

From the Pastor's Desk...



On January 17, 2019, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver died. Her poetry often focused on nature, but it also opens new ways of thinking about the world and our place in it. In these days marked by winter blues and a government shutdown dragging on (which is hopefully over once this newsletter is in your hands?!), we need a reminder of the wonder of living and the beauty of God's world. Though this poem of Oliver's has death in the title, it is most certainly about embracing life and all that God has created. Perhaps it even invites us into a life worthy of the calling we have received, as the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians. May it speak to your spirit and encourage you in these days.

Emma

When Death Comes by Mary Oliver

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox
when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,
and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,
and each name a comfortable music in the mouth,
tending, as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Church Bell



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.



our staff

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

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mezzo soprano **Julie Anne Smith**

soprano **Kim Sanders**

tenor **Curt Peters**

baritone **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

our soloists

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Join us as we begin the season of Lent in worship with the imposition of ashes on **Ash Wednesday, March 6 at 7 pm**. We'll gather for a **Soup Supper at 6 pm** with a freewill offering to cover the costs. There are no other Wednesday Night Live activities on this evening.



Each year, we begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and shows our repentance for sin. We are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Yet the ashes also remind us that we are created from the same "stuff" of the earth as all of creation and that God calls that creation good. We can enter the season of Lent with a spirit of penitence because of our trust in God's promise of forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ.

“Change your life, not just your clothes. Come back to God, your God. God is kind and merciful. This most patient God, extravagant in love, is always ready to welcome you back.”

~Joel 2:13 (The Message)

memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of S. David Cheney, Errol Foss, George Teufel, Richard Wade, Paul Watson and Jewel Watson.

SAVE THE DATE—NEW CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY IS COMING!



Lifetouch will be at FPCRO **April 9-13** to take photographs of church members and their families for our new pictorial directory. Weekday photos will be from 2 pm to 8:30 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. You will have an opportunity to purchase photos, but there is no obligation to do so. (And, if you have a pet who's like family, you can even bring your critter to join you in a photo!) Look for more info starting in March. Questions? Contact Scott Rieck.

FLOWER DEDICATIONS



The flower dedication chart is up and dates are still available. Whether memorializing a loved one, celebrating a special occasion, or honoring a friend or family member, this is a wonderful way to celebrate others and give honor and glory to God by beautifying the chapel or sanctuary! Dedications can be completed with an information card found at the sign-up chart. Fill it out, place in the envelope on the reception desk counter with your payment OR go online at www.fpcro.org/flower-dedications. Questions can be directed to flower chair, Jennifer Ward, at jward428s@gmail.com.



Do you, or someone you know, need to be lifted in prayer? Please contact Kathie Brom at kbrom@fpcro.org with your prayer requests.

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.



DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT INFO?

Has your home address, phone number, or email address changed recently? Did you eliminate your "land line" and have just a cell phone number now? Please let Pam Kaufmann (pkaufmann@fpcro.org) know of changes in your contact information so we can maintain current and up-to-date records of your member information.

mission & benevolence

SECOND MILE CENTER FOOD DRIVE: FEBRUARY 10 & FEBRUARY 17

The Mission & Benevolence Committee is sponsoring a food drive for Second Mile Center. Non-perishable food items may be left in the Auxiliary Dining Room on February 10 and February 17. Second Mile Center is a mission in Detroit serving families living in that area. The Center provides meals each week, clothing suitable for job interviews, tutoring for children, summer day camp, health fairs, and many other services. FPCRO has been generous in giving to this mission in the past. A list of food items and other needs will be posted at the reception desk.

