

Church Bell



fpcro

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear friends,

I suspect you, like me, are saying something like this to yourself in these days: “Wow, how is it Advent already? These months just flew by!” The staff like to tease me when I plan our Advent theme during July and our Lenten theme at Christmas. What can I say?! I like to be prepared. So, although our church is always ready for each new season, it still feels like time flies!

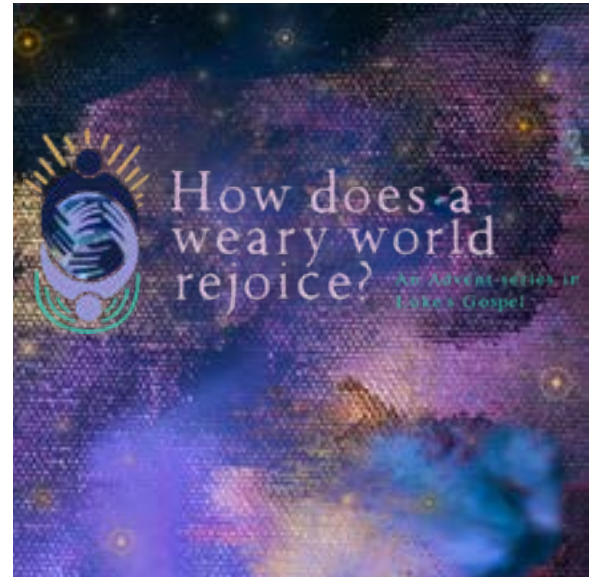
This Advent we are asking ourselves, *how does a weary world rejoice?* That line about a weary world rejoicing appears in the Christmas carol, “O Holy Night.” The world does feel weary; you don’t need me to name the reasons why. And yet people of faith look toward God’s hope in the midst of that weariness. Advent invites us not just into preparation, but also expectation, that God does come to be among us in Jesus Christ. God is at work transforming the world, even now. And so, there is a thrill of hope. We can rejoice!

Like the months before, this season can easily fly by without attending to your inner life or your spirit at all. And I think most of us will regret that if we let it happen to us. So I encourage you to set an intention for this season. What small actions can help you acknowledge your weariness and then lean into hope and joy? What can you do to rejoice in the coming of Jesus this year?

- Light the candles on your Advent wreath, week by week, if you have one at home. Or set up four candles (one to light each Sunday, beginning November 26; any color will do) with one in the center as your Christ candle to light on Christmas Eve.
- Get an Advent calendar at church to look at each day throughout the season. Children’s and Anyone versions are available.
- Pick up an Advent devotional booklet at church to dig deeper into our theme and scriptures for this season, as we journey with the gospel of Luke into the story leading up to Jesus’ birth.
- Follow our church’s social media accounts for periodic posts about Advent that invite you to reflect.
- New research shows that micro-acts of joy, done daily, can increase our sense of well-being by 25% over the course of a week. So, engage in a daily micro-act of joy this Advent. Compliment a colleague. Buy an Angel Tree gift or some gloves for the Mitten Tree. Bring cookies to a neighbor. Leave a nice comment online. Enjoy a coffee or hot chocolate and don’t work while you drink it.

May you have an Advent that leads you into rejoicing,

Pastor Emma



In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:
9am in Evans Chapel,
and 10:30am in the
sanctuary. **One Service
only at 10:30am Dec 10,
Dec 24 & Dec 31.**

Livestream Worship

Sundays at 10:30am
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.

our staff

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tenor **Brady DelVecchio**
soprano **Olivia Donnel**
soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

our soloists



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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.



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



FPCRO Family,

Thank you for all of the congratulations, kind words, cards, and gifts celebrating my 25th anniversary at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak. I have deep love and fondness for the congregation and staff I have worked, worshiped, and fellowshipped with over the years. I have been honored to work with committees over the years on so many projects, big and small, and was glad my institutional knowledge helped bridge staff and leadership transitions during my tenure. I believe wholeheartedly in the mission of this church and am proud to continue to support it in any way that is needed.

Warmest Regards,
Kari Peruski

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.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

On **December 24**, we'll worship together to celebrate Christ coming among us. Because December 24 is a Sunday this year, plan to join us for both services!



- **10:30am Sunday morning service** with baptisms, a pageant, and the joy of Christmas
- **7pm Traditional evening service** with carols and candlelight

There will be **no 9am service** on **December 10, December 24** and **December 31**. The 9am service in Evans Chapel will resume on January 7, 2024.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES

The church offices will be closed on **December 25-26, December 29, and January 1**.

S.T.A.G.E. YOUTH-LED WORSHIP SERVICE



Join us on **Sunday, January 7 at 5pm** at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham for the S.T.A.G.E. Youth-Led Worship Service. Mark your calendar to attend this inspiring worship service led by youth from FPCRO and our four S.T.A.G.E. partner congregations.

