

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Romans 14: 7-8

WE BELONG TO GOD is PCO's 2025 Stewardship theme. You may recognize this language, as it comes from our **Mission Statement**:

As members of The Presbyterian Church of Okemos,
We believe that in life, in death, and life beyond death,
We belong to God.

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

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

We desire to build a network of caring relationships
Between families, friends, and strangers
By offering welcome, healing, justice and peace to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Beginning October 12, and through Dedication Sunday, November 16, we will explore in worship what it means to *belong to God* – that is to have our identity as individuals and as congregation rooted in the Word of God and God's promises of faithfulness. This is our hope in times of chaos and challenge. It is our solace and comfort when the road ahead of us is filled with hills that seem too steep to climb and valleys too deep for us to see the road ahead. That *We Belong to God* is also our marching orders – our call to serve, giving of our time, talent and treasures.

During this season, we will hear from members of the congregation as to how our identity as children of God shapes the ministry of PCO, both our inward engagement with God and each other, and our outward engagement with the community and the world. We will also be treated to special music from Youth Instrumental Choirs, the Handbell Choir and the Chancel Choir.

On page 2 is the schedule for our **We Belong to God** series.

Pastor Lisa

In This Issue

- *A Message from the APNC—pg. 2*
- *Upcoming Events—pgs. 2-3*
- *Fellowship Opportunities — pg. 4*
- *Mission Activities - pgs. 5 & 6*
- *Library Books and Book Study—pg. 7*
- *Book Nook—pg. 8*
- *PeaceQuest—pg. 9*

**Deadline for the November Grapevine is
Wednesday, October 22nd.**



Update from the APNC

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee has been hard at work for the past nearly 15 months, searching for PCO's next Associate Pastor. After the creation of our Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) and its approval by Session in October last year and then subsequent release date in the matching system on October 30, we began our review process.

We have reviewed dozens of Personal Discernment Profiles (PDPs), conducted many first and second interviews, and even hosted two in-person interviews with potential candidates. Unfortunately, the needs of our congregation and those of these candidates did not align and we are still searching for the one God wants us to find. We are continuing to receive matches in the PC(USA) system and are also posting on a site for those call-seekers with whom we share communion - UCC, Methodist and PC(USA).

As we were told when we began our work, this can be a long and arduous process, and we are experiencing this. Please continue to pray for the APNC and the candidates seeking a call.

Candy Boldrey, Brett Cone, Laurin Gierman, Jerri Gillette, Zachary Krawczyk, and Zach Nawyn-Hellinga

Cont. from page 1.

We Belong to God Series:

October 12: Mission and Vision of PCO

October 19: Worship that Glorifies God

October 26: Study that Seeks to Understand God

November 2: Service to a World that Needs God

November 9: Offering Welcome, Healing, Justice and Peace

November 16: We Dedicate Our Gifts as We Respond in Gratitude

Pastor Lisa



October 5, 2025 10 am
Worship Service with the Lord's Supper
Peace Quest Service
 Service led by the PCO Mission Committee
 Kent Workman preaching
 Special Music: *Creation Will Be at Peace*
 Performed by the PCO Handbell & Chancel Choirs

PCO's World Communion Sunday worship service is one of many events and ongoing activities happening in the greater Lansing area as part of PeaceQuest 2025. PCO has taken part in PeaceQuest for a number of years, and is listed as one of more than two dozen locations in the annual 'Peace Pole Pursuit.'

For more information about PeaceQuest and an online address to this year's calendar of events, see page 9.

Save the Date

Sunday, November 9, 2025

Following Worship

Session has called a Congregational Meeting to hear report from Nominating Committee

Please join us in person if possible. All are welcome. Only members may vote.

Happening This Month at PCO



TRUNK OR TREAT



@ Presbyterian Church of Okemos
(PCO)

Sunday, October 26 from 4 - 6 pm

PCO, in partnership with Okemos Community Church, will host a Halloween Trunk or Treat this year in our parking lot.

Lots of ways to get involved: Decorate a trunk, help out with traffic control and snack distribution, welcome guests at the registration or donate candy or funds for candy.

