

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Lent and Holy Week 2026 at PCO: Path to Repair and Restoration

Throughout Lent this year we are walking through various steps we can take to repair and restore our world using the lectionary passages for the Lenten season. Each week we have action items that are steps to repair and restore (or strengthen and sustain) us with respect to our **Relationship with God, Care for Creation, Relationship with Others, and Serving Others**. We are marking our progress with footsteps on the path in the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. You can mark your own progress on the path with a small poster we are providing and footprint stickers.

Our Sunday morning education hours during March will include opportunities to deepen your commitment to repair and restoration. We begin Holy Week participating in a Palm Sunday Processional to the State Capitol. We will then be fed by the bread of life and drink from the cup of salvation as we begin the final steps to the cross. On Good Friday will worship at Okemos Community Church with a joint choir performing John Rutter's *Requiem*. On Easter Sunday, April 5 we will celebrate Christ's resurrection – the ultimate act of repair and restoration.

Through music and scripture, through prayers and sermons, through stories shared and stories heard, we are confronting the chaos, the despair, and the fears of our world with obedience to, and trust in, God's word to be his body here on Earth. We trust in God's grace and providence as help to carry each other's burdens, and work to repair and restore breaches in relationships and broken places in our world. This is our posture as we approach Holy Week. We know we have heavy days ahead, and we know we don't walk the path alone.

Education Hour During March

Many of us are feeling like the world around us is shattering and are not sure what we can do. During our Education Hour in the month of March we will be intentional in helping you as individuals and us as a congregation seek ways to be repairers of the breach.

March 1: Resources for Public Theology and Witness. Brian McWilliams will facilitate a discussion on the Presbyterian Advocacy Hour: *Courage in the Face of Authoritarianism: Historical Roots and Modern Responses*, as well as other resources available to us through our presbytery and the national denomination offices.

March 8: Steps on the Path to Repair and Restoration. This will be an open forum. We will gather in Fellowship Hall and brainstorm concrete actions we can take. There will be an opportunity to break into small groups for people interested in specific topics (like creation care, support of immigrants and refugees, housing and food insecurity) or types of actions (like advocacy, protest, neighbor to neighbor care).

Cont. on next pg.



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

Cont. from pg. 1

March 15: Christian Nationalism: What is it? Why is it a concern? How might we respond? We will explore what Christian Nationalism is and what it isn't. And why is Christian Nationalism a concern both to our faith and to our democracy. Presenter: Nancy Janisch, M Div. Volunteer local organizer for Christians Against Christian Nationalism. Retired campus minister, United Campus Christian Fellowship. **See another opportunity to learn about this topic on page 3.**

March 22: Financial Giving: Legacy of Our Faith and Values. Olivia Martin, CRPC®, Managing Director – Investments, Martin Bylsma Investment Group of Wells Fargo Advisors will be speaking about various mechanisms you can use to support the ministry and mission of PCO

March 29: Preparation for the Path to Palm Sunday. No formal Education Hour. **See below for more information about this event.**



We live in difficult times. 2,000 years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, an image reflecting his humble, just leadership and his care for those in need. Emulating this practice, the Palm Sunday Path is a nationwide movement calling Christians to faithful, public witness rooted in the life and way of Jesus. It is based on the principles of Matthew 25: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and welcoming the stranger.

This is not about partisanship—it is about discipleship. The PCO Session has endorsed our participation as a church in this event. Just as Jesus entered Jerusalem humbly and peacefully, we will enter our capitol in Lansing proclaiming God's values in contrast to the dominant politics of hate, greed and injustice.

Pertinent Details

- The processional will begin at Pilgrim Church, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing at **3:00 p.m.** for an approximately 1-mile march to the State Capitol.
- There will be singing and waving palm branches during the processional. You are asked to bring your palms from our service that morning (we will have plenty!).
- At the State Capitol there will be a program, including speakers and a choir that that will be singing.

How Can I Learn More?

- Check out this short video that explains the event: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/664038593432750>
- Details can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61587784623273> (you do not need to have a Facebook account to access this information)

How Can I Get Involved?

- You can walk the processional.
- You can attend the event at the State Capitol.
- You can sing in the choir.
- Volunteers are needed to help out with a variety of tasks.
- Easiest way to volunteer is using the QR Code to the right. A link will be included in the upcoming e-announcements. Or you can contact Pastor Lisa for a registration link.



