

From the Pastor's Desk...

Siblings in Christ,

I was in a meeting of pastors this week when the question was asked, "what defines a *healthy* church?" For one of the pastors, she knows that she serves a healthy church. But putting her finger on *why*, and what makes it healthy, has been tricky. The clearest example she could think of was that, when a church member was bullying her—nasty emails on weekly repeat, complaining about everything under the sun, most of which was outside her control anyway—her Personnel Committee handled it all on their own while she was away on vacation. In kindness, but with authority, they spoke to the member and sought to redirect his energy and help him reform his ways. It worked! And even better—my friend's pastoral relationship with that member has endured and thrived even after the committee intervened.



Thankfully, we are not dealing with anything like that at FPCRO! But like my friend, I, too, recognize that I have the gift and privilege of serving a healthy congregation. When I think about what defines our church's health, these things top my list:

- The church is outward looking to the community and world and is willing to take some risks in our ministries.
- Energy for ministry trumps burnout.
- Members are kind, trustworthy, and generous toward each other and toward staff.
- We are honest about who we are and how we are doing as a church.
- Leaders are leading! Folks are taking initiative in their areas of ministry to lead activities, share new ideas, and invest in what the church is doing. This is true in each committee, with our mission grant, and especially in our co-sponsorship of the refugee family.
- We have transparency and good communication.
- No one is defending their 'turf,' whether staff or member. We all work together for the common good and to support our church's ministries as a whole.

What would you add to this list? I would love to know and to celebrate what you see!

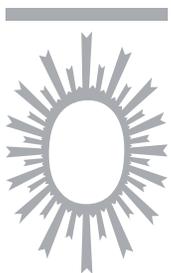
As we lean into the last weeks of Lent, then Holy Week, and finally Easter, I am yearning for the joy the resurrection brings. (Which may have as much to do with late-March weather, as it does with anything else!) But I am also seeking to look around and be thankful for right here, right now, which is part of our Lenten theme, too.

Not a week goes by that I do not think in astonishment about how lucky/blessed/called I am to serve at this healthy church. I am thankful for this Lenten season where we are exploring the good enough-ness of life and faith. Nearly 50 people are reading our Good Enough devotional book and I'm blown away by your commitment! I am grateful for our God who walks with us through the awful things we are seeing in the world right now. And I am thankful for the core story of our faith: that out of death and chaos and heartbreak, God brings something life-affirming.

May you know God's presence on this journey,

Pastor Emma

Church Bell



fpcro

In-Person Worship

Sunday at 10:30 am
join us for worship in
the sanctuary. Masks
are welcome, but not
required, beginning
April 1.

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.

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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newsletter editor **Tere Ryan**

tenor **Dawson Trotman**

baritone **Noah Rogers**

soprano **Audrey Frieberg**

soprano **Olivia Donnel**

our soloists



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of Royal Oak

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The **Church Bell** is published monthly,
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IS YOUR INFO CURRENT?

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

STEPHEN MINISTRY

FPCRO is a Stephen Ministry church. Stephen Ministers
are lay caregivers trained to provide high-quality,
confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting.



OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Harold Teufel, March 15, 2022



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



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 Knoxville, Tennessee where they will work with Next Step Ministries to perform service projects in the community.



Orders are accepted online and must be placed by **Tuesday, April 19**. You can pay by credit card, Venmo, PayPal, cash, or check. <https://tinyurl.com/54e74k6f>

Flower pick up is at Greenfield Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 21 between 2 and 4 pm.

memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of John Corwin, Dorothy Hoagg, Russ Vahlbusch, and Joy Warriner.

SPRING GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

Please save the date of **Saturday, May 7 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 14 is the rain date. Thank you!

-House & Grounds Committee

SENIOR SUNDAY IS MAY 15

FPCRO will honor all those graduating from high school during worship on **Sunday, May 15**. Seniors will also use their gifts to lead us in worship on this special day. May God bless their next endeavors and all the ways they use their gifts in the world!



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.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

Mission and Benevolence

A HUGE THANKS FROM THE NATURAL MOMMA ME INITIATIVE!

Our February H.O.M.E. Project delivered approximately 2500 diapers (and seven boxes of wipes) to The Natural Momma Me Initiative on March 21. Our FPCRO church family reached many families through this diaper drive and a lot of babies will benefit from our effort!

