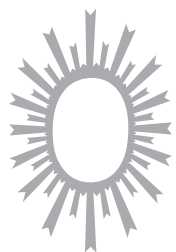


Church

Bell



From the Pastor's Desk...

Summer greetings from your church family! We usually aim for a slower summer around the church, but this year has dealt us much with which to busy ourselves. We urge you to stay up to date by following the church emails and mailings as the Session continues to make decisions about how and when our church will reinstate in-person worship services safely and confidently. Planning for the fall is underway, even though we are not yet fully sure whether or how much in-person activity we will be able to do. Please continue to call on your friends and neighbors inside and outside of the church family. The Deacons, Stephen Ministers, and staff are reaching out to those who may be less able to connect with our congregation during this time. Continue to be safe and follow all the appropriate protocol as you also seek to enjoy the summer. Each of you is precious in our sight and in God's, and we most want you to stay well in body, mind, and spirit. Don't hesitate to call or contact any of us.

Love and many blessings,

Pastor Emma and the FPCRO Staff



On Sunday, June 21, we ordained and installed our new class of Elders and Deacons in a Zoom online worship service. Although the laying on of hands took place in a different way this year, we believe that the Holy Spirit can overcome our distance because nothing is too astonishing for God! Thanks be to God for these faithful leaders.

WORSHIP ON-LINE WITH FPCRO

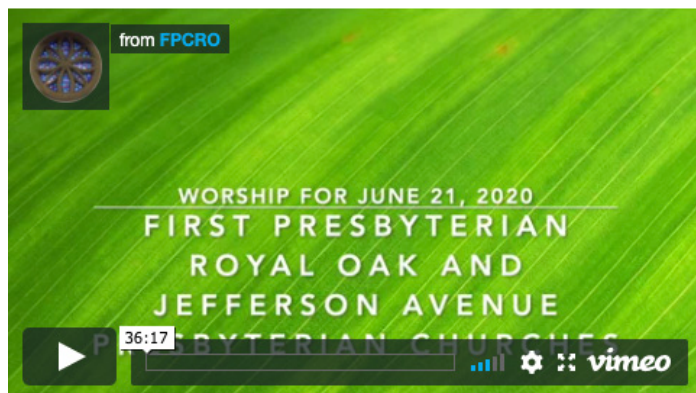
In this time of staying at home, worship continues in an on-line format. Each week, we are producing a worship service video from home that includes scripture, music, thoughts for kids, preaching, and prayer, and even online communication. Worship God from wherever you are, at anytime you choose!

Access the video each weekend on our website:

www.fpcro.org/home-worship-resources

From there, you can download a printed guide for worship, ideas for kids activities related to the weekly worship themes, and copies of the sermon.

Or, watch worship on our Facebook page and share comments with other worshipers: **<https://www.facebook.com/fpcro/>** (Clicking "like" and/or sharing posts of the church Facebook page is another way to help increase our reach.)



First Presbyterian Church
of Royal Oak

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baritone **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

mezzo soprano **Julie Anne Smith**

soprano **Kim Sanders**

tenor **Curt Peters**

our staff

our soloists

OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Jim Hyatt, May 2, 2020

Ray Crawford, June 21, 2020



How has
your star
word surprised
you so far?



MATTHEW 25 IN THE PC(USA): A BOLD VISION AND INVITATION FPCRO is a Matthew 25 church!

Our congregation has accepted the PC(USA)'s invitation to follow Jesus' teachings in Matthew 25:31–46 by becoming active disciples and making a difference in our community and the world.

