

# The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

**From Pastor Lisa Schrott**



## In This Issue

- *Upcoming Book Study—pg. 3*
- *Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities—pg. 3 & 4*
- *Youth Calendar—pg. 5*
- *New at the PCO Library—pg. 6*
- *Missions—pgs. 7 & 8*
- *Looking Back through the Book Nook—pg. 9*

**Deadline for the February Grapevine is Wednesday, January 22nd.**

### **Journey to 2030 - Engagement Ministry**

*As members of The Presbyterian Church of Okemos,  
we believe that in life, in death,  
and life beyond death, we belong to God.*

<https://www.okemospres.org/our-mission/>

So opens the mission statement of PCO. Our mission statement continues with aspirations for ways we will live out this belief, through worship, study, fellowship, service, care and community. Last April the Session adopted a visioning document, Journey to 2030, to shape the ways we will engage with our mission statement during the next 5-6 years.

The plan Identified three areas of focus:

- *A welcoming congregation where meaningful connections are made.*
- *A congregation that is intergenerationally inclusive.*
- *A congregation actively building partnerships*

A few highlights from the last nine months include a commitment to inter-generational worship leadership, opportunities for intergenerational learning and fellowship on Sunday mornings and beyond, an intergenerational Lenten supper and study, and an intergenerational mission week last June with 35 adults and youth serving together. These activities, as well as new opportunities, will continue in the coming year.

In August an all-church planning retreat helped us set a more concrete vision, as well as identifying obstacles, for partnering across church committees and with community groups. This work will continue and I am personally excited by the cross-fertilization of ideas.

For the coming year, using data we received in the Journey to 2030 process, there will be a focus on how we can **engage**, body and soul, in our work as disciples of Christ. Below are some rationale for this focus.

- We received a good bit of feedback about issues to which the church should devote more attention, especially related to our witness to social justice.
- Concerns were raised about the amount of committee-work at PCO and the potential for burnout. Desires were expressed for work on short-term projects or topic-based interest groups.
- Concerns were also raised regarding those who have found it difficult to find a place to share their gifts in our current committee structure.

To address these issues in 2025, I shared with Session ideas for reshaping our Communications and Engagement committee into Engagement Teams related to **Congregational Engagement** and **Community Engagement**.

**Cont. on next pg.**

*Cont. from previous pg.*

The first steps for **Congregational Engagement** involve Welcome Teams. See the article by Jill Schaberg on pg. 3 to learn how you can get involved in this ministry.

With respect to **Community Engagement**, I want to share three teams we will launch this winter.

**Racial Reconciliation.** I will be leading a book study on Dr. William Yoo's book *What Kind of Christianity. A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church*. (see pg. 3 for more information). My hope is that there will be a group of PCO people emerging from this book study who want to continue this discussion and look at what actions we want to pursue, including more direct involvement with the Justice League.

**LGBTQ+ Inclusion.** We have participated in the Meridian Township Pride Festival for the past two years. In 2024 we were one of the organizers of the Pride Worship service on the morning of the festival. This year's festival is set for May 31. I am looking to get a team together to work on our participation in the festival, including the worship service, as well as other ways that PCO can enhance our welcome and inclusion.

**Refugee Support.** PCO has been active in the support of refugees resettling in the Greater Lansing area. Working with the All Faith Alliance for Refugees (AFAR), there will be opportunities this coming year to walk along side our newest neighbors as we faithfully live into our call to welcome.

If you are interested in any of these areas, please reach out to me. If you have a passion or are feeling called by God to engage in our community and world in a new way this year, and are looking for some companions for the journey, please reach out. I'm happy to be a connector. And please know if you express an interest in one these areas, you will not be consigned to a rigid meeting schedule. How about a cup of coffee or tea and some conversation and see where the Spirit leads?

