

YOU BELONG BEFORE YOU PROVE ANYTHING

GRACE
MAKES ROOM
FOR YOU



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Gathering Music	“Place for You” (Griffin Anspach)	House Band
Call to Worship		Jan Matsumoto
Opening Song	“Love God Love People” (Danny Gokey)	
Welcome/Invitation to Community		Jeff Nelson
Noisy Bucket		Stephanie Yu
Time of Prayer		
Making Christ’s Love Real		Nicole Wilson
Invitation to Offering		
Musical Offering		Joel Palmer
Doxology	“Give Thanks”	
Scripture Reading*	Luke 15:11-24	
Message	“You Belong Before You Prove Anything”	Jeff Nelson
Closing Song	“God Really Loves Us” (Crowder)	
Benediction		
Departing Music		

**New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

OUR WAY

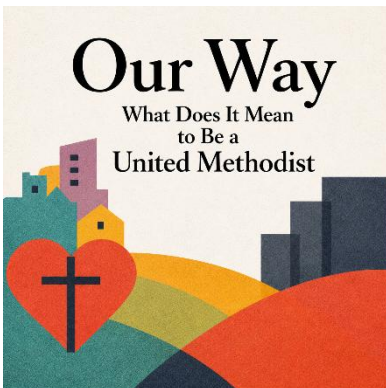
About This Sermon Series

Why do you come to church? Most of us answer that question differently, although there are usually some common threads. At Royal Oak First, one thread is often about experiencing the grace and love of God before anything else. In this series, we want to explore “Our Way,” we want to give vocabulary and history to why we teach that grace goes first. We want to explore what it means to be loved before anything is expected of us, and to see how Jesus is the divine example of love and grace. We want to remember that communion and baptism are means of experiencing grace so that we can be God’s love made public. And we want to learn together what it means to stay, even when staying is hard.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THERE’S STILL TIME TO JOIN!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A UNITED METHODIST?



Our six-week small groups have begun, and **there are still spots available!** Join us as we explore how our United Methodist history shapes us as people who are covered in grace, formed in love, and sent to serve.

Find a group that works for you and sign up today!

If you don't have time to join a group, we encourage you to read along and follow our coordinating “Word of the Week” and “Spiritual Practices” posts on Social Media.

Books are available on Amazon (\$10 print / \$7.50 Kindle).



 SIGN UP



 BUY BOOK

ANNOUNCEMENTS



NEW HERE? LET'S CHAT!

TODAY! Sunday, September 27 | 10:15 a.m.

New to Royal Oak First and wondering what's next? Pastor Chat is a relaxed opportunity to meet the pastor, ask questions, learn more about our church, and discover ways to get connected. No registration needed—just come as you are. We'd love to meet you!



SOCK IT TO ME SEPTEMBER (UNDERWEAR TOO!)

Our goal this September is to bring in 2,000 pairs of socks. Half will contribute to keeping feet (and hands) warm for our own Outreach on 7th. The other half will go to NOAH at Central, where they will pass out close to 10,000 pair of socks this year.

To Participate: Please bring a package of NEW MEN'S CREW SOCKS or NEW MENS UNDERWEAR to church during the month of September. Please drop off the items in the white bin near the Welcome Desk by the Lafayette entrance.



HALLOWEEN CANDY NEEDED FOR SPOOKTACULAR!

Royal Oak Spooktacular is on Sunday, October 18 from 2:00-5:00 p.m., and we will be hosting a trick or treating stop on our corner! We need donations of Halloween candy to pass out to all the kids! Donations can be brought to church office Mon-Thu from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. or on Sundays.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



BIG BOY NIGHT

Tuesday, October 13 | 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Troy Big Boy (200 W. Maple, Troy)

The Music Guild invites you to Big Boy Night on Tuesday, October 13 from 4:00-8:00 p.m. at the Troy Big Boy (200 W. Maple). Present a card at checkout and 15% of your purchase will support our Youth Summer Camp! Cards are available at the Connections Table. Enjoy dinner, fellowship, and door prizes while supporting our youth!



WELCOME INN COMMUNITY WORK DAY

Hosted by the South Oakland Faith Alliance in partnership with the Welcome Inn

Saturday, October 17 | 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Welcome Inn, 1717 W. 13 Mile, Royal Oak

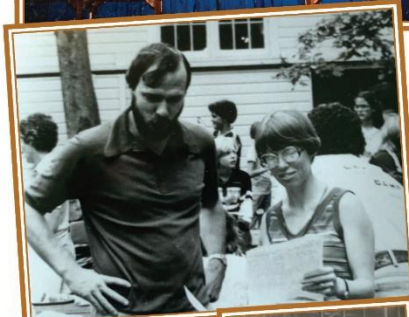
Join us as we prepare the Welcome Inn for the important work ahead! Help organize, clean, sort supplies, and prepare guest spaces. You can also help by donating needed supplies, including paper products, cleaning supplies, bottled water, and individually packaged snacks. Bring donations on Saturday, October 17 or order directly from the Amazon Wish List. Scan the QR codes to sign up or shop the Wish List.



