

*Pastor's Log, Lent into Easter 2021*

**Friday** — Phone call with member Theresa Henige who shared her discovery of [Lasagna Love](#), which invites anyone who could use a meal to sign-up to receive one. Other local neighbor's sign-up to deliver a lasagna to their porch. Theresa has delivered three meals so far. Pondering how to share this ministry with folks who need a hand and those who'd love to care for others in this time.

**Sunday** — Great Bible study this morning, and new member showed up. Yay! First meeting with the confirmation class this afternoon and excited to get to know these young people.

**Monday night, 1 am** — Laid awake worrying about committee leadership and the slate of elders for 2021-2022. How will it all come together and will the folks we need answer God's call? Easy to slip into 'scarcity' mode in the darkness.

**Tuesday morning** — Woke up and saw photos on Facebook from the installation service for the new Pastor at Northbrook Presbyterian in Beverly Hills. Loved the beautiful red ribbons they used in place of a laying on of hands, all attached to the baptismal font with people holding the ends in a socially distanced way. Contacted Pastor to see if we can use this idea to ordain/install officers in June.

**Tuesday evening** — Just left Nominating Committee meeting. Remembering God's abundance, even when it looks nothing like I expect. Feeling more hopeful and trying to be patient.

**Wednesday morning** — Listened to the [Circle Round](#) story podcast while driving the kids to school. Loved "The Red Leather Shoes" fairy tale. Looked up the story online and saved it to my sermon illustration file. Would work especially well for a sermon on serving Christ without even realizing it (Matthew 25:31-46). Will save for future sermon.

**Wednesday late morning** — Got the 'studio' set-up in sanctuary and filmed worship for Sunday. Took 12 takes to get the Welcome recorded right, but at least only one take on the sermon this week!

**Wednesday afternoon** — Made phone calls to members to catch up. Learned about an upcoming hip surgery and someone whose relative passed away. Offered prayers for these folks. Updated Of Concern list and sent out to Deacons, Stephen Ministers and Prayer Circle members.

**Wednesday night** — After workout, read commentaries to plan for Easter sermon. Agonized about whether the Mark text will feel 'joyful' enough for Easter, since it ends with the women going away in fear. Tried to remember that the good news is on the loose and nothing can get in its way!

**Thursday** — Sabbath day at home with the kids. Made new batch of homemade playdough and negotiated each of them choosing which color to create (orange and pink were the winners). Facetimed Gigi and Grandpa. Kids declared dinner 'best ever' even though not super special. Kids are funny!

**Friday** — Wrote first draft of sermon for the Sunday a week and a half out. Feeling ok about it but will keep revising. Attended Lenten Bible study and got to know more about friends at Hope Presbyterian.

*What is the log of your weeks looking like? Where are you encountering God in the midst of joy and worry? How is the good news emerging around you?*



*Pastor Emma*

Church Bell



fpcro

## WORSHIP ONLINE WITH FPCRO

Worship continues in an online format. Each week, we offer a worship service video that includes scripture, music, thoughts for kids, preaching, prayer, and even online communion. Worship God from wherever you are, at anytime you choose!

Access the video each weekend on our website: [www.fpcro.org/home-worship-resources](http://www.fpcro.org/home-worship-resources). From there, you can also download a printed copy of the sermon.

Or, watch worship on our Facebook page and share comments with other worshippers: <https://www.facebook.com/fpcro/> (Clicking “like” and/or sharing posts on the church Facebook page is another way to help increase our reach.)



