

From the Pastor's Desk...

My dear friends,

I feel hope every time I stand to lead worship in the sanctuary filled with longtime members and new faces. I feel hope when members reach out to me asking for prayer and support from their church family. I feel hope when I see our children laughing together and playing with their church friends. God is deeply present in our congregation. God is building hope among us.

This month, our **Building Hope campaign** takes off! The campaign is a vision for our future as a congregation that invites and nurtures all people—regardless of ability or condition—and that offers spiritual shelter and enrichment for Christ's disciples. The campaign is also a unifying generosity journey. In that sense, it is a calling that will help us meet our financial goal of \$900,000 and a way to unleash generosity as a spiritual practice that God uses to shape our whole lives.

I'm excited for the ways our vision and goal equip us to continue our ministries and expand them. Because of this congregation's commitment, we will be able to welcome more families to the Backyard Playroom when we have a restored elevator to ferry strollers between floors. We will enjoy worship in a space that reflects the wonder of God's love and helps us connect with all that is holy. We will host events in Kirkman Fellowship Hall and know that people in wheelchairs and scooters can join us just the same as those who use the stairs. We will be confident in making firm plans for the future because we can heat our building and keep our ceilings dry with strong roofs.

Not all of the projects are glossy ones! Just like in home improvements, we often need to invest in the infrastructure so our house continues to stand strong. The same goes for this house of God. With this campaign, we are investing in the essential underpinnings of ministry, so that we can continue to respond to Christ's Spirit which is on the loose among us.

Every aspect of this campaign has surprised and delighted me! The campaign team has brought a wealth of ideas and expertise. The staff have embraced this new initiative and contributed their many gifts to make it a success. We have had strong gifts in our advance commitments. In all these ways, there has already been an outpouring of generosity. Yet I have hope and trust there is so much more to come. We are praying for each person to listen for God's leading and to contribute in the way God calls.

Plan to join us for our launch on **Sunday, November 2**, for the start of our Building Hope worship series, and for a light lunch and short presentation about the campaign after worship. Look for your packet in the mail with a brochure and pledge card. And join me in sharing your pledge on or before **Sunday, November 23**, when we will dedicate all our gifts and commitments.

Pastor Emma



In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship is at 10:30am
in the sanctuary.

Livestream Worship

Sundays at 10:30am watch worship
on Vimeo, Facebook or YouTube.
(Or anytime later in the day/week.)

Sunday School for children pre-K through 5th grade begins after the *Time with Children* in worship. The nursery is open for infant and toddler care.

our staff

pastor/head of staff, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**
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newsletter editor **Gretchen Hirsch**

baritone **Bryan Clinthorne**
soprano **Olivia Donnel**
soprano **Audrey Frieberg**
tenor **Kayvon Kashani-Gharavi**

our soloists



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The **Church Bell** is published monthly
September through June. Email
contributions to newsletter@fpcro.org.
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.



OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Ro Gregory, September 13, 2025



How could you use your star word and your journey with it to teach someone about faith?



HANGING OF THE GREENS

Join us after worship on **Sunday, November 23**, to hang greenery and wreaths throughout the church building. Lend a hand to fluff bows or put up trees. We need a few brave and sturdy folks to hang Advent banners in the sanctuary. Thank you for your help to prepare us for this season!



ADVENT BEGINS NOVEMBER 30

Advent is the season leading up to Christmas that helps us prepare our hearts for the arrival of Jesus—both in the manger and in our lives today! This year, our theme will be **Out of the Blue**. We'll explore moments of surprise, occasions of awe, and instances of inspiration as we discover the astonishment of God's work and purposes. No matter how much we learn about scripture and faith, God never ceases to surprise us with wonder and awe!



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 chair of the Generosity and Resources Committee. All information given will remain confidential.



memorials & gifts

*Memorial gifts
were given
in memory of
Jean Russell and Ro Gregory.*

BUILDING HOPE KICK-OFF, NOV 2

Building Hope is FPCRO's campaign seeking your financial gifts to support necessary repairs and improvements within the church, but it is also much more. Don't miss the kick-off to our Building Hope campaign on **Sunday, November 2**. In worship, hear how **hope is what we do!** After worship, join us for a special reception to build our hopeful future on the strong foundation of Christ. Worshippers will receive a building block in worship to take to Kirkman Fellowship Hall where we will all build a new creation together.