S.T.A.G.E. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are 4:30-6:30pm, unless otherwise specified.

Dec 3: Regular Meeting, FPCRO

Dec 17: Luminaries & White Elephant gift exchange, Cana

Jan 7: Youth-Led Service, FPCB

Jan 21: Regular Meeting, Cana

Jan 28: Regular Meeting at FPCB



Worship and Nurture

CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING FAMILY WORSHIP

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year and children will lead the Christmas pageant as part of the morning worship service. Children of all ages are invited to take part as we share the story of Jesus' birth for all to hear. If your child hasn't yet been fitted for a costume, be sure to contact Joelle Jarrait. Children will practice walking through the pageant on December 17 during Sunburst Singers time.



DECEMBER 31 FAMILY WORSHIP

Our worship on Sunday, December 31 will be a time for family worship. Children will not have Sunday School. We invite parents of older children to sit together and guide their children through each part of worship. The Playground will have quiet activities for younger children. Nursery care will be available.



SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPERS NEEDED

We give thanks to God for the many children who are part of our Sunday school program and all of our wonderful families who participate. As our classes continue to grow, we need extra volunteers to help teach or assist with our teachers. If you feel God calling you to work with the children, please visit our sign-up link at <https://tinyurl.com/yzrtb2wf>. You can also speak to Joelle Jarrait. We are grateful to those who serve with our youngest disciples.



CHOIR SINGS PORTIONS OF HANDEL'S MESSIAH DEC 10

Join us on **Sunday, December 10 at 10:30am** for a special seasonal worship service of anthems and songs, accompanied by strings. The Chancel Choir will sing portions of Handel's *Messiah* that celebrate the expectation and joy of Christ's birth. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you for this celebratory service. There will be one worship service at 10:30am on this Sunday.



LET'S GO CAROLING!

Join the Deacons after worship on **Sunday, December 17** to go Christmas caroling to friends in the congregation. We'll share joy and song to celebrate the coming birth of Jesus with folks who can't get to church as often. Bring a snack so you're fueled up for three to four caroling stops. Feel free to wear your fun holiday gear.



SAVE THE DATE: DIGGING INTO MARK, A BIBLE STUDY

**Wednesdays at 7pm,
Jan 17–Feb 7**

Join Pastor Neeta for Bible Study as we move into the Gospel of Mark in the new year. The Narrative Lectionary invites us to dig deeper into the story of Jesus in this one gospel, the earliest and shortest of the four gospel accounts.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

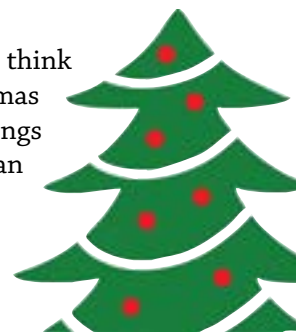
The Men's Fellowship Group will gather at Bagger Dave's in Berkley (2972 Coolidge Hwy) on **Monday, December 11 at 7:30pm**. All are welcome. Please join us, whether it's a return visit or the first time. For more information, please contact Matthew Nickel or Derek Helenberger.



THE MITTEN TREE

Hard to believe, but it's time to think about Advent and the Christmas tree we use to gather warm things for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Please think about what you might hang on the tree—warm gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, warm 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.



STEWARDSHIP THEME FOR 2024-25

The Generosity and Resources Committee is excited to share the Stewardship theme for the coming year—**Abundant Life**. We are a community on a mission. Following Jesus, we are called to thrive and to help our neighbors thrive, creating a meaningful, delightful, abundant life for all. During worship in January and February, we'll explore what this abundant life looks like and celebrate some of the ways FPCRO participates in God's grace-filled love for the world.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL SPOTLIGHT

When you work at a church, at some point you will hear someone say they stopped attending services or left their old church because all they talked about was money. In most cases, when that church talked about money, it was in the form of an “ask,” bringing money up only when they wanted you to “dig deeper and give a little more.” I’ll admit, even FPCRO has been culpable of that in the past. However, one of the main reasons churches talk so much about money is because the Bible does so, too. According to Tithely:

- There are more than 2,000 scriptures about money, tithing, and possessions in the Bible
- 16 out of 38 of Jesus’ parables deal with money and possessions
- Nearly 25% of Jesus’ words deal with biblical stewardship
- 1 out of 10 verses in the Gospels deals with money

In many instances, the scripture is using money to illustrate how to live, give, worship, and serve. My upcoming Financial Spotlights will focus on different pieces of our church’s finances and share how that account impacts the mission of FPCRO. It will highlight how we nurture the gifts we receive from God, through our generous donors, and how we use those funds in our ministries to impact the lives of our members and the community.

