

Rearranging & Reframing: Reflections by Derek Helenberger

Usually I sit about midway up on the pulpit side along the center aisle in worship. The first Sunday in February, I agreed to help out with Communion and sat up in the front row on the pulpit side along the center aisle. The next Sunday, I was running embarrassingly late and “snuck in” and sat midway up on the pulpit side on the outside aisle. During the Passing of the Peace, someone mentioned that I was sitting all over the place. That gave me the idea to make a definitive effort to sit in different locations in the sanctuary.

The next week, I crossed the center aisle and sat on the lectern side, about three quarters of the way back, on the central aisle. Once again, someone else noticed that I was sitting in a different spot. On the rescheduled Ash Wednesday, I was pulpit side, on the central aisle, but further up than my usual spot. After receiving the ashes, I ended up in another row as some of my fellow worshippers sat where I had been, so I was doubling down on sitting in different spots that evening. The following Sunday was the first Sunday of Lent, and the picture frame display was present in the sanctuary. I wondered if part of my re-framing of Lent was to include this idea of making a point of sitting in different locations. I told someone what I was doing, and she said I should sit in the pews where some regulars sit because they were out of town. The next few Sundays, I again sat in different places to experience worship in new ways.

It wasn't clear if this connection between my movement among the seats and my re-framing of Lent was just coincidental or providential. Certainly, my perspective was re-framed. From the front row, pulpit side, center aisle, I had a good view of the Lord's Table and the full choir and how big the choir really is. Remarkable how much better I sounded singing that close to the choir! The outside aisle on the pulpit side gives me a straight shot to watching Joseph playing the organ. His animated full-body playing is wonderful to behold. From this spot I could also see the liturgist making their final review of what they were going to say. Sitting on the lectern side gives me a better view of the choir on the pulpit side. I have noticed other things as well. The lighting is better under the balcony, not a trifling matter as my eyes try to adjust to my multifocal/progressive lenses. The temperature varies depending on where I sit as well. The windows cracked along the outside aisles keep it cooler near them, a definite plus for someone who tends to run warm like me. It's a little warmer under the balcony with the ceiling much lower keeping the heat from rising to the rafters. Sitting closer to the back enables me to see more of the people in church, as they are easy to see in front of me. Sitting closer to the front enables me to get a good view of the dramatic productions of the service's Bible verses I have been enjoying this Lent.

So how does my re-framing re-late to the *re-* words on which this theme is focusing?

- **Repent:** “To repent means to rearrange your entire way of thinking, feeling and being in order to forsake that which is wrong.”¹ Rearrange where you sit, maybe you've been doing it wrong.
- **Resist:** Resist the urge to always sit in the same spot in church. Change it up and experience a new perspective. Or two.
- **Reclaim:** Reclaim the joy you felt as a child by sitting on the center aisle and feeling the joy of the children as they go rushing by after the Time with the Children.
- **Reimagine:** Reimagine your worship experience with a different view from a different spot.
- **Reveal:** Feeling stuck? Move your seat to see what may be revealed.
- **Restore:** If you feel like you need something familiar, rotate back to your usual seat instead of sitting in a new spot every time and restore your comfort level.
- **Revere:** Revere the saints that have sat in these seats before you. You aren't the first and won't be the last.
- **Resurrection:** He is risen indeed! Celebrate and proclaim it from any and every seat.

See you in the seats!

¹ Estera Wieja, “What Did Jesus Mean by Repent? The Hebrew Meaning of Teshuva,” firmisrael.org, 3 August 2021



In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:
9 am in Evans Chapel,
and 10:30 am in
the sanctuary.
(Masks are welcome,
but not required.)

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.

One worship service at 10:30am on Sunday, April 16. (No 9am service.)

our staff

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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:

June Van Dyke, March 4, 2023



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



memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of Jim Baldwin.