FALL GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

The House and Grounds Committee invites you to join us on **Saturday, November 8, from 9am-12noon** for the annual Fall Grounds Clean-Up. All are welcome! Bring work gloves and gardening gear as we rake leaves and prepare the church grounds for the coming winter.



THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

The church office will be closed **November 27 and 28** for the Thanksgiving holiday.



Congregational News

The FPCRO Nominating Committee is seeking church members to serve as elders, deacons, and Nominating Committee at-large members. Service terms for both elders and deacons are three years.



- **Deacons** provide care to congregation members. This includes sending cards, making phone calls, visiting homebound members, members in nursing care facilities, or those who are hospitalized. Deacons serve on one church committee as well.
- **Elders** make up the session and guide the ministries of the church. They serve on one committee and usually chair or co-chair that committee.
- **At-large** Nominating Committee members serve for two years. They are part of the process of thinking about people who may want to serve as elders or deacons and approaching those church members to see if God is calling them to serve.

If you know of someone you believe would be a good candidate for an elder, deacon, or at-large nominating committee member, or if you yourself are interested, please email the Nominating Committee chair, Robin Hanks, at rhanks@wayne.edu, or contact any of the committee members: Karen Kline, Linda Willemsen, Ken Millinger, Sally Gilreath, Ted DeVantier, Chris Klein, Barb Hayes. Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you.

—Robin Hanks

SCAM EMAIL AWARENESS

We want to make you aware of an increase in scam emails targeting our faith community. These messages may appear to come from church leaders or trusted members, often requesting money, gift cards, or personal information. Please know that our church staff will never ask for sensitive information or financial support through email in this manner. If you receive a suspicious message, do not respond or click any links. Instead, report it to the church office so we can help verify its authenticity. Remember that the authentic church email addresses include the first letter of the staff member's first name, then their last name, and end in @fpcro.org. Let's continue to look out for one another and stay safe online!



COULD YOU HOST A COFFEE HOUR?

We all love a good cookie and cup of coffee! But coffee hour only happens when church members or groups are willing to host it by bringing goodies to eat, making coffee (staff can show you how!), serving, and cleaning up.



- Could you team up with some friends to host?
- Could your 5F group or committee host?
- Do you want to celebrate an anniversary or mark a special event with your church family by hosting?

Sign-up on the sheet outside the reception office to host, or call the office with questions.



Congratulations to **Haley DeFeyter and Vinny Krishnan** on their recent engagement! Haley joined FPCRO last fall and serves on the Board of Deacons.

The Mission in Service committee has reflected on their ministry and discerned the following, which will guide them in their work together. These commitments will shape the mission outreach, volunteer opportunities, and benevolence gifts made through the MiS committee this year.

The Mission in Service committee embraces Christ's call in Matthew 25 to serve "the least of these," which is a way we also serve Christ himself. Our mission giving and hands-on missions will seek to offer compassion and care to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned, and all who are vulnerable in body or spirit. As we serve our neighbors, we also commit to the stewardship of God's creation, honoring the earth as a gift entrusted to our care. Through acts of mercy, faithful service, and responsible stewardship, we seek to reflect God's love, bring hope to our community, and bear witness to Christ's kingdom.

FORGOTTEN HARVEST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The Mission in Service committee is offering an opportunity 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.



25 volunteers are 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 or Denise Huebner.

Reprinted from the
Lighthouse 2024
Annual Report:



SHELTER TO STEWARDSHIP: A CONGREGATION'S FINAL GIFT FOR THE FUTURE

Drayton Avenue Presbyterian Church leaves behind a profound legacy of faith in action. As one of the earliest congregations to join the South Oakland Shelter network, they served for over two decades—offering shelter, meals, leadership, and care to neighbors in need.

As the congregation prepared for dissolution, they chose to ensure their impact would carry forward by making a \$20,000 gift to the Lighting the Way capital campaign. This final act of generosity reflects the heart of their mission: serving others with dignity and love.

Drayton Avenue Presbyterian's legacy lives on in the thousands of lives they uplifted, and through their investment into Lighthouse's campus expansion and future service.

THE SALVATION ARMY OF ROYAL OAK ANGEL TREE TOY DONATION



You are invited to donate new, unwrapped toys to bring a sense of love and hope to a child in your community. Please bring unwrapped gifts to FPCRO by **Friday, December 5**. In addition to toys, the Salvation Army is in need of new winter coats. The Angel Tree program in Royal Oak helps 15 communities in Southeast Oakland County.

