

Church Bell



fpcro

From the Pastor's Desk...

Friends,

Hopefully you stuffed your face full of pancakes or paczki as February drew to a close and now you are ready to enter the season of Lent, whose first Sunday is March 1. This year in Lent, we'll focus on the theme *A Season to Turn: From Our Way to God's Way*. In Greek, this concept of turning is called *metanoia*.

In the gospel of Mark, this is one of the first words Jesus speaks. He says, "*Metanoia*—and believe in the gospel." We usually translate that word as *repent*. It could also mean *convert*, *turn*, or *change*. No matter how we translate it, it's clear that this action is a big deal and something our faith calls us to do.

Most of us don't like *change*, even when we know it's good for us. Most of us don't like admitting when we're *wrong and asking for forgiveness*. We are hard-pressed to *convert* our old habits into something totally new. But the act of *turning* has fewer of these challenging connotations. In fact, *turning* may be something we can embrace because of the newness and freshness it implies.

Instead of feeling harsh or final, turning feels to me like a gentler way of shifting our lives. It acknowledges that we will continue to work at this change perhaps for a good, long while. Even at the end of Lent, our turning likely won't be accomplished. There will probably be more bends in the road, more curves and turns to make before we arrive. But God goes with us down the path.

We are sometimes all-too familiar with things in our lives that we are being called to turn away from: saturation with technology, certain patterns of eating, unhealthy relationships, being weighed down by events from our past. Many of these are concrete activities that have deep spiritual implications, too. To turn away from those things points us in a new direction. It opens a clearer path in front of us where we might forge a different way of being and doing. Often, God meets us on that path and invites us into a new journey in faith.

Other turns we might make this season are toward God. How can we orient our lives toward holy things a little bit more often? I have been finding great ideas for my own household in a few books that help us pray and talk more often about our faith. *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home* by Traci Smith (a former pastor in the Presbytery of Detroit) and *Bless this Mess: A Modern Guide to Faith and Parenting in a Chaotic World* by Molly Phinney Baskette and Ellen O'Donnell are offering my family some ways to devote more attention to God as we go about our daily lives. Do buy a copy of one of these for yourself, your kids, or grandkids who may be in the thick of things but still wanting to turn their own lives closer to Christ. It doesn't matter your method, though. There are plenty of meditation apps or devotional books that could help you turn your thoughts to peace and holy things more often. And there's always back to basics: turning to the Psalms in your Bible to remember how we can bring the fullness of our lives to God in prayer. There are places to volunteer your time or worthy organizations to give to, which moves us from a focus on self toward God.

This is a season for turning. Turning can happen through changed attitudes, service of time and energy, the way we give of our resources, and how we treat the gift of our own selves. Let's turn the page and enter this season with open hearts, ready to loosen our grasp on our own ways so that we can reach out and grasp God's hand.

Blessings for your turning,

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

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baritone **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

mezzo soprano **Julie Anne Smith**

soprano **Kim Sanders**

tenor **Curt Peters**

our soloists

OF NOTE:

Baptisms:

Patrick James Frieberg, February 16, 2020
Son of Bradley & Audrey Frieberg.



PRESBYS

Presbys is a group for all adults—not just senior church members. Everyone is invited to Kirkman Fellowship Hall **Friday, March 20, at 6 pm** for punch and fellowship, followed by a delicious dinner at 6:30 pm prepared by chef Randy Jarman. Following dinner, at approximately 7:15 pm, our program will be a Travelogue by Liz Patterson, **“Walking Where Jesus Walked and Taught.”** Come and invite a friend. Sign up at the reception desk. Members will be called.

COMING IN APRIL — PRESBYS PRESENTS EARTH CARE!

Some members will remember March 11, 1970 when the University of Michigan hosted it's Teach In — On the Environment five weeks before we celebrated our very first Earth Day as a nation on April 22, 1970.



April 22, 2020 commemorates the 50th anniversary of this important day. As part of Earth Day 2020, Presbys invites you to join them on Friday, April 17, for supper and a presentation from a member of the Climate Reality Project Leadership Corps. Guest speaker Jody Wise will address climate change and global warming.

- What is happening to our environment?
- What is our responsibility to earth?
- What can we do to make a difference?

Please join us on **April 17**. A sign up sheet is available at the reception desk.

“...our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us...”

~Pope Francis

STEPHEN MINISTRY

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



memorials & gifts

*Memorial gifts
were given
in memory of
Richard Dusenbury and Carol Lengjel.*

IMAGINE ALL THAT GOD IS DOING AMONG US!

Don't forget to bring your pledge card to worship on **Sunday, March 1** as we dedicate our pledges to God. On that day, join the Stewardship Committee for a Celebration Reception in Kirkman Fellowship Hall with fun treats, activities for kids, and a photo booth for all ages. Let your imagination be free!



