

# The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

**From Pastor Lisa Schrott**



## Stories of Our Faith

As we have been exploring the scriptures that tell the *Stories of Our Faith* this summer in worship, I have enjoyed hearing your stories of people and places and experiences that have shaped your faith. We are exploring some opportunities for the fall where we can be in deeper conversation about our faith formation.

I have been reminded this summer about the way my years as a research scientist and professor shaped the story of my faith. This summer is 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Scopes Trial. Many of you are familiar with the story through versions of the play and movie *Inherit the Wind*. The trial (and particularly the dramatizations of the trial) have promoted a view of science and religion in an antagonistic relationship – warring factions seeking to establish the absolute truth about our identity - who we are and to whom we belong. While historians have shed light on the way this case was in some ways manufactured, marketed and hyped to bring attention (and money) to a small Tennessee town, it nonetheless has been the prototype of science vs. religion, Darwinian evolution vs. the Genesis creation account.

My story is one of science and faith intertwined and in dialogue with each other. They have been framed by the mutual characteristic of wonder and awe of the world in which we live – from microscopic neurons to the vastness of the cosmos.

One of the joys (among so many!) for me in serving as a pastor at PCO, is the breadth and depth of the interests of our congregational family, including those with backgrounds in a range of science and technology areas. If you also have an interest in the intersection of science and faith, I encourage to check out the Presbyterian Association of Science, Technology and the Christian Faith at <https://pastcf.org/> and the John Templeton Foundation <https://www.templeton.org/>. I am also happy to connect you to other resources! And stay tuned for an opportunity later this fall where I will share more about my journey from the laboratory bench to the pulpit.

**Pastor Lisa**

**Thank you for your patience regarding the delay of this month's newsletter.  
Deadline for the September Grapevine is Friday, August 22nd.**

## In This Issue

- *Meet PCO's New Chancel Choir Director—pg. 2*
- *Special Worship Service Info—pg. 2*
- *Opportunities for Fellowship—pg. 3*
- *Emergency Preparedness at PCO—pg. 4*
- *Montreat Recap—pg. 5*
- *Upcoming Events—pg. 6*
- *Book Nook—pg. 7*

## Welcome PCO's New Chancel Choir Director



**Shelby Laird**

PCO welcomes Shelby Laird as its new Chancel Choir Director. Shelby officially joined the PCO family on Sunday, August 3.

Shelby is a passionate conductor, vocalist, and educator dedicated to connecting people through choral art music. She has performed with ensembles across the U.S. and internationally, including the Sedona Academy Chamber Singers, the Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, and the University of Oregon Chamber Choir. Shelby has worked with esteemed conductors such as Dr. Judy Bowers, Dr. Anton Armstrong, and Helmuth Rilling, and has sung on recordings and projects that span both classical and contemporary styles.

She earned her Bachelor's in Choral Music Education from Northern Arizona University, her Master's in Choral Conducting from the University of Oregon, and is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts at Michigan State University.

Shelby has previously served in church music roles in Arizona and Oregon, where she directed choirs and helped lead worship through meaningful and expressive music.

Shelby is thrilled to join the music ministry at Presbyterian Church of Okemos and looks forward to making music and building community together.

## Special Worship at Eastminster Presbyterian Church

**Sunday, August 17 at 10:00 a.m.**

We will join our siblings in Christ in worship at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 1315 Abbot Road in East Lansing. Rebecca Mattern and Rev. Kristin Stroble will speak about their experience walking on the Camino de Santiago (The Way of St. James) during the worship service. Since the Middle Ages, this nearly 500-mile trek has been traveled by pilgrims seeking alignment of body, mind, and spirit with God.

The worship service will include a Blessing of the Backpacks and Back to School blessing for all children and youth. Please bring backpacks to the service. There will be a time of fellowship after the worship service. This will be followed by additional reflections by Rebecca and Kristin, and time for questions.