## our staff

*pastor/head of staff*, [enickel@fpcro.org](mailto:enickel@fpcro.org) **Rev. Emma Nickel**  
*director of music ministries & organist*, [jjackson@fpcro.org](mailto:jjackson@fpcro.org) **Joseph Jackson**  
*chancel choir director*, [kwattleworth@fpcro.org](mailto:kwattleworth@fpcro.org) **Kent Wattleworth**  
*preschool music director*, [afrieberg@fpcro.org](mailto:afrieberg@fpcro.org) **Audrey Frieberg**  
*director of christian education*, [jjarrait@fpcro.org](mailto:jjarrait@fpcro.org) **Joelle Jarrait**  
*S.T.A.G.E. youth director*, [stageyouth@gmail.com](mailto:stageyouth@gmail.com) **Matthew Stoel**  
*church administrator*, [kperuski@fpcro.org](mailto:kperuski@fpcro.org) **Kari Peruski**  
*administrative assistant*, [sgilreath@fpcro.org](mailto:sgilreath@fpcro.org) **Sally Gilreath**  
*evening reception/security*, [tcrawford@fpcro.org](mailto:tcrawford@fpcro.org) **Todd Crawford**  
*preschool director*, [preschool@fpcro.org](mailto:preschool@fpcro.org) **Sarah Gibson**  
*preschool teacher* **Beth Heitchue**  
*child care provider* **Ivy Debrow**  
*facility manager*, [aglasel@fpcro.org](mailto:aglasel@fpcro.org) **Alan Glasel**  
*wedding coordinator*, [weddings@fpcro.org](mailto:weddings@fpcro.org) **Ginny O'Brien**  
*newsletter editor* **Gretchen Hirsch**

*tenor* **Ryan Hurley**  
*baritone* **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**  
*soprano* **Audrey Frieberg**  
*mezzo soprano* **Julie Anne Smith**

## our soloists



529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak MI 48067  
248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859  
[www.fpcro.org](http://www.fpcro.org) • [facebook.com/fpcro](https://www.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.

## ATTENTION HOMEBOUND RESIDENTS!

Oakland County Health Division has partnered with Ready Nursing Solutions to provide COVID-19 vaccinations for homebound residents that meet eligibility requirements per State guidelines. If you are a homebound resident of Oakland County, make your vaccine appointment directly with Ready Nursing Solutions.



- **Call 810-331-0902 or**
- Register online: <https://oaklandcountyvaccine.com/appointments/>
  - Complete the *Patient Intake Form*
  - Select ‘Oakland County Residents – Homebound’
  - Ready Nursing Solutions will contact you directly to make an appointment

**Please note:** If the Ready Nursing Solutions call center is experiencing a high volume of calls, you will be prompted to leave a message and will receive a return call to schedule an appointment.

Ready Nursing Solutions: <https://getreadyvaccine.com/>



*A celebration gift was given toward the Facility and Technology Fund in honor of Greg Gillham.*

Where do you find the hope and good news of the resurrection in/ through your star word?




## SHOWING UP: EASTER SEASON WORSHIP SERIES

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to many of his followers: individually and in groups, on the beach, on the road, behind locked doors, and out in the open. Throughout this series, from **April 11 to May 16**, we will bear witness to the appearances of our resurrected Lord! The stories don't align perfectly, and the details differ from one gospel to the next. Some people might take that as a sign that all of this is made up. Others take that as a mark of authenticity. It is perfectly human to remember and retell stories in ways sometimes vastly different from the others who were there. The variety of perspectives we'll explore simply adds to the wonder of Jesus' resurrection!



### 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.



### 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.



### IS YOUR INFO CURRENT?

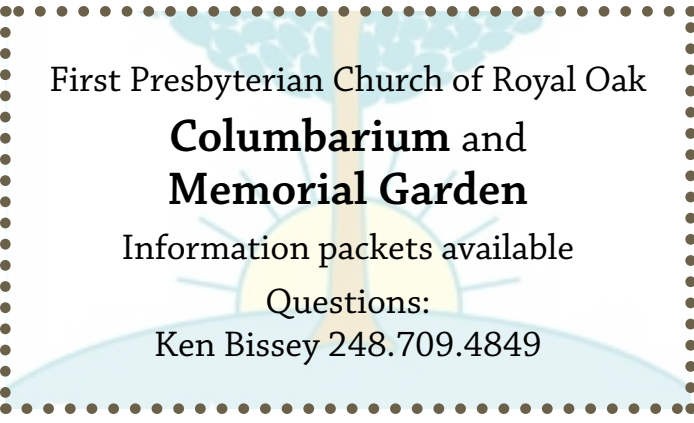
Please let Sally Gilreath ([sgilreath@fpcro.org](mailto:sgilreath@fpcro.org)) know of changes to your contact information so we can maintain current and up-to-date records of your member information.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

## Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:  
Ken Bissey 248.709.4849





# Congregational News

## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WORSHIP

Join us for worship as we travel to the cross, and then to the empty tomb, with Jesus on the *Way of Love*.

**Maundy Thursday** – Join us for a special Zoom worship service with Hope Presbyterian Church in Detroit. Log in at 7 pm on **April 1** for the service, which will focus on the five senses as we read about the anointing of Jesus, the foot washing, the last supper, and the garden.

### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8623003309?pwd=MVVyc3B2TnpjclNPZEFnQ1lvTWd3Zz09>

**Meeting ID: 862 300 3309**

**Passcode: 417721**

### One tap mobile

+16465588656,,8623003309#,,,,\*417721# US (New York)

+13017158592,,8623003309#,,,,\*417721# US (Washington DC)

**Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799**

**Good Friday** – Our online service will focus on Psalms of Lament as we read the difficult story of Jesus' death on Good Friday. Special music and readings from Mark's gospel will also guide us. Service will be available to watch anytime on Good Friday or after.

**Easter** – A glorious pre-recorded service will be available beginning Easter morning, including a virtual choir anthem in partnership with Hope Presbyterian Church. We will also have two outdoor services at 9 am and 11 am on the Hendrie Lawn, where we will enjoy a **flowering of the cross**. If you can, pick up some flowers to bring with you that we will insert into a large cross for a beautiful display during the service. Bring your mask and a lawn chair. Come to uncover the Alleluias and praise God together!



## MARCH SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



At the Session meeting on March 16, the elders opened the meeting in a discussion of 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. They considered events of their own lives, and in the church's life, that seemed foolish, but that might have been wise according to God's wisdom of the cross.

The following also took place:

- Approved an outdoor congregational meeting for the purpose of electing officers for Sunday, May 16, on the Hendrie Lawn immediately following the youth-led worship service. Rain date is May 23.
- Approved mission giving in the amount of \$1,000 each to Lighthouse/SOS, Welcome Inn/South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless, and Open Hands Food Pantry at St. John's Episcopal Church in RO.
- Received the February 2021 financial reports, noting that operating income remains ahead of expense for the year.
- Adopted an adjusted 2020-2021 operating budget, reflecting reduced spending due to COVID restrictions and adjustments to anticipated income.
- Discussed the adoption of new technology to allow for hybrid committee/board meetings beginning in August 2021 and possible uses of technology to enhance in-person worship in the future.

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## SPRING GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

The Spring Grounds Clean-Up will be **Saturday, May 1, from 9 am-12 pm.** (Rain date: Saturday, May 8.) Bring garden tools and any extra lawn bags you have, in addition to your mask. Feel free to come for whatever portion of the day you can!





## SPRING FLING!

Spring signals new growth, renewed hope, more daylight, and of course... the **Spring Fling!**

On **Sunday, May 16**, following the outdoor Youth Sunday service and brief Congregational Meeting, join our church family, friends, and neighbors to celebrate Faithfulness, Fellowship, Friendship, and Hope. (Rain date will be Sunday, May 23.)

Activities for all ages will be set up on the church grounds, including lawn games, bubbles and chalk. Opportunities will be available to create cards for our homebound members, to express feelings and experiences of gratitude, and to pick up the final H.O.M.E. Bag of the season.

