

From the Pastor's Desk...

Friends,

Recently, I was invited to coffee by Seth Resler, who produced our *Forging Faith* podcast last year. It was fun to catch up with him and hear about his projects in production and radio. Though I thought he was going to pitch me with something new, we just had a great conversation about his work and ours. He is investing in ways to create and build community, particularly through online and in-person events. He is interested in how we do this as the church, and it was interesting for me to hear his take on how much community is needed in the 'secular' world. I came out thinking a lot about our church's role in creating connections among people, and my role in that as pastor.



In one of my seminary classes, we were asked to consider a personal metaphor that illustrated pastoral ministry for us. At that time, fourteen years ago, the metaphor I shared was *drum major*: the one who marches in front of the band to conduct, and who is helping the other members of the band (church members) play their music well. The conversation with Seth led me to think about the question of a metaphor for my ministry in 2024.

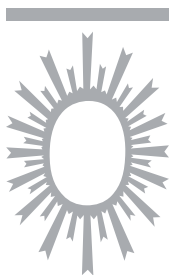
Today, I would say a *dinner party host* is a more apt metaphor for the work of a pastor. The kind of host who carefully plans the meal, thinks through the guest list to be invited, and intentionally seats certain people next to one another to ensure great conversation. Then who ultimately opens the door, and begins helping people make connections. This metaphor also reminds me that there is a lot I can do as the pastor/host to prepare and plan for a gathering. But, there is also a lot that is not in my control once people begin to come together. I can invite folks to gather and I can curate an experience for them. But then I must be able to set them free to relate, build relationships, and create something new that goes way beyond me.

I don't think most people clearly state that they are looking for *community*. Even though all of us long for connections, I think most people would not name their longing as such. But when new people do come here, they seem to be looking for a place to be known and to know other people; to feel comfortable in thinking through their problems and those of the world; and to find connections to others and to God that are meaningful. All of those are things are possible to find here in this church community. I believe that when I serve as a good host, I can help people find those authentic connections, ask good questions, and come to trust the people around them.

But I don't think this metaphor is limited to pastors. I think the image of a good host is one for which many people in our church are gifted. As you perhaps host an Easter dinner or attended one recently, I invite you to think about this metaphor, too, and about how you might be called to help people—new and old—build connections in our church.

Pastor Emma

Church Bell



In-Person Worship

Sunday Worship:
9 am in Evans Chapel,
and 10:30 am in
the sanctuary.
**One Worship Service on
April 7 at 10:30am**

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

pastor/head of staff, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**
director of music ministries & organist, jjackson@fpcro.org **Joseph Jackson**
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sunburst singers director, afriberg@fpcro.org **Audrey Frieberg**
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newsletter editor **Gretchen Hirsch**

baritone **Bryan Clinthorne**
tenor **Brady DelVecchio**
soprano **Olivia Donnel**
soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

our soloists



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The **Church Bell** is published monthly
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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:

Rev. Neeta Nichols, March 2, 2024

Linda Thompson, February 29, 2024

Skip Eddy, February 26, 2024



memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of Jean Lichtenberg.

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



ONE WORSHIP SERVICE ON APRIL 7

There will be one worship service on **Sunday, April 7, at 10:30am** as we gather to praise God on the second Sunday of Easter. A coffee and fellowship hour will follow the service, hosted by Session, and feature yummy doughnuts!

WISH TO BE A BETTER LISTENER?

On **Monday, April 29, from 7-8:30pm**, Pat Johnson, retired healthcare chaplain, spiritual director, and Commissioned Ruling Elder, will present *"Listening Sets the Broken Heart Free,"* an in-depth look at listening to others, to ourselves, and to God. This broad spiritual view of what makes for a meaningful growth experience is based on her book, *Listening for Life*. Highlighting these three layers of listening, Pat will share stories of encounters with patients while a chaplain. Read her book in advance (listed on Amazon) or purchase it after the presentation (check/cash only). Learn more about Pat on her website patj.substack.com.



BUY NOTHING FREE SALE EVENT

On **Saturday, May 18 from 9am to 12pm** (rain date, June 15), FPCRO will host a group from Royal Oak to have a Buy Nothing Free Sale in our parking lot. Many RO residents are members of Buy Nothing Facebook groups, where they can take unwanted/unused items from their homes and gift them to others in the community. Usually these arrangements are made individually. This year the group wants to host an in-person event and we have the parking lot space to do that! This event encourages community connections, and cares for creation by keeping items out of landfills.



To offer this service to our community, we need some volunteers! Could you:

- Serve as a parking lot attendant on this day, directing people where to park and set-up?
- Serve as a host at a booth for our church offering greetings, giving directions to our church's bathrooms, water fountains, and pointing people to the event's coordinators for other assistance?

