

BE
THE
Light

ADVENT 2025

Sunday, November 30, 2025 9:00AM
ROYAL OAK FIRST: A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Gathering Music	“Christmas in Hawaii”	House Band
Greeting		Griffin Anspach
Opening Song	“Behold”	
Welcome & Invitation to Mission		Jeff Nelson & Jennifer Tripoli
Lighting of the Advent Wreath	“Christ, Be Our Light” (verse 2 and refrain)	The Guerra Family
Time of Prayer		Nicole Wilson
Old Testament Reading**	Isaiah 2:1-5	Michael Rosas
Psalms Response	“Let Us Go Rejoicing” (Curtis Stephan)	
Epistle Reading**	Romans 13:11-14	
Story of Transformation		
Invitation to Offering		
Musical Offering		Joel Palmer
Doxology	“Advent & Christmas Doxology (What Child is This?)”	
Gospel Procession		
Gospel Reading**	Matthew 22:36-44	
Message	“Awaken to Hope”	Jeff Nelson
Closing Song	“The First Noel”	
Benediction		
Departing Music		

**United Methodist Hymnal*

***New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SERVICE FOR OTHERS TODAY!

Join us after either service today, Sunday, November 30 in service for others. We will be prepping and assembling meals for our Family Shelter Meals mission project. See below for more details about our project:

The Royal Oak First Missions Team has partnered with “Kids Empowered: On the Move” to provide meals at a new family shelter this winter in Pontiac. Our church will be sponsoring meals one week each month throughout the winter. We need help prepping the food on Sundays, heating the food at Royal Oak First each evening, transporting the food to the shelter, and serving the meals at the shelter.

If you are unable to help out this Sunday, please consider signing up for another volunteer spot by scanning the QR code.



ADVENT WREATH & BOOK

As we gather each Sunday during Advent to light our candles—Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love—we're excited to invite you to bring that beautiful tradition into your own homes!

This year, we've put together a special Advent package for everyone. Members of our church family have lovingly contributed daily devotionals for the entire Advent season, and we've compiled them into a book just for you. And, each family is also welcome to take home a pie tin along with sand and tea light candles. Simply pour the sand into your tin, arrange the candles on top, and you'll have your very own Advent display to enjoy throughout the season.

We hope this helps make Advent even more meaningful as you celebrate with your loved ones at home!



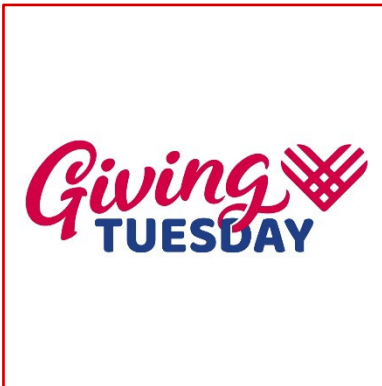
ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHILDREN'S STORYTIME WITH PASTOR JEFF

Starts this Sunday!

Every Sunday in Advent (11/30, 12/7, 12/14, 12/21) at 7:30 p.m., join Pastor Jeff on Facebook Live for a cozy bedtime story. Each week he'll share a seasonal tale to help children—and all of us—enter more deeply into the spirit of Advent. Tune in and enjoy a few fun moments together as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.



MAKE CHRIST'S LOVE REAL ON "GIVING TUESDAY"!

As we enter this season of gratitude and generosity, we invite you to join us in celebrating *Giving Tuesday*, a global day dedicated to giving back and making a positive impact in our communities.



At Royal Oak First, your generosity helps us Make Christ's Love Real every day. From supporting children and youth, to caring for our neighbors in need, to providing meaningful worship and outreach opportunities, your gifts allow our ministries to thrive.

This Giving Tuesday, we invite you to prayerfully consider making a gift that will continue the work God is doing through our church. Every contribution, large or small, helps us share love, hope, and compassion in tangible ways.

You can give easily online by scanning the QR code, by mail, or in person at the Connections Table. Most of all, we thank you for being a church that gives from the heart. Your faithfulness truly makes a difference.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SPREAD THE CHEER THIS CHRISTMAS!

This Christmas season, let's make sure every heart feels remembered and loved. Everyone will get a **Christmas card**, because it may be the only one they receive.



SCAN ME

We're also continuing our **Christmas Cookie Delivery & Visit** tradition to make Christ's love real in our church family.

On **Saturday, December 6**, bring two dozen of your favorite type of cookie or holiday treat. We will make cookie plates for some of our church family that could use a little extra love this season, and they will be delivered (with a few minutes to stay for a visit) throughout that weekend. It is a lovely, and delicious, way to spread holiday joy within our church family this season!