After March 1, simply mail your pledge card to the church in the provided envelope. Or place it in the offering plate or return it to the church office. We are grateful for your gifts!

In this season of Lent,
what repentance or
self-examination has
come from your star
word so far?



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2020 “PARABLE OF THE SOWER”

Parables are special stories told by Jesus to help us understand the lessons he wants all of God’s children to learn. Our VBS this year will dig into the Parable of the Sower. This will be an exciting week of stories and activities. There will also be a few surprises.

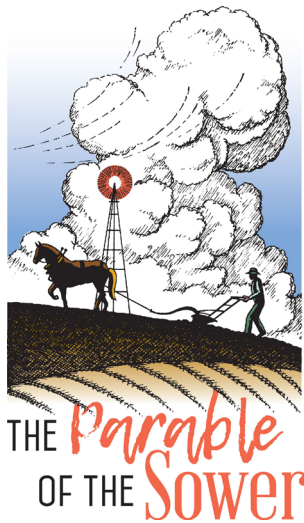
The dates this year are Monday, June 22–Thursday, June 25. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm with the program to follow at 6:15 pm. Children in Preschool through 5th grade are invited to attend. Watch for registration coming soon!

Volunteers we need you! We are looking for people to help with this year’s program. We will need crew leaders and station leaders as well as storytellers who have a passion for gardening. You can sign up in the Christian Education Lobby or online at <https://tinyurl.com/tw5h2h8>

For more information, please see Joelle Jarrait. You can also email her at jjarrait@fpcro.org.

IT’S HERE! COME AND EXPERIENCE IT!

We are happy to reveal our new Playground! The Playground is a place in our sanctuary where children can experience worship through age-appropriate worship materials and tools that will help keep them engaged in worship. This is an exciting addition to our worship space and we invite all families with young children to come and experience it. This change has also allowed us to create more space for barrier-free seating in the middle of the sanctuary. A special thank you to our volunteers who helped with planning and assembly! The Dedication of the Playground in worship will take place on Sunday, February 23.



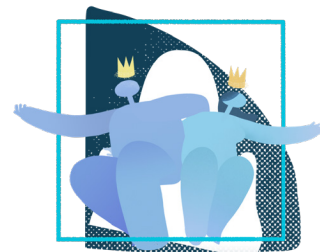
ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FISH BANKS

On **March 1** we will distribute the *One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Banks*. Children and adults are welcome to take home a bank and fill it up during Lent. You’re invited to bring them back for dedication on **Palm Sunday, April 5**. With your fish bank, you may take home a “Fish Bank Bingo” sheet. This provides creative ways to add money to your bank while helping you understand how One Great Hour of Sharing funds are used.



SPIRITUAL BEINGS BIBLE STUDY BEGINS MARCH 11

Many modern readers of the Bible think of God and humans as the main characters of the biblical story and spiritual beings as interesting (or weird!) background characters. But this is not how the biblical authors thought about spiritual beings. For them, spiritual beings played a significant role in their conception of the world and of humanity’s role within it. In discussion and the short videos from the Bible Project, we’re going to take a deeper dive into the Bible’s portrayal of the spiritual realm and its inhabitants. Be prepared for some surprises! Join Pastor Emma for this weekly study at Wednesday Night Live from 5-6 pm, starting on March 11.



PRESBYTERIAN PILGRIMAGE

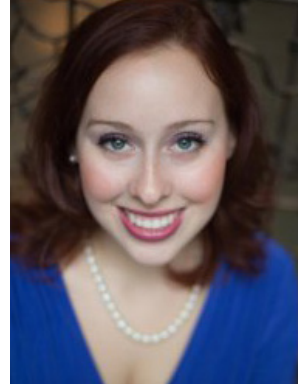
Are you seeking an opportunity to get away, ponder your life of faith and reconnect or renew your relationship with God? The Michigan Presbyterian Pilgrimage is a three-day experience of embracing God’s grace while enjoying a beautiful Michigan setting. The Pilgrimage will be held April 23-26 at Echo 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. Please see Joelle Jarrait to sign up for a scholarship.



NEWS OF MUSIC PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Audrey Frieberg, member and leader of our preschool music program, will be the featured soloist with the Michigan Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in a performance of The Symphony No. 4 in G Major by Gustav Mahler. The performance will take place on **Sunday, March 15**, 2 pm at The First United Methodist Church of Plymouth. For tickets and information call 734-541-2112 or visit www.michiganphil.org

Grace Watson, one of our talented youth, is the winner of a full tuition scholarship to attend an intensive six-week vocal program at Interlochen this summer. In a new arrangement with the Michigan Opera Children's Chorus, full time scholarships were made available in each of three categories: elementary age, middle-school, and high school. In a judged competition on January 26, Grace was named the winner of the High School division.



