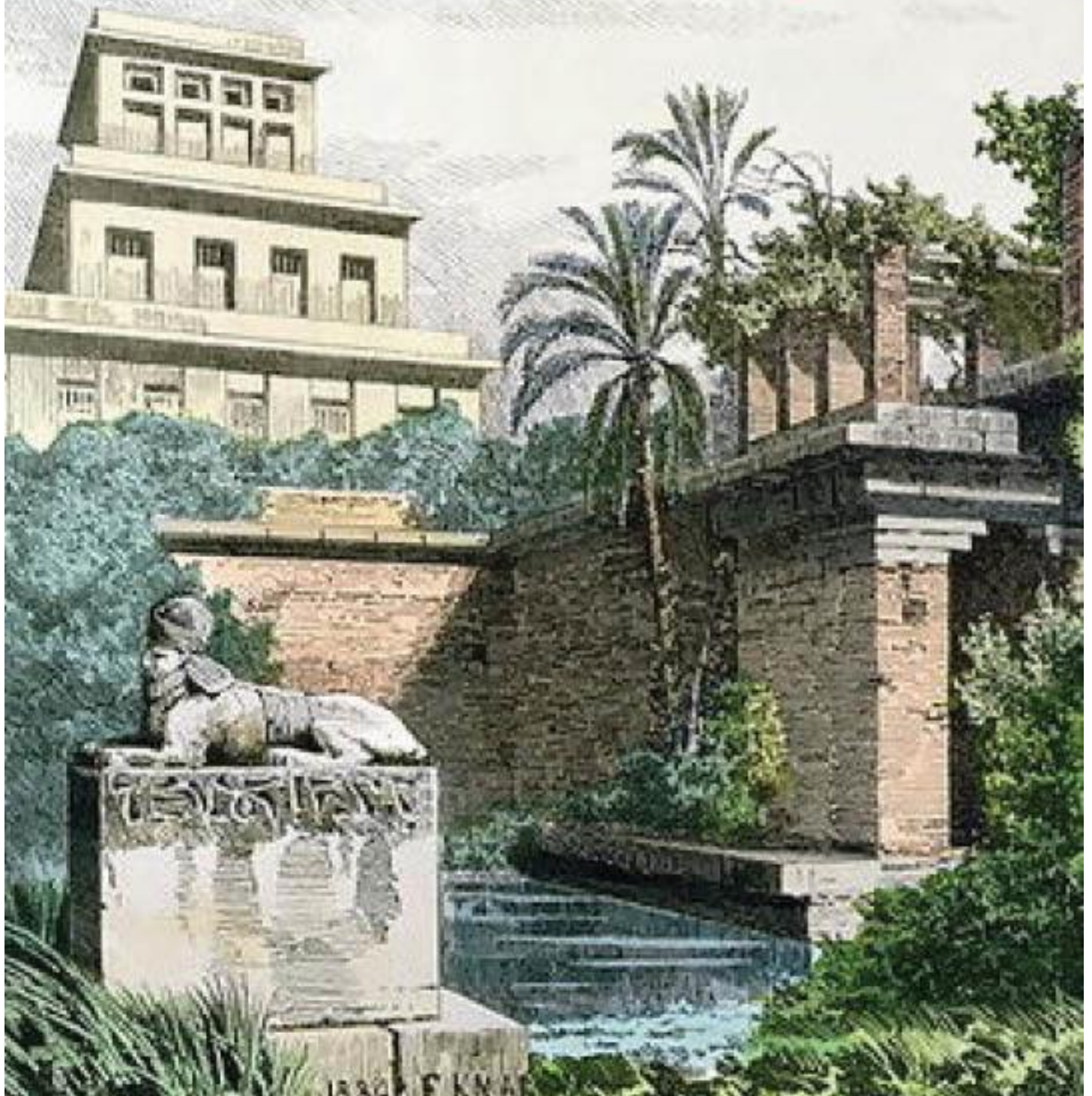




*Postcards
from
Babylon*



1889 F. KNA

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude	<i>When the Morning Comes</i> Tim Schoenherr	
Pastor's Welcome		
Hymn #2214	Lead Me, Guide Me	*TFWS
Invitation to Mission		
Time of Prayer		
Offering Our Gifts and Tithes		
Musical Offering	<i>Soulshine</i> Andrew Lindblom	
Doxology #95		**UMH
Scripture	Jeremiah 29:11-14 Virginia Wright	***CEB
Message	The Plan	Jeff Nelson
Song	<i>Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)</i> Erica Plesco	
Benediction		

