

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Rooted & Engaged: Rooted in Christ & Engaged in Community

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. -- Colossians 2:6-7

A year ago the PCO Session adopted our Journey to 2030 vision which included our commitment to be:

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

Committees of the church have sought to strengthen places where these actions were already in place, as well as develop new opportunities. Our worship services include more participation from across the age span; our Green Team and Youth are partnering on an exciting project you will hear about on May 4; a new Welcome Team has been established; we are partnering with churches in our Presbytery to eat, pray, and act in hope together (see page 3 for our next event on May 16). I have been so heartened by the participation in fellowship opportunities, with connections and conversations abounding.

Last June we embarked on an Intergenerational Mission Week with 35- participants across ages engaging in service projects with some long-standing, as well as, newer mission partners. Participants expressed deep appreciation of the value of the intergenerational aspect of the projects, as well as the opportunities to dig deeper into the challenges facing our community. Our **2025 Intergenerational Mission Week will be June 9 – 13**. There will be opportunities to serve during the day, and in the late afternoon and early evening. We will kick the week off on **Pentecost Sunday, June 8** with an all-church picnic hosted by Parish Life. Mark your calendars!

From May 4 – June 1, our worship services will prepare us for the Mission Week as we explore how the disciples were *rooted* in Christ and how they *engaged* in their communities. Each week will have a theme related to one of the service opportunities occurring during the upcoming Mission Week:

- Creation Care (PCO Prayer Path)
- From Welcoming to Belonging (Care for Our Refugee Neighbors)
- Tend My Lambs (Shalom in a Fractured World)
- Feed My Sheep (Addressing Food Insecurity).

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***Deadline for the June Grapevine is
Friday, May 23rd.***

Cont. from previous page.

In addition, on May 11 we will hear from First Presbyterian Church Lansing Elder Willie Bryan (Founder) and Prince Solace (President) of the Justice League of Greater Lansing. The Justice League aims to address the impact of slavery, fostering relationships and reparations in Lansing by linking faith with racial justice to promote healing and unity.

My prayer in the Eastertide season is that we truly practice resurrection through our commitment to being rooted in Christ's call to love God and love neighbor, as we seek to engage our community. We remember that the wilderness of death and despair do not have the last word. We are called to be the body of Christ in this time and in this place. May it be so.

Pastor Lisa

A Message from Rebecca Mattern

Dear PCO Members and Friends,

I give thanks to God for the last 18 months of my ministry with you. I celebrate you as a congregation and as individuals for your atmosphere of welcome, encouragement, and engagement in the work that God is calling you to do both within the congregation and out in the community. I give thanks for the tears and laughter and ordinary times we have shared, for the ways you have experimented with me in worship, supported and engaged the youth and their ministry, welcomed children into worship leadership, cared for one another, and served as leaders and helpers in the work of worship, mission, education, fellowship, leadership, congregational care and stewardship that glorifies God and creates a sense of belonging.

I have grown in my own sense of call to ministry and as a person, and I am grateful that you have provided time and space for that growth. Thank you for your beautiful send off, your cards and gifts, your hugs, your encouragement, and your excitement for what lies ahead for me. I am confident that God has amazing plans in store for me – and for you – and I am so excited to see how God will use each of us, now on separate paths, to make this world a more loving, just, and welcoming place for all creation.

As many of you already know, I will be traveling to Turkey and then, on May 12, Kristin Stroble and I will begin walking the Camino Frances route of the Camino de Santiago (also known as the way of Saint James). Since the Middle Ages, this nearly 500-mile trek has been traveled by pilgrims. I am excited to embark on this spiritual journey and spend time evaluating and tending to the alignment of my body, mind, and spirit with God. I plan to post pictures on my blog, at least weekly, and you are welcome to follow: <https://rebeccamattern.home.blog/>

May God bless you and keep you, until we meet again,

Rebecca



Map source: Paulusburg, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Happening in May



Presbyterian Church of Okemos

2258 Bennett Rd. Okemos, MI

4:00 PM, Sunday, May 18, 2025

A freewill offering will be collected in support of local refugee services

Featuring the combined handbell choirs of Presbyterian Church of Okemos, Edgewood United Church of Christ, and University United Methodist Church, along with members of the Capital City Ringers, Capital Area Community Bell Choir, and Kalamazoo Ringers

With special guests Larry and Carla Sue, handbell duet

Also including piano, vocal, string, and wind solo and small ensemble performances

New Member Class

The next opportunity to formally join PCO will be during **early-mid May**. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Lisa for more information.

