mondays in December, 11am-12pm

Join Pastor Emma to read the short book *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes: An Advent Study*. Order your copy now! (<https://tinyurl.com/yczak8tf>) Also available on Kindle. This Advent study will help us anticipate the gift of Jesus as we explore the unique ways each of the gospel writers describes the incarnation. Read Week 4, John's House, for December 23.

Upcoming December S.T.A.G.E. Dates

Christmas Party on **December 15**, from 4:30-6:30pm at **First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak**. 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)

SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE



The Mitten Tree

The Mitten Tree in the CE Lobby is used to gather warm things for those who need a helping hand. Please think of what you might hang on the tree—gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, socks, etc. Our gifts will go to adults at the Welcome Inn and Second Mile Center, as well as kids at Second Mile Center and local schools in Royal Oak. The need is great! Thank you in advance. Questions? Contact Julie Matthews.

Christmas Eve Worship

Join us on **December 24** at one or both services to welcome the Christ child!

5pm—Family service with pageant and glow-sticks

7pm—Traditional service of candlelight and carols, held jointly with Drayton Presbyterian Church. **An organ prelude will begin at 6:45pm.**

Church Office Holiday Schedule

The church office and The Backyard Playroom will be closed for the holidays, December 25-27 and January 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

December 29 Family Worship

Our worship service on **Sunday, December 29** is a family worship time. Elementary-age children are encouraged to sit with their grown-ups so they may engage in worship. Younger children will have activities at the Playground. Nursery care will be available in the nursery.

Christmas Joy Special Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Offering envelopes are available today. Mark your gift 'Christmas Joy,' or donate online through our website and designate 'Christmas Joy,' or you may text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999 to give.

Year End Contributions

We welcome your gifts at any time during the year, but we know many folks like to offer year-end donations. If you would like to make such a contribution to FPCRO, please make sure it is delivered to the church or postmarked by December 31 to be included on your 2024 contribution statement. Otherwise, per IRS guidelines, it will appear on your 2025 giving statement. The church offices will be closed December 25, 26, and 27. We will be open 9am-1pm on December 30 and 31. Remember you can donate online on our website **fpcro.org** anytime by clicking on the "Give" tab.

FPCRO Family Game Night Party

The Worship & Nurture Committee is pleased to host a Family Game Night Party on **Saturday, January 4, 2025 from 2-4pm**. People of *all ages* are invited to bring their favorite game to share!

Ordination Service

Join FPCRO and the Presbytery of Detroit on **Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 2pm** to celebrate the ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament for FPCRO member Lon Kuehn. A reception will follow.

Men's Fellowship Group

The Men's Fellowship Group will gather at Bagger Dave's in Berkley (2972 Coolidge) starting at **7:30pm on Monday, January 6, 2025**. Join us for some multifarious topics of conversation. If you can't join us at 7:30pm, don't worry. Join us at 8pm or 8:30pm and you can find a place in one of the conversations.

Women's Fellowship Group

Women of all ages and stages are invited to participate for fellowship, friendship, and conversation. We'll meet at North End Taproom (111. S. Main St., Royal Oak) on **Monday, January 20, 2025 at 7pm**. The Taproom offers beverages, including non-alcoholic options, and food.