As part of our Matthew 25 commitment, we pledge to embrace these three core areas of focus:

- Building congregational vitality by deepening and energizing our faith and growing as joyful leaders and disciples actively engaged with our community as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed
- Dismantling structural racism by fearlessly applying our faith to advocate and break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color
- Eradicating systemic poverty by acting on our beliefs and working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor

To learn more and for ideas on how to get involved and do your vital part as a member of a Matthew 25 church, please visit pcusa.org/matthew25.

memorials & gifts

*Memorial gifts
were given
in memory of Margaret Brom,
Robert Cooper, and Donald Gardiner.*

SUNBURST STEWARDS

We are excited to introduce Sunburst Stewards to FPCRO! Earlier this year, the Session created the Sunburst Stewards with the goal to build the church's endowment fund, and thus ensure the future of FPCRO and our mission for generations to come. Sunburst Stewards are members and friends who seek to build the future of FPCRO through planned giving in their estate. Gifts of any amount are welcome and celebrated.

Donors may remain anonymous, but with permission, they may be recognized in church publications by name to celebrate their generosity and to encourage others to consider making such a gift.

We are delighted to report that, to date, three church members have anonymously enrolled as Sunburst Stewards, sharing their intention to make an estate gift to the church. For the generosity of these faithful members, we are so grateful. If you would like to receive information on becoming a Sunburst Steward or making an estate gift to the church's endowment, please contact Pastor Emma Nickel.

The symbol of the sunburst is central to our lives at FPCRO. We see it over our communion table as a symbol of our light and the light of Christ, and it perpetually reminds us to shine that light into all the world.

The symbol of the lamp appears on the lectern in the sanctuary. Oil lamps have long symbolized both the light of Christ and the word of God. Psalm 19 says God's word is a lamp to our feet. In Matthew, Jesus invited us to let our light shine like the lamp on the lamp stand.

To learn more about Sunburst Stewards and Planned Giving, please visit www.fpcro.org/ministries.



Congregational News

JULY BOOK STUDY

Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others

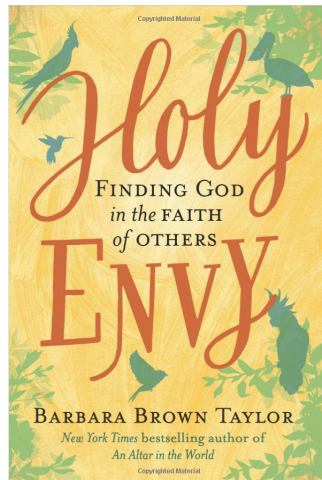
Join Pastor Emma on **Tuesday, July 28** from **7-8:30 pm** on Zoom for a discussion of *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor. Get your own copy of the book—available in paperback, audiobook, or on Kindle—and come ready to share your thoughts, ask questions, and hear from others. Taylor, lovingly known as BBT, teaches world religion to undergraduates in Georgia and discovers much about the Christian tradition by delving deeply into these other practices of faith. Her work is very readable and personal! Questions? Contact Pastor Emma at enickel@fpcro.org

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88492945315>

Meeting ID: **884 9294 5315**

Password: **087737**

Phone: **+1 312 626 6799**



HELP STOCK THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Once again, you may donate items to the Little Free Pantry! The pantry has been highly utilized by the community during this time. You can place items directly in the pantry or bring items to the carts just inside the Christian Education Lobby/Main Office doors

during our office hours; Monday, 12 pm-3 pm, Tuesday, 9 am-12 pm, Wednesday, 9 am-12 pm. We are trying to offer meal and dinner items (canned vegetables, pasta, sauce, etc.) instead of snacks (granola bars and similar items) at this time. If you would like to give a monetary donation to support the pantry, your gift will help us purchase additional items to stock it.



Annual Notice to Electronic Givers

We want to thank you for your continued support to FPCRO. **About 33% of our pledging congregation and 39% of all our pledge dollars, about \$192,500, came in through electronic giving during 2019-20.** Thank you!

A few points to remember:

- At the start of this new fiscal year, your gift will continue to be deducted in the same manner as requested on your ACH request form.
- If you turned in a pledge card, the new amount will be reflected starting the withdrawal after August 1.
- If you didn't turn in a new pledge card, the amount will remain the same as the ACH Request form or the last pledge card received, including your per capita payment preference.
- Per Capita payments, if you so authorized, will be taken in your first withdrawal in September during our Focus on Per Capita campaign.
- If your chosen withdrawal date lands on a weekend or banking holiday, your gift will be withdrawn on the next business day.
- You can change, suspend, or terminate your electronic giving option by giving 7 day advance written notice to the church administrator.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email our Church Administrator, Kari Peruski at kperuski@fpcro.org.