At Church and in the Community

PCO Seeking a Part-Time Interim Parish Associate

At the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and with the encouragement of Pastor Lisa, the PCO Session has approved a search for a part-time interim Parish Associate.

The Parish Associate will assist with pastoral duties including preaching, worship leadership, and pastoral care and may serve additional leadership capacities. This position would be approximately 10 hours a week, with the flexibility of having at least one Sunday off each month. Ordained pastors in the PC(USA) or one of the denominations in full communion with the PC(USA) (e.g., RCA, ELCA, and UCC) are eligible. The term of employment would be for 6 months. A longer term is possible.

If you know of anyone interested in the position, they can contact Kelly Locke, Chair of the Personnel committee at personnel@okemospres.org.

Special Opportunity

Wednesday, March 18 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
follow-up on Christian Nationalism.

The Rev. Dr. William Yoo (who visited PCO in November 2024) will be presenting a talk titled: *The Church Cannot be Silent, but What Should It Say? The Rise of Christian Nationalism, the Decline of the American Dream, and How to Still Have Faith in America*. We will be streaming this talk in Fellowship Hall if you want to join others watching it. Or you can watch from home or work.

Register at: <https://montreat.org/events/william-yoo-lecture?mraid=m>

Mission Partner Reaches Significant Milestone

Recently during the latest UKirk Book Project distribution, UKirk reached more than 10,000 books distributed during the life of this ongoing project!!!! TEN THOUSAND plus books have been given to children and youth, many of whom live in book deserts and don't have easy access to books in their homes.

Children with access to books, particularly in their homes, experience significantly higher academic success, stronger vocabulary, and better cognitive development. UKirk at Michigan State continues to do their part in this effort.

Well-done to all UKirkers present and past who have kept this effort going strong!



Help Reduce Hunger in Michigan

A faith-based advocacy day will take place on **Wednesday, March 18** at the Capitol. Volunteers will be talking to their own state legislators and staff about continuing full funding for Michigan's food banks, which are the "wholesalers" for the food pantries where we volunteer.

If you are interested in joining several other PCO participants, please register by March 1. There's on-line training at 7:00 pm on March 2 and March 9. The registration link is: <https://miumc.swoogo.com/advocacyday/10735965>



Conversation and Contemplation

Conversation and Contemplation class meets every **Wednesday from 10:00—11:30 a.m.** on Zoom #905-709-104. We occasionally gather in person at PCO.

During March, *Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News of Lent* is our focus, using Lectio Divina with the Scripture readings. The devotional is written, illustrated and published by A Sanctified Art, LLC. PCO has used both Advent and Lenten devotionals from this collective of artists and ministers for a number of years. Learn more about their work at <https://sanctifiedart.org>



Women's Dinner Out

The next Women's Dinner Out is scheduled for **Monday, March 2** at 5:30 p.m. at Persis Indian Grill, 3536 Meridian Crossing, Suite 200 in Okemos. Please RSVP to Judi Harris (*info in the directory*) if you plan to attend.

Women's Connection

Women's Connection will not meet in March.

Women are encouraged to mark their calendars for the final two meetings of this program year: **Sunday April 26** and **Sunday, May 17**.

Below is a message from our February speaker, PCO member and friend Jane Dettore:

Thank-you for the invitation to tell of some years, of my past, to the Women's Connection on February the 22nd. My Kindest Friends, I am NOT, really that interesting! Truly, the BEST part for me was learning about your own admirable Bibles and special personal Bible verses! Such glorious messages you shared with us!

I am grateful for the gift Bible Bookmark and Pastor Lisa showing us "A GOOD DAY" by Brother David Steindl-Rast. THANK YOU to Vicki M. for one very delicious lunch (Molto gustoso!) and Barbara D. for beginning our time together with a beautiful reading about 'The Bread of Life!' Deepest appreciation to David R. for our homemade shared loaf and Shirley for her cookies and organizing everything.

Dear Ladies, the presence of our Lord and you definitely made this A memorable Good Afternoon!



Always all ways Blessings!

Jane Dettore

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our March Birthdays on **Sunday, March 15**. If you were born in March, please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, March 8 if it is not already there.