Gifts were given to the technology fund in honor of Greg Gillham.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

On **Saturday, May 6, at 10am**, we will be hosting the Community Programs Ensemble from Detroit Opera in a free performance of Little Red Riding Hood. This 40 minute Opera for Children of **all** ages tells the classic story of Little Red, her grandmother, and a not very bright wolf whom they outsmart. This delightful production is full of humor and teaches important lessons about keeping promises.



The Community Programs ensemble is a part of the education wing of the company which performs in schools and community centers throughout the area. The performance will be followed by a brief question and answer period by the cast. Plan to bring a child, grandchild, neighbor, or just yourself, and enjoy the show!

The Deacons want to ensure that everyone who wants to come to church can get here! **Roger Watson** is the transportation advocate on the Board of Deacons. If you need a ride



to church, or would like to have a ride occasionally, please get in touch with Roger. Or call the church office to get his contact information. Roger can work with you to see how we can arrange a ride for you to join us for worship.

SPRING GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

Please save the date of **Saturday, May 6, from 9 am to 12 noon** 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 13, is the rain date. Thank you!

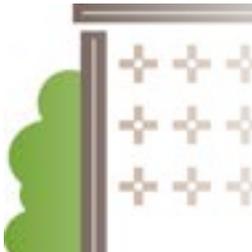
-House & Grounds Committee

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.



COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN
Contact the church office for an information packet

Congregational News

SUPPORT GROUP FOCUSING ON DEPRESSION, BIPOLAR DISORDER AND HOPE

Have you experienced a persistent feeling of sadness or emptiness, lack of energy, loss of interest in activities, or experienced changes in sleeping or eating habits?



These are just a few symptoms of depression. Sometimes depression can be situational, such as part of the grieving process, and sometimes it is a long-term health condition that requires diagnosis and treatment. If you think you may be experiencing depression, or if you have been diagnosed with depression and/or bipolar disorder and are in treatment, help and hope are available.

Beginning **Saturday, April 29, 2023**, a small group will be meeting once a week for six to eight weeks from 9am-10:30 am to support those who are struggling with depression or bipolar mood disorder. Each 90-minute session will focus on education, support, and a time of prayer and reflection. We will also acquaint you with resources that might be helpful in your journey. The group will be facilitated by Pat Johnson, MA, CSD, BCC.

Sign up using here: <https://tinyurl.com/56zs3454>. Please feel free to contact Pat via email (pjohnson71@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

APRIL 30 INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION EVENT



Join us after the 10:30am service on **Sunday, April 30** to make **plarn**, in an effort to help folks experiencing homeless and to care for the earth. **Plarn** means plastic yarn. We'll cut plastic grocery bags into strips and learn how to tie them into the yarn. The yarn is then woven into lightweight mats that can be used to keep folks off the ground and drier. This intergenerational mission project will last until about 12:30pm.

- Bring all your plastic bags to church on April 30—colored ones are especially nice!
- Bring a good pair of scissors (or two) marked with your name
- All ages are welcome. We'll find tasks especially suited to children

RETURNING OUTSIDE GROUP RENTAL

Sportsman's Dog Training Club was founded in 1942 and is proud to be Michigan's Oldest Dog Training Club. They help train dogs to be a well-mannered companion, compete in obedience or rally, strut in the confirmation ring, or fly through an agility course. They will be hosting an AKC Scent Work Trial at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak on **April 22 and April 23**.

Sportsman's will be using our entire building on Saturday and Sunday for scent trials except the worship wing starting at the reception desk and extending through the sanctuary and the nursery.

During their rental on April 22 and April 23, we are asking that you please:

- Enter the building through the Chapel or Hendrie doors. We will have the sandwich board signs out as reminders.
- Remain in this section of the building as much as possible. The rest rooms will be open. If you are able, please use the ones at the top of the stairs in the CE Lobby.
- The dogs are being timed, please don't interact with them in any way.





HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES

Maundy Thursday, April 6, at 7pm: An accessible, family friendly service, to explore the love commandment, foot washing, the last supper, and Jesus' time in prayer in the garden.

