

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



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**Deadline for the March Grapevine is
Friday, February 20th.**

Lenten Journey 2026: The Path to Repair and Restoration

I know it feels like it was just Christmas, and yet Lent begins in mid-February this year. The last Sunday after Epiphany is February 15 when we celebrate the Transfiguration of Jesus – a glorious scripture of light. This Sunday is also known at PCO as Jazz Sunday. This year, we are excited to be hosting the Grammy nominated all-female Jazz Ensemble from Detroit *Straight Ahead*. They will perform a concert on Saturday night and lead the Sunday morning service, which will be followed by a pancake breakfast hosted by Parish Life. All are free and open to the public.

Ash Wednesday February 18 will call us into Lent with a 7:00 p.m. service focused on repentance as the first step in our *Path to Repair and Restoration*. The service will include imposition of ashes. For those unable to attend the service, there will be a drive-through imposition from 12 noon – 1:00 p.m. in the PCO Circle Drive.

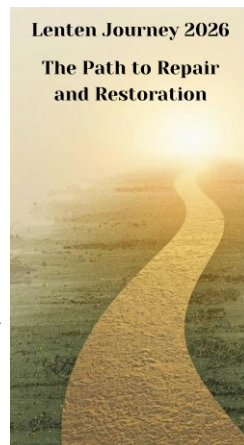
Lenten Worship We will walk through various steps we can take to repair and restore our world using the lectionary passage for the Lenten season. On February 22, we will consider what it means to be obedient to God's word. In subsequent weeks we will consider themes of trusting in God's path, receiving grace, discernment in decision making, being unbound from the world's priorities, and remembering Christ's action. On Easter Sunday, April 5 we will celebrate Christ's resurrection – the ultimate act of repair and restoration.

Actions on the Path Each service will include action items for us as individuals and us as a congregation to undertake to repair and restore our world. As in past years, we will share the *Tread Lightly for Lent* calendar from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, which features ways you can care for creation. In addition, we will feature actions from *Creating a Culture of Repair. Taking Action on the Road to Reparations* by Robert Turner which addresses issues of racial injustice in our communities.

Education Opportunities On February 22 during the education hour, I will lead a session on the concept of repentance, including a look at some neuroscience work related to our ability to grow and change. In March we will have an education session on Christian Nationalism. We are planning some additional sessions during Lent to address ways we can work to repair and restore our world in this season when much that we know and trust is being dismantled.

Pastor Lisa

Lenten Journey 2026
The Path to Repair
and Restoration



Happening in February



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF OKEMOS

2258 Bennett Road,
Okemos, MI
okemospres.org



Jazz Weekend @PCO

Saturday, February 14 at 7:00 p.m.

Jazz Concert featuring Detroit's own
Grammy-nominated jazz group **Straight Ahead**.
Free Concert. All Welcome!

Sunday, February 15 at 10:00 a.m.

Jazz Worship Service with Communion.
Pancake breakfast following the worship service.

New this year: Share the Love!!
Collecting cold weather gear for our neighbors in
need: socks, scarves, hats, gloves and mittens.

Conversation and Contemplation

Conversation and Contemplation class meets every **Wednesday from 10:00—11:30 a.m.** on Zoom #905-709-104. One of the members facilitates the meeting, Michele Arbour offers a weekly meditation to help us center, and other members lead Lectio Divina based on the week's lectionary or a discussion of the book of study.

Currently, we are reading *Sacred Balance: How Ancient Practices Can Restore Modern Minds* by Miriam Diephouse-McMillan. Reading and discussion of each chapter is followed two weeks later with participants sharing their experiences with the practice.

Choir Rehearsals for Good Friday Begin

This Good Friday (April 3), the PCO Chancel Choir will collaborate with Okemos Community Church for a joint service featuring *Requiem* by John Rutter. This reflective and comforting music offers a meaningful way to participate in the community Good Friday service through song. This year's service will take place at OCC.

Anyone interested in singing is warmly invited to join the regular choir singers—no prior choral experience or music-reading skills are required. Rehearsals are on **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.**; join us for all or part of the rehearsal to listen or sing. If you'd like to sing on Good Friday, please plan on attending rehearsals by mid-February. You are, however, welcome to start now.

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our February Birthdays on **Sunday, February 22 (one week later due to pancake breakfast)**. If you were born in February, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, February 15 if it is not already there.

