

From the Pastor's Desk...

Friends,

I am still basking in Easter joy—and I hope you are, too. If you were able to worship with us in person or online for Easter Sunday, it was an incredible blessing to be together with so many folks to encounter the risen Christ! I think we really missed that kind of celebration and togetherness these past two years, so it all felt even more special and holy this year.

Sometimes there's a bit of an Easter slump in the weeks after the big day. We've all put a lot into Lenten preparation and practices; Holy Week takes a lot of emotional energy; and Easter tends to just be both wonderful and exhausting. But we have several special Sundays to look forward to during the seven weeks of Easter and a number of ways to serve and grow coming up, too.

Take note of these upcoming dates and look for more info in this newsletter about them:

- May 1 – 9 am Sunday service begins again in Evans Chapel
- May 7 – Grounds Cleanup from 9 am-12 noon
- May 8 – We celebrate a baptism in worship at the 10:30 am service!
- May 15 – Senior Sunday—We will celebrate our graduating high school seniors and be led by them in worship and song.
- May 18 – *Braiding Sweetgrass* book discussion on Zoom at 7:30 pm
- May 22 – Black Composer Sunday (one service at 10:30 am in the sanctuary)
- May 22 – Rise Against Hunger meal-packing event following the 10:30 am worship service, with lunch served. Please register now!

Please don't hesitate to contact me or the church office for more info on any of these events, or if you are in need of pastoral care in these days.

As I think about seeing signs of resurrection each day, these words from Walt Whitman are speaking to me:

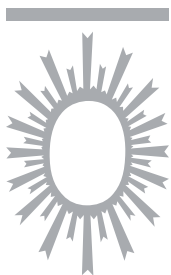
*Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.*

–Walt Whitman

May we be Easter people this season!

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.

*Please Note: On **May 22 & May 29** there will be one service only at 10:30 am.

our staff

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baritone **Noah Rogers**

soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

soprano **Olivia Donnel**

our soloists



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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.



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?



memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of Harold Teufel.

FOOD, RENTAL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Many Royal Oak households have experienced loss of employment or significant reduction in income due to COVID-19. Renters may be eligible for free financial assistance for unpaid rent and/or utilities dating back no more than six months.



The City of Royal Oak has contracted with South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse of Oakland County, and Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit to help keep low- to moderate-income Royal Oak renters from being evicted for non-payment.

Interested parties should contact Legal Aid and Defender Association to inquire about their eligibility for rent or utility assistance.

Additionally, those in need of free food, for a period not to exceed six consecutive months, can discuss opportunities with South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse.

South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse: 248-920-6000 ext: 5500. Legal Aid and Defender Association: 313-967-5555, royaloakcares@ladadetroit.org

EVANS CHAPEL WORSHIP SERVICE RESUMES

We are pleased to welcome worshippers back to our **9 am** Sunday worship service in Evans Chapel beginning **Sunday, May 1**. A new commercial air purifier has been installed in the chapel to increase ventilation and safety in the worship space. Make sure your friends know to join us for worship!

COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP RETURNS!

On the second Sunday of each month through August, Coffee Hour Fellowship after the 10:30 service will resume. The dates are May 8, June 12, July 10, and August 14. Volunteers and donations of goodies are always welcome. Contact Candace Rieck at **4ccrieck@gmail.com**. We look forward to seeing you there!



WALK FOR JUSTICE AT THE DETROIT ZOO

Join The Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic's **10th Annual Walk For Justice Fundraiser** at the Detroit Zoo **Saturday, May 14, 2022**. The event is \$40 for adults and free for kids. Registrants will receive parking and zoo entry, a Walk For Justice t-shirt, and access to the silent auction and kettle raffle which include many exciting items. For previews visit: **<http://www.walkforjustice.org/home-1.html>** and: **<https://www.facebook.com/williamboothlegalaid>**.

