

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



The Wilderness Does Not Have the Last Word

During this Lenten season we are exploring how we remain faithful, and even deepen our faith during seasons of life when we are challenged by loneliness, the need for healing or forgiveness; when we feel stuck and like we are withering on the vine. On Palm Sunday we will turn our face to Jerusalem with a triumphal entry before we share in that Last Supper together on Maundy Thursday and make the journey to the cross on Good Friday.

Through music and scripture, through prayers and sermons, through stories shared and stories heard, we have faced the chaos, the desolation, and the fears of the wilderness. We have looked to Jesus as our model to navigate these times, with his emphasis on connection to God and each other, as we help to carry each other's burdens, and work to reconcile broken relationships. This is our posture as we approach Holy Week. We know we have heavy days ahead, and we know we don't walk the path alone.

Whether we are weighed down by the toll of climate change, global warfare and violence, the political landscape in our country, or personal challenges, we recognize just how hard it is live in hope and faith. And yet that is what we do. The tomb is empty. He is risen. **The wilderness does not have the last word.**

This year I invite you to face Holy Week with this perspective. There are challenging days ahead for us in the church as we say goodbye to Rebecca Mattern after her year and half with us in faith formation, youth ministry pastoral care roles and as we await an Associate Pastor whom God will call to minister with us. There are difficult days ahead for our country as the very ground on which we were formed as a nation is shaken and fractured. Many of us are facing days ahead of grief, pain, and the unknowns of disease. And yet we know **the wilderness does not have the last word.**

In this issue of the Grapevine there are more details on opportunities to deepen faith through worship, service, and education. **Our Lenten Suppers and Storytelling continue on April 3 and 10.** Join us as we be in community as the body of Christ. For spring is coming. The tomb will be empty. Death does not have the last word. The wilderness does not have the last word. Jesus Christ is risen and we live as an Easter people with hope, love, and grace as our guides.

Pastor Lisa

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**Deadline for the May Grapevine is
Tuesday, April 22nd.**

Happening in April @ PCO

A vibrant blue poster for Trivia Night. At the top, the words "TRIVIA NIGHT" are written in large, white, bold letters. Below the title, there are several colorful icons: a question mark in a purple circle, a lightbulb in a teal circle, and a brain in a pink circle. The text "Friday, April 4 7 pm" is in a green circle on the left, and "\$120 PER TABLE (TEAMS OF 6)" is in a purple circle on the right. At the bottom, it says "SUPPORT UKIRK CAMPUS MINISTRY" and "FOR MORE INFORMATION: UKIRKMSU.ORG".

TRIVIA NIGHT

Friday, April 4
7 pm

\$120 PER TABLE
(TEAMS OF 6)

SUPPORT UKIRK CAMPUS MINISTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION: UKIRKMSU.ORG

Trivia Night returns to PCO. Sign up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall or contact Kent Workman (info in the directory)

Thursday Evening Lenten Program

Sharing our Stories: Faith in the Wilderness Lenten gatherings continue in early April. Suppers take place on **Thursdays, April 3 & 10, from 6:00—6:30 p.m.** and Storytelling through voice, writing and drawing is scheduled from **6:30 to 7:15 p.m.** Everyone is welcome.

If you'd like contribute food to the meal, or assist with set up or clean up, sign up on the kiosk or contact Barbara Fretwell-Cooke (*info in the directory*).

Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner

PCO will host a table at this years Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner on **Monday, April 21, 2025** at 5:30 p.m. at the Henry Center 3535 Forest Road, Lansing. If you would like to join us, add your name to the sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall or see Kent Workman (*info in the directory*).

PCO HOLY WEEK

April 13, 10 am --- Palm Sunday Worship

*Interactive Journey Through Holy Week Education Hour, 11:30 am

April 17, 7 pm --- Maundy Thursday Service

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

April 18, 7 pm --- Good Friday Service at PCO

Worship with Okemos Community Church featuring the Gounod Requiem

April 20, 10 am Easter Worship featuring Brass Quintet, Handbells, and Chancel Choir

Easter brunch for all following worship!

*Interactive Journey Through Holy Week will also be available:

- Tuesday - Friday from 9 am - 2 pm
- Thursday from 6 - 7 pm
- Friday from 6 - 7 pm

Locations throughout the church.
Directions provided.



Note from the APNC

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee is continuing candidate review and discernment, and while we have had a few strong candidates, the collective discernment doesn't always match needs (our or theirs).

If you have contacts with other churches and presbyteries, feel free to share this position broadly. Interested candidates can self-refer through the Church Leadership Connection platform.

