

# The Grapevine

A monthly newsletter of  
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

October 2018; Volume 18, Issue 10

## *Some Thoughts on Faith*

It all did start with the 95 theses. Luther may or may not have actually nailed his theses to the door of the Wittenberg church. He most certainly did not nail them to the door as an act of anger or protest. Martin Luther was trying to arrange an academic discussion, and the church door served as the community bulletin board—the equivalent of a Home Page in 1517. We know for certain that Luther mailed off the theses along with a treatise on indulgences and a cover letter to his archbishop, dated October 31, 1517.

Five hundred one years later, we still acknowledge the Sunday nearest October 31 as Reformation Sunday, and we use that date as the start of the Protestant Reformation.

Martin Luther was a professor at the University of Wittenberg, which is why he was arraigning a disputation. He was also the official town preacher with pastoral responsibilities to the laity of the city, which is why he was trying to clear up some issues concerning the theology of indulgences. These indulgences were being sold very aggressively in

neighboring territories, much to the harm of the souls under Luther's charge. He was also a pious monk and he was convinced that once the Pope learned of the

practice in and around Wittenberg, the Pope would step in and stop it. Luther feared that the forgiveness of sins had been turned into a kind of merchandise, for sale at the expense of Christ's people.

What Luther did not know was that his archbishop and the Pope were the ones profiting from this merchandise, each claiming half the take. This intensely obedient monk soon learned the fuller picture and concluded that obedience to God precluded obedience to the Pope, and a schism in the Church followed.

Faith comes by hearing, and Luther is the greatest and most obsessive theologian of hearing in the Christian tradition. For Luther, everything depends on hearing the Word of God, taking hold of it, clinging to it, listening—not talking back, and not making God a liar. Hence, for Luther, "Gospel"

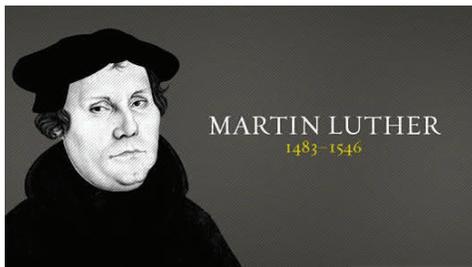
includes any scriptural telling of the story of Christ given for us. So when Isaiah announces, "For unto us a child is born;" that is Gospel (good news). When Abraham hears the angel's voice calling to him, "Do not raise your hand against the boy;" that is Gospel. When Paul writes that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus; that is Gospel.

Luther came to believe that hearing these Gospel stories "are a kind of sacrament, that is, sacred signs through which God brings about, in those who believe, whatever the story designates." The life and deeds of John, and Peter and Mary offer us examples of righteousness and virtue to follow. But the story of Christ actually gives us the righteousness, virtue, and salvation it signifies. The Word is as real as the water of baptism, as real as the bread of Eucharist. "So on Christmas, when we open the doors of the church, we learn that we are in Bethlehem, and we may approach the maiden with a child on her lap and say, 'Mother, this baby is mine also.'"

This fall, I began teaching a Sunday morning Bible Study during the Education hour. It is my intention to continue teaching the class every Sunday morning I am present. (There may be a few exceptions when we host guest speakers or special events during the Education Hour.) As we study together, we read the text aloud because I am convinced that hearing opens the Word to us in ways that we do not fully understand.

There are times and circumstances that require other means of communicating—reading, sign language, visual clues, dramatic retellings, and so forth. But gathering together in a community of faith—expressing our many questions, giving voice to our doubts and fears, searching together for the source of enlightenment and wisdom—these are some of the essential activities of a people who will be shaped by their relationship to one another and to God.

