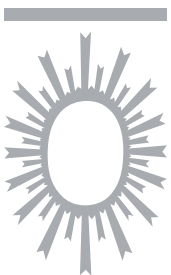


Church Bell



fpcro

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dearest friends,

In November, I attended a preaching conference at my alma mater, Princeton Theological Seminary. When the opening worship service was over, I said to a friend, "is this what regular people feel like when they leave worship?" All of us were buoyed up, feeling the presence of God and one another. We were joyful from the music and uplifted by the prayers!

I usually feel good when I leave our worship services, too. But it's different when I am leading than when I am worshipping in the pew. In worship leadership, there is a sense of responsibility, of taking care of the congregation's needs, of ensuring we are following the 'script' so everything goes smoothly. My attention is on God but also on the running of the service itself.

At the conference, I got to participate in the 'pick-up choir' where we learned an anthem with a couple of descants, verses, and a refrain in about 20 minutes before we sang it in the service. Our singing wasn't perfect by any means, but it was spirit- and joy-filled! We heard the Word preached by one of our beloved professors and enjoyed the beauty of the chapel we remembered so well. At the service, it was refreshing to let go of our usual responsibilities and just be present to God through what was being said and sung and read.

This Advent and Christmas season, I hope that worship, whether at church or at home, can be as meaningful for you as it was for me on that Monday night in New Jersey. And so I invite you to be intentional about how you approach worship and prepare for it this season. After all, Advent is all about preparation to welcome God.

Can you come prepared with particular questions in your own life about which you can be listening for guidance?

Beforehand, might you focus on setting aside—or handing over to God—the things weighing you down in order to clear your heart and mind?

Could you write down one meaningful phrase during worship to take home with you to wonder and pray about in the week ahead?

During Advent, our worship services will include an Invitation to Discipleship each week. This part of worship is not an 'altar-call.' It's a real-life way to consider how you can live out your faith in the real world. It's a tangible way to make worship meaningful in the context of your daily life.

As we journey through this season together, it may be the familiar songs, the lit candles, the evergreens, and the scripture readings you've heard many times before that speak to you. It may be that God offers you something totally unexpected in what you experience. Or it may also be that you are seeking something that doesn't, in the end, turn up by the time we get to Christmas. No matter the specifics, I pray that your moments spent in worship are at times refreshing, joy-filled, meaningful, and draw you closer to the presence of God, who is with us in Jesus Christ.

With Advent expectation,

Pastor Emma



In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:
9 am in Evans Chapel,
and 10:30 am in
the sanctuary.
**On December 18 & 25,
one service only at
10:30 am.**

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 at
10:15 am.

our staff

pastor/head of staff, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**
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tenor **Brady DelVecchio**
soprano **Olivia Donnel**
soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

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 in order to maintain current and up-to-date member records.

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.



Reflect on your star word journey this year. Where has it taken you? What have you learned?



COOKIES AND COCOA AT CHURCH!

Bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies to church with you on **Sunday, December 11**. We'll share with each other after the 10:30 am worship service as we enjoy a warm cup of cocoa. Drop off your goodies in the Christian Education lobby when you arrive at the service and our Deacons will have everything set up to enjoy following the worship service.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

On **Sunday, December 11** at 12 pm, after the 10:30 am worship service, please join in with other church members as we go caroling. We will visit members' homes to sing Christmas carols and bring smiles to faces. Christmas carols all sound beautiful whoever sings them! Please dress for the weather as this is an outdoor activity. We will drive between homes. Come and enjoy this special activity.



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.



memorials & gifts

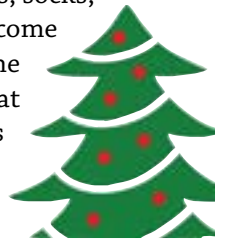
Memorial gifts were given in memory of

Jane Makulski, Nancy Marsh, Pam Moultrup, and Bill Roberts.

A gift was given to the Kirkman Scholarship Fund in honor of Tom and Ruth Kirkman.