* The Faith We Sing
** United Methodist Hymnal
*** New Revised Standard Version

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bills for Books

Do you remember your favorite book as a kid? Was it *Where the Wilds Things Are*, or maybe a *Thomas the Tank Engine* classic? Books become memories forever etched in our youth. ROFUM is being asked to play a role in making exciting books a personal reality for the students at Ferndale Lower Elementary School. The November and December Bills for Books initiative will help purchase a book for every child at the school. You can make special gifts to this fund at rofum.org/giving and choose the Bills for Books fund or you can drop off or mail a check made out to Royal Oak First with Bills for Books on the memo line. Donated funds will be multiplied through the Scholastic Book Club, a program which allows Ferndale Lower Elementary to stretch the money and maximize book purchases for all students. Your donation is a loving way to make a great positive activity a reality and great memory for a lifetime.

Advent by Candlelight

Monday, December 7 at 7:00 pm via Zoom

Ladies, it may be virtual but we will still come together for prayers, songs and inspirational stories as we prepare for Christmas. Our theme this year is "Hard Candy Christmas." In this unprecedented year we will recognize the hard days but find the sweetness of coming together in community at Christmas. It is a zoom event.

We'll come together as a large group for the program then break up into small groups or virtual tables. Don't miss the chance to kick off your Advent celebrations.

If you would like to sign up to be a host (hosting a small breakout group) or attend, or if you have any questions, contact Pastor Myra at MMoreland@rofum.org

RECENT PRAYER CONCERNS

Prayers for our church family: Ginny Borts; Todd Menig; Joyce Hollingsworth; Lee & Shirley Gnegy; Judy Chambers; Carol Hardt; Ed Cline; Joyce Burton; John Wagster; Jordan Altman; Diane Sexton; Laurie Foss; Greg Umstead; Marian Kremer; Inge Wichers; Betty Lawson; Marilyn McCreedy; Pam Ortner; George Bard; Jan Carlson; Karen Porter; Nancy Lorenz; Cathy Baker; Linda Jones; Kim Frentz; Diana Shornak; Krista Conyers; Dave & Sue Minch; Marilyn Hocking; James Respecki; Kevin Lasky; Lee Hoffmann; Joe Waisanen Jr; Crystal Clark; The Riggs Family

Prayers for our extended family: Lorraine Murdoch; Paul Edward; Richard Gifford; Susan Inch; Cheryl & Jimmy Clark; Anthonne Tracy; Sheila & Marty Boyer; Pam Payne; Mary Jo Cady; Teresa Baker; Mike Pilon; Kathy Kearns; Effie Lambros; Lorraine Bowden; Joal Brown; Tim Bell; Laurie Harris Wiener; Essential workers and health care providers fighting COVID-19; Margaret O'Donnell; Don & Ann Anderson

Senior Spotlight: Don & Marilyn McCreedy

Sympathy to the Paswater family for the death of Jill's niece, Lucy Sieck, November 12.

Sympathy to the Spath family for the death of Amy's grandmother, Mary Morrison.

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

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Following Governor Whitmer's Sunday night announcement, asking the state to move into a 3 week pause, Michigan Area Methodists received a letter from Bishop David Bard in which he wrote, "Today, I am asking you in the strongest way possible to refrain from in-person indoor worship for the Advent and Christmas seasons."

After meeting with our Leadership Team and staff, I want you to know that we are planning to honor these requests. It had been our plan to begin in-person, indoor worship in the month of December and offer in-person, indoor Christmas Eve worship experiences. We had spent much of the last month

preparing the space, planning the procedures, and creating meaningful worship experiences. So, we are of course disappointed that the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic require us to reconsider these plans.