PCO YOUTH CALENDAR OCTOBER 2025

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED

YOUTH GROUP: SUNDAYS OCTOBER 5 AND 19 @ 5- 7 PM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26: TRUNK OR TREAT AT PCO 4 - 6 PM

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **OCTOBER 4: (SATURDAY 9AM - 6PM) CASS COMMUNITY SERVICES INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION TRIP TO DETROIT**
- **OCTOBER 12: (SUNDAY @ 1 PM) CROP WALK AT GRACE METHODIST, LANSING**
- **OCTOBER 18: (SATURDAY 2:30 - 4:30 PM): SERVE MEAL AT ADVENT HOUSE, LANSING**



Conversation and Contemplation

The C&C group meets each Wednesday from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Various members facilitate each week and Michele Arbour offers a centering meditation. Lectio Divina, which leads members into a contemplative time with scripture or other readings and followed by discussion is led by Charlie Senger, Mary Anne Larzelere, and Laurie Harkema on alternating weeks.

Our fall book for study is *Sacred Balance: How Ancient Practices Can Restore Modern Minds* by Miriam Diephouse-McMillan. Jill Schaberg, Jennifer Gordon and Jayne Zulkhe lead the study this month.

This group meets on Zoom 905-709-104. All are welcomed to join and Zoom partners are willing to host non-Zoom participants in their home. Please contact Jane Bobay (contact info in the directory) for more information.

Retirees in October

The Retirees meet at noon on the third Monday of each month in the PCO Fellowship Hall. **October 20** is the next meeting. Please bring your own sack lunch or snack.

Discussion topics, mission activities and guest speakers vary throughout the year. We are currently getting to know each other through conversations about our favorite things. We continue this month with our favorite songs, hymns, and poems. Please bring your favorite to share with the group.

Caregiver Support Group

Those caring for a loved one are welcomed to join us for open discussion. Share your joys and concerns, activities, plans, resources or anything on your heart. Members of the group provide support for each other. We meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:00 pm. See you on **October 22** on Zoom 892-3955-1708.

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our October Birthdays on **Sunday, October 19**. you were born in October, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, October 12, if it is not already there.

Women's Dinner Out

The next Women's Dinner Out will take place on **Monday, October 6** at 5:30 p.m. at Everyday Authentic Chinese Cuisine, 1315 East Grand River in East Lansing. Please RSVP to Barb Hoevel at 517 927 6311 by either text or call.

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 at 11:30 a.m. Watch e-Announcements and Bulletin for description and location.

Writing Life's Stories — 1st Sundays, **2:00 p.m.**, Zoom 848 6124 7191— October meeting is on the **Sunday the 5th**.

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

Women's Connection— 4th Sundays September— November and January—May. This month will be on **October 26th**.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— **1st Monday unless otherwise noted.** October meeting will be on Monday, **October 6**. See left column for details.

Retirees — Regularly scheduled on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00 noon in person at PCO. This month's meeting is **October 20th**.

TUESDAYS

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

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall. Next meeting is **Tuesday, October 7**.

Artists Circle—Monthly, 1:00 p.m. on 2nd Tuesdays. Confirm with Eunice Creswell (contact info in the directory).

WEDNESDAYS

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

Caregiver Support Group - 4th Wednesdays, **October 22nd**. 5:00 p.m. on Zoom 892 3955 1708; password: 48864. See left column for details.

THURSDAYS

Bible Study — Weekly, 9:30 a.m.
Zoom <https://msu.zoom.us/j/5147440526>; password: 48864



Missions & More



WALK. GIVE. CHANGE THE WORLD.

**Greater Lansing
CROP HUNGER WALK**

OCTOBER 12, 2025

LANSING, MICHIGAN

**CROP
HUNGER WALK**
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

12 OCTOBER, 2025
SUPPORT PCO'S EFFORTS
TO END HUNGER

REGISTER AT:
[HTTPS://EVENTS.CROPHUNGERWALK.ORG/CROPHUNGERWALKS/
TEAM/PRESBYTERIAN-CHURCH-OF-OKEMOS](https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/presbyterian-church-of-okemos)

2025 CROP Walk

Sunday, October 12, 2025
1:00 p.m.

Grace United Methodist Church
1900 Boston Boulevard
Lansing

Once again, you can walk, roll, or rock "The CROP Walk." You can join us on the 12th, or you can do your walk any time in October.

This year PCO will be dedicating our participation in the CROP Walk to the memory of Mac Davis, who led the Lansing CROP Walk for many years.

You can support the PCO team by joining the team, donating funds, and supporting the team with your prayers. You can also do all three!

Questions? See Kent Workman or others on the Mission Committee.

Alternative Christmas Market Returns Next Month

Saturday, November 8
Fellowship Hall at PCO
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Familiar favorites
and New Vendors!

Food available for purchase
while you shop!