C&C Retreat Reminder

The Conversation & Contemplation Group will be gathering from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, May 14** at PCO for a retreat led by Sharon McCauley.

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://campsyline.org>

Meridian Pride

Saturday, May 31

Worship Service

11:00 a.m.

Central Park Pavilion
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos

Pride Festival

5:00—10:00 p.m.
Marketplace on the
Green Pavilion
1995 Central Park
Drive
Stop by the PCO
booth!

Feeling discouraged by current events?

Feeling called to do something?

Hope in Action

Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Eastern Area Churches

Potluck, Worship & Community Action

Friday, May 16, 2025

Gathering Time 6:00–6:30 p.m.

Potluck 6:30–7:15 p.m. (bring a dish to share)

Worship 7:15–7:45 p.m.

Action 7:45–8:30 p.m.

Host: First Presbyterian Church of Holt
2021 Aurelius Road, Holt

Participating
churches:
Delta and Dimondale
PC
Eastminster PC
FPC-Holt
FPC-Jonesville
FPC-Lansing
FPC-Mason
Northwestminster PC
Okemos PC

YOUTH CALENDAR



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Pastor Lisa and Roy Meland will be leading sessions during youth group on Mental Health and Suicide Awareness

AND

The Green Team and Youth will join together to create a prayer path in our very own PCO woods

- MAY 4 5-7PM MIDDLE SCHOOL: MENTAL HEALTH SESSION
SENIOR HIGH: WORK ON TRAIL WITH GREEN TEAM
- MAY 11 5-7PM MIDDLE SCHOOL: WORK ON TRAIL WITH GREEN TEAM
SENIOR HIGH: MENTAL HEALTH SESSION
- MAY 18 5:30-7:30PM ALL YOUTH: WORK ON TRAIL WITH GREEN TEAM



HOMEWORK AND HANGOUT
CONTINUES THROUGH MAY 21
WEDNESDAYS 3-5PM
SEE Barbara Fretwell-Cooke
for details



Save the Date!

On **Sunday, June 8**, the PCO All Church Picnic returns. Watch the announcements for more information. We hope to see you then!



May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

Watch your inbox for dedicated emails that will include resources to help care for your own mental health and to possibly assist others who may need help.



Congratulations Graduates!

class of

2025

Happy Graduation!

Graduate Recognition Sunday

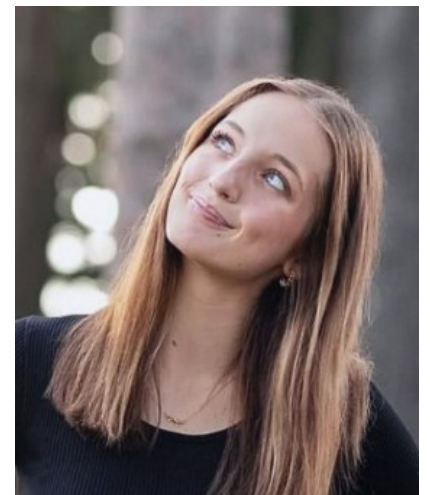
Sunday, May 18 during Worship

Celebrating PCO members and children graduating from high school, trade school and post-secondary programs, college/university, and graduate and professional programs.

Please send names of graduates to the church office with school name and diploma.



PCO Chancel Choir Director Westin Sorrel is graduating from Michigan State University this May with a Masters of Music (MM) in Choral Conducting.



Laurel Boldrey is graduating from Okemos High School. She is the daughter of Lance and Angie Boldrey. Her church family is invited to her graduation party on Saturday, May 31 beginning at 1:00 p.m. at 4228 Cornell Rd. in Okemos.



