

# The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



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### **Winter Weather Reminder:**

***If Okemos Public Schools are closed due to weather, PCO will be closed as well. On a Sunday morning, we will notify you through e mail and/or social media if worship will be online only.***

***Deadline for the March***

***Grapevine is Friday, February 21st.***

### **Engaging in the Work of the Lord.**

*“What does it mean to be Christian in this time?”*

In my January 26 sermon I shared this question asked by theologian Kelly Brown Douglas in a recent article in the *Christian Century* magazine. Many of you have been asking that question and I appreciate those who have shared their thoughts with me.

As the body of Christ, here and now, in this place and time, we are called to fulfill and embody Jesus’ ministry. We are called to love God and love our neighbor. We are called to bring the Good News of the Gospel to the world. We do this through our words and our actions, individually and a community of faith. Some days this work brings us great joy. Other days we recognize how hard and lonely was the path Jesus walked.

During the month of February, we will continue considering the various facets of the person and ministry of Jesus. What does it mean to be a Christian in this time? It means that we are healers and teachers and that we are called to work together. It means that we recognize when we speak out, others may question and even attack us, as they did Jesus. And we speak out anyway, because if we take our call to discipleship seriously, we know there will be risks.

*“What does it mean to be Christian in this time?”*

It means we engage with the issues facing our community, our country, our world, and all of God’s creation. The needs can feel overwhelming. And sometimes when there are so many needs and options, we are paralyzed and do nothing. So I want to share some upcoming engagement opportunities, especially for those who are looking for a short-term project that doesn’t require a commitment to a meeting schedule.

### **Meridian Pride Festival & Ecumenical Worship Service, Saturday May 31.**

For the past two years, we have had a table at the Pride Festival and last year we partnered with other local faith groups for a worship service before the festival. This is an important witness that we are a church where all God’s children understand they are valued and loved. Can you help serve on the planning team? Can you put this date on your calendar and commit to taking a shift at our table, or helping to set-up or clean-up?

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**Intergenerational Mission Week June 9-14.** As we did in 2024, we will spend a week working with some of our local mission partner organizations and faith communities tackling issues of housing and food insecurity, environmental sustainability, refugee support and domestic abuse, among other issues. Can you help serve on the planning team? Can you put these dates on your calendar and commit to participating at least one day?

**Thursday Night Lenten Suppers** During Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5, we will be “in the wilderness” with Jesus. Our Thursday evening supper and program will include opportunities for us to share our stories of discipleship, to share our stories of grace and forgiveness, to share our stories of thirsting for a world justice and mercy. Can you help provide a meal, help with set-up and clean-up for one Thursday night (March 13- April 10)? Can you put these dates on your calendar and commit to participating in this time of community building and learning?  
*“What does it mean to be Christian in this time?”*

In means we engage in the hard work of discipleship. There places we all can serve to fulfill the work of Jesus. One step and one day at a time.

**Pastor Lisa**

## **Jazz Weekend is March 1 & 2, 2025**

This year’s jazz festivities begin at **7:00 p.m. Saturday, March 1**, with a free concert featuring the master trumpeter James O’Donnell and his band. O’Donnell has entertained Detroit audiences for more than three decades and has performed in more than fifteen countries across North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. While his favorite music genres are Jazz, Big Band Standards, and Blues, his repertoire also includes R&B, Funk, Soul, and Motown.

O’Donnell’s band will return **Sunday, March 2** for the jazz worship service featuring the brass sounds of New Orleans. The service will take place as usual at **10:00 a.m.** The Parish Life Committee is planning to host a pancake breakfast following the service. Everyone is welcome.

