

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS



From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Celebrating Our History and Looking Forward

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.--- Psalm 90

At a meeting convened September 27, 1843, the First Presbyterian Church of Meridian was organized at the home of S.D. Alverson. A fourteen article Confession of Faith and Covenant was adopted. It began with these words “You believe that there is only one living and true God, infinite Eternal and unchangeable in his Being...” While this church folded some years later, it laid the foundation of faithful witness to Jesus Christ in the Okemos area.

Fast forward to the early 1960’s. The Synod of Michigan purchased the property on which our church resides in 1961. In August 1963, the Rev. Howard Kehde was named the organizing pastor of a new congregation, which met at Okemos High School. While the church celebrates May 4, 1964 as its founding, the service of organization was held at Eastminster Presbyterian Church on May 10, 1964. The first Session meeting was held on May 15.

While much has changed over the past 60 years of the life of PCO, we celebrate that *from everlasting to everlasting we worship a God of love*. God’s love has been with us through difficult days and jubilant moments. God has walked with us from the waters of baptism to the assurance of the resurrection. God will walk with us as we continue our journey.

On Sunday April 28th, following worship Fellowship Hall was filled as Journey to 2030 visioning team shared a vision statement shaped by the generous and enthusiastic input from the PCO community. We asked and you answered, with approximately 50 people participating in a town hall visioning exercise in November and nearly 100 people completing a detailed survey in February. Session will formally adopt the vision statement at its May 15 meeting. Be on the lookout for an email following the meeting, where the vision statement and full report, including recommendations to Session for implementation will be shared.

--- **Pastor Lisa**

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***Deadline for the June Grapevine is
Friday, May 24th***

*With a vision for providing intergenerational opportunities,
partnering between PCO Committees
and with the community, mark your calendars for:*

Intergenerational Mission Weeks! June 9-15 and Aug 4-10, 2024

The two weeks will be very similar and will include work with our mission partners playing bingo, having breakfast with kids, working in community gardens and food pantries, serving meals, and more! The week is full of drop in experiences: come for some or all. Sign ups will be available in Fellowship Hall soon. Please contact Rebecca Mattern for more information.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39

Speaking of Community & Intergenerational...

PCO has opened Fellowship Hall to the Michigan State University students of UKirk twice a year for several years, to allow them to host their trivia nights. The events draw people from the congregation and community to the church for an evening of fun, fellowship and good-natured competition.

Below is the text of a letter recently received from a UKirk student.

Dear Presbyterian Church of Okemos,

*Thank you for hosting the once-a-semester trivia nights. I have attended two trivia nights in my senior year of college and thoroughly enjoyed them. **The first trivia night in November was the first time I ever discovered UKirk, and I have attended the Thursday meetings every since. UKirk has been an integral part of my senior year, and I wish I'd known about it earlier.***

Wishing you a bright future ahead Thank you.

The note was signed by the writer and many of his fellow UKirkers.



Congregation and community members gather at PCO for fun and fellowship during UKirk's trivia nights.

Presbyterian 101 & New Member Class

Join us on **Sunday, May 12** during the education hour for an overview session covering the theology and governing practices of the Presbyterian Church PC(USA). Whether you are a long time member or new to our community, you are welcome to attend!

Following the class, there will be an opportunity for those who have been attending and are ready to affiliate with us officially, to join as a member of the church.

Please contact Pastor Lisa for more information.



Calling All 2024 Graduates!

Graduation is a cause for celebration!

On June 9th, PCO would like to recognize all church members and friends who are graduating from high schools, colleges and universities, trade schools and post-secondary programs.

Please send names of graduates to the church office, along with the graduates' schools and diplomas or degrees to the church office no later than Friday, May 24th for the June Grapevine.

Thank you!

Youth Parents' Nights Out:

Gather at 8:00 p.m. at Joe's on Jolly, 2360 Jolly Road in Okemos on the **3rd** Thursdays of the following months: May 16, June 20, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 15.

What's Happening with Youth Group

May 12: Youth Ensemble Practice 5:00 p.m., Youth Group for all 5:30-7:30pm.

May 18: Youth Sunday Practice

May 19: Youth Sunday and Pentecost Celebration after church

Memorial Day Weekend - May 24-26: Family Camp at Camp Skyline - contact Roy and Christine Meland or Rebecca Mattern to sign up and for more info.

June 2: Youth Group: Middle School—5:00-6:30 p.m. & Senior High—5:30-7:00 p.m.