Good Friday, April 7, at 7pm: Good Friday will be a reflective service of Meditations on the Cross through the Passion Chorales of J.S. Bach. Bach is often referred to as the *fifth Evangelist* due to his deep and profound faith. His settings of the Lenten Chorales (German Hymns) of his day are rich with imagery and meaning. The service also features visuals of great works of art, original poetry, scripture, and prayer to bring us closer to Jesus and the Cross.

Easter Sunday, April 9, at 9am and 11am in the Sanctuary: A service of rejoicing to celebrate the empty tomb and Christ's resurrection, with choir and brass.

WORSHIP SERVICE OF HOPE AND JOY

Join us **Wednesday, April 26 at 7pm** for a Worship Service of Hope and Joy. Our Stephen Ministers will lead a time of scripture and inspiration as we glorify God for the hope and joy we find in each new day.



ALMOST SACRAMENTS EASTER SEASON WORSHIP SERIES

Starting **April 23**, we'll explore everyday ways we experience signs of God's grace in our lives. Through walking/exercise, food, service, friendship, and music, God's grace and love are powerfully present to us, much as they are in baptism and communion. In these "almost sacraments" we encounter the presence of God in ways Jesus did, too. Join us on Sundays at 9am and 10:30am to explore these everyday ways we connect with God and make meaning in our lives.

A WORD OF THANKS

When communion is set up on the table in worship when you arrive each month, it got there out of an act of love and devotion. For countless years, **Sandra Olah** has arrived early on Sunday mornings to set up the communion ware and the meal in both the chapel and the sanctuary. Her tireless commitment to this task has



been a blessing to our community. This quiet act of service has allowed us to be nourished at God's table and joined together in unity in God's presence.

Sandra is now passing the torch to other members who will carry on this important act of service. We are thankful to members of the Worship and Music committee and other volunteers who will be leading this ministry into the future. **Sandra**— thank you for your heartfelt commitment to FPCRO and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Choral Scholar Program



Can you help us continue the FPCRO Choral Scholar Program into the future?

On **Sunday, May 7, at 1pm**, join us for a **concert** showcasing our Chancel Choir Soloists and current Choral Scholars as a fundraiser for Choral Scholar Program. The concert will be preceded by a suggested donation **brunch**, and a free-will offering will be received following the program.

What is the Choral Scholar program? About four years ago, through the generosity of the Earla Smith Foundation, we created the Choral Scholar Program. This program offers young adult singers experience singing choral repertoire at a high level, and mentoring from our music staff, while also enhancing our Chancel Choir with the addition of their youthful voices. These high school students are offered a small honorarium for their participation, perhaps to put toward college tuition.

In the first 2019-20 season, the foundation funded two scholars, a third was made possible through the generous gift of one of our soloists, and a fourth was funded out of the music budget. Choral Scholars in that initial year offered these reflections:

"I feel like I became a more skilled and disciplined musician having worked with the people in the choir."

"I loved coming to the Church on Sunday mornings and being part of the service."

"The music was very inspiring to me and helped shape my understanding of religious music."

"The process of how we learned music in rehearsal prepared me for my advanced college choir."

"The sense of community was a beautiful thing, people coming together with a shared appreciation to make music and help a younger musician grow."



Although the pandemic put a damper on music-making for a time, we were still fortunate to have one excellent choral scholar in 2021-22. This year the Foundation allowed us to welcome a full complement of four wonderful scholars who add much to our music ministry.

About this unique program, Chancel Choir members have said:

"I have been a member of the choir for about 50 years. We are a "mature" group, and the addition of the Choral Scholars has helped bring a lightness and enthusiasm to choir that makes all of us sing better."

"I love working along all of the Choral Scholars. They bring great energy, and really support the sections. It is a joy getting to know these personable young people."

We have hosted Choral Scholars from Royal Oak, Berkley, and Shrine High Schools and are currently hosting one student who is in a gap year and attending Schoolcraft College taking preparatory courses.