OTHER MUSIC NEWS

On **Friday, March 13**, at 7:30 pm, Rackham Choir will present **"Singing and Sipping,"** a concert of two of Bach's most contrasting Choral pieces. The concert begins with the festive and sacred Cantata 29 "We Thank Thee, God." The second half features the charming secular Coffee Cantata. Yes, Bach apparently loved his Starbucks as much as the rest of us! Vocal soloists will include recent Julliard and U of M graduates who were participants in the Rackham High School Vocal Intern Program. Both works will be conducted by Maestra Suzanne Acton and our own Joseph Jackson will be prominently featured on both organ and harpsichord in the orchestra. Tickets available at 313-404-0222 or visit www.rackhamchoir.org





SINGING &



Friday, March 13, 2020
7:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church of
Royal Oak

SIPPING

**Bach's Cantata 29
And
Coffee Cantata**

Celebrate Artistry
as Rackham Choir presents two of
Bach's most contrasting choral pieces
the festive and sacred Cantata 29
and the charming secular Coffee
Cantata.

Featuring former Rackham choir intern soloists:
Aurora Haziri-Soprano
Olivia Johnson-Alto
Ryan Hurley-Tenor
Dominik Belavy-Baritone

Sunday, March 15, 2020
3 p.m.
Orchard Lake Community
Church

Tickets available at rackhamchoir.org or
(313) 404-0222

mission and benevolence

CROP HUNGER WALK

ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME



Mark Your Calendars! Get Out Your Walking Shoes!
CROP HUNGER WALK • SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020

50 years of walking.

50 years of ending hunger together.

Join this legacy to step out for the next generation.

Are you looking to make a difference in our local community and in communities worldwide? The Berkley/Royal Oak CROP Hunger Walk has set a goal of raising \$20,000 in 2020 to help end hunger and poverty through long-term sustainable approaches to significantly reduce or eliminate hunger. Consider joining in by walking or making a donation to this year's event. More information will be coming soon.

2019 Stats: 800 walks • \$7,600,000 raised • 100,000 participants



session highlights

FEBRUARY 18, 2020 MEETING

- Received the December 2019 financial reports and noted that we remain slightly ahead for the year so far.
- At the recommendation of the Finance and Investment Committee, approved the creation of The Sunburst Stewards to celebrate and promote planned estate gifts to the church's endowment fund.
- At the request of the Mission and Benevolence Committee, approved a gift of \$1,500 to South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless/Welcome Inn from the budget to support SOCH's work to alleviate needs in our community.
- At the recommendation of the Evangelism & Communication Committee and the Board of Trustees, approved the installation of two new signs on our property. The first on Pleasant Street will be a pet clean-up station equipped with a sign welcoming "all creatures great and small" to FPCRO and offering bags for dog waste. (No trash can will be provided, encouraging neighbors to take the bags home with them for disposal). The second sign will be near the playground welcoming families who have come to play and offering information about church programs for children.
- Approved the 2019 Statistical Report to be submitted to the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Took part in a discussion about the PCUSA's initiative to invite congregations to become Matthew 25 churches. Following Jesus' instruction to "serve the least of these," the initiative asks churches to boldly engage the world around us, serving those who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned, or poor. The three focus areas of Matthew 25 churches are eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, and building congregational vitality.



EMPTY BOWLS DETROIT AT FPCRO

On Sunday, January 19, about 80 people gathered at FPCRO as we hosted an Empty Bowls Detroit painting workshop to create beautiful designs on ceramic greenware bowls of various shapes. The completed bowls were taken to Cass Community Social Services (CCSS) to be fired and will be included in a March 6 fundraising event at Eastern Market.



Empty Bowls Detroit raises money and awareness for the food program at CCSS, a Detroit-based agency dedicated to providing food, housing, health services, and job programs to those in need. Empty Bowls Detroit hosts bowl painting workshops throughout the year in which members of the community join in fellowship while painting bowls.

This FPCRO mission was sponsored by Ruth and Naomi Circles. The Circles wish to thank all church members who participated in the event. Through a grant from the Earla B. Smith Foundation, our church was able to pay \$10 for each bowl painted by a church member and help with the cost of lunch. Members of the surrounding community signed up for the event through the Empty Bowls Detroit website.



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



did you know...?

You can pick up a copy of the day's sermon on Sundays in the sanctuary narthex. Some find it helpful to follow along during worship. Some folks like to take a copy on a week where the sermon particularly speaks to them, or when they want to share it with a friend. (This written copy closely follows what the pastor preaches, but may have some differences).