All church members, guests, friends and neighbors are welcome to greet Spring and each other. Let's come together and share much needed fellowship and laughter

and love. (being mindful of appropriate precautions... don't forget your masks). The Spring Fling is being sponsored by the Stewardship and Christian Education Committees and the Deacons. We are grateful for the overwhelming support and continuing care that our church family has demonstrated during this difficult year. We have survived and thrived and it's time to celebrate all of God's gifts and love!

## YOUTH SUNDAY — SAVE THE DATE!

FPCRO Youth are working hard on a special worship service for Youth Sunday, which will be **May 16**. Youth Sunday will take place outdoors on the Hendrie Lawn at 10:30 am and online anytime. Come to celebrate our seniors and our Kirkman Scholarship recipients, and to give thanks for all our youth. Bring your lawn chairs and masks and plan to practice social distancing. Stay for the other fun events planned for the day! The rain date for Youth Sunday and other events planned for the day is May 23.



## OUTDOOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING — SUNDAY, MAY 16

The Session has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, May 16, for the purpose of electing church officers. It will follow the outdoor Youth Sunday worship service on the Hendrie Lawn, which begins at 10:30 am. In the event of inclement weather, the meeting will take place on Sunday, May 23 at the same time. All FPCRO members are encouraged to attend.

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## ONLINE TRIVIA NIGHT

**Friday, April 30 at 8 pm**

Come share what you know at a special FPCRO Zoom trivia night! The Family Feud-style game will get us thinking and laughing together. Come to enjoy time with friends old and new, a COVID-style date night, and/or some friendly competition! Our host will be Sporcle Trivia Host and associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, the Rev. Bethany Peerbolte.

To play, sign-up online by Tuesday, April 27. <https://tinyurl.com/97zuru9s> Then look for an email from Pastor Emma a day or two before the event on April 30 for login information. Questions? Contact Pastor Emma at [enickel@fpcro.org](mailto:enickel@fpcro.org)



# Pandemic Response Team Update

The Pandemic Response Team continues to meet to evaluate and make recommendations about worship, ministry, and operations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. With an increasing number of Americans being inoculated and the new cases being less than they were just weeks ago, the group is shifting its focus to the time we can again gather together in worship and other church activities.

We will have two outdoor services on Easter Sunday, and look forward to additional outdoor worship through Spring and into Summer. As we are encouraged by the progress on vaccine inoculations, we are also moving forward with developing plans for worship in the sanctuary when we can safely do so. However, we add our caution to that of

public officials and medical authorities that now is not the time to relax our vigilance against this devastating virus. We continue to be guided throughout our deliberations by our concern for the health and safety of the congregation and staff, taking into careful account the best information available to us.

As a reminder, the current status of the Church's pandemic response is as follows:

- The Church remains closed for indoor, in person worship services, with no date yet set for reopening.
- Activities within the church premises by individuals or groups of not more than three (3) persons are permitted, subject to the discretion of the pastor, provided that such activities are for one of the following purposes: worship, worship preparation and planning, mission service, faith-nurturing activities, and pastoral care.
- Face masks and social distancing requirements will be followed at all times.
- This motion does not extend to rental of the church's facilities or use by individuals or groups not affiliated with FPCRO.
- There shall be no gatherings within the church, except for the following activities:
  - Sunflowers Preschool.
  - The school learning pods.
  - The production of online worship services.
  - Activities by church staff related to their employment.
  - Essential building repair and maintenance.
  - Restrictions limiting visits by members and others to drop off or receive items or other essential church business shall continue to be limited to a maximum of five minutes and shall take place at the church entrance (without building entry) whenever possible shall continue.

Again, these we continue to reassess these limitations as conditions improve. Please feel free to contact any member of the Pandemic Response Team if you have questions or to share your concerns.

