

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dearest friends,

As summer beckons, I think we find ourselves in a liminal season. *Liminal* time is a popular term these days. To be in a liminal time means to be in a time of transition, or perhaps that we have our feet on both sides of a threshold. We are still in this mid-pandemic phase experiencing so many improvements, and yet still so much uncertainty. Liminal spaces provide new opportunities and invite us into new ways of thinking. We might sense God's presence in fresh ways as we inhabit this time of wondering, wandering, and waiting. Liminal times also asks us to be honest about where we find ourselves now, so that we can chart a course ahead.



In May, the Session discussed a PowerPoint presentation called "They're Not Coming Back," which I borrowed from a mentor. The presentation encouraged us to acknowledge that a lot of people might just be choosing not to return to church at all. I'm not talking about people who are faithfully participating in online worship. But rather folks who have decided that other ways of Sabbath-making feel just as holy as coming to church: making pancakes, taking walks, being with family at home. Some spouses or kids who used to be dragged to church have probably fallen away. People who were only loosely connected to the church pre-pandemic may have chosen to pull away. Many may have simply gotten out of the habit of coming to church and don't know how or don't want to get back into it. These realities grieve me, but I still think it's good to have these honest conversations.

The presentation concluded that one final reason for people struggling to return might be because we have all been through a kind of pandemic trauma these past two years. In response, the church may be called to become a spiritual trauma care center—seeing the real pain, speaking Good News in response with hopeful reframing and merciful actions. In light of all we've been through, the church can help us figure out how to practice faith in the midst of a lot of awful things and how we see the image of Christ in the world. Our goal in this ministry must not be growth in numbers or dollars, but rather seeing people's wounds and pointing them toward a path that leads to life abundant.

I admit I don't fully know how to become or lead a spiritual trauma care center, but I'm intrigued by a fresh way of thinking about what the church can be about as we share God's mercy and grace. Part of that journey for our church means that we plan to keep doing outreach to folks who haven't returned and to see if there are ways we can support them and offer ministry that speaks to where they are now. I know that no one will be healed by coming to worship services alone. Therefore, I and other leaders continue to seek ways to bring all aspects of life into the spiritual realm, and vice versa, through our church's varied ministries. I also try to weave these themes into my preaching and worship liturgy. So if you feel intrigued by this idea of caring for folks in the midst of trauma and you're in worship every week, let me know what you're hearing or what might be speaking to you. If you haven't been back to church or been in a while, I still pray that you might be coming back! And I invite you to come soon and to come often because it is my hope that we can help each other hear God's love and presence speaking into our wounds and our hopes even as we continue to make our way through this liminal time.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Emma

Church Bell



fpcro

In-Person Worship

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

*May 29, one service at 10:30 am.

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.

our staff

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director of music ministries & organist, jjackson@fpcro.org **Joseph Jackson**
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wedding coordinator, weddings@fpcro.org **Ginny O'Brien**
newsletter editor **Sandra Olah**

tenor **Dawson Trotman**
baritone **Noah Rogers**
soprano **Audrey Frieberg**
soprano **Olivia Donnel**

our soloists



First Presbyterian Church
of Royal Oak

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www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro



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:

Eric Hugh Hayes, May 10, 2022,
son of Barb & Bill Hayes

Don J. Leshner, May 13, 2022

Phyllis Hertler, May 17, 2022



We're halfway through the year! Revisit your first thoughts, impressions, and prayers of your star word. Have they changed? How have you grown?



Rev. Mary Weese visited FPCRO for worship on May 15, High School Senior Sunday. She is a pastor in Kentucky and had these encouraging words to share about our congregation:

Rev Emma,

It was a delight to worship with you and your congregation today.

I wanted to share with you how blessed I was to witness the love your congregation has for each other. The support of your youth was so evident among all the older folks I was sitting with. This is church, I thought! This is a church that loves its young people. It was a spiritual moment for me.

God bless you and your work together in Royal Oak!

—Mary Weese

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.