Looking for gift donation ideas? Use the QR codes below for the Angel Tree wish list. The Amazon wish list is on the left and the Walmart wish list is on the right.



Worship and Nurture

FAMILY WORSHIP

Our worship service on **Sunday, November 16**, is a family worship time. We will not have access to our Sunday school rooms because of the dog training taking place. The nursery will still be available for infants and toddlers. Parents may take their little ones there as normal. Our preschool children will have activities in the Parlor just across from the Sanctuary. Sunburst singers will meet in the chapel following worship.



ADVENT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday school advent season begins **November 30**. Our lessons and activities each week will talk about how different parts of the world recognize the Advent and Christmas seasons.



GINGERBREAD JUBILEE

Mark your calendars and join us on **Saturday, December 6, from 3pm-4:30pm**. FPCRO children and their grown-ups will have their own Gingerbread House to build and decorate. It will be a time for Christmas activities and celebration! Please see Joelle Jarrait to sign up.



FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP DECEMBER 24

During our **5pm worship on December 24**, children will participate in the Christmas pageant. Children of all ages are invited to take part as we share the story of Jesus' birth for all to hear. During November, Ms. Joelle will talk with children and parents to determine a part for everyone. Please watch your emails for updates.



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



November brings a month of happily giving thanks! Our preschoolers have settled into new routines, are developing new friendships, and working hard. For all these things, and all of our kiddos and their families, we are truly thankful.

Brown is the color of the month. Colorful feathered brown birds will be hanging around our room and hallways. All classes will be making projects telling about the things we are thankful for. From the Bible, our study of Moses and the Ten Commandments will help us to know how God wants us to live.

All classes will celebrate Thanksgiving later this month, followed by no school on November 26-28 as we celebrate Thanksgiving with our families. A very blessed Thanksgiving to our church family, as well!

We still have some openings in both our three- and four-year-old classes. Call us if you'd like to visit or know someone who would like to become a Sunflower! (248) 541-0108

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Kerfoot

Christmas Joy Special Offerings



Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church. God has blessed the wider Presbyterian church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

- 50% supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides critical financial assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need.
- 50% supports Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color to provide education and leadership development.

We are joining many other PCUSA churches again this year by receiving gifts for the Christ Joy Special Offering on **Sunday, December 21**. We invite you to celebrate this offering by placing your gift in a Christmas Joy envelope and putting it in the offering basket, mailing a check to the church with Christmas Joy in the memo, or giving an online gift at fpcro.org/give (select special gift and put Christmas Joy in the note section). Envelopes can be found at the reception office desk and will be placed in the pew racks **Sunday, December 14-21**.



Third Graders Receive Bibles



TIME TO ORDER
CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



I wish to order poinsettia plant(s) for display in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Choose number/color(s) Red: _____ White: _____

Please print:

*In Loving **Memory** Of:* _____

*In **Honor** Of:* _____

Donor's name: _____

Phone & Email: _____

Each poinsettia is **\$18**. Please make out a check payable to **First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak**. Leave your check and order form in the basket at the reception desk in the CE Lobby. If you wish, you may mail your order to: Chris Klein, 4405 N. Verona Circle, Royal Oak MI 48073

Please Check: ☐ I will pick up my plant(s) Christmas Eve or after worship on December 28, 2025.

All orders must be received by Sunday, November 16, 2025.

Everyday Spirituality

LINGERING ON A PRAYER

Prayer can be defined as a solemn and heartfelt communication with God involving intimacy and trust, and focusing on God's will while requesting personal needs. Sounds complicated, and prayer can be. Other times we make it more complicated than it needs to be.

In an effort to simplify prayer, many methods have been developed. Two examples are the ACTS method (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication), which is closely related to the FACTS method (faith, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication). When expanded, FACTS is expressed as: having faith in God, offering adoration and praise, confessing sins to restore fellowship, expressing thanks and gratitude, and making supplications for your needs and those of others.

The Five P's of Prayer offer multiple versions such as: praise, proclamation, petition, promise, and power; God's person, program, provision, pardon, and protection; place, position, place, perceptions, and pause. Also, the Prayer Hand models can include: praise, confession, intercession, thanksgiving, and petition; or, thanks, praise, sorry, request, and protection, among others.