Support good causes and
start your
Christmas shopping.

Questions? Contact Jayne Zuhlke
(info in the directory)

Thanksgiving Baskets in partnership with Meridian Cares

October 5 - October 26, 2025

Baskets for collection of funds will be
in Fellowship Hall.

Give online thru our website or send a
check to the church.

Help us make Thanksgiving special for
families in Meridian Township.

Missions & More

Spend the day-
Saturday,
October 4, 2025
9:00 a.m.
6:00 p.m.



Early October Mission Trip to Detroit

Join us, as we support the mission of Cass Community Social Services in Detroit: **providing basic needs** including food, affordable housing, health care, employment, and encouraging community involvement and improvement. This year we will be painting the exterior of their warehouse.

Adults as well as middle and high school youth are welcome to participate. If accompanied by an adult family member, upper elementary children are also welcome.

Sign-up sheets are in the publications rack in Fellowship Hall. We will meet at PCO at 9:00 a.m. to car-pool to Detroit. We'll return to church around 6:00 p.m., earlier for those who leave before dinner.



Or
stop by
Saturday
afternoon,
October 4, 2025
2:00—5:00 p.m.

Celebrate with a PCO Mission Partner

Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton & Clinton Counties celebrates Refugee Resettlement

The Celebration takes place at the St. Vincent Campus Children's Home Gym, 2800 Willow Street in Lansing from 2:00—5:00 p.m. on **Saturday, October 4**. This event is free to attendees and will include food tasting, dancing, testimonials and more.

For more information, contact Kwach Kwan Abwol at 517-853-2215 or *kabwol* at *catholiccharitiesiec dot org* (standard email setup).

Policy Report

By Ellen Hoekstra

The Michigan House finally approved a state budget, a technical step towards agreement on the 2025-26 budget among the two chambers and the Governor. At this late date, the significant differences among the three decision makers are vast and include whether the state budget would be tied to a large increase in road funding, sought by the Governor, and supported by the House. Policymakers' failure to pass the education budget before July 1 was a major factor (as well as federal budget uncertainties) causing 10% of districts to reduce staff in their schools; the possibility of missing the October school aid payment remains a serious concern for the education community.

In the past, policymakers have—briefly—missed the September 30 deadline. The governor then had sole responsibility for the state's budget and shut down state services other than those she considered essential to health and safety, such as the state psychiatric hospitals, child protective services, and the Michigan State Police.

One big piece of news for K-12 schools is that a new state superintendent, Dr. Glenn Maleyko, was selected by the State Board of Education. Dr. Maleyko is the superintendent of the Dearborn Schools, whose students have benefited from Communities in Schools Michigan's involvement. A big challenge for him will be reversing the state's downward slide in reading scores, especially for third grade students.

At the higher education level, some Michigan universities will be negatively impacted by a major drop in enrollment of international students, whose higher tuition has helped maintain costs for Michigan students. Michigan is one of the country's top ten states for international student enrollment, with U of M, MSU, CMU, and Wayne State University having especially high numbers.

Confusion resulting from changes in FDA guidance on eligibility for COVID vaccines has caused many residents to wonder if their insurers will cover the vaccines. Although Michigan's largest insurer, BCBSM, has indicated it will do so, those covered by other plans still have concerns.

The state legislature's output remains the lowest it has been in decades, with only 12 bills signed into law. A number of bills are somewhere "in the pipeline." The State Senate has passed legislation tightening restrictions on hazardous waste energy disposal, including banning the disposal of certain radioactive waste. However, this package of bills passed without bi-partisan support, making success in the House questionable. The Senate is also working on a complex package of bills to increase access to mental health services, so we will want to watch what happens with those bills.

PCO Library News

This month, we add to the theology section of our library with some new titles and fresh voices (all quotes are from the publishers):

Imagining a Way: Exploring Reformed Practical Theology and Ethics edited by Clive Pearson. "What does being Reformed mean for how one engages the ills of racism, white supremacy, and homophobia? What does it mean for an environmental ethic? How does Reformed preaching and liturgy respond to sexual violence? This comprehensive volume gathers some of the most respected voices from within the study of Christian ethics and practical theology to ask how the Reformed tradition informs and animates Christian engagement with the world."

A Human-Shaped God: Theology of an Embodied God by Charles Halton "A new way of theological inquiry that embraces both the human-like characteristics of God and the transcendence of God in traditional theology. By seeing and understanding the human-like depictions of God in the Old Testament and by using the rich language of traditional theology together in tandem, the reader acquires a much deeper and meaningful understanding of God."