–Kari Peruski, Church Administrator



Monthly Spotlight:

Interest Income

Interest Income is derived from interest and dividends from our banking and investment accounts. Our investment accounts were funded through donations and legacy gifts from members and friends. By investing these funds until they are needed, we are able to maximize the impact of the gifts of our generous donors.

Fun Facts:

- We rely on our income-earning assets for 11% of our operating income, which is around \$88,250
- Carolyn and Milton Kevreson, former members, donated \$250,000 to FPCRO designated for our Music Ministry. Session invested these funds and uses the income generated to help offset the cost of our Soloists. It generates about \$7,550 each year.
- Interest earned on our Cheek Memorial, Tom & Ruth Kirkman Scholarship, and Pooled Income Funds do not go into our general operating budget but are reinvested in their respective funds.

House and Grounds



The House & Grounds Committee would like to thank everyone who came to help with the Fall Cleanup on November 4. We got the grounds and garden beds ready for winter, including filling 35 lawn bags, raking and blowing countless leaves into the street for the city to cleanup, trimming some trees and shrubs, and cutting back some dead growth on perennials. Thank you to Ellen Burns, Krispen Carroll, Greg Gillham, James Hanks, Dave Hayes, Derek Helenberger, Jim Kaliszuk, Dan Kline, Karen Kline, Bob Lengjel, Emma Nickel, Glenn Shepard, Nate Shepard, Catie Slusser, Jett Slusser, Edie Watson, and Roger Watson.



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 Free Pantry for the holiday season.

Our biggest project of the month will be rehearsing for our annual Christmas Concert! It will be on December 20 at 10am 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

“Pulling Out All the Stops” Organ Concert



YouVersion Reviews: A Smartphone Bible App

Technology can be a great tool for our faith! Some people like to say that we always have the Bible at our fingertips as long as we have our phones with us. Seminary Intern Lon Kuehn and member Derek Helenberger have been in conversation about one of their favorite Bible apps for their phones. Below, they each review the **YouVersion** app, and share features that are helpful in learning more about scripture and developing our faith. If you have questions or need help getting the app, feel free to speak to Lon or Derek for assistance.

Android: *Derek Helenberger*

Having had the YouVersion app for several years, I have been very pleased with it and enjoy its Verse of the Day, which was the first feature I used. With a few taps of my fingers I can easily get to different locations in the Bible. This app also can download versions to my phone's memory so I don't need an Internet connection to use it.



I've downloaded nine versions, including the NRSV, NIV, and the King James version when I am looking for the old-world words. Also, I have The Message downloaded for when I need a more plain-spoken version.

The app has 72 English translations to choose from and the ability to change from one to another with the tap of a finger. Recently I discovered some versions on the app may be played aloud.

To download the app, go to the Google Play store, search "YouVersion" and click the "install" button.

iPhone: *Lon Kuehn*

For about five years I've been using the YouVersion app, and in addition to the features Derek mentioned, I've enjoyed the Reading Plans. With literally hundreds of Reading Plans available, they cover a variety of topics (love, anxiety, healing, anger, hope, depression, fear, peace, etc.), and vary in length from three days to one year.

To read the Old and New Testaments annually, I like using the Bible in One Year plans. I've completed the Standard Reading plan, the Chronological Order plan (which takes one through the Bible as the events occurred). Currently I'm reading the One Year Original Order Reading plan, which groups the Old Testament books in their original order of the Hebrew Bible. Each plan gives a fresh viewpoint of the Scriptures and allow one to progress through them alone, or invite family and friends to read the plan together. Groups may comment and interact with each other as they read the day's verses.

With so many options in this app it never feels stale or boring—there's always new content to explore and immerse oneself in God's Word.

To download the app on iPhone, simply swipe down on your home screen and type "YouVersion" in the search box, click on the "YouVersion Bible App" link and install.

**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)

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

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fpcro *Spirituality • Service • Sharing*

find us on:



Advent and Christmas Worship Services at FPCRO

Nov 26 • 1st Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

Dec 3 • 2nd Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

**Dec 10 • 3rd Sunday of Advent, one worship service at 10:30 am
featuring the special Chancel Choir presentation**

Dec 11 • Men's Fellowship Group at 7pm

Dec 17 • 4th Sunday of Advent, worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

Dec 17 • Caroling after 10:30 am worship

**Dec 24 • Christmas Eve: 10:30am, Family Worship and Pageant;
7 pm, Traditional Service**

Dec 25 • Christmas Day–Merry Christmas!

Dec 31 • Family Worship, one worship service at 10:30 am

Jan 7 • Worship at 9 am & 10:30 am

**Jan 7 • S.T.A.G.E. Youth-Led Worship Service at 5pm, at First
Presbyterian Church of Birmingham (1669 W Maple Rd)**