

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Summer Sabbath: Play, Pray & Read July

The disciples gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. — Mark 6:30-32

Jesus encouraged the disciples to take time to rest after seasons of busyness. Jesus often retreated to the hills or to the lake to recharge. These scriptures are part of the *Stories of Our Faith*, the theme for our summer worship.

Amid the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, summer offers a sanctuary—a time to restore balance, nurture our well-being, and rekindle our connection to nature and to ourselves. In the rhythm of modern life, rest often feels like a luxury rather than a necessity. Yet, research tells us that taking time to recharge is essential for physical, emotional, and mental health.

As we did last summer, we will be taking some Sabbath time this July. Our regularly scheduled meetings will go on hiatus, with committees only meeting if there are important needs. Our formal education programs will stop and we will be intentional about taking time for personal renewal and drawing closer to God. It is a wonderful time to develop new spiritual rituals, rhythms that can sustain you during the busier seasons of the year.

Following worship on Sundays in July we encourage you take extra time to visit with each other and have deeper conversations. Check out a book from the church library and curl up on the couch for some time of reading. Share what books you are reading with others. Take a walk on our new prayer path. Bring a camp chair and enjoy some quiet time in the clearing on the prayer path.

This summer, make it a priority to embrace moments of stillness, connect with loved ones, and immerse yourself in nature. Let the warmth of the season inspire you to find balance, cultivate joy, draw closer to God and emerge refreshed.

Pastor Lisa

***Have a safe and happy Independence Day holiday.
Church is closed Friday, July 4. Staff does not report.***



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***Deadline for the August Grapevine is
Thursday, July 24th.***

JULY 2025 WORSHIP STORIES OF OUR FAITH



July 6: Luke 10:25–37	The Good Samaritan; Rev. Dan Lewis preaching
July 13: 2 Kings 5:1–14	Naaman is healed of leprosy
July 20: Luke 10:38–42	Mary & Martha
July 27: Luke 11:1–13	Jesus Teaches Prayer Jonathan Townley preaching

Celebrating Westin's Music Ministry at PCO & Summer Pick-Up Choir



Following worship on July 13, we will celebrate Westin's Sorrel's two years of music ministry as Chancel Choir Director at PCO. The Personnel Committee will be providing some special treats. There will be basket for cards and notes for you to share your appreciation and good wishes as we bid him farewell.

Westin graduated from Michigan State University in May with Masters in Music and will be headed to the University of Missouri, Kansas City to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts.

We will also have a **Summer Pick-Up Choir** that Sunday, so we encourage you to come at 9:00 a.m. and sing along with Westin one last time.

Your Input Requested

PCO will be assessing our facility needs for the near future and invites anyone who would like to participate to join the effort. In addition to necessary maintenance updates we plan to consider potential building modifications that align with our Journey to 2030 vision document. If you are interested please contact Pastor Lisa or Jeff Arbour.

Staying Healthy at Church

Need a band aid? Blood sugar a little low? Concerned about cardiac issues? PCO has you covered!

The Administration Committee is installing a new first aid kit in Fellowship Hall right next to the automatic external defibrillator (AED). In addition to band aids, antiseptic creams, and compresses, the kit will also contain Narcan, a treatment for reversing opioid overdose. In addition, first aid kits are located in the kitchen and classrooms.

Not sure what do if there an issue? There are a number of people in the church trained on both the AED and Narcan delivery. Instructions are included with the Narcan and the AED will provide verbal instructions.

For those who may struggle with low blood sugar, please know that there is juice in the refrigerator in the kitchen. Don't be shy – the grape juice we use for communion is fair game!

And one more piece of valuable help...If you don't have a cell phone handy, there are landline phones located by the computer in the fellowship hall library and on the kitchen wall near the exit doors to fellowship hall.



Happening This Summer

Special Mid-Summer Music Event

Organ Praise: A Recital of Organ Music in Praise to God

Sunday July 20, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the PCO Sanctuary

Reception to follow.

Join us as we welcome renowned musician Charles Frost to our organ!

Frost is active as an organ recitalist and workshop clinician. He is a member of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) and The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada where he is President. He was a member of the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song (PCOCS) which developed Glory to God, the Presbyterian Hymnal. He is conductor of the Sea Island Chamber Singers, an auditioned choir in the Beaufort community.