I am proud to work with leaders and staff who have consistently asked how we can best serve our congregation and the wider community. The decision to pause in person worship was made hoping to protect public health, promote the common good and care for the well-being of others in the name and spirit of Christ.

We miss being together! We know the day will come when we will be able to be together again for worship, fellowship and service and we will be so grateful for it. Weeks ago we planned a Christmas theme of "I'll be Home for Christmas," having no idea just how much that would become our reality. We will be working together to provide more online and personal connections during this season to help bring the love, joy and peace of this season into your homes.

Below I will try to answer some of the questions you might be asking.

Please do all you can to stay safe. You are important to us. If you need emotional, spiritual or financial support to help this Holiday season please reach out. We are here to support each other.

In closing, I know this continues to be a tough year. Like you, I was hoping that this Christmas might feel a bit more normal. I leave you with these inspired words from our Bishop:

"Remember, the Christmas story is about a God who arrives in surprising places and surprising ways. When there is no room in the inn, a manger will have to do. When being inside together is not safe, good news of great joy, still arrives."

Humbly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jeff". Below the signature is a simple smiley face drawn with a circle and two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.

What guidelines are we using to make a decision regarding COVID-19 entry plans?

This summer the Compass Team adopted a Re-engagement Plan to follow the phases of the state of Michigan. With current changes in the conditions, we return to Phase 4 of our plan. These are the guidelines for this phase that we have been following:

- Masks at all times in the building
- 6 feet social distancing
- Increased cleaning and sanitization
- Online worship
- Small groups - no more than 10
- Sack lunch to remain outside
- CYF online
- Staff working from building

When will we revisit in-person, indoor worship?

The good news here is that we have prepared the space and have the procedures in place to begin in-person, indoor worship as soon as conditions allow.

Will we still be able to hold funerals?

Yes. In line with the Michigan Health Departments' guidelines, we will continue to offer funeral services for up to 25 guests.

Will church offices remain open?

Yes. We will continue to be open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.

We will close the offices between Christmas Eve and New Years'. December 25th through January 2nd.

Will we continue the lunch program?

Absolutely. After a little over a week of serving lunch in Fellowship Hall, we will move the program back outside. We are so grateful for the leadership of Mike Monte, Shirley Harris, Fred Bowden, and dozens of dedicated servants for making the love of Christ real for our neighbors.

What is our Christmas Mission?

We are excited to be partnering with Royal Oak's Detroit Youth Club (formerly Boy's and Girl's Club) in providing gifts for 10 Royal Oak families. If you would like to help support us in getting gifts for these families please contact Bridget Nelson at bnelson@rofum.org.

What will we be offering during the Christmas season?

We will publish a full list of programs in the coming week but let me highlight a few things.

Advent by Candlelight

December 7th, 7:00 pm. A special night of music, stories, prayers and reflection for women will be offered virtually through zoom. If you would like to attend, please email Pastor Myra at mmoreland@rofum.org.

Live Nativity

Sunday, December 20th, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Come and see the Holy Family, the shepherds, the three kings and the angels on the church lawn. At 5:30 pm there will be a short program retelling the story of the first Christmas.

Christmas Story Time

On Sunday evenings, December 6, 13, and 20, all kids are welcome to join us on Facebook live for story time! Pastor Jeff will read a children's story to all who tune in.

The Longest Night

Monday, December 21, at 7:00 pm will be the longest night of the year - a day covered in more darkness than any other day of the year. We will offer an online service that night to reconcile that Christ comes in the midst of the struggle, hardship and losses of our lives and world. This will be a night of reflection and testimony.

Christmas Eve

We have a full day of Worship experiences for you to enjoy online or in-person.

- 10:00 am Children's Pageant will broadcast from our Website and YouTube channel.
- 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm come by the church to see the Live Nativity. At 5:30 pm, there will be a time of prayer, a message and communion.
- 7:00 pm Service of Lessons and Carols will broadcast from our Website and YouTube Channel.
- 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm Silent Night and Candlelight Meet in front of the church for a brief and simple time of prayer, reading of the Christmas story, a reflection and the playing of Silent Night by candlelight.