Sexism and Sin-Talk: Feminist Conversations on the Human Condition by Rachel Sophia Baard "Baard argues for a feminist critique of traditional sin-talk alongside a constructive reinterpretation of the doctrine of sin – one that can be life affirming for all persons. She claims that the Christian idea of sin provides one of the best tools for understanding the evils of sexism, patriarchy, and traditional sin-talk itself."

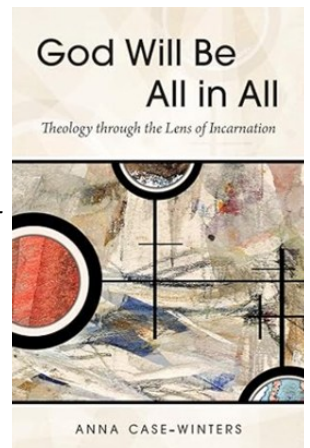
Awake to the Moment: An Introduction to Theology edited by Laurel C. Schneider and Stephen G. Ray "Theology, the authors tell us, is constructive when it joins in God's work of building human lives and human societies. Readers will learn to think about all of life in light of their religious commitments and to see theology as an essential tool for a life well lived."

Walking through the Valley: Womanist Explorations in the Spirit of Katie Geneva Cannon edited by Emilie M. Townes et al "The late Katie Geneva Cannon was the founder of womanist ethics. Her work continues to generate new explorations of womanist moral thought. In this volume, leading womanist ethicists and theologians come together to continue Cannon's work in four critical areas: justice, leadership, embodied ethics, and sacred texts."

God Will Be All in All: Theology through the Lens of Incarnation by Anna Case-Winters "In this volume, Anna Case-Winters demonstrates that the doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ is not simply one belief among others; it is the cornerstone on which all other Christian convictions are built. Throughout, she carefully lays out the consequences for Christian belief and Christian life of the ancient confession that in Christ, *the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*."

The Prophetic Imagination by Walter Brueggemann "In this fortieth-anniversary edition of the classic text from one of the most influential biblical scholars of our time, Walter Brueggemann offers a theological and ethical reading of the Hebrew Bible. He finds there a vision for the community of God whose words and practices of lament, protest, and complaint give rise to an alternative social order that opposes the 'totalism' of the day.

Stop by the PCO Library and borrow one today! - **Kathi Cook**



Book Discussion Begins

The Men's Group will be discussing the book The Road to Wisdom - On Truth, Science, Faith, and Trust by Francis Collins starting in October. Francis Collins is a former director of the National Institute of Health and head of the Human Genome Project as well as being a Christian.

Even if you are not a regular participant in the Men's Group, we'd love to have you join our discussion of this special book. Note that our discussions are every other week for four weeks.

Dates and Chapters

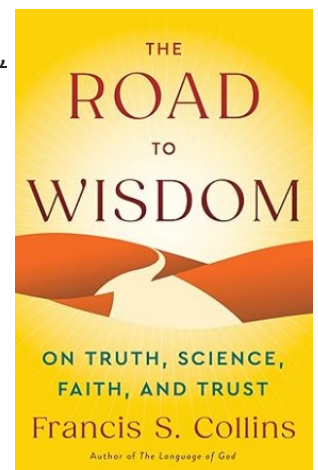
(all times are Tuesdays from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m.):

October 7 - In person at PCO and on Zoom. Chapters—"Searching for Wisdom in Troubled Times", "Intro and Truth"

October 21 - Zoom only. Chapter—"Science"

November 4 - In person at PCO and on Zoom. Chapter—"Faith"

November 18 - Zoom only. Chapters—"Trust" and "Hope and a Plan of Action"



7 Schuler's Books has set aside copies of the book. If you tell them you are in a book group, you will get a discount.

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

Braiding Sweetgrass
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Published in 2013, Braiding Sweetgrass is one of the most challenging and rewarding books that I have read in the last 25 years. It transcends traditional boundaries. Is it nature writing? A story of the Indigenous people, the Potawatomi Nation? A plea to stop destroying our natural environment? A master teacher's relationship with her students and her subject? A spiritual autobiography? The infusion of the Divine all around us? All of the above? Or something more?

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a member of the Potawatomi Nation, the mother of two daughters, a distinguished professor of environmental biology, and the author of Gathering Moss, which won a prize for nature writing. She is adept in writing description, narratives, character sketches, analysis, and argument. She will stretch your mind, touch your heart, appeal to your imagination, nourish your soul, call you to act—and add to your vocabulary.