UPDATE FROM PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAM

The PRT continues to meet monthly to review the current situation with COVID-19 in our area. At the meeting on May 10, the Team discussed the current rise in cases locally. They decided to continue on our current path and to remind the congregation that mask-wearing is always welcome and encouraged for those who prefer it at church events. We continue to focus on ventilation in our worship spaces. The commercial air purifier is working well in Evans Chapel and we continue to keep windows and doors open in the sanctuary and to run a ventilation fan in the balcony each week during worship. The Team affirms those who need or choose to participate in worship or other activities virtually from home, just as we are grateful to also offer in-person activities during this time. The PRT plans to remain together and to routinely evaluate the situation for as long as is needed.



UPDATE: due to high COVID transmission levels in Oakland County, we strongly recommending masking indoors.

—Kevin Ball, Marilyn Sutton, Lindsey Harris, Chris Klein, Joseph Jackson, Rev. Emma Nickel

COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP RETURNS!

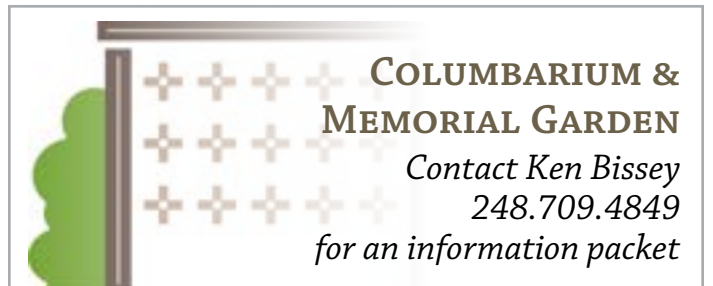
On the second Sunday of each month through August, Coffee Hour Fellowship after the 10:30 service will resume. The dates are **June 12, July 10, and August 14.**



Volunteers and donations of goodies are always welcome. Contact Candace Rieck at 4ccrieck@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you there!

COLUMBARIUM & MEMORIAL GARDEN

Contact Ken Bissey
248.709.4849
for an information packet



Mission and Benevolence

RISE AGAINST HUNGER

Thank you to everyone who made this event happen! The response from the church was wonderful and we made a difference on a May Sunday afternoon. Thanks again.

CEREAL FOR SUMMER!

As part of the church's mission to be a Matthew 25 Church, the church is supporting the Seventh Annual **Cereal For Summer Campaign** of the Presbytery of Detroit to help feed hungry children in the presbytery.



When? During the month of June (A special event is planned for the last Sunday in June. Stay tuned!). Where? Look for collection bins at the church.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

Starting July 31 through August 24, look for collection bins at church to drop off donated school supply items to benefit Oakland Elementary School in Royal Oak.



Requested Items:

- **Plastic pocket folders**
- **Crayons (skin tone colors accepted & appreciated)**
- **Pre-sharpened pencils**
- **Plastic pencil cases**
- **Colored pencils**
- **Colored markers**
- **Dry erase markers**
- **Glue sticks**

Please check Sunday worship bulletin, as additional school supply items may be added. This collection is a long standing one FPCRO has done in years past and was interrupted by COVID-19. It has been moved from September to August so members can take advantage of Back-to-School sales.

OPERATION PAPERBACK

We are continuing to look for paperback books in good condition. There is a need for adventure, mystery, and non-fiction appropriate for our armed service personnel overseas and stateside. (Please, no romance or risqué titles.) Books may be dropped off in the Steen Library at church. We request addresses and receive specific requests for types of titles. Have questions? Contact Adair Calder 248-835-0070.



CROP WALK — SAVE THE DATE!

The Royal Oak/Ferndale CROP Walk is scheduled for **Sunday, September 18, 2022**. More details coming soon.



FOOD, RENTAL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

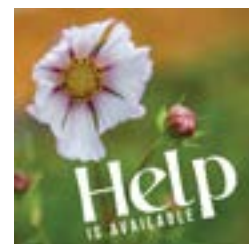
Many Royal Oak households have experienced loss of employment or significant reduction in income due to COVID-19. Renters may be eligible for free financial assistance for unpaid rent and/or utilities dating back no more than six months.

The City of Royal Oak has contracted with South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse of Oakland County and Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit to help keep low- to moderate-income Royal Oak renters from being evicted for non-payment.

