

BE
THE
Light

ADVENT 2025

Sunday, December 21, 2025 9:00AM
ROYAL OAK FIRST: A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Gathering Music	"Angels Carol" (John Rutter)	Analisa Thomas & Maria Moro
Call to Worship		Sam Nelson
Opening Hymn #202**	"People, Look East"	
Welcome & Invitation to Mission		Jeff Nelson & Jennifer Tripoli
Lighting of the Advent Wreath	"Christ, Be Our Light" (verse 5 and refrain)	Jake & Nick Beaven-Parshall
Baptism		Lochlann Boll <i>Son of Paige and Brian Boll</i>
Baptismal Response	"Gather at the Water"	
Finance Moment		Rick Buxton
Time of Prayer		Nicole Wilson
Old Testament Reading*	Isaiah 7:10-16	
Invitation to Offering		
Musical Offering	"People, Look East" (arr. Tom Mitchell)	Sanctus Choir
Doxology	"Advent & Christmas Doxology (What Child Is This?)"	
Gospel Procession		
Gospel Reading*	Matthew 1:18-25	
Message	"Love in the Darkness"	Jeff Nelson
Closing Hymn #251**	"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"	
Benediction		
Postlude	"Veni Emmanuel" (arr. Noel Rawsthorne)	Michael Rosas

**New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

***United Methodist Hymnal*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Longest Night Service



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IS **TONIGHT**

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.

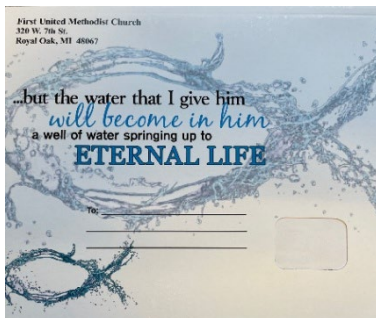
CHILDREN'S STORYTIME



WITH PASTOR JEFF

LAST CHILDREN'S STORYTIME WITH PASTOR JEFF IS TONIGHT

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.



2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE HERE!

2026 Royal Oak First offering envelopes are now available for you to pick up at the Welcome Desk! If you are unable to pick up your envelopes, we'll begin mailing them out after January 12. Contact Karen Calhoun at kcalhoun@rofum.org or 248.541.4100 if you have any questions.

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 is 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



SAVE THE DATE!

SPAGHETTI DINNER VARIETY SHOW

On **Sunday, February 1** the Music Guild will be putting on a Spaghetti Dinner Variety Show! Proceeds will help our youth go to camp this summer. The opportunity to showcase your talents will be open to all, so stay tuned for details. Plan to come join the fun on Sunday, February 1!



Church Office
Holiday Hours

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS

The church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25, 2025, **and** Thursday, January 1, 2026, in observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays. If you need assistance during this time, please feel free to leave a voicemail or send an email, and our team will respond when the office reopens. We wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas season and a joyful start to the New Year!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

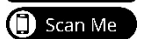


ONLY ONE WORSHIP SERVICE AT 10AM ON DECEMBER 28 AND JANUARY 4

We will have only one service at 10:00 a.m. on both Sunday, December 28 and Sunday, January 4. There will also be no Sunday School on either of those days. The nursery will be open. We will return to two services (9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.) on Sunday, January 11.

GROWTH LAB SERIES

What if choosing peace was a practical skill you could develop? Jesus calls us to be peacemakers, but in a divided world, how do we actually live that out? Join us for five sessions (Saturday mornings, January 10-February 7, 9:30-11:30 a.m., led by Nicole Wilson) exploring concrete tools to respond with curiosity instead of judgment. We'll practice asking better questions in difficult conversations, understand how our positions developed, and strengthen connections even when we disagree. Whether navigating family tensions, workplace conflicts, or simply wanting to grow in Christ-like love, this workshop offers a space to practice new patterns together. Scan the QR code to sign up.





WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 4PM, 7PM, 9PM, 11PM

Join us in-person for any of the four services
or watch the 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. services
live streamed on YouTube or Facebook

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.

Merry Christmas

from all of us
at Royal Oak First!



STAFF DIRECTORY

NAME	TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE
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Ben Graham	Weekend/Evening Custodian	office@rofum.org	248.541.4100

PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS

Prayers for Our Church Family:

Cattran Family • Bill Bond • Craig Sleeman • Karen Porter • Mark Thatcher •
Laci Basel • Zackary Landry • Arthur Jemison • Mary Lou Graeber •
Phyllis Hassberger • Kathy MacFarlane • Tom Soboleski • Carrie Morse •
DJ Hinman • Phil Button • Bernice Sayers • Joyce Negrich • Al Pollard •
Patti Peterson • Keith Messing • Janice Marsh • LeeAnn Witherspoon •
Megan Mckenzie-Grimm • Dennis Allen • Bill Courtney • Ann Anderson •

Prayers for Our Extended Family:

Mark Hall • Sarah Hughes • Carol • Joan • Margie Reese • Susie Inch •
Carolyn Aucchio • Gina Novak • Holly Hempstead • Susie Wilkinson •
Reefe Renforth • Raedea Wagner • Joe Bridge • Bernice Graham •
Elma Holloway • Amanda Lewandowski • Karen Cunningham •

Sympathies to:

Joyce Russell on the death of her cousin's grandson on December 13, 2025
The Mikell family on the death of Christie's uncle, Dan Habel on December 13, 2025
The family and friends of Joseph Bamsey on his death on December 11, 2025

Congratulations to:

Jenna and Doug Learnard on the birth of their son, William Douglas Learnard on
December 15, 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.