Thirty-one essays, plus a prelude and epilogue, comprise the book. It is divided into five parts: planting, tending, picking, braiding, and burning sweetgrass. Pay attention to the short explanations under each one of those section's titles because they explain sweetgrass. The subtitle of the book is more accurate in covering the broad range of the writing: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. Eight themes demonstrate and unify those three kinds of knowing: gift, respect, responsibility, relationship, reciprocity, balance, renewal, and gratitude. Page 166, for instance, contains seven of those words and p. 158 "responsibility."

Part I, "Planting Sweetgrass," gives us the charming story of the origin of the Potawatomi people. Skywoman falls from Skyworld, geese and a turtle soften her fall into water, and Musk-rat brings up from the depths enough mud to create land. Vivid images also appear in "The Council of Pecans" and "An Offering" of coffee to the earth, granite rocks, and lake.

In section II, the most appropriate application of the tending to, weeding, and care of sweetgrass comes in the essay, "A Mother's Work." There Kimmerer takes us through the six stages of her life, especially trying to create a swimming pool out of a pond filled with algae and muck. The six roles are daughter, young woman who knows who she is, mother, member of a larger community, grandmother/teacher/model for other women, and elderly human being mothering the earth. "Witch Hazel" offers another role easy to relate to: friendship.

"Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass," in part III, give us all eight themes from gift to gratitude. It combines Indigenous wisdom with scientific language and the method of presenting such knowledge: Introduction, Literature Review, Hypothesis, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgments, and References. At the end of a two-year experiment, to the surprise of scientists, the Indigenous people live what they have learned. "If we use a plant respectfully, it will flourish. If we ignore it, it will go away." The sweetgrass pickers and basket makers say to sweetgrass, "We need you," and the grass says to these people, "I need you." This essay is the heart of the book.

"The Sound of Silverbells," In Part IV, reveals an apparent paradox. "In braiding sweet grass . . . a certain amount of tension is needed." Students' singing "Amazing Grace" at the end of three days camping out in the woods lends a surprising religious note and hope for the frustrated teacher. "Witness to the Rain" gives us the wonderful feel and variety of raindrops.

"Burning Sweetgrass," the last part of the book, reveals how little we listen, think, and learn. "The Sacred and the Superfund" shows the stunning collapse, corruption, and contamination of Onondaga Lake near Syracuse. Such cruel development is the opposite of sweetgrass braid, "burned to create a ceremonial smudge that washes the recipient in kindness and compassion to heal the body and the spirit."

It will take more than "Defeating Windigo" to absorb the Indigenous worldview. Reading this book is a good start in conversing with the planet. So is Stringfellow Barr's call for "a certain high and universal power to listen, . . . self-emptying, . . . quietness, . . . gentleness, and a certain wakefulness." Braiding Sweetgrass embodies all five of these necessities



Author Robin Wall Kimmerer

GREATER LANSING

PEACE QUEST 2025

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 24

A month of
family-friendly fun,
learning, & community
action for peace in
Greater Lansing!

COORDINATED BY
GREATER LANSING
UNITED NATIONS
ASSOCIATION



PeaceQuest is a community-wide celebration in the Greater Lansing area held in September and October each year to celebrate the United Nations **International Day of Peace** (September 21) and **United Nations Day** (October 24). PeaceQuest is coordinated by Greater Lansing United Nations Association (GLUNA).

The International Day of Peace was declared by the UN General Assembly with a resolution passed unanimously in 1981. **United Nations Day** marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter.

PeaceQuest aims to bring everyone together for fun and interesting activities with friends, family, and community while focusing on ways we can promote peace, resolve conflicts, learn about other faiths and cultures, and encourage mutual understanding. Among this year's activities are worship services, lectures, films and plays, a gun buyback, activities to improve the environment, and more. For the complete list, visit:
<https://peacequestgreaterlansing.org/events-schedule.org>

**CROP
HUNGER WALK**
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME



*The Greater Lansing
Crop Walk on Oct. 12 and
the Salaam Peace Festival
on Oct. 4 are among this
year's PeaceQuest activi-
ties. See PCO's e-
Announcements for more
information.*

Salaam Peace
FESTIVAL
Ethnic Food & Sweets - Cultural Exhibits - Bazaar & More

Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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

The Grapevine is a monthly newsletter of
The Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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](http://okemospres.org)

Email: office@okemospres.org