The Earla Smith Foundation offers funding to experimental programs for up to three years. As funding expires ahead of the 2023-24 year, our goal is to raise \$18,000 to fund the program for the coming two years. Each Scholar receives \$2,000 to sing with the choir for its season from September through mid-June. Additional funds cover taxes and potential extra services.

This program has brought new energy to our choir, enhanced our worship, and created a place of welcome and support for these fine young people. **We hope you will consider adding your support for the future of the Choral Scholar Program, and that you will join us for a concert of beautiful music on May 7 at 1pm.** Donations of all sizes are appreciated! If you feel called to sponsor one or more Choral Scholar positions for one year, please reach out to Joseph Jackson or Pastor Emma Nickel.

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

The annual S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry Flower Sale is back! Order beautiful flowers to plant in your garden, as well as hanging baskets and tomato pots with cages. This is S.T.A.G.E.'s largest and last fundraiser of the season and the youth are counting on your support. All proceeds go directly to supporting the summer mission trip. This summer the group is going to Chicago, Illinois, where they will work with *Be the Neighbor*, and will explore the relationship between modern life and the degradation of vital ecological systems.

Orders are accepted online and must be placed by **Tuesday, April 18**. You may pay by credit card, Venmo, PayPal, cash, or check. <https://forms.gle/8bdiefY9KbJcSkQC6>

Flower order pick up will be on Saturday, May 20, between 12 noon and 2pm at Greenfield Presbyterian Church, 2312 Greenfield Road, Berkley.



S.T.A.G.E. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

- April 2** – No meeting: Happy Spring Break!
- April 9** – No meeting: Happy Easter!
- April 16** – Meeting at Cana/Drayton from 4:30-6:30pm with dinner.
- April 22** – Volunteer at Forgotten Harvest
- April 30** – Meeting at First Pres Birmingham from 4:30-6:30pm with dinner.
- May 7** – Activity/meeting TBD – we will meet!
- May 14** – No meeting: Mother's Day
- May 20** – Flower Sale set-up and distribution on Saturday
- May 21** – No meeting: rest up after the Flower Sale
- May 28** – No meeting: Memorial Day weekend
- June 4** – End of Year Picnic at Cana/Drayton at 4:30pm
- July 9-15** – High School Mission trip to Chicago
- July 24-27** – Middle School Mission Week in Metro Detroit

FORGOTTEN HARVEST VOLUNTEERING

On **Saturday, April 22**, from 9am-12 noon, S.T.A.G.E. is volunteering at Forgotten Harvest in Oak Park (15000 W. 8 Mile Rd., Oak Park, MI 48237). You need to sign-up two ways—once for us, so S.T.A.G.E. knows you're coming, and once for Forgotten Harvest, to ensure you're registered in their system. Youth and parents are welcome to attend. Currently, we have 12 spots available. Please complete registration no later than **April 18**.

First, let S.T.A.G.E. know you're coming by signing up here: <https://tinyurl.com/mvvpf36eu>

Then, click here to register with Forgotten Harvest: <https://tinyurl.com/2s4bbkf6> At the registration page:

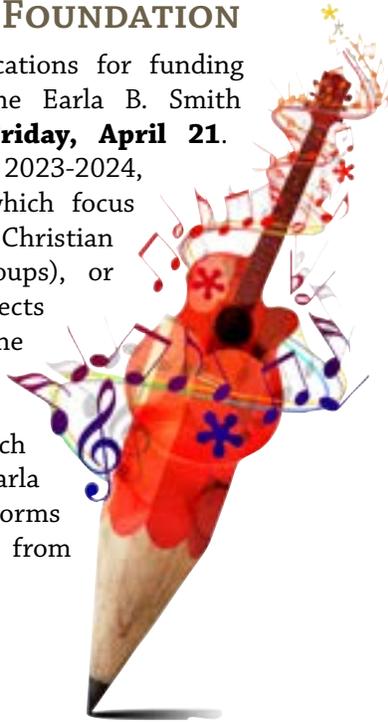
1. Login: Enter email and password or click: "haven't signed up yet" – follow instructions
2. Click to read volunteer waiver
3. Check box "I have read and agree to the volunteer waiver"
4. Click on Join Team

Please note the required dress code for volunteers: Long pants & closed toe shoes. No open toe or heel shoes (any kind of shoe exposing feet or any part of the foot. ex. sandals, sling back, or Crocs), no tank tops, no jewelry, except wedding rings. All earrings and facial piercings must be removed.

