



YOU, WHO ALONG THE ROAD

ROYAL OAK FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
rofum.org • 248-541-4100

RECENT PRAYER CONCERNS

Prayers for our church family: Joan Johnson; Krista Conyers; Dave & Sue Minch; Jan Carlson; Marilyn Hocking; James Respecki; Kevin Lasky; Bruce and Ginny Conrad; Jenny Lowman; Lee Hoffmann; Inge Wichers; Betty Latimer; Barb Nicholas; Sue Parisi-Reid; Dick LaCombe; Paula Derkowski; Joe Waisanen Jr; Crystal Clark; Marian Kremer; Betty Locke; Bill Young; John Wagster; Pastor Jeff Nelson; The Riggs Family

Prayers for our extended family: Steve & Peggy Zelonium; Lorraine Bowden; Joal Brown; Tracy & Paul; Lucy Sieck; Jamie Radick; Pat Callahan; Pam Payne; Tim Bell; Laurie Harris Wiener; Heidi and Dan Grogan; Essential workers and health care providers fighting COVID-19; Marilyn Mansfield; Margaret O'Donnell; Don & Ann Anderson

Senior Spotlight: Al Simmons

Sympathy to the family and friends of Mack Spears on the event of his death.

For the complete Prayer List, please contact our
Pastoral Care Team at prayers@rofum.org.

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

27 weeks ago, I stepped into the role of interim lead pastor, filling in as Pastor Jeff went off on a Spiritual Renewal leave. Wow, it has been an adventurous 27 weeks filled with great moments, new friends, and unprecedented challenges. It is amazing and heartwarming to look back and see God moving through it all.

It was fun to begin this time back in January with a sermon on the movie "Little Women" and then get the chance to share that sermon with high school students a few weeks later. In February, we celebrated "Love." I will never forget that slide show of "Love" on display in so many different ways or the churchwide Valentine's Day party. Another great high point was the band arrangement of "All You Need Is Love" (featuring Russell Calhoun on the trumpet). That will always be etched in my heart. (Thank you, Debi Szeliga, for putting it together.)

Rev. James Cogman came to us in March, taking us all by storm with his energy, knowledge, and love. With Pastor George officially under appointment to Royal Oak First and James in place, our Pastoral team had just started to get our feet on the ground when the global pandemic was declared, and our church building went into lockdown. Preaching into my iPad from my living room became the new normal as I learned to navigate grandchildren and barking dogs. Many of you asked about the picture above my mantle that became a staple in the service. It's called "The Baptism" by Clementine Hunter.

Shelter-in-place, Holy Week was something we will not soon forget. The virtual "seven last words" and Maundy Thursday from my dining room were a whole new experience. By Easter Sunday, we were all so desperate to see one another, the Easter greetings you sent in were the highlight of that service. Still, we learned time and time again that it does not matter how we come together. When we come together, "we" are the church.

Over the next two months, we would connect in the best ways possible. Our Pentecost Parade gave us a chance to drive up, say "hello," and then drop off food and supplies for those in need. It was a great excuse to dress in our "red," decorate our cars and have fun. Our Drive-in Communion found us still in our cars (with me on the back of a pickup truck) breaking bread and coming to the table in a new way. There were mixed emotions on that day as we said goodbye, not only to Pastor James but also to Pastor George, who, like James, was headed to a new church and a new appointment. Over the span of thirty years, Pastor George had a profound effect on our church. From playing the piano at the Saturday service to sharing his talents and teaching piano to so many, from his hospitality to all of our new members to his love and warmth for the As We Gather and Sack Lunch guests, George Marck made us a better church. George Marck made Christ's love real.

Please know that I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to lead this church in these interesting and challenging times. I must admit, I am also glad to pass the baton back to Pastor Jeff and hopefully take a little time to catch my breath. I'll be preaching this Sunday on a great text from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, and we'll see how our children experienced Choir Camp this week in new ways. August 2, Pastor Jeff will be back in the pulpit. It will be good to see him and hear the new word he has to bring. I'll continue in my role as Associate Pastor and hope to help us find new and better ways to connect and care for each other.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Neya