

## Church Bell



fpcro

*From the Pastor's Desk...*

Friends,

Sometimes when my family is driving home from school or church, my four-year-old will ask “*Can we imagine together?*” As she sees the cars and trucks passing us by, we take turns imagining where everyone is headed. We imagine that some people are:

- Going to visit their grandkids
- Going to work
- Headed to Canada
- Driving to the airport
- Coming home from church
- Going to school
- Going to the grocery store
- Going to visit Daniel Tiger’s neighborhood (a favorite kids’ TV character)



We have no idea where everyone is really headed. Some of our imaginings are probably correct. And some might be a little far-fetched.

Imagining is like that. When we imagine, at first, we may envision ideas based on the facts we have and what we know to be possible. When we allow ourselves to do it, we can also think up ideas that push the boundaries of what seems possible. Then, we can begin to imagine outcomes, projects, and ways of being that are outside our norm. Sometimes, it’s those outlandish imaginings that get us headed in the direction we actually need to go.

This month, the Stewardship Committee invites our congregation to **imagine**.

- We will imagine possibilities that we feel confident about and sure of, based on tried and true traditions.
- We will imagine what it’s like to let some things go, in order to prepare the way for the arrival of something new.
- We will imagine a future we might not have expected, yet one that God holds and calls us into.
- We will try to imagine what God might have in mind for our community and how we can join our reality with God’s.

Scripture offers so many entry points to think about imagination. God imagined the world and created it out of nothing. Jesus imagined a meal for 5,000 people from just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Eventually, the Apostles imagined a community gathered around the risen Christ that included a wider diversity of people than they originally wanted or expected. When we imagine, we practice our faith and seek to let God guide our minds and our hearts.

I hope you will enjoy the stories of imagination in this newsletter and in the colorful brochure that will come to you later this month. I hope you will join me in imagining what it would mean to take a step up in your financial pledge and giving to the church in the 2020-2021 year. The Stewardship Campaign is taking place a bit earlier this year so we can fully engage with the theme of Lent throughout that entire season, which begins on March 1. Read more about our theme for Lent in these pages.

As we go forward in faith, I ask of you: “*Can we imagine together?*”

Blessings,

*Pastor Emma*

# our

## vision

statement

## mission

statement

always growing as a community of believers,  
reaching out in love to the world.

**fpcro** welcomes and accepts all, just as we all are  
uniquely valued as children of God.

responding to God's call,

- we listen for and minister to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of our congregation and community, using the resources **God** has given us.
- we nurture each person in their relationship with **Jesus** and provide opportunities to be connected in community through worship, music, education and prayer.
- we share the Word and demonstrate the love of the **Spirit**, working and praying for people to experience healing, reconciliation and transformation.



fpcro

## our staff

*pastor/head of staff*, enickel@fpcro.org **Rev. Emma Nickel**

*associate pastor*, pmeilands@fpcro.org **Rev. Pamela Meilands**

*director of music ministries & organist*, jjackson@fpcro.org **Joseph Jackson**

*chancel choir director*, kwattleworth@fpcro.org **Kent Wattleworth**

*director of christian education*, jjarrait@fpcro.org **Joelle Jarrait**

*church administrator*, kperuski@fpcro.org **Kari Peruski**

*administrative assistant*, sgilreath@fpcro.org **Sally Gilreath**

*evening reception/security*, tcrawford@fpcro.org **Todd Crawford**

*preschool director*, preschool@fpcro.org **Sarah Gibson**

*preschool teacher* **Beth Heitchue**

*child care provider* **Ivy Debrow**

*facility manager*, aglasel@fpcro.org **Alan Glasel**

*assistant custodians* **Gary Moultrup & Dennis Groh**

*food consultant* **Randy Jarman**

*wedding coordinator*, weddings@fpcro.org **Ginny O'Brien**

*newsletter editor* **Tere Ryan**



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September through June, and is advised by  
Evangelism & Communication committee. Email  
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Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

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*baritone* **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

*mezzo soprano* **Julie Anne Smith**

*soprano* **Kim Sanders**

*tenor* **Curt Peters**

## our soloists

## OF NOTE:

### Deaths:

Gloria Cole, December 4, 2019



You've been sitting with your star word for a month. What struggles, challenges, and/or uncomfortable growing areas have you encountered through your star word?



