

Church Bell



fpcro

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear church members and friends,

At the end of April, the Session received and acted on recommendations of the Sustainability Task Force, which was created to reduce our church's growing annual deficit and set us on surer financial footing. The Task Force was appointed in November 2019 and included Krispen Carroll (chairperson), Kevin Ball (secretary/reporter), Adair Calder, Ron Coleman, Anne-Marie Devantier, James Hanks, Scott Kortlandt, Kevin Schnieders, and myself.

The elders were thorough in their questions and discussion of the report and acted with faithfulness and wisdom in responding. Of the measures approved, the most significant is that Session voted to eliminate the position of Associate Pastor. Concurrent with this decision, you can read the letter from Rev. Pam Meilands in this newsletter which details her acceptance of a call to Derry Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania, pending a vote there in June. We will hold a congregational meeting on May 31 to vote on her request; her last day with us will be June 14, 2020. We have been so grateful to Pastor Pam and her ministry with the youth. We will continue to minister to our youth and connect with them and their families through this season of change. In the next few weeks, you will also hear more about Pastor Pam's transition and how we can send her into her next call with God's blessings.

Another significant change will be a reduction of the Mission and Benevolence annual budget by approximately 50%. This reduction is substantial and will change the way we support local, national, and international missions. However, the Mission and Benevolence Committee has already been working to help us re-shape our focus on hands-on mission opportunities, allowing us to continue our service to God in the community. The Session also considered and adopted several other Task Force recommendations. These include the following:

- To change the Chancel Choir soloists' contracts to a 10-month contract from a 12-month contract, beginning in August 2020. The Music staff are preparing for this transition in the coming year and looking for ways to invite the gifts of youth, instrumentalists, and other church members into our worship as we experience this change.
- To sell the Hendrie Blvd. parking lot north of the church to a residential real estate developer, subject to congregational and Presbytery approval. The lot is little used but requires maintenance and upkeep expense. The Task Force recommends that the sale proceeds be devoted to facilities maintenance and capital repair and improvement expenses.
- To form a sub-committee to investigate and make recommendations as appropriate to establish a child day care facility at the church.
- To develop and implement an updated schedule of rental fees for church facilities.

The Session approved other changes to the operating budget beginning in August 2020 totaling \$18,670. Together, these changes will result in savings of \$126,980.85, which are essential to moving us toward a more sustainable financial position. The Session also received recommendations on specific practices to increase financial transparency in our church's accounting and financial statements.

I, and members of the Task Force, are ready to speak with you about the specific questions you have surrounding these decisions. Please send me an email to enickel@fpcro.org or leave a voicemail for me at church and I will get in touch soon. The full report can also be emailed or mailed to you upon request.

Challenges, transitions, and times of change can reveal who a community really is. The Task Force's work and our experience during the pandemic shows me that our community comes together in gratitude, love, and shared ideas. You, and the leadership of the church, have cared for one another so well, shared your feelings and vulnerabilities, and continued to serve God through this time. For this, I cannot express my gratitude enough! I am confident in the future and our congregation's place in it. God is always inviting us into new things and God promises to go with us through all endeavors.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Emma



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. Worship God from wherever you are, at anytime you choose!

Access the video each weekend at our website:

www.fpcro.org/home-worship-resources

At the above site, you can also 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.)



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

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

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

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

preschool music director, afriberg@fpcro.org **Audrey Frieberg**

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

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

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

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

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

preschool teacher **Beth Heitchue**

child care provider **Ivy Debrow**

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

assistant custodian **Gary Moultrup**

food consultant **Randy Jarman**

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

newsletter editor **Sandra Olah**



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First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak
529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak, Michigan 48067
248.541.0108 • fax 248.541.1859
www.fpcro.org • [facebook.com/fpcro](https://www.facebook.com/fpcro)

baritone **Miroslav Pavle Manovski**

mezzo soprano **Julie Anne Smith**

soprano **Kim Sanders**

tenor **Curt Peters**

our staff

our soloists

Congregational Meeting May 31

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, May 31 at 11:30 am via Zoom telephone and video-conferencing for the purpose of: 1) electing church officers; 2) requesting that the Presbytery of Detroit dissolve the pastoral relationship between the Rev. Pamela Meilands and FPCRO, effective June 14, 2020, on Rev. Meilands' request in order that she may accept the call to Derry Presbyterian Church in Derry, Pennsylvania; and 3) declaring the position of Associate Pastor at FPCRO closed. Details for attending the meeting using your telephone, smartphone, tablet, laptop, or computer with camera and microphone are below. All appropriate safety features for Zoom have been enabled. In the event it is legal and advisable to hold the meeting in person, you will receive further instructions for doing so at the church at the same date and time. If you have questions about connecting to the meeting, please call the church and leave a message for Pastor Emma at ext. 206.