THE MITTEN TREE

Please think about what you will hang on the Mitten Tree we use to gather warm things for those less fortunate than ourselves—gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, socks, etc. Our gifts will go to adults at the Welcome Inn, Second Mile Center, and on the streets of Detroit, as well as children at Second Mile Center and at local schools in Royal Oak. The need is great! Thank you in advance. Questions? Contact Julie Matthews at 248-647-3796.



ANGEL TREE PROGRAM

As the busy holiday season arrives, we're grateful for our blessings but are also aware of struggling families in our community. The Salvation Army has asked for our help to make Christmas brighter for area children who might not receive gifts. The Salvation Army invites us to purchase new, unwrapped gifts for different age groups. Gift suggestions by age group are on tags which are available in the CE lobby. There are also two QR codes available to scan and have your gift sent directly to the Salvation Army. Bring **unwrapped** gifts to church by **Thursday, December 8**.

COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN
 Contact Ken Bissey
 248.709.4849
 for an information packet

Congregational News

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

Join us this Advent season as we travel with the prophet Isaiah to prepare our hearts for Christmas.

November 27—First Sunday of Advent, one worship service at 10:30 am

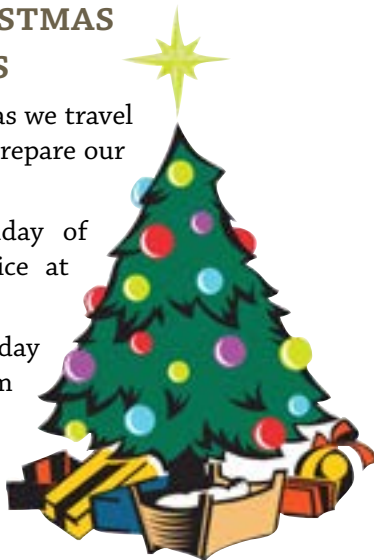
December 4—Second Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am and 10:30 am

December 11—Third Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am and 10:30 am

December 18—Fourth Sunday of Advent, one worship service at 10:30 am with Lessons and Carols, featuring the Chancel Choir

December 24—Family Worship and Pageant at 5 pm
Traditional Service at 7 pm

December 25—Christmas Day, one worship service at 10:30 am to tell the Christmas story through carols



IMPORTANT INFO ABOUT SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

Youth Sunday is coming! This year, **Greenfield Presbyterian Church** in Berkley is hosting our **S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sunday** worship services on **January 15 at 9 am and 11 am**. We want to boldly support our youth, so there will be **no worship services in the church building at FPCRO on January 15, 2023**. The whole congregation is invited to worship at Greenfield Presbyterian (2312 Greenfield Road, Berkley) at 9 am or 11 am to hear our youth preach, offer music, and lead us in prayer. S.T.A.G.E. stands for *Somewhere To Ask God Everything* and is a collaborative ministry among FPCRO, Greenfield, Drayton Presbyterian, and Cana Lutheran Church.



LITURGISTS IN WORSHIP

Are you comfortable with public speaking? Do you love God and love to serve the church? Do you want to try something new? Pastor Emma and the Worship and Music Committee invite church members and friends to serve as liturgists in the new year. If you are able and willing to serve, please contact Pastor Emma to be added to the weekly schedule.



AN 'ODYSSEY' FOR THE MOTAKHASIV FAMILY

Thanks to the dedication, support, and commitment of our church family, along with Dave Nelson and his son, Scott, the Motakhasiv's now have a gently used minivan! Dave was also instrumental in helping with Abdul Basir to take the written test in order to obtain a driver's license. Pictured below are Dave with Abdul Basir, ODY (the car the church purchased), and Abdul Basir with Scott Nelson.



The Campaign theme for Stewardship 2023-2024 is **Strong • Open • Ready**. We will highlight and celebrate our congregation's **Strength** as Christians in this church; our **Openness** to God, each other and our community; and our **Readiness** to follow God into new ventures. Look

for information and messaging during the Stewardship Campaign in the new year.