June 9: Last youth Group for Sumer! Picnic and games at Beal Gardens on MSU campus (*weather permitting*). Families welcome for an afternoon of celebrating the end of the school year!



Pentecost

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHURCH!

MAY 19, 2024

10am Worship led by PCO Youth

11am Intergenerational Fellowship & Education

**Birthday Cake
Games**

**Crafts
Stories of the Early Church**



**all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
Acts 2:4a**



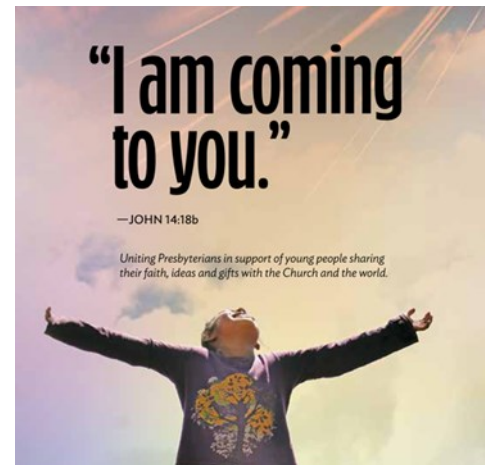
**PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF OKEMOS**

2258 Bennett Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Pentecost Offering

On May 19, we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday and collect the Pentecost Offering. When you give to the Pentecost Offering, you are helping to provide opportunities for young people to grow and share in their faith in Christ. Forty percent of the Pentecost Offering is retained by us at PCO for our ministries with youth in our community, while the remaining 60% is used to support children at risk, and youth and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Mission Committee has designated that the 40% we retain will support children and youth at Edgewood Village. Let us support the faith formation of children and youth with our generous support.



→ WHERE TO START ←

things to say when you're not "fine"

I'm having a day / It's been one of those days.

I'm on the struggle bus.

I'm actually going through some stuff.

Today is not my day.

I'm feeling some kind of way.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

The theme for Mental Health Month 2024 is "Where to Start: Mental Health in a Changing World." In a world that is constantly evolving, it can be overwhelming to navigate the various challenges and changes happening around us. The pressures of work, relationships, and societal factors, like politics, climate change, and the economy, can significantly impact our mental well-being, sometimes even more than we realize.

While society is getting more comfortable discussing mental health, it can still be hard to know "Where to Start" when these pressures are impacting your daily life — what do you do when you think you might be experiencing signs and symptoms of a mental health condition?

We will partner with Mental Health America, a non-profit organization that founded what is now known as Mental Health Month in 1949. Every May, they promote awareness, offer vital resources and education, and advocating for the mental health and well-being of everyone. You can learn more at <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month>

During the month of May Rebecca and I will be sending out weekly emails addressing issues related to mental health, including resources in the community. Stay tuned!

Snacks for Edgewood Kids

At the Mission Meeting on April 10, Tom Schaberg discussed some ways that PCO can participate at Edgewood Village. To begin with, we will collect healthy snacks for the youth there. Please place them in the labeled bins in the coatroom. Nonperishable and individually wrapped snacks, such as peanut butter crackers, granola bars and juice boxes would be greatly appreciated. This collection will begin on **May 12 and end on May 31**. See Jayne Zuhlke for questions.



From the Green Team

The Green Team is pleased to share that we have experienced a strong response to the battery recycling program with more than thirty (30) pounds of batteries recycled already. We want to remind everyone that **all** household batteries are accepted including hearing aid batteries. It is not required but will be helpful if batteries could be dropped off in a Ziploc or any other plastic bag. Hearing aid batteries should be packaged in either a pill bottle or plastic bag.

Please don't mix non-household batteries in the bin.
Thank you for your participation!

May Women's Dinner Out

Our next Women's Dinner Out is scheduled for **Monday, May 6 at 5:30 p.m.** at Harrison Road House, 720 E. Michigan Avenue in East Lansing. If you'd like to attend, or would like more information, please notify Candy Boldrey by Sunday, May 5. Her email address is *cbold67 at gmail dot com* (standard email setup) and phone number is (859) 421-0014.

May Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our May Birthdays on **Sunday, May 19**. If you celebrate a birthday in May, please check the Birthday List on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, May 12, if it is not already on the list.

May Women's Connection

Women's Connection will meet Sunday, **May 19** (one week early) at 12:30 p.m. We look forward to our final meeting for this program year, having sharing time, and lunch together.

Speaker will be Eunice Creswell, our reliable, devoted, spiritual, longtime Christian Ed leader, talented teacher, arts & crafts creator (including her amazing bulletin boards), and poet! Eunice, in her usual style, will surprise us with her presentation and most likely make it interactive.

