

Church Bell



fpcro

From the Pastor's Desk...

Friends in Christ,

At the August Session meeting, we had challenging and helpful conversation about how our church is responding to the current movements for racial justice. Our recent commitment to become a Matthew 25 congregation means we have already agreed to help dismantle structural racism through our ministries. The gospel calls us to work for justice, to care for our own community as well as our neighbors, and to live out our discipleship, even when our actions are costly. I am grateful for members' honest sharing, their concern for the church, and their own vulnerability on these matters.

Member Peter Tanaka approached me and the Session, calling us to become more deeply engaged with the Black Lives Matter movement. Individual Session members showed their support and some wished that they could demonstrate, too, if conditions in the world were different. We also sought to recognize the various beliefs within our congregation, which may not fully align with this movement. In all, there was support for urging our members to learn more about racism, our complicity in it, and the role that the church can play in establishing a more just and equitable society.

To this end, it was agreed that members of the Evangelism and Communication committee will host a virtual Community Conversation about the racial justice movement in the next month. This will be an interview-style conversation inviting several people with different experience and expertise to share their thoughts. I hope you will watch for more info on this event and tune in for it. A class I am offering this fall on these topics is also highlighted in this newsletter.

After the meeting, Elder and member Karen Kline shared with me her personal reflections written to the church, which I am sharing with you here, with her permission. I think she sums up well what many may be feeling. She speaks to the role of our church and our faith as we consider issues of race, racism, and privilege. I look forward to hearing more reflections from you and invite you to contact me with them.

Blessings to you this fall, *Pastor Emma*

Reflections from Elder Karen Kline: *Racial Injustice. Systemic Racism. Black Lives Matter. I can't breathe.*

What does all this mean? What does all this mean to me? What does all this mean to our Church?

It really is impossible to avoid hearing about these issues right now. But processing and understanding these critical issues requires a bit more effort. Knowing that our church has joined the Matthew 25 movement through the PCUSA, I feel even more compelled to explore my own feelings and try to understand.

I know you. You helped raise my brother and me. I went to school with your children. I made VBS snacks for your kids. I sat through your Inquirers' Class or assisted at your loved one's funeral. We are family. I know we are not intentionally racist and we truly and genuinely care about all people. But I know how and where I was raised and I am beginning to understand that I may not really understand racial injustice. I don't have answers, but I want to start learning and discerning. I want to be more aware, more supportive, and more understanding.

I have been repeatedly horrified by the deaths of people of color at the hands of those who hold power. And I think, "oh but for the Grace of God." I know that when I get pulled over, my biggest fear is admitting to speeding to my husband and not being dragged out of my car to the ground. I'm now reading about how restrictive covenants and redlining have impacted black and brown people for generations. I am learning about systemic wage and housing deficiencies in many Detroit neighborhoods. Sure, I've always known that "those people in Detroit" have problems, and have even led church mission trips to "help them." But I am realizing that my own views and personal commitments need to change. And I am trying. Recently, while in line at a grocery store, I noticed that the cashier asked the black woman in front of me for her driver's license when using her credit card, as did the clerk in the lane next to me. But I was not asked to show my license. I asked the clerk why that was and she turned red and fumbled a lame excuse. I was shocked that I noticed the encounters and then, that I actually said something. Maybe there is hope for me. For our families. For our church.



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.)



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of Royal Oak

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baritone **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

tenor **Curt Peters**

soprano **Kim Sanders**

mezzo soprano **Julie Anne Smith**

our staff

our soloists

OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Christian Uppleger, July 28, 2020

Judith Hayward, August 5, 2020

Annette Watson, August 21, 2020



How could you use your star word and your journey with it to teach someone about faith?



