

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott



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Deadline for July Grapevine is Monday, June 22.

Growing Deeper in Faith: Nurturing Our Spiritual Roots as a Church Community

So live in Christ Jesus the Lord in the same way as you received him. Be rooted and built up in him, be established in faith, and overflow with thanksgiving just as you were taught. -- Colossians 2:6-7 (Common English Bible; CEB)

As members of our church family, we are all on a journey to grow closer to God and deepen our faith. In today's busy world, it's easy to let our spiritual lives take a back seat to everyday responsibilities. However, nurturing our faith is essential—not just for our own spiritual well-being, but for the strength and unity of our church community as a whole.

Faith is the foundation upon which we build our lives. When we grow deeper in faith, we become more resilient in times of trouble and more compassionate toward others. A strong faith enables us to face challenges with hope and to share the light of Christ with those around us.

During the summer our individual and church schedules lighten a bit and it is a wonderful opportunity to dig a bit deeper.

Beginning on June 21, we will begin a 7-week journey that seeks to deepen our faith through materials from the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation. We will include spiritual practices in our worship service and I invite you to incorporate them into your individual and family routine. Prayer journals with prompts and questions will be available to guide your journey. Both print and electronic versions will be available. Some of the themes we will explore include being present in the here and now; living into our core values; spending time with God; experiencing Sabbath and sharing the labor with others.

Artificial Intelligence and Faith. One of the ways I will be deepening my faith this summer is via participating in the Synod of the Covenant AI (Artificial Intelligence) Advisory Team. I am looking forward to using some of my scientific background as well as my pastoral training in this role. In December of 2025, the Synod of the Covenant received a grant from the Open AI Foundation's People First Fund. Partnering with Science for the Church (www.scienceforthechurch.org) and AI and Faith (www.aiandfaith.org), the Synod will be developing programs and resources to assist churches in conversations related to AI. Two main areas of focus are the implications of AI (e.g., societal, ethical, and environmental) and how and when to utilize AI. **Cont. on pg. 4**

As the academic year ends and Summer gets underway, some activities go on hiatus at PCO while others continue on modified schedules. Check out the weekly e-Announcements for more up-to-date information about what's happening here at church. Below is information about what's currently scheduled in June.

Women's Dinner Out

The next Women's Dinner Out is scheduled for **Monday, June 8** at 5:30 p.m. We will meet at Altus Okemos location - 4738 Central Park Dr. Please rsvp to Judi Harris (*info in the directory*).

Retirees in June

The Retiree Group will meet on **Monday, June 15** in Fellowship Hall at noon. Please feel free to bring a sack lunch. We will continue discussing "Our Favorite Things" this month. Please be prepared to share your favorite vacation. What made it special? How did it impact your life when you returned? What surprised you about your trip? Feel free to bring a visual aid.

Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our June Birthdays on **Sunday, June 21**. If you were born in June, please check the birthday list on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name if it isn't already there. We want to celebrate you!

Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group will meet on **Wednesday, June 24** at 5:00 p.m. on Zoom 892 3955 1708. Please join us as we offer support and resources to those caring for loved ones. No preparation is necessary. Just come and share your journey.

Conversation and Contemplation

C&C will break for the summer months. We will reconvene on September 9 at 10:00am. Please watch for the announcement in the September Grapevine. This is a good time to join the group as we start a new program year. There will be a new book chosen for spiritual growth and Lectio Divina will continue on current lectionary passages.

Adult Education & Fellowship

Password for Zoom meetings unless otherwise noted is 48864. Days and times are 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 – June meeting is **Sunday, June 7**.

Birthday Cake Sunday-3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **Sunday, June 21**.

Women's Connection – *On hiatus for the summer. See you in September!*

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out – 1st Mondays *unless otherwise noted*, 5:30 p.m. This month will be **Monday, June 8**.

Retirees - 3rd Mondays at 12 noon in person at PCO. This month will be on **Monday, June 15**.

TUESDAYS

Men's Group – Weekly at 8:00 a.m. on Zoom 813 7514 8286. Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom) this month is **Tuesday, June 2**.

PCO Crafts Ministry – Monthly, 1:00 p.m. on 1st Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall. This month will be on **Tuesday, June 2**.

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

WEDNESDAYS

Conversation & Contemplation – *On hiatus for the summer.*

Caregiver Support Group – 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise noted at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom 892 3955 1708. This month will be **Wednesday, June 24**.

THURSDAY

Bible Study – Weekly, 9:30 a.m. on Zoom <https://msu.zoom.us/j/51474400526>

Father's Day is
Sunday, June 21



Graduation

The Global Institute of Lansing requests the honor of your presence at the high school graduation ceremony of the

Class of 2026

Friday, June 5, 2026
6:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
510 W. Ottawa Street, Lansing, Michigan

Please join us for dessert immediately following the ceremony

Missions and More

This year, Intergenerational Mission Week is Thursday, June 4 through Wednesday, June 9. See page 7 for more details.

Simbolei Mission Trip – June 2027

The Mission Committee would like members to know that a mission trip is being scheduled to the rural area of Iten, Kenya to work with students at the Simbolei Academy. The estimated departure date is June 6, 2027. Details are being worked out by former member Andrea Kaitany, but this year, there is an opportunity for youth 13 and above to participate.