Please mark your calendars and invite friends. Questions: Shirley Rumminger 655-4123

Caregiver Support Group

Please join the group online on **Wednesday, May 22**, for a discussion of caregiving and its joys and concerns. We meet from **5:00—6:00 p.m.** on Zoom #517--329-2320. Password is hello. We will continue meeting through the summer.

Retiree Group

The Retirees will meet on **Monday, May 20** at noon in the PCO Fellowship Hall. We will continue reminiscing about the past years at PCO after celebrating the 60th anniversary.

Retirees will not hold regular meetings during the summer months; however, a cook out is scheduled at Tom and Jane Bobay's house at noon on Monday, June 17.

Conversation and Contemplation

The C&C group currently meets every Wednesday on Zoom from 10:00-11:30am. We will discuss a summer schedule soon. For May, please join us on Zoom 905-709-104. Password 48864.

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 — 1st Sundays, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— **next meeting is May 5.**

Birthday Cake Sunday—Third Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **May 19th.**

Women's Connection— Usually 4th Sundays at **12:30 p.m.** in Room 108. In May, it will be on **May 19th** due to the Memorial Day weekend.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— **Monday, May 6** at Harrison Road House, 720 E. Michigan Ave. East Lansing.

Retirees — Monthly on Mondays at noon at PCO in warmer months. This month will be on **MAY 20th.**

TUESDAYS

Men's Group — Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid** (*In-person and on Zoom*) this month is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 7.**

PCO Crafts Ministry— **1st** Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. This month will be on **Tuesday, May 7**

WEDNESDAYS

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

Caregiver Support Group - **4th** Wednesdays, **May 22.** 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 **8:00 p.m.** at Joe's on Jolly, 2360 Jolly Road in Okemos. This month will be on **May 16th.**



PCO Library News

You will find **nine** new books on the library table during the month of May.

Three of these books explore our relationship with nature, Earth, and creation. (All of the book descriptions in quotations are from the publishers):

Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility edited by Rebecca Solnit & Thelma Young Lutunatabua—“An invitation to everyone to understand the issue more deeply, participate more boldly, and imagine the future more creatively.”

God of Earth: Discovering a Radically Ecological Christianity by Kristin Swenson—“Swenson invites readers to reconsider our relationship to the nonhuman natural world and so experience new dimensions of the sacred and new possibilities for hope and healing.”

Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You: A Field Guide to the Bible by Daniel Cooperrider.

Three more new books take a look at words and reading:

You Are a Tree: And Other Metaphors to Nourish Life, Thought, and Prayer by Joy Marie Clarkson—“This book invites you to pay attention – to your experiences, and to the words you use to describe them. That attention reveals a richly layered and meaningful world, a refreshing perspective that nurtures wonder, gratitude, and hope.”

The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner’s Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings by Amy-Jill Levine

Reading for the Love of God: How to Read as a Spiritual Practice by Jessica Hooten Wilson—“Wilson argues that the simple act of reading can help us learn to pray well, love our neighbors, be contemplative, practice humility, and disentangle ourselves from contemporary idols.”

The other three books address personal struggles such as as grief, loss, and illness:

Beautiful and Terrible Things: A Christian Struggle with Suffering, Grief, and Hope by Christian Brady—“With deep faith, knowledge of Scripture, and the wisdom that comes only from experience, Brady guides readers grieving losses and setbacks of all kinds in voicing their lament to God, reflecting on the nature of human existence, and persevering in hope.”

Cancer Sucks, but You’ll Get Through It: A Guide from Detection to Remission to Getting On with Your Life by Michelle Rapkin—“This book will become your companion on the journey no one wants to take and will make it easier to navigate. Trust the author; she’s been there.”

Grieving Room: Making Space for All the Hard Things after Death and Loss by Leanne Friesen

We also have four new titles for our younger readers, shelved with the other books for youth:

What Can I Say?: A Kid’s Guide to Super-Useful Social Skills to Help You Get Along and Express Yourself by Catherine Newman

Queerfully and Wonderfully Made: A Guide for LGBTQ+ Christian Teens
edited by Leigh Finke

Book Scavenger by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

The Star that Always Stays by Anna Rose Johnson “A Michigan Notable Book Award winner”

All of these books are available for you to borrow. Look for the simple instructions posted in the library. And then read something new!



Dear Friends,

Thankyou for “beeing the change” through your CROP Hunger Walk! We have one goal - building a world where there is enough for all.