Interested parties should contact Legal Aid and Defender Association to inquire about their eligibility for rent or utility assistance.

Additionally, those in need of free food, for a period not to exceed six consecutive months, can discuss opportunities with South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse.

South Oakland Shelter/Lighthouse: 248-920-6000 ext: 5500. Legal Aid and Defender Association: 313-967-5555, royaloakcares@ladadetroit.org





JUNE WORSHIP SERIES

Join us beginning on **June 5** to celebrate Pentecost and the tongues of fire from the Holy Spirit. On the following Sundays, through July 3, we'll visit other times when God's presence came near through fire including Moses and the burning bush and the charcoal fire where the disciples met the risen Jesus on the beach. Check out the campfire scenes in worship and enjoy the beautiful new banner that Ginny O'Brien created for this series and the Pentecost season.

Join us on **Sunday, June 12** after the 10:30 am service for a special coffee hour to roast your own marshmallows at the campfire to make a s'more!

JUNETEENTH

On June 19, 1865, news reached enslaved people in Galveston, Texas that they were free. In later years, Juneteenth grew as a celebration throughout Texas and other parts of the United States with the descendants of slaves recognizing it as their Independence Day.



In June 2021, Juneteenth National Independence Day became a federal holiday. The 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will observe Juneteenth 2022 with a hybrid worship online and in Louisville. The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will preach.

This year, FPCRO will also observe Juneteenth (this year, June 20) as a holiday for staff who want to take advantage of activities and efforts surrounding the holiday.

JULY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

On the **five Sundays in July**, we will adjust our worship schedule to allow for an opportunity to worship God outdoors, for those who enjoy it! We welcomed many neighbors during outdoor worship last summer and this is a great way to make our witness to Christ more visible in our neighborhood. The Session has ensured that there is still opportunity to be inside and to worship online so that the most people possible can access our worship services.



9 am worship in the sanctuary, which will be livestreamed, **10:30 am worship outside** on the Hendrie Lawn, weather permitting. Bring your lawn chair, sun hat, and wear some sunscreen!

TAKE THE MOTAKHASIV FAMILY GROCERY SHOPPING OR HELP WITH CHILD CARE

We need the congregation's help to schedule drivers for grocery store and food pantry visits for our Afghan refugee family and to help with child care for the remaining children while parents shop. Visit the Signup Genius and select a time to help: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhasfdp>



In agreement with our church policy, individuals spending time with the children will need to have a background check on file at the church. Contact Joelle Jarrait to complete this simple step. Questions? Contact Ted DeVantier, Benny Rediers, or call the church office.

Meet Our Incoming Elders and Deacons!

At the Congregational Meeting on May 15, these faithful servants were elected to serve. They will be examined by the Session at their June meeting and ordained and/or installed in worship at the end of June, with their term of service beginning in August.

DEACONS, CLASS OF 2025



Elsa Jorgensen—Elsa joined the church in 2018 and started attending through her cousin, Linda Willemssen. She grew up at Southfield United Presbyterian. Elsa works as a freelance court reporter/stenographer and has a boyfriend, Steve. Presently, she enjoys attending Bible study as her work schedule allows. Her interests include amateur bird watching, Norwegian Club and language lessons.



Nancy Lambert and her husband, Richard, raised their two children at the church and are now empty nesters with a cat at home. Nancy is a former teacher and librarian at a local public high school. Reading is her favorite hobby. When Nancy joined the church after marrying Richard, Vicki Dickinson got her involved in the Book Club, which is still meeting today.



Melissa Ross—Happily married for almost 20 years, Melissa and Brad have one daughter, nine year old Gracie and she is the star of the family! With 26 years in the field of education, she currently works for a management company supporting charter schools in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Alabama. Members of FPCRO since 2006, they enjoy sharing their gifts with the church and have been blessed by the fellowship, music and work of the



Roger Watson retired from the Michigan Department of Corrections, Field Operations Administration. He met his wife Edie on a blind date in 1968. They were married in 1969 and will celebrate 53 years of marriage in July. They have three children and four grandchildren. His hobbies include wildlife photography, travel, reading, and yard work. Roger hopes that FPCRO will continue to engage in service to the

church. At home they enjoy entertaining, music, cheering on home team sports, and watching Gracie grow.

community, both locally and internationally.