He is a native of Red Bank, New Jersey and began his music studies at an early age. He began playing the organ in churches and directing choirs as a sophomore in high school. Frost attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey where he received both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Church Music. His organ studies were with the late Dr. Joan Lippincott, retired head of the organ department and world renowned concert and recording

artist. As a graduate student, he was the teacher of all of the organ minors. He studied conducting with the late Dr. Joseph Flummerfelt, Head of Choral Activities and conductor of the famed Westminster Choir. Frost currently resides in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Frost has served as Minister of Music in churches in California, Long Island, New York, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 2018 he retired as Minister of Music at Sea Island Presbyterian Church in Beaufort, South Carolina where he served for sixteen years. In May, 2023, he retired as the organist at First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina after five years.



Save the Date!

Parish Life Out on the Town

Lansing Lugnuts Game

Saturday, August 16 at 7:05 p.m.

Join fellow PCO parishioners to cheer on the Lansing Lugnuts. In addition to the game (against the Dayton Dragons, by the way), the evening is a Faith & Family Night, including a pre-game Faith All-Star lineup! Hint: you might recognize a member of our church on the field! To cap it all off, there will be a spectacular LAFCU Fireworks show following the game.

Tickets will be approximately \$13.00 (we will confirm price closer to the date). To facilitate a group booking, please let the Parish Life Committee know how many in your party by signing up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall or contacting Deb Major or a member of Parish Life Committee **by Sunday August 10**. We'll collect money for tickets closer to the event.

Montreat Youth Conference

The Montreat Youth Conference draws thousands of youth every summer to the mountains of NC where they have an opportunity to experience faith formation alongside other youth and adults through worship, keynote, small group, shared meals, and play.

Youth leave Montreat knowing that:

- Their faith matters.
- They are loved as they are.
- They are part of a broad community of faith

PCO Youth Becca Boldrey, Lucas Meland, Alex Juarez, Maddie Pearson and adults Jennifer Gordon and Christine Meland will attend the conference **July 13-19** and stay in a house with a group from New Hope Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, NC. The group will be commissioned in worship on **July 6** and we will hit the road **July 12**.

You are invited to accompany the group in these ways:

Pray: for safe travels, growing faith, experiencing nature, fun, and friendship

Provide: snacks & water for the road (it's a 10+ hour drive!), and notes of encouragement for the participants

Please deliver to Christine Meland and/or the church office by July 11.

As Summer is in full swing, many activities are on hiatus at PCO while some continue on a modified schedule. Check out the weekly e-Announcements for the most up-to-date information about what's happening here at church. Below is information about what's currently scheduled in July.

Retirees in July

The Retirees are invited to join regular volunteers (including Jane Bobay) at the Greater Lansing Food Bank on **Thursday, July 24 from 1:30-3:30 p.m.** instead of their regular July monthly meeting.

The facility is ADA compliant. You can join a car-pool at the church at 1:00 p.m. or drive to the facility off the Webster Road Exit in Bath. A tour of the facility will be included.

Please let Jane know if you plan to come (contact info is in the directory).

Caregiver Support Group

We will meet on **Wednesday, July 23** from 5:00-6:00 p.m. on Zoom. Please note we have a **new Zoom number: 892 3955 1708** and **passcode: 48864**. An open discussion format will allow attendees to share resources, successes and concerns. Please join.

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our July Birthdays on **Sunday, July 20**. If you were born in July, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, July 13, if it is not already there.



Volunteers Needed Next Month

Please consider helping feed the hungry at Advent House in Lansing on **Saturday, August 16**. Adult and youth volunteers are needed for both preparing food and serving this **3:30 p.m.** meal. A signup sheet will be on the Mission side of the kiosk beginning July 15.

Questions? Contact Ellen Hoekstra (info is in the directory)



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—On hiatus for the summer.

Writing Life's Stories — 1st Sundays, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— next meeting is July 6.

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **July 20**.

Women's Connection— *On hiatus until fall. We will see you in September!*

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— To be determined for July. Please watch e-Announcements for info.

Retirees — Regularly scheduled on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00 noon but **see left column for July information**.

TUESDAYS

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

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall. Confirm with Patty Wilson or Emily Conroy-Krutz (contact info in the directory).

Artists Circle—Monthly, 2nd Tuesdays. Confirm with Eunice Creswell (contact info in the directory).

WEDNESDAYS

Conversation & Contemplation—*On Summer Break until Wednesday, September 3*.