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AUGUST 18, 2020 MEETING



- Opened the meeting with a discussion on “The Insecurity of Certainty” from Joan Chittister’s book, *Between the Dark and the Daylight*. We pondered how our church is responding to the uncertainty of our times and how uncertainty can be a blessing.
- Approved hands-on and donation-based mission projects through July 2021 in FPCRO’s focus areas of Homes, Health, and Hunger, as well as in the Matthew 25 focus areas of eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, and strengthening congregational vitality.
- Received the July financial statements and noted the deficit was still large, but less than half of the budgeted deficit for the 2019-2021 fiscal year.
- Discussed how our church has so far received our commitment to be a Matthew 25 congregation, focusing our ministries in the areas stated above. Comments were mostly positive, though one disagreement with the objectives was shared. The Session also had discussion around the call from one congregation member to engage in the Black Lives Matter movement. By motion, the Session voted to approve a Community Conversation on the current racial justice movements to take place in the coming month, hosted by members of the Evangelism and Communication committee. See Pastor Emma’s cover article for more on this discussion.

memorials & gifts

Memorial gifts were given in memory of Ray Crawford, Judy Hayward, and Chris Uppleger.

The Personnel Committee is grateful for the many years of service given to the church by **Gary Moultrup** and **Randy Jarman**.

In August, Gary retired from his position as Assistant Custodian and Randy retired from his position as Food Consultant. Since we cannot gather to celebrate with them in-person, the Personnel Committee invites congregation members to send notes of gratitude to Gary and Randy at their home addresses. If you need an address, please contact the church office.



First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak Columbarium and

Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

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.



Upcoming September Events

OUTDOOR YOUTH HANGOUT

Friday, September 11 • 5-6:30 pm

FPCRO Middle and High School youth are invited to join us from **5-6:30 pm** on **Friday, September 11** for a time to reconnect and hangout together outdoors. Play cornhole or other games, just chat (from 6 feet away with face coverings!), or commiserate about school. We'll offer some pre-packaged snacks that evening. This event is not associated with S.T.A.G.E. Youth Ministry and is just for FPCRO youth and your friends—feel free to invite one or more. Questions? Contact Pastor Emma Nickel.

CONGREGATIONAL PICNIC & TRIVIA

Sunday, September 13 • 11:30 am-1 pm

Pack your own picnic and come out to eat together (socially-distanced style) on the Hendrie Lawn. Starting about 12:15 pm, we'll enjoy playing a professionally hosted trivia game! Play as your household, team up with another one (from 6 feet away) or call some friends to gather a few folks to be on your team. Bring your blanket and lawn chairs, your face covering(s), your lunch, and your thinking cap for a time of fellowship and play with the church family. *Rain date: Sunday, September 20, 11:30 am- 1 pm.*



Photo used with permission: @logankade via Twenty20

Please note that social distancing and proper wearing of masks will be required at all events. If you have been sick or are showing any possible symptoms, please practice love of neighbor by staying home.

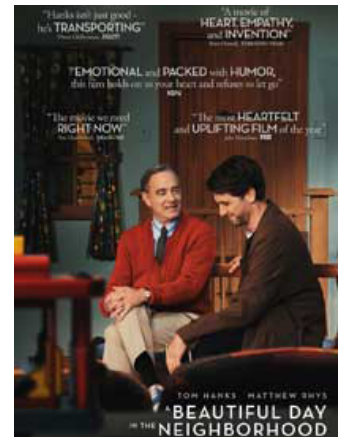
Should you become ill after attending a church event, please contact us so that we can participate in contact tracing.

MOVIE NIGHT ON HENDRIE LAWN

Friday, September 18 • 7:30 pm

Join us for an outdoor screening of **"A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."** Writer Lloyd Vogel is tasked with creating a profile of Fred Rogers. When the interviewee suddenly becomes the interviewer, magic begins to happen. Bring your face covering(s), and lawn chair or a blanket!

Rated PG, Runtime 109 minutes.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, September 27 • 11:30 am

Look for Zoom login details in your weekly email or by postal mail for those who don't receive emails. The Annual Report will be available for download, or in hard copy by request.