I’m delighted to let you know that **your walk is ranked in the top 100 fundraising Teams national for 2023!** Congratulations!

The donations from your Walk are already at work - from providing beehives to communities in the country of Georgia to working in your community through local agencies. Your efforts are building resilience for the most vulnerable in your community and our world. Thank you for being a leader in this movement towards a more hope-filled, secure world.

We appreciate your partnership. Thank you to you and your Team for your outstanding efforts!

Sincerely,

Jon K. Skogen
National Community Engagement
Manager
CWS/CROP



Thanks

To local restaurant: **Ozzy’s Kabob**

The organizers of the Gun Violence Prevention Summit greatly appreciated the lunch catered by **Okemos’ Ozzy’s Kebob**. Not only was the meal varied and ample, but this local restaurant gave us a significant discount on the cost.

Public Policy Report—Ellen Hoekstra

The Michigan legislature is in session, following a spring recess. The House is expected to be back in full swing now that the April 16 special elections have taken place. The House has returned to its full complement of 110 legislators.

Numerous new state laws took effect on February 13.

In state news:

- One of these new laws will provide supplemental checks to working individuals with lower incomes. Our late and beloved John Duley once testified before a Senate committee to urge expansion of this benefit known as the Earned Income Tax credit-- citing scripture in his remarks.
- This year’s executive budget proposal includes nearly \$259 million to increase access to mental health and substance abuse services. It includes \$8.3 million to create Medicaid reimbursement for peer provided substance abuse services and \$4 million to increase gambling prevention and treatment services.
- The budget proposal also includes \$5.5 million for community-based violence intervention programs designed to reduce shootings.
- Youth usage of e-cigarettes in Michigan is nearly 50% higher than the national average, according to a senator involved with legislation designed to reduce youth addiction. One of the bills in the Senate Regulatory Affairs Committee would prohibit the sale of most flavored tobacco products.
- Michigan has spent less than a quarter of the \$12.3 million received from the opioid settlements. Meanwhile, nearly 3000 Michigan residents die from overdoses every year.
- Legislation is being considered to mandate kindergarten, now optional. The bills would permit districts to select between full time and half day kindergarten.
- Legislators are reviewing a long-awaited school safety package, including stronger threat assessments, tip sharing, and a statewide school safety commission.
- Among the bills effective on February 13 were ones designed to reduce firearm violence by requiring safe storage, extending background checks to purchasers of all firearms (not just pistols), and permitting judges to confiscate firearms from people who threaten to kill themselves or others. On Valentine’s Day in Flint, a toddler shot herself in the head with one of two loaded guns; her father has been arrested for violation of the safe storage law and other laws. The “red flag” law has—in three months-- resulted in almost forty judicial orders to confiscate firearms. Most orders were initiated by law enforcement and at least one by a medical professional.
- No later than June, cable-style gun locks will be available for free from the Michigan Department of Human Services and some county health departments, using \$500,000 in state funding.

Letter from an Old Friend

Dear PCO Friends,

Thank you so much for the invitation to attend the celebration of the church's 60th anniversary in May. It was such a pleasure to attend both the 25th and the 50th celebrations, and it would be a delight to see the Good Shepherd statue, the lovely building, and so many of you once more. From the moment I first saw the original building while I was passing through from the Detroit area to attend the annual meeting of the Synod of Michigan at Alma College, I had thought how much I would love to be pastor there! The building could not have been more than a year or two old if that. What a surprise when I was contacted by the search committee, and it dawned on me that they were representing the congregation that worshipped in that randomly spotted church on Okemos Road. Our family's more than twelve years in Okemos were some of the happiest in our lives. Son Steve was only three years old when we arrived, and Matt was born in Sparrow hospital soon after. And, oh, such interesting and delightful people!

At 86, I have decided that, through I have been fortunate to have traveled to many interesting places, the challenges of traveling, whether by car or by air, no longer appeal, So I will hope that other former pastors will be able to join you and enjoy your company and the many reminiscences, while I will be eager to hear a report here at home. (Get your pen out, Ron Dorr!)

Susan also sends her very best wishes. You will be a happy presence in our prayers!

Ron Byars (1968-1980)



Ron Byars during his time at the Presbyterian Church of Okemos

Earth Care Sunday at PCO—April 21, 2024



Dr. Gretel Van Wieren, Professor of Religious Studies at Michigan State University was guest speaker during the worship service and the Adult Education Hour



Displays on Earth Care Sunday offered practical information on caring for the world around us. A houseplant cutting swap was held for anyone who wanted to make their homes a little greener.