Please note: there will be no worship service at PCO on that morning. If you are unable to attend in person, you can watch the livestream of the service at <https://www.youtube.com/c/eastminsterpresbyterianchurcheastlansing>. While the livestream will be available at PCO in Fellowship Hall, we do hope that you will make every effort to attend the service in person. This will be a special opportunity for us to share in this spiritual pilgrimage as we partner with our sister congregation.



**Rev. Kristen Stroble (left) and  
Rebecca Mattern (right)**



*As Summer begins winding down, some activities remain on hiatus while others 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 August.*

### **Conversation and Contemplation**

The C&C group is making plans for **September**. We will continue to meet Wednesdays from 10:00-11:30 a.m., mainly on Zoom. The group time includes sharing joys and concerns, meditation, the practice of Lectio Divina, alternating weeks with a book study. We have chosen *Sacred Balance: How Ancient Practices Can Restore Modern Minds* by Miriam Diephouse-Mc Millan was selected. Jill will order these through Schuler's Books.

Our plan is to meet on Zoom **Wednesday, September 10**. Jayne will facilitate and Michele will offer the meditation from "Pray as You Go". An extended time of sharing will be offered.

On **Wednesday, September 17**, we will meet in person. At that time, we will encourage new members to learn about the format and practices of our group and enjoy a time of fellowship and coffee. We will also offer a partnership for members who don't feel comfortable on Zoom. If you would like to share your screen and Wednesday morning group time with a member, or if you would like to be partnered with a member, please let Jane Bobay know. We would love to broaden our outreach.

### **Retirees in August**

The Retiree Group will meet on **Monday, August 16** at noon in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a snack or lunch and a drink for yourself and enjoy a time of fellowship and sharing your favorite summertime readings, activities and places you've enjoyed visiting over the summer. We will discuss fall plans for the group.

### **Caregiver Support Group**

The Caregiver's Support group meets the Fourth Wednesday of each month on Zoom at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting is **August 27**. Join us for a time of discussion and support. Zoom #892-3955-1708; password is 48864.

### **Birthday Cake Sunday**

We will celebrate our August Birthdays on **Sunday, August 24** (*delayed one week due to service at Eastminster*). If you were born in August, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, August 17, if it is not already there.

## **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— August meeting was on the 3rd.

**Birthday Cake Sunday**—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. **This month** will be on August 24 due to service at Eastminster.

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

### **MONDAYS**

**Women's Dinner Out**— August meeting was on Monday, August 4

**Retirees** – Regularly scheduled on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00 noon

### **TUESDAYS**

**Men's Group** – Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid** (In-person and on Zoom) this month was **Tuesday, August 5**.

**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 10. See info on left about plans for fall.*

**Caregiver Support Group** - 4th Wednesdays, **August 27th**. 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.*

## PCO's Emergency Preparedness Yearly Review

**EMERGENCIES HAPPEN** and we don't know when or where an emergency may take place. **SO, the best we can do is be prepared.** The Administration Committee has prepared a plan for our church. The plan includes the following emergency situations that *could* take place in the church, either during worship or committee meetings, or other events.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a medical emergency occurs, after a quick evaluation, 9-1-1 would be called. This would be done by the head usher or designee. We do have an A.E.D (Automated External Defibrillator) located in Fellowship Hall, by the kiosk and hall door. Staff plus other members have been trained in use of this equipment. (This unit is serviced each year to ensure it works properly.) There is a well-stocked first aid kit, next to the defibrillator. It includes Narcan (naloxone) to reverse opioid overdoses.



*First aid kit and AED in Fellowship Hall*

### FIRE PROCEDURES

In the event a fire is noticed, an alarm will sound. If the alarm sounds, everyone is expected to use the nearest fire exit and leave the building!

If in the sanctuary, everyone uses the nearest fire exit, and once outside, gathers in the parking lot near the side-walk on Okemos Road. Next time you are in the sanctuary, PLEASE LOOK AROUND AND NOTICE THE EXIT SIGNS.

