



## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

Whether you are a visitor to the community or are looking for a church home, you will find a welcome at the Presbyterian Church of Okemos. This is a warm and nurturing community where all are invited to gather together and engage God through worship, study, fellowship, and service.



# WELCOME



## MEET OUR PASTOR



### WEBSITE:

[okemospres.org](http://okemospres.org)

### OFFICE:

(517) 349-9536

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

#### Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00am-2:00pm



## Reverend Lisa Schrott



The Rev. Lisa Schrott joined the staff in November 2021. Prior to joining us at PCO, she served as the Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Congregational Life at First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head Island. Rev. Schrott earned her Master of Divinity at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA with Honor's in Practical Theology.

Lisa grew up in Bowie, MD, a suburb of Washington, D.C. She graduated from Lafayette College in Easton PA, with a degree in Biology. Following college Lisa earned an M.S. and Ph.D. in Biobehavioral Science (Neuroscience). Lisa is a second career minister, having been an Associate Professor of Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Neuroscience at Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, LA. It is while there that she felt a call to ministry.

Lisa is married to Brian McWilliams. They met while they were both living in Connecticut and they have traversed the country for their respective careers, living in Colorado, Minnesota, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina and now Michigan.



## MEET THE STAFF



**Marlene Brewbaker**  
Organist and Music Director

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker received her Bachelor and Master degrees in organ performance from the University of Michigan, and studied toward a DMA at the University of Kansas. In addition to playing for Sunday services, Dr. Brewbaker coordinates the activities of the various music groups and plans special music programs and concerts throughout the year.



**Colleen Chester**  
Choir Director

Colleen is studying for her doctorate at MSU's choral conducting program. She is a graduate teaching assistant at MSU and previously served in the same role at University of Georgia. She has also been a choral director for elementary, middle and high school students.



**Anna Thiel**  
Office Manager

Anna is the first smile or cheerful voice you will see or hear when contacting PCO during the week. She assists staff in the day-to-day administrative duties of the church, and she prepares the monthly newsletter, weekly worship bulletins and manages communication among committees. During her 2 years with PCO Anna has become an integral member of our Church family.



**Edward Ennen**  
Sexton

Edward is PCO property caretaker and serves an outreach role by assisting outside groups who use our facilities. Edward works closely with the staff and administration committee to keep our wonderful building in excellent condition. Edward attends our church and is always able to help whenever problems arise.



## **Yusuf Sultani**

### **Technology Coordinator**

Yusuf manages our technology for livestreaming worship services and special events on YouTube. Yusuf is an Afghan refugee and has shared with the congregation his harrowing journey from Afghanistan. Yusuf is a student at Western Michigan University.





## OUR MISSION

As members of The Presbyterian Church of Okemos,

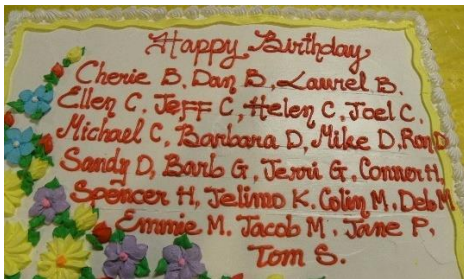
We believe that in life, in death, and life beyond death,  
We belong to God.

The Church exists to invite everyone to join the lifelong journey of faith that is life in Jesus Christ.

Through Worship that glorifies God, Study that seeks to understand God, Service to a world that needs God,

We desire to build a network of caring relationships  
Between families, friends, and strangers

By offering welcome, healing, justice, and peace to all in the name of Jesus Christ.



## OUR HISTORY

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos began life in 1962 when the Synod of Michigan purchased six acres where the present-day church stands. In 1963, the church called as its first pastor, Rev. Dr. Howard Kehde, and purchased a manse at 4461 Arbor Drive. The manse was to serve as a meeting place for Sunday services as well as home to Pastor Kehde and his family. Within months, the congregation outgrew the manse and moved to Okemos High School for services. In 1964, a pledge drive was begun to fund a church building. There were 108 charter members at that time, and they managed to exceed the pledged goal. Ground -breaking for the new church was held on May 2, 1965. Pastor Kehde served as pastor until 1967. In 1968, Pastor Ronald Byars was installed, serving a congregation that had grown to 275 members.

During the 1970's the church was an active religious center for families, with a yearly Family Camp, an Agape Feast that became a long-lasting part of the Sunday service, as did the traditional "hanging of the greens." Members went on their first Mission Trip to Oklahoma in 1976. More fund-raising occurred and in 1978 the congregation, now 356 people strong, added a Fellowship Hall, classrooms, and kitchen facilities.

In 1978 The women's group purchased the Good Shepherd statue that now stands in the narthex.

During that year Rev Byars left for a new call in Lexington, Kentucky and in 1980 Rev. Lawrence Farris became pastor. In 1986, Rev. Farris moved to Princeton, New Jersey to pursue graduate studies, and in 1987 Rev. Mark Ramsey was called to be the head pastor. The beautiful Fowler pipe organ was dedicated in January of 1988. The church celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989, with church membership now nearly 500. That year the church also called its first Associate Pastor, Catherine Rutledge-Gorman, who served until 1991. Rev. Janice West was called to become the second Associate Pastor in September of 1992.

In 1994 Rev. Ramsey left to accept a call in Denver, and in July 1996, the congregation called Rev. Dr. Robert Carlson, Jr. to serve as senior pastor. Rev. Janice West left in 2001 to serve a congregation in Carbondale, Illinois. Rev. Timothy Chon served as Associate Pastor between 2003 and 2009. In 2004, a major building expansion provided a new sanctuary and improved classrooms, kitchen and fellowship hall. Assistant Pastor Alice Townley joined the staff in 2010.

In 2019 Rev. Carlson retired, and Pastor Peggy Casteel-Huston became our interim head of staff serving our congregation until Pastor Lisa Schrott was called and approved by our congregation as our new pastor during its October 2021 meeting







## OUR CHURCH



Above is the sanctuary at Christmas, left is the fellowship hall and below the kitchen







## SUNDAY MORNING



We gather at 10 a.m. for worship, fellowship and education

During the Pandemic our Church was able to offer Sunday Services through Facebook and YouTube livestreaming. Church groups continued to meet via ZOOM. As of fall 2021, we continue meetings and services via ZOOM but are opening services in-person with all members following safety protocols (social distancing, vaccinations, and masks).

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos is a Welcoming Church! Our congregation consists of people with a variety of backgrounds, ethnic identities, ages, and types of families. Visitors will find people of various occupations, interests, and lifestyles.

After worship, there is a time for conversation and refreshments in Fellowship Hall. Please plan to stay! This time proves an opportunity to get acquainted with new people and to meet with long-time friends. A greeter can help you to locate Visitor Name Tags.

**Christian Education Hour for Children and Youth** is from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each Sunday morning during the academic year (with few exceptions). These classes explore Bible stories, teach aspects of our worship, and for the youth, include opportunities to discuss faith and contemporary life. Classes are offered occasionally in the summer.

**For Adults, from 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m., classes are scheduled with special topics of interest.**

## Christian Education for All Ages

### THE NURSERY

Our nursery is staffed year-round to provide a safe and caring environment for our youngest during the education hour, the 10:00 am worship service, and during special events.

### PRESCHOOL

Children will learn the answers to the questions “Who are you?” and “Who loves you?” through stories from the Old and New Testaments.

### LOWER ELEMENTARY

Children who are in kindergarten through second grade use storytelling, arts and crafts along with drama to explore the Bible Stories.

### UPPER ELEMENTARY: GRADES THREE TO FIVE

Children in grades 3-5 study Bible Stories and discuss different ways to praise God. Their studies are enhanced with role playing, drama and crafts.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL: GRADES SIX TO EIGHT

Sunday School is a time to think more deeply about what they heard in worship and start to apply it to their own lives. Coordinating with the Youth Group and Adult Education program, they will also discuss mission work, particularly in connection to the CROP Walk in October.

### HIGH SCHOOL: GRADES NINE TO TWELVE

The high school students meet weekly to discuss current events from a Christian perspective often using online resources. Students have the chance to talk about how their faith shapes their life outside of church.

### ADULT EDUCATION

Growing as a disciple is a lifelong journey. Adult study and fellowship groups meet on Sunday mornings, and throughout the week. Recent education offerings are shared on the Events blog of the web site, and reminders are e-mailed in the weekly Friday announcements.



A youth mission trip to benefit Habitat for Humanity in the Michigan upper peninsula.





Souper Bowl of Caring – on Super Bowl Sunday, the youth lead a soup lunch fundraiser for food banks.

### **YOUTH GROUP**

Middle and high school youth join together, dividing activities evenly between mission, education and fun. Some favorite fall activities include a lock-in, visiting a local corn maze, serving a meal at Advent House, and taking leadership roles in the Christmas Eve pageant. In the winter, youth prepare soup and serve the Souper Supper of Caring to raise money for the local food banks. Spring's focus is on preparing for Youth Sunday. The season ends with a picnic, adding to the plans for VBS and a rousing game of Capture the Flag.

### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

During the pandemic, Vacation Bible school has been limited to a single day. Our Church joined with Okemos Community Church and Faith Lutheran Church. In the coming years we hope to return our traditional week of Bible School.



The youth write the Christmas pageant script and lead the pageant for the family worship service.

## FELLOWSHIP AND STUDY GROUPS

A full list of fellowship and study groups can be found at <https://okemospres.org/groups>. During the pandemic meetings have continued through ZOOM and are beginning to return to in-person with appropriate safety precautions.

### **ADULT BIBLE STUDY** *with Ewen and Zora Todd*

We meet weekly from fall through spring. We conclude each session by sharing joys, concerns, and prayers.

### **ARTIST'S CIRCLE** *with Jennifer Gordon*

Artist's Circle is open to anyone interested in exploring faith driven creativity. We meet Tuesday afternoons from 1 – 3 p.m. We share in fellowship, learning new techniques, field trips and book discussions.

### **CONTEMPLATION CLASS**

This weekly class uses the ancient spiritual practices of centering prayer, lectio divina, silence, journaling, and shared conversations.

### **WOMEN'S CONNECTION** *with Shirley Rumminger*

Women's Connection meets monthly September to May (excluding December). We enjoy lunch provided by group members, join in a devotional time, then hear a presentation of a PCO member's life and faith journey. Our goal is to build closer relationships among PCO women as we get to know each other better and learn of, are inspired by, the life experiences and faith which have formed us, and strengthen our personal faith.



Artist's Circle with their completed Advent banners.





Women's Dinner Out

### **WRITING LIFE STORIES** *with Ron Dorr*

People bring something that they have written or something that they have read and want to share in monthly meetings. You do not have to have written anything to contribute to our sessions. But you are surely welcome to join the discussion after someone else's contribution. During those conversations, loss and love, joy and sorrow, renewal and religion, laughter and seriousness often walk hand in hand. We meet at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom on the first Sunday of each month, including summer."

### **MEN'S GROUP** *with Doug Paterson, Tom Schaberg, Ron Dorr*

The Men's Group is an informal small group within the PCO that meets weekly in the early morning. It is open to all regardless of age and has no pre-set agenda. It consists of a light breakfast provided by the members, lively discussion, and closing prayer. Discussion is done in an atmosphere of mutual respect, civility, and a desire to understand and learn. We will also engage in mission projects to serve the community and to foster interpersonal relationships within the group.

### **RETIREES GROUP** *with Tom and Jane Bobay*

The Retirees group meets monthly to share conversation over a packed lunch. Topics are chosen by those attending and dates are set each month for the following month. Watch for upcoming dates in the Grapevine and weekly announcements.

### **WOMEN'S DINNER OUT** *with Barbara Dorr*

Women's Dinner Out occurs monthly except December. We eat at different restaurants that are chosen the month before. There is no set membership. Whoever can make it that particular month shows up. Our only agenda is to get to know each other better.

## THE JOYS OF MUSIC



**“Music is a fair and glorious gift of God...  
Music makes people kinder, gentler, more  
reasonable...”**

Such was the opinion of Martin Luther, an opinion we share at The Presbyterian Church of Okemos. Our goal is to provide people of all ages with an opportunity to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, to enjoy the fellowship of others in a choir setting, and to grow in their faith and life.







## CHANCEL CHOIR

The choir performs on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. worship service, September to May. They also perform for a variety of other special occasions like the Christmas music concert, Lessons and Carols. Senior high students and adults are invited to join for music and fellowship. Through a generous endowment to the music program, the church is blessed to hire additional student singers and musicians from MSU's world-renowned music programs.

*Colleen Chester leads the chancel choir.*

## REHEARSALS

**Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m.**

**Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m.**



## THE HANDBELL CHOIR

The handbell choir performs at worship services and for other special occasions. The Monday Mallets meet each Monday from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. The group adds beautiful and complex sounds to the worship experience.

*Irene Shutt conducts the handbell choir.*



## THE CHILDRENS CHOIR

**For children, ages 4-Middle School**

This choir meets as scheduled by the director and accompanist. It provides children an opportunity to enjoy singing, learn songs that have shaped Christian souls for generations, and "make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

The Children's Choir is directed by Sarah Mayhew and accompanied by Sandy Detrisac.



## JAZZ WEEKEND

Jazz Weekend is held before the beginning of Lent, traditionally the time of Mardi Gras. The festivities begin with a lecture and discussion of various jazz styles followed by a Saturday evening concert featuring some of the best jazz musicians in the state. The Sunday morning worship service highlights jazz selections relating to the liturgy and sermon. We include Jazz, Gospel, and Folk music in our worship music at other times during the year.



Jazz Quintet who led the September "Jazz Sunday" service

## LESSONS AND CAROLS

During Advent the choirs present "An Evening of Lessons and Carols" as a Christmas gift to the community, with offering benefiting a local charity. The chancel Choir and Handbell Choirs, along with guest musicians perform a variety of Christmas music, including carol arrangement, and opportunities for the congregation to sing as well.

We are continually expanding our music concert series and often include concerts on Good Friday and other special occasions in the life of the congregation.



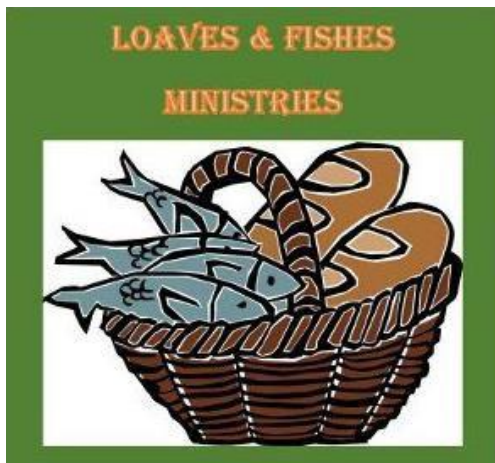


## MISSIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT

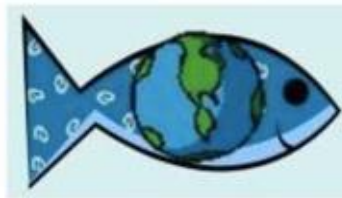
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos assumes our responsibilities to the less fortunate and acts in the name of God to feed the hungry, heal the sick, clothe the naked, promote justice and bring the gospel to the whole world. To this end, we provide many opportunities to serve. See our Mission Blog at <https://okemospres.org/mission/>

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos provides support and volunteers for many agencies. We summarize here a selection. For a more complete list, see <https://okemospres.org/mission> or visit with a mission committee member.

### The Global Institute of Lansing



*Educating and graduating  
the cultures of Lansing...*





Providing Thanksgiving meals to twelve families, the PCO collects food through the third Sunday of November. Volunteers deliver the meals to the families.



Financial donations assist welcoming new refugees into the Lansing area.



PCO makes donations to support the Simbolei Academy for Girls in Kenya.



All Faith Alliance for Refugees – Clergy and other members of the church have established relationships with members of other faiths to support the refugee community in the Greater Lansing area.





## COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY

### SHARING YOUR GIFTS

Members of the Presbyterian Church of Okemos say one of the most meaningful aspects of their membership is sharing their talents, skills, interest, and resources. Want to teach? Join the men's group? Visit shut-ins? Sing? Take photos? Whatever talent you have, please let us know!

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Another important way to share is to pledge. Our congregation demonstrates our gratitude for all its gifts through the time talent and the financial resources we pledge.

### VOLUNTEERING

There are also lots of opportunities to volunteer at the church, including Sunday morning greeting and ushering, bringing snacks for Sunday morning fellowship, helping with valet parking, and providing flowers. Sign-ups for these important volunteer opportunities can be found online at <https://okemospres.org/signup/>

### INTERFAITH PARTICIPATION

Our church is active with the Interfaith Clergy Association of Greater Lansing and the All-Faith Alliance for Refugees (AFAR). The church also engages regularly in dialogue events with the Islamic Center of East Lansing.





### **THE GRAPEVINE**

The Grapevine is the church's monthly newsletter. Please ask to have your name placed on the mailing list. Previous newsletters can be found at:

<https://okemospres.org/grapevine/>

### **THE MONTHLY CALENDAR**

All events and activities can be found on the monthly calendar. These include mission projects, youth events, and Sunday morning topics and classes. The calendar can be found at:

<https://okemospres.org/calendar/>



### **THE PHOTO DIRECTORY**

One of the best ways to get to know everyone is by having some photos to remind you. A copy of the PCO Photo Directory can be picked up at the church office.

### **VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

<https://okemospres.org/>

Subscribe to our weekly e-mail announcement list

<https://okemospres.org/announcements-list/>

### **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

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

<https://twitter.com/okemospres>

### **ACCOMODATIONS FOR HEARING AIDS**

A hearing loop system surrounds the perimeter of the sanctuary and links with the most hearing aids. In addition, receivers with headphones are also available. Our church is easily accessible for all.

**Please join us in worship of God and service to our community.**







[okemospres.org](http://okemospres.org)