

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

*“I will open my mouth and tell a story.
I will speak about things that were hidden.” -- Psalm 78:2a)*

Last November I attended a continuing education conference to explore the art of biblical storytelling and the power of testimony – sharing our own unique and authentic stories. Working with some amazing folks from The Moth (themoth.org), including doing our own StorySLAM, as well as seminary professors who use storytelling as a mode for preaching, I came back enthused to incorporate more storytelling into our life together. I gave it a try on Christmas Eve (check out the sermon online if you missed it). Lots of room to grow....lots of Sunday mornings.

Scripture is full of stories – joyful stories, challenging stories. Stories about siblings who don’t get along. Stories about shipwrecks and dramatic healings. Stories about the power of the Holy Spirit to sweep in, blow out the dust and cobwebs, and birth something new. Stories about the wilderness times of our lives. This Lent we will focus on stories of *Faith in the Wilderness*. On Sunday mornings we will hear stories of Jesus own wilderness times and how he helped people navigate times when they sought connection, healing, and forgiveness.

On Thursday nights, our **Intergenerational Lenten Supper & Programs** will give you a chance to share your stories. We will gather in small groups around tables following a simple meal, and using prompts, there will be opportunities for each person who wishes to share a story related to the evening’s theme. If that is not your cup of tea, there will be ways to share your story through writing or drawing. Please see the schedule on page 2. If you would like to help out with providing a supper, see the sign-up list on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall or contact Barbara Fretwell-Cooke.

To accompany our journey in Lent, we are providing two devotionals. In keeping with our theme Faith in the Wilderness, we will share **The Hardest Part** from Kate Bowler. This will only be available electronically. Bowler says: “Life is this strange, tender mix, isn’t it? Joy and sorrow, love and loss, heartbreak and hope, all tangled together. This year, embrace Lent as it is—raw, honest, and tender. Let these 40 days be a time to pause, reflect, and find the courage to stay with the hard part, trusting that the good part is still coming.”

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**Deadline for the April Grapevine is
Friday, March 21st.**

Cont. from previous pg.

As in the past few years, we are highlight our commitment to environmental stewardship with a **Tread Lightly for Lent** calendar from The Presbyterian Hunger Program. This calendar has actions for each day in Lent that help us move to towards sustainable choices that restore and protect all of God's children and creation. This calendar will be available both electronically and in print. Hard copies will be available beginning on Ash Wednesday.

Pastor Lisa

Lenten Supper Schedule

If you would like to help set up and/or clean up, or provide part of the meal of soup, bread or desserts one or more weeks, sign up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall. If you have questions, contact Barbara Fretwell-Cooke (info in the directory or contact the church office).

**Sharing our Stories
Faith in the
Wilderness**

Lent 2025 @PCO

**Gathering & Supper:
6:00 – 6:30 pm**

**Storytelling through voice,
writing and drawing:
6:30 - 7:15 pm**

**March 13: Wrestling with Choices
(The Wilderness of Temptation)
Scripture: Luke 4:1-13**

**March 20: Thirsting for Connection
(The Wilderness of Loneliness)
Scripture: John 4:5-42**

**March 27: Seeking Healing
(The Wilderness of Illness, Disease & Grief)
Scripture: John 9:1-41**

**April 3: Forgiveness, Grace & Reconciliation
(The Wilderness of Separation)
Scripture: Genesis 45:4-8**

**April 10: Failure to Thrive
(The Wilderness of Struggling & Floundering)
Scripture: John 11: 1-45**



Facility Note from Pastor Lisa

Our Sexton Edward Ennen and the Administration Committee are dedicated to keeping our facility in great shape. I am grateful for their hard work and attention to detail. If you notice any areas of concern, please feel free to contact me or Edward and let us know.

Over the past several months, we have had extensive work done on the toilets in our restrooms. Just like the rest of us, they are aging and are a bit more fragile than in their younger years. We ask you to be gentle with them so we can keep them functioning for as long as possible.

Happening This Month—March Events at PCO

Learn More About Communion Practices

Curious about the practices of communion at PCO? Have questions on why and how we do what we do?

The congregation is invited to join with the Confirmation Class on **Friday, March 14 at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary as we explore the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We will look at the scriptural and theological underpinnings of communion in the Presbyterian Reformed tradition, as well as the liturgical elements and the various ways communion is served.