It is now 14 years since we adopted a Mission Statement as a congregation, and that statement remains a relevant and important touchstone to our collective identity. We are shaped by "worship that glorifies God, study that seeks to understand God, and service to a world that needs God." See you in church,



## JOYS & CONCERNS

### Congratulations to:

- Dan Hoevel and Emily Steel on their wedding  
July 28, 2018, in Mystic, Connecticut.  
Gary and Trudy Sturk on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding  
anniversary.  
Patti & Mike Geske on the birth of William  
Michael, born September 20; grandparents  
include Barb & John Geske

### Please hold in prayer:

- Ardith DaFoe
- Bill and Sis Fritze
- John Geske
- Esther Gierman
- Mary Lou Gifford
- Soleil Keck
- Lyleen Haller
- David Hoekstra
- Joey Hubbard
- Wally MacLean
- Harriet McDaniel
- Dick Stuart
- Jean Weinert



### Following us on Facebook



Some Facebook members report that they are not seeing posts to the Mission blog or other Event posts on their Facebook feed. Facebook uses algorithms to decide what to show you on your personal feed. It shows your friend's posts whom you follow, but not pages that you have not 'liked' or 'followed'. To follow PCO, from Facebook, in the FACEBOOK search (not the browser search), enter 'presbyterian church of okemos'. The Facebook page should be listed in the search results. Click the search result to reach the PCO Facebook page. On the PCO page 'banner', click 'like' or click 'follow'. A 'like' will automatically configure you as a follower. You also can 'follow' without liking. In the dropdown for the 'follow' button (PC), or by clicking the 'follow' a second time (phone), you can indicate that you want to see posts in your feed at the default or top of the feed. Set Facebook to display PCO posts at the top of your feed to be sure that you see the PCO content. Typically, Facebook posts on your feed show only an overview, but clicking the item will take you to the full posting on the PCO web site.

Carl Lira, Communications & Engagement  
Committee.

**Thank you** for the lovely card and recipe book in celebration of our marriage! We are so grateful to have had our wedding ceremony at PCO with my Uncle Rob marrying us. Many thanks to Jennifer Gordon and Beth Weidenaar for their time, coordination and beautiful music that made for such a joyous day.

Love, *Ellen (Corder) and Ryan Beyea*

Now that I am in remission I am working on my infection therapy, strength and endurance. We both thank everyone in the church for the kindness you have shown us; thoughts and prayers have helped and meals have been so delicious. We will try to make it on our own now and hopefully return to our great friends in the church soon. Keep the prayers coming. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

*Mary Lou and Roland Gifford*



### Artificial Christmas trees needed

The Advent decorating crew would like to use branches from artificial Christmas trees to create some of the decor this year. If you no longer need your tree please let Jennifer Gordon know at [gordonjms@gmail.com](mailto:gordonjms@gmail.com) or 517-349-6880.

*Join us to celebrate the 90th Birthday of  
Helen Treadwell*

*Sunday, October 21, 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.*

*Dessert & Beverage Open House*

*King Arthur's Court Community Center*

*2201 E. State Road*

*Lansing, MI*

*Please RSVP by October 14 to Pepper*

*517-290-4290 (text or call)*

*Or [Pepper.Treadwell@Gmail.com](mailto:Pepper.Treadwell@Gmail.com)*

*Cards may be sent to: Pepper Treadwell*

*108 Brittany Drive, Lansing, MI 48906*

*(Please write "Helen"*

*on the backside of your envelope.)*

## New Faces in our Chancel Choir

We have a new choir director this fall. Connor Koppin (pronounced Ko-peen) is a conductor, composer, and educator, with a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, and a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from MSU. He and his wife, Chelsea, have moved here from West Des Moines, Iowa where Connor had been working as Director of Vocal Music at Valley High School. Connor has won awards in Composition, and has conducted many ensembles, both religious and secular. He has been working with us since mid-August, and we are grateful for the way he is working with the staff, the choir, and the congregation. We also have new section leaders and singers in our choir this fall.

Adam Epler, tenor section leader: Adam is a senior music education/saxophone performance major. He has subbed as a section leader for PCO and is delighted to be with us this year! He is originally from Dallas, Texas and was brought to MSU because of its renowned saxophone programs. He is a huge Dallas Cowboys fan. He reads Hemingway in his free time. After graduation, Adam hopes to either teach in Texas or enroll in a master's program in saxophone performance.

Natalie Sweeney, soprano section leader: Natalie is a freshman double major in civil



engineering and vocal performance, an incredible pairing. She is from Batavia, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and came to MSU because they encouraged her to pursue both her love of math and science, as well as vocal performance. We are grateful; she is a beautiful spirit and has a wonderful voice! After Natalie graduates, she would like to continue singing and work as a structural engineer.