*Pastor Lisa*

# Baptism of the Lord

## Sunday, January 12, 2025



### Note from Rebecca Mattern

I am excited to transition into a new, part-time role beginning January 6. As Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Youth Ministry, I will be concentrating on working with the Deacons on visitation ministry as well as continuing to lead Youth Group and Youth Council. I will also be working on setting boundaries around my time and work and will not be in worship every week - in January I will be present on the 5, 12 and 26. I will continue to lead youth group Sunday nights and meet with youth for Homework and Hangout. After January 5, I will be in the office and checking emails consistently on Wednesdays and Sundays.

I am grateful to the Personnel Committee who will walk alongside and guide me in time and task management. I am looking forward to what this new season holds for us - and continue to pray for the APNC as it seeks, works, and discerns the next person to be called to ministry at PCO.

In gratitude and hope,  
**Rebecca Mattern**

**Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 26th after Worship.**

## **Welcome 2025 & PCO Visitors!**

We are forming a Welcome Team at PCO, in order to better serve our visitors and new members. We seek to continuously ask the question: How can we do it better?

Our Welcome Team will consist of a minimum of twelve members, each of whom will take **one month** to be the Visitor Contact. Responsibilities will include greeting visitors on Sunday mornings, introducing them to other members if feasible, and following up after Pastor Lisa's first welcome email if they're repeat visitors.

We will have more specific information for Team members but your service would be relatively light and for one month only. If this is a ministry that fits you, please contact Jill Schaberg, Bill Given, Mickey Martin or Siri Rainone. Thank you.

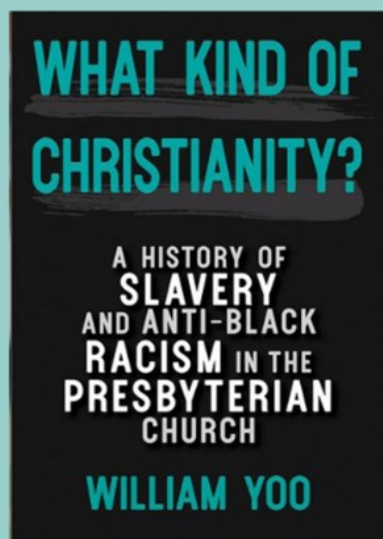
## **And speaking of welcome...**

What 's more welcoming than a hot cup of coffee and a snack?

Sunday Morning Fellowship time is a cherished part of our church life! Having snacks to share depends on the generosity of volunteers. Would you like to take part in providing snacks? The sign-up sheet for January and February is on the kiosk.

Ideally two volunteers work together on a chosen Sunday, so you might ask a friend to partner with you, or speak with Shirley Rumminger at 517 655-4123.

# **Presbyterian Church of Okemos hosts a book study on *What Kind of Christianity: A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church* by the Rev. Dr. William Yoo**



Dr. Yoo is an Associate Professor of American religious and cultural history at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. His research involves examining the histories of racial injustice, settler colonialism, and slavery in the United States. If we as Christians want to pursue racial justice, we must first understand racial injustice and the ways it is part of our histories and identities.

**Tuesdays January 14, 21, 28 and February 4  
6:30 - 8 pm online**

**Contact Pastor Lisa ([pastorlisa@okemospres.org](mailto:pastorlisa@okemospres.org))  
for more information and the Zoom link**

## Women's Dinner Out

This month we will meet at **5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 6** at BJ's Brewhouse in Eastwood Towne Center, 2515 Lake Lansing Rd.

Please RSVP to Judi Harris at *judiharris at gmail dot com* (standard email set up).

## C & C Group Epiphany Party

**January 8, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 108**

### Epiphany Party at the Church

Please join us for a brunch. We welcome all. Since this is not on Zoom and there will be no technical difficulties to overcome, we hope to see some of our group who have been unable to join us. Bring a fruit or bread to share with others. Our discussion will focus on how you have experienced the presence of God in your life this past year.

We will continue alternating Lectio and our study of Spiritual disciplines using *Soul Feast* each Wednesday from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom **starting January 15**. Zoom # is 905-709-104 and password 48864.

## Retirees in January

The Retiree Group (which is not limited to retirees!) will continue meeting the third Monday of the month for fellowship and discussion. Please feel free to bring a lunch. We will meet in Fellowship Hall on **Monday, January 20 at noon**.

