

The background is a vertical gradient from dark blue at the top to dark purple at the bottom, filled with numerous small white stars. A large, bright, multi-pointed star is centered near the top. Below the star, the text "Merry Christmas" is written in a white, elegant cursive font. In the lower half of the image, there is a black silhouette of a gazebo-like structure with a peaked roof. Inside the gazebo, three figures are silhouetted against the lighter background: a man on the right holding a staff, a woman in the middle, and a child on the left. The overall scene is festive and evokes the nativity story.

Merry Christmas

Sunday, December 24
9:00 p.m. Worship

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude	“Away in a Manger” arr. Nicholas Palmer “O Come, All Ye Faithful” arr. Michal Tyree	String Quartet
Call to Worship		Jennifer Tripoli
Opening Carol #234*	“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (Stanzas 1,3,6)	
Welcome		Jeff Nelson
Advent Candle Lighting		Megan Porath
Response	“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (Refrain)	
Lesson**	Isaiah 9:2,6-7	
Carol #240*	“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (Stanzas 1,3)	
Lesson**	Luke 2:1-18	
Anthem	“The First Noel” arr. Trevor Manor	Sanctus Choir with Allison Harris, Violin
Invitation to Offering		
Musical Offering	“O Holy Night” Adolphe Adam	Mark Sleeman
Lesson**	John 1:1-18	
Message	“Looking Forward”	Jeff Nelson
Service of Candlelight		
Carol #239*	“Silent Night, Holy Night”	
Closing Carol #246*	“Joy to the World”	
Benediction		
Postlude	“He Is Born” arr. Michael Tyree	

**United Methodist Hymnal*

***Common English Bible*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Church Office Holiday Hours

OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS

The church office will be closed on: Monday, December 25, Tuesday, December 26 and Monday, January 1.

Also, please note that church office hours on Wednesday, December 27 and Thursday, December 28 will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Our normal office hours (Monday-Thursday from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.) will resume on January 2.



Sunday, December 31

Only one service at 10:00 a.m.



ONLY ONE SERVICE AT 10AM ON 12/31

Remember, there is only one worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 31. There will be no Sunday School that day.

New Year Sandwich Assembly for NOAH (from home)



NEW YEAR SANDWICH ASSEMBLY – FROM HOME

Would you like to start the new year in service? We've designed an opportunity for many households to sponsor another NOAH Lunch Project together. You can sign up to make 30 sandwiches at your home to be delivered to church on Sunday, January 7. Additionally, we are collecting individual size bags of chips to donate with the sandwiches. Scan the QR code for more information and to sign up!



SCAN ME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT 2023 MISSION PROJECT



ADVENT 2023 MISSION PROJECT

We will continue our special collection through December to fund the transportation program at Metro Detroit Youth Club (MDYC) in Royal Oak. The transportation program busses students from area public schools to the club for their after-school program where students are supervised while playing games, receiving tutoring and homework help, and building friendships. Without this transportation, most families would not be able to participate in what the club has to offer. Please help support the work the MDYC does to help local families in need. Scan the QR code to donate.



SCAN ME

January GROWTH LABS ADDRESSING FEAR AND ANGER

January 13
9:30 am-
noon



GROWTH LAB: ADDRESSING FEAR AND ANGER

Saturday, January 13, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

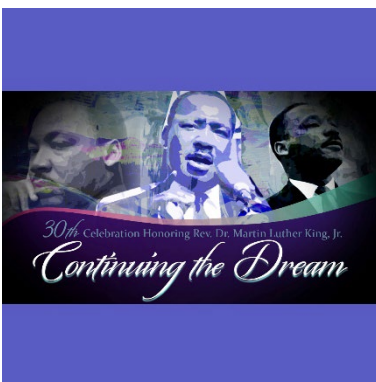
The Christmas season is a reminder of the promise that God dwells among us, but when it's not Christmas, sometimes we need practical tools to help us think about the things like fear and anger that can keep us from living with the peace of God. Join us as we dig into ways we can root out fear and anger as we seek to live with an awareness of God's presence. For questions, please email Nicole Wilson at NicoleLWilson.sd@gmail.com. Scan the QR code to sign up.



SCAN ME

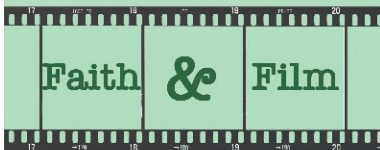
CONTINUING THE DREAM- DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION

You are invited to the 30th Celebration Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Sunday, January 14 for a 2:30 p.m. reception and a 3:30 p.m. worship right here at Royal Oak First! Join us in-person or watch online.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 15, 22 and 29
7:00 p.m.



MJR Troy Movie Theater

FAITH & FILM IS COMING IN JANUARY!