If a fire breaks out during education hour, everyone exits the building using the closest fire exits. and once out-side, gathers in the parking lot near the sidewalk on Okemos Road where a head-count can be made. During this time, teachers walk and stay with their class to make sure all are safe. All must stay a safe distance from the building until an all-clear is given.

### WEATHER ALERTS

In the event there is a meeting at church and a weather alert is issued, groups will be asked to move into a "SAFE AREA". This safe area has been identified as in the church interior, away from windows and doors. This includes the Sunday School wing hall, plus the Middle School and High School rooms, as these two rooms are interior rooms with no windows. In addition, the far choir room, which exits to the education wing may be used. Pastor Lisa has the "emergency alerts" on her phones in the case a storm pops up during church service.

### BUILDING LOCKDOWNS

A LOCKDOWN IS USED WHEN THERE IS A POTENTIAL DANGER OUTSIDE THE BUILDING. In the event this happens, our church would be notified and a designee would communicate this to people in the building.

A designee would lock all outside doors and make sure all windows are closed. Depending on the situation, a decision might be made to move groups to a specific safe area and all need to remain in place until notified the incident is over.

### ACTIVE SHOOTER

Because of unfortunate circumstances with church shootings, we do need to be aware of "active shooter" incidents. We are fortunate Pastor Lisa has been involved in "plans of action" for these types of incidents, and now is involved in the continued process of planning in the event this ever happens. Planning for responding to a violent situation in the church will be handled in a separate training event by the Administration Committee.

### MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS INCIDENTS

We are grateful Pastor Lisa has training in working with incidents involving those with mental health crisis. She will continue to involve staff and leadership in this type of training.

The Administration Committee continues to evaluate and review present procedures and will make adjustments as needed.

## A Grateful Congregation and Community

### Montreat Youth Conference 2025—Follow-up

Four PCO youth and two adults attended the Montreat Youth Conference (MYC), in Montreat, North Carolina from July 12-19, 2025.

We spent the week with a group from New Hope Presbyterian Church of Hillsborough, NC. The 11 youth and 4 adults shared housing and meals, worshipped and played together, all while exploring how “God lights our path”. We heard lessons from Psalms, the books of Acts, Ruth, and Isaiah, as well as The Gospels. We discussed stories relating to light and darkness, and shared common experiences of fear in the dark. We discerned that God is present in the darkness, He helps us to see His light, and we are invited to help shine His light into the world.

We enjoyed our time in Montreat during worship times, as well as play time. The mountains have many paths to climb, and winding creeks to explore. We relished quiet moments in the woods, and celebrated friendships with games and ice cream. We are all grateful to have shared this experience, growing closer to God and each other.

### From the Memorial Fund

Have you seen the new griddle at church? It’s been used for the church picnic and by the Retirees and the Youth Group. Cooking and eating food together is certainly a great way to get to know each other and connect with old friends. And we’ve found that the griddle is more efficient than a regular grill

The undesignated funds from the memorial fund were used to fund the purchase of the griddle and accessories. What a wonderful way to use the funds, bringing church members and friends together. Let’s give it a lot of use!



**L to R: Christine Meland, Jennifer Gordon, Maddie Pearson, Becca Bol-drey, Lucas Meland & Alex Juarez .**

### Thank You

We would like to thank the congregation for your prayers and support during our time in Montreat. Many of you donated snacks, drinks, and money. Many of you sent us notes of affirmation and encouragement, as well as craft projects to share.

We would also like to thank Pastor Lisa for supporting our group for the second year. We couldn’t have done this without all of your love and support!

***Sincerely, Alex, Becca, Lucas, Maddie, Christine, and Jennifer***

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your donations on 06/04 and 06/19/2025! From all of us at Greater Lansing Food Bank (GLFB) thank you for choosing to support our critical work, feeding neighbors of all ages in the seven counties we serve. With the help of your gift, we can continue to be a vital resource for our mid-Michigan community.