## Caregiver Support Group

Please join us on Zoom the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome to share their successes and struggles, as others offer support, resources and suggestions from personal experience. This month, we will meet on **Wednesday, January 22 at 5:00 p.m.**, Zoom # 517-329-2320; password is hello.

## Women's Connection in January

We will meet on **Sunday, January 26th at 12:30 p.m.** in Room 108. After enjoying fellowship and lunch together, we will welcome Laurie Harkema as our speaker.

A retired music teacher, Laurie stays busy *playing* keyboard, *singing* in several choirs (including ours!), and *ringing* carillon bells in the MSU Beaumont Tower, along with various family, church and community activities. Her life story and faith journey are inspiring! Please plan now to join us and invite friends.

Questions—Shirley Rumminger at 517 655-4123.

## 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** – 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— **next meeting is January 5.**

**Birthday Cake Sunday**—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **January 19.**

**Women's Connection**— 4th Sundays at **12:30 p.m.** in Room 108. This month will be on **January 26th**. See left column for more info.

### MONDAYS

**Women's Dinner Out**— 1<sup>st</sup> Mondays at 5:30 p.m. See left column for more info.

**Retirees** – 3rd Mondays at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Next meeting is January 20th. Feel free to bring a lunch.

### TUESDAYS

**Men's Group** – Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom) this month Tuesday, January 7th.**

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

### WEDNESDAYS

**Conversation & Contemplation**—Weekly, 10:00 a.m. Zoom 905-709-104 (see left column for special info for Jan. 8!)

**Caregiver Support Group** - 4th Wednesdays, January 22. 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 **January 16.**

**Deadline for the February Grapevine is  
Wednesday, January 22nd.**



**Merry Christmas From  
the Manger.**

*Thank you to the youth and  
children for leading worship  
and to all who participated in  
the Christmas Pageant on  
Sunday, December 22.*

**Youth Souper Bowl  
Sunday and Bowl  
Auction  
Following worship  
February 9, 2025**

**Youth Parents  
Night Out**

Thursday, January 16  
(Third Thursdays)  
7:00 p.m.

Joe's on Jolly  
2360 Jolly Road

**Winter Weather  
Reminders**

If Okemos Public Schools  
are closed due to weather,  
PCO will be closed as well.

On a Sunday morning, we  
will notify you through email  
and/or social media if worship  
will be online only.

# YOUTH CALENDAR

## SUNDAY JAN 5

YOUTH GROUP Middle School! 5-6:30pm  
Senior High 6:30-7:30pm

## FRI JAN 10-SAT JAN 11

MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCK-IN 8pm-8am

## SUNDAY JAN 12

SOUP BOWL MAKING All Youth 11am-1pm  
Arts Unlimited

YOUTH COUNCIL 1pm

## SUNDAY JAN 19

YOUTH GROUP Middle School 5-6:30pm

## MONDAY JAN 19

MLK LUNCHEON Senior High 11am-3pm

## SUNDAY JAN 26

YOUTH GROUP Middle School 5-6:30pm  
Senior High 6:30-7:30pm

## PCO Library News

### New books for the new year!

This month, we present two new books from **N.T. Wright**, one of the world's leading New Testament scholars (all quotations are from the publishers):

*Into the Heart of Romans: A Deep Dive into Paul's Greatest Letter* "Wright takes a deep dive into Romans 8, showing how it illuminates so much else that God reveals in Scripture."

*The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* "Your passageway from the twenty-first century to the era of Jesus and the first Christians. Highly readable."

And another addition to our New Testament studies, from multiple contributors:

*The New Testament in Color: A Multiethnic Bible Commentary* "A one-volume commentary on the New Testament written by a multiethnic team of scholars holding orthodox Christian beliefs. Listening to scholars from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities offers us an opportunity to explore the Bible from a wider angle, a better vantage point."