Caregiver Support Group

Caregivers Support group continues to meet the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Join us for a discussion based on the needs and questions of individuals who attend. Share your experiences and support. This is a Zoom meeting #892-3955-1708. This month's meeting is **Wednesday, February 25th**.

Women's Dinner Out

The next Women's Dinner Out is scheduled for **Monday, February 2** at 5:30 p.m. at Gjoni's, 662 West Grand River Avenue in Okemos. Please RSVP to Judi Harris (*info in the directory*) if you plan to attend.

Retirees in February

Retirees will meet at **noon on Monday, February 16th** in Fellowship Hall. What is your favorite way to spend a winter day? What would you include in that 24-hour period? Who would you share it with, if anyone? Which foods would you want to be sure are available? If you are not interested in sharing your perfect day, come get ideas to add to a future one. Feel free to bring a snack or lunch to enjoy during the discussion.

Women's Connection

Women's Connection will meet **Sunday, February 22 at 12:30 p.m.** Following a time of fellowship, devotion and lunch, we will hear a church member speak on her life and faith journey. All women are welcome and encouraged to invite friends. Questions? Contact Shirley Rumminger (*info in the directory*).

Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner

The 2026 Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner will take place on **Monday, February 9, 2026**, from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m., at the East Lansing Islamic Center, 920 S Harrison Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823.

The theme for this year is "A Tradition of Sharing." An invitation is extended for all community members to come together to raise proceeds for the Greater Lansing Food Bank and to help bring awareness to the plight of those who go hungry.

A link for ticket info is in the right column.

Adult Christian Education & Fellowship

Password for Zoom meetings unless otherwise noted is 48864. *Days and times subject to change.*

SUNDAYS

Adult Education— Weekly at 11:30 a.m. Watch e-Announcements and Bulletin for description and locations.

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

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **Sunday, February 22nd**.

Women's Connection— 4th Sundays at 12:30 p.m. This month will be on **Sunday, February 22nd**.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— 1st Monday unless otherwise noted. This month's dinner is **February 2**.

Retirees — Regularly scheduled on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00 noon in person at PCO. This month's meeting is **February 16**.

TUESDAYS

Men's Group — Weekly, 8:00 a.m. Zoom 813 7514 8286. **Hybrid** (In-person and on Zoom) this month is **Tuesday, February 3**.

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall. Next meeting is **Tuesday, February 3**.

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 See left column for details.

Caregiver Support Group - 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise noted. This month will be **February 25** at 5:00 p.m. on Zoom 892 3955 1708;

THURSDAYS

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

Tickets for the 2026 Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner are \$25 each (or 4 for \$80). Student tickets are \$15 each. Purchase tickets at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2026-mayors-ramadan-unity-dinner>



Happening in February

Parish Life Committee—Out on the Town

Thursday, February 26 at 5:30 p.m.

MSU Multicultural Center, 535 N. Shaw Lane in East Lansing

Mary Ann Pettway and China Pettway of the **Gee's Bend Quilting Collective** in Alabama are coming to Michigan State University. Their visit is part of the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine's Annual Dr. William G. Anderson Lecture Series.

The women of Gee's Bend have created hundreds of quilt masterpieces from the early 20th century to the present. The quilts have appeared in exhibits around the United States, including in the Smithsonian and here at MSU. The quilting tradition in Gee's Bend can be traced back as far as the early 19th century, and it's not only a skill. It's a language and ministry that has been passed down for generations. The Gee's Bend Quilting Collective holds workshops throughout the country.

To register to attend in person or online, visit: <https://osteopathicmedicine.msu.edu/current-students/student-life/diversity-inclusion-safety/william-g-anderson-lecture-series>



Mary Ann and China Pettway display quilts designed and stitched together by the women of Gee's Bend.

PCO YOUTH CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2026

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED

SOUP-ER BOWL OF CARING

- SATURDAY, FEB 7 FROM 10 AM-NOON: SOUP MAKING (PCO KITCHEN)
- SUNDAY, FEB 8 @ 9AM: SOUP-ER BOWL OF CARING PREPARATION

SUNDAYS: FEB 1, 15 & 22: CALLED TO SERVE.

PLANNING OUR INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION WEEK.

PASTOR LISA WILL LEAD A BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION ON SERVING AS CHRIST'S HANDS AND FEET IN THE WORLD. BRING THE ISSUES THAT ARE STIRRING YOUR HEART AND PLACES WE MAY BE ABLE TO BRING GOD'S LIGHT.