VIDEO & DISCUSSION SERIES ON RACE AND FAITH: COVENANTAL RESTORATION

As part of our church's commitment to being a Matthew 25 congregation and working to end structural racism, we will take part in a video-based discussion series starting in September. In partnership with First Presbyterian Church in Warren, Pastor Emma Nickel and Pastor Julie Delezenne will offer a joint series using videos and material from The Work of the People, which creates films to discover our humanity and to be transformed by God. In the Zoom sessions, we will watch the short videos together and engage in discussion. This will also be an opportunity to hear perspectives from outside our own congregation.

We'll meet by Zoom on the following Mondays at 7:30 pm: September 28, October 12, October 26, November 9. Check the mid-week email for Zoom login details as the date approaches or call the church later this month for info if you don't receive the emails. Contact Pastor Emma Nickel with questions.

PRESCHOOL JOYFUL JOURNEYS

This fall, our children will experience the stories of the Growing with God Story Bible. Beginning Sunday, September 20, our preschool families will find a special preschool link on our website. There they will find a video of each week's story being read by someone special. Families will each receive their own Storybook Bible to follow along with beautiful illustrations.

ELEMENTARY JOYFUL JOURNEYS

Our fall season of Joyful Journeys begins Sunday, September 20. Lessons will be provided in an online format. Families will receive a weekly email with a resource sheet and a link to a video. All information can also be accessed on the church website.

Weekly lessons are from "Growing in God's Love" using the children's story Bible by the same name. Families can read the story together in their own story Bible and wonder together using the resource sheet. Joelle Jarrait is contacting parents to arrange delivery of the Growing in God's Love Story Bible for each family.



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



As we welcome back our Sunflower families, we welcome them to a slightly different type of year. It is time for another preschool year to begin, although many things will remain the same, some things will be very different. This summer, the teachers have been very busy preparing and organizing for our preschoolers to come to a safe and loving environment. We are following the State's guidelines and the recommendations of our Pandemic Response Team by limiting our class sizes to 10 students per class. The school year will begin for Sunflowers Christian Preschool on Monday, September 14 for our four-year-old class, and on Tuesday, September 15 for our three-year-old class.

This September may look slightly different, but we still are excited for the new friends to learn about, classroom rules to remember, and lots of enthusiasm for new routines. The children come with lots of excitement and an eagerness to meet new friends, to play and to learn. Both classes will focus on fall themes, including apples, and the color red. You might even smell something delicious coming from our room when we cook with apples! We will also start our Bible study right at the very beginning, with creation.

The four-year-old class will also begin studying the letters of the alphabet and begin to learn about word families. Our three-year-old class will start counting the very first day as we count the days we are in school each month. All the children will be busy each day developing their fine motor skills in many ways. The playground is also a wonderful place to play in September.

Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Heitchue

We look forward to all the new faces and plan to bring some routine and a little bit of "normal" to all our students. It is going to be a great year!

Earth Care Mission — Climate Care Challenge



Now is our time to love tenderly and act boldly. Human use of God's creation is far out of balance with creation's natural ability to regenerate.

Not all Presbyterians have the same passion around climate change, but we all want a healthy world with clean air and clean water for every living plant or animal on the earth. Changes made by us in the U.S. have a greater impact because of our energy usage. Americans use 40% of the world's oil and emit 25% of the world's greenhouse gases, even though we are less than 5% of the world's population. We can and must change these patterns.

In 2006, the PCUSA General Assembly passed a policy about becoming "carbon neutral." Presbyterians are called to take the results of our energy consumption seriously, to pray asking for God's forgiveness and guidance, to reduce energy consumption, and to calculate carbon emissions and offset their negative impact.

Children and youth are passionately acting to protect the earth for their future, and they encourage us in our lives to become protectors of God's creation.