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

Diamond Jubilee Contributions

Part of the Diamond Jubilee on May 4-5 has been encouraging church members to contribute stories, memories, and artwork. For four Sundays in April, we displayed different expressions, impressions, and activities from the Jubilee collection.

On April 7, we provided contributions by and about children and youth, especially from Sunday School classes. They included activities for the season of Lent, children's drawings, poems by young people in a class on the Psalms, an imaginative "Cronkite-on-Site" report on Noah and his ark, and a six-year-old's interview of Rev. Larry Farris.

That same Sunday, we displayed adults' stories and memories. One former member recalled the early days of the United Presbyterian Church of Okemos. Bobbi DuByne provided five pages of narratives from 1963 to 2014, including the occasion in which the organ being hauled to Sunday service fell off the trailer in the snow. A cornucopia of "More Tales" of PCO contained lots of short vignettes. Former members provided memories about choir, the small number of funerals, and special rituals such as Christmas Eve services. Humor appeared in several accounts.

On April 14, rituals and mission projects predominated. Accounts of rituals included the dedication of Sunday School teachers by Rev. Ron Byars; the rigorous confirmation classes by Larry Farris, which required faith statements by both confirmands and parents; a funny episode involving communion being served by Rev. Mark Ramsey; the ordination of Ben Dorr, which involved 13 pastors laying hands on him; and Rev. Rob Carlson's poem celebrating his daughter's wedding.

Material on mission projects was voluminous and varied. Loaves & Fishes provided an article about our church's financial support and Vacation Bible School kids, with Don Treat's guidance, painting the mural inside the shelter. Lorrie Dial interviewed several people who had shoveled caliche and cleared brush at a shelter for Central American refugees in Los Fresnos, Texas, as well as visiting with the abandoned children who would occupy a new orphanage in Matamoros, Mexico. Habitat for Humanity workers left new houses with blisters, sore bodies, and rejuvenated souls. Workers who traveled to Nicaragua included a three-generational family, who, along with nine others, benefited from a sobering interview with Father Fernando Cardenal ("There is no word that adequately describes the poverty in Latin America"). A photo album of the Nicaraguan experience and one of a trip to Israel in February, 2009, led by Rev. Timothy Chon, mingled with a photo of the first trip to Detroit, led by Rev. Alice Townley.

On April 21, the display included a very limited number of small groups' contributions. A beautiful series of four book covers indicated what works the book club was discussing in early 2014. The men's group, meeting 1,804 consecutive Tuesday mornings, has been a protean group, primarily a discussion group, but also involved in retreats such as one on December 2, 2023, work projects, Bible study, support for people such as Bill Horne, and advisor to lay and ordained preachers. Writing Life Stories involves writing poems, stories, character sketches, letters, journals, and essays, then discussing them. Too many small groups' activities, however, are missing.

The other item featured on April 21 was creative expressions. It included drawings on a church bulletin by someone nearly two, a child's reaction to a CROP Walk, and lots of poetry such as "Fat Tuesday" and "Heroes are Human," which were read publicly months ago. The major contributor of poems, however, has been Eunice Creswell, who is in her ninth year of composing a book of poetry every year, praising God, appreciating nature, and musing about humanity especially since the pandemic.

On April 28, as of this writing, we hoped to have a display of books, articles, or both by pastors and members of our church.

Please continue sending contributions to Eunice Creswell, Ron Dorr, Jerri Gillett, or Kent Workman. Our deadline is flexible, extending beyond May 5. Any contributions on the following subjects, largely missing in the Jubilee edition in 2014, would be most welcome: Advent, adult education, Bible study, Board of Deacons, disagreements, Easter, the Green Team, The Grapevine, hymns, interfaith endeavors, Jazz Sunday, minutes for mission, pastors' arrivals and departures, retirees, sermons, special offerings, Women's Connection and dinner out, and Zoom.



Presbyterian Church of Okemos

2258 Bennett Road
Okemos, MI 48864
Phone: (517) 349-9536
www.okemospres.org

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Staff

REV. DR. LISA SCHROTT, PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF

REBECCA MATTERN, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FAITH

FORMATION

DR. MARLENE BREWBAKER, ORGANIST

WESTIN SORREL, CHOIR DIRECTOR

EDWARD ENNEN, SEXTON

ANNA THIEL, OFFICE MANAGER

GABRIELLE SHELTON, MEDIA SPECIALIST

Phone: 517-349-9536

<https://instagram.com/okemospres>

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

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

Email: office@okemospres.org