For more than 40 years, GLFB has been at the heart of hunger relief for mid-Michigan. Support through strategic partnerships and donor support from community members is tremendously important for us to continue connecting food insecure neighbors with much needed resources. Last year, in 2024, we were able to distribute 10.7 million meals!

Our mid-Michigan community is a testament to the power of joining together to fight hunger. Thank you for letting us know we can depend on you!

***With gratitude—Zach Jandereski, Annual Giving Specialist***

GREATER LANSING  
**foodbank**





## Happening Soon

### New Member Class Sunday, September 14 11:30 a.m. following worship



Want to learn more about becoming a member of the Presbyterian Church of Okemos (PCO)?

Join Pastor Lisa for a time of conversation and information. Questions welcome!

There will be an opportunity to join the church following the class. Please contact the church office or Pastor Lisa for more information.

### Parish Life Out on the Town Lansing Lugnuts Game Saturday, August 16 7:05 p.m.

It's Faith & Family Night, where you might recognize a member of our church on the field! Following the game against the Dayton Dragons, there will be a spectacular fireworks show, sponsored by LAFCU.

Tickets are \$13.00.

Sign up online (find the link in the e-announcements) or on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall **by Sunday August 10**. Checks (preferred and made out to PCO) or cash may be brought to the church.

### PCO Mission Partner Fundraiser

The Haiti Nursing Foundation says *Cheers to 20 Years: Honoring the Past, Fueling the Future.*

You are invited to join in for a heartfelt evening celebrating 20 years of progress, partnership, and purpose—supporting the next generation of nurses and advancing healthcare in Haiti. The event takes place on **Friday, September 26 from 5:30—8:30 p.m.** at The Kensington Hotel, 3500 South State Street in Ann Arbor.

You will enjoy a delicious dinner, drinks, live music, and inspiring tributes. We will honor Dean Hilda Alcindor for her 20 years of leadership at FSIL.

Tickets are \$150 per person or \$1100 for a table of 8. Tickets can be purchased online here: [haitinursing.org](http://haitinursing.org) or through the QR code below.



## BOOK NOOK

*By Ron Dorr*

### Two More Stories of the Port William Membership

by Wendell Berry

"For the nearly thirty years of their marriage, they had worked hard every day." That sentence about Mary and Elton Penn comes in the first of Two More Stories of the Port William Membership, by Wendell Berry. But what is "hard work"? One afternoon of Elton's labor cutting tobacco in 1967 provides some clues about the nature and purpose of work, its order, rhythm, and momentum, how such labor felt, the doubleness of work, and the remarkable effects of thoughtful physical and emotional endeavors.

On the afternoon of the story, "A Friend of Mine" (the only one I will analyze), Elton Penn arrived to help Mart Rowenberry harvest his tobacco. Mart told him to work a patch by himself—but not to eat any of the watermelon growing at the edge of the patch. Sure enough, Elton picked up three juicy watermelon before he began cutting his share of the tobacco harvest. He knew exactly what he was to do—but at first he dreaded the task. It was a very hot day, and the work, always bending over, was difficult. Elton was precise in his job, stripping the tobacco leaves and putting them on a stick until they looked like a tent. But he knew the stages of this work—"from seeming impossibility to obvious possibility to eventual completion," and Penn was able to imagine "the familiar sequences of emotions," able to muster "the necessary strength and will." Half the row finished, he looked back and forth, "feeling a sort of joy now in the expenditure of his strength." By the end of the row, "he was almost completely in the rhythm of his work, carried along by it." Penn's "body entered freely to the work, his mind to its thoughts." His strength was "feelable in his bones."