Christian Education

EARLA B. SMITH FOUNDATION

A reminder that applications for funding of projects through the Earla B. Smith Foundation are due **Friday, April 21**. Allocated funds are for 2023-2024, and are for projects which focus on music ministries, Christian Education (all age groups), or mission programs. Projects are funded by the Foundation which was established with the generous gift to the church by long-time member Earla Smith after her death. Forms are available online or from Kari Peruski.



H.O.M.E. FOR APRIL/MAY

The H.O.M.E. project for this spring will be **Birthday in a Bag** as we anticipate the birthday of the church at Pentecost. Bags will be available starting **Sunday, April 23**, and are due **May 21**, and will contain a guideline sheet and a list of items to include in the bag—cake mix, frosting, candles, birthday napkins, plates, etc. There will also be a blank card which you and your family may use to create a birthday card. If you want to add any other birthday treats, please feel free to do so! In the past, these bags have been donated to The Salvation Army and the Royal School District. Help to celebrate the birthday of the church by donating a bag for a child who will enjoy a Happy Birthday!



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



We are thrilled that April's arrival means spring has sprung. As the weather improves and the ground dries, we look forward to playing outside again. We love seeing the sunshine! Our color this month is purple. Look for some beautiful purple flowers blooming in our hallway!

We will be ordering caterpillars this month. We will create a habitat for them, observe them while they grow and change, and make chrysalises to become butterflies. What a wonderful introduction to the spectacular creation of new life! It is quite a celebration when each class releases their butterfly friends into the big world outside.

We are observing and taking note of all the wonderful things the children are learning and doing, in preparation for parent-teacher conferences the end of April. As you can see, we are so busy this month in preschool

and always so thankful for the wonderful children in our care.

We opened registration for the next school year in February. Our four-year-olds class filled up quickly and has only one opening available. There are still a few spaces open in our three-year-olds program, and interested families come in for a visit each week.

Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15-11:45am. Our four-year-olds meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:15-12 noon. Please call us to learn more about our program (248-541-0108, ext. 220). We can't wait to meet you!

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue

SUNDAY SCHOOL

April begins with the excitement of welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. **Our Sunburst Singers will meet at 9:45am in the Parlor to put on robes and practice with the Chancel Choir.** At 10:15am, everyone participating in the Procession of Palms will meet in the Parlor.



Our April 2, Palm Sunday, and April 9, Easter Sunday, worship celebrations will be times for family worship. Our playground will be available with quiet activities, and there will be "Pew Pouches" for older children to follow along with the service.

Following Easter, Sunday school lessons will include:

Live Peaceably Romans 12:1-2, 9-21
Road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-35
Giving Together Acts 2:42-47

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FISH BANKS

In February, children received fish banks for the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. **Don't forget to return them on Sunday, April 2.** The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is used to help people affected by natural disasters in the United States and around the world.



HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR VBS?

Be sure to check out our bulletin board near the Good Book Nook! Children ages 4 years through 5th grade are invited to attend our STELLAR VBS where we will Shine Jesus Light! The event is **June 26-30, 9am-12pm.**

Register at <https://form.jotform.com/223405660685054>

VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH VBS!

Our 2023 VBS is June 26-30! 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/ycka7hwhf> to join in on the fun! Be sure to talk to Joelle Jarrait for more information.



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.