#### For our middle school and teen readers:

*The Long Way Around* by Anne Nesbet "In an exciting wilderness adventure, three cousins are cut off from their parents by a huge earthquake – and must hike long and treacherous mountain trails back to safety, with only each other to rely on."

*Courageous Creativity: Advice and Encouragement for the Creative Life* by Sara Zarr "Courageous Creativity will empower readers to express themselves with self-confidence, bravery, and joy."

#### And for our youngest readers, two new picture books:

*God Gave Us Thankful Hearts* by Lisa Tawn Bergen "An ode to gratitude that helps little ones understand how the act of thanksgiving warms hearts and brings joy."

*Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora "A heartwarming story of sharing and community in colorful cut-paper designs as luscious as Omu's stew, with an extra serving of love."

The PCO library has a binder for signing out books, a basket for returning books, and a shelf for donating books. Please remember to return the books after a two-month borrowing period. Thank you.

And remember—the best way to support the library is to borrow a book!

**Kathi Cook**



## From the Green Team:

### Food Insecurity & Sustainable Practices

Food Rescue USA is a nationwide organization that operates in the Greater Lansing area and they are looking for local volunteers.

Using a web-based app, Food Rescue USA engages volunteers to transfer fresh food surpluses from local businesses to social service agencies serving the food insecure. Food Rescue USA's model empowers communities to serve themselves, as all food donors, rescuers, and agency partners are members of the communities where services operate. In addition, eliminating food waste remains one of the top solutions to global warming.

If you are interested in volunteering to rescue food and transport it to receiving agencies in the area, you can learn more and volunteer at [FoodRescue.us](http://FoodRescue.us).



### From Ewen & Zora Todd

We appreciate the kind words, prayers, cards and chats from our PCO family over our loss of our daughter Mandy, who we adopted when she was just under 2 years old. We knew there was a 50% chance of her contracting Huntington's Disease (HD), which was confirmed in her late teens. Huntington's is a difficult disease in many ways, became progressively worse and eventually confined her to a nursing home bed. Her husband, Martin, was her companion and caregiver. We visited her with our family this summer, and her siblings, Tasha and Alec, were with her in her last days. We were able to Zoom on two occasions before she died on December 1. Unfortunately, this is not the end of this terrible disease in our family, as it affects her children and grandchildren. Please pray for God to allow research to eradicate HD.

## Mission Work in 2024 & 2025

**"Mission Statement** - With inner contemplation and outward joy, the Mission Committee leads all members of the Presbyterian Church of Okemos in awareness of our responsibilities to our brothers and sisters, advocacy of our Christian ethics and action in the name of God who has blessed us in his calling to feed the hungry, heal the sick, shelter and clothe those in need, promote justice and bring the gospel to the whole world."

### Simbolei Mission Trip—2025

The Mission Committee encourages you to consider participating in a mission trip to Simbolei Academy for Girls in Iten, Kenya. This secondary school for girls was established by former PCO member Andrea Kaitany and her husband Richard, who is from this area of Kenya. The trip is scheduled tentatively for June 7-14, 2025.

Participants would spend most of their time volunteering directly with students, helping coach them in creative writing, drama, singing and chess. This will be the third time PCO volunteers have gone to Simbolei.

Participants last time (2022) were Jill and Tom Schaberg, Cathy McCarthy, and Ellen Hoekstra. Please ask any of these members about their experiences. If you THINK you are interested, please hold the date, and let Ellen know, as she's the Committee's Simbolei trip coordinator.

### Mission Retreat

The Mission Committee will be meeting on **Sunday, January 19, 2025** after the education hour to review the past year and plan how we can best meet our mission for the new year.

We will be meeting at the church and invite your input as we make plans for the 2025 year. You are welcome to join us, or share your thoughts with any member of the Mission Committee prior to the meeting. Please let Kent Workman know if you have questions or wish to join us.

### MLK Day

This month PCO will once again celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day by attending the Day of Celebration Luncheon at the Lansing Center on **Monday, January 20, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.** sponsored by the Dr. MLK Jr. Commission of MidMichigan. PCO will have two tables for this year's event, and we hope you will join us to show our support of this important event.