Kristina Crimmons, alto section leader: Kristina is from Commerce, Michigan and prior to attending MSU she was a vocal performance major. She transferred to MSU to pursue environmental engineering. She wants to be an engineering consultant with a focus on water systems and pollutants. She would like to continue helping with worship and ministry by going on mission trips. Being involved in a Christian community is important to Kristina. She enjoys a wide variety of activities including board games, card games, hiking, camping, playing Frisbee, painting, and learning new instruments.

We are equally grateful to Ben Baldwin who has returned this year as our bass section leader. Ben has shared his skills with us in vocal music and as a clarinetist. Please welcome back Ben, and greet Natalie, Kristina and Adam.

Save the Date  
**Kalamazoo College Singers Concert**  
Friday, November 9  
8:00 P.M.  
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

Dear Friends,

Many of you have asked me for an update on my son David's status as he grapples with kidney failure and hopes for a transplant. He has been on dialysis for several months and goes three times a week to a dialysis unit about 15 minutes from our house. While dialysis has helped alleviate many of his symptoms, the whole process takes about five hours each time. As is typical for people on dialysis, he is very tired afterwards and it takes time to regain his energy. He has cut back his work schedule to four days per week. The process also involves some pain, even with skilled and compassionate caregivers.

The University of Michigan Transplant Center, where David had his initial transplant 20 years ago, has approved him as a candidate for a transplant. David is on the deceased donor list, but the wait can take years. Currently, church member Shawn Grady has agreed to be tested to see if he is a potential donor. Living donors do not need to be biologically related and gender does not matter. I was a donor for David who is adopted, when he received his first transplant.

If you would be willing to help share David's needs with your family and friends, he and I would truly appreciate it. If you might consider being a living donor yourself, I would be glad to talk with you about my experience as a donor or you can go to [www.ExploreTransplant.org](http://www.ExploreTransplant.org) to learn more information.

In this difficult situation, we ask you to support David and our family, as well as Shawn, in your prayers.

*Ellen Hoekstra*

## CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

### Youth Group Lock In

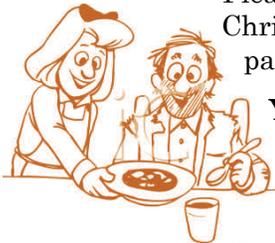
This year's lock in was a great success! Twelve youth participated Friday evening into Saturday morning. Thanks to Ron Dorr who shared great information with them about the CROP Walk and our youth are very excited to get started collecting donations. Many thanks to Stephanie Nawyn for helping this year! Saturday was Henry Nawyn-Hellinga's birthday and he prepared omelets for everyone. Quite the young chef! We ended with a game of Capture the Flag and shared ideas for next year's lock in.

*Ready or not Christmas is on the way!*

### Pageant Writers' Workshop

Any child interested in helping with this year's pageant script, who is 5th grade or younger, is welcome to participate. This will take place October 21 after church school hour until 2:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be provided. This has become a wonderful tradition in our church! Our children take great pride in telling the story of Jesus' birth and we are blessed to have such creative children, Emily Conroy-Krutz will be facilitating this workshop.

Please let Sue Schnackenberg know if you will be in town for Christmas Eve and if your child or youth is interested in being part of our Pageant as soon as possible.



### Youth Group

October 7 we will be going to the Best Corn Maze (3803 Noble Rd in Williamston). \$6.00 in cash. We will need drivers, Please contact Kelly Locke.

October 14 we will all participate in the CROP Walk. Youth can get all the information from Ron Dorr on Sunday morning.

November 3, Saturday afternoon at 2:30 P.M. we will meet at Advent House to serve a meal for 100 people. Advent House is located in the basement of North-Westminster Presbyterian Church on the corner of Oakland Ave and MLK Ave. in Lansing.

I am thrilled to announce that our Youth Group has two amazing young women to help out this year. **Allie Otberg** is one of our own, a MSU student who will be working with our middle school age group. **Sarah Keeler** works in medical billing during the week and has a rich background with youth groups and working with children. She will be working with our high school youth. We are off to a spectacular year.

*Sue Schnackenberg*

## Adult Ed

### Sunday Morning Bible Study

Rev. Carlson leads a class on Sunday mornings at 11:30 a.m. in Room 108—Jesus Then and Now: Readings in the Gospel of Mark and Luke. We will be reading through chapters 4-6 in Mark, though the month of October. The class will meet on Sundays October 7, October 21, and October 28.