As a preview to Jazz Weekend, PCO’s resident jazz pianist Arlene McDaniel will give a lecture on New Orleans Jazz on **Sunday, February 23**. The lecture will be in the sanctuary and begin at **11:30 a.m.**

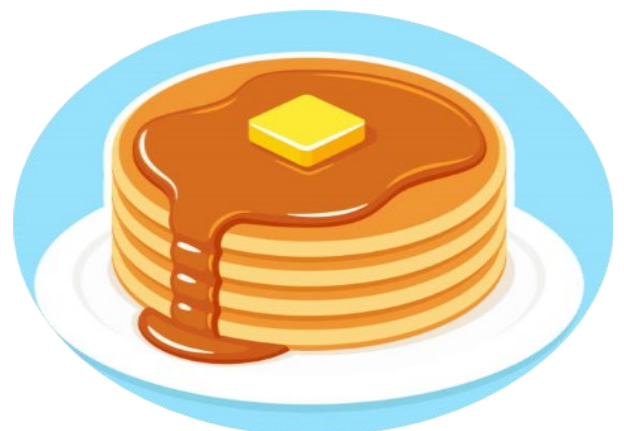
*Please reserve these dates on your calendar and bring family and friends for a great weekend of music and worship.*



**Detroit –based trumpeter James O’Donnell & his band will be the featured musicians this year.**



**Pianist Arlene McDaniel is a familiar face to many at PCO. She’s scheduled to lead Adult Education on Sunday, February 23.**



**Everyone is invited to a pancake breakfast following the Jazz Sunday Worship Service on March 2.**

## Women's Connection in February

This month's meeting is **Sunday, February 23, at 12:30 p.m.** All women are invited for fellowship, lunch, and to hear the life story and faith journey of one of our PCO members. Please plan now to join us, invite friends, and watch weekly announcements for details.

Questions: Shirley Rumminger, 655-4123

## Caregiver Support Group

Caregivers need support and this group strives to meet the varying needs of its members. Whether it be sharing triumphs and struggles or offering resources, the group is supportive of all aspects of caring for a loved one. Our online meeting in **Wednesday, February 26 at 5:00 p.m.** on Zoom, meeting number 517 329 2320. Password is hello.

## Retirees in February

The retirees will meet on **Monday, February 17** in the home of Zora and Ewen Todd (info in the directory or contact the church office) at **12 noon**.

Please join us as we celebrate President's Day and discuss our role as Christians in the political arena.

## Conversation & Contemplation Group

The weekly meeting of the Conversation & Contemplation Group continues on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom, meeting number 905-7009-104. All are welcomed to join the discussion, meditation and study at any time.

In February, we will continue with *Soul Feast* by Marjorie Thompson, Chapters 7 and 8. Reading the chapters is not a requirement of participating, as the discussion and sharing are rich in themselves.

We will deepen our understanding of scriptures in preparation for the Sunday sermon on alternative weeks with the practice of Lection Divina. Centering time with meditation, prayer and sharing joys and concerns are included each week.

This group is led by members of the group who wish to share leadership roles.

## Women's Dinner Out in February

This month, we will eat at Tatse, 515 E. Grand River Avenue in East Lansing at **5:30 p.m. on Monday, February 10**. Please RSVP to Judi Harris at judiharris@gmail dot com (standard email setup)

## 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 February 2.**

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

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

### MONDAYS

**Women's Dinner Out**— This month will be February 10 at 5:30 p.m. See left column for more info.

**Retirees** – 3rd Mondays at 12:00 noon This month we will meet February 17 at Ewen and Zora Todd's home. See left for more info.

### TUESDAYS

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

**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, February 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 **February 20th.**

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

## Info for Youth & Families

# youth calendar

- Sunday Feb 2** pizza & games after worship  
youth group 1:30-3pm
- Saturday Feb 8** soup making 1-3:30pm all youth
- Sunday Feb 9** Souper Sunday 9am-2pm
- Sunday Feb 16** youth group? MS 5-6:30pm  
HS 5:30-7:30pm
- Saturday Feb 22** worship practice
- Sunday Feb 23** Youth Sunday
- Friday Feb 28** tentative: confirmation to synagogue

### Youth Parents Night Out

Thursday, February 20  
(Third Thursdays)  
7:00 p.m.