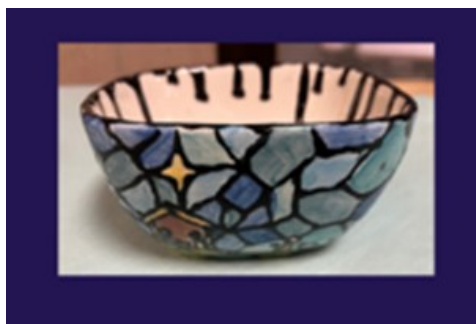
For the Young and Young at Heart



The annual Souper Bowl of Caring takes place this year after worship on **Sunday, February 8**. A variety of soups will be prepared and served by the PCO youth group. To-go orders will be available. Donations are requested to support the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

In addition to staying for lunch, you can support the youth and the food bank by bidding on the creative soup bowls already on display in Fellowship Hall. You can see two of them below, but more are available in Fellowship Hall. Bid sheets are under each bowl. These bowls were painted by PCO youth during a recent visit to Arts Unlimited in Okemos.

However you choose to support the youth and the food bank, your generosity and contributions are appreciated!



Liberty and Justice

Award-winning Artwork by PCO Youth

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid Michigan launched the MLK Art Contest for local artists to showcase their talents honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Artists were tasked with curating a piece to accompany the theme, *"In the long run, justice finally must spring from a new moral climate"* and include a 250-word narrative explaining their piece's relation to social injustice and inequity.

PCO youth **Nina Roy** was this year's first place winner in her age category for her collage titled Liberty and Justice. Below is an essay Nina wrote describing the piece, and a photo of the piece itself. .

"In my piece, I wanted to paint a collage to embody the theme of the MLK art contest, because real life and justice is messy, complicated, and layered. The way I made the collage felt more connected—messy but connected, just like life.

I added chains of paper dolls because it reminded me that we are all connected even amongst our differences and how that makes us stronger—yet those connections can become weak if we become apathetic.

The Human Rights Campaign symbol of the yellow equal sign inside a blue square signifies equality for all. In the same way, I added the Statue of Liberty because it combines liberty and justice and put it next to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to emphasize his dream that everyone should be treated as equals. "



You can see Nina's artwork in color on the PCO website. Go to okemospres.org, scroll down to the latest service and click the link.

Mission Opportunities & More



Join GIL for a festive evening of celebration and community! All proceeds directly support our program that empowers adult newcomers on their paths to success.

Friday, February 20, 2026

6:00—9:00 p.m.

The Cadillac Room

**1115 S. Washington Avenue,
Lansing**

*Tickets are \$40/person
(cash bar available). Scan QR
code to purchase.*

*Visit globalinstitutelansing.org
for more info.*



Policy Report by Ellen Hoekstra

Prior to its planning meeting for this year, the Mission Committee received this report (with updates) for context in making decisions. With next year being a major election year, we can expect a shortened legislative session, not that many bills were enacted in 2025—a record low for decades.

The Committee discussed the 2026 “Day at the Capitol” addressing food security, organized by the United Methodists but set up as a day for the wider faith community. Usually, 200-300 volunteers participate in this. This year, the event takes place on **Wednesday, March 18**. For those interested, two on-line training courses, to help prepare. One is on the process of advocacy and the other is on content. The first is scheduled on Monday, March 2 and the second on Monday, March 9. Both begin at 7:00 p.m.

When the legislature returned from Christmas vacation, they faced major issues:

- The \$645 million in state funding cut by the House Appropriations Committee was declared unconstitutional by AG Nessel. Attorney general opinions are considered binding on state departments, including the state budget office and Treasury, and previous cuts were being restored, including the \$1.3 million for the Office of Global Michigan, wigs for children with cancer, and cash assistance for new, low income mothers. The House Speaker sued over this ruling, and Judge Michael Gadola ordered the state to freeze the remaining funds. Following this order, Governor Whitmer’s attorney stated that the state had already encumbered about 70% of the funding, leaving less than \$200 million available to be cut.
- Legislators and the new state superintendent will be focused on improving the performance of 4th and 8th graders, given Michigan’s students scoring in the bottom half of all states in reading and math. The scores may well overlap with Michigan students’ poor attendance in comparison to other states.
- Bridge Magazine’s reporting on problems in MI’s nursing homes is likely to spur legislators’ interest in updating state laws governing them. Nursing staffing levels haven’t increased since 1978, in sharp contrast to many other states.
- Although gas prices have dropped, affordability is a major issue for many in Michigan:
 - ◇ Food: grocery prices have gone up 40% since 2017.
 - ◇ Jobless rates: only four other states have higher rates.
 - ◇ Healthcare: insurers have raised premiums an average of 20%.
 - ◇ Household income: The median is \$72,389 in Michigan but \$81,604 nationally, with the gap doubling since 2014.
 - ◇ Electric bills: the highest in the Midwest.
 - ◇ Rental costs: have risen more sharply in Michigan than in the US, with the US average up nearly 33%.