No need to be a baker to spread holiday cheer. **We will need everyone's (kids & adults) hands to: make/send cards, buy/bake treats, assemble cookie plates/bags and to visit & deliver the treats.** Scan the QR code to sign up.



NEW HERE? CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE? COME TO PASTOR CHAT!

Are you new to Royal Oak First or just curious to learn more about our church? Want to find out how to get involved? Join us for Pastor Chat, a relaxed, informal time to meet some of the pastors, ask questions, and discover your next steps at Royal Oak First. **The next Pastor Chat will be on Sunday, December 7 at 10:15 a.m. in the Parlor** and last no more than 45 minutes. We'd love to meet you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



“FEAST OF CAROLS” CHRISTMAS CONCERT

On **Sunday, December 7 at 3:00 p.m.**, join us for the 71st annual “Feast of Carols” Christmas Concert: “Jesus, Joseph, and Mary: a Holy Family.” The concert features the ensembles of Royal Oak First including our Sanctus Choir, Carillon Ringers, Children’s Choirs, Youth Choir, and House and Youth Bands, in addition to guest instrumentalists. Be sure to take in the sounds of our ensembles at Royal Oak First for an afternoon of glorious music. After the concert, join us for cookies and punch in the gathering space organized by the Music Guild.



ADVENT MISSION PROJECT

For this year’s Advent Mission Project, we will be **collecting children’s Christmas gifts for area families who are struggling financially.** We have two different ways to do this:

If you are feeling especially generous, reach out to Karla at missions@rofum.org and you can **adopt a whole family of children** through the Metro Detroit Youth Club, based in Royal Oak. You will be asked to purchase two gifts and a stocking stuffer for each child in the family. Families range in size, so you can request the size of family you are able to support, ranging from 1-6 children.

Alternatively, you can **bring in fun, unwrapped gifts of your choice.** Check out the “giving tree” on the Connections Table for ideas if you need them. Shop for your items and return them to the Missions collection bin (located by the Welcome Desk) by December 14. These gifts will help stock the Cass Community Social Services Christmas Store where nearly 300 families in Detroit will “shop” for their kids’ Christmas gifts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Shelter Meals

Beginning November 30



Prep Food / Heat Up Food / Transport Food / Serve the Meal

FAMILY SHELTER MEALS (DINNER HELP)

The Royal Oak First Missions Team is partnering with “Kids Empowered: On the Move” to provide meals at a new family shelter this winter in Pontiac. **Our church will be sponsoring meals one week each month throughout the winter. We need help prepping the food on Sundays, heating the food at church each evening, transporting it to the shelter, and serving the meal OR** if you are someone who likes to cook for a crowd (50 people) and want to plan a whole meal, please sign up for either by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME

CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY



CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY

Sunday, December 14 at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Wear your favorite Christmas sweater - “ugly” or not! Come and spread the joy of the season with your best Christmas get-up!

Longest Night Service



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

If you are mourning the loss of a loved one, dealing with an illness, navigating financial struggles or simply not feeling the spirit of Christmas; this service on Sunday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m. is a quiet, prayerful moment acknowledging the difficulties of the season.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Keeping It Real - A Christmas Pageant"



Written by Pastor Jeff Nelson

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

On Sunday, December 21 at our 11:00 a.m. service, the children of Royal Oak First will present the story of the first Christmas, in a pageant written by Pastor Jeff Nelson entitled "Keeping It Real-A Christmas Pageant." Music will be provided by the Children's Choirs of Royal Oak First.



THE FREEDOM DREAMERS

ARTHUR JEMISON'S OFF-PAPER PARTY

Our friend and church member Arthur Jemison is celebrating a milestone and our church family is all invited to the party. We are partnering with "The Freedom Dreamers" ministry to help celebrate Arthur Jemison getting off parole in an Off-Paper Party Saturday, December 13 in our fellowship hall from noon - 3:00 pm. Please follow this link for more details and to sign up to contribute food and/or to attend.



LAST 2025 TRANSFORMATIVE RETREAT WITH PASTOR JEFF IS ON DECEMBER 20!

Join us for the final 2025 transformative retreat with Pastor Jeff. The retreat is designed to help you pause, reflect, and open your heart to encountering Christ in new ways, while offering a sacred space for prayer, conversation, and spiritual renewal. The retreat on December 20 is "Come to the Manger." To sign up, please scan the QR code.



Transformative Retreats

With Pastor Jeff Nelson



BE THE Light

Christmas Eve Worship Experiences

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

4:00 p.m.