Alexander (Alex) Juarez is graduating from Okemos High School. He is the son of John and Chandra Juarez. His church family is invited to his open house on Friday, May 30 from 6:00—9:00 p.m. at PCO.



Lucas Meland is graduating from Holt High School on June 1st and plans to attend Michigan Technological University in the fall. He is the son of Roy and Christine Meland. All church friends are invited to his open house at PCO on Friday, June 13 from 6:00—10:00 p.m.



Spencer Locke is graduating from Haslett High School. He is the son of Scott and Kelly Locke.

Conversation & Contemplation Group

In May, the C&C group will meet each Wednesday from 10-11:30 a.m. on Zoom 905-709-104. Lectio and Book discussions alternate, with members leading the study. Sharing joys and concerns, meditation and prayer are part of each gathering.

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

Retirees in May

The Retirees will meet at **noon on Monday, May 19 in Fellowship Hall**. We will have a guest from the Tri-County on Aging Outreach team. They will talk about resources that are available to county residents, programs they offer and distribute informational materials.. Whether you are interested in what they have to offer, would like to have brochures to share or may be looking for volunteer opportunities, this session will provide one-stop-shopping! Please join us. This is open to all church family and friends.

Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support group meets on Zoom (517-329-2320 - password—hello) on **Wednesday, May 28 at 5:00 p.m.** Members discuss topics related to providing care for loved ones and we invite anyone to join this meeting. Sharing successes, frustrations, information and resources and receiving support is valuable to all.

Women's Dinner Out in May

The women's dinner out will be on **Monday, May 12 at 5:30 p.m.** at Cancun Mexican Grill on Central Park in Okemos. Please RSVP to Judi Harris at *judi harris at gmail dot com* (standard email set up).

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our May Birthdays on **Sunday, May 18**. If you were born in May, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, May 11, if it is not already there.

Women's Connection

Women's Connection *will not* be meeting in May. We encourage everyone attend Kaleidoscope: A Collage Concert on Sunday, May 18 and to enjoy their Memorial Day weekend wherever they are.

We will see you in September!

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— This month ^{2nd} Sunday, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— **next meeting is May 11.**

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **May 18.**

Women's Connection— On hiatus until September.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— This month will be **Monday, May 12** at 5:30 p.m. See left column for more info.

Retirees— 3rd Mondays at 12:00 noon This month we will meet **May 19** 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, May 6.**

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, **May 28th**. 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 scheduled for **May 15th.**

PCO Library News

Reading as an Act of Resistance

Please take a moment to consider buying, borrowing, and reading books as an act of resistance. We can learn from and support a diverse group of writers. We can resist racism, cruelty, despair, injustice, willful ignorance, and book-banning. We can choose inclusion, empathy, kindness, hope, justice, and truth. The possibilities are too numerous to list here. You can visit the PCO Library and pick up a new book, or one of the many already on the shelves. This may seem like a small act, but it can be one with meaning and purpose.

The table in the PCO Library will feature these new books for May (all quotes taken from the book covers):

Social Justice for the Sensitive Soul: How to Change the World in Quiet Ways by Dorcas Cheng-Tozun “Social justice work, we often assume, is raised voices and raised fists. What does social justice work look like for those of us who aren’t comfortable battling in the trenches? Cheng-Tozun explores pathways where our quieter, but equally passionate, collaborators for social good can serve and thrive.”

Bring Back Your People: Ten Ways Regular Folks Can Put a Dent in White Christian Nationalism by Aaron Scott “For White folks alarmed by the rise of Christian nationalism comes this mouthy, practical guide to holding conversations with those who have been misled by White Christian nationalist ideas. Scott shares strategies of relationship and organizing to help us and others resist.”

Rally: Communal Prayers for Lovers of Jesus and Justice by Britney Winn Lee “Both a cry for action and a comfort for our anxious souls, *Rally* addresses issues of social justice through lament and celebration. It provides words for concerned Christians who yearn to lift their voices to God with their community to confront injustice in its many forms.”