*The Grapevine* is a monthly newsletter of

## The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

**Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.**

STAFF

*Rev. Dr. Robert T. Carlson, Jr.*, PASTOR  
*Rev. Alice Fleming Townley*, Assistant Pastor  
*Sue Schnackenberg*,

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES  
*Laurie Horstman*, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Thursday: 9:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

Friday: 9:00 A.M.-Noon

Phone: 517-349-9536

Contact us at:

<https://twitter.com/okemospres>

<https://www.facebook.com/OkemosPresbyterian/>

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

Email: [office@okemospres.org](mailto:office@okemospres.org)

## MID-WEEK STUDY GROUPS AND CLASSES

**Men's Group** meets Tuesday mornings at 6:45 A.M. in Fellowship Hall.

**Artists' Circle** meets Tuesdays, 1:00 P.M., in Room 108.

Come join our delightful group as we explore the ideas and concepts of Art and Christianity. We look forward to having you join us!



**Conversation & Contemplation**, with Rev. Alice Townley begins Wednesday, October 10, 10:00 A.M. Room 108.

**Bible Study:** Thursdays, 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. in Room 108.

We are currently studying the last three prophetic books of the Old Testament; books we rarely read in worship and yet are often used in the Gospels and other New Testament writings. Haggai and Zechariah focused on rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem in 516 BC after the Babylonian exile. Malachi has the last words of the Lord to the nation of Israel (somewhere between 460 and 440 BC). All three demand a return to the ways of the Lord before the Temple can be truly sanctified and the Lord praised. But they also encourage and motivate God's people, and promise Israel an everlasting kingdom ruled by a descendant of David.

The prophet Haggai predicted that God's judgment will precede the restoration of Israel as God's kingdom. Social and environmental calamities are seen as warning signs and a call for repentance. Even after 2500 years these same signs are visible around our world. The prophet offers comfort in the face of fear; a relevant word for us today. [Haggai 2:4-7]. Zechariah begins his prophecy with eight visions that indicate change is coming among the nations and God is in charge of those changes. He makes Messianic prophecies that are fulfilled with the coming of Jesus: *"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion.... See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey...."* [Zech. 9:9, 11:12-14, 12:10, 13:1, 7-9].

In the Christian Bible, the prophet Malachi has the last word from the Old Testament. His writings are placed at the end in part because his prophecies seem to foretell both John the Baptist [Malachi 4:5] and Jesus of Nazareth, the Messenger of the Covenant, and the Son of Righteousness who rises with healing in his wings [Malachi 3:1-7].

Early Christians saw these prophecies fulfilled 500 years later in Jesus of Nazareth. Many of these verses were selected by Charles Jennens for Handel's "Messiah". But the prophets had everyday concerns about our relationship with God. We live in Christian hope; yet is our worship sometimes an empty ritual? Does the Lord grow weary with us? And where is justice in the world today, especially when some seems to say that what is evil is actually good. Malachi accuses the people of robbing God when we do not tithe. Does that apply to the church members today? Were all of the prophecies by these and other prophets fulfilled, or are some still to come? These, and many other questions will be explored in the next months.

There are handouts available each week to help review the information and cross-reference other Scripture passages. At the end of each class, we share joys and concerns; we pray for members and friends in need; some stay and fold bulletins for Sunday worship; several in the class go out for lunch afterwards. In October, we will talk about other books of the Bible to study, and we are always open to share leadership among the people in the group. Please feel free to join us.

*Ewen Todd*

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION & FELLOWSHIP

**Writing Life Stories group** will meet on Sunday, October 7, at 11:30 A.M. in Room 108.

### Women's Supper Out

Join us for supper out on Monday, October 15, at 5:30 P.M. Each month we choose a different restaurant to meet at and enjoy an evening together. This month we will be eating at Naing Myanmar Family Restaurant, 3308 S. Cedar St, Lansing. Those planning to attend, please let Barbara Dorr know so she can make arrangements.

### Book Discussion Group

Will meet Sunday, October 21 at 12:30 P.M. in Room 108. We will discuss Kent Haruf's PLAINSONG.