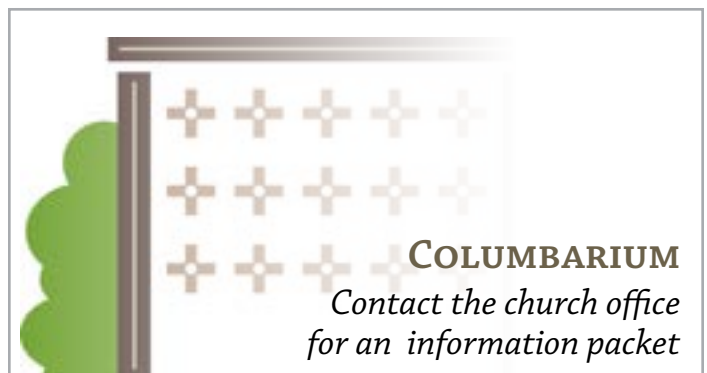
Sign-up here: <https://tinyurl.com/3mpttsn2> or email Pastor Emma to let her know you want to participate.

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.



Worship and Nurture

In early April, the Deacons will be going out to serve home communion to some of our members. The Deacons, and a few elders, have been trained in the theological understanding of communion and the how-to's of serving the sacrament. Our Presbyterian Church (USA) allows and encourages the serving of communion by deacons and elders in this manner, once they have been trained and approved by the Session. Ideally, home communion is served in teams, to highlight that the sacrament takes place in the midst of the whole community. It is served close to the time when the Lord's Supper is served in worship to demonstrate that this is an extension of the one table to which God invites all of us. If you would like to receive communion at home, please contact Pastor Emma. Also, be in prayer for those going out to serve.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Men's Group will gather on **Monday, April 8, at 7:30pm** at Bagger Dave's (2972 Coolidge Hwy) in Berkley. Join us for a return visit or for your first time! Questions? Contact Derek Helenberger or Matthew Nickel.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Women's Group will meet from **9:30-10:30am** on the following Fridays: **April 12, May 10, and June 7** at Coffee and Bark (2733 Coolidge Hwy) in Berkley. Questions? Contact Amanda Curry.



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A STEPHEN MINISTER?

Do you need a listening ear? Could you use a regular visit or phone call from a caring friend?

FPCRO is blessed to have Stephen Ministers who provide confidential care and conversation to those struggling with life's challenges. Through grief, transition, or perhaps a scary diagnosis, we are there to lend an ear and offer Christian care. If you feel this is something that would be helpful to you, please contact Pastor Emma, Gretchen Hirsch, Joelle Jarrait, or Norm Dell.



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 and observe them while they grow, change, make a chrysalis, and 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. There are still a few spaces open in both our three and four-year-old programs. Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15-11:45am. Our four-year-olds meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:15am-12pm. 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

REGISTER TODAY FOR SCUBA VBS!

June 24-28 • 9am-12pm

<http://tinyurl.com/yc42r5m8>

Children will receive a free gift when they register!



BE PART OF THE SCUBA VBS FUN — VOLUNTEER!

In order for our VBS week to be successful, we need folks who can help in a variety of ways. Adults and Youth are welcome to volunteer. Our program runs **Monday-Friday, June 24-28 from 9am-12pm**. If you can help on all five days, that's great! If you can only come two or three days, that's great too! Even one day is a big help.

What is required to be a VBS volunteer? We just ask that you love being around children, and you want to share God's Word with them. You do not have to be an experienced teacher or an expert in any of the areas. Everything is set up for you and you'll have a chance to look at things ahead of time. Per our church safety policy, we do require a background check be on file for adults working with children. It's a simple process with a quick form to fill out. Be sure to see Joelle Jarrait if you have any questions or to sign up. You can also sign up online at <https://tinyurl.com/mr53bmr>

What's needed?

1. **Crew Leaders** who will oversee a group of children as they move from station to station.
2. **Station Leaders** are needed for each area. The areas include:
 - **Bible Adventures** where children hear the story and dive into God's word in simple hands one ways.
 - **Sticky Scripture** where children hear the scripture and enjoy fun experiments with water.
 - **Imagination Station** where children wonder together as they dip into water activities.
 - VBS isn't complete without **games!** We have some fun things in store that might even involve getting a little wet.

EARLA SMITH FOUNDATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applications for the Earla Smith Foundation grants will be accepted until **April 30**. The Earla Smith Foundation Committee will review the applications and send them to Session for approval in May.

Earla Smith set up this grant to benefit FPCRO and the Troy School District for special programs and other activities of the church. If you have a proposal for how these funds could be used we encourage you to submit an application. Visit <https://www.fpcro.org/forms-event-scheduling> to download application form. Contact Kari for more information and/or assistance.



SAVE THE DATE— SUNDAY SERENADE

On the afternoon of **Sunday, June 2 at 2pm**, our talented section leader/soloists Bryan Clinthorne, Brady DelVecchio, Olivia

Donnel, and Audrey Frieberg will be sharing their gifts with us in an afternoon of song. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful quartet of soloists here at FPCRO, and this concert will feature them in ways that go beyond what we hear on a Sunday morning.

Their program will include solos, duets, trios and quartets from classical Art Song, Opera and Musical Theater. Within this huge variety of pieces there will be something for everyone to enjoy. The singers will be accompanied by our own Joseph Jackson at the piano.