ELDERS



Lauren Schnieders (Youth Elder, Class of 2023) Lauren is a sophomore at Berkley High School and has been at FPCRO her whole life, beginning with Sunflowers Christian Preschool. Her memories of the nursery with Ms. Ivy and Wednesday Night Live were a space where she felt secure and at ease. In her free time, Lauren enjoys art, tennis, and sometimes aerial yoga. She's interested in movies and the film industry, as well as nature/



Anne-Marie DeVantier (Class of 2023). Anne-Marie met her husband, Ted, through her work as President of Financial One Accounting which serves non-profits, and they have now been married for 22 years! In 2003, they traveled to Kazakhstan and returned with the most amazing presents, their children Luke and Ali, who were baptized in our church and now attend college.

animals, and is working to become fluent in Spanish. Lauren hopes that our church can help people in our community and make everyone who might want to join the church feel welcome.

After moving into a home down the street from the church, Anne-Marie and Ted came to worship for a visit. They loved the warmth and the choir. Her favorite memories from church are of the children's plays and camping trips where everyone looked out for the little ones. In her spare time, Anne-Marie loves to read, hike, and travel. She hopes that the church will find new ways to grow and to keep increasing our fiscal health.



Julie Matthews (Class of 2024). Julie came to FPCRO as a young child and has been a member for over 60 years. Her favorite things about the church are the many good friends she has here. Her hopes for the church during her term are for growth and service. Julie has two grown children and three grandchildren. She served as an early childhood teacher before retiring and becoming involved in many organizations

and volunteering. You can find her in her garden when she has free time!



Cassie Coates (returning, Class of 2025). Cassie met her husband, Sean, in youth group at FPCRO and they have two fur babies, Dottie and Ricky. Her experience in youth group and choir has always kept her connected here, in addition to her extended family's many ties to the church. Professionally, she is a corporate mortgage trainer, and her other interests include singing, painting, gardening, and her dogs. She is returning for another term

of service and hopes to help the church serve its current needs in addition to try to help as we move forward into the future.



Suzanne Lewand (Class of 2025). Suzanne was initially drawn to FPCRO through the music program and cherishes the memories of all the children she worked with in the children's choir beginning 20 years ago. Working with many of them through Confirmation has also been a blessing! Suzanne and her husband, Tom, have four daughters, aged 17 to 24, and will become empty nesters this fall.

In her career, Suzanne serves as a litigation attorney with Hewson & Van Hellemont, PC and as the Costumer at Cranbrook Schools for the theater department. In the coming years, Suzanne hopes that the church remains healthy and vital; that we as a congregation can continue to grow and serve together, accepting and celebrating our differences as well as our common faith and subscription to the politics of PCUSA. Suzanne loves riding her horses and keeps very busy serving with the Presbytery of Detroit's Committee on Ministry, Operations Team, and Bylaws Committee.



Candace Rieck (Class of 2025). Candace is an accountant, is married to Scott, and they have two adult children. She started attending FPCRO in second grade with her parents, joined in 9th grade, and has been here ever since. Candace has more wonderful memories from the church than we can list here, including youth group in the pit in the old Teen Lounge, Singles Group, her husband and children's baptisms, and the fall

hayride and s'mores at Mayberry Park. As we look toward the future, Candace hopes that the next chapter in the church's life will be stronger than ever and that the church will spread the good news of Jesus Christ. She hopes we can reach more people to have a personal relationship with Jesus and for them to feel his comfort and support through the joys and trials of their lives.



Kevin Schnieders (Class of 2025). Kevin began attending FPCRO twenty years ago when he was first dating his now wife, Wendy. Their wedding in the sanctuary is his favorite memory associated with the church. Kevin serves as Chief Servant Leader/CEO at EDSI, a Training and Workforce Consulting firm, headquartered in Dearborn, MI. In returning to Session for another term, Kevin hopes that our church can show up and support

others as often as possible. His children are a great joy. Lauren, a sophomore at Berkley High School, is an artist and varsity tennis player. Riley is a 7th grader, loves anything social, plays tennis, volleyball, and golf.