—The Pandemic Response Team: *Rev. Emma Nickel, Kevin Ball, Lindsey Harris, Joseph Jackson, Chris Klein, Marilyn Sutton*

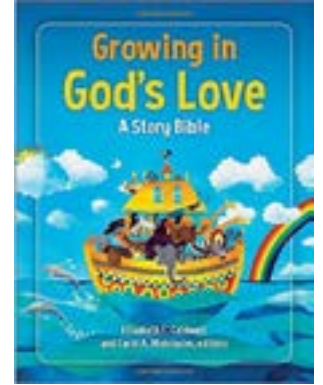




## GROWING IN GOD’S LOVE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our At Home Joyful Journeys Sunday school continues with videos and resources available on the church website. We are reading stories about “Parables Jesus Taught” from our Growing in God’s Love Storybook Bible.

- April 4            Women at the Tomb            (Luke 24:1–12)
- April 11          Thomas Wants to See        (John 20:19–31)
- April 18          Memory and Surprises        (Luke 24:13–35)
- April 25          Mary Finds Her Friend        (John 20:11–18)



## SET THE HALLELUJAHS FREE!



It’s been a long Lenten season. During these weeks we have safely put away our Hallelujahs. We have journeyed with Jesus into the darkness and we can now celebrate Jesus in the light of the empty tomb. With that light we can once again open our box and release our Hallelujahs. On **Easter Sunday, April 4**, families are invited to set your Hallelujahs free.

Shout them, sing them, dance for joy in their presence! Join us for our Easter services when we will open the box and delight in the warmth and love of our risen Lord!

## SAVE THE DATE

Our **2021 “Give Praise to God” VBS** will be the week of June 21. There will be a **special outdoor kick off on Sunday, June 20**, and an outdoor closing celebration on **Saturday, June 26**, at 10:30 a.m. There will be online activities Monday through Thursday of that week. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details and surprises.



## S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry



### S.T.A.G.E. FLOWER SALE

Help support S.T.A.G.E. by ordering flowers during the annual flower sale. To place your order, use this link: <https://forms.gle/GqvH7r4sVGtg2iio9>. Follow the Google Form instructions (four pages in all) to complete your order. Once the form is submitted, a confirmation will be sent to the email provided, summarizing the order and the total amount due.

Payment may be made by check (*made out to S.T.A.G.E Youth Ministry*) and mailed to S.T.A.G.E., 2119 Catalpa, Berkley, MI 48072. Or, pay online to the S.T.A.G.E. treasurer using PayPal ([barney.bourgeois@hotmail.com](mailto:barney.bourgeois@hotmail.com)) or Venmo (@Bernard-Bourgeois). **Orders must be received by the end of the day April 13.**

Pickup flowers on **May 22 between 1-3 pm** at Greenfield Presbyterian Church: 2312 Greenfield Rd, Berkley, MI 48072. If you have questions contact youth director, Matt Stoel, at [stageyouth@gmail.com](mailto:stageyouth@gmail.com), (616) 405-7918, or

treasurer Barney Bourgeois at [barney.bourgeois@hotmail.com](mailto:barney.bourgeois@hotmail.com), (248) 376-6338. Your orders support the day to day youth ministries and mission trips, both this year and in coming years!

### S.T.A.G.E. CALENDAR

S.T.A.G.E. will be returning to in-person meetings after Spring Break. Due to spring break, we will not have S.T.A.G.E. on March 28 or April 4, **but will return April 11**. Look for an email from Matt with more info!