FLAT JESUS! WHERE ARE YOU?

Our preschool and elementary aged children are having fun with Flat Jesus! As they go about their days then take Jesus and take his picture in cool places. He's been spotted in a turtle garden, a rock garden and even up in a tree! Keep an eye on the church Facebook page to see where Jesus will pop up next. If you did not receive your flat Jesus in the mail, please contact Ms. Joelle and she will make sure you get it. If any of our grown ups would like to join in on the phone, we'd be happy to send one to you. Leave a message at the church and a Flat Jesus will be on its way to you.

MARCO POLO FOR CHILDREN



It's not too late to join us on our Marco Polo App. It's a fun way for children to leave videos for each other and share what's happening in their lives. Contact Ms. Joelle for a private link to join in on the fun.



Choral Scholars Update

Kent Wattleworth and Joseph Jackson had a Zoom meeting with the four Choral Scholars from our music program this past year, and we thought you might like to hear of their future plans. All of the scholars expressed their gratitude for the opportunity provided by the Choral Scholar program. Each one expressed how much they had learned and how they felt they were better musicians after this experience. Gratitude was also expressed for the warmth and support of The Chancel Choir and the members of FPCRO.

Emily Robinson will be attending DePaul University where she will pursue a degree in Marketing with emphasis on the Business of Music. **Jill Gerhart** will be attending Oakland University where she will major in Music Education. **Tyler Vigliotti** will be attending Michigan State, specifically The Lyman Briggs College which focuses on the natural sciences and mathematics. **Elijah Bruening**, having previously earned 80 credits, will be attending Oakland Community College for an Associates Degree before pursuing a BFA in theater. All of them will continue to participate in music ensembles throughout their college careers.

We are very proud to have been a small part of the journeys of these young people and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.



Pandemic Response Team (PRT)

FPCRO PLAN FOR RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP WITH CONFIDENCE

The Pandemic Response Team set out to create a plan for a return to in-person worship services that places the safety of worshippers and our whole community as the highest goal. We believe this is an important way First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak lives out Jesus' call to love God, neighbor, and self in this challenging time. While we understand the longing to worship together inside the church again, we also understand the serious risks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In its work, the PRT continually monitors the response of state and local authorities, as well as that of other ecclesial bodies and our own church denomination. We have reviewed all those recommendations and applied them to our church's specific context. Once this plan is implemented, its success depends on the cooperation of the members of the congregation. We further recognize that, as the circumstances around us change, the recommendations of the PRT and the decisions of the Session may need to change, too.

Ultimately, worshippers must be able to return to church with confidence. The provisions outlined in this plan seek to increase our confidence and create a safe environment for all. Although some of the trappings of worship may feel different for a time, our attitude toward God remains one of deepest trust and gratitude.

—Members of the Pandemic Response Team

Kevin Ball, Lindsey Harris, Joseph Jackson, Chris Klein, Emma Nickel, and Marilyn Sutton

PREPARATION: (Before Stage One)

- Maintain regular communication with members; be transparent about how decisions are being made and on the basis of what resources.
- Set realistic expectations for a gradual return to in-person worship.
- Session communicates with insurance company regarding any decision about building use and/or creating or resuming in-person mission and ministry during the pandemic.
- Continue alternate plans for worship, mission, and ministry that does not involve in-person gatherings.

STAGE ONE: (Current)

- Evaluate risks of inviting congregation to in-person gatherings.
- If risk is present, restrict church activities to ten persons or fewer.
- Continue online worship
- Prepare for increased risk reduction measures in the church building such as sanitation/cleaning and hygiene measures.
- Procure or ask members to procure personal protection equipment (PPE) which may be needed for in-person ministries and missions, such as cloth masks, inserts for masks, face shields, and gloves.
- Three days of office hours will be available for those who have necessary errands at church. (Monday, 12 pm-3 pm, Tuesday, 9 am-12 pm, Wednesday, 9 am-12 pm)

STAGE TWO: Following State guidelines, in-person worship is restricted to fifty persons or fewer. Once the State announcement has been made, the church will allow at least one week to make final preparations.