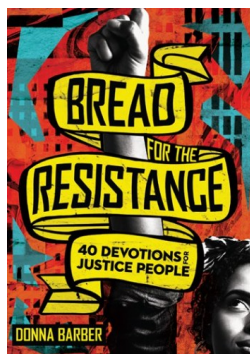
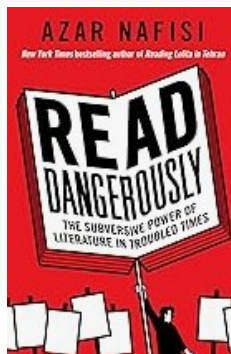
In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Our Lives, and How It Can Save the World by Bruce Reyes-Chow “What if kindness could change the world? Reyes-Chow asserts we can each choose kindness as a new way to experience community and wholeness.”

Bread for the Resistance: 40 Devotions for Justice People by Donna Barber “In these daily devotions, Barber offers life-giving words of renewal and hope for those engaged in the resistance to injustice. When you face adversity, you can take courage. When you grapple with discouragement, you can find hope. When your legs are tired from marching and your knees are bruised from kneeling, you can experience rest and healing.”

Read Dangerously: The Subversive Power of Literature in Troubled Times by Azar Nafisi “The New York Times bestselling author returns with a guide to the power of literature in turbulent times, arming readers with a resistance reading list from James Baldwin to Zora Neale Hurston to Margaret Atwood.”

I encourage you to take a look at these books for more detailed summaries and author bios. Thank you.

Kathi Cook



The sweatshirt collection was a success!

Thank you to all who donated to the Love Clothing Bank. More than 80 sweatshirts were delivered to Judson Memorial Baptist Church, where the Clothing Center is located. Your donation will keep those in need warm this spring! Thank you!

Jayne Z

From UKirk @ MSU

Thanks for once again hosting the UKirk Trivia night this Spring! It was a great success and Fellowship Hall was full of people having fun and supporting the UKirk ministry at MSU. More than \$2,600 was raised for the campus ministry. Thanks, and hope to see you again in the fall!

On Saturday, April 12th UKirk distributed about 600 new and gently used books to children, bringing the total number of books distributed to nearly 8,000!

And, working with the MSU Food Bank, UKirk collected 20 carts of donations.

