

*From the Pastor's Desk...*

Friends,

This season feels very Lent-y to me. Many among us are carrying difficult challenges, experiencing deep loss, or facing worries about the future. I also find the return to a presidential election year a bit wearying, even as I strongly believe in the need to participate in our democratic process. And even if ongoing wars cease, the upheaval, death, and destruction they leave in their wake will not. What can people of faith do in the face of all that?

At the simplest, we can do things that constitute gratitude and discipleship: checking in on loved ones, being honest and caring with people who are struggling without papering over their sorrow with platitudes, donating money to causes that contribute to the common good. We can speak honestly, but listen with even more openness, when we talk about difficult issues. We can pray, bring food to those who need it, and make sure we are working toward peace in our own small families and communities.

As we journey toward Holy Week and Easter, we also prepare ourselves to encounter the stories of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. Those are not easy stories to live with either. We sometimes don't know what to do with them, just as we don't know what to do with the hard things in our lives. When it all feels overwhelming, we can zero in on one thing Jesus shared with his disciples, what we often call the "love commandment." On Maundy Thursday, Jesus said, "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." When we don't know what else to do, we can act with love.

A short poem from Emily Dickinson, "I had no time to Hate," encourages us toward love.

*I had no time to Hate—  
Because  
The Grave would hinder Me—  
And Life was not so  
Ample I  
Could finish—Enmity—  
Nor had I time to Love—  
But since  
Some Industry must be—  
The little Toil of Love—  
I thought  
Be large enough for Me—  
~Emily Dickinson*

May you be blessed to give and receive love this season.

*Pastor Emma*



Church  
Bell



fpcro

## In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:  
9 am in Evans Chapel,  
and 10:30 am in  
the sanctuary.  
**See Easter Worship  
schedule on next page.**

## 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.

*pastor/head of staff, enickel@fpcro.org* **Rev. Emma Nickel**  
*parish associate, nnichols@fpcro.org* **Rev. Neeta Nichols**  
*director of music ministries & organist, jjackson@fpcro.org* **Joseph Jackson**  
*chancel choir director, kwattleworth@fpcro.org* **Kent Wattleworth**  
*sunburst singers director, afriberg@fpcro.org* **Audrey Frieberg**  
*director of christian education, jjarrait@fpcro.org* **Joelle Jarrait**  
*church administrator, kperuski@fpcro.org* **Kari Peruski**  
*S.T.A.G.E. youth ministry director, stageyouth@gmail.com* **Jessica Gibbs**  
*administrative assistant, sgilreath@fpcro.org* **Sally Gilreath**  
*evening reception/security, tcrawford@fpcro.org* **Todd Crawford**  
*preschool director, preschool@fpcro.org* **Sarah Gibson**  
*preschool teacher* **Beth Heitchue**  
*facility manager, aglasel@fpcro.org* **Alan Glasel**  
*nursery care worker* **Julia Carroll**  
*wedding coordinator, weddings@fpcro.org* **Ginny O'Brien**  
*newsletter editor* **Sandra Olah**

*baritone* **Bryan Clinthorne**  
*tenor* **Brady DelVecchio**  
*soprano* **Olivia Donnel**  
*soprano* **Audrey Frieberg**

## our staff

## our soloists



First Presbyterian Church  
of Royal Oak

529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak MI 48067  
248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859  
www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro



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:

Jean Lichtenberg, January 27, 2024



### Baptisms:

Flynn Matthew Coates and Fiona Marie Coates, son and daughter of Cassie and Sean Coates February 11, 2024

In this season of Lent, what repentance or self-examination has come from your star word so far?



## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Men's Fellowship Group will gather on **Monday, March 11 at 7:30pm** at Bagger Dave's (2972 Coolidge Hwy) in Berkley. Some of the topics of discussion at February's gathering included book reviews, Super Bowl (game & commercials), Lions, Hitchcock movies, streaming services, Red Wings, neurology, shark movies, genealogy, travel, and tech issues. If you feel like you missed out on these stimulating topics, or have one of your own for the group, please feel free to join us for a return visit or your first time. Contact Derek Helenberger or Matthew Nickel for more information.