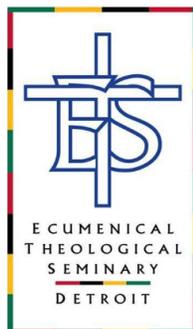
SOUTH OAKLAND SHELTER

Those who have been members of FPCRO will remember this is an organization we hosted for many years. Their mission is building communities that end homelessness and harness the power of dedicated volunteers representing congregations of Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Contributions also assist. The Mission & Benevolence Committee unanimously agreed to increase our support of this mission to \$2,500 which will provide two months of housing for a family recovering from homelessness and two weeks of emergency shelter to get someone off the streets. www.southoaklandshelter.org



ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY DETROIT

ETSD is a multi-denominational, fully accredited seminary that trains church leaders. There are Presbyterian pastors on staff to teach Reformed Theology. ETSD makes religious education accessible to those students who are unable to afford to attend a large seminary, such as Princeton, by providing reasonably priced classes and offering classes at night for students who work at other jobs. Also, all classes can be transferred, so a student can reduce costs by studying one year at ETSD and then transferring to a larger seminary if desired. The Mission & Benevolence Committee unanimously agreed to continue our support of \$1,000 to this seminary. www.etseminary.edu



TOKYO UNION CHURCH FOUNDATION

Kari Peruski, FPCRO Administrator, has been volunteering at Tokyo Union Church every Friday to make onigiri (Japanese rice balls) for the homeless. Sunday through Friday mornings, onigiri is made by volunteers and then delivered to the homeless. They serve around 75 in Yoyogi Park and 40 in Shibuya-Ku. Once a month, TUC hosts a hot meal lunch where 250-300 people are served. Kari helps with the preparation of the food on Friday and comes back to help serve on Saturday. In November, the church did a new warm clothing collection and the people coming in for a meal were able to pick items they needed (socks, thermals, hats, gloves, etc). They were also able to take what they needed after the church rummage sale in March. This is mostly used items but they can pick what they need when they come for lunch. The Mission & Benevolence Committee unanimously agreed to sponsor a meal for \$300. Pictured is Kari making lunch.



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

The Personnel Committee is pleased to announce a redesign of staffing in our Music Department. Our Director of Music Ministries and Organist will be responsible for administrative leadership of the Music Department, as well as accompaniment and support for all ensembles. Our Chancel Choir Director will report to the Director of Music Ministries and will be responsible for leading rehearsals and directing the Chancel Choir in worship.

It is our great joy to welcome **Joseph Jackson** to the position of **Director of Music Ministries and Organist**. We all know his talents as our organist and we are thrilled to entrust him with these new duties. We are very grateful that he is willing to step into this new role in our church.

We are also excited to welcome **Alex Sutton** to the position of **Interim Chancel Choir Director**. Alex will begin his ministry at FPCRO on February 7 and has agreed to serve through early June. Mr. Sutton currently serves as Director of Choral Activities at Wayne State University and has previously directed music ministries at Presbyterian churches in Ohio and Georgia.

Joseph holds degrees in Church Music and Organ Performance from McKendree College and the University of Michigan. He has served as Organist and Choir Director at: First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Wayne Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania; First Presbyterian Church of Detroit, Michigan; and Littlefield Presbyterian Church in Dearborn, Michigan.



This exceptionally talented organist has an impressive resume of solo recitals throughout the United States, including featured soloist with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Lake St. Clair Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra. He has been featured on National Public Radio's "The First Art" with the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia and with The Music Group of Philadelphia and as a soloist on NPR's "Pipe Dreams." Joseph served as Assistant Organist on the famed John Wannamaker Organ in the Grand Court of Philadelphia's Lord and Taylor. He also has two professional recordings to his credit. In addition to his work at FPCRO, Joseph is a touring artist for Michigan Opera Theater, accompanist for the Michigan Opera Theater Children's Chorus and the Rackham Symphony Choir.



Alex is Director of Choral Activities at Wayne State University, where he conducts and administers a program of four ensembles and teaches graduate conducting. He previously served as Associate Director of Choirs at the University of West

Georgia, where he conducted the Concert Choir and taught aural skills, music appreciation, and secondary choral methods. While a doctoral teaching assistant at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Alex conducted the UC Women's Chorus, taught music education and conducting courses, and managed the University Choruses' program of campus ensembles.