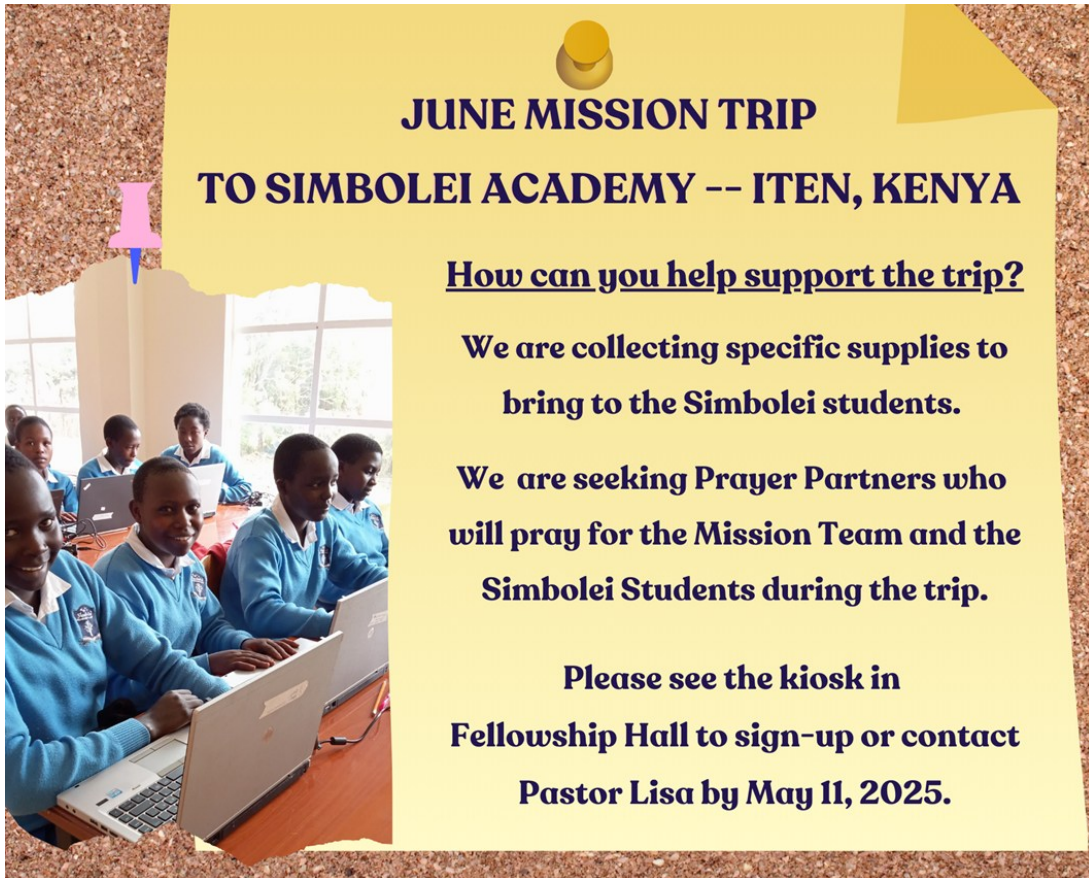
UKirk Campus Ministry

OGHS

Your support of The One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering will help the hungry, those recovering from various kinds of disasters, and those benefiting from various kinds of development programs.

Thank you!

PCO Mission Committee



JUNE MISSION TRIP

TO SIMBOLEI ACADEMY -- ITEN, KENYA

How can you help support the trip?

We are collecting specific supplies to bring to the Simbolei students.

We are seeking Prayer Partners who will pray for the Mission Team and the Simbolei Students during the trip.

Please see the kiosk in Fellowship Hall to sign-up or contact Pastor Lisa by May 11, 2025.

**Intergenerational
Mission Week
2025**

June 9—14th

Participate in one day's activity,
or join in all week.

We will have opportunities to serve at several different PCO Mission partners in the area.

Everyone is encouraged to take part. It is truly a rewarding experience.

**Public Policy Report
By Ellen Hoekstra**

Movement on legislation has been slow at the State Capitol. Although new sessions typically begin somewhat slowly, only two bills have passed through the legislature and been signed by the Governor in the past three months. By contrast, in 2024 275 bills were signed into law. We can, of course, count on a state budget being enacted.

At the state level, we are seeing tidal waves (not ripples) as a result of actions by President Trump. For starters, as a result of the DOGE cuts, \$394 million in federal dollars that was expected to flow through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will not be forthcoming. These cuts are expected to affect services that include COVID testing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and the prevention/control of emerging infectious diseases.

In education, 27 districts across the state will share \$17.8 million in losses because US Secretary of Education Linda McMahon halted their remaining COVID funds. Also, this year nearly 60,000 fewer K-12 students will no longer be considered "economically disadvantaged", mainly due to the definition of "economically disadvantaged" no longer being tied to Medicaid eligibility as it was during the pandemic. This will reduce funding for "at risk" students in 350 of Michigan's 820 districts—hitting districts with higher proportions of low income families more heavily.

Leaders of the Michigan Immigration Rights Center, which provides attorneys for unaccompanied minors from other countries, are desperately seeking additional private funding. DOGE cuts eliminated federal funding for attorneys for these children, and there is a \$12 million gap to fill. Sources suggest 800 some minors including one 10 month old make up this caseload. Legal assistance can show whether the minor meets one of the standards—abuse, neglect, or persecution—to remain here legally.

In other news, the Governor has asked MDHHS to analyze the effect of potential cuts to Medicaid in our state. More than 2.5 million use Medicaid for health care. And finally, Michigan is one of the states with the highest concentration of seniors. Preliminary reports suggest that the seniors would get better care if a greater proportion of state funding for the elderly went to services to help residents remain in their homes rather than going to costlier nursing homes. In some counties, for instance, there are waiting lists for Meals on Wheels, and insufficient funding also means recipients don't receive as many meals as they are eligible for.

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

BOOK NOOK

Kent State: An American Tragedy

by Brian VanDeMark

In his interview with former national guardsman Matt McManus on October 24, 2020, historian Brian VanDeMark was seeking answers to persistent questions. Who ordered the Ohio national guardsmen to fire at student protestors on the campus of Kent State University on May 4, 1970? Who fired the first shot and why? And who should be held responsible or accountable for the disaster that followed? The answers that McManus provided—answers that the guardsman had withheld for 50 years—were anguishing but illuminating.

Fifty-four years after the tragedy, U. S. Naval Academy historian Brian VanDeMark published the most thorough, most informative, and saddest book on this “American tragedy” that I have read.

VanDeMark does what any good historian does. He crafts the stuff of lived (and dying) human experience into narrative art. Characters exhibit the warts and wonders, the weakness and wisdom, of fellow human beings. One telling detail after another surfaces. Yet pertinent analysis leads to significant generalizations, interpretations, and judgments.

Mixing narrative and analysis judiciously, VanDeMark organizes his material well. The first 99 pages set the context: the divisive issue of the war in Vietnam, character sketches of 13 students, and events on May 1-3. The next 106 pages examine the events of May 4, 1970, hour by hour—especially 12:34 p.m., when “within 12.53 seconds, approximately thirty of the seventy-eight guardsmen on Blanket Hill fired sixty-seven shots,” killing four and wounding nine students. The final 99 pages give us the immediate aftermath, the investigations and trials that followed, and lives lived through April, 2021.

In chilling and heroic moments, the author personalizes the principal actors. In March, 1970, two extremists in the Students for a Democratic Society blew themselves to bits because they mistakenly set off a home-made bomb. Governor Jim Rhodes, running for reelection, sent the Ohio National Guard to restore order on Kent State’s campus even though the young men arrived, exhausted from four-days’ duty at Akron earlier. Some of the guardsmen had never shot M-1 rifles before. Putting gas masks on meant that many had to remove their glasses—two with uncorrected eyesight of 20/80 and 20/200. Ironies abound. Early on the morning of May 4, protestor Jeff Miller told his mother, “Don’t worry, Ma, I may get arrested, but I won’t get my head busted”; that afternoon he was shot in the head and killed. After identifying his dead daughter, Sandy, at a hospital, Martin Scheuer drove home “towards this rainbow like it was created by God to show he was over us.”

Later, General Robert Canterbury was asked, “Who was the senior officer on the Kent State campus on May 4, 1970?” “I was,” he replied. “Did you consider yourself in command?” “No, I was there, but I was not in command of any unit,” he admitted. Confused by the back and forth movements on Blanket Hill, platoon sergeant Matt McManus yelled, “Get the weapons up! Fire in the air!” He fired once from his shotgun, he confessed to Brian VanDeMark 50 years later.

Unfortunately, other guardsmen thought it was a command to fire into the crowd. “Matt McManus shouted his ‘Fire in the air!’ order in a desperate attempt *to prevent bloodshed*. A young man under tremendous strain and pressure, he tried to do the right thing, but ended up making things much, much worse—in large part because of General Canterbury’s failure of leadership, which allowed the situation to get out of control,” VanDeMark concludes.

That judgment largely follows the reports by the F. B. I. and the Scranton Commission, which concluded that most students hit were 55 to 200 yards away, that guardsmen’s lives were not in danger, and that the killings were “unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable.”

Yet no one was held accountable. A special state grand jury report, which indicted 24 students and one professor, was thrown out as “prejudicial” by an appellate court. National guardsmen were acquitted in criminal and civil cases. The final civil case resulted in a financial settlement of \$675,000 for the students injured and \$15,000 for each of the four families who lost a son or daughter. The killings at Kent State went unpunished.



Author Brian VanDeMark

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