## 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

*Memorials gifts were received in memory of*

*Jean Lichtenberg and Katherine Voghtman.*

*A gift for the Choral Scholar program was received in honor of Marilyn Sutton.*

*A gift for the Technology Fund was received in honor of Greg Gillham's birthday.*

## MAUNDY THURSDAY SOUP SUPPER

Join us for a Soup Supper at **6pm** before the **Maundy Thursday Worship service on March 28.**

We'll have a simple meal of soup and crackers and conversation at the table. Then we'll head to **worship at 7pm.**

To make the meal possible, we are looking for volunteers to provide a crock pot of soup to share. Signup if you can donate one: <http://tinyurl.com/2uardv6x>. The Deacons and Worship and Nurture Committee are co-hosting the event.




## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES

**Maundy Thursday, March 28:**  
6pm Soup Supper, 7pm Worship

**Good Friday, March 29:**  
7pm Worship

**Easter Sunday, March 31:**  
9am and 11am Worship Services with brass accompaniment

**COLUMBARIUM**  
*Contact the church office for an information packet*



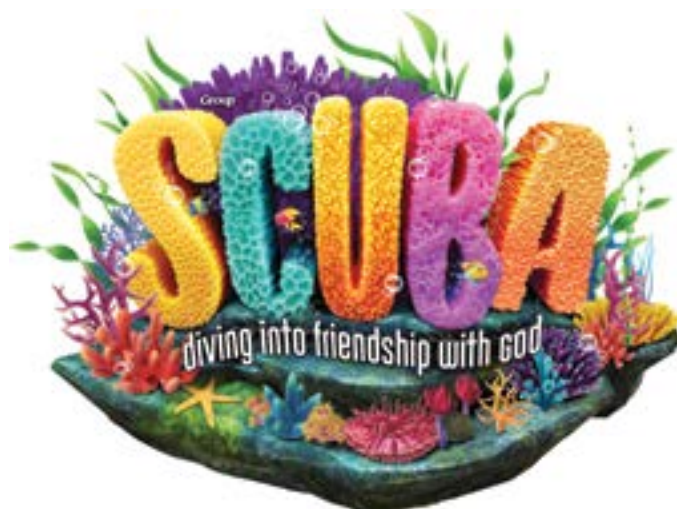
# Worship and Nurture

**TOM AND RUTH  
KIRKMAN  
SCHOLARSHIP  
FUND FOR  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION**



## Applications Due March 31

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. 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).



**REGISTER TODAY!**

**SCUBA VBS**

**June 24-28 • 9am-12pm**

**<http://tinyurl.com/yc42r5m8>**



Children will receive a free gift when they register!

## WE'RE LOOKING FOR SCUBA VBS VOLUNTEERS!

Our 2024 VBS is June 24-28! This is a wonderful week of sharing God's word with our church children and the children of our community. We are looking for volunteers for a variety of areas. Not only do we need helpers during the event, but also helpers for planning and designing sets and props. Please visit our sign-up genius at <https://tinyurl.com/mr53bmrf> to join in on the fun!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS!

**Palm Sunday is March 24**—Our Sunburst Singers will meet at 9:30am in the Parlor to practice with Ms. Audrey. There will be regular Sunday school. **Easter Sunday is March**

**31**—Easter Worship will be a time for family worship. Our playground will be available with quiet activities.

## ADVENTURE IN WORSHIP

Be sure to join us for Adventure in Worship on **Saturday, March 2 from 3pm-5pm**. Children of all ages are invited to attend with their grown-ups! There will be opportunities to learn about worship including baptism, communion, and organ music. Child care will be available for families with infants and toddlers.



## CHILDREN'S COLLECTION FOR ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

During Lent, children are collecting for One Great Hour of Sharing with their fish banks. They have an opportunity to collect coins as they talk with their families about the things they are grateful to have in their own life. Children are invited to return their banks to church on **Palm Sunday, March 24**.



## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A STEPHEN MINISTER?

*Do you need a listening ear? Could you use a regular visit or phone call from a caring friend?*

FPCRO is blessed to have Stephen Ministers who provide confidential care and conversation to those struggling with life's challenges. Through grief, transition, or perhaps a scary diagnosis, we are there to lend an ear and offer Christian care. If you feel this is something that would be helpful to you, please contact Pastor Emma, Gretchen Hirsch, or Joelle Jarrait.



## A HIGHER CALLER: WHAT JESUS ASKS OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW

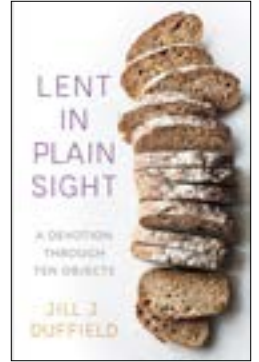
During Lent this year, we'll read scriptures in Mark's gospel that show us the high calling of discipleship. This kind of life is not for the faint of heart. Jesus asks much of those who follow him.



And God's grace goes with us as we pursue the life of discipleship. Consider whether there is a spiritual practice you would like to take on during the season of Lent this year. Maybe joining the Lenten book study, taking a day of Sabbath each week, or something else.

## LENT IN PLAIN SIGHT DISCUSSION GROUP

Join Pastor Emma in reading *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects* by Jill Duffield. Read one devotion per day, and gather at the church for discussion of each week's readings on **Wednesdays from 1pm-2pm, through March 27**. God is often at work through



ordinary people and objects. These devotions highlight ordinary objects Jesus would have encountered on his way to Jerusalem: dust, bread, the cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns, and stones. As we follow the Biblical account of Jesus' final days, we will find meaning in the ordinary corners of our lives as well.

# Sunflowers Christian Preschool



As March begins, we hope spring is on its way! This month, our preschoolers will be watching the weather to see if March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Blue is the color of the month, so we'll look at the sky hoping for blue and paint something blue.

March is reading month, and during it the three-year-olds will learn an assortment of nursery rhymes to say and act out with accompanying art work. The four-year-olds will have reading logs so they can share with each other books they especially liked, or maybe didn't like. We will also focus on a special author, Eric Carle, and read lots of his books. We will display special art work around our room based

on his stories. During center time on Fridays, we will continue to work on language and math activities and do fun science projects.

Registration for the 2024-25 school year has begun. If you are interested in enrolling your child, or know someone who might be interested in preschool, please call 248-541-0108 x220 so we may mail out registration information to you. Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15am to 11:45am. Our four-year-olds meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:15am to 12noon. We'd love to introduce you to our wonderful program! Come see for yourself.

*Mrs. Heitchue and Mrs. Gibson*



## Mission in Service

### FORGOTTEN HARVEST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

FPCRO has reserved spots to volunteer in the Oak Park Forgotten Harvest warehouse on **Saturday, March 16 from 9am-12pm**. Volunteers must be at least 10 years of age. Please sign up on the link provided: <http://tinyurl.com/26nf8h45>

We will then provide you with more information about signing up on the Forgotten Harvest website. Please contact Edie Watson or the church for more information.

Forgotten Harvest is fighting hunger and food insecurity in Metro Detroit by picking up food from over 520 food donors. Volunteers then clean and repack food into family-sized portions which are distributed to families in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. Their team delivers 144,000 pounds of surplus food per day to local charities.



## Save the Date

### SPRING GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

Please save the date of **Saturday, May 4, from 9am to 12noon** for this year's Spring Grounds Clean-Up. Plan to join us as we ready the church's flower beds and grounds for the growing season. *Saturday, May 11 is the rain date.* Thank you!

–House & Grounds Committee



## Scholarships for Student in Education

Each year, the Detroit Area Chapter of Pi Lambda Theta (an international educational honor society), awards 10 scholarships of \$2,500 to students in education at any Michigan college or university who will be doing their student teaching in the next school year.