For three Monday nights in January, (15, 22 and 29), we will head over to the MJR Troy Movie Theater at Maple and Livernois Roads at 7:00 p.m. to see a movie together. Our first movie on January 15 will be "The Color Purple". Tickets are \$8.50 per person. Stay tuned to this space for details about the other two movies we will be seeing. **Also, if you are looking to have a bite to eat before the movie** and want support the church, stop by the Big Boy at 200 W. Maple in Troy (right down the street from the theater). They have offered to give back 10% of any of meals purchased by someone from Royal Oak First from 9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. on any of the Faith & Film movie days. Just bring your Sunday Bulletin mentioning Faith & Film.

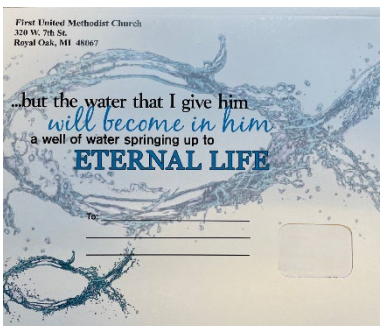
NURSERY COORDINATOR TRANSITION

We want to extend our gratitude to Ashley Erard for her years as our Nursery Coordinator. Ashley came onto our staff at a time when we were growing with young families, but had no space for a nursery due to construction. (You might remember the gated off corner of Fellowship Hall!). Ashley worked hard to connect with our youngest families and made our new nursery into a safe and caring place for little ones during church. Ashley has stepped aside from this position and a familiar face will be our new Nursery Coordinator. Natalia Tovarez has been a part of this church for many years and has worked in the Nursery since 2017. She is familiar with our young families and our volunteers so we have no doubt our kids will continue to be well cared!



OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE HERE!

2024 Royal Oak First offering envelopes are now available for you to pick up after service at the Welcome Desk! If you are unable to pick up your envelopes, we'll begin mailing them out after January 31. Contact Karen Calhoun at kcalhoun@rofum.org or 248.541.4100 if you have any questions.



Merry Christmas

from all of us
at Royal Oak First!



PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS

Prayers for Our Church Family:

Diane Sexton • Robin DeSantis • Dauroran Shirina Lee-Thurman •
Al and Gloria Knappenberger • Amy Rhoades • Sinead Valentine •
Sarah Altman • Steve Conyers • Betty Latimer • Yvonne Bashur •
Linda Wilson • Judy Bryan • Scott Shuttleworth • Jeanette Maylen •
Inge Wichers • Ann Anderson • Lee Hoffmann • Mary Lou Graeber •
Randy Riggs • Pam Belecki • Kim Stroud • The Perry Family •
Karen and Yale Porter • Alexa Brinning • Mike Long • Karen Porter •
Diana Shornak • Carrie Morse • Nancy Reid • Dona Wells • Kathy Seidler •
Jordan Altman • Allison and Bill Hempstead • Marian Kremer • Sheryl Hunter •
Art Miller • Mary Nahhat • Donna Allen • Charlene Faunt •

Prayers for Our Extended Family:

Effie Lambros • Mary Healander • Ellen Delangy • Claire Jones • John Hice •
Paul Lucas • Jeff and Marcy Carmichael • Ellen Carmichael • Linda Harding •
Lynn Simon • The O'Mara Family • Rob Tencza • Pam Payne •
John and Joyce Barber • Neal Gaberdiel • Scott Spaulding • Nancy Graves •
Dave Beerer, Sr. • Laura Cable • Jennifer Gaudette-Wood •
Connie Armstrong • Robert Baker • Glen Baker • Faye Rogers • Julia Rogers •
Chrystl Roman • Kyron Bradstrom • James Lovitt • Liz Fitch • Jim Slimek •
Diana Laginess • Jonathon Larson • Bob Blonde • Sharon Pillow •
Scott Peacor and Kyla Boyse • Larry Campbell • Dan Hicks • Brent Miller •
Carl Jones • Dorothy Follette • Deana Sawicki • Atlas • Steve Wurdock •
Harold Baker •

Sympathies to:

The Tovarez family on the death of Cathy's mother, Josephine Nunez on
December 19, 2023

The Clark family on the death of Jenni's father, Jim Carmichael on December 14,
2023

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas!

On behalf of all members of Royal Oak First, I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you. We are truly glad you are here!

I stumbled upon this quote this week from one of my favorite writers Frederick Buechner; "The birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it."

After reading it, I thought this is what Christmas means to us here at Royal Oak First. Tonight is not just a celebration of the birth of a baby in a manger, but instead it is inviting us to remember and recommit to the kind of life, and building the kind of world, that Jesus' life, death and resurrection brought into the world.

Tonight, we come together in joyous worship, expressing gratitude for the gift of Christmas and the hope it brings.

Enjoy the music. Join us in prayers. Reflect on the message of our scriptures. But most importantly, be reminded of the love, compassion, and forgiveness that Jesus embodied.

Whether you are a long-time member of our congregation or someone seeking a spiritual connection during this holiday season, we welcome you with open arms.

You are welcome here!

We wish all of you a joyous and blessed holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jeff". The word "Pastor" is written in a simple, slightly slanted font, and "Jeff" is written in a more stylized, cursive-like font. Below the signature is a simple line drawing of a smiley face with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.

Pastor Jeff Nelson