Book Club Discussions for 2018-2019:

- ★ November 11 or 18: Yeon-mi Park, IN ORDER TO LIVE: A NORTH KOREAN GIRL'S JOURNEY TO FREEDOM
- ★ December. 9 or 16: Wendell Berry, FIDELITY: FIVE STORIES
- ★ January 20: Kate Bowler, EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON AND OTHER LIES I'VE LOVED
- ★ February. 17: Lan Samantha Chang, ALL IS FORGOTTEN, NOTHING IS LOST
- ★ March 17: Teeda Butt Mam with Joan Criddle, TO DESTROY YOU IS NO LOSS: THE ODYSSEY OF A CAMBODIAN FAMILY

Books for April, May, and June will be selected at one of our meetings during the winter.



### Retirees Group

The Retirees group will meet Monday, October 22 to discuss how we experience our Spiritual life in our senior years. Bring a sack lunch and join us from 12-1 in Fellowship Hall. Beverages are provided. Our last gathering for 2018 will be on Monday, November 26 to discuss change and how we deal with change.

**Women's Connection** meets Sunday, October 28, 12:30P.M. All women are invited for fellowship, lunch, and a presentation by one of PCO's newer members. Catherine Holdway will speak on her life and faith journey. As our current project, everyone is asked to bring snack items to add to the Mission Committee's collection for GIL. (Questions: Shirley Rumminger 655-4123 or [srumming@yahoo.com](mailto:srumming@yahoo.com))

## Mission Committee Update: September 2018

- ◆ Barbara Scott has stepped down as coordinator for **Alternative Christmas**. Please consider assuming that role for Christmas 2018. The Mission Committee has reserved the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in December to hold the event if there is a volunteer to assume the role from Barbara. (contact Keith Camann)
- ◆ Our offerings continue to help support **Global Institute of Lansing (GIL)**. Also, PCO has members volunteering to teach at GIL.
- ◆ The **Fletchers**, missionaries we have supported in the Democratic Republic of Congo, have retired. The committee is considering another mission to support.
- ◆ Offerings have provided financial support for the movie presentation “Trails of Terror and Hope” to be held on September 27. This movie is a **Peace Quest 2018** presentation.
- ◆ Offerings have supported **Andrea Kaitany** in her efforts to develop a school in Kenya.
- ◆ **Faith Lutheran** has been supporting three 18 year old, undocumented refugees from Central America. Faith has requested help from PCO to help meet transportation needs and Spanish translation needs for these boys. (Contact Keith Camann).
- ◆ Offerings in 2018 have also helped support Edgewood, the Greater Lansing Food Bank, a mission in Niger, and the Cass Project.
- ◆ The Mission Committee compiles non-cash donations of time and work performed by PCO as well.
- ◆ World Communion Sunday, October 7, will have an offering to support the **Peace and Justice project of PCUSA**. Please donate generously.



## CROP Walk: Sunday, October 14, 2018

- What: Walk for five kilometers (3.1 miles) in Lansing  
When: 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 14, 2018  
Where: Start and finish at Grace United Methodist Church  
1900 Boston Blvd., Lansing (corner of Mt. Hope Avenue and Boston Blvd.)  
Why: To combat hunger in the greater Lansing area, in the U. S., and in the world  
How: Pledging money (a lump sum or a certain amount per kilometer)  
Gathering pledges from other people  
Walking or running five kilometers (3.1 miles)  
Rocking for a certain period of time  
Who: Anyone who pledges or solicits pledges  
Anyone who walks, runs, or rocks  
Anyone who contributes cash or checks to CWS/CROP  
Anyone who goes online, creates one's own walker's page, or donates to PCO.  
Walkers at [www.crophungerwalk.org/lansingmi](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/lansingmi)

What else: Lunch will be served to walkers after Sunday School classes



**CROPWALK**

Youth will be challenged to gather \$1,000 or a greater sum, which will be matched by donors.  
Sign up in Fellowship Hall, or talk to Ron Dorr (484-3610) for additional information.

**Personal Needs:** Please bring your travel and hotel toiletries for the Advent House shelter. We will get them to Advent House so they can be distributed. Please cut out coupons and buy toiletries during your shopping trips for great savings and an even greater demonstration of our caring for others in our community.