This year's theme is "I Have a Dream that One Day this Nation will Rise Up and Live Out the True Meaning of its Creed – We Hold these Truths to be Self-evident: That All Men are Created Equal." – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If you are interested in attending, please sign up on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall or let Kent Workman know.



*From meal prep to clean up, PCO members continued working to serve wholesome meals at Advent House Ministries in Lansing in 2024. (L to R) Candy Boldrey, Barbara Scott, Kent Workman and Wayne Scott.*

## More About Missions at PCO

## Thanks!

### PCO Pajama Drive for the Judson Love Clothing Center January 5 – 26, 2025



**Needed: Boys and girls warm pajamas 4T to adult  
Place donations in labeled bin in the coat room.**

Thank you so much for your very generous gifts totaling \$2405.00 to support the work of Meridian Cares. Your donation to the Holiday Food Assistance program is greatly appreciated. Residents like you make this fund possible. We appreciate you!

**Katie Love**  
**Human Services Specialist**

Thank you, thank you for your generous donation to the Okemos Community Food Pantry! Please know, your donation will be used well as we feed yours and our neighbors in need. Blessings!

**Mary Gardner & Karen Fraser,**  
**Co-directors**

Just a note to say thank you for the food gift cards for Thanksgiving. I really appreciate them. May you be blessed. Thank you again. God's Blessings!

**A Recipient**



## Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra

In news pertinent to mission, at the December Mission Committee meeting, the Committee reviewed these updates.

- The Governor has signed into law HB 4928-4930, which aims to enhance protections for school children against drivers failing to stop. These bills include establishing a system for cameras to capture drivers who fail to stop. Similarly, she signed legislation increasing protections for construction workers on roadways.
- Also relevant to student safety, the bipartisan bills in the MI School Safety package were reported out of committee and sent to the House floor. The bills enhance protocols to respond to school emergencies and increase mental health support for students.
- Legislation mandating kindergarten has moved forward in the process. The vast majority of children in Michigan already attend kindergarten.
- Legislation introduced by Reps. Brixie and McDonnell would require schools to inform parents every year of Michigan's safe storage of firearms requirements. These bills have passed the House and were sent to the Senate Education Committee.
- The Governor has signed into law legislation prohibiting firearms at polling places.
- Local governments are suing the state over PA 233, which allows the state to approve large wind and solar installations over local objections.
- The Governor has signed HB 4361 to provide a tax credit for organ donations.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has released a comprehensive plan to reduce HIV infections in Michigan by 90% by 2030.
- MDHHS has also enhanced its plans to help individuals successfully seek and enter Substance Abuse Disorder programs.



## BOOK NOOK

*By Ron Dorr*

### Book Reviews, 2020-2024, Part I

*(Every five years, Ron has written a summary of the reviews of books highly recommended in the past period.)*

Susanna Wesley was more than the mother of John, the founder of Methodism, and Charles, a great hymn writer. She gave birth to 19 children; seven daughters and three sons survived past infancy. An inspiring teacher, she home schooled those children in the Bible, theology, geography, history, math, and grammar six hours a day for 20 years. A bold speaker, she could hold her own in disputes with her husband, Samuel, and George Whitefield. “A preacher of righteousness,” she led worship services drawing 200 people to her house when her husband traveled out of town. She wrote essays on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and reconciling Christianity with Newtonian science.



**Susanna  
Wesley**

She loved learning, kept accounts, wrote letters and journals, sewed, counseled John, and grieved the estrangement between her husband and their daughter, Hetty. “Susanna Wesley lived sacramentally in the most common ventures of life.” She was my favorite figure in Richard Foster’s 424-page book, Streams of Living Waters: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith. She represented the incarnational tradition.