Joe's on Jolly  
2360 Jolly Road  
Okemos

### Youth Sunday Sunday, February 23

Youth of all ages are invited to plan and participate in the worship service happening Sunday, February 23. From readings to prayers to musical pieces and even preaching, there is a part for every young person.

A long-standing tradition at PCO, Youth Sunday always brings fresh energy and enthusiasm to the sanctuary and is enjoyed by young and not-so-young parishioners alike.

### Souper Sunday is February 9 The tradition continues!

Everyone is welcome enjoy a soup lunch following worship on **Sunday, February 9**. Plan now to stay and sample chicken noodle and tomato soups as well as chili, all prepared by the youth of PCO. Also expected on the day's menu is san-cocho (a stew typically made from meat and root vegetables) prepared by Juan Carlos Roya.

Everyone is also encouraged to bid in a silent auction on soup bowls beautifully painted by the PCO Youth. The auction is going on now and will end at exactly at **Noon on February 9**.

All proceeds from the auction and lunch will benefit the Greater Lansing Foodbank.

Please join us for food and fellowship and to support the PCO Youth and our hungry neighbors.

Thank you!



*Souper Sunday and Bowl Auction*

**February 9**  
after Worship  
soup prepared & served by youth

silent auction of bowls painted by youth

to go orders available

Proceeds support **GREATER LANSING foodbank**



## PCO Library News

### This February, Warm Up With a Good Book!

What's your favorite winter combo? A book and a cup of hot chocolate? A book and a mug of coffee, a cup of tea, a fireplace, a cozy comforter, a lap cat? So many possibilities! Whatever your preference, the PCO library has a book to supply one half of your perfect pairing.

**New for February** (all quotations are from the publishers):

*Tending the Wild Garden: Growing in the Fruit of the Spirit* by Eugenia Anne Gamble "Let the fruit of the Spirit be more than just words on a page—they're the living expressions of God's love within you. Dare to cultivate a life overflowing with love, joy, peace, and so much more."

*The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer "As Indigenous scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer harvests Serviceberries alongside the birds, she considers the ethic of reciprocity that lies at the heart of the gift economy. How, she asks, can we learn from Indigenous wisdom and the plant world to reimagine what we value most?"

*High Hawk: A Novel* by Amy Frykholm "Author Amy Frykholm delivers a beautiful blend of the simple and the profound in a story of self-discovery and reckoning."

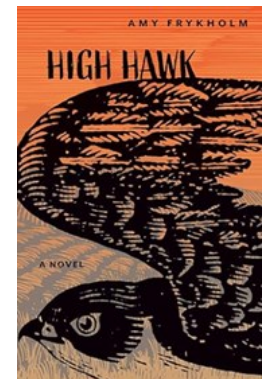
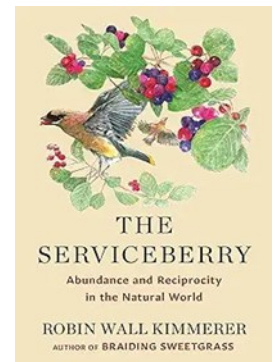
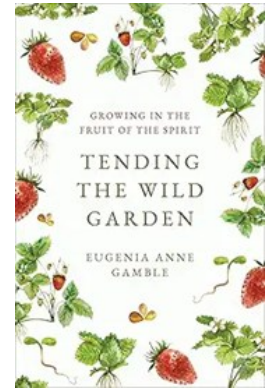
*Irreverent Prayers: Talking to God When You're Seriously Sick* by Elizabeth Felicetti and Samantha Vincent-Alexander "Two pastors share their experiences with serious illness – and their candid, darkly humorous prayers for making it through."

*The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World* by Sharon Brous "A leading American rabbi makes the case that the spiritual work of our time, as instinctual as it is countercultural, is to find our way to one another in celebration, in sorrow, and in solidarity. To show up for each other in moments of joy and pain, vulnerability and possibility, to invest in relationships of shared purpose and build communities of care."

*Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart* by Brian D. McLaren "Blending insights from philosophers, scientists, and theologians, McLaren explores the complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging in turbulent times."

All of these new books, and more, are available for you to borrow from the PCO Library. Just add the title with your name and date to the check-out binder, and keep the book for a suggested loan period of two months (longer if you need more time). When you are finished, please return the books to the returns basket. Thank you!

**Kathi Cook**



## Pajama Collection at PCO

To the Congregation:

The PCO pajama collection for the Judson Love Clothing center was a big success again. We collected 70 sets of pajamas to take to them the first week of February.

Thank you to all of you who donated. Many children in our community will keep a lot warmer while they sleep this winter. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated!

**Jayne Zuhlke**



**So many Spidermen!**

*Young fans of the web-slinging super hero are bound to be happy as well as warm in the many pjs collected that feature Peter Parker's alter ego.*

*For those with a little arachnophobia, plenty of other styles, colors and designs were collected as well.*

**Thank you!**

## **Simbolei Mission Trip June 6-14, 2025**

Simbolei Girls Preparatory Academy is a boarding high school for girls in rural Kenya, founded and run by PCO member Andrea Kaitany and her husband Richard. Two years ago, volunteers from PCO and other churches participated in a short term mission trip to Simbolei. **This year another trip is planned for June 6-14, 2025.**

Volunteers will spend three full days and evenings working with Simbolei students to enjoy enrichment activities and help the students practice conversational English. Activities will include sports, drawing/ painting, baking (utilizing the oven purchased by the PCO Men's Group) and helping groups put the finishing touches on two "Shakespeare for Kids" performances. Two days will include story time activities at local elementary schools.

In addition, the trip will include sightseeing at Nairobi National Park and visits to local business enterprises. An optional trip to Maasai Mara National Park will be available at the end of the mission.

The tentative cost for the entire trip at this point is estimated at \$4000 USD including airfare. We will have more firm estimates as details of the professionally guided tours and also the price for airfare becomes available.

If you would like to learn more from past participants, please feel free to talk with Cathy McCarthy, Jill or Tom Schaberg, or Ellen Hoekstra. There will be an opportunity to hear more in February, and application materials will be available soon.



*Simbolei students in the school library*

### **Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra**

A lot is happening at the federal and state levels. In the US Congress, one piece of good news for continuity is that US Senator Elissa Slotkin has been appointed, among her other assignments, to the Agricultural Committee, previously chaired by former Senator Debbie Stabenow. This appointment is important because that committee is responsible for providing food for low income people, including pregnant women and children.

At the state level, leadership has not yet appointed committees for the State House, while Senate Committees will likely remain very much the same

In other news:

- PCO members are welcome to take part in an advocacy day at the Capitol on **Wednesday, March 12**. The event is hosted by the Michigan Conference of United Methodists and organized by Rev. Alice Townley. This year's goal is to provide individuals catastrophically injured in automobile accidents more care, both by family members and by professional medical staff.
- Prospects are rosy for next year's state budget, given the analysis of the Revenue Estimating Conference. Expect discussions over whether to use the revenue surplus to enhance programs, fix roads, or to return some or all of it to taxpayers.
- One of the recently enacted state laws restores eligibility for sick leave back to 26 weeks (from the 20 enacted during Governor Snyder's administration). It also increases weekly maximum benefits; the effective date is April 1, 2025.
- Beginning on April 1, living organ donors would be eligible for a one-time state income tax credit for lost wages, childcare, transportation, lodging, and other related expenses. The goal of the new law is to incentivize healthy individuals who may be considering donation but cannot afford the non-medical expenses relating to the procedure.
- At both the national level, 4.2 million young people are not enrolled in school or employed. That includes close to 27 % of Detroiters aged 16-25, the highest percentage in the country. Advocates are reviewing programs to engage these young people in ways to reduce their chances of an adulthood in poverty.
- Michigan's teacher shortage is particularly high in districts with the highest proportion of students in poverty. One impact is that students in these districts are significantly more likely to have teachers who aren't certified to teach that grade level or subject.