**New Member Class
coming in May.
Contact Pastor Lisa
for more info.**

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our April Birthdays on **Sunday, April 13, due to the Easter Holiday**. If you were born in April, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, April 6, if it is not already there.

Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group meets on Zoom the fourth Wednesday of each month. This month we will meet on **April 23 at 5:00 p.m.** The Zoom number is 517-329-2320 and the password is hello. All are welcome to attend this open discussion. Topics vary depending on the needs of the group.

Women's Connection in April

Women's Connection will meet **Sunday, April 27, 12:30 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. After gathering time and lunch, we will have guest *Valerie Marvin, Michigan Capitol Historian and Curator, and President of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing*, speaking on the women of the historical churches in Downtown Lansing. All interested people are invited. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Shirley Rumminger, 655-4123 or *srumming at yahoo dot com*.

Retirees in April

The Retirees will meet at **noon on Monday, April 21 in Fellowship Hall**.

We will reflect on the Lent and Easter season. What disciplines, practices, services or readings made a difference in your lives over this period? We will also explore future topics of discussion and whether or not to continue over the summer months.

Some members of the group have volunteered to help prepare and serve an Advent House meal, date to be determined. If you are interested, please let Jane Bobay or Ellen Hoekstra know (*contact info in the directory*).

Conversation & Contemplation Group

In April, the C&C group will meet each Wednesday from 10-11:30 a.m. on Zoom 905-709-104. The practice of Lectio Divina alternates with the study of the spiritual disciplines using *Soul Feast* by Marjorie J. Thompson. This set-up provide contemplative time and discussion each session. Members of the group share leadership.

On **Wednesday, May 14**, C&C will meet at the church for a retreat with Sharon Mc Cauley from **10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.** If you are interested is attending, please contact Jane Bobay (*info in the directory*).

Group members will prepare and serve a dinner at Advent House in Lansing on Saturday, April 19.



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 April 6.**

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **April 13.**

Women's Connection— 4th Sundays at **12:30 p.m.** in Room 108. This month will be on **April 27.**

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— This month will be **Monday, April 7** at 5:30 p.m. at A1 Fusion (see below).

Retirees – 3rd Mondays at 12:00 noon This month we will meet **April 21** at PCO in Fellowship Hall.

TUESDAYS

Men's Group – Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid** (In-person and on Zoom) this month **Tuesday, April 1.**

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, **April 23rd**. 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—4th Thursday this month due to Holy Week Services, 7:00 p.m. at Joe's on Jolly. Next meeting is **April 24th.**

Women's Dinner Out in April

The women's dinner out will be on **Monday, April 7 at 5:30 p.m.** at A1 Fusion, 2827 E. Grand River, East Lansing ,MI 48823. Please RSVP to Judi Harris at *judi harris at gmail dot com* (standard email set up).

For Youth & Families

Youth Calendar

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

APRIL 13 PALM SUNDAY
YOUTH GROUP
DETAILS COMING SOON

APRIL 17 MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE 7PM

APRIL 17 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE 7PM

APRIL 20 EASTER

APRIL 27 REBECCA'S LAST DAY
YOUTH GROUP
ALL YOUTH 5-7:30PM
DINNER 5PM

APRIL 24
7PM
JOE'S ON JOLLY
Youth
Parents
Night Out

Family Camp Reminder
PCO members and friends are invited to return to Skyline Retreat Center in Almont, MI on May 23, 24 & 25! All ages are welcome! Check in is between 4:00 & 7:00 p.m. Friday. Check out is by 2:00 p.m. on Sunday. If you have questions, contact Christine Meland (*info in the directory*) or visit <https://campskyline.org>

INTERACTIVE

FOR ALL AGES

JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY AFTER WORSHIP
SELF GUIDED DURING HOLY WEEK
VARIOUS ROOMS

PLANNED AND LED WITH
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
YOUTH

- HEAR AND PARTICIPATE IN THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES OF THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS' LIFE
- RESPOND THROUGH A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED FOR EACH READING



From the PCO Mission Committee



One Great Hour of Sharing

We are collecting for this offering through Palm Sunday, April 13.
Please note OGHS in the memo line of your check or e-donation.



Simbolei Update

In June, Jerri Gillett, David Horner, Ellen Hoekstra and a non-PCO friend of David and Ellen's will take part in a mission trip to Simbolei Academy for Girls in rural Kenya. The volunteers' suitcases will include supplies for the school requested by Andrea Kaitany, former PCO member and co-founder of Simbolei with her husband. If you would like to help, a list of her requested items will be posted on the kiosk on April 20.

Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra

Recently, the Governor gave her State of the State Address and delivered the Executive Budget proposal for legislative consideration.

Recent policy items include:

- Michigan's statewide high school graduation rate is at a record high—reaching over 82% in 2023-23, according to the Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information. School districts in our area generally reflect this trend.
- The deaths of two Detroit children are drawing attention to people who are homeless. Homelessness has been on the rise in Michigan, with rates increasing a little over 8% since 2020. Michigan stopped providing Section 8 housing vouchers in July, yet almost 60,000 Michiganders remain on a waiting list. Rents in Michigan increased by over 12% last year.
- The tiny northern town of Rapid River saw four deaths from fentanyl overdoses in less than one year, a reminder that the opioid crisis affects rural as well as urban communities. Ingham County has seen a significant uptick in overdoses as well. Statewide, more than 2,200 residents died of opioid overdoses in 2023.
- Further north, sheriff's deputies frequently drive psychiatric patients 8 to 15 hours to Wisconsin or downstate, due to an acute shortage of psychiatric beds in the UP.
- Another medical provider shortage in Michigan is dentistry, with at least 400 more dentists needed. The greatest needs are in rural areas and Detroit. In 2023—for the first time in 30 years—Michigan raised the Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental services to encourage more dentists to accept patients with that insurance.
- Bills have been introduced in the Michigan House to repeal the “red flag” firearm safety legislation enacted in 2023. Although these bills, HB 4138-4140, may see action in the House and even pass that chamber, it is very unlikely that the Senate will follow suit.
- A few PCO members attended the UMC & Friends' Day on March 12. This year's advocacy was aimed at resolving the crisis in care caused by the 2019 auto no-fault legislation. Over 200 volunteers focused on increasing the number of reimbursable hours for family caregivers and improving reimbursement rates for medical providers.
- At the Capitol, a bipartisan set of legislators is proposing funding benefits to make Michigan a leader in the nuclear power industry.

PCO Library News

The PCO Library celebrates Earth Day all month long! As we read about God's beautiful creation, we can find comfort, wisdom, and inspiration in our connections with nature. These new books for April will be displayed on the round table in the library (all quotations are from the book covers):

Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth by Randy Woodley

"Randy Woodley, an activist, farmer, and scholar, guides us on a one-hundred-day journey to reconnect with the land around us, with the people native to that land, and with ourselves. Meditations, epigraphs, and ideas for reflection and action help us become rooted in our relationship with creation and Creator."

This Sweet Earth: Walking with Our Children in the Age of Climate Collapse by Lydia Wylie-Kellerman

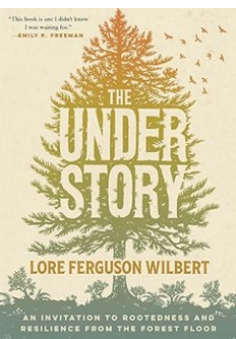
"Climate anxiety touches nearly everything we do, but perhaps nothing so tenderly as our parenting. What do we do with the fear, grief, and anger we feel? Parent and activist Lydia Wylie-Kellerman wrestles with these questions and argues that while the future remains unknown, we can still join our children in the beauty and hope of the struggle."

The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year by Margaret Renkl

"Margaret Renkl presents a literary devotional: fifty-two chapters that follow the creatures and plants in her backyard over a year. What develops is a portrait of joy and grief: joy in the ongoing pleasures of the natural world, and grief over winters that end too soon and songbirds that grow fewer and fewer. A lovely and deeply moving book from a cherished observer of the natural world."

Love's Braided Dance: Hope in the Time of Crisis by Norman Wirzba

"In this series of meditations, Norman Wirzba recasts hope not as something people have, but as something people do. It grows in contexts of nurture and belonging. Hope ignites when people join in a commitment to care for one another and our world. Wirzba offers a powerful argument for hope as a way of life in which people are intimately and practically joined with all the living."



The Understory: An Invitation to Rootedness and Resilience from the Forest Floor by Lore Ferguson Wilbert

"Wilbert explores what we can learn from eroding soil, the decomposition process, the time it takes to grow lichen, the beauty of fiddlehead ferns, the regeneration of self-sowing seeds, and walking through the mud. Among the understory of the forest, she discovers rich metaphors for living a rooted and flourishing life within the complex ecosystems of our world."

Three other new additions to our collection:

First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament

I Made the Earth, a picture book by Shannon Cook

Class Act, a graphic novel by Jerry Craft

Please visit the PCO Library and follow the simple instructions for borrowing a book. Every month is a good month to read something new!