## COMING SOON!

The Evangelism and Communication committee is excited to announce our next Community Conversation topic on Gun Violence: Keeping EVERYONE Safe. We are excited to invite advocates from our schools, city, and region to discuss what efforts we can take both individually and as a congregation to combat this growing societal problem.

Please keep an eye out for coming details in the March issue of the *Church Bell* about the time and date.



## STEPHEN MINISTRY

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



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

## Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

## memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts  
were given for  
Richard &

Betty Campbell, Errol Foss, Dick Gregory,  
Eileen Peery Goddard, Barbara Nelson, and  
Norman & Barbara Weber.

Gifts were given in honor of  
Alexandria Bastian, Children's Ministry,  
Mid-High Ministry, Senior High Ministry,  
and Music Ministry.

## ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 26

Begin the season of  
Lent together with  
our community.

**6 pm:** Soup Supper and  
Hands-On Worship  
Stations for all ages in  
Kirkman Fellowship Hall

**7 pm:** Worship Service  
with imposition of ashes  
in the Sanctuary



## ASSISTED LISTENING

Could you use a little help  
in hearing the service in the  
sanctuary each week? If so, we  
have good news!

Four brand new assisted  
listening devices have been  
purchased for use each Sunday.  
Members tested out several  
models and ear-piece styles this fall and selected the best  
style for our church. Our units offer a single, over-the-ear  
piece and are also equipped to be used by those who wear  
a T-Coil enabled hearing aid. If you would like to try out  
the assisted listening system, please see the head usher  
before the service starts. Our church takes seriously the  
importance of being able to hear the words and music  
offered to God in worship!





# Stewardship

God is always imagining far more than we can think or dream on our own. As we ponder how we can be stewards of all God's gifts to us, it's a joy to reflect on the possibilities God has made into reality. As we enter our stewardship campaign in February, church members are reflecting on the impact this church has had on their lives. And together, we begin to imagine what God might have in store for us next!

Look for your stewardship packet (with a surprise inside!) in the middle of the month. We invite you to return your financial pledge card to the church on or before March 1, 2020. On March 1, we will dedicate our pledges to God at both the 9 am and 10:30 am worship services. The committee invites you to join us for a special reception following the 10:30 am service on that day—come for a photo booth, cookie decorating, and celebrating the life of our church together. Thank you for sharing your gifts and all your imaginings!

*~Tamara Shepard (chair), Theresa Henige,  
Megan Kortlandt, and Marilyn Sutton,  
Stewardship Committee members*

*imagine*



**"The** first time I saw the sign for First Presbyterian Church on Woodward, I never could have imagined how God would transform my life here. The year was 1981—I was brand new to Michigan and didn't know a soul here other than my spouse. I was lost and lonely, trying to find my way in a new state. Stopped in traffic on Woodward, I glanced over and saw the sign. The Holy Spirit then whispered in my ear, "You should try that church." I had grown up in a similar Presbyterian church in Ohio, but in my young adult years had become a lapsed Christian, not attending church for at least 10 years, doubting the faith I had grown up with. So I came to FPCRO. I was immediately drawn to the music and sermons, and the fact that it was so much like the church in which I had grown up. It took some time, and some visits to other churches to make sure, but I joined, and eventually the church changed my entire life. I made friends, joined the choir, got involved in a circle, deacons, and eventually in many other things. I went on 5 European choir trips and met Bev Moss, who became my friend and later my employer for my all time favorite job as a gardener for Garden Rhythms. Through the years here, my faith has grown and solidified through choir, bible study, worship, service, friendship and more. I have been helped through difficult times and have had a place to share my joys and happy experiences. God has given me all I could ask for and more and the opportunities to participate always continue to expand. My love for God and our church grows each year. It is my real family and home."

*~Ellen Burns*



## SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

On Sunday, February 2, you are invited to bring a canned food item or a non-perishable food item to church. If possible, please bring cans with a pull tab for easier opening. Examples of what to bring are soups, vegetables, and fruit. Other items that are welcome are cereal bars, cheese & crackers packets, and cheese & peanut butter cracker packets. Items donated will be kept at the church and used to stock our Little Food Pantry. You can learn more about Souper Bowl of Caring at [www.tacklehunger.org](http://www.tacklehunger.org).