 **SIGN UP**



 **WISH LIST**



*Different times.
Same song.
Forever friends.*



Royal Oak First Choir + Reunion Weekend

ROYAL OAK FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OCTOBER 16 – 18, 2026

Royal Oak First United Methodist Church is hosting a reunion of choir members the weekend of October 16 – 18, 2026.

This reunion is for the current members of the Sanctus Choir, and all former choir members, Music Directors, Choir Camp Deans and Counselors and their guests.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Welcome Reception – featuring fellowship, memories shared and pictures of past choir performances and choir camps.

Pizza and Salad will be served.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

1:00 – 3:30 P.M. Gathering at the church.

Tours of the renovated church building will be available, and fellowship, memories and pictures shared.

3:30 – 5:30 P.M. Choir Practice.

We will rehearse the three songs that will be sung during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service, including:

- “In Remembrance of Me/You Shall Know the Truth” (from *Celebrate Life*).
- “What a Fellowship (Leaning on the Everlasting Arms)”.
- “Amen”.

6:00 – 8:00 P.M. Dinner



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

10:30 A.M. Arrive at the church

11:00 A.M. Worship Service

12:00 P.M. Coffee Hour Reception

Registration

Register for any or all of these events by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME



FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE EMAIL choirreunion2026@gmail.com

PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS

Prayers for Our Church Family:

Mark Thatcher • Liz Malama • Noah Ryckman • Barb Simmons • Linda Anderson •
Lee Gnegy • Mike Dabney • Kathy Border • Margie Carrington • Myra Pollard •
Carrie Morse • Lee Hoffmann • Megan Grimm • Elizabeth Kincannon •
Phyllis Hassberger • Pam Payne • Ann Anderson • Michele & Bob Prud'homme •
Jerry Elliott • Kay Nowaczok • Kathy MacFarlane •

Prayers for Our Extended Family:

Rev, Marvin McCullam • Rachel Hopkins • Dianne Stobbe • Lee Potter • Jean Murphy
• James Cudejko • Noah Armstrong • Russhele Dohnal • Patricia Guarino •
Mike Sopheia • Sue & Harold Williams • Latha Ravi • Angie Grose • Ashley Mink •
Allyson Jones • Kathy Latham • Tom & Ann Thompson • Russ Dore' •
John Barber, Jr. • Doug Zorn • William McMahon • Effie Lambros • Ron Gilmour •
Tracy Zawaski • Donna Bartley • Kerry Doty • Ron & Betsy Fisch •

Prayers for Our Extended Family:

Sympathy to:

Kathy Seidler and friends on the death of member Don Seidler, September 23, 2026

Deloris Grier, on the death of her brother Joe Waroquier, September 19, 2026

Congratulations to:

Griffin and Amelia Anspach on their marriage, September 20, 2026

Courtney and Stephanie Fall of the birth of Josephine Morgan Fall, September 22, 2026

The flowers on the altar are in honor of Jay and Patty Dunstan's 46th Wedding Anniversary!

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

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Beloved Community,

This week, I want to begin with a very big thank you to **Karla Goetz**.

For the last several years, Karla has served as our Missions Coordinator, and as she steps away from that role to give more time to family and teaching, I hope we can pause and recognize just how much she has helped shape the mission life of Royal Oak First.

Karla came into this work during those strange early days after COVID, when we were all trying to figure out how to be together again. After spending so much time inside our own homes, we were rediscovering what it meant to be a church connected to our neighbors, our community, and the wider world. Karla helped us reconnect.

She also kept asking a wonderful question: How do we help more people actually *do* mission?

That led to Service on Sundays, giving people of all ages the chance to stay after worship, roll up their sleeves, and participate in hands-on projects right here in our building.

One of my favorite things Karla has said over the years is that she thought she had one of the best jobs in the church because she got to represent all of you in so many places. She carried the generosity, compassion, energy, and love of this congregation out into the world. And maybe most importantly, she helped build a Mission Team that will continue that work long after her time on staff has ended.

Karla, we are going to miss you. But what you have built here remains. You leave with our gratitude, our love, and our blessing. Thank you for helping us make Christ's love real.

There are a couple of other beautiful things happening this Sunday as well.

We will present Bibles to our third graders, one of those church traditions that means more to me every year. I still have the Bible my Methodist church gave me when I was in third grade, signed by my pastor, Rev. Carol Smith, and my Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Smith. All these years later, it is still on my shelf.

When we hand a child a Bible, we are telling them something important: **This story belongs to you, too.** Take it with you. Grow with it. Ask questions of it. Let it remind you that you are part of this story and part of this community.

This week, we will continue our *Our Way* series by talking about that old Methodist phrase that our hearts can be "strangely warmed." It seems especially fitting this week. Grace goes first. You belong before you prove anything.

And together, we make love real.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jeff Nelson