Our time together will end with sharing the Lord's Supper together.



Hope in Action

**Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Eastern Area Churches**

**Potluck, Worship &
Community Action**

March 21, 2025

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Bring a dish to share

**Host: Presbyterian Church of Okemos
2258 Bennett Road, Okemos
okemospres.org**



Join the PCO Green Team
and other local faith communities for
National Faith + Climate Forum



March 27, 2025

12:00–5:30 pm

**Presbyterian Church of Okemos
Fellowship Hall**



A light lunch and refreshments will be served.

Forum Notes

Be part of a powerful, nationwide event that brings together people of faith to explore how we can care for creation and take meaningful climate action.

This will be a live-streamed broadcast with opportunities for in person discussion and establishing partnerships across churches.

Whether you're just starting your journey in creation care or are a seasoned advocate, this event has something for everyone!

Women's Dinner Out in March

The women's dinner out will now be on **Monday, March 10 at 5:30 p.m.** at Altu's Ethiopian Restaurant 1312 East Michigan Ave, East Lansing. Please RSVP to Judi Harris or Jennifer Gordon (info in the directory or contact the church office).

Conversation & Contemplation Group

The C&C group continues to meet on Zoom each Wednesday from 10:00-11:30 am. This month, we will discuss the last two chapters in *Soul Feast* and study scriptures using Lectio the other two weeks.

Please reserve **Wednesday, May 14** for a retreat with Sharon Mc Cauley from **10:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m.** at the church. Details to follow.

Retirees in March

The Retirees will meet in the home of Tom and Jane Bobay (info in the directory or contact the church office) on **Monday, March 17 at 12 noon.** Please come celebrate Saint Patrick's Day with us.

Women's Connection in March

Our monthly meeting is **Sunday, March 23, 12:30 p.m.** All women are invited for fellowship, lunch, and a casual way to get to know other PCO members. Please plan now to join us, invite friends, and watch the weekly announcements for details.

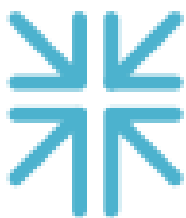
Questions: Shirley Rumminger, 655-4123

Caregiver Support Group

On **Wednesday, March 26** at 5:00 p.m. the group will meet on Zoom (517-329-2320: password is hello) to offer support and share resources. All are welcomed to join this discussion.

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our March Birthdays on **Sunday, March 16.** If you were born in March, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, March 9, if it is not already there.



One Great Hour of Sharing

This Special Offering will be collected at the end of Lent. These funds support Presbyterian Church USA Hunger, Disaster and Development efforts. More on this later as we travel this season of Lent 2025.

Adult Christian Education & Fellowship

Password for Zoom meetings unless otherwise noted is 48864. *Days and times subject to change. Please watch Friday e-Announcements for changes.*

SUNDAYS

Adult Education—Weekly, **11:30 a.m.** in person (*Check the Sunday bulletin for topics. Enjoy a time of fellowship after worship when no adult ed is scheduled*)

Writing Life's Stories – 1st Sundays, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— **next meeting is March 2.**

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **March 16.**

Women's Connection— 4th Sundays at **12:30 p.m.** in Room 108. This month will be on **March 23.** See left column for more info.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— This month will be **Monday, March 10** at 5:30 p.m. at Altu's Ethiopian Restaurant.

Retirees – 3rd Mondays at 12:00 noon This month we will meet **March 17** at Jane and Tom Bobay's home.

TUESDAYS

Men's Group – Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom) this month Tuesday, March 4th.**

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall.

WEDNESDAYS

Conversation & Contemplation—Weekly, 10:00 a.m. Zoom 905-709-104

Caregiver Support Group - 4th Wednesdays, **March 26th.** 5:00 p.m. on Zoom 517 329 2320; password is hello

THURSDAYS

Bible Study – Weekly, 9:30 a.m. Zoom <https://msu.zoom.us/j/5147440526>

Youth Parents Night Out—3rd Thursdays, 7:00 p.m. at Joe's on Jolly. Next meeting is **March 20th.**

Deadline for the April Grapevine is Friday, March 21st.