Caregiver Support Group - 4th Wednesdays, **July 23rd**. 5:00 p.m. on Zoom. This group has a new Zoom number: **892 3955 1708** and **password: 48864**

THURSDAYS

Bible Study — Weekly, 9:30 a.m.
Zoom <https://msu.zoom.us/j/5147440526>

Youth Parents Night Out—*On hiatus until Fall*.

Rooted and Engaged Intergeneration Mission Week 2025

Last month, PCO adults and youth spent time working in the community garden at Edgewood Village, sorting and packing food at the Okemos Community Food Pantry, and preparing the prayer path here at the church.



EDGEWOOD VILLAGE

The mission at Edgewood Village is to empower low-income households by providing access to affordable housing, educational opportunities and community programming.



COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Located at Okemos Community Church and services residents in the 48864 zip code. The pantry provides food and personal needs items such as soap and toilet paper.

PCO PRAYER PATH

This project began as a partnership between the PCO Green Team and the Youth Group. While there is still some work to do, the prayer path is ready for use. Start by the playground and come out by the shed behind the church building or vice versa.



Before: Sexton Edward Ennen shows where the path will begin.

During: Using tools and a woodchipper to prepare the wood donated by PCO members

After: Moving the chips onto the path. There's more to move if you're interested. ☺

PCO Library News

The PCO Library shines a light on books of poetry for the month of July. The following quotes are from the publishers of our new acquisitions:

Days and Times: Poems from the Liturgy of Living by Paul K. Hooker “These poems seek to be playful with faith. Their aim is to expose the underlying sacredness of events that form the liturgy of living and to do so with sensitivity toward mystery, wonder, and occasionally suspicion. Some of these seek to tell stories left untold by the narratives of faith; others prod the narratives of ordinary life to see where faith may be hiding.”

Begin with a Question: Poems by Marjorie Maddox “Explores how the life of faith is a continuous voyage, launched anew each bright day of the spirit or dark night of the soul. This is a book of contemplation and motion, a journey—often in stops and starts—toward the Divine, a pilgrimage paved with prayer, praise, pause, penitence, and (of course) questions.”

Joy: 100 Poems edited by Christian Wiman “In this revelatory anthology, Wiman takes readers on a profound and surprising journey through some of the most underexplored terrain in contemporary life. Rather than define joy for readers, he wants them to experience it. His rich selections awaken us to the essential role joy plays in human life.”

You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World edited by Ada Limón “A singular collection of fifty poems reflecting on our relationship to the natural world by many of our most cherished writers.”

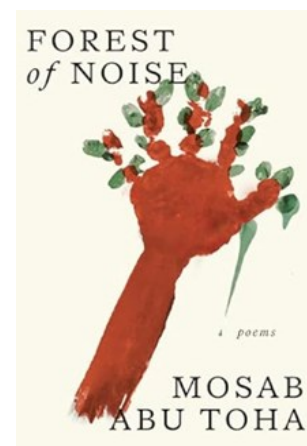
Slow Wreckage by Barbara Crooker “The poems in this collection consider the ‘slow wreckage’ that comes with advancing years. As well as considering the travails of an aging individual, Crooker uses a wider lens to examine the damages inflicted by society and its failings. And through it all, or despite it all, she finds beauty and hope in the physical world.

Unalone: Poems in Conversation with the Book of Genesis by Jessica Jacobs “Deeply personal and yet universal in its truths, this collection draws on the Book of Genesis as a living document whose stories, wisdom, and ethical knots can engage us more fully with our own lives—whatever your religious tradition or spiritual beliefs. In this stunning and ambitious book, Jacobs reminds us that all poetry serves as a kind of prayer.”

Forest of Noise: Poems by Mosab Abu Toha “A candid, horrific, and deeply touching new collection of poems about life in Gaza by an award-winning Palestinian poet.”

While you are visiting the library, take some time to look at the poetry of PCO’s resident poet, Eunice Creswell. Her collections, as well as the new books, are available for you to borrow.

Kathi Cook



Public Policy Report By Ellen Hoekstra

Actions at the federal level may cause major cuts to both Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). The Michigan State Budget Office has estimated the total cost of the US House passed bill to Michigan at \$900 million. Almost 1.5 Michiganders—nearly 15% of our population—receive SNAP benefits. The majority of those eligible for SNAP benefits are also Medicaid recipients, creating a potential economic double whammy.

In other news:

The Governor has signed a state of emergency for Lansing as well as for Allegan and Baraga counties, opening up state resources to assist with recovery costs from recent storms.