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE VALENTINE WORKSHOP

Please plan to join the Christian Education Committee to make Valentines after the WNL dinner on **February 5**. We will make Valentines for church members. There will be materials for making valentines for family members and friends, as well. The Christian Education Committee did a similar outreach to members not always able to attend services or programs in December. We hope you will join us in our efforts to stay connected with all of the members of our church family.



## PRESBYTERIAN PILGRIMAGE

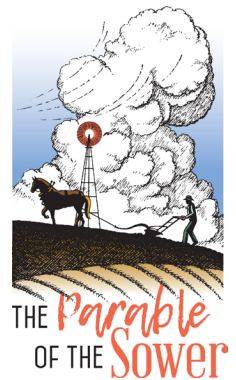
Are you seeking an opportunity to get away and reconnect or renew your relationship with God? The Michigan Presbyterian Pilgrimage is a 3-day experience of embracing God's grace while enjoying a beautiful Michigan setting.



The Pilgrimage is **April 23-26** at Echo Grove Camp and Retreat Center located in Leonard, Michigan. The cost to attend is \$200 per person. Through the Earla B. Smith Foundation the Christian Education committee is offering scholarships of \$150 per person. The deadline to sign up for a scholarship is March 15. There is information available in the CE Lobby. Please see Joelle Jarrait to sign up for a scholarship. You can also sign up at the table and Joelle will contact you.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR VBS!

Mark Your Calendars so you can join us for our **2020 VBS**. The dates are **June 22-25**. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm and the program begins at 6:15 pm. During the week, we will dive into the Parable of the Sower and learn how to care for what God has created. We welcome children in preschool through 5th grade. If you are interested in helping, we have many opportunities available. Please see Joelle Jarrait to sign up.



## STAYING SAFE ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Visiting expert, Erin Bailey of The Social Family, will be teaching a series of workshops at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham to help people stay safe online. Her experience working in social media marketing has given her an inside look at how websites and apps monetize our attention. The tools and tricks she teaches will help you and your loved ones stay safe while enjoying the positives of being online. Register at [fpcbirmingham.org/staying-safe-online](http://fpcbirmingham.org/staying-safe-online). Questions? Contact Rev. Bethany Peerbolte, Assoc. Pastor of Youth & Mission, [bethany@everybodyschurch.org](mailto:bethany@everybodyschurch.org), 248.644.2040 x 140.

### Sunday, March 15

**Parents** • Noon-2:30 pm • \$20 (lunch provided)  
Child care available

**4th-6th Grade Students** • 3:30-4:30 pm • Free  
(snack provided)

**7th-12th Grade Students** • 5:30-7 pm • Free  
(dessert provided)

### Monday, March 16

**Teachers** • 4:30-5:30 pm • Free (snack provided)  
Child care available

**Online Safety for Everybody** • 6:30-7:30 pm • \$20  
(dinner provided) Child care available



# Earla B. Smith Foundation

The Earla B. Smith Foundation was established with a generous monetary gift to First Presbyterian Church and to the Troy School District by long-time church member, Earla Smith, upon her death. The funds are managed by Horizon Advisers, and each year the interest accrued is distributed to FPCRO and the Troy School District, where Earla Smith was a teacher. Seventy five percent of the funds are distributed to FPCRO and twenty five percent to Troy Schools. The funds are designated, by the Trust, to be used for scholarships by the Troy Schools and for Music Ministry and/or Christian Education by FPCRO. Included, but not limited to, this list of possible requests:

- vocal or instrumental soloists, or groups
- the purchase of books, or other materials, relating to a project or program
- outside speakers
- projects that support the missionary ministry of the church
- initial funding for pilot programs, which if successful, would eventually be funded through the church

Requests for funding for programs/activities can be submitted to Pastor Emma Nickel or Kari Peruski. All requests are reviewed by the Earla B. Smith Committee, which includes the senior pastor, the church administrator and the two FPCRO board members. After review, requests then go to the Session and, when approved, are presented to the full Board of Directors of the Foundation for approval. The Board is made up of two session members from FPCRO and the superintendent of the Troy Schools. Currently, Marilyn Sutton and Edie Watson represent FPCRO as board members. Richard Machesky, superintendent of Troy Public Schools represents the Troy Schools. The president of the Board is Daniel Doyle, CPA.