The portraits of FPCRO's previous pastors are now located in the Pastor's Study near the Library. Come and check out this new placement.

There is a bulletin board of community events near the door leading to the Pleasant Street parking lot/entrance. The board is full of upcoming concerts and events that our members and friends are participating in.

You can "rent" rooms in the church building for family functions or other events you may be hosting. Call the office for current building usage fees and to learn more.

If the Little Pantry is full, you can drop off donated items (cans of soup, packages of crackers, mac and cheese, etc.) at the reception desk and we will store them until the items are needed. Our pantry is well used and we restock it frequently. Please continue to help with this needed mission right here in our front yard.

Unfortunately, pastors can't read minds. They don't always know when folks are having surgery, going into the hospital, or facing an illness or other struggle. Don't assume that someone else has told them. Please contact a pastor by phone or email for yourself or when you hear news of another church member so we can pray for and attend to those needs.

You can now give to the church online! Go to **www.fpcro.org** and click on the red "GIVE" button to be taken to a PayPal site where you can complete your gift of any amount. We hope this makes giving easier and more convenient, whether you're in town, on vacation, or just prefer to give this way.



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak
529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak MI 48067 • 248-541-0108 • fpcro@fpcro.org

Give

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Sunday morning
worship services at
9 am and 10:30 am



sunflowers christian preschool



As March begins, we hope spring is on its way. This month, our preschoolers will be watching the weather to see if March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Blue is the color of the month and we'll look at the sky hoping for blue, and paint something blue.

March is reading month and during this month the three-year-olds will learn an assortment of nursery rhymes to say and act out with accompanying art work. The four-year-olds will have reading logs so they can share with each other books they especially liked, or maybe didn't like. We will also focus on a special author, Eric Carle and read lots of his books. Look for special art work around our room based on his stories. During center time on Fridays, we will continue to work on language and math activities and do fun science projects.

Our monthly missions project is going well. The kids are enjoying helping others.

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year has begun. If you are interested in enrolling your child or know someone that might be interested in preschool, please call 248 541-0108 x220 so that we may mail out registration information to you. Our three-year-olds meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 to 11:45. Our four-year-olds meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:15 to 12:00. We'd love to introduce you to our wonderful program! Come see for yourself.

Mrs. Heitchue and Mrs. Gibson

PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUP

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

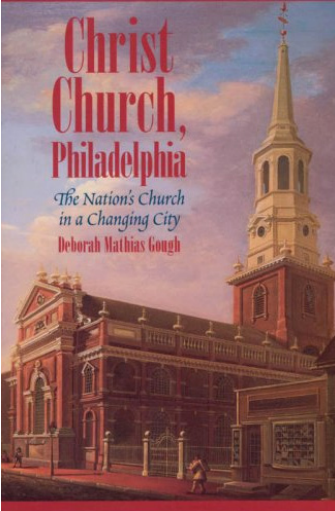
WHAT: For kids, time to play and be active inside during the colder months of the year. A variety of toys and activities will be available, as well as open space for free play. For adults, time to make connections and enjoy playing with their kids in a different environment. Escape the cabin fever of 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, March 14** from 9:30-11:30 am

Monday, April 20 from 12 noon to 2 pm—Bring a lunch to eat a "picnic" together, if you like.

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.





Christ Church, Philadelphia

238.748 G Gough

Christ Church, Philadelphia chronicles the church's history from its founding in 1695, through three centuries of change. The fascinating story of Christ Church is intertwined with that of the development of Philadelphia as a major city, emphasizing the bond forged between the church and the neighborhood surrounding it.

From its panoramic perspective, Christ Church, Philadelphia unfolds events as both religious and local history. The church continues to play a vital role in the life of one of the nation's most cosmopolitan cities.

qualified charitable distributions

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

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD), also known as an IRA charitable rollover gift, allows individuals 70-½ 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 70-½ 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 nonitemizers 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.

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

www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro

248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859

529 Hendrie Blvd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067



fpcro

opportunities for all ages!
serving • learning • growing

find us on:



lenten reflection service

Our Lenten Reflection Services will begin on Thursday, **March 5**, at **6 pm** in the Chapel. These brief 30 minute services of scripture, poetry and prayer provide an opportunity to reflect on the word and listen to the prompting of the Spirit within us. Services continue on **Thursdays, March 12, through April 2**. Consider joining us with others on their Lenten journey of discovery and worship.

Lent is a time when Christians are invited to examine our faith, and deepen our commitment to live the Christian life. Thomas Merton wrote: "Lent is a time for realizing what we had not seen before. It is a time of reflection and reconciliation revealed through prayer and meditation."