In A Pilgrimage to Eternity, Timothy Egan participated in a different tradition, joining 40,000 other pilgrims walking the 1,200-mile journey on the medieval Via Francigena from Canterbury, England, to Rome, Italy. Part spiritual quest, part family memoir, part travelogue, and part history of Christianity in western Europe, Pilgrimage succeeded on all four accounts. For Sophie, Egan’s daughter who joined him in northern Italy, the journey clarified what she valued: “family, friends, love, community, lifelong learning, continuous self-improvement, reflection, creative expression, empathy, care of the natural world and all the creatures who inhabit it.” “You’re going to be fine,” her father blessed her.

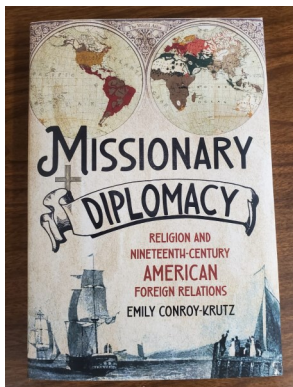
Other books in religion, theology, and spirituality that I reviewed in 2020-2024 included books of the Bible such as Paul’s letter to the Philippians, featuring his joy in that community, and the letter of James, providing practical and provocative advice to Jesus’s followers. Building on Walter Brueggemann’s book, Praying the Psalms, retirees read and discussed their favorite psalms. Men’s group led a retreat on Into the Mess, featuring Debi Thomas’s commentaries on Jesus’s paradoxical preaching, teaching, and healing. I also explained Biblical parallelism.

History is the second category of works that I review in Book Nook. They include auto-biographies, biographies, and general histories. The most familiar autobiography reviewed was I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, by Maya Angelou, which I taught for 40 years. The dominant theme in her life was renewal, especially in the face of defeat and disappointment. The most unconventional autobiography was Pulitzer Prize-winning Chasing Me to My Grave, Winfred Rembert’s frank exposure of apartheid-like Georgia during the 1940-1950s and Rembert’s escape through marriage and artistic success. Dozens of his paintings in leather enhanced this story.

The most illuminating biographies were three. In The Chancellor, Kati Marton showed how Angela Merkel, a pastor’s daughter and laboratory scientist, became the most powerful woman in Germany and Europe from 1995 to 2015. In King: A Life, Jonathan Eig showed how Martin Luther King, Jr., evolved from a conventional pastor willing to compromise at the start of the bus strike in Birmingham, Alabama, to a militant activist, seeking to change radically the legal, economic, and political status of oppressed people in the South, the U. S., and the world. Like Jesus, he proposed a “revolution in values,” losing his life in that struggle. Combining autobiography and biography in Lost & Found, Kathryn Schulz poignantly narrated the death of her father and her own love for the woman who became her wife.

Two general histories by members of our church were well worth reading. Missionary Diplomacy, by Emily Conroy-Krutz, showed how relationships between Protestant missionaries and diplomats in the U. S. Department of State changed significantly during the nineteenth century. In A History of Michigan State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, 1970-2022, Jan Krehbiel and Fred Derksen provided the most attractive, appealing, and people-oriented institutional history that I have ever read.

The next issue of The Grapevine will contain part II of this essay. As mentioned above, I write this every five years. The next essay will cover the categories of literature—fiction, drama, and poetry—and miscellany, my grace note—education, social justice, the fine arts, and speeches.



## Presbyterian Church of Okemos

2258 Bennett Road  
Okemos, MI 48864  
Phone: (517) 349-9536  
[www.okemospres.org](http://www.okemospres.org)

*The Grapevine* is a monthly newsletter of  
*The Presbyterian Church of Okemos*

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

### Staff

*REV. DR. LISA SCHROTT*, PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF

*REBECCA MATTERN*, COORDINATOR OF PASTORAL CARE &  
YOUTH MINISTRY

*DR. MARLENE BREWBAKER*, ORGANIST

*WESTIN SORREL*, CHOIR DIRECTOR

*IRENE SHUTT*, BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

*EDWARD ENNEN*, SEXTON

*ANNA THIEL*, OFFICE MANAGER

*GABRIELLE SHELTON*, MEDIA SPECIALIST

Phone: 517-349-9536

<https://instagram.com/okemospres>

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

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

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