Below are the six requirements (which were written when the scholarship was established). They are:

1. A GPA of 3.5 or above
2. A statement of need
3. Two references
4. A copy of an official student transcript
5. Explanation of a volunteer project for his/her community or house of worship
6. Innovative ideas for their classrooms

Most teacher preparation programs require two student-teaching placements, during which time the students is not

allowed to work, yet still has to pay for the total of 14 credit hours for the two semesters involved. This scholarship aims to offer the financial assistance needed during the student-teaching period.

If you know a student who fits the criteria, please contact Barbara Weiskopf. (Barbara is a member of the State Employees Retirement Association (SERA), who rent Kirkman Fellowship Hall for their monthly meetings at FPCRO.)

Barbara Weiskopf may be contacted via email at [oldscout36@gmail.com](mailto:oldscout36@gmail.com) or by phone at 248-968-2799. Inquiries may be mailed to her at: 14520 Balfour St., Oak Park, MI 48237. All required documents must be received no later than April 15, 2024. Scholarship awardees will be notified by May 30, 2024



As our annual giving campaign concludes, the Generosity and Resources Committee is grateful for all our church members and friends who have thoughtfully and generously made a pledge for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. We have had a fun and creative year! It started with yummy baked goods at our Presbyterian Baking Showcase, highlighting how God has abundantly worked through the lives of our church family through gifts of music and art, and finishing with donuts and art shared from your homes that bring joy at the Abundant Life Art Share. Thank you for your enthusiastic support and care of FPCRO. If you have not yet made your pledge and wish to do so, it's not too late! Contact the church to receive a pledge card or pledge online by visiting <https://www.fpcro.org/copy-of-give>.



## Monthly Spotlight:

### Grounds Maintenance

Everything outside of the church building, including the garage, is considered “grounds” and thus falls under grounds expenses.

#### Fun Facts:

- We contract our lawn maintenance and snow removal to Total Lawn Care, and our weeding to Ellen’s Gardening. Last summer, weekly cutting and trimming of our grass cost \$85. We pay on an hourly basis for weeding of the garden beds.
- Our snow removal and salting contract is an annual cost of \$13,500. We pay this rate no matter how many snowfalls we get during the winter. Typically, we find this is to our advantage when there is average or above snowfall.
- Minor parking lot repairs and patching are budgeted in our annual general operating budget. By patching and re-stripping our parking lots on a regular basis, we can lengthen the times between when it needs asphalt.
- Boy Scouts Dan Kline and Aiden Davis chose the FPCRO garage for their Eagle Scout project. Dan changed boards and painted the exterior, and Aiden helped clear the contents and build shelves in the interior.



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

[www.fpcro.org](http://www.fpcro.org) • [facebook.com/fpcro](https://www.facebook.com/fpcro)

instagram: [fpcro1914](https://www.instagram.com/fpcro1914)

529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

248.541.0108



**fpcro** *Spirituality • Service • Sharing*

find us on:



## March 2024 Special Dates

- Mar 1 • World Day of Prayer
- Mar 2 • Adventure in Worship, 3-5pm
- Mar 6 • Lent in Plain Sight Discussion Group, 1pm
- Mar 10 • Daylight Saving Time Begins
- Mar 11 • Men's Fellowship Group, 7:30pm
- Mar 13 • Lent in Plain Sight Discussion Group, 1pm
- Mar 16 • Forgotten Harvest, 9am-12pm
- Mar 19 • First Day of Spring
- Mar 20 • Lent in Plain Sight Discussion Group, 1pm
- Mar 24 • Palm/Passion Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing Collection
- Mar 27 • Lent in Plain Sight Discussion Group, 1pm
- Mar 28 • Maundy Thursday, 6pm Soup Supper, 7pm Worship Service
- Mar 29 • Good Friday, 7pm Worship Service
- Mar 31 • Easter Sunday, 9am & 11am Worship Services with brass
- Mar 31 • Kirkman Scholarship Fund Applications Due