The following special programs/ministries have been funded by the Earla B. Smith Foundation in the 2019-2020 year:

- underwrite the cost of hiring high school students as Choral Scholars
- scholarships to defray the cost of attending the Michigan Presbyterian Pilgrimage, either in October or April
- underwrite the cost of two Michigan Opera Theater community programs, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *I, Too, Sing America*
- underwrite the cost of Michigan Opera Children's Chorus holiday program
- underwrite the cost of a Dementia Support Conference
- underwrite the cost of instrumentalists and vocalists to partner with the Chancel Choir in a major work as part of a worship service
- purchase DVD's from Great Courses to supplement the library offerings
- supplement the cost of hosting the Empty Bowls project
- supplement the cost of a year-long focus on Save the Earth during WNL activities

Requests for funding of programs for next year are being sought for this year's designated funds. Request forms (available from Kari Peruski) are due by April 16 and may be submitted to either Pastor Emma or Kari Peruski.

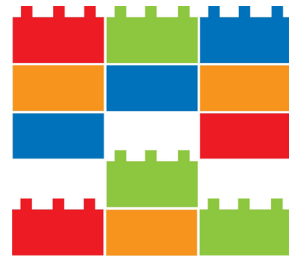
~Marilyn Sutton



## "Talk to the Task Force"

Session created the Sustainability Task Force in November with the goal of identifying and recommending measures to bring the church's spending in line with its income. Over the course of many years, our church has been blessed with many generous endowment gifts intended to provide income and sustainability to the congregation for future generations. In the past decade we have come to rely on endowments for not just the income it produced, but also additional withdrawals from principal in order to fund day to day operations. The church needed to take more than \$97,000 from the endowment principal in the last fiscal year to meet its expenses. The continued depletion of endowment funds in this manner is not sustainable and action must be taken now to reduce the deficit.

The Sustainability Task Force has begun evaluating our expenditures, income and assets so it can recommend actions to Session that can be implemented immediately. To that end, it is seeking your comments, ideas and concerns. Congregation members are encouraged to fill out a **"Talk to the Task Force"** comment card available at the front desk, or submit your comments electronically using the QR at right, or visit: <https://bit.ly/373STOB> on or before **February 3**. Your voices are important, and all submissions will receive a personal follow-up from a member of the Task Force.



**sustainability  
TASK FORCE**



## Serving in the Community

### FROM PRESBYTERIAN VILLAGES OF MICHIGAN *OUTLOOK* NEWSLETTER

#### The Village of Oakland Woods Captures the 14th Annual PVM Village Victory Cup

On June 21, 2019, Presbyterian Villages of Michigan (PVM) communities from across Michigan converged in Novi at the Suburban Collection Showplace, Diamond Banquet & Conference Center, for the 14th Annual Village Victory Cup.

Supported by an army of volunteers, including FPCRO's own Joan Geering (pictured at right), Lloyd Geering, and Ron & Shirley Gillham, hundreds of residents competed in a variety of events that challenge body, mind, and spirit to win the coveted Village Victory Cup trophy for their community.

Residents earned points for their community by supporting their team, participating in events, and finishing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in an event. At the end of the day, the community that earned the most points wins the trophy—and a year's worth of bragging rights! This year that team was Pontiac's formidable Village of Oakland Woods!





# A View From the Pew

## A SEASON TO TURN: FROM OUR WAY, TO GOD'S WAY

In our daily journeys most of us have learned to depend on our GPS to tell us which way we should turn, and if we are headed in the right direction. As we approach Lent, we ask you to consider the season as your SGS (Spiritual Guidance System), a calling to change direction from our self-serving way toward the self-giving way of the cross, God's way.

As Staff and the Worship and Music Committee met to discuss our focus for the Lenten season, we talked about the Greek word *metanoia* ("turning around"). This word implies not only a change of direction or heart, but is often translated as "repentance" in the New Testament. But this kind of repentance is not about regret or guilt or shame; it implies making a decision to turn around, to face a new direction.