Retirees in March

The Retiree Group will meet on **Monday, March 16 from noon –1:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. You are welcome to enjoy your lunch during the discussion. Since the January meeting was canceled due to inclement weather, the group will discuss the following questions: What are your hopes and dreams for 2026? How will you embrace the new year?

Caregiver Support Group

Join the online discussion of what it means to be a caregiver, to share resources and information, and to support each other. This is a Zoom meeting #892-3955-1708. See you on **Wednesday, March 25th at 5 p.m.**

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— March meeting is **Sunday, March 1**.

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **Sunday, March 15**.

Women's Connection— 4th Sundays at 12:30 p.m. On hiatus this month.

MONDAYS

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

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

TUESDAYS

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

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, Fellowship Hall. Next meeting is **Tuesday, March 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 page 3 for details.

Caregiver Support Group - 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise noted. This month will be **March 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

Daylight Saving Time Begins.
Set your clocks one hour ahead on
Saturday night, March 7

For the Young and Young at Heart



In February, the PCO Youth were busy preparing for and serving at the Soup-er Bowl of Caring to raise money for the Greater Lansing Food Bank. In March, they'll start making plans for Youth Sunday 2026, coming up on April 12.

PCO YOUTH CALENDAR MARCH 2026

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED

SUNDAYS FROM 5 – 7 PM WITH DINNER

- **MARCH 1: YOUTH SUNDAY PLANNING**
- **MARCH 8: GEOMETRIC PAPER FOLDING WITH WAYNE SCOTT**
- **MARCH 15: YOUTH SUNDAY PLANNING**
- **MARCH 22: SHARING OUR LOVE THROUGH SINGING – SINGING AT BURCHAM HILLS**
- **MARCH 29: SPRING BREAK – NO FORMAL YOUTH GROUP PARTICIPATION IN THE PATH TO PALM SUNDAY FROM 3 – 5 PM**

Mission Opportunities & More

One Great Hour of Sharing offering

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees — serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

PCO will be collecting this year's One Great Hour of Sharing offering on Palm Sunday, March 29th.



Policy Report by Ellen Hoekstra

The Governor presented her televised State of the State address on February 25. Atypically, the upcoming year's budget had already been issued by the Governor and was being reviewed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committee.

This year's state budget will need to take into account a \$1.1 billion shortfall, hitting basic needs particularly hard in part because of federal reductions and changes, including SNAP eligibility and health care. For food benefits, for example, states will now need to pay 75% of their costs in contrast to the previous 50%. The executive budget proposes an additional \$94.3 million to cover this cost. However, as has often been said, "the executive proposes, but the legislature disposes." Last year elected officials did not finish the budget by July 1, to the dismay of school officials who count on knowing their state funding before they finalize hiring for the new school year.

In other news of interest:

A group called "Americans for Citizenship Voting" states that it has sufficient votes to make the ballot, though the signatures had not been approved as of this writing. The proposal would tighten vote ID rules and would require proof of citizenship to register. Data reflects that the number of non-citizens voting in Michigan is extremely low.

Another proposal is required to be on the ballot. Every 16 years, voters must be asked if they would like a new Michigan Constitutional Convention to be held, either to make changes in the current constitution or create a new one. If a majority of voters approve this proposal, there would be a second election to select the 148 delegates, followed by a third one once the convention has concluded, to approve or disapprove of the delegates' recommendations.

State Superintendent Maleyko has presented his views on changes needed for K-12 education both by a letter to the legislature and a presentation before a committee. He expressed concerns about the teacher shortages in 150 districts and advocated for making the "science of reading" professional development mandatory for teachers. He also recommended increasing summer school programs.

The Governor's goal of having 60% of residents finish post-secondary education by 2030 is making progress but is not quite there yet. The range varies greatly by county, with Lake County at 18.4% and Washtenaw at 66.7%. Ingham County ranks sixth highest at 52.3%.

State Attorney General Dana Nessel has posted a link on the AG website to enable residents to report on ICE actions in Michigan that concern them.

One of four Michigan residents (2.7 million) live in health care professional shortage areas. For one thing, 58 of 83 counties have shortages of dental professionals. Dentistry has not recovered from the impact of the pandemic, which saw droves of dental professionals leaving for other employment. Michigan has improved Medicare reimbursement but there is no quick fix for this problem.