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 Ken Bissey
248.709.4849
for an information packet

Congregational News

HENDRIE PARKING LOT UPDATE

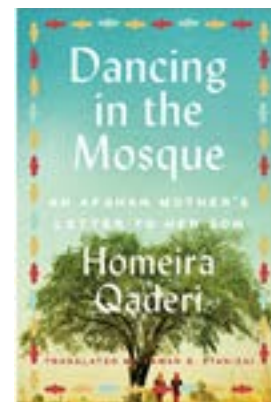
The congregation voted to authorize the sale of the Hendrie Blvd. parking lot at the special congregational meeting held on April 10, 2022. This authorization allows the church to move forward with efforts to sell the property to one or more builders or developers to build one or two new homes on that land. Approval to move forward with a sale must also be obtained from the Detroit Presbytery. Our proposal will be presented to the Presbytery's Board of Trustees at its meeting on May 3, 2022, and if approved, it will be presented to the full Presbytery on May 24, 2022. The land will be actively marketed once Presbytery gives its approval.

Information was offered at the congregational meeting about an offer received from a local builder. Unfortunately, that builder decided to back away from that deal. However, we remain optimistic about the ultimate prospects of a sale that will provide substantial benefits to the church.

Kevin Ball, Derek Helenberger, and Keith Weber are the members of the task force overseeing the sale of the Hendrie parking lot. **They will be available in the church parlor on May 1 after the 10:30 service to answer questions about selling the parking lot.**

BOOK CLUB RETURNS!

Starting **Tuesday, May 7**, the FPCRO Book Club will resume, meeting the **first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm** in the Pastor's Study. At this first meeting in May, the Book Club will discuss, *Dancing in the Mosque: An Afghan Mother's Letter to Her Son* by Homeira Qaderi. New and returning members are more than welcome to join the Book Club! Questions? Contact Adair Calder.



Devastating in its power, *Dancing in the Mosque* is a mother's searing letter to a son she was forced to leave behind. In telling her story—and that of Afghan women—Homeira challenges you to reconsider the meaning of motherhood, sacrifice, and survival. Her story asks you to consider the lengths you would go to protect yourself, your family, and your dignity.

Dr. Homeira Qaderi is a women's rights activist originally from Afghanistan. She has published six books in Afghanistan and Iran, some of which have received prestigious awards. *Dancing in the Mosque* is her first book in English.

Hands-On Mission—Sign Up Now!



FPCRO is participating as the host for the upcoming Rise Against Hunger meal packaging event scheduled for **May 22, 2022** from **12:30 to 3 pm** in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. Use the link below to volunteer for the event. As a reminder, all who plan to attend this event should register using this event page:

<http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/firstpresbyterianchurchofroyaloak>

Our goal is to pack 10,000 packages of food for distribution around the world and **we need 60 volunteers** to make it happen! Please check out Rise Against Hunger to see what they do: <https://www.riseagainsthunger.org/>

We will need volunteer help before, during, and after the event on May 22. Set-up will be between 8:00-9:30 am in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. After worship, a light lunch will be provided and then we will start packing. The S.T.A.G.E. youth from our church participated in a similar event at Greenfield Presbyterian this past autumn. It is an event for all, including children over the age of five. Please plan on joining us for an afternoon of fellowship and mission.

Thank you for sharing our vision of a world without hunger!

On **Sunday May 22**, our 10:30 am worship will celebrate the Spiritual as well as organ compositions by African American composers. All our soloists will be featured, and the choir will sing several wonderful spiritual arrangements. Organ music that day will be by Black composers and our congregational hymns will include much loved spirituals like “Balm in Gilead” and “Deep River.”

The following is a brief history of the Spiritual with thanks to “The Gospel Truth About Negro Spirituals” by Randye Jones and from an article by Pamela Crosby, executive director of Black Methodists for Church Renewal for “The Interpreter” magazine.

Negro spirituals are songs created by the Africans who were captured and brought to the United States to be sold into slavery. This stolen race was deprived of their languages, families, and cultures; yet, their masters could not take away their music. Over the years, these slaves and their descendants adopted Christianity, the religion of their masters. They re-shaped it into a deeply personal way of dealing with the oppression of their enslavement. Their songs reflected the slaves’ need to express their new faith.