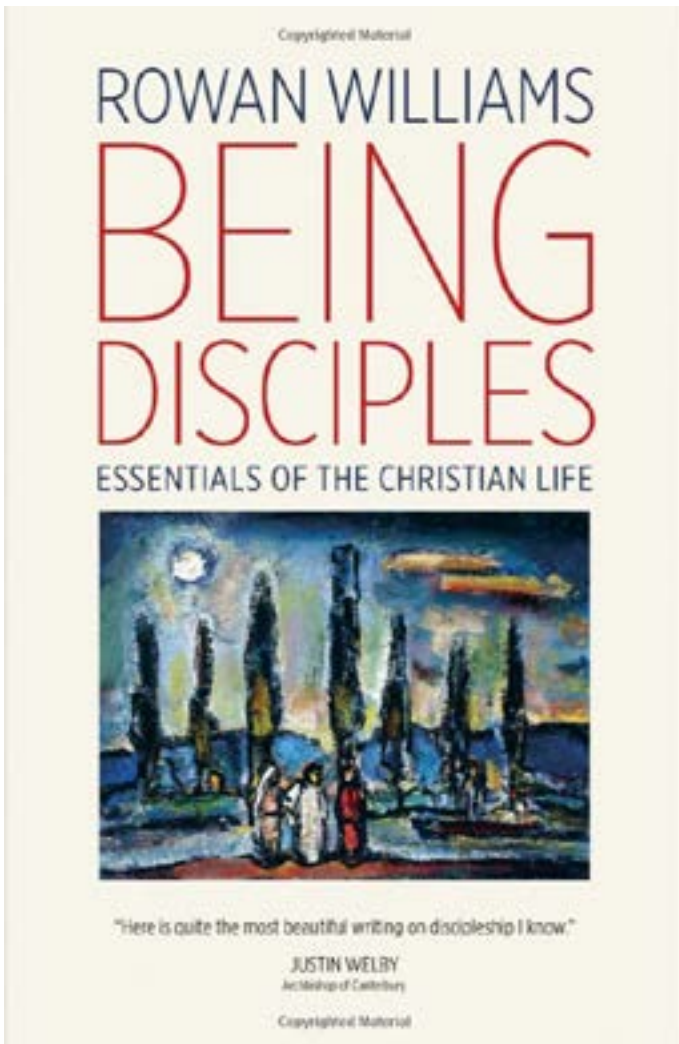
### S.T.A.G.E. ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Make sure to follow our instagram [@stageyouthministry](https://www.instagram.com/stageyouthministry) and our Facebook [@stageyouthministry](https://www.facebook.com/stageyouthministry) for the most up to date information about current programming!



# 2021 Book of the Month Challenge

If you haven't yet attended one of the monthly book discussions, we hope to see you in April! Have you read a book and attended one of the monthly discussions yet? Remember, Pastor Emma is challenging every member of the congregation to participate in at least one of the monthly book studies through June. Can't wait to chat with you there!



## April 2021

Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life

by Rowan Williams

A slim, classic approach to topics of faith and discipleship that offers fresh views on the touchstones of our faith.

**Thursday, April 22 at 7:30 pm**

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85879008825>**

**Meeting ID: 858 7900 8825**

**Passcode: 059913**

**One tap mobile**

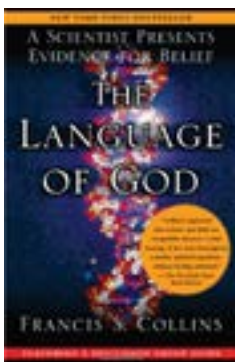
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**(Washington DC)**

**+13126266799,,85879008825#,,,,\*059913# US**

**(Chicago)**

**Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799**



## May 2021

The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief

by Francis S. Collins

A compelling work that describes one scientist's take on Christian faith.



## June 2021

Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone

by Brené Brown

A book about belonging, communities, and culture.



## Mission and Benevolence

### APRIL H.O.M.E. PROJECT

April H.O.M.E. (Helping Out, Mission Edition) bags will be available for **pick-up on April 4**, at the Easter services. The Christian Education Committee and Mission and Benevolence Committee hope for continued support and engagement with H.O.M.E. outreach in April.

The focus will be to celebrate Earth Day, and to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

To focus on caring for God's creation, save a few empty chip and snack bags for recycling into sleeping bags for neighbors experiencing homelessness with the Chip Bag Project of Detroit. Plant nasturtium flower and pumpkin seeds to experience the joy of new life this spring. Bags will be **due back Sunday, May 16**.