Join us in support of our talented singers for a beautiful concert which will showcase the versatility of their gifts. The concert will be free and open to the public.



Generosity and Resources

A QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION TO FPCRO FROM YOUR IRA CAN BRING TAX BENEFITS

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD), also known as an IRA charitable rollover gift, allows individuals 70½ or older to make an outright gift of up to \$100,000 from an IRA directly to FPCRO and exclude it from taxable income.



Requirements of a QCD

- The IRA account holder must be age 70 1/2 or older at the time the distribution is made to FPCRO.
- Distributions are limited to \$100,000 per individual per year and must be transferred directly from the IRA custodian to FPCRO.
- Distributions can only be directed from a traditional or Roth IRA (not from a retirement plan such as a 401(k), 403(b), etc.).
- Distributions cannot be made to a donor advised fund or supporting organization (including most private foundations) or used to fund a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust.

No goods, services, or income can be received by the donor in exchange for the gift. Donors should consult their financial adviser, as other requirements may apply.

Benefits of a QCD

- Satisfies all or part of annual required minimum distributions (RMD) and provides a charitable giving strategy for donors who do not need the additional income.
- May be used to fulfill any outstanding pledges.
- Maximizes giving by allowing donors to give outside of the 60 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI) charitable deduction limit.
- Provides value for non-itemizers and donors who live in states that do not allow charitable deductions.
- Minimizes tax liability and can put donors at a lower threshold for Medicare premiums by reducing income.

Donors should work closely with their IRA custodian to request a direct distribution to FPCRO. Please talk to Kari Peruski for more information.

Monthly Spotlight:

Technology

Technology includes everything from our office computers, software, WiFi, to our live-stream cameras.

Fun Facts:

- Our office hardware is on a rotation replacement schedule to ensure we are working on current equipment. Our server is changed out every five to seven years, and our computers every three years. This enables our ability to run the latest safeguarding software to keep the church network secure.
- We are diligent to make sure any software loaded onto our computers is fully licensed. Many of our licenses are obtained through TechSoup, which offers discounted seats to non-profit organizations.
- During the pandemic in 2021, when we found the best way to resume worship was through live-streaming services and moving to online meetings, the congregation was in full support and contributed \$12,000 to purchase cameras, equipment, and other supplies to make it happen.
- Our IT Department consists of Greg Gillham and Kari Peruski. We partner with Huntington Technology when we run into issues which require more technical knowledge. Greg Gillham has put in hundreds of hours over the years, and our technological platform would not run as smoothly without his time and dedication. We invite you to thank him for his service the next time you see him!

Youth in middle school, high school, and their friends are invited to our collaborative S.T.A.G.E. (Somewhere To Ask God Everything) youth ministry. Meetings, on select Sundays, are from 4:30-6:30pm, unless otherwise specified. Questions? Contact Director, Jessica Gibbs, at stageyouth@gmail.com.

- **Sunday, April 7:** Regular Meeting at Birmingham First Presbyterian Church
- **Sunday, April 14:** Service Project, moving S.T.A.G.E. to FPCRO. Parents are asked to stay and assist for this meeting.
- **Sunday, April 21:** Regular Meeting, location TBD

FLOWER SALE FUNDRAISER FOR S.T.A.G.E. YOUTH MINISTRY

The annual Flower Sale is back! Order beautiful flowers to plant in your garden, as well as hanging baskets, and tomato pots with cages. All fundraiser proceeds support the operation of the S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry. Orders are online only: <https://tinyurl.com/4pe4hb23>. Place orders by **2pm, Sunday, April 21**. Order pick up on Saturday, May 18, from 12pm-2pm at Greenfield Presbyterian Church, 2312 Greenfield Road, Berkley.



RETURNING OUTSIDE GROUP RENTAL

Sportsman's Dog Training Club will again be hosting an AKC Scent Work Trial at FPCRO on **April 20 and April 21**. They will be using our entire building both days 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 20 and April 21, 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.



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

www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro

instagram: fpcro1914

529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

248.541.0108



fpcro Spirituality • Service • Sharing

find us on:



April 2024 Special Dates

April 7 • One Worship Service, 10:30am

April 7 • Sunburst Singers, 11:15am

April 8 • Men's Fellowship Group, 7:30pm

April 8 • Women's Fellowship Group, 9:30am

April 21 • Sunburst Singers, 11:15am

April 21 • Sportsman's Dog Training Building Rental

April 21 • S.T.A.G.E. Flower Sale Order Deadline, 2pm

April 29 • *Listening Sets the Broken Heart Free*, 7pm

May 10 • Women's Fellowship Group, 9:30am

May 18 • Buy Nothing Event in FPCRO Parking Lot

**May 18 • S.T.A.G.E. Flower Sale Order Pickup,
Greenfield Presbyterian Church, 12pm-2pm**

June 2 • Sunday Serenade Concert, 2pm

June 7 • Women's Fellowship Group, 9:30am