The Chancel Choir will lead us in worship on **December 18**, with one service only at 10:30, in the traditional service of Lessons & Carols. This



is a service of worship in which the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus are told in nine short Bible readings or lessons from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of carols, hymns, and anthems.

Although the tradition of Lessons & Carols is popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge, its origins are attributed to Truro Cathedral in Cornwall. Rev. Edward White Bensen, Bishop of Truro, concerned at the excessive consumption of alcohol in Cornish pubs during the Christmas season, sought a means of attracting revelers out of the pubs and into the church by offering a religious celebration of Christmas. The idea for a service consisting of Christmas Music with Bible readings was proposed and the first Service of Lessons & Carols was held on Christmas Eve of 1880.

Taking advantage of the established choral tradition of the King's College Chapel Choir, the service was introduced there in 1918 and has been done annually ever since. The service increased in popularity when the BBC began to broadcast it in 1928 and it has been heard every year since. Lessons & Carols at King's Chapel helped to popularize the service, spreading this idea to schools, chapels, and churches around the world.

The first known celebration of this service in the United States was at The Groton School in Massachusetts in 1928, and the oldest service in an American parish church was at St. Thomas in Hanover, NH, where the service has been done annually since 1935.

The main theme of the Service of Lessons & Carol is the development of the loving purposes of God seen through the windows and words of the Bible. This service reminds us what Christmas is truly about and unites us across space and time with Christians around the world today and in the past who have listened to the same readings and have sung the same songs.

CHORAL SCHOLARS

A few years ago, funds from the Earla Smith Foundation allowed us to begin the Choral Scholar program. Each year we have sought out high school students who love choral singing to come and be a part of the music program here at FPCRO to learn and worship with us.

What a joy it has been to welcome these young people to our program. They have been warmly welcomed, learned a lot of music, and enhanced our choir with their voices.

This year we have three scholars with us, and this month, I would like to introduce you to one of them, **Jacob Gonzales**. Jacob is a junior at Berkley High School where he sings in two of the auditioned choirs, Encore and Acapella. He is very active in the school's theater program, having performed in numerous stage productions. Jacob loves music because it helps connect people in ways that words alone can't, and he is so thankful for the opportunity to sing with the amazing FPCRO choir. He hopes to major in film when he is in college, and in his spare time he writes, directs and acts in films with his friends.

We are very proud of being able to nurture these young people as they also earn funds for their work. If we wonder if what we are doing matters, read the following letter from former scholar Jill Gerhart:

Being a choral scholar played a very important role in my musical journey. It was also super fun as well! I loved getting to sing and collaborate with everyone in the group. Everybody was so welcoming and I enjoyed how everyone would be laughing and making jokes one minute and then singing a complicated and serious piece of music the next. Everybody took their work seriously but knew how to have fun.

I really enjoyed having more complex music than I normally would have had in high school. Being given a piece of music and asked to sing it immediately was a shock for me at first, but overall, it really did help with my ability to sight read. The process of how we learned new music in rehearsals was very similar to how I learned music in my advanced college choir. Without learning this complex music at a rapid pace, I would have not been prepared AT ALL for choir in college.

It was also an amazing experience being able to make money by singing and being in choir. As someone who wanted to (and still wants to!) do music as a career, it was so fulfilling to be able to have the opportunity to do that and really reinforced how much I wanted to keep doing music.

Ever since my time at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, I have been accepted to various music schools, been awarded musical scholarships, got into an advanced college choir which frequently tours the United States and Europe and works closely with renowned composers such as Stacey Gibbs, and I was able to tour the country of Spain over the summer and perform in churches that are over hundreds of years old with my choir.

If I didn't have the opportunity to become a choral scholar, I would not have been as prepared to study music in college. I hope other students are able to have the same opportunity as me because being a choral scholar really did help me and my musicianship.