Additional past conducting appointments include Tecumseh High School and the Boychoir of Ann Arbor, as well as pre-collegiate summer programs, including the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain and the MPulse Vocal Arts Institute at the University of Michigan. Alex studied conducting and music education at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Michigan.



staff appreciation

The Personnel Committee is grateful for each staff member who serves at FPCRO. Their gifts and skills, wisdom and faith, help us all to serve God and our community. Our committee is inviting the whole congregation to share appreciation and love with our staff members at a reception in **Kirkman Fellowship Hall after the 10:30 am** worship service on **Sunday, February 10**. You're invited to bring cards and notes to share with staff members, expressing your thanks for their ministry, and in many cases, their many years of service at our church. Please consider showing your appreciation to those staff members you work closely with, as well as those you don't know well, but whose faithfulness allows our church to fulfill its mission. Below is a list of our staff and their approximate years of service at FPCRO:



Curt Peters, Soloist – 30 years

Randy Jarman, Chef – 21 years

Kari Peruski, Church Administrator – 20 years

Gary Moultrup, Assistant Custodian – 13 years

Pam Kaufmann, Administrative Assistant – 13 years

Alan Glasel, Facility Manager – 12 years

Joseph Jackson, Director of Music Ministries and Organist – 12 years

Ivy Debrow, Childcare Provider – 12 years

Beth Heitchue, Preschool Teacher – 10 years

Kathie Brom, Parish Visitor – 6 years

Scot Thomas, Assistant Custodian – 6 years

Julie Smith, Soloist – 5 years

Pam Meilands, Associate Pastor – 4 years

Sarah Gibson, Preschool Director/Teacher – 4 years

Todd Crawford, Security and Reception - 1 year

Sally Gilreath, Media/Content Manager – 1 year

Miroslav Manovski, Soloist – Eight months

Emma Nickel, Pastor – Six months

Kim Sanders, Soloist – Six months

The Deacons would like to thank **Mel and Jackie Janney** for being our wonderful “Coffee Hour Hosts” for many, many years. They have decided to retire from that post and are going to be very hard to replace!

We are hoping that we can get volunteers to help out each Sunday. The job would entail making coffee and tea and putting out cookies and treats between services and after the 10:30 service. Maybe **you** would like to help out? It is a great time to visit with friends and make new friends. Please contact Barb Hayes if you are interested.



cozy mountain women's retreat

Wish you could sneak away to the mountains? Need to slow down, savor a warm beverage while chatting with friends, and enjoy time with God? Then join us at Cozy Mountain Lodge! It's a mountain lodge theme retreat you won't want to miss!

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 23, 2019, 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.** We're planning a day to take time with God and friends at our FPCRO "Cozy Mountain Lodge." We'll experience worship, meaningful Bible studies, quiet reflection and laughter!

Early bird registration is just \$30.00 when you sign up by February 24, 2019. After that date, the cost is \$35.00, so please register early! **All registrations must be received by March 13, 2019.** A registration form is below. More registration forms are available at the reception desk in the Christian Education Lobby. Invite a friend!

Fill out the registration form, attach your check (made out to "FPCRO"), and leave it in the special Cozy Mountain Lodge box at the reception desk. If you need childcare for the day, please indicate that as well. A limited number of scholarships are available. Please see Chris Klein if you have questions.



Registration Form

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Home telephone: _____

Cell phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Allergies or other special needs: _____



Permission to photocopy this resource from Group's Cozy Mountain Lodge Women's Ministry Retreat granted for local church use. Copyright © 2012, 2018 Group Publishing, Inc., Loveland, CO. group.com

God is our refuge and strength, always ready
to help in times of trouble. -Psalm 46:1

child and youth protection training

TRAINING SESSION

In response to approval of our FPCRO Child and Youth Protection Policy last November, a training session has been scheduled for **Saturday, March 16, 2019 from 9 am until 12 noon**. This training is for all volunteers, childcare workers, staff and elected governing officers. A light breakfast, beverages, and snacks will be served throughout the morning.