Not wanting to leave you entirely with bad news, Michigan has seen improvements in preschool and post-secondary education. Since our current governor was elected, the percentage of people attaining some post-secondary education has risen from 45% to 51.8%. Also, infant mortality has declined, setting a new record. Finally, we have begun to see gains in population, according to companies that provide moving vans!

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

41st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Celebration

On Monday, January 19, 2026, several members of PCO attended the 41st Annual MLK Day of Celebration at the downtown Lansing Center. The event attracted 1,500 attendees, brought in several well-known speakers such as Diane Nash, honored lifelong service to racial justice and equality, introduced prize winners in art and essay contests including Nina Roy from our congregation, brought people to their feet with music led by the Detroit Youth Choir, and closed with “We Shall Overcome.”

Several hosts and city officials noted that Lansing’s celebration may be the largest and “coolest” one in the nation, that we are living in terribly difficult times, but that efforts to create greater justice and equality would continue in the greater Lansing area.

The guest speaker was well-known Diane Nash. She was introduced by a recording with Fred Shuttlesworth, a revered Black leader, telling her not to send any more Freedom Riders to Birmingham, Alabama, in May of 1961, because the original group had been beaten and their bus firebombed. “We have all signed our last wills and testaments,” Nash responded. “We are coming down to continue the trip. If we allow violence to stop us, it will mean the end of nonviolence.” The alternative she practiced went beyond just voting against virulent racism and segregation. It was “agapic energy”—a self-sacrificing, nonviolent love for all human beings, which included freedom, justice, and equality for everyone. (See Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict, by Joan Valerie Bondurant). Nash was willing to suffer, she said, because she and the others were really working for the next generation to live in a different world than the one of the 1960s. Nash, 87, spoke clearly, powerfully and hopefully, calling on ordinary people to act extraordinarily. Here was a giant of American history giving us her life’s lessons.



***Dr. Diane Nash, well known
civil rights and peace activist.***

The featured speaker for the occasion was the Honorable Justice Kyra Bolden, 37, the first Black woman appointed and elected to the Michigan Supreme Court. She recounted key moments from her life. After four successful years as a representative in the Michigan state legislature, she did not want her children to think she was a hypocrite if she turned down an effort to run for the office of Supreme Court justice. She lost that election race, but then was appointed to a newly-vacated position. In 2024, she handily won her election. Her story showed lessons in integrity, resilience, and unity of self, family, state, and humanity.

Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II gave a fiery speech, telling us to replace the image of King as Santa Claus with that of militant seeker of justice and revolutionary change in values necessary in the United States. Senator Elissa Slotkin provided the appeal of story rather than a resume. She encouraged people to visit the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village this spring. Beginning in June, 2026, visitors can see the rebuilt house of Sullivan and Jean Jackson from Selma, Alabama. The Jackson House provided a home for King when he was struggling for voting rights in Selma in early 1965. In that house he lived, ate, talked to President Lyndon Johnson, strategized, and slept. Outside were segregationists. Here again was extraordinary courage by ordinary people.

Keeper of the Dream and Legacy of Service Awards went to deserving adults. The \$200 to \$10,000 Scholarship Award winners from middle and high schools in East Lansing, Lansing Eastern, Haslett, and Waverly were impressive. Eighth-grader Charlotte Nance read extremely well her poem about the theme of this year’s contest: King’s quotation from Amos 5:24: “[let] justice roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.” PCO member Nina Roy won the middle school award for MLK art, creating a collage that was “messy, complicated, and layered . . . messy but connected just like life.” See her artwork and explanation of it on page 5.

The Detroit Youth Choir gave us several multi-layered, energetic, joyful songs, showing why they are a world-renowned choir. Iman Sohail Chaudhry sang his beautiful, yearning benediction, “Peace be upon you,” in Arabic. Finally, everyone stood, some holding hands, to sing “We Shall Overcome” in English and Spanish. In this fitting way, the three-hour and 46-minute program ended.

Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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

Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.

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