They told stories, from Genesis to Revelation, with God’s faithful as the main characters. They sang about Moses and the Red Sea, the Hebrew children and Joshua and the Battle of Jericho. They could tell you about Mary, Jesus, God, and the Devil. If slaves couldn’t read the Bible, they would memorize Biblical stories they heard and translate them into songs.

The songs were also used to communicate with one another without the knowledge of their masters. The lyrics of “Steal Away” alerted slaves that a secret religious meeting would take place that night. An “invisible church” developed as a place where slaves truly could express their concerns. Meeting in the woods or arbors, out of sight of owners and overseers, the slaves were free to worship and praise and to offer unbridled prayers and requests to God. Other “codes” found in the first spirituals related to an escape to a free country. For example, “home” can mean Heaven, but it is also is a safe place where one can live free. “Crossing over Jordan” can mean crossing to heaven or crossing over into freedom. “Wade in the Water” and “Deep River” were used by Harriet Tubman, conductor of the Underground Railroad, to warn slaves to travel in the water to throw off their scent from the bloodhounds.

Spiritual were created extemporaneously and were passed on orally from person to person. These songs were improvised as suited the singers. There is a record of approximately 6,000 spirituals or sorrow songs; however, the use of oral tradition and the prohibition of slaves learning to read or write meant the actual number is unknown.

With the conclusion of the Civil War, and the ratification of the 13th amendment, most former slaves distanced themselves from the music of their captivity. It was through a group of singers from Fisk University in Nashville in the late 1870s, who began to tour to raise money for their financially strapped school, that the performance of spirituals was given a rebirth. The Fisk jubilee Singers not only carried spirituals to parts of the United States that had previously never heard Negro folk songs, the musically trained chorus traveled to Europe and performed for thousands.

In 1916, Harry Burleigh, arranged a plantation melody he heard as a child for voice and piano. “Deep River” is considered to be one of the first spirituals to be written in art song form specifically to be performed by a trained singer. Many great arrangers followed, and in addition to Burleigh there were names like Hall Johnson, Jester Hairston, Moses Hogan, John Work and Brazeal Denard.

Whether in a concert performance, joined in congregational singing, or just singing to oneself, spirituals must be sung with and understanding of what forced such powerful songs to rise up from the souls of the men and women who created them. The unknown creators of these songs may no longer be among us and may never be acknowledged for their work, but their longing for freedom and their abiding faith remain to fill our hearts each time we sing these emotionally charged songs.

Session has approved the opportunity to support an organization doing great work in the area of education at this service. The “Our Own Thing Chorale” was formed by internationally renowned bass/baritone and instructor at the University of Michigan, Willis Patterson. The chorale is committed to the preservation and performance of the Spiritual and contemporary works by African American composers. Through their Instructional Program they also provide free instrumental and vocal instruction to under-privileged children in the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor area. If you would like to contribute make your checks payable or mark your envelopes to “Our Own Thing Chorale.”

Compassion Camp: Changing the World with Lovingkindness

LOVINGKINDNESS



Sunday's at 10:30 am • July 10 – August 28

Compassion Camp is a program where kids explore what it means to have compassion for others, ourselves, and the world! Lovingkindness is the utmost form of selfless love toward ourselves and others. The practice begins with focusing on self-compassion because once we have compassion for ourselves, we can have compassion for others.

Our Compassion Camp will be held each Sunday during our weekly Sunday school time together. Children will begin in worship at 10:30 am and then move into the camp areas for stories and fun activities.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ON SUNDAYS FOR “COMPASSION CAMP”

Compassion Camp is set up as a VBS but will take place on Sunday mornings. We are looking for volunteers to help guide our little ones through the

activities. Whether you can help every Sunday or just specific dates, we would love to have you. Please contact Joelle Jarrait to sign up for a Sunday or Sundays to help.

Sunflowers Christian Preschool



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. We have managed to stay healthy and safe!