For Youth & Families

MARCH YOUTH CALENDAR

MARCH 2 MOVIE NIGHT FOR YOUTH, PARENTS, FAMILIES,
5-7:30PM, PIZZA, POPCORN, DRINKS PROVIDED

MARCH 9 YOUTH GROUP
MS 5-6:30PM, SR HI 5:30-7PM

MARCH 14-15 CONFIRMATION RETREAT

MARCH 16 MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP
5-6:30PM

MARCH 23 NO YOUTH GROUP
HAPPY SPRING BREAK!

MARCH 30 YOUTH GROUP
MS 5-6:30PM, SR HI 5:30-7PM

JAZZ CONCERT MARCH 1 - 7PM

JAZZ SUNDAY MARCH 2

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE: MARCH 5 - 7PM

Family Camp 2025 A Memorial Day Tradition

It's time to start planning for Family Camp, a tradition at PCO for many years. After a 4-year hiatus, we returned to Skyline Retreat Center in 2024. We hope that more people will join us in 2025.

Leave your gadgets behind and enjoy hiking, boating, catch & release fishing, archery, campfires, s'mores and more. You never know what the weather will bring, but expect the usual favorites: games, goats, chickens, hammocks, new friends, the Makerspace, Capture the Flag, and the Saturday Night Campfire songs and skit.

Family Camp is for all ages & all types of families. We've had families bring friends, grandparents bring grandkids, and solo travelers. There is something here for everyone.

The weekend includes activities Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, and five healthy meals; including Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch. Dining will likely be outdoors.

Lodging in tents, buildings, and cabins.

Check in Friday 4:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m. / **Check out Sunday** at 2:00 p.m.

Registration is open now! More information can be found at <https://www.campskyline.org/family-camp> For any questions please talk to Christine or Roy Meland (info in directory or contact the church office.)

From Rebecca Mattern

I am grateful for your prayers as I discern and for your loving curiosity about my plans.

My last Sunday is April 27 and I will be leaving with a friend soon after for a trip to Turkey and then a pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago. We will be walking the Camino Frances route, which is about 500 miles from St. Jean-Pied-du-Port near Biarritz in France to Santiago, Spain, ending at the believed burial place of the apostle James. This pilgrimage is one that has been traveled as far back as the 9th century, and I am excited to walk alongside pilgrims of the past, present and future as I spend time connecting with myself and with God.

Upon my return I anticipate time with family and friends while I seek my first ordained call to ministry.

As we move toward the end of our relationship, my heart and spirit are full of gratitude and prayer, confident that the Holy Spirit is at work among and within us, for the furthering of God's kingdom in this world even now, through the teachings of Christ Jesus.



PCO Library News

Please join the PCO Library in celebrating Women's History Month 2025! This March, the display of books on the library table puts the spotlight on books by and about women, including three new titles:

(All quotations are from the publishers)

How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith by Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington "The decisive moments in life are those pivot points when we're called on to push past our fears and act with strength. Bishop Budde teaches us to respond with clarity and grace even in the toughest times. Being brave is not a singular occurrence; it's a journey that we can choose to undertake every day."

Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality by Sarah McBride "Informative, heartbreaking, and profoundly empowering. A powerful entry point into the LGBTQ community's battle for equal rights and what it means to be openly transgender. McBride weaves the important political and cultural milestones into a personal journey that will open hearts and change minds."

Turning Over Tables: A Lenten Call for Disrupting Power by Kathy Escobar "With keen insight and unwavering conviction, visionary pastor Kathy Escobar guides readers on a Lenten journey inspired by the ways of Jesus to dismantle the systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Readers will discover how they can harness the disruptive power of Jesus' teachings to effect meaningful change in their communities and beyond."

In addition to these three, check out the many titles by and about women that you may have missed. All of these books are available for you to borrow.

Kathi Cook



Thanks to our ministers, deacons, and other members for everything you did to help me recover from knee surgery, whether that was providing meals, lending me durable medical equipment, and sitting with me that first week when my son was unable to do so!

Blessings to you all

Ellen Hoekstra

Thank you to everyone who bought soup and/or bid on hand-painted bowls at the PCO Youth's Souper Sunday and Bowl Auction last month. More than \$1360.00 was raised for the Greater Lansing Food Bank, and many PCO members and friends enjoyed fellowship while eating a delicious lunch.

PCO Youth Group



The PCO Youth displayed their creativity in the form of soup bowls, painted at Arts Unlimited in Okemos, and auctioned off on Souper Sunday last month. Breadsmith of Okemos donated breads and rolls to serve with soup and cookies prepared by the youth and a few adult volunteers.