Poinsettias Decorating Our Sanctuary



In Memory of

Given by

Jim Backes	The Backes Family
Harry and Estelle Knoy	The Brennan Family
John L. Buxton	Cheryl and Rick Buxton
Charles and Christine Jones	Cheryl and Rick Buxton
Jim and Marie Dunstan	Jay and Patty Dunstan
Charlie McCormick	Julia Filipp and Family
Marvin and Delphine Frey	Mike and Colleen Frey
Diego Garcia	The Garcia Family
Linda Pollard	The Garcia Family
Gerald Gibson	Richard, Diane, Andrew, and Aidan
Keith and Audrey Leenhouts	Bill, Jim, and Kathy Leenhouts
Georgia and Jim	Roger and Sue Lynn
Dorothy Matsumoto	Mike and Jan Matsumoto
Deceased members of the Moore/Sorchilla family	Kristine Moore
Dennis and Kathy Nelson	Jeff, Bridget, Casey, and Sam Nelson
Dorothea J. Renforth	Ren Renforth
Floyd and Marjorie Showers	Andy, Kory, Reese, and Olivia Showers
George and Kathleen Bethel	Andy, Kory, Reese, and Olivia Showers
Phyllis Brittain	Andy, Kory, Reese, and Olivia Showers
Paul Edward	The Tripoli family
Joseph Tripoli	The Tripoli family
Zola Webster	The Webster-Miller Family
Wayne and Shirley Wells	The Wells Family
Mary June Wilkinson	Todd and Julie Wells Family
Sara Gillette	Robin Whitcroft and April Coons
Charles A. and Audrey Donnelly	Jim and Linda Wilson
Reed and Helen Wilson	Jim and Linda Wilson

In Honor of

Given by

Mike and Chris Stempien	Mike and Colleen Frey
Bev and Jim Miller	The Miller Family
Kay and Joe Nowaczok	The Miller Family
The Kempanien Family	Michelle Miller
The Miller Family	Mary Murawski
Phyllis Hassberger	The Plaxton Family
The Musicians of Royal Oak First	Michael Rosas



Our congregation has contributed to UMCOR
(United Methodist Committee on Relief) in honor or in memory
of the following:

In Memory of

Given by

Bill and Mary Dawe	Willa and Scott Cummings
My parents, Ralph and Mildred Johnson	Joan Johnson
H. Allan Knappenberger	Gloria Knappenberger and Family
Quentin Kramer	Margaret Kramer
Wim Kramer	Margaret Kramer
Arthur Miller	Delores Miller and family
Jo Cowan	Joshua and Elizabeth Wright

In Honor of

Given by

Our grandchildren, Eleanor and Isaac	Bruce and Cathy Baker
All Royal Oak First Volunteers	Elsie Consolacion
My sisters, Jan and Jean	Joan Johnson

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Beloved Community,

And just like that—here we are! It's the last Sunday of Advent, and as we round the final corner, let's focus on what this whole journey is truly about—LOVE! Yes, that's right! Everything in our story is pointing us toward love.

The star in the sky? A sign of love.

Mary and Joseph finding room for a miracle? An incredible act of love.

The angels showing up to the often-forgotten night shift shepherds? A glorious word of love!

And those wise folks (who says they were men?) bringing gifts? Yep, gifts of love—even if the myrrh was a bit of a strange choice for a baby!

The one born in that manger would literally become God's love made real—teaching love, preaching love, acting with love, dying for love, and then rising again in the name of love. This whole journey is like one big love letter, tucked into every detail so we don't miss it.

Sometimes, it feels like the world is missing it right now, doesn't it? That's why it's so essential to soak up all the love this season has to offer in these next few days.

Join us this Sunday morning as we light one more candle!

And don't forget, at the 11:00 a.m. service, we'll be graced by the time-honored tradition of our Children's Christmas Pageant! There's nothing cuter (or more honest) than kids reenacting the joy and wonder of the birth of Christ. Bring your tissues, folks—it's a real heart-warmer!

Then come back Sunday night for our Longest Night Service at 7:00 p.m.—where we'll sit together in the darkness and feel the love, even in the midst of loss.

Mark your calendars for Christmas Eve! Join us at any or all of our services (4 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m., 11 p.m.)—if you manage to attend all four, I'll personally gift you a special T-shirt. I'm serious!

And on Thursday, Robert and the volunteers at Outreach on 7th will be back to serve a meal and throw a Christmas party for our unhoused neighbors and other friends. It'll feel a lot like that manger from that first Christmas—angels, shepherds, and gift-givers all sharing the love of God.

Thank you for making this journey with us. Let's spread the love this season!

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jeff" in a cursive, friendly script. 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