To join with audio/telephone only using any phone, dial +1 312 626 6799. Then punch in the Meeting ID and Password (below) when prompted.

To join with video and audio, download the Zoom Cloud Meetings app on your phone, computer, or tablet well ahead of the meeting time. At 11:30 am on May 31, click the link to join the meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/93371779773>. Then enter the Password (below) as prompted.

Or, directly in the app, enter the **Meeting ID: 933 7177 9773** and then the **Password 176997** when prompted.

Zoom software limits us to the participation of 100 devices for the meeting. We urge all member couples and families to log-on using a single device to allow the participation of others. In the event that we exceed our limit, a second congregational meeting session will be hosted at 12:30 pm the same day. Any members prevented from logging in to Zoom at 11:30 am should log in at 12:30 pm on May 31 in order to participate.

Letter from Pastor Pam Meilands

April 22, 2020

Friends,

Over these last few months, both our church and I have gone through a time of great discernment. The session appointed a Sustainability Task Force, from which the session received a final report last night. Around the same time, I began the search for a new call. Pending a candidating service and congregational vote, which is currently scheduled for June, I will be starting as the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and their Families at Derry Presbyterian Church in Hershey, Pennsylvania. My last day in the office, so to speak, will be May 31. It is with both joy and sadness that I share this news with you.

One of the recommendations of the Sustainability Task Force is to reduce staffing costs at FPCRO by becoming a solo pastor congregation. While I officially learned of this recommendation in late February, I knew that this would be a likely outcome of the task force's work. Many churches about the same size of FPCRO are finding themselves in situations like ours and making similar decisions and, so, when the task force was first announced, I knew it was time to start circulating my PIF (Pastoral Information Form - the equivalent of a resume for a PC(USA) pastor).

In March, I was offered the call at Derry Presbyterian Church. While the transition process is being delayed by stay-at-home orders, this new position offers an opportunity for significant growth and will provide new and exciting challenges for me. The church and community are also closer to home - about two hours from where my parents live.

This is bittersweet news to share. Over the past five and a half years, I have come to love Michigan and the people of FPCRO. However, I know that this is God's next step for me and I am confident in God's desire to keep FPCRO a thriving worshipping community into the future.

Transitions are difficult in even the best of times and, unfortunately, these are not the best of times. I ask for your grace and prayers for the church, the staff, and for me as we navigate a change like this during a pandemic and know that you are all in my prayers as well.

God's Peace,
Rev. Pamela Meilands

Congregational News

LITTLE FREE PANTRY

The Little Free Pantry is being heavily utilized by our community during the pandemic. The limited staff who are going into church, fill the pantry each time they are present, as well as ensuring the grounds nearby are clean. Just before Easter, we used up the congregations' generous donations of items from the Souper Bowl of Caring in February. The church has funds on hand that are designated for food ministries and for now, those will be tapped to safely purchase items to keep the pantry filled. At this time, we are not requesting donations of food items, as we encourage everyone to stay home, stay safe, and limit grocery shopping trips as much as possible.

We are thankful for your inquiries into how this important ministry is working at this time. It has been clear that there is a need in our Royal Oak Community for this ministry to tide people over normally, and especially through this hard season. Many thanks to the vision of church member Luke DeVantier for planning this mission, which will celebrate its first anniversary in August!

LECTIONARY CLASS

Everyone is invited to join our Lectionary Class on-line! Join facilitator Peter Tanaka and class members at 9 am on Sundays to read the scriptures for the day and dig into their meaning, connections and the ways God speaks to us through them.