April Child of God—Miles Salyers

Miles is a 3rd grader at Heritage Elementary in Highland, MI and his favorite subject is Math. When asked what he'd like people to know about him, Miles says: *"I try to be a kind person. I like to help people, especially my mom and dad. I help them clean at home."*

Some fun facts about Miles: Two years ago, Miles and his family adopted a rescue dog named Callie who is a mix of Siberian Husky and Akita. Miles loves to read and build with Legos. He also enjoys his screen time.

At home with his mom and dad, Miles likes watching movies. Action movies are his favorite. Miles enjoys coming to church and he loves Sunday school and the activities for children.

Blessing and Benediction from Rev. Emma Nickel

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2023 BY PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION

A four year old I know likes to ask, “is God really everywhere?” Each time she asks, it’s as if the Spirit is inviting me not just to say, “Yes, everywhere. Really.” But to *believe* that news myself. And to *embrace* it.

So when life feels like a slog, and when it’s been a minute—or years—since your last mountaintop encounter with the Divine, may you train your eyes to look for the blessing of God:

In that first sip of hot coffee,
In a few extra seconds gazing out the window,
In a blank document that shines with possibility,
In a finished document that signals “well done,”
In the gleam of a fresh car wash,
In the phone call you finally make to a friend,
In the tears shed over the news,
In the beauty of a finished meal on the plate, before you dig in,
In the words of a familiar prayer,
In the freshness of clean sheets,
In the memories that pop up from a photo,
In the release of a good laugh.

Which is to say—look for the blessing of God everywhere.

For surely God is present in all those places, ready to soothe your soul, comfort your spirit, and put you (back) in touch with the holiness that surrounds you.



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- Rev. Emma Nickel



HOW JESUS SAYS YOUR NAME

It's been said that when someone loves you, they say your name differently. Your name is "safe" coming from their mouth.

Mary Magdalene found this to be true. Walking alone in the dark to Jesus' tomb, she wanted nothing less than for a concerned loved one to interrupt her private grief, crooning her name in pity: "Oh, Mary, there, there." Or worse, someone from her old life who would spit her name like a curse, not knowing that Jesus had cast out her demons. But then Mary saw the tomb open and panicked, ran to get Simon, hurried back to the garden. Angels addressed her—not by name, just "Woman..." —and then a gardener: "Woman..."

Except, then—"Mary"—this man knew her after all, speaking her name so knowingly, tenderly, lovingly that she recognized him. "Mary." Her name was safe in his mouth, her life safe in his care. He wasn't the gardener. He was her teacher, her friend, her Savior.

Friend, your name also is safe in Jesus' mouth, your life safe in his care, for he loves you deeply.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

DEATH DOESN'T WIN

In the final hours of 2021, a wildfire near Boulder, Colorado, destroyed 1,000 homes, including one belonging to Pastor Bill Stephens. His family, out of town at the time, lost all their possessions. After months of feeling buried in debris, insurance paperwork and mourning, Stephens decided that Easter 2022 would mark a fresh start.

During worship that morning, the pastor shared a photo of vibrant daffodils emerging on his charred property. Burned remnants were visible in the background, just as Easter's backdrop includes the pain and death of Good Friday. But the empty tomb in Easter's foreground means death won't win, reminded Stephens. Even when earthly life "isn't all daffodils," we have hope and eternal life through Jesus.

Easter reveals that God will "give us the joy, and it's going to be in the heart of pain that we go through as well," added the pastor. "And that just makes me draw closer to God."

**Worship with us at 9 & 10:30 am,
or online anytime at www.fpcro.org**

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opportunities for all ages!
serving • learning • growing

find us on:



Holy Week & Easter Services

Maundy Thursday, April 6, at 7pm:

An accessible, family friendly service, to explore the love commandment, foot washing, the last supper, and Jesus' time in prayer in the garden.

Good Friday, April 7, at 7pm: A service of reflections on the cross through the Passion chorales of J.S. Bach, featuring choir, organ, scriptures, and poetry.

Easter Sunday, April 9, at 9am and 11am in the Sanctuary: A service of rejoicing to celebrate the empty tomb and Christ's resurrection, with choir and brass.