Let's act now to answer God's call! You can sign up for the Climate Care Challenge at pcusa.org/climatecarechallenge or look over the list of personal and outward steps and choose those you will accept.

Personal Steps Climate Care

- **Walk/bicycle**, take public transportation, carpool, drive more efficiently, and avoid air travel.
- **Eat** a (more) plant-based diet or grow your own food.
- **Plant** a tree or help restore a wetland. www.arborday.org
- **Reduce** your energy use: replace your light bulbs with LEDs, add insulation, air dry clothes or do an energy audit.
- **Reduce** waste: recycle, compost, and buy less.
- **Purchase** renewable energy or carbon offsets.
- **Talk** about why you care about climate change to your friends and family. bit.ly/btlestalk

Outward Steps Climate Care

- **Host an Earth Day Sunday worship** or become an Earth Care Congregation.
- **Learn about and support** groups and communities working for environmental justice.
- **Make energy efficient** renovations, transition to more renewable energy at your church, school, or workplace.
- **Use your voice!** Advocate for strong climate action on local, national, and international levels.
- **Follow, learn from, and participate** in global conversations about climate change—from the UN climate talks to global partner stories.
- **Challenge** your school, workplace, church or other institutions to set a goal, such as going 100% renewable energy or carbon neutral by 2030.
- **Help move** investments and pension funds to climate-supportive options and challenge climate-harming practices.

Watch upcoming newsletters for more opportunities to show how you care.

CROP Walk — Perambulating Presbyterians



CROP Walk 2018

BERKLEY/ROYAL OAK WALK

Are you ready for a *virtual* walk? It's EASY!

On the weekend of October 4, 2020:

1. Walk at your own time and place!
2. Make it FUN! Watch for suggestions on our Facebook page.
3. Start with a virtual opening and prayer.
4. Take lots of pictures and videos and share them online.

- Register for the CROP Hunger Walk at www.crophungerwalk.org. Select the **Berkley/Royal Oak Crop Walk** and then the **First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak Team**.

- Make a donation if possible.
- Get yourself or your group ready to walk.
- Send photos of your group before, during, and after your walk to Chris and Pete Klein (CKlein8000@live.com) for our FPCRO Facebook page.

Or fill out and send your donation(s) to church. Mail in or drop off donations during church hours. Checks should be made out to "CWS/CROP."

Though the Walk might look different this year, 25% of all the funds raised will still be shared with South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless, the lunch program at First UMC and the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Food Pantry.

Thank you for your commitment to serving those in need, especially at times like this!



CROP Hunger Walk Donation Form

If you would like to make a donation for the CROP Hunger Walk, please fill out this form, add your check or cash, and place it in an envelope. Make out checks to "CWS/CROP." Either drop off or mail the form by October 1, 2020.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak
529 Hendrie Blvd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Donation Amount: _____

A receipt for your donation will be mailed or emailed to you. Thank you very much



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

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:



Flu Shot Clinic

Sunday, September 20 • 9:00 am – Noon

With COVID-19, it is even more important to get your Flu Shot this year! The Deacons are hosting a Flu Shot clinic with Rite Aid and most insurance plans will cover the cost. For those without insurance, 10 vouchers covering the cost of the shot will be made available on a first-come basis. Please contact FPCRO if you need a voucher and to arrange a pick up time for it during church office hours. Be sure to bring the voucher with you when you come for the flu shot.

The clinic will be different this year due to COVID-19. When you arrive in the parking lot, you will receive a number. Please wait in your car until your number is called and plan to enter the building near the Fireside room. If you have not downloaded and completed the Rite Aid Flu Shot Screening Form (**visit <https://www.fpcro.org/forms-event-scheduling> OR <https://tinyurl.com/yy8g7odb>**) ahead of time, or forgot to, blank forms will be available for you to fill out while you wait. Please bring valid ID, insurance card (or voucher), and a face covering. Your temperature will be taken before you enter the church and a volunteer will escort you through the process.