Keith Weber (Class of 2025). Keith is a local real estate agent who loves architecture and homes and his hobbies include classic cars and gardening. Keith has been at the church since the womb and still attends with his mom, Carol, and partner, Joseph. He is part of the many Webers who've attended here and even has a brother who's a PC(USA) pastor. Keith hopes that FPCRO will focus on an expanded outreach in the community and

even invite back those who may have fallen away from the church.

Congregational News

MOVIE NIGHTS!

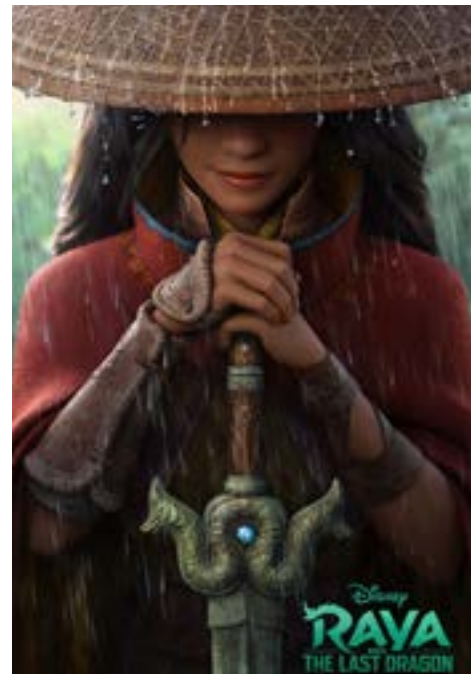
Mark your calendar for our monthly movie nights throughout the summer, each beginning at 7:30 pm on the Hendrie Lawn, weather permitting. We're grateful to Sean and Cassie Coates for hosting these fun events. Bring your lawn chair and a friend!



June 10 • *Encanto*



July 15 • *Cars*



Aug 26 • *Raya and the Last Dragon*

During its May 12 meeting, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners recognized 12 exceptional Oakland County residents as part of a program developed by Commissioner Kristen Nelson (District 5) in honor of Older Americans Month. The Oakland County Outstanding Older Adult Award celebrates seniors for the experience, wisdom and skills they share to help build stronger communities through service and volunteerism.

FPCRO's own 2022 awardee, Laurie Geraldts, was nominated by Commissioner Gary R. McGillivray (District 20). Laurie has been a driving force behind countless improvements to the City of Madison Heights community for over 40 years. She is a leader in the Madison Heights Women's Club, and with long-standing connections throughout the city, she is able to recruit volunteers in a short amount of time. This ability is especially crucial for storm cleanup, welfare checks, litter pickup and special event planning.

Laurie also started and leads MAD (Make a Difference) Mondays to encourage volunteers to take small steps to make their community a better place. She is a member-at-large of the Madison Heights Arts Board, she and organized and participates in the annual Madison Heights Pumpkin Walk. She also serves as secretary with Madison Heights Citizens United, is active with the Madison Heights Food Pantry and the Memorial Day Parade Committee, and helps support the Veteran's Day ceremony. Congratulations Laurie!



Compassion Camp: Changing the World with Lovingkindness

LOVINGKINDNESS



**Every Sunday, July 10 – August 28,
10:30 a.m. beginning in worship**

We are excited for our upcoming Compassion Camp this summer on Sundays, July 10 – August 28. Children will begin in worship and then move to our “Campsite” for the hour. Together, we will explore what it means to have compassion for others, ourselves, and the world! Lovingkindness is the utmost form of selfless love toward ourselves and others. The practice begins with focusing on self-compassion because once we have compassion for ourselves, we can have compassion for others.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ON SUNDAYS FOR “COMPASSION CAMP”

We are looking for volunteers to help guide our little ones through the activities. Whether you can help every Sunday or just specific dates, we would

love to have you. Please contact Joelle Jarrait to sign up for a Sunday or Sundays to help.

JOYFUL JOURNEYS SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our children are so thankful for the warm weather we’re having! Our Sunday school time is being spent outside at the church playground. Together we share a story or conversations about where we feel God in our lives. It’s great being together and getting to know some new friends!