~Jill Gerhart, 2019-2020 Choral Scholar

House and Grounds

The House and Grounds Committee would like to thank everyone who came out to help with our Fall Grounds Clean Up on November 5. We filled sixty-four leaf bags with leaves, cuttings, and garden debris. In between filling bags, volunteers enjoyed refreshments of apple cider and donuts. The committee would especially like to thank the following:

Ellen Burns, Greg Gillham, James Hanks, Derek Helenberger, Scott, Jack, & Charlotte Kortlandt, Bob Lengjel, Gail Meengs, Ginny O'Brien, Barb Stafford, Roger Watson, Ted & Carol Wedepohl

We apologize if we missed anyone who was there but didn't make it onto the sign-up sheet.



"GO TELL" ADVENT SUNDAY SCHOOL

During Advent, our children will explore the "Go Tell" lessons from the PCUSA curriculum Follow Me. It will be a time to hear the Christmas story and learn how we can share the exciting news.

Tell the Right Story (Matthew 25:34-40; Luke 4:16-21, 46-55)

Break the Good News (Luke 1:1-25, 57-80; John 1:1-18)

Join the Chorus (Isaiah 58:6-9a; Acts 8:26-39)

Tell of the Hope within You (Jeremiah 32:1-44; Luke 2:8-20)



FAMILY WORSHIP DECEMBER 25 AND JANUARY 1, 2023

During worship on Christmas morning and New Year's morning, children will be in worship for the full service for family worship. Our Prayground will have quiet worship activities for all ages. Children are invited to sit with their families or with Ms. Joelle.

On New Year's morning, **Sunday, January 1, 2023**, children are invited to wear their pajamas to worship! Join us as we welcome in the new year offering praise to God.



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.

December Child of God — Gracie Ross

Gracie lives with her mom and dad, Melissa and Brad Ross. Her favorite thing to do is go on vacation as a family. Gracie is a 5th grader at Ferndale Upper Elementary. What's her favorite thing about school? *"We have a class called Maker Space every Friday where we get to make things from scratch."* What are your hobbies? *"Collecting pencils, acting, singing and performing."*

Some fun facts about Gracie: She can play several instruments including piano, recorder, drums and violin. She is also an actor and loves to perform. Gracie loves coming to church and is a special part of our congregation. She loves the lessons she receives when she's at church. Gracie has two cats who are siblings: Sunny is an orange-colored male and his sister, Ginger, is ginger-colored. Gracie and Ginger have a special connection with one another.

Sunflowers Christian Preschool



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! How exciting it is to prepare for the birth of our Lord with His smallest followers. We will spend the days of December preparing our hearts and classroom for Jesus' birth.

Our three-year-old class continues to work on socialization, fine motor skills and literacy, while our four-year-old class continues their weekly alphabet study, along with math exploration. Both classes will decorate our classroom and hallway and work on wonderful surprises to share with their families.

We will also celebrate Jesus' birth by sharing our love for others with warm hats, scarves and mittens placed on the Mitten Tree as our monthly mission project. In November, our families were very generous with nonperishable food items for our little food pantry for the holiday season.

Our biggest project of the month will be rehearsing for our annual Christmas Concert! It will be on December 16 at 10:00 am in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. The kids will be singing the songs they've worked so hard on and present them for all the families. Christmas blessings to you all!

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue

**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

529 Hendrie Blvd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



fpcro

opportunities for all ages!
servicing • learning • growing

find us on:



Advent and Christmas Worship Services at FPCRO

Nov 27 • 1st Sunday of Advent, one worship service at 10:30 am

Dec 4 • 2nd Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

Dec 11 • 3rd Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

**Dec 18 • 4th Sunday of Advent, one worship service at 10:30 am
with Lessons and Carols, featuring the Chancel Choir**

**Dec 24 • Christmas Eve: 5 pm, Family Worship and Pageant;
7 pm, Traditional Service**

Dec 25 • Christmas Day, one worship service at 10:30 am

**Jan 1 • 1st Sunday of Christmas,
one worship service at 10:30 am**

**Jan 15 • S.T.A.G.E. Youth Sunday at
Greenfield Presbyterian Church, 9 am & 11 am
*no worship services in FPCRO church building***