Our FPCRO training session will include:

- 1) FPCRO Child and Youth Protection Policy review and training
- 2) **Stewards of Children** – presented by representatives from *Care House of Oakland County*

Darkness to Light is a non-profit committed to empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse. Their work is guided by the vision of a world free from child sexual abuse, where children can grow up happy, healthy and safe. At Darkness to Light, they know that prevention is possible, and they believe that it is an adult's responsibility to protect children. Children deserve to grow up happy and healthy, with their sexual boundaries intact.

Stewards of Children is a program developed by Darkness to Light which features survivors who lived through child sexual abuse, experienced its immediate and long-term effects, and ultimately were able to

find healing. It also highlights experts who work with children and families and confront abuse on a daily basis. Research suggests that child sexual abuse reports, substantiations, and interventions in cases of abuse increase as a result of training, implying that more children being identified as victims and able to receive services.

Outcomes of **Stewards of Children** include:

- Increased awareness of prevalence, consequences, and circumstances of child sexual abuse
- New skills to help adults prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse
- Positive change to organizational policies and procedures
- Individual empowerment through an understanding of personal responsibility and actionable ways to make a difference

Care House of Oakland County is a children's advocacy center, providing first rate services to victims of child abuse and neglect. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency based in Pontiac, Michigan, serving the residents of Oakland County Michigan. Founded in 1977 as the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County, they currently offer an array of programs focused on the identification and treatment of child abuse victims, and on child abuse prevention. **Stewards of Children** is one of the programs offered to Oakland County residents by Care House.



CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

This month, we wanted to highlight the Child and Youth Protection Policy. In March, we will share important points from our Sexual Harassment Policy.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) requires that all churches in the denomination have child and youth protection and sexual misconduct policies. First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak is also subject to the Michigan Child Protection Law, which places reporting responsibilities on certain persons when they become aware of instances of child abuse, including child sexual abuse. FPCRO's Session approved substantial revisions to its existing child and youth safety and sexual misconduct policies at its November 2018 meeting. Implementation of these revised policies has already begun.

In summary, the Child and Youth Safety Policy provides for the following:

- All ruling elders, deacons, Christian educators, and teaching elders are required to report knowledge of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities (i.e., Presbytery) should they become aware of such abuse.
- Strengthens reporting guidelines and specifies procedures to be followed in accordance with the Michigan Child Protection Law.
- The continuation of existing policies, including:
 - A requirement that all volunteers be members of the church and active participants in the church for a minimum of six months.
 - All staff and volunteers working with children will undergo a criminal background check every two years.
 - Restates a goal that a minimum of two volunteers and/or staff persons be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. One of the two people may be a hall monitor, provided that the hall monitor actively patrols the Christian education areas when children are present, and so long as classroom doors remain open.
 - Prohibits minors from being alone with one adult unless in a counseling situation.
 - Provides that an adult must accompany children to the bathroom and must wait outside the door while the child is using the bathroom. No adult is permitted to be in a closed bathroom with a child.

FPCRO is fully committed to protecting the safety of everyone in its community.

- States requirements for creating and maintaining records of reports of child sexual abuse.
- Continues policies requiring criminal background checks for staff and volunteers who work with children and requires that teenage volunteers be at least fourteen (14) years of age, and that they submit a background application signed by a parent or guardian in lieu of a criminal background check.
- Establishes check in/check out procedures for children engaged in church activities. Children may be released by someone other than a parent or guardian only with the express permission of the parent or guardian.
 - Provides for mandatory training for all volunteers, childcare workers, staff, and elected governing officials (elders, deacons, and trustees) on an annual basis.
 - Requires non-sponsored groups using our facilities to certify that they have their own child and youth safety policy in place.
 - The Child and Youth Safety policy includes implementation guidelines for staff and volunteers. These guidelines are intended to assist staff and volunteer to implement the Child and Youth Safety Policy, both in general and in specific situations, such as overnight trips.