The Mission Committee asks members to support the **Global Institute of Lansing (GIL)** through donations of snacks and school supplies appropriate for adult students. For new members: GIL is a school that provides an alternative path to high school completion to refugees in the Lansing area, and our member Paula Frantz is GIL's director. A basket for snacks and a plastic bin for school supplies are in the coatroom. Items most needed by students are two-pocket folders, spiral notebooks, flash drives, pens, and pencils. A link to classroom needs can be found on Amazon.com-Idea Lists.

## Update from the Endowment Committee

The committee met at the end of the 1st and 2nd quarters in 2018. In the 1st quarter, four applications were received, and three were approved for a total of \$3,205 (Worship and Music Hymn sing, Mission Committee Youth Project, and Communications and Engagement directory).

In the 2nd quarter, the committee met and reviewed a proposal from the Personnel committee for additional hours for Alice and voted to approve the full amount of \$5,100.

To date, the committee has approved \$8,305 in new applications in 2018 and has \$3,695 left of the original \$12,000 if additional requests for approval come in 2018.

We look forward to reviewing more applications throughout the year. Please make sure to get your request in. The applications are available in the Endowment Fund mailbox or contact [kelly.locke@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.locke@gmail.com).

The committee will be looking for two new members next year. Please let the team know if you are interested in serving!

Thank you!



## Public Policy Update from Mission Committee

As mentioned last month, the legislature is on an abbreviated schedule due to the November 6 General Election. As a reminder, October 9 is the last day to register to vote if you have moved to a new city or town, and absentee voter applications are due by 2:00 P.M. on November 3.

In addition to candidates, three statewide ballot proposals have been approved. A good source for information about each is available on the Citizens' Research Council website ([crcmich.org](http://crcmich.org)). The CRC has webinars on each of the proposals scheduled for October 16, 17 and 18 respectively, and written analyses are available on their website as well. The three proposals are:

Proposal 18.1—**Recreational marijuana** approval (medical marijuana having already been legalized in Michigan).

Proposal 18-2—Commission for **re-districting** through a commission of randomly selected individuals. Statements pro and con can be located on the Michigan League of Women Voters and the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce websites respectively. Also, the Brennan Center for Justice: Twenty Years website has a factual description of the contents of the proposal.

Proposal 18-3—**Expansion of voting access**. This proposal would permit automatic and same day voter registration, straight ticket voting, and the ability to vote absentee without selecting a reason. It would also automatically register people who update or seek drivers' licenses or state ID cards, and lock into the constitution the practice of sending ballots to military or overseas voters 45 days prior to an election. Interestingly, this ballot proposal would overturn a very recent ruling that restored the state's 2016 ban on straight party voting—be prepared to wait longer at the polls this November or choose to vote absentee.

In other pre-election news, there will now be **four candidates for state attorney general**, with Independent candidate Chris Graveline having been

added to the three others: House Speaker Tom Leonard (R), Dana Nessel (D) and Lisa Lane Gioia (Libertarian). Also, the legislature has approved two issues that otherwise would have become ballot proposals: raising the state's minimum wage over a period of years and requiring paid sick leave. Neither was given immediate effect, meaning that they would not take effect until 2019. When the legislature approves a proposal, it can then amend that law, unlike a ballot proposal approved by voters that must be enacted word for word. Consequently, allegations have been made that these proposals were approved by the legislature with the plan of substantially modifying them during the lame duck session.

In other news:

DHHS's Child Protective Services has received a scathing audit that includes failure to initiate investigations into child abuse/neglect promptly, failure to perform criminal background checks, and substantial fear of physical harm by employees working in the field. In response, the Governor has appointed Orlene Hawks, Director of the Office of Children's Ombudsman, to head up a team to review an improvement process for CPS. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is also under criticism for failure to provide timely funding for childcare costs of foster children.

DHHS has finished public hearings regarding the implementation of the 80 hours/month work requirements for individuals receiving Medicaid. This law (previously SB 897) will not take effect until 2020. Michigan must seek a federal waiver to implement this new law.

Recent data on the "Healthy Michigan" program shows that 1.7 million Michigan residents have pre-existing conditions.

Governor Snyder has removed the requirement that state employees and individuals seeking jobs governed by the state's construction and occupational codes automatically must indicate that they have committed felonies.