Thank you to everyone who picked up a March H.O.M.E. Bag the first week in March. If you are interested in buying two paperback children's books for the Arts and Technology Academy of Pontiac kindergartners, there are a few bags left and we can add a few more, if necessary.

The **bags are due back on Easter Sunday, April 4**, at the outdoor church services, or any time during church office hours in the contact free drop box. Delivery of the books will be on April 8 or 9.

Thank you for your faithfulness this year. We have truly reached out to others and shared the love and kindness that is asked of us by God, to love our neighbors as ourselves.

*Marilyn Sutton for the Christian Education Committee*



### Earla B. Smith Foundation

**E**arla B. Smith Foundation funds are available this year, as they have been since Earla Smith made a very generous donation to the Foundation, through her trust. Earla Smith was a long-time, devoted member at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak and a teacher in the Troy School District, which also receives money, for scholarships, from the funds available.

The Fund was established to provide for a variety of Music and Educational programs, as well as missionary outreach, at FPCRO. It also can be used for pilot programs, such as the Youth Music Scholars program, for up to three years. This year, some funds received from last year have been used to cover the cost of joining S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry, which is a multi-church educational and outreach program for our mid and senior high students. Funds have also been used to support the new H.O.M.E. (Helping Out, Mission Edition) project, which began in the fall. Hopefully some projects approved last year, such as an outdoor children's concert, will be possible this year, depending on pandemic guidelines.



Kari Peruski sent information and application forms last month. Please consider applying for the funding of projects, or events, when you meet with your committees this month. Applications are due by April 30. They can be turned in, or emailed, to Kari. The Earla B. Smith Committee-Pastor Emma, Kari, Edie Watson and Marilyn Sutton-will meet early in May to review the applications, which then are approved by session and, finally, go to the Foundation Board for approval. Edie and Marilyn are the board members from FPCRO and join Richard Machesky, superintendent of Troy Schools, and Daniel Doyle, CPA.

If you have any questions about the Foundation and/or the guidelines, please connect with one of the committee members. If you need an application form, email Kari. We look forward to hearing about your plans for next year and know you will give thoughtful and prayerful consideration of projects, or events, that might be funded through the Earla B. Smith Foundation.

*Marilyn Sutton for the Earla B. Smith Committee*





# FPCRO Photo Gallery



*Helen D. and Ruth G. during the March 7 Drive Up/Drop Off.*



*Nancy L. and Lindsey H. assembling DMC Cardiac Unit goodie bags.*



*Pam M. helping to assemble Lenten Kits.*



*FPCRO youth sporting their Ash Wednesday temporary tattoos.*



*Pastor Emma and N sporting No-Sew hats they made for the January H.O.M.E. bag project.*



*H.O.M.E. Birthday in a Bag kits from December picked up by Mike Jacobs, Director of Dining Services, Royal Oak Schools Food Service.*



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## Upcoming Dates to Note

### **Maundy Thursday • April 1, 7 pm**

Zoom Online Worship with Hope Presbyterian Church

### **Good Friday • April 2**

Online Worship Service Available Anytime Good Friday

### **Easter • April 4, 9 am & 11 am • Outdoor Worship on Hendrie Lawn**

Featuring a “Flowering of the Cross” — Bring a fresh flower (or two) with you!

**Online Easter Worship** Featuring Virtual Anthem with  
Chancel Choir in partnership with Hope Presbyterian Church

**Showing Up: Easter Season Worship Series • April 11 to May 16**

**S.T.A.G.E. Flower Sale • Orders due April 13**

**Online Trivia Night • April 30**

**Earla B. Smith Foundation Applications due • April 30**

**Youth Sunday, Outdoor Congregational Meeting & Spring Fling! • May 16**