Former Governors Jennifer Granholm, James Blanchard, John Engler, and Rick Snyder have jointly asked for increased civility in politics

PCO Library News

We have lots for you to look at in the library this March. Three different displays of books feature timely selections, both new ones and those from the existing collection. *(All quotations are from the publishers.)*

1) **March is Women's History Month**, and we will gather some of our many books by and about women.

2) **March is a time for Lent**. We will feature a collection of our books for Lenten studies and observances, including this new title:

Meeting Jesus at the Table: A Lenten Study by Cynthia M. Campbell & Christine Coy Fohr "The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus sharing meals with disciples, friends, even tax collectors and Pharisees. This eight-chapter resource provides biblical insights along with thought-provoking queries regarding our own times, such as whom should we invite to Sunday dinner and who is left out and left behind in our culture today."

3) **March, as any other month, is a time for new books**. These books invite us to look for hope and wisdom in new ways and places:

Lost Hidden Small: Finding the Way of Jesus Where We Never Think to Look by Kate Haynes Murphy "Pastor Kate Murphy guides us through Jesus' parables to mine their wisdom for spiritual formation and growth. Living faithfully in a culture of violence, hierarchy, and supremacy means following Jesus into weakness, loss, and even despair. Sometimes following the way of Jesus means letting yourself be astounded by the authentic grace of what is lost, hidden, and small."

Make Believe: Poems for Hoping Again by Victoria Hutchins "A reclamation of wonder and an invitation to return to childlike joy, wielding nostalgia and memory as lenses to imagine a fuller life. These poems pave a path of reconnection to our body, our past, our wanting, our wonder – beckoning us to discover a world worth holding on to."

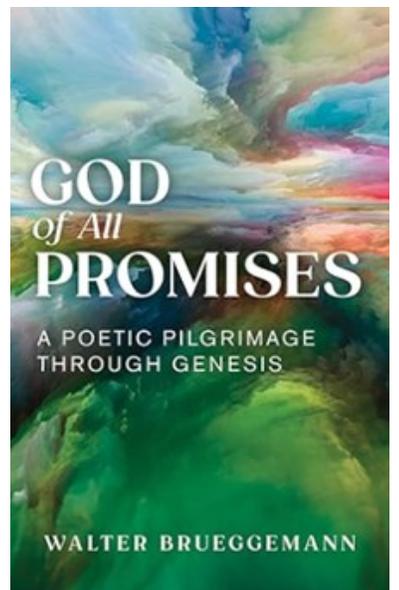
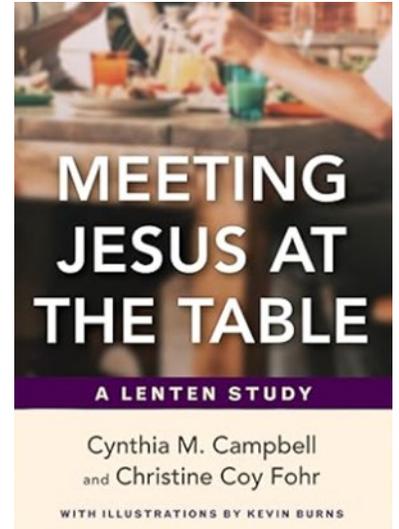
Evangelism in an Age of Despair: Hope Beyond the Failed Promise of Happiness by Andrew Root "With churches experiencing a decline in numbers and resources and the idea of evangelism contested, Andrew Root contextualizes evangelism in our late-modern times and reimagines what the call to outreach means in today's world."

God of All Promises: A Prophetic Pilgrimage through Genesis by Walter Brueggeman "Walter Brueggemann's final work takes readers on a poetic journey through Genesis, bringing new hope, deep reflection, and discovery of all that God promises."

The River Is Waiting: A Novel by Wally Lamb "From a New York Times bestselling author comes the powerful story of a young family in crisis. In the wake of an accident that leads to unthinkable tragedy, can a grief-stricken husband ever atone for what he's done? Is a heartbroken wife's forgiveness even possible?" Characters are sustained by small acts of kindness, hope, mercy, faith, and the possibility of reconciliation.

All of these books, and more, and available for you to look through and borrow.