Family Service

Our children and youth will lead us in a service with lots of music and a shorter message for all ages. All are welcome to join this family and kid friendly worship, complete with glow sticks! The Nursery will be open. We will be in the Sanctuary and livestreaming the service on YouTube and Facebook.

7:00 p.m.

Blue Jean Christmas Service

Come as you are and worship with us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We will also have a service of candlelight as part of our worship. Our House Band will be leading us. The Nursery will be open. We will be in the Sanctuary and livestreaming the service on YouTube and Facebook.

9:00 p.m.

Traditional Service

Traditional Christmas Eve worship service featuring Sanctus Choir, organ, and a woodwind quartet. A service of candlelight will conclude our worship. We will be in the Sanctuary and livestreaming the service on YouTube and Facebook.

11:00 p.m.

Outside Service

Join us outside on our front lawn for a simple, yet Holy worship experience in the dark of night as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. A service of candlelight will be included.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA SALE

Order by Sunday, December 7

We are excited to offer the choice of purchasing a poinsettia or contributing to UMCOR in honor or memory of a loved one.

The poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 21 and at our Christmas Eve services. The names of the donors and those to be honored or memorialized will be printed in the Sunday, December 21 Bulletin.



If you wish to participate, fill out the form below and drop off at the Connections Table or scan the QR code before ***Sunday, December 7.***

Payment must accompany this order form (checks payable to Royal Oak First United Methodist Church)

____ Enclosed is \$18.00 for a 1 stem red poinsettia

____ Enclosed is \$33.00 for a 2 stem red poinsettia

____ I will pick up my plant(s) following the 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

____ Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ for UMCOR in place of a poinsettia.

This will be a memorial to _____
(Please Print)

OR in honor of _____
(Please Print)

Given by _____
(Please Print)

Phone # _____

PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS

Prayers for Our Church Family:

Zackary Landry • Phil Button • Arthur Jemison • Bernice Sayers • Al Pollard •
Patti Peterson • Keith Messing • Joyce Negrich • Mark Thatcher • Janice Marsh •
Rita Nicholas • LeeAnn Witherspoon • Karen Porter • Megan Mckenzie-Grimm •
Mary Lou Graeber • Joel Palmer • Phyllis Hassberger • Kathy MacFarlane •
Ann Anderson • Don Matson • Dennis Allen • Bill Courtney •

Prayers for Our Extended Family:

Carol • Joan • Carolyn Aucchio • Gina Novak • Holly Hempstead •
Susie Wilkinson • Reece Renforth • Raedea Wagner • Joe Bridge •
Bernice Graham • Elma Holloway • Amanda Lewandowski • Bruce Snyder •
Ron & Denise Bell Haines • Penny Carolin • Karen Cunningham •

Sympathies to:

Amber Evans on the death of her friend, Anthonee Tracy on November 26, 2025

Joan Johnson on the death of her cousin, John Tedder on November 24, 2025

The Jones family on the death of Jeff's uncle, John Bulga on November 24, 2025

*If you would like to add someone to the Prayer List,
please contact Danielle Moody at prayers@rofum.org.*



TIME OF PRAYER

All are welcome to the Time of Prayer on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. at church. We review the church prayer list, spend time in silence and pray together in the Sanctuary. This is wonderful opportunity to uplift your personal prayer requests.

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Beloved Community,

Well, here we are—Advent and Christmas are upon us! It's like the holiday season sneaks up on us, whether we're ready or not! I'll be honest, it takes me a hot minute to fully embrace this time of year, but once I do, I can't help but fall in love with it all over again!

At Royal Oak First, we're on a mission to make sure that Christ's love shines bright, not just for us, but for our entire community. And let's face it, nothing fills our hearts quite like the thought of spreading joy and kindness!

We're particularly mindful of those in our community who might be facing tough times. We don't want anyone to feel left out or forgotten, especially during the holidays. That's why we're excited to continue our support for Cass Community Social Services and the Metro Detroit Youth Clubs. There are plenty of ways for you to get involved and help bring a little cheer to children and families this season. You can find all the details in our bulletin or just ask after the service—trust me, your generosity will make a world of difference!

Additionally, we would love for you to participate in our annual "Spread the Cheer!" Christmas mission. Our goal is to ensure that every person connected to our church receives a Christmas card, and that our most vulnerable members—many of whom cannot make it to church often or at all—receive a visit and some treats from their church family. Be a part of spreading the joy of Christmas; so we would love your help in making this happen! Again, you can find details in the bulletin or ask after the service.

This season, we're embracing the theme "Be the Light." After all, we are called to be the light of Christ in this world, and I can't thank you enough for shining brightly alongside me.

Wishing you all grace and peace,

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

Pastor Jeff Nelson