On behalf of FPCRO, the Mission and Benevolence Committee continues to support neighbors in need. Since November 2021, Session has approved gifts in the amount of \$2,000 each to Gleaners, Open-Hands Food Pantry, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, a \$1,500 gift to Here to Help, and gifts of \$1,000 to Cass Community Social Services, Lighthouse of Oakland County, and Starr Presbyterian Church for SOCH/Welcome Inn. All funds were from the Mission and Benevolence budget.

We are again planning to provide two lunches for the SOCH guests at Starr Presbyterian Church. The lunches will be served inside the church so we don't have to worry about the weather. A kind donor has provided meat, which the program would like us to use. So I have been offered some ground beef—enough to make three 9 x 13 casseroles for each lunch.

Our dates to serve are **April 26** and **May 24**. Lunch is served at 12:00 pm and food can be dropped off anytime after 11:30 am. For each lunch date we will need the following:

- **Three people** to prepare a 9 x 13 casserole with ground beef (which I will get to you).



- **Three people** to prepare a side dish to serve 10 to 12 people.
- **Two people** to provide a dessert to serve 10 to 12 people.

We don't know yet how many guests there will be. If you are willing to help on either date, please let me know at hdusenbury@gmail.com or call 248-417-3044.

I look forward to seeing you at Starr Presbyterian Church. We are welcome to stay and visit with the guests, but if you have a busy schedule, you can just drop off the food and be on your way.

–Helen Dusenbury

Sign Up and Save the Date!



FPCRO is participating as the host for the upcoming Rise Against Hunger meal packaging event scheduled for May 22, 2022 from 12:30 to 3 pm in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. Use the link below to volunteer for the event. As a reminder, all who plan to attend this event should register using this event page:

<http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/firstpresbyterianchurchofroyaloak>

Our goal is to pack 10,000 packages of food for distribution around the world. Please check out Rise Against Hunger to see what they do: <https://www.riseagainsthunger.org/>

We will need volunteer help before, during, and after the event on May 22. Set-up will be between 8:00-9:30 am in Kirkman Fellowship Hall. After worship, a light lunch will be provided and then we will start packing. The S.T.A.G.E. youth from our church participated in a similar event at Greenfield Presbyterian this past autumn. It is an event for all, including children over the age of five. Please plan on joining us for an afternoon of fellowship and mission. More information coming soon!

Thank you for sharing our vision of a world without hunger!

Furniture Move In Day for our Refugee Family

FPCRO members worked hard on Saturday, March 19 to set up house for the Afghan family we are co-sponsoring. Pray for them as they settle into their new home.



Christian Education

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Children received a One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Bank in their Lent Kits. These are coin banks to collect money for One Great Hour of Sharing which is an offering that supports those affected by natural disasters. Children are invited to bring their fish banks on Sunday, April 10, Palm Sunday. They will have an opportunity to bring them forward for a special dedication.



COMING THIS SUMMER!

Compassion Camp: Changing the World with Loving Kindness

Compassion Camp is a program that will cultivate compassion for each other, ourselves, and the world. This exciting event will be for all ages. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

If you would like to volunteer to help with planning for Compassion Camp, please contact Joelle Jarrait.



LET'S WAVE OUR PALMS

Palm Sunday is April 10!

Children are invited to join in our special Procession of the Palms. We will wave palms into worship as we celebrate Jesus' entry to Jerusalem. Our procession will continue with special activities during Sunday school. Be sure to join us!



EASTER SUNDAY



We welcome our children and families for the joy and excitement of Easter Sunday! Join us as we open the box and set free the Hallelujahs. Our Prayground will be open and full of Easter surprises. Nursery care will be available.

JOYFUL JOURNEYS SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday school class continues to talk about Spiritual Practices for young children. Scriptures and stories include:



Fast – The Book of Esther

Pray – Luke 5:1-6; Psalm 136:1-6, 25-26

Listen to God – John 10:11-15, 27

Embrace Simplicity – Luke 10:38-42

Unplug – Mark 1:35-39

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!

Our spring break this year began March 28. School resumes Monday, April 4. When we return from break, our caterpillars will arrive. We will create a habitat for them and observe them while they grow and 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 at the end of April.

As you can see, we are busy, busy, busy in preschool and always so thankful for the wonderful children in our care.

We have opened registration for the new school year, and still have a few spaces available in our three-year-old and four-year-old classes. Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15-11:45 am. 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

H.O.M.E. NEWS

The Christian Education (CE) committee wants to thank everyone who has participated in H.O.M.E. project activities this year! We have reached out to the those in need from making hygiene kits in October for Presbyterian Disaster Relief, to collecting cake mixes, birthday paper goods, and cards in December to create Birthday in a Bag kits for area families in need. In February we collected diapers for The Natural Momma Me Initiative, which is connected to the National Diaper Bank Network, and we did a Book Drive in March to collect books for our new FPCRO Children's Library.