Connect to the class using Zoom. To join with video and audio, download the Zoom Cloud Meetings app on your phone, tablet, or computer. At 9 am on Sunday, use the link to join the Zoom Meeting: **<https://zoom.us/j/175028691>**
Meeting ID: 175 028 691
Password: 417903

To join on the phone only, dial: +1 312 626 6799, then punch in the meeting ID and Password as above when directed.



WEEKLY PRAYER CIRCLE

FPRCO is starting a weekly prayer circle to pray for people and needs inside and outside our church family.

Deacons, Stephen Ministers, and other members have signed up for particular days of the week and, on their days, will hold all the needs in prayer before God. If you have prayer requests, send them to Pastor Emma at **enickel@fpcro.org** or leave a message on Pastor Emma's voicemail at **ext. 206**. If you are interested in being a member of the prayer circle and having one day each week as your day to pray, also contact Pastor Emma. *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* – Philippians 4:6-7



ALL-CHURCH (VIRTUAL) POTLUCK

Join us on **Tuesday, April 28** from **6-6:45 pm** for dinner together and time to catch-up. You're encouraged to eat dinner as we chat. All ages welcome!

To join with video and audio, download the Zoom Cloud Meetings app on your phone, computer, or tablet well ahead of the meeting time. Join Zoom Meeting at **<https://zoom.us/j/96185838071>**, then enter the **Password: 420626** as prompted.

Or, directly in the app, enter the **Meeting ID: 961 8583 8071** and then the Password: 420626 as prompted.

To join with audio/telephone only using any phone, dial +1 312 626 6799, then punch in the Meeting ID and Password when prompted.



OF NOTE:

Deaths:

Robert S. Cooper, M.D., March 31, 2020



As we prepare for Pentecost, how has the Holy Spirit lit a fire in you in/through your star word? What new thing has it inspired you to do?



SAVE THE DATE

The CROP Hunger Walk is tentatively rescheduled for **Sunday, October 11, 2020**. Stay tuned for details.



SIGN-UP TO USHER

A Sign-Up Genius for FPCRO ushers will be available beginning in May 2020. Visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4eaca92ba2f94-ushers1> and select a Sunday. It's that easy! The link is also accessible via the church website (www.fpcro.org) under the MINISTRIES tab. When on-site worship resumes, ushers scheduled for a canceled service are invited to self re-schedule using the Sign-Up Genius.



For those who prefer the in-church paper sign-up in the CE hallway, that will still be available once the church is re-opened. On-line sign-ups will be reconciled with the hallway list. Questions? Contact Dave Nelson at: 248-589-3825; Text: 248-390-7217; email: davnel@comcast.net.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak

**Columbarium
and**

Memorial Garden

Information packets available

Questions:

Ken Bissey 248.709.4849

memorials & gifts

*Memorial gifts
were given in
memory of Don Gardiner
and Margaret Brom.*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER GOES ON THE ROAD

*Chef Randy is tired of sitting at home
and really wants to cook dinner for you!*

On Wednesdays during the pandemic, Chef Randy will be preparing and delivering dinner to members and friends of FPCRO! If you could use a hand in preparing meals, an extra dinner in the freezer, or a renewed connection to the church, sign-up for a home-cooked meal, delivered safely to your doorstep.

Place orders by calling the church and leaving a message on the GENERAL LINE at the RECEPTION DESK no later than 12 noon on Tuesdays. Indicate how many meals per family/person you would like. (Wait through the message until the end in order to leave your message in the correct place). Church staff will be picking up the messages. We can accommodate up to 25 orders each week.

There is no charge for the meals or delivery.

Chef Randy is certified in safe food handling and preparation. He will be the only person shopping, cooking, and delivering, in order to minimize contact. Meals will be dropped at your doorstep between 5-7 pm on Wednesday afternoon/evening.

Questions? Contact Randy at (248) 770-8077.



Financial Gifts

GIVING TO GOD THROUGH AN UNEXPECTED TIME

“Even though we’re not attending services in person, we feel it’s important to continue our weekly offering to FPCRO as God continues to bless us. It’s a fairly small congregation, but there are still bills to pay, staff to pay, and programs to support. We know the staff is working hard. Think of all the new skills Emma, Pam, Joseph, Kent, Joelle, Sally, Kari and other staff have likely had to learn—doing the weekly on-line services, Zoom meetings, and how to minister from a distance. We don’t want to add money worries to their load or return to a larger deficit. We invite you to join us in giving to God and the church. Don’t put it off. Please put a check in the mail or use the on-line option today.”