# BOOK NOOK

*By Ron Dorr*

## Book Reviews, 2020-2024, Part II

*(This second part of my summary of reviews written during the past five years focuses on literature and miscellaneous subjects.)*

Literature. The most engaging and challenging work of fiction was Claire Keegan's novella, Small Things Like These. The protagonist of this story set in Ireland, Bill Furlong, was pondering where he was in life. "Might things never change or develop into something else or new?" What mattered? What were the days for? Tensions peaked between this coal merchant and the Catholic religious order running a laundry and exploiting its workers. Furlong discovered the telling "small things," which, "when added up, amounted to a life."

In Hannah Coulter, by Wendell Berry, the protagonist, twice-widowed and 80 years old, reviewed her life. "This is my story, my giving of thanks." Loss and love were the warp and woof. Berry's customary themes included "our place"—a "farm kindly kept . . . for a lifetime," "the membership" in Berry's imaginative Port William, Kentucky, and the "room of love . . . a great room with a lot of room, where we are invited to knock and come in." And in the midst of hard times, the Coulters kept the faith. They knew how to live right and "right on."

The Other Wise Man, by Henry van Dyke, and A River Runs Through It, by Norman Maclean, were other fiction worth rereading and reviewing.



In March, 2022, Jonathan Townley continued the discussion of Wendell Berry, sang original songs, and read his stunning poem, "Fat Tuesday." He recounted flipping pancakes with several other church members, remembering Tom DuBuoyne, and taking communion, "*the cup of joy, given for you.*" In Born on the Water, a children's version of the 1619 Project, Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renee Watson told the story of African-Americans in verse, a grandmother's lyrical words to her young granddaughter. Nikkolas Smith based his colorful illustrations on African motifs "where Life, Death, and Rebirth" prevailed.

**Poet, musician and seminarian Jonathan Townley**

To Be Young, Gifted, and Black is a collection of Lorraine Hansberry's writing: poetry, interviews, photographs, sketches, letters, personal history, and excerpts from plays such as A Raisin in the Sun and The Drinking Gourd. This multi-talented writer speaks to the mind, heart, imagination, soul, and will to action.

Miscellany. During an unprecedented pandemic, I wrote about contemporary affairs such as four kinds of freedom, two northwestern Iowa towns' views of immigration, and the shootings at Michigan State University. Social justice issues included Ronald Sider's relevant book, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger and Jill Leovy's Ghettoside, a detailed study of multiracial cooperation in solving a murder in Los Angeles. Two books on loss and grief revealed the danger of a single theory such as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's so-called five stages of grief. In a more nuanced study of sorrow (an emotion that Kubler-Ross omitted), psychologist George Bonanno stressed The Other Side of Sadness: resilience. In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Notes on Grief, the reactions of her mother, five siblings, herself, and the Igbo African culture to the death of the patriarch, James Woye Adichie, 88, differed considerably. In a remembrance of Fred Graham, I tried to recreate something of this pastor's faith, teaching, and sense of humor.

In the field of fine arts, besides Townley's singing, Smith's bold drawings, and Winfred Rembert's colorful paintings on leather, I added Ken Burns's and Davton Duncan's illustrated history of Country Music. When True Simplicity is Gained combined the hymn, Biblical passages, classical prayers, Martin Marty's meditations, and son Micah Marty's photographs of Shaker Village buildings and artifacts in Kentucky—all making a fine Lenten devotional book. Finally, I also reviewed statements by public figures: commencement addresses at M. S. U. and President Abraham Lincoln's proclamations for Thanksgiving and days of fasting.

I want to thank Jill Schaberg for encouraging me to write an essay about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and Eunice Creswell for a review of The Lost Words, by Robert MacFarlane and Jackie Morris. Thanks also go to Frank Hatfield for his review of Unsettled, on climate science, by Steven Koonin, and to Rob Carlson for an interview. If anyone would like to write a guest review in the future, please talk to me.

## Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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

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

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