For April, the CE committee is providing our church family and friends with information about taking care of God's Earth. We hope you will stop at the table in the CE lobby, to get some tips for caring for our environment and become familiar with products that are 'earth friendly.' We are delighted to have Luke DeVantier volunteer to lead a book discussion on May 18. The book is *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The discussion will be via Zoom at 7:30 pm. (Details below.) Thanks to Chris Klein for her commitment to environmental care and for gathering information and materials for our April outreach. Also, thanks to



Luke for volunteering to share his interest in caring for God's creation.

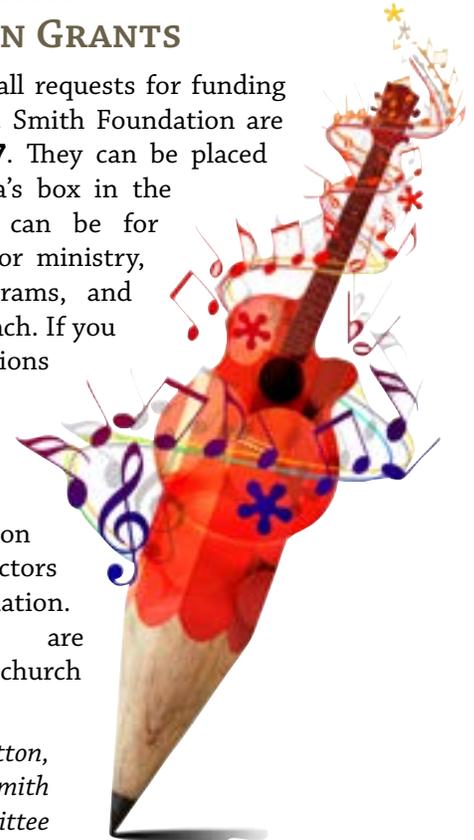
April will conclude H.O.M.E. projects for the year. Thank you again for all of your interest and support.

–Marilyn Sutton, Christian Education committee

EARLA B. SMITH FOUNDATION GRANTS

A reminder that all requests for funding from the Earla B. Smith Foundation are **due by April 27**. They can be placed in Kari or Emma's box in the office. Requests can be for music programs or ministry, educational programs, and missionary outreach. If you have any questions please call Edie Watson or Marilyn Sutton, our church representatives on the board of directors of the Foundation. Request forms are available on the church website.

–Marilyn Sutton,
Earla B. Smith
committee



Upcoming Book Discussion

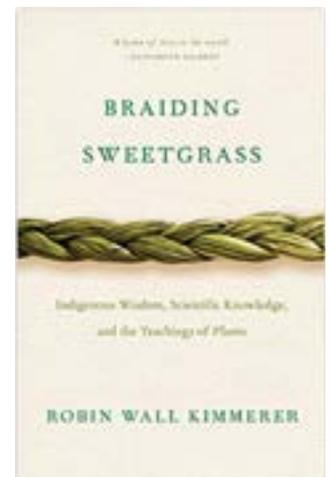
A BOOK DISCUSSION ON CARING FOR CREATION

**Wednesday, May 18 at 7:30 pm on Zoom,
led by Luke DeVantier**

Join us to discuss the best-seller *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The book helps us think about the earth we have been given, how we are called to be stewards of it, and the knowledge we can learn from indigenous people. After our April focus on caring for creation, this discussion will be a next step in our efforts to take care of God's good world. Member Luke DeVantier will moderate the discussion.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88647098066>

Meeting ID: 886 4709 8066



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

www.fpcro.org • [facebook.com/fpcro](https://www.facebook.com/fpcro)

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fpcro

opportunities for all ages!
servicing • learning • growing

find us on:



FPCRO Holy Week & Easter Services

- **April 10, Palm Sunday worship at 10:30 am**, followed by a Coffee Hour Fellowship, hosted by the Deacons
- **April 14, Maundy Thursday worship with communion, 7 pm** in the sanctuary
- **April 15, Good Friday worship, 7 pm** in the sanctuary
- **April 17, Easter Sunday worship:**
 - 9 am, simple outdoor worship** on the Hendrie lawn; bring a lawn chair and a flower for the cross!
 - 10:30 am, traditional service** in the sanctuary with brass