With all of these various and sundry methods for prayer, is it surprising I sometimes find myself stuck and overwhelmed trying to follow a format to make it solemn, as opposed to invoking intimacy to make it heartfelt? I find myself lingering on a prayer rather than living on a prayer.

When I find myself lingering on a prayer, I try to take a step back and focus on content rather than format. I do make some concessions to format, in that many of my prayers have a pattern of an opening, a body, and a closing.

In the book *A Sermon Workbook* by Thomas H. Troeger & Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, the authors have an exercise that uses lists of adjectives and nouns to describe the image of God at the opening of prayer. Some of these words

are familiar and others less so. The adjectives include: eternal, flowing, kind, heavenly, tender, source of, risen, demanding, loving, and mighty. The nouns include: God, stream, Lord, mother, Father, life, Christ, sovereign, spirit, and rock. These adjectives and nouns may be combined into familiar prayer openings like: Eternal God, Heavenly Father, and Risen Christ; or, some less familiar openings like Loving Sovereign, Flowing Stream, and Tender Rock.

To both acknowledge the power of God and to offer praise, I use openings like these and others like: Gracious God, Omnipotent and Merciful Creator, Almighty Lord, Good Shepherd, and Wonderful Counselor.

Also, I routinely give thanks to God in my prayers, as 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says to *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* I typically give thanks first thing in the body of the prayer as I am so grateful for all of the blessings that God has provided.

Frequently I have requests in my prayers as well, since Matthew 7:7 says *"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."*

In the song "Need a Favor" by Jelly Roll, which, depending on where your ears find themselves listening to music, you may have heard the line "I only talk to God when I need a favor." This is another expression of one of the parts of prayer from the methods above. Supplication, petition, intercession, request, favor—these are all ways of asking for God's help.

My prayer format could then be defined as PTA: **P**raise God, give **T**hanks to God, **A**sk God for help. This certainly doesn't cover all prayers, but when I am stuck or lingering on a prayer, or unexpectedly asked to offer a prayer, it is a relatively simple tool to have in my prayer toolbox.

—Derek Helenberger



Thanksgiving Dinner Volunteer Opportunity

Westminster Church of Detroit

September 5, 2025

Dear Friends,

Turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce and dessert all make Thanksgiving special. But many people can't afford to buy food, or don't have a way to prepare it.

Westminster Church wants everyone to have a bountiful, hot Thanksgiving meal. This year is our 43rd annual Thanksgiving dinner, and we want to make sure everyone can share in the bounty of Thanksgiving.

Each year, our partner churches support us in making Thanksgiving a success, and we are grateful for all that is given.

Are there people in your congregation who would like to volunteer? We would be grateful if you would spread the word that volunteers from all area churches are welcome. Volunteers can email **Thanksgiving@wcodetroit.org** or call our dedicated Thanksgiving line at 313-341-2697 x 314 for more information. Thanksgiving week, we will need volunteers Monday-Wednesday for set-up, and Thursday to serve, deliver meals and help with cleaning up. There is a kitchen protocol to be followed for those working in the kitchen and we will provide all necessary items. We will continue to use Sign-up Genius to organize volunteers. Monetary contributions of any amount are also a welcomed blessing. Please make your check payable to Westminster Church and put "Thanksgiving" in the memo line.

Thank you for helping to make our 43rd annual Thanksgiving dinner for the community a success again this year! We are extremely grateful for your help.

With thanks,

Dawn Hicks and Kimberly Wells

Dawn Hicks
Co-Chair, Westminster Church Mission Committee

Kimberly Wells
Westminster Church Mission Committee

17567 Hubbell

A Church for All People
Detroit, MI 48235 313.341.2697

www.wcodetroit.org

**Worship with us Sunday at 10:30 am
or online anytime at www.fpcro.org**

www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro

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

529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

248.541.0108



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find us on:



November Dates to Note:

Nov 1 • Forgotten Harvest Volunteering in Oak Park, 9am-12pm

Nov 2 • Building Hope Kick-Off and Lunch

Nov 8 • Fall Grounds Clean Up, 9am-12pm

Nov 15 • Scent Dog Trials Building Rental (thru Nov 17)

**Nov 16 • Family Worship
(No Sunday School)**

Nov 16 • Poinsettia Orders Due

**Nov 23 • Hanging of the Greens,
and Building Hope
Commitment Day**

Nov 30 • Advent Begins

**Nov 27 • Thanksgiving Day,
Church Office closed**

Nov 28 • Church Office closed