Kathi Cook



BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth

by Richard J. Foster

This January, I summarized the content of Richard Foster’s masterful book on spiritual growth. The four inward disciplines are meditation, prayer, fasting, and study. The outward disciplines are simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. And the corporate disciplines are confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. All 12 are tied together, grounded in Holy Scripture, and designed to place us “before God so that He can transform us.”

Now in its fourth edition, published in 2018, this book is well worth reading, pondering, and following its many practical suggestions. Like other Quakers, Foster does a modest task well. He is a humble learner but rigorous teacher. To be a servant, he reminds us, is different from acting like a servant: self-righteous service is not true service, for authentic service is genuine listening, doing small things, supporting rather than criticizing people, being served, bearing the burden of others, and sharing the Word of God. Foster’s seven acts of submission reveal his priorities: submission first to the Triune God, second to Holy Scripture, next to our family, to our neighbors and co-workers, and to the believing community, then to the helpless and despised, and finally to the world.

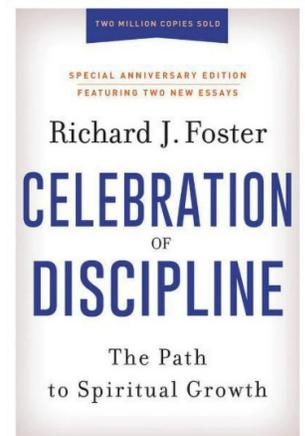
This book is filled with rich thoughts about the spiritual life gleaned from writers such as Paul, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, George Fox, John Woolman, Evelyn Underhill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Thomas Merton. But the author also brings his own discerning heart and mind to the discussion of self, society, the world, and God.

Concerning the self, he recognizes the despairing “dark night of the soul,” addresses the fears, anxieties, and false pride that plague us in an affluent society, and admits the necessity of confessing to others as well as to ourself and to God. As for others, he offers a model of community as unity rather than as democracy, distinguishes between the necessary authority of function and unnecessary authority of status, and advises us to study other people in action and in books. Read the natural world closely and well for the discovery of God in creation and God’s creatures. The book of Psalms is one of Foster’s favorite sources. The God whom he worships is a God of gifts, active in nature, in history, and in people’s lives. God is the core of life—the center of reality and pregnant with the seeds of mercy, love, peace, and joy.

If we were to center our lives on God, practicing these disciplines, our world would turn upside down. We would pray, believing, without ceasing. We would fast for spiritual reasons more often than filling our plates to excess. We would balance social activity with the “holy leisure” and inner wholeness gained in Christian meditation. We would study and not just read—study to understand first, interpret second, and evaluate last. If we practiced the discipline of simplicity, we would de-accumulate, disregard fashions, eliminate whatever addicts us, reject most ads, buy less so we don’t have to pay later, reject whatever breeds oppression in others, speak plainly and honestly, enjoy things without possessing them, appreciate nature more fully, and punctuate our lives with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. We would celebrate holidays in a Christian not a cultural way.

In short, we would live some of the paradoxes of Christian life: the freedom of discipline, grace that is demanding not cheap, self-fulfillment through self-denial, willingness to surrender to God without worshiping the will, interdependence that brings out the best in each other, a genuine gospel community in a secular world, and joy that comes from holy obedience.

Foster has published four editions of Celebration of Discipline: in 1978, 1988, 1998, and 2018. The fourth edition is largely the text of the second edition. The latest edition is longer, more expensive, and more bloated. The preface to the fourth edition is far better than the unnecessary celebrations of the revised editions. D. Elton Trueblood’s endorsement in the 1978 edition suffices. The “Annotated Bibliography,” however, is a welcome addition, enlightening readers about other books on spiritual growth. Why Henry Thoreau’s Walden, Dorothy Day’s The Long Loneliness, and Kathleen Norris’s Dakota: A Spiritual Geography are missing is puzzling.



HOLY WEEK 2026 AT PCO

March 29 at 10 am --- Palm Sunday Worship
3 - 5 pm: Path to Palm Sunday Processional
in Lansing

April 2 at 7 pm --- Maundy Thursday Service
Celebration of the Lord's Supper

April 3 at 7 pm --- Good Friday Service at
Okemos Community Church (OCC)

John Rutter's Requiem sung by a joint choir
from PCO & OCC.

April 5 at 10 am --- Easter Worship
Featuring Brass Quintet, Handbells, and the
Chancel Choir

Easter brunch for all following worship!

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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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