As part of the One Book, One Community program this fall, Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor spoke to 1,200 people at East Lansing High School on Sunday, August 26. In her formal remarks, she outlined three reasons for writing her memoir, **My Beloved World**. In her informal remarks, walking around the aisles of the auditorium, she answered pre-arranged questions, spoke directly to members of the audience, shook their hands, and even hugged kids. Such openness, hospitality, and humility radiated from her.

Speaking formally on the stage and on one occasion reading from her book, Sotomayor provided three reasons for writing her memoir. The first reason occurred in the first year, 2009-2010, of her tenure on the Supreme Court. "You're catapulted overnight from being an ordinary person to being on television during an All-star game and being known throughout the world." This jolt bothered Sotomayor. "I was afraid of losing me, who I was, how and why I got to where I was." She wrote the book to re-create who she was. Second, her relatives were aging and dying. In researching and interviewing relatives for the book, she was startled to learn some things about her family that she didn't know. And third, "I wanted the world to know about Puerto Rico." This island that has meant so much to Sotomayor is complex, yet "we are no different from residents of Washington, D. C."

Sonia Sotomayor's answers to questions moved from revelations about herself, relationships with others such as her Supreme Court family, and civil disagreement to inequality, mentoring, and happiness in life.

"I am an ordinary person who has had an extraordinary life," she said. Writing about her insecurities, breakup of her marriage, an unrealized job offer, and other hurtful experiences, she learned "how many people at college who [she] thought were secure really weren't." She felt quite withdrawn until her mid 30s. "I needed to be hugged more; nobody was touching me." Really touching someone became very important to her: "shake hands, touch someone on the shoulder, reach out to people." In her actions among audience members, she practiced what she preached.

Her life became "very, very public." But "If you want to keep connections, you have to be present." So she visits Puerto Rico regularly, goes back to her high school and Bronx neighborhood, and takes other small steps to stay connected. "If you don't go back, they won't have hope." You have to go to parties and funerals. You have to make the effort to create relationships.

Her views about Supreme Court members reinforced this sense of remaining connected. "We are family. We really do love each other. I feel for every one of my colleagues." When her stepfather died, she received notes from all her colleagues. When Ruth Ginsberg's grandchildren performed music recitals, all the justices attended. When Ginsberg's husband was dying, other justices made sure she was



getting food. When **My Beloved World** came out, Ruth Ginsberg would read two or three chapters, have lunch with Sotomayor and discuss those chapters, then repeat that pattern after she had read another two or three chapters. "We love Ruth and want to support her."

"We justices disagree. You see that. We're pretty direct. We know how to wield the sword of language, even to cut. But personal confrontation is not allowed. We differ because we're passionate. We are motivated not from ill will but love of country. We work hard to change our fellow justices' minds." Civility, however, reigns.

The number of women was small when she went to Princeton University in 1972. At times, she was the only woman in a class. Problems still persist. Men are often promoted more readily than women. A man calls her "honey" instead of "judge." Today, academia is ahead of many other institutions in our society; women graduating from college, however, "aren't fully prepared" for the sexism in the world of work. "We still have work to do in equality."

Attentive mentoring is one way to address such inequality. Justice Sotomayor usually has three women and one man as law clerks. But, she added, "I mentor men." Her sense of mentoring is more than the mentor-mentored relationship. We need "to pass on kindness and justice" in every relationship. She spends time with girls who are godchildren. "Can you give me a hug?" she asks them. She speaks to children as well as women lawyers and judges. "Look at people whom you interact, work, and play with. . . Men of goodwill took the time to mentor me," and she takes time to mentor with men. "I should not exclude men." Not only should the mentor help the mentored in her work, but the mentored should help the mentor as well.

The last question involved happiness: how is happiness possible? Sotomayor started her answer in an unexpected way. "No one's life is perfect. People suffer. Life isn't easy for anyone. Sad things that I don't know about happen. The lack of perfection is a fact of life. You think I'm happy when I lose a case? Some dissents are pretty angry. There will always be hardship, challenge, and tragedy in life."

"Yet happiness is possible." Provide positive answers to two key questions: "Do you like yourself at the end of the day? Are you leading a meaningful life?" Sonia Sotomayor also asks herself two additional questions at the end of every day. "Today what did I learn that was new? Today what act of kindness did I do?" If she can't answer the first question, she writes down the name of some book or other work that she should read. If she can't answer the second question, she goes to the internet and writes a friend who is sick or otherwise needs a kind word.