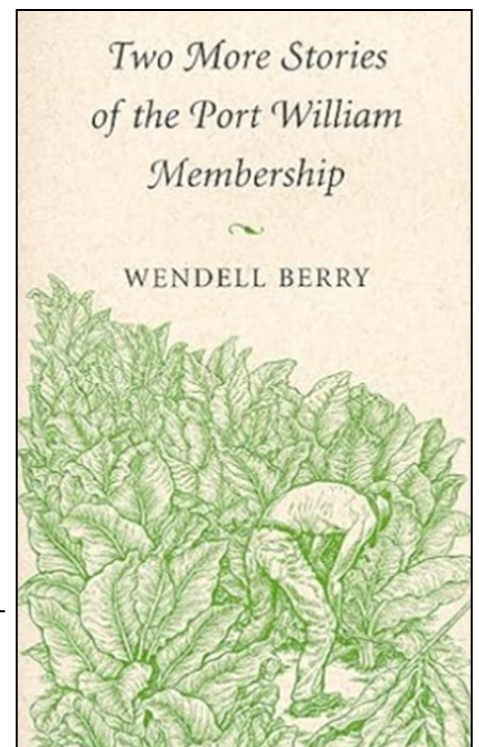
Absorbed in body and mind, Penn, 47, knew how to pace himself. At the end of the first row, he stopped, cut up slices of one small watermelon, ate, felt refreshed, and resumed his stripping and spearing of the tobacco leaves. "Working alone, a little margin of ease" surrounding himself, he was happy, "feeling good and satisfied with what he had." Elton "was in it now. . . as though his motion through the field was not made by him but he by it, and it was carrying him." That motion would carry him through the other rows. "And yet there was a momentum that went beyond tiredness and sleep, moving in him like the flow of blood, and through him like a wind." Half done, he "rested happily," eating another watermelon, "feeling lightened, pressed on by the force of what he had done."

Momentum and desire carried Penn through the third and fourth rows. "With the end of the row and day in sight, he worked easily, easily, and fast, as if he were going downhill." When he finished, "weariness then seemed to flow down and through his body, and with it came an odd elation." He envisioned the harvest, the provisioning that he and May prized, and it all felt good. He had something to show for all his work. He realized not only his place in the world but also his share in his society. He was part of a larger community: that of Port William membership. "You have lived there, and suffered and rejoiced . . . it was after all a good time, and you like to remember it."

Seven years later, Elton Penn would be "six months in his grave." Remembering Elton, Mart Rowenberry "would laugh with satisfaction and delight." "He was a friend of mine," Mart would say. "A friend of mine."

This story of the nature of work and the man who knew intimately the pleasure, happiness, gladness, elation, delight, and joy of good work hits home quite closely. I can easily apply many passages to my own teaching, especially the grading of papers and the conducting of class discussion: steadfast purpose, dread and eagerness, a hard-earned rhythm, judicious patience and pacing, sweat and gladness, connectedness in writing alone, love and passion in what I was doing, felt knowledge, pain endured, pride in being equal to the task, fierce devotion to helping others, completion and fulfillment, harvest and provisioning, rejoining or reclaiming one's membership with fellow workers.

Doubleness abounds in Berry's story: inner humor and outer seriousness, dread and desire, labor and rest, physical sensation and imagination, the individual and the community, discipline and freely-given grace. Biblical passages also surface: "It was good" (Genesis 1:10, 16, 21, 25, 31), the Fourth Commandment, the hired laborers in Matthew 20). Finding joy in one's faithful work is in itself one of the deep joys in life. Wendell Berry's masterful prose continues to challenge and enrich my life.



## Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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

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

### Staff

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

DR. MARLENE BREWBAKER, ORGANIST

SHELBY LAIRD, CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR

IRENE SHUTT, HANDBELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

EDWARD ENNEN, SEXTON

ANNA THIEL, OFFICE MANAGER

GABRIELLE GHOSH, MEDIA SPECIALIST

Phone: 517-349-9536

<https://instagram.com/okemospres>

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

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

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