As spring emerges, the Northern Hemisphere is turning toward the sun (the source of life). So this season, we, too, turn away from sin and death toward God as our source.

Originally, though Lent contained elements of penitence, it was primarily a time of preparing those who were to be baptized. The season seems to have developed as a period of learning on what it means to be a follower of Christ. The period of Lent had and still has an emphasis on reaffirming baptismal identity, of knowing and living the faith. During Lent, we have the opportunity to reaffirm who we are and always will be, in anticipation of Easter.

## **metanoia**

[ meh-ta-noy-ah ] • Greek

(n.) the journey of changing one's mind, heart, self, or way of life; spiritual conversion.

We begin our journey on Ash Wednesday **February 26**, when we receive ashes and acknowledge the dust and broken debris of our lives and the reality of our own mortality. We listen for the word of God in the scriptures of the Lenten journey. We follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, fast, and proceed "on the way" to Jerusalem, and

the cross. What we hear during Lent is the power and possibility of the Easter mystery, that the way to Easter is through death. Christ, in being raised for us, shows us the new life beyond the power of death. So we are required to surrender the old life, so we might celebrate Easter transformed as new people.

*~Worship and Music Committee*



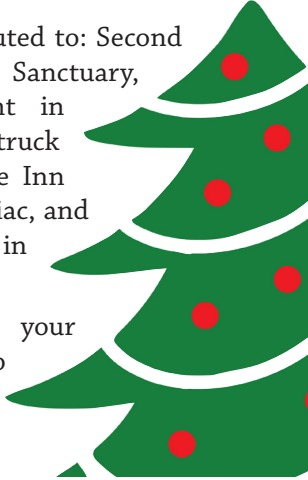


## THE MITTEN TREE

Dear church family and friends; this year the Mitten Tree was amazing! During the seasons of advent and Christmas 450 warm items—scarves, hats, gloves and mittens—were placed on and around the Mitten Tree.

Mitten Tree items were distributed to: Second Mile Center, Common Ground Sanctuary, Salvation Army Harbor Light in Detroit, sent out on the bread truck for the homeless, the Welcome Inn Day Center, Lighthouse in Pontiac, and Oakland Elementary School in Royal Oak.

Thank you one and all for your generosity and thank you to those that spent time knitting and crocheting! Your gifts were a blessing to many.



## ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Thank you to all who so generously supported the Adopt-a-Family collection in December. With your generosity, we were able to provide at least eight gifts for each of the four people in the five families we supported. That totals nearly 160 gifts in all!





# Sunflowers Christian Preschool



**Love** is in the air at Sunflowers Preschool! We so enjoy the month of hearts and happy sentiments, especially as winter weather keeps us inside. God's love keeps us warm on the coldest of days! This month, our preschoolers will paint with pink paint, and wear pink clothing on "pink" day. Special valentines for Moms and Dads will also be carefully crafted in each class. We will share valentines with all of our classmates, and make a delicious dessert for our Valentine party.

Our three-year-old class will be practicing more with scissors this month, and working on printing our names independently. It's not easy!

Our four-year-olds continue alphabet study, and the 'Friday Centers' that get us ready for the routine of kindergarten. We are visiting the post office this month to learn how letters are sorted/delivered and mail our special Valentine cards for mom and dad. We will also start our extended day on Wednesday to help prepare us for kindergarten.

Our January monthly mission was a success with collecting puzzle books for our troops with Operation Paperback.

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year opens early in February. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call 248-541-0108, x220 so we may mail out a registration information to you. There will also be scholarship applications available, if needed, this year. Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 am to 11:45 am. Our four-year-olds meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:15 am to 12:00 noon. Please spread the word to family and friends. Hope to hear from you soon!

*Mrs. Heitchue and Mrs. Gibson*

## PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUP

Invite friends and neighbors to our newest offering for families in the community!

**WHAT:** For kids, time to play and be active inside during the colder months of the year. A variety of toys and activities will be available, as well as open space for free play. For adults, time to make connections and enjoy playing with their kids in a different environment. Escape the cabin fever of winter and connect with other kids and families through free play and activities in a safe space in the church. Coffee and tea available for grown-ups!