PENTECOST CELEBRATION!

On **Sunday, June 5**, we are celebrating the Holy Spirit as part of Pentecost Sunday. Be sure to **join us after the 10:30 am worship service** for fellowship and activities on the church lawn. It will be a time to experience different languages and cultures as we will be joined by our refugee family from Afghanistan. There is something for all ages so come and celebrate with us!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN SYNOD OF THE COVENANT GATHERING

**July 29–July 30 at
First Presbyterian
Church of Dearborn**



The regional Presbyterian Women Gathering is being held in Dearborn this year! The theme is **“Hope Renewed—New Visions Imagined.”** During the event, there will be a Plenary address by Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel, author of the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study “Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God’s Gift of Rest and Delight.” The keynote speaker is Susan Jackson Dowd, PW Executive Director. Her topic is “Hope Renewed with Grassroots Action.” There will be workshops, worship, communion, fellowship and a business meeting. Be sure to join us for a meaningful event with Presbyterian Women from around our Synod!

More information and registration forms are available on the counter at the reception desk. You can also contact Joelle Jarrait for more information.

Congratulations Class of 2022!



Meredith Batcheller is graduating from Berkley High School. She participated in Choir, Drama (Drama Club President), National Honors Society, Tri-M Music Society, International Thespian Society. Meredith will be attending DePaul University in Chicago, studying Communication & Media.

Zumi Hagopian is graduating from Seaholm High School. She has been active in S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry and enjoyed going on the mission trip to Wisconsin. She will be going to a community college in the fall.

Megan Hanks is graduating from Ferndale High School. She participated in Ferndale High School Golden Eagle marching band and won the 2021 state finals last fall. Member of Ferndale Schools Orchestras and received high ratings at festival and superior ratings at solo and ensemble. Recipient of AP Scholar Award. Megan will be studying archeology at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.



Julia Harris will be graduating from Royal Oak High School. During her time at ROHS, she was a four-year violist for the Symphony Orchestra and Alternative Strings. In addition, she was a four-year member of the Interact Club and a two-year member of National Honor Society. Outside of school, since eighth grade, she has tutored middle school students in all subjects, especially math, and hopes to continue tutoring in college. In the fall, she will be attending Lake Forest College in Illinois, majoring in



Neuroscience with minors in psychology and writing, and she hopes to be a part of the school's orchestra.

Kavanaugh Helenberger is graduating from Berkley High School. He was a member of the Varsity Swim Team, ski club, Honor Roll, NHS, and Michigan All State Academic. He works as a lifeguard at Lakefront Park and at Panda Express. In the fall, he will be attending Michigan State University.



Congratulations Class of 2022!



Erin Lewand is graduating from Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School. She has been very active in the drama program at school as well as competing in both Olympic weight lifting and Equestrian sports. In the fall, she will be attending Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. She thinks she will major in sports management.

Sarah M. Sellers is graduating from Troy High School. She is an Honors Student Graduate, Chinese Honors Society, THS Varsity Dance Team, THS Varsity Cheer Team. Sarah plans to do volunteer work during the summer, and in the fall will attend Michigan State University, focusing on Nutritional Sciences/Pre-Med studies.



Grace Watson is graduating from Berkley High School. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Tri-M Music Society President, member of Diversity Council, Rackham Choir Intern, FPCRO Chancel Choir Intern, Top 12 in state of Michigan for Michigan State Vocal Music Association for vocals. Grace will be majoring in Vocal Performance at The Boston Conservatory at The Berklee College of Music in Massachusetts.



Graduating seniors not pictured:

Collin Beltz

Cayleigh Bushey

Gavin Warner



**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)

248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859

529 Hendrie Blvd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



fpcro

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Special Dates in June at FPCRO



June 5 • Worship Series “Finding God in the Flames” begins

June 5 • Pentecost Celebration after 10:30 am worship

**June 10 • FPCRO Movie Night “Encanto” at 7:30 pm on the
Hendrie Lawn**

June 12 • Trinity Sunday

June 14 • Flag Day

June 19 • Juneteenth

June 19 • Father’s Day

June 21 • First day of summer