- Resume in-person worship, strongly encouraging those age 65 and over, and those with underlying conditions to continue to participate in online worship as an alternative.
- Online worship will continue for those who remain at home.
- Worshippers who wish to attend in-person may sign up online or be able to call in a reservation.
- Create a video tour of how the church will operate after reopening with procedures for wearing masks, entering, exiting, etc.
- If a member doesn't feel well (headache, scratchy throat, or such) please stay home. Exercise more than usual caution and participate in online worship at home.
- Require all persons engaging in in-person worship, ministry, or mission to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, face shields, and/or gloves.
- Sanitizer stations will be placed in the CE Lobby. Members will be asked to sanitize their hands when they arrive and before leaving. ("foam in, foam out")
- All Bibles, hymnals and paper materials will be removed from the sanctuary. Members may bring their own Bible if they wish.
- The Playground will be closed.

Pandemic Response Team (PRT)

- Worshippers will be asked to park in every other parking space in the lot.
- Worshippers will be asked to enter and exit the church through the Christian Education Lobby. The entrance door will be propped open, and an usher greeter will give directions to members as they enter.
- Worshippers will be asked to make sure to check in at the reception desk where a staff member and/or volunteer will check off or add their name to a list in case of possible contact tracing in the future.
- Arrows and signs will indicate the path through the church.
- Worshippers will enter the sanctuary guided by an usher at the center sanctuary entrance and an usher down the center aisle at the pew. The pews will be occupied from the front to the back and households must sit at least six feet apart
- Worshippers will be asked to exit the service during the postlude by ushers on the side aisles from the back of the sanctuary to the front.
- Increased sanitation/cleaning and hygiene measures at church will be instituted. A team of volunteers will clean pews, handles and other high touch areas before each weekly service.
- There will be no congregational singing. A soloist may sing from the back of the chancel area.
- Physical distancing will be maintained in worship (at least six feet, excluding households). Pews will be taped off.
- Common areas will be closed and/or roped off (Kirkman

Fellowship Hall, church offices, Joyful Journeys wing).

- Worshippers are asked to refrain from communion, handshakes, hugs, and passing offering plates.
- Sunday bulletins will be placed in a stack near the entrance to the sanctuary or may be downloaded and printed at home.
- An offering basket will be placed at the exit on each side of the sanctuary, allowing members to deposit their offering on the way out of the service.
- Rest rooms are for emergency use only and will allow one person at a time. The rest room in the Christian Education Lobby will be open with its outer door propped open.
- Use of air conditioning may be minimized in accordance with applicable health guidelines.

STAGE THREE: Only if the underlying risks are significantly reduced or eliminated such as the development of a cure or an effective vaccine for the coronavirus COVID-19.

- In-person worship is open to more than fifty persons according to State guidelines.
- Online worship will continue.
- Increased sanitation/cleaning and hygiene measures will be maintained at church.
- In-person worship will resume with other members (insofar as they feel comfortable doing so).
- Communion may resume with additional precautionary measures.
- Physical distancing may be relaxed and masks may become optional.



Photo used with permission: https://www.twenty20.com/photos/f6c94f3e-4cc8-4c84-92ad-5b108064ed45/?utm_t20_channel=bl

Worship on-line with us at www.fpcro.org

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:



Walk with Jesus!

VBS DELIVERED TO YOU!

Our 2020 VBS is **“Walk with Jesus!”** is coming the week of **August 3!** Families will have the opportunity to participate in VBS activities through the church website and Zoom. There are stories and hands on activities with supplies delivered right to your porch. During the week families can view videos on the church website and explore the stories of Jesus and hear about where he walked and what it was like to be in those places. Parents, please watch your emails for special updates as the week gets closer.