**WHEN: Saturday, February 15** from 9:30-11:30 am

**Saturday, March 14** from 9:30-11:30 am

**Monday, April 20** from 12 noon to 2 pm

**WHO/DETAILS:** Kids, up to age five, from the Royal Oak and surrounding community are invited to play! Children must be actively supervised by a parent or other adult accompanying them throughout the playgroup time. Church volunteers will also be present as hosts of the event and all have been background checked.



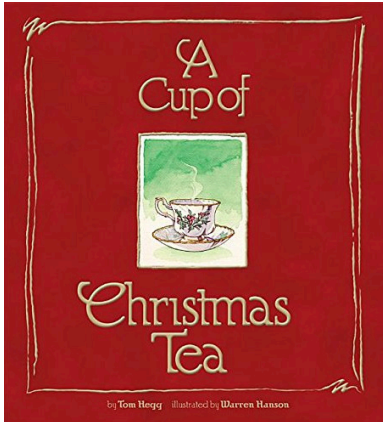


## Library Book Reviews

### A Cup of Christmas Tea

H

Tom Hegg

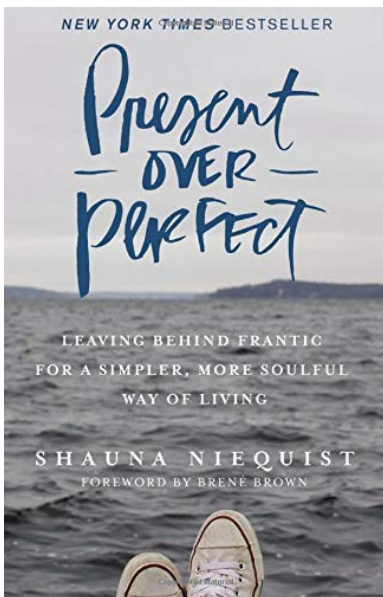


A lovely book with colorful pictures that bring back memories of a wonderful family Christmas past, the joys of Christmas present, and the promise of Christmas yet-to-come.

### Present Over Perfect: Leaving Behind Frantic for a Simpler, More Soulful Way of Living

248.4 N

Shauna Niequist



Live a life of meaning and connection instead of pushing for perfection.

"A few years ago, I found myself exhausted and isolated my soul and body sick. I was tired of being tired, burned out on busy. It seemed as if everyone I talked to was in the same boat."

This book is an invitation to this journey that has changed my life. I'll walk this path with you,

a path away from frantic pushing and proving, and toward your essential self, the one you were created to be before you began proving and earning for your worth.

### The Only Woman in the Room: A Novel

B

Marie Benedict



She possessed a stunning beauty.

That almost certainly saved her from the rising Nazi party and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer.

She also possessed a stunning mind.

Underestimated, she overheard the Third Reich's plans while at her husband's side, understanding more than anyone would guess.

But she kept a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist. And she knew a few secrets about the enemy. She had an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis...if anyone would listen to her.

A powerful novel based on the incredible true story of the glamour icon and scientist who became Hedy Lamarr, screen star.

Her extraordinary beauty saved her life. Her brilliant mind changed ours.

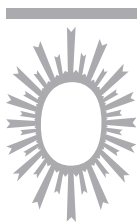
**Worship Services: Sunday, 9 am & 10:30 am**

www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro

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Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



fpcro

opportunities for all ages!  
*serving • learning • growing*

find us on:



## February 22, 2020 • 10 am • FREE Performance!

FPCRO AND MICHIGAN OPERA THEATER PRESENT: *I, TOO, SING AMERICA*

The **FREE** one-hour performance on **Saturday, February 22 at 10 am**, made possible through a grant from the Earla B. Smith Foundation, is accessible to adults, teens, and youth alike.

Created by Chris Jakob, with original poetry by Jessica Care Moore, *I, Too, Sing America* looks closely at the African American experience in music and sports.

Through the lens of two seemingly different worlds, opera and baseball, both of which have thrilling spectacles, incredible feats, and a history of segregation—the show invites us to consider: What have these two worlds traditionally meant for African American individuals and communities? How have arts and sports played a role in bridging racial divides and promoting healing? And how do we, today, move toward a fuller incorporation of those pursuits in our world?



MICHIGAN  
OPERA  
THEATRE