Kathi Cook



Dear Reverend Schrott & PCO Family,

Happy Spring! As we see the beauty of spring and the warmth of the season around us, I am reminded that even though everything around us changes, God's love and provision for us never will!

For the Love Clothing Center, we see the examples God's love and provision through all the donations we receive, such as the donation of pajamas received from PCO! The donation is truly a blessing for the children and teens we serve at the clothing center!

Thank you again for your support!

Sincerely,

**Debra Dawsey, Co-Director,
Love Clothing Center**

To the Congregation:

Thank you for your ongoing support of Loaves and Fishes, Advent House and the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Your donations to the grocery cart and the personal needs bins support our neighbors utilizing these organizations

**The PCO Mission
Committee**



BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

THE SLOW ROAD NORTH

by Rosie Schaap

Glenarm is a charming village of 600 members 30 miles north of Belfast that time has forgotten. In 2019, it had become a community of holdons and holdovers who welcomed Rosie Schaap into their village. At 48, Schaap had come to Glenarm because she savored the nearby sea and forest, she was grieving the deaths of her husband and mother, and she wanted “to live. I am here for the long-gone well that heals the wounded.” Five years later, The Slow Road North shows How I Found Peace in an Improbable Country.

Rosie Schaap’s career varied considerably. She had been a teacher, free-lance writer, community organizer, director of a shelter for the homeless, ordained interfaith minister, chaplain for the Red Cross, bartender, and wine steward. Author of Drinking with Men: A Memoir and Becoming a Sommelier as well as columnist for the New York Times on dining, sports, books, and travel, she is witty and warm-hearted, curious, and skeptical. She is adroit at changing an Irish Protestant or Catholic’s question, “What are you?”, into an invitation, “Let’s share a pint,” at the pub. Her Judaic humanism shines throughout this book. Unlike her mother, Rosie had grown wiser as she grew older.

On February 15, 2010, Rosie’s “mate of thirteen years, husband for seven,” professor of literature and fellow lover of poetry, Frank, 42, died of cancer at a hospice, “alone and afraid,” according to the chaplain. Schaap felt extremely guilty that she was not present in Frank’s last hours. A year later, her mother died. Grieving both deaths was quite difficult. To be a widow at 39 was terrible.

Memories of her trips to Ireland in 1991 and 2008, however, began to surface. In October, 2010, a trip to Dublin convinced her that “Ireland was where I had to be . . . where I could tend to my sorrows.” She met new people. At a cocktail bar she hugged three Irish women who had empathized with her grief: “Aw, pet, he was too young. And you’re too young, too.” Endearing trips to Glenarm in 2016 and 2017 were calling her to Ireland.

The Slow Road North gives us several memorable characters and conversations. A punk rock expert told her, “Belfast needs you.” An Irish bartender/sculptor insulted Rosie but befriended her. A storyteller told her to take care of a wasp sting. A yoga class provided local gossip and a visit to the pub after each weekly session. Early widows and a married couple in their 80s offered advice, kindness, and sense of community.

The most important people included Mark, the sculptor who helped her move in. Long walks in the forest and along the beach during the beginning of the Covid pandemic drew them closer and closer, leading to their wedding in 2021. Stevey McAuley’s partner at the local pub, Joan, who had lost her 21-year-old son in an accident caused by a drunk driver, became special. She talked frankly and generously about her own loss and grief, sharing unconventional views about death, grief, Irish wakes, closure, and forgiveness.

The Slow Road North shows how important social support and community are to bereft and wounded people. Grief suppressed is often grief increased; grief expressed is usually grief diminished. On September 1, 2021, Seaview Primary School in Glenarm became the first former Catholic school in Northern Ireland to formally integrate students of all faiths or even no faith. Even the physical aspects that drew tourists—forest trails to appreciate nature, beaches to relax to the rhythm of waves—enhanced the sense of reviving community.

Finally, The Slow Road North provides a wise and humane meditation on mortality, grief, mourning, and renewing life. Rosie Schaap welcomed the Irish attitude about accepting not denying death in the midst of life. Irish wakes were restorative ways to handle strong emotions and evoke beautiful tributes. Schaap ends with Seamus Heaney’s famous poem, “The Cure at Troy.” Not only does it mean “once in a lifetime / That justice can rise up / And hope and history rhyme,” but also “Believe that a further shore / Is reachable from here. Believe in miracles / And cures and healing wells.”



Author Rosie Schaap

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