The next day Sonia Sotomayor spoke to M. S. U. students, read with children at the library, and continued to radiate her good will and wisdom.

Essay by Ron Dorr



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## CROP Walk—OCTOBER 14, 2018



### **Friends in Faith: Continuing the Conversations between the Islamic Center of Greater Lansing and The Presbyterian Church of Okemos**

Last year, members of the Islamic Center of Greater Lansing and the Presbyterian Church of Okemos began a series of conversations and events to deepen our understanding of one another. These activities included formal presentations by our clergy, small group discussion, a prayer vigil, worship services, evening meals, and the CROP Walk.

This year, some members have attended the annual Mayors' Meeting on Hunger at the Lansing Center. There we ate a wonderful dinner catered by Sultan's Place and heard from Rashida Tlaib, who, beginning in January 2019, will be the U. S. Representative from Michigan's 13th Congressional District.

This fall we will continue the conversations and events. Here is a schedule:

- Session 1: Sources of Strength in Troubling Times  
5:30 P.M., Sunday, October 7  
The Islamic Center of Greater Lansing (920 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing)
- Session 2: CROP Walk,  
2:00 P.M., Sunday, October 14,  
5K walk starts and finishes at Grace United Methodist Church, 1900 Boston Blvd., Lansing.
- Session 3: "Engaging Practices of Faith in Troubling Times"  
5:30 P.M., Sunday, October 28  
Annual Friendship Dinner  
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

We welcome all members and the public at large to attend these educational and social activities.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> 6:45pm JuBellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets	<b>2</b> 6:45am Men's Group 1pm Artists' Circle 5:30pm outside group 6pm Adult Ed Committee 7pm outside group	<b>3</b> 7:30pm Parish Life Committee	<b>4</b> 9:30am Bible Study 5:30pm outside group 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>5</b> 1pm Prayer Shawl	<b>6</b> 
<b>7</b> <b>World Communion Sunday</b> 10am Worship Peace & Global Witness offering 11:30am CE Hour 12:30pm Life Stories 12:30pm Youth Corn Maze trip 5:30pm Friends of Faith @ Islamic Center	<b>8</b> 6:45pm JuBellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets	<b>9</b> 6:45am Men's Group 1pm Artists' Circle 5:30pm outside group 7pm Deacons' meeting 7pm outside group	<b>10</b> 10am Conversation & Contemplation 6pm CE Staff meeting 6:30pm Mission Committee 7pm Communications & Engagement Comm.	<b>11</b> 9:30am Bible Study 5:30pm outside group 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 12 Noon - 5:00 P.M. Orchid Society Annual Meeting
<b>14</b> 10am Worship CROP Walk activities 	<b>15</b> 5:30pm Women's Supper Out 6:45pm JuBellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets	<b>16</b> 6:45am Men's Group 1pm Artists' Circle 5:30pm outside group 6:30pm outside group 7pm group	<b>17</b> 10am Conversation & Contemplation 6:30pm Administration Committee meeting 7:30pm Meeting of Session	<b>18</b> 8:30am outside group 9:30am Bible Study 5:30pm outside group 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>19</b> 1pm Prayer Shawl	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> <b>Grapevine</b> deadline 10am Worship 11am Birthday Cake 11:30 am CE Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 12:30pm Book Club 2:30pm outside group	<b>22</b> 12noon Retirees Lunch 6:45pm JuBellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets	<b>23</b> 6:45am Men's Group 1pm Artists' Circle 5:30pm outside group 7pm outside group	<b>24</b> 10am Conversation & Contemplation 7pm Personnel Committee	<b>25</b> 9:30am Bible Study 5:30pm outside group 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 
<b>28</b> <b>Reformation Sunday</b> 10am Worship 11:30am CE hour 12:30pm Women's Connection 12:30pm Youth Group 5pm Friends of Faith – Friendship dinner and program	<b>29</b> 6:45pm JuBellees rehearsal 6:45pm Monday Mallets	<b>30</b> 6:45am Men's Group 1pm Artists' Circle 5:30pm outside group 7pm outside group	<b>31</b> 10am Conversation & Contemplation	<b>All Saints Day will be observed Sunday, November 4</b>		