The Session also affirmed that a comprehensive educational program is an essential component of any successful effort to prevent and address sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse within the Church. It directed the appropriate committees to develop and implement training programs for church staff, officers, and volunteers, and educational programs for children, youth, and church members. To that end, a training program for staff, officers, and volunteers is being held at the church on March 16, 2019, and additional programming for children, youth, and the church community is being developed.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak is fully committed to protecting the safety of everyone in its community. Please contact Pastor Emma or Pastor Pam if you are aware of or have any concerns about child sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, or if you have any questions about these policies.

evangelism & communication

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: SUPPORTING THE HOMELESS

Featured panelists from a diverse group of support organizations will gather at FPCRO in Kirkman Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday February 20, 2019 at 7 pm**. The goal of the discussion is to learn from each other in a unified effort to end homelessness by helping our guests to regain their self-respect, their self-worth, and returning them to stability and productive community living.

Participating organizations are Homeless Action Network Detroit, Alliance For Housing Oakland County, Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries, South Oakland Shelter, South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless, Fort Street Presbyterian—Open Door Ministries, Community Housing Network, Helping Oakland's People Everyday, Coalition On Temporary Shelter and the Gary Burnstein Community Health Clinic.

Panelists will discuss a variety of questions such as: "What is the state of homelessness in Metro Detroit?," "What can be done to increase the number of people that graduate from emergency shelters to transitional housing to permanent supportive housing?," "What are the barriers; what are the enablers?," "What are useful resources for organizations that want to help?," "Which needs are best filled by church organizations?," and "What is the most effective way for individuals to help?"

The congregation and public is cordially invited to join us for this important conversation!



stewardship

IT'S PER CAPITA TIME



February marks the time that our church pays "dues" for each member on our rolls. Many of you may not be aware of this obligation—I know I was not until my first time on session! Our congregation belongs to a group of many congregations in our area called a presbytery, specifically the Presbytery of Detroit. The Presbytery of Detroit belongs to a group of Presbyteries, called the Synod of the Covenant. Finally, all of the Synods come together to form the Presbyterian Church of the United States, or PCUSA. Our per capita, which totals approximately \$16,000 this year, goes to support the work that each individual church cannot do alone: connecting congregations to each other in theology and in service, helping to resolve disputes, and allowing all congregations to share equitably in all things that distinguish us as Presbyterians.

Even if you already give regularly, please prayerfully consider giving your per capita this year. If you have not given regularly in the past, this is a great way to start! Every dollar we give to cover this cost, which is \$26.50 for each confirmed member (kids who have been confirmed too!), helps support our own congregation's mission: to respond to God's call by following Jesus' example within our congregation and in the world.

~Suzanne Lewand

This month, we continue hearing the stories of our congregation, showing how the church shapes lives and what is done in response to that gift. We again invite you to think of your own story. How has FPCRO impacted your story and how will you respond?

*I love to tell the story;
More wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies
Of all my golden dreams,
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee.*

*I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story
of Jesus and His love.*

Scott and I first came to First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak looking for a place to start celebrating our faith as a family. When we found it, we were happy to have found a place where we both felt comfortable and welcomed to worship together. But we had no idea what a gift God had in store for us: joy.

Growing up, there was a lot about going to church that was about obligation. But now, although we sometimes have trouble making it every Sunday that we want to go, I can say with certainty that we never go out of obligation.