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-old class will finish the year with a fun outdoor day (hopefully) on the church grounds on Tuesday, May 24.

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 Wednesday, May 25 at 10:00 am 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

JOYFUL JOURNEYS SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our children are enjoying times of stories and fellowship in our weekly Sunday school class. As we move into warmer weather, we will spend some time outside at the church playground area. During May and June our theme is "Honor God's Diversity."



God calls us to honor diversity. When we recognize and celebrate the different gifts, abilities, and voices in all creation, we honor the diversity in the world that God has created. Lessons include:

- Differences and Similarities (Genesis 1:1-27)**
- Listen to Ones Left Out (Matthew 15:21-28)**
- Love Your Neighbor (Luke 10:25-37)**
- Make It Right (Luke 19:1-10)**

SENIOR SUNDAY IS MAY 15

FPCRO will honor all those graduating from high school during worship on **Sunday, May 15**. Seniors will also use their gifts to lead us in worship on this special day. May God bless their next endeavors and all the ways they use their gifts in the world!



KIRKMAN SCHOLARSHIP HONORS

Congratulations to our 2022 recipients!

- Meredith Batcheller**
- Hazumi Hagopian**
- Megan Hanks**
- Julia Harris**
- Kavanaugh Helenberger**
- Erin Lewand**
- Grace Watson**

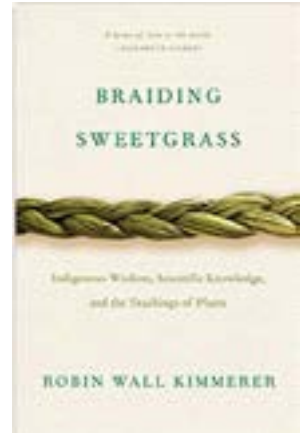


The Tom and Ruth Kirkman Scholarship is awarded to those in our church family who are pursuing higher education. The fund is named after Tom and Ruth Kirkman. Dr. Kirkman served as FPCRO pastor from 1955-1985. Congratulations to our recipients! May God continue to uphold you and may you feel the love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

ABOOKDISCUSSIONON CARINGFORCREATION

Wednesday, May 18 at 7:30 pm on Zoom, led by Luke DeVantier

Join us to discuss the best-seller *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The book helps



us think about the earth we have been given, how we are called to be stewards of it, and the knowledge we can learn from indigenous people. After our April focus on caring for creation, this discussion will be a next step in our efforts to take care of God's good world. Member Luke DeVantier will moderate the discussion.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88647098066>

Meeting ID: 886 4709 8066

PRESBYTERIAN WOMENSYNODOFTHE COVENANTGATHERING

July 29–July 30 at First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn



The regional Presbyterian Women Gathering is being held in Dearborn this year! The theme is **"Hope Renewed—New Visions Imagined."** During the event there will be a Plenary address by Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel, author of the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study "Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight." The keynote speaker is Susan Jackson Dowd, PW Executive Director. Her topic is "Hope Renewed with Grassroots Action." There will be workshops, worship, communion, fellowship and a business meeting. Be sure to join us for a meaningful event with Presbyterian Women from around our Synod!

More information and registration forms are available on the counter at the reception desk. You can also contact Joelle Jarrait for more information.

**Worship with us at 9 am & 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

529 Hendrie Blvd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



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opportunities for all ages!
servicing • learning • growing

find us on:



Special Dates in May at FPCRO



May 1 • Evans Chapel 9 am Worship Service Resumes

May 5 • National Day of Prayer

May 7 • FPCRO Book Club Resumes

May 8 • Mother's Day / Coffee Hour Fellowship

May 14 • Walk for Justice at the Detroit Zoo

May 15 • Senior Sunday

May 18 • Caring for Creation Book Discussion

**May 22 • Black Composer Sunday featured in worship;
Rise Against Hunger Event
(one service only at 10:30 am)**

May 26 • Ascension of the Lord Day

May 29 • One worship service only at 10:30 am

May 30 • Memorial Day (Church Office Closed)