From the PCO Mission Committee



The graphic features a light blue background. At the top right, three hooded sweatshirts in pink, purple, and orange are hanging on hangers. Below them, a hand is shown holding a green spray bottle. At the bottom, five long-sleeved sweatshirts in various colors (pink, grey, black, green, purple) are laid out. The text is written in a mix of red and black fonts, with some words in italics.

**Spring Cleaning
Sweatshirt
Collection**

March 16 - 30, 2025

***Donate your gently used Adult and
Children's Sweatshirts
for the Judson Love Clothing Bank .
Drop off in the Toddler Room.***

Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra

- The state legislature is back in session, and the Governor has issued her executive budget recommendations for a \$84 billion budget. Her proposal includes a new “vape tax” on non-tobacco nicotine products as well as \$150 million more for student mental health and school safety, a one-time \$1 million in funding to AG Nessel for a review of the Oxford High School mass shooting incident, and increased funding for replacement of lead lines. Her State of the State message will be delivered on February 26.
- About 91,000 people, roughly 1% of Michigan’s population, have entered the state illegally. The top priority for many is completing paperwork designating where their children will go if the parents are deported.
- The US Department of Transportation has been told to give preference in grants to communities with higher marriage and birth rates, a problem for states like Michigan with an older population.
- The proposal to enclose the Line 5 pipeline in a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac might be on a fast track due to President Trump’s declaration of a national energy emergency.
- Michigan is expanding an experimental program –RX Kids-that gives cash to expectant mothers and babies. The program began in Flint and is expanding to Kalamazoo and the eastern UP.
- Some housing advocates are saying that Michigan’s \$4 million shelter diversion pilot program, which pays for things such as rent, utilities, and transportation, is keeping people off the streets. In Ingham County, \$500,000 was allocated to Advent House, Child and Family Charities, and the City of Lansing Economic Development and Planning Department.

Refugee Services

Many of you have asked how we can best support our partners in supporting refugees in the currently challenging times. First we will continue to support refugee services in the Lansing area, including legal services through your mission dollars. We will also be posting updates from AFAR and other Lansing-based refugee services and how you can be supportive of their efforts.

Clothing Needed

We at PCO have so much for which to be grateful. Others in our community are not so lucky.

As winter leaves us, we are thinking of spring and spring cleaning. There are many families in the Lansing area who could use a warm sweatshirt. As you clean this early spring, will you donate your USED sweatshirts to the Judson Love Clothing Bank in Lansing, by bringing them to PCO? They are in need of children and adult sizes.

We are collecting and storing them in our Toddler room (temporarily) from **March 16 through March 30**. We will deliver the shirts during the first week of April.

Any questions see Jayne Zuhlke.

Simbolei Information

If you missed the meeting regarding the June mission trip to Simbolei Academy for girls, copies of the handout are in a red folder in the magazine rack, and you can contact Ellen Hoekstra.

The price of the trip, including an optional two-day trip at the end to a game park with elephants, is \$1620 plus airfare.

As a reminder, the trip is scheduled from **June 6 through 14, 2025**.

Final Amount for CROP Walk 2024

A very big "Thank You" to all who participated in and supported our 2024 participation in the Greater Lansing CROP Walk. The final numbers came in last month and we had 30 "Walkers" and raise \$14,858.93. You help so many people locally and around the world through your generous support!

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

Address at Michigan State University
by Martin Luther King, Jr.

During Black History month in February this year, I listened to a recording of the address that Martin Luther King, Jr., gave at the Michigan State University Auditorium on February 11, 1965. Sixty years later, that speech is still relevant.

Amid the struggle to attain voting rights for Black people in Selma, Alabama, John Duley called King to see if he would speak in support of Student Tutorial Education Project (STEP). STEP involved M. S. U. students, faculty, and other volunteers to lift academic standards, work with Rust College students and faculty, and help that Black college in Holly Springs, Mississippi, get re-accredited.

In his introduction, King commended those who would live with, teach, and learn from African-Americans. Such efforts showed that college students were no longer apathetic but involved in the moral issues of the times. Indeed, such endeavors were necessary to address the challenges facing the U. S. In the mid 1965s.