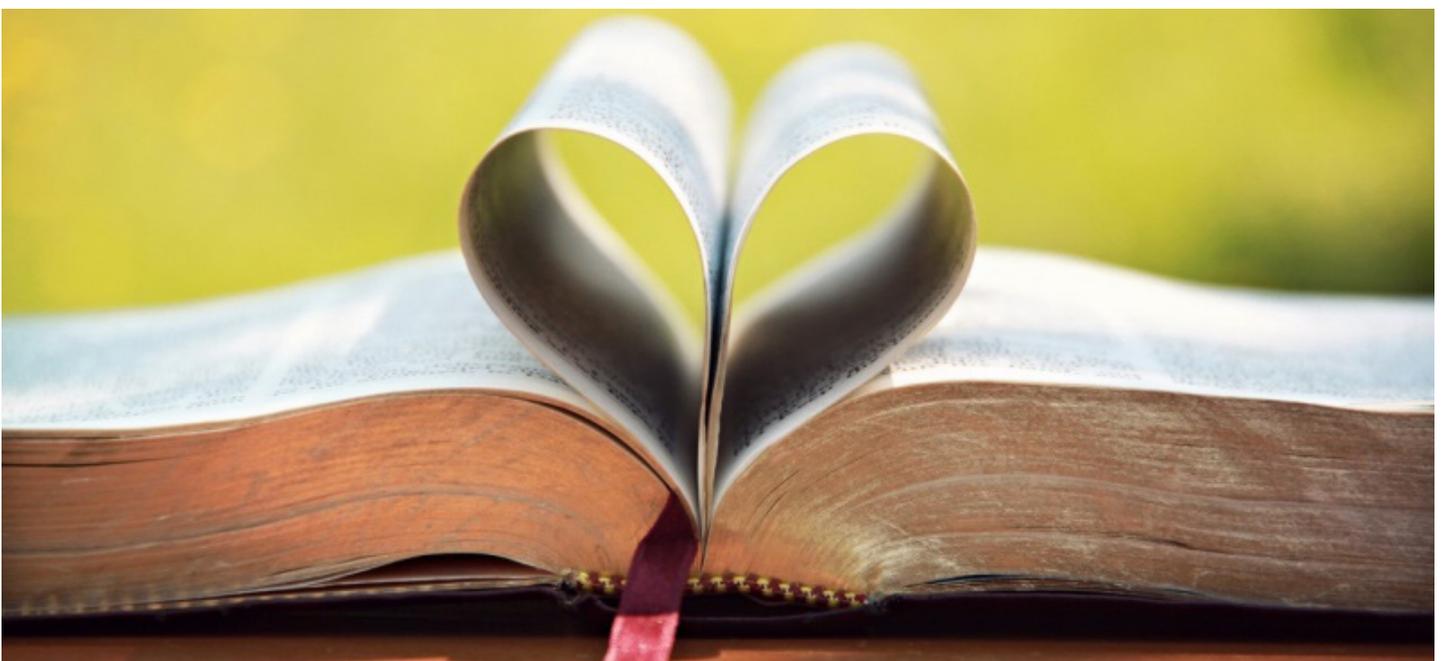
We go because we have found a place where we are excited to share our ideas and learn new ones. When we attend a committee meeting or volunteer at an event, it feels like home as we learn about and celebrate our faith with our friends.

We go because we have found a place where our kids are forming meaningful friendships. If you ever hear the sounds of small kids having meltdowns on the way out the door, there's a good chance it's one of ours, and it's because they don't want to leave their Church family.

When we first started attending FPCRO, we thought we'd found a comfortable place to practice, but we found so much more. Through FPCRO, God has brought great joy to our faith.

We give to FPCRO to celebrate and continue the joy it brings to us and others.

~Megan Kortlandt





Sunday Worship Services at 9 & 10:30 am

www.fpcro.org • facebook.com/fpcro

248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859

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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-olds 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 them ready for the routine of kindergarten. We are hoping to visit the post office this month to learn how letters are sorted/delivered and mail our special Valentine cards for Mom and Dad.

Registration for the 2019-2020 school year opens early in February. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call 248.541.0108, x 220 so that we may mail out registration information to you. This year, there will also be scholarship applications available, if needed. 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 noon. Please spread the word to family and friends. Hope to hear from you soon!

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue