

# The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



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*Congratulations to the church officers elected at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, October 29th. They will be ordained and/or installed to service in February.*

**Deacons:** Sean Clark, Linda Cravotta, Barbara Fretwell-Cooke, and Nancy Kanistinaux

**Elders:** Jennifer Gordon, Gail Lytle Lira, Kelly Locke, and Kent Workman

**Endowment Committee:** Lance Boldrey and Barbara Given

The second Sunday of 2023, we celebrated Epiphany, the magi paying homage to infant Jesus. Each of us received a “star word” that we could use as a word of orientation for the year. My word was *thanksgiving*.

Throughout the year I have reflected on all that I have to be thankful for, especially within the life of this church. So I think it is fitting – one might say providential – that the Stewardship Committee chose **Gratitude. For the Past, Present, and Future** as the theme for our Annual Campaign this year.

This year we are celebrating our history and the impact we have made. We are grateful for the lives touched, the baptisms, the weddings, the celebrations of lives well-lived. We heard Jill Tribell speak to these in our October 15 service.

We are offering gratitude for the ways we presently serve God. Alex Juarez, a high school junior, spoke on behalf of our congregation’s youth on October 22 service. The youth expressed gratitude for the deep relationships formed with each other and members of the church, and for the ways they have been able to serve. On October 29, Jill Schaberg expressed gratitude for the diverse ways we serve God through our communal ministry in the church.

We also appreciate new opportunities going forward. PCO is not resting; we are forward looking through our Journey to 2030 strategic visioning process. In the November 5 worship service you will hear from Jeff Arbour and Emily Conroy-Krutz (see also the article on page 2) as they share gratitude for the church we are called to become.

I am asking every household in the congregation to prayerfully consider supporting the PCO community with your financial gifts and gifts of time and talent. Your financial support means more now than ever to keep this flexibility, creativity, and faithfulness alive and thriving in the year to come. **Dedication Sunday is November 12.** On that day, we will gather our pledges, bless them, and pray for direction in their use.

We have much to be grateful for here at PCO. We celebrate our accomplishments as we look forward to a vibrant future. I hope you will join me in expressing your gratitude for PCO’s past, present and future!

**Pastor Lisa**



## Journey to 2030

What do you want to see when you walk through PCO's doors in 2030? What do we need to do to get there?

These are the questions that are animating the work of the Journey to 2030 committee. In the past few years, PCO has gone through many transitions. The pandemic forced us to think in new ways about technology and community. It changed what church looks like for many Christians across the country. In our congregation, we have seen major changes in our pastoral staff. As we emerge from an era of transition, it is time to take stock and dream big about the future of our church.

Our committee—co-chairs Jeff Arbour and Emily Conroy-Krutz, and members Catherine Holdway, Doug Patterson, and Matt Pearson—have been hard at work this fall thinking about the questions that face our congregation in this era of its history. We have the tremendous opportunity right now to imagine what a new era might hold. What do we want to carry forward with us from our past sixty years? What might we want to rethink? Where is God calling us as a congregation?

Over the next several months, our committee will be reaching out to the congregation to get as many voices as possible involved in this process. The conversation begins during Adult Education on Sunday, November 5. Join us to meet the committee and talk around the tables about your visions for our church's future. This conversation will help to shape our ongoing work, so please attend and share your thoughts!

You can look forward to more opportunities to participate as we move ahead. Expect to hear more from us about a survey and small-group conversations later in the fall and winter. The role of our committee is to gather information from the congregation, share ideas and strategies, and ultimately to create a report for Session in the early spring. That report will identify PCO's strategic vision for the coming years as well as some suggested strategies for achieving it. Please join us and let us know your thoughts for what we should be thinking about as we **Journey to 2030**.

**For the most up-to-date listing of happenings around PCO, please visit the website calendar at <https://okemospres.org/calendar/>**

**Deadline for the December Grapevine is Tuesday, November 21st.**

## Save These Dates

**Friday, November 3**

**7:00—10:00 p.m.**

**UKirk Trivia Night**

**Sunday, November 5**

**5:00—7:00 p.m.**

**Chili Cookoff and Game Night**

*(More information below )*

**Sunday, November 12**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Parish Life Out on the Town**

**Lecture at People's Church**

*(see Library News on page 3 for more Info)*

**Thursday, November 16**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Greater Lansing Interfaith Clergy**

**Gathering of Hope and Solidarity**

Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Lansing

*(Watch e-Announcements for more info)*

**Saturday, December 2**

**Book Discussion & Retreat**

**9:00 a.m.**

*(More information on page 3)*

## Chili Cook-Off & Game Night

**Sunday, November 5, 2023 from 5:00-7:30 PM**

Join our church family for a delicious & fun evening! We will enjoy a variety of chili dishes at **5:00** with games beginning around **5:45-7:30**. What a great way to spend a beautiful Fall night! Sign up on the church website under Serve - Food Preparation (<https://www.okemospres.org/signup/food/>) or the sign-up sheet on the kiosk to bring chili, a side dish or dessert to share with the group.

Feel free to bring along your favorite game, too! This is an event for all ages so come along and enjoy the night with us.



## Online Fellowship

Do you like to travel to warmer climates or hole up at home during the winter months? Do you miss your church family if you do? If you are uncomfortable or unable to come to church in person when there's ice and snow on the ground, would you be interested in facilitating online fellowship after Sunday services? We need someone who can start a Zoom meeting and admit attendees, not necessarily a technological wizard or Adult Education teacher.

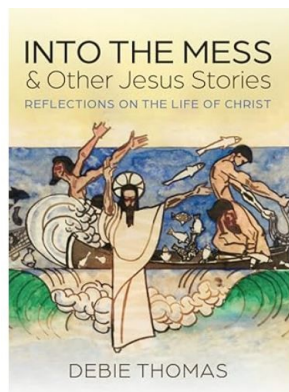
Moving forward, not every Adult Education class or service project will lend itself to a Zoom component.

If you are interested in facilitating online fellowship, please contact Pastor Lisa.

## Invitation to Book Discussion

In November, the Men's Group is planning to read the book [Into the Mess and Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ](#) by Debbie Thomas (**see description in the box below to the right**). We are planning to discuss the book at a retreat at the Church on **Saturday, December 2** from **9:30 a.m. until 12 noon**.

We would like to invite **ANYONE** (not just men) who is interested in joining us to come. We will have breakfast rolls and coffee available and will meet in Fellowship Hall to discuss the book. Books are available at Schuler's book store on the book group reading table if you would like to purchase one. Please come join us!



## PCO Library News

We have added three new titles and a set of New Testament study guides to the PCO Library. Descriptions are below. You can find these new books, and all other new titles, in the "New Books" section of the PCO Library. All are available for borrowing. Look for the simple check-out instructions on the round table. We encourage all of our members and friends to take a look at the updated library, and to take a book home!

**The Lord Is My Shepherd: Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-Third Psalm** by Harold S. Kushner

"Harold Kushner was compelled in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, to offer a book of practical spirituality based on the well-loved Twenty-third Psalm. With this inspiring little book, Kushner provides insights that offer strength, courage, and the power to live a spiritually fulfilling life even in the darkest of times." (from the publisher)

This is the book that Rebecca referenced in her sermon on October 8.

**Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation** by Kristin Kobes Du Mez

"A sweeping, revisionist history of the last seventy-five years of white evangelicalism, revealing how evangelicals have worked to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism. Du Mez shows that, far from adhering to biblical principles, modern white evangelicals have remade their faith, with enduring consequences for all Americans." (from the publisher)

The author is speaking about this book at The People's Church on November 12 at 1:00 p.m., a PCO "Out on the Town" event.

**Nobody's Mother: Artemis of the Ephesians in Antiquity and the New Testament** by Sandra L. Glahn

"Combining spiritual autobiography with scholarly exploration, Glahn takes readers on a journey to ancient Ephesus and across early church history. Unveiling the cult of Artemis and how early Christian related to it can give us a clearer sense of the type of radical, countercultural fellowship the New Testament writers intended Christ's church to be." (from the publisher)

**The New Testament for Everyone: Complete Eighteen-Volume Set** by N.T. Wright

"In the New Testament for Everyone series, Wright continues his trademark of bringing the most up-to-date biblical scholarship to life with engaging writing, inspiring anecdotes, and faithful interpretation. These eighteen volumes are ideal for Bible study, personal devotion, and teaching." (from the publisher)

**Kathi Cook**

### INTO THE MESS & Other Jesus Stories: REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST By Debbie Thomas

The introduction to the book states in part: *"He was a disrupter and a peacemaker, a rebel and a rabbi. His friends were the riffraff, and his enemies the religious elite. He was the wounded man who healed the sick, the homeless man who fed the hungry, the convicted criminal who released the captives, and the dead man who conquered the grave. The stories he told were scandalous, and the stories he lived changed the world... These essays on the stories of Jesus are invitations to faith in all its complexity and untidiness. The Jesus who emerges here is not the sanitized Christ of piety and platitude, but the Christ of complicated joys and transcendent sorrows... These are the stories of the Incarnate God who finds and loves us in the messiness of our lives."*

## Women's Dinner Out

The November's Women's Dinner out will be held on Monday, November 6, at Taste of Thai (adjacent to Coral Gables), 2838 E Grand River Ave, #2, East Lansing. We will meet at the restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Please notify Candy Boldrey at (859) 421-0014 or by email at *cbold67 at gmail dot com* (standard email set-up) by Sunday, November 5th if you are planning on attending so we can give the restaurant a count of the number attending.

## Birthday Cake Sunday

In November, we will celebrate Birthday Cake Sunday on **Sunday, November 12** (early due to Thanksgiving).

If you celebrate your birthday in November, please check the Birthday List posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, November 5th if it is not there. Happy Birthday, Dear Scorpios and Sagittarius!

## Retiree Group

The Retirees (or nearly retired) will meet on **Monday, November 20** in Fellowship Hall at noon. You are welcome to bring a lunch, drink or snack.

## Women's Connection

**Women's Connection** will meet Sunday, November 19, 12:30. (Note: third instead of our usual fourth Sunday because of Thanksgiving). Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for conversation and lunch, followed by a presentation, "*An Unexpected Turn*," by longtime PCO member Mickey Martin. All women are welcome and encouraged to invite friends.

Questions: Shirley Rumminger 655-4123 or *srumming at yahoo dot com* (standard email set-up)

## Caregivers Support Group

Those who would like support for their new roles with loved ones are encouraged to join us on zoom 517-329-2320 password hello. Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we will meet on the second Wednesdays of November and December 5:00-6:00 p.m. Topics vary depending on the needs and interests of those attending.

## 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 & on Zoom 434 304 558 (*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 November 5th.**

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

**Women's Connection**— 3rd Sunday due to Thanksgiving Holiday at 12:30 p.m. in Room 108. This month will be on **November 19th.**

### MONDAYS

**Women's Dinner Out**— 1st Mondays. Next gathering is **Monday, November 6** at 5:30 p.m. at Taste of Thai, 2838 E Grand River Ave. #2 East Lansing.

**Retirees**— Noon at PCO on **3rd Mondays**. Next meeting is **Monday, November 20th.**

### TUESDAYS

**Men's Group**— Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom) 1st Tuesdays - this month Tuesday, November 7th.**

**PCO Crafts Ministry**— 1st Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Board Room—**next meeting is November 7th**

**Artists Circle**—*Watch the weekly Announcements for artists' gatherings.*

### WEDNESDAYS

**Conversation & Contemplation**—Weekly, 10:00 a.m. Zoom 905-709-104

**Caregiver Support Group** - **2nd Wednesday** in November and December due to holidays. 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>



## Life at PCO in Pictures

*Twenty-one people of all ages from PCO took part in the 47th annual CROP Walk last month. It was a sunny afternoon to stroll through Lansing. Money raised from the walk will go to Church World Service to provide emergency food and seeds, tools and programs that will help families feed themselves in the future*



*On October 22, members and friends assembled 120 hygiene kits for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance organization. The PDA enables congregations of the PC (U.S.A.) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events .*

## Cabin Fever Returns in 2024!

After a four-year hiatus, Cabin Fever is coming back! In case you're a new member, Cabin Fever is a time for members or guests to share their skills and knowledge. After the worship service on **Sunday, January 21, 2024**, there will be two class sessions, held one after the other, with a lunch served in between. Each session will have about 4 or 5 class offerings for you to choose from.

January may seem like a long way away but there is a lot of holiday between now and then! Cabin Fever takes a bit of organizing so it's best if we start lining up our Cabin Fever class offerings **now**. In the past, we have offered everything from art classes to academic lectures, interpersonal relations to exercise, genealogy and much, much more. Classes are 55 minutes long.

Do you have an idea for a class to teach or skill to share? If so, please let Jerri Gillett know and we'll see how it fits into the lineup. Jerri can be contacted by phone (351-3816 landline), email: [gillett@msu.edu](mailto:gillett@msu.edu) (standard email setup) or in person.

Cabin Fever has been a popular event and Parish Life is looking forward to offering it again!





## Mission Trip to Cass

In October, PCO members and friends took part in the Mission Committee's annual trip to Cass Community Social Services in Detroit. This year, the team organized and painted a warehouse for the organization. The church received the message below following their visit.

*Thank you for your continued support of Cass Community Social Services, both financially and physically. The Warehouse looks great inside and out. It was good to have young people with you and I hope we can turn that into a mission trip in 2024. Thanks!*

**Rev. Sue Pethoud, Church and Community  
Relations Liaison**



## Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra

Michigan is facing challenges in meeting residents' mental health needs, in part because of personnel shortages:

- A lack of licensed school counselors is resulting in caseload increases in many schools. Michigan ranks 48<sup>th</sup> among states, having an average counselor-student ratio of one per 615 students. The national average is 408 per student.
- Community social workers are in short supply, partially due to special state and federal funding for schools to hire school social workers. Schools offer better pay and more time off than community agencies. Statewide, the social worker shortage is nearly 600, with rural areas particularly challenged. Legislators are working with social work organizations to modify state licensure requirements to increase the number of social workers.

In other news:

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is expanding access to mobile mental health services through grants to five community mental health services programs, including the CMH authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties.
- MDHHS has been awarded a \$1.85 million grant from CDC to implement a public health approach to addressing Alzheimer's and related dementias.
- The state has awarded the National Minority Quality Forum a grant for research responding to Flint's concerns about cancer related to environmental contamination.
- The Michigan Developmental Disability Council joined other entities nationwide to celebrate October as National Disability Employment Month.
- Four free COVID-19 tests are available at COVIDTests.gov
- Legislation to prevent child marriage has been signed into law, raising the minimum age of consent to 18 and updating current laws to implement the policy more effectively.
- The Governor has also signed bipartisan bills requiring the instillation of water filters in childcare centers and schools to protect children against contaminated water.
- Michigan's version of the federal Affordable Care Act has been signed into law: it prohibits insurers from denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions, requires coverage for dependents under 26, and prohibits insurers from instituting annual and lifetime dollar limits.
- Michigan's Operation Safe Neighborhoods has now taken over 500 illegal guns off the streets through check-ins with probationers and parolees.
- Nearly 240,000 Michigan households that received Home Heating Credits in 2022 are receiving an additional one time payment of \$54. Eligible households include those with seniors, children under 5, and individuals with disabilities.

## BOOK NOOK

*By Ron Dorr*

### Abraham Lincoln's Proclamations of Thanksgiving and Fasting

On October 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a Proclamation of Thanksgiving to the citizens of the United States, eventually leading to an annual national holiday. During the American Civil War, Sara Josepha Hale, the editor of Godey's Lady's Book, had been urging the President "to have the day of our annual thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival." The proclamation in 1863 was also the result of several proclamations of thanksgiving and fast days that Lincoln had begun issuing on August 12, 1861.

In 1863, Lincoln encouraged U. S. citizens at home, at sea, and abroad "to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." Three recommendations followed. Citizens should ascribe to God "such singular deliverances and blessings," which Lincoln had outlined earlier in the document. "With humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience," citizens should also commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged." And they should ask "the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purpose to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

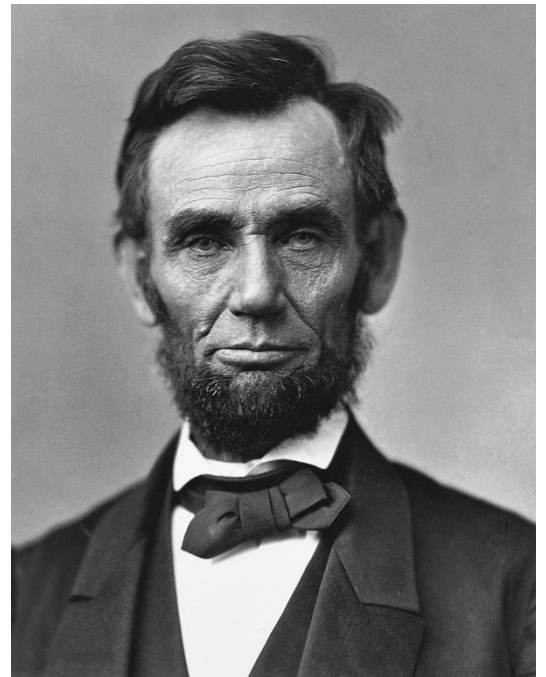
In the first half of the proclamation in 1863, Lincoln stressed the gratitude and blessings "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity." Military necessities "have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship." Population, settlements, and mining have "steadily increased." "Augmented strength and vigor" have marked the Union. All these developments "have been the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy." Such acknowledgment of bounties and blessings continued, especially in the Proclamations of April 10, 1862, July 15, 1863, May 9, 1864, September 3, 1864, and October 20, 1864. Those six proclamations usually followed Union victories in battle. The last one also acknowledged increased population due to immigration and emancipation of enslaved people.

Religious language permeated much of the proclamations for national fast days and a day of prayer. For the first "day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting," scheduled for September 26, 1861, Lincoln thought it was "fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offences."

The Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day for April 30, 1863, was even more explicit. "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. . . . But we have forgotten God. . . . Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." The Proclamation of a Day of Prayer for August 2, 1864, urged all citizens to go to public places of worship, among other reasons, "to implore [God] in His infinite goodness to soften the hearts, enlighten the minds, and quicken the consciences of those in rebellion, that they may lay down their arms and speedily return to their allegiance to the United States."

Whatever the varied language for God, whatever the Biblical allusion, whatever the occasion, gratitude for God's blessings went hand in hand with confession, penitence, and renewed lives. According to Kathryn Schulz, "and-ness" is "built into the basic facts of our existence." Even Abraham Lincoln's proclamations of thanksgiving and fast days demonstrate such "and-ness."

The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Roy P. Basler, contain the full texts of these proclamations.



**16th President of the United States  
Abraham Lincoln**

## Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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