The first challenge was implementing a new world order to replace the old order of colonialism. Changes in transportation and technology were making the world a neighborhood, inter-related and interdependent. A trip to India convinced King that the U. S. should share its abundant food with the hungry and homeless in Bombay. Colonialism and nationalism were obsolete. "Together we must learn to live as brothers or together we will be forced to perish as fools."

The second major challenge was to eliminate the notion that one race was superior to another. It has been wrong to base beliefs about racial superiority on the Bible. Other arguments for racism—logical syllogisms, sociological data, historical experience—have been contradictory, misguided, or false.

The third challenge, the one most fully developed in this speech, was that Americans needed to develop "massive action programs" to end racism and segregation. Specific examples followed: in jobs, housing, "the constitutional right to vote," and eliminating poverty. More effective organization and group activity were necessary.

The last part of the 53-minute speech, the most fervent portion, dealt with the foundations and pillars of all these efforts: nonviolence and agape love. Nonviolent resistance can disarm opponents, take the moral high ground, make means and ends consistent, and outlast one's enemies. Agape, the universal love of and regard for all people's well-being, is different from, stronger, more compassionate and self-sacrificing than eros and philos. Redemptive suffering can provide a purpose worth dying for and replace war with shalom—right relationships, health, wholeness, humility, mercy, forgiveness, peace, and justice.

This speech influenced people's lives. In Lansing, David Hollister changed his career from teaching in high school to becoming an effective leader in city and state politics. In 2007, 70 volunteers came back to M. S. U. and talked about the effects that STEP had on their lives: opening their eyes to injustice, living with people from another race, staying in the South to work for racial justice, and spurring them to seek higher degrees in education. This speech demonstrated the value of combining education and social action. "Education without social action is a one-sided value," King believed. "Social action without education is a weak expression of pure energy. Deeds uninformed by educated thought can take false directions."

This speech was part of a climactic year in the civil rights movement, especially the struggle in Selma, Alabama, and President Lyndon Johnson's speech before Congress on March 15: "We shall overcome." John Lewis's praise for the Voting Rights Act on August 6 was tempered: "That day was the end of a very long road. It was the last day of the movement as I knew it."

Ironically, as King became more militant in his call for "a revolution in values" in American society, frenemies, adversaries, and rabid racists became more violent, eventually snuffing out the life of King.

If King preferred to speak extemporaneously than read a speech, here is a good example. When he riffs and rhymes and resonates with his audience, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is an amazing orator. The applause of 4,000 people was still ringing when the recording stopped.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking at Michigan State University in February 1965.

Fun, Fellowship and Service at PCO in February

(Right) PCO members and friends of all ages enjoyed a pizza lunch and game day in early February.



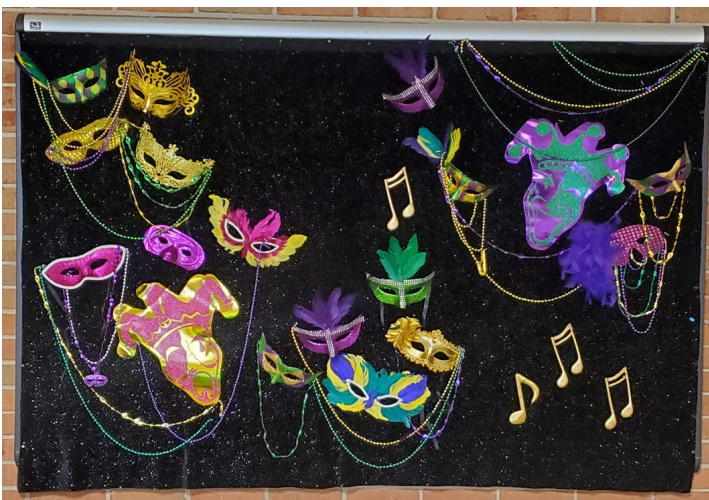
(Below) The Mission Committee went back to Advent House in Lansing. Wayne & Barbara Scott & Kent Workman prepare food in the kitchen, while Vickie Marcus and Eunice Creswell decorate the dining room.



(Right) Parishioners greet the youth who led worship on Youth Sunday, February 23. Youth planned and led all parts of the service, including liturgy, music and preaching.



(Below) At the end of the month, Fellowship Hall was decorated in preparation for Jazz Weekend.



Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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The Grapevine is a monthly newsletter of
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