~Theresa Henige (Stewardship Committee Member) & Jim Demerath

Your gifts are making a difference! We are very appreciative of those who can continue giving to the church during this unprecedented time with so many out of work or working from home on a limited basis. The gifts that have come in the past month have helped FPCRO continue its mission. We are able, in part, to offer worship at home experiences, provide assistance to those in need, and maintain our facility with these gifts.

Ways to give to the church:

- **Mail your gift to the church.** For those with a regular income stream, we encourage you to mail your regular offering or pledge to the church where it will be collected from our locked mailbox. If you don’t have a stamp, try using the Bill Pay feature of your on-line banking to have the bank send a check directly to the church.
- **Initiate Electronic Giving.** You can also start an automatic, recurring withdrawal by filling out an Electronic Giving form available at <https://tinyurl.com/givefpcro>. You can mail the form to the church via US Post or just send it in an email to kperuski@fpcro.org. If you need to adjust your electronic contribution at any time, please contact Kari Peruski.
- **Make an on-line gift anytime using the GIVE button on our website.**

If you are experiencing **financial hardship**, you’re encouraged to reach out to Pastor Emma Nickel and speak with her about ways the church can help you through this time. The church has a **benevolence fund** available to help members fill some of the gaps in this challenging season. Your situation and request will remain confidential.

Mission & Benevolence

SESSION APPROVES GIFTS

On April 14, Session approved gifts of \$5,000 to Gleaners Community Food Bank and \$5,000 to Cass Community Social Services from the Mission and Benevolence budget on behalf of FPCRO to support those in need at this time.

FORGOTTEN HARVEST
ON THE GO

Forgotten Harvest is hosting a special car only drive up mobile pantry distribution in your community.

To keep everyone safe, food will **ONLY** be distributed to trunk - please have your trunk space clear.



Every Wednesday
from 9:00am - noon
or until all food has been distributed
Oak Park Recreation Center
14300 Oak Park Blvd.
Oak Park, MI 48237

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.



MARCO POLO APP FOR CHILDREN

During our time apart, children are invited to join Ms. Joelle on an app called Marco Polo. The app is a place for children to talk to each other by posting videos. It can be thought of as an app that allows you to leave video voicemails that you can check on your own time and respond to at your leisure. An email was sent out to parents with a link to join the private group with other FPCRO children. Please feel free to post a video and let us know how you're doing. Tell us what you've been up to. Watch for posts from Ms. Joelle and others. If you did not receive a link, please email Ms. Joelle at jjarrait@fpcro.org.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

During this time, we all find ourselves in uncharted waters. As conversations arise in your home, please don't hesitate to contact the church staff about resources. We are in communication with each other and with colleagues at other churches. We will pass things along as we receive them, and we invite you to let us know if there is a specific topic or area where you can use some guidance for God's children of all ages.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FISH BANKS

Thank you everyone who took home a fish bank to fill for One Great Hour of Sharing. Please hold on to your bank and bring it with you when we return to church. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People. All work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. Your gifts are greatly appreciated, and we will dedicate them when we return to in-person worship.



Sunflowers Christian Preschool



year-olds' class who have started the reading process.

Registration is open for the 2020-2021 school year! Three-year-olds meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:15-11:45 am, four-year-olds meet Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:15 am-12:00 noon. Please call 248-541-0108 ext. 220 to reserve a spot.

Mrs. Heitchue and Mrs. Gibson

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:



FPCRO news!

Youth Sunday

Sunday, May 17 is

*Youth
Sunday!*

Join us for a worship
service planned, written,
and led by the middle
school and high school
youth of our
congregation

**Youth Sunday
Youth Sunday**

FPCRO STAFF MEETINGS ON ZOOM!

As a result of Governor Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order on March 16, staff have been meeting "virtually" each week since March 24. Pictured is a screen grab of a recent staff meeting. Zoom allows us to gather, pray, discuss pastoral care needs, plans for worship and other matters.