Michigan’s Great Start Readiness Program has record enrollment of 56% of Michigan’s four year old children. This pre-K program is free to participants.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has reported a dramatic increase in emergency medical services related to recreational use of nitrous oxide—laughing gas. It comes in a variety of flavors and is often marketed to the young.

The “bottle bill” has not recovered from its COVID slump, with 3 of 10 not returned for a deposit last year. A ballot measure to “reform” the law may be on the ballot in 2026.

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

A Banned Book at the Naval Academy Library

On April 5, 2025, CBS News* reported that the United States Naval Academy had banned 381 books from its library. West Point soon followed suit. The New York Times headlined Maya Angelou's first volume of her six autobiographies, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. Books on the Holocaust, civil rights, feminism, gender, transgender, and D. E. I. were also removed.

I immediately wrote a brief letter to the editor of the Times, but only one letter on the subject appeared in that newspaper. So I composed a 364-word letter to Art Cullen, the Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of the Storm Lake Times Pilot, a small newspaper in northwestern Iowa. To my surprise, Cullen published the entire letter, even giving it a title, "Lessons from Maya."

To the Editor: *Banning Maya Angelou's book, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, robs U. S. Naval Academy midshipmen of a valuable resource of fierce resilience and wise instruction. For nearly 40 years, I taught Angelou's book in four different courses in James Madison College at Michigan State University.*

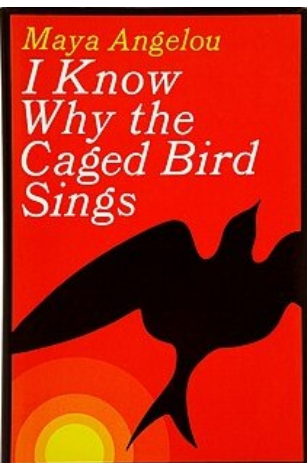
In my first-year writing course on the human life cycle, students deeply appreciated Angelou's frankness, courage, resilience, and skillful descriptive and narrative writing. In my course on research writing and the Great Depression, young women and men learned multiple ways in which African-Americans maintained hope amid hard times. "All my work is meant to say, 'You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated.'" She persisted, over-coming the strikes against her even in the streetcars in San Francisco.

In my course on religion in American literature, Maya's autobiography started with Easter and resurrection, showed the power of religious revivals, and ended with the birth of a new child. She described her victory over muteness, Joe Louis's remaining heavyweight boxing champion of the world, and the power of 'Lift Every Voice' in the face of a bigoted speaker at her junior high commencement. Because of their age, many youth in my course on American autobiography preferred Angelou to Benjamin Franklin, Dorothy Day, Black Elk, and Alfred Kazin.

First-year students in particular learned how they too could overcome unexpected difficulties. Many white students resonated to a Black adolescent's search for identity and support from communities. Because of Angelou, one African-American thought more about her life and her courage—practicing and not practicing courage in class discussions, not drinking at parties, and refusing to give up when she wanted to quit college. Another student read two more of Maya's autobiographical volumes and persuaded her dad to read Caged Bird. "Reading, studying, discussing, and ultimately seeing Maya Angelou was the high point in my entire freshman year," wrote one young woman.

Maya Angelou made students think. What these young adults learned was the power of renewal—replacing the forces that diminish with the forces that replenish. They were inspired by Angelou's love and courage. And they learned from a masterful crafter of words how to write more clearly and vividly.

Of course, I could have provided more evidence. Five formidable females, for instance, helped to cultivate Maya's moral strength in the midst of one adversity after another. Of Bertha Flowers, Maya said, "She gave me back my voice." Of Grand-Momma Henderson, Maya wrote: "Her world was bordered on all sides with work, duty, religion, and 'her place.' I don't think she ever knew that a deep-brooding love hung over every- thing she touched."



According to James Baldwin, Angelou's "portrait is a Biblical study of life in the midst of death. . . . I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings liberates the reader into life simply because Maya Angelou confronts her own life with such a moving wonder, such a luminous dignity." A year after she had graduated, a former student of mine met Maya Angelou, got Angelou's autograph on the page with the student's favorite quotation, and later taught middle-school girls in Detroit from Angelou's book. A good friend, 57, once told me, "Maya Angelou—that woman just exudes strength and confidence."

This liberating, regenerating book belongs inside not outside the Naval Academy library.

**A follow-up article published May 21, 2025 by CBS News in Baltimore reported that most of the 381 books had been returned to the library; however, "(t)he Navy ... could not confirm which books have been returned to the library or if Angelou's book or the others will remain pulled from shelves. "*

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