If you think you might be interested, please let Ellen Hoekstra know, as she is helping to coordinate the trip.

Message from a Mission Partner

Thank you for your generous contributions to the Haslett Food Pantry provided through the Greater Lansing Food Bank. We purchase approximately \$300 of food through GLFB each week and serve approximately 60 families each month. Purchasing food through GLFB is critical to fulfilling those requests.

Ruth Hinnemann, Service Coordinator
Mary L. Nelson Haslett Food Pantry

Policy Report by Ellen Hoekstra

Both the state House and Senate have approved budget bills, which are expected—as usual—to go to conference committees, following discussions among the two chambers and the executive.

Several PCO members and others (about 300 volunteers) from the faith community met with state policymakers and their staff this spring, concerned that the state’s revenue shortfall would reduce food security for low-income residents. The good news is that both chambers retained the current \$201.6 million for public and private school meals as well as the \$4 million for the Double Your Bucks program at farmers’ markets.

Farmers appreciate the Double Your Bucks program as well as the Michigan Agricultural Surplus program, funded as was true last year at \$12,045,000. Surplus crops go directly to the state’s seven food banks, and farmers are reimbursed for processing costs, like bagging potatoes. Such programs also help our agricultural community at a time when many farmers are struggling financially because of the high costs of oil and fertilizer.

In other state news:

- Medical debts continue to accelerate, with 690,000 MI adults affected, at the same time that federal Medicaid funding has been reduced. Employer provided insurance premiums have increased 80% in less than a decade, and 34,000 Mi residents have dropped their healthcare.gov coverage, which increased 20% in cost this year.
- The Michigan Supreme Court has approved a new rule that limits immigration-related arrests at state and local courthouses. The Court’s goal was to encourage residents to participate in unrelated court hearings without fear of being deported.
- The Michigan Court of Appeals has ruled that solar developers can seek state approval for projects not approved by local governmental units. The ruling does provide some procedural protection for localities and clarifies that localities without zoning jurisdiction are eligible for payments from developers.
- Ingham County’s Intermediate School District’s millage to upgrade facilities for special education services passed. Voters throughout the state approved school bonding proposals by more than 60%.

Pastor Lisa's Column cont. from pg. 1

Although I have strong interest in the implications of AI, I have very limited experience with it, using it only to generate a few graphics and AI-assisted search engines. I did however, use AI (Microsoft Co-Pilot) to assist in writing this newsletter article. The first two paragraphs were written using material generated from the prompt "church newsletter article on deepening faith." I made two words edits to smooth the syntax, but otherwise it was AI generated. I would be interested in your thoughts on how the writing sounds to you. Could you tell it was written by AI? Although standards for when and how to acknowledge AI are still be developed, I will be as transparent as I can and acknowledge when AI is used for church materials, acknowledging that AI is sometimes built into programming in ways that are hard to detect.

As technology grows and changes, it is important that we continue to encourage one another to stay rooted in Christ. Person to person we need to celebrate milestones, share our lives and faith and uplift those who are struggling. Let's commit ourselves to a season of deepening our faith as individuals, families and a congregation.

Pastor Lisa



**Pastoral Care and Pastor/Deacon's Discretionary Fund
Reminder from Pastor Lisa**

As a reminder, while I am available to meet with individuals, couples and families for pastoral care, I am not a trained therapist or mental health counselor. If care needs are greater than I can provide, I am happy to connect people to a psychologist, psychiatrist or therapist that will best fit their needs. It is important for me to set boundaries with respect to this. During emergency situations, I will do my best to make myself available for the requested time. Please note that pastoral care is confidential. You will not be placed on the prayer list or information shared with the Deacons unless you specifically request or are asked to confirm.

Through the Board of Deacons, funds are available to help congregation and community members who have emergency financial needs. All requests are held in confidence. Please note that we cannot use this as a "pass through fund" or designated gifts fund. If you personally would like to help out someone, you are encouraged to reach out to them directly. Funds cannot be funneled through the church as a charitable contribution. We do welcome contributions to Pastor Discretionary/Deacons Fund, which will be disbursed as the discretion of the Pastor(s) and Deacons.

NEW Grief Group

The Board of Deacons will be establishing a grief group that will begin meeting in late summer or early fall. This will be an in-person group led by a trained facilitator. No date or time has been set yet.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Bill Given or Pastor Lisa so we can keep you in the loop as plans go forward.



PCO Library News

We invite you to stop in the PCO Library this month to see a new collection of books from Chalice Press: “Real-Life Books for Real-Life Schedules,” a collection of short books (all under 130 pages) that are made to fit into the life you’re already living. You can finish a thoughtful and engaging book in a day or two! We have added twelve of these books, covering a wide variety of topics, to our shelves. Please visit the library to view the titles.

Next, look for the “Read the Rainbow” sign to find a grouping of books gathered to recognize Pride Month and our LGBTQ friends, family, and neighbors. We’ve added one new book to this collection:

The Bible’s Yes to Same-Sex Marriage, New Edition with Study Guide: An Evangelical’s Change of Heart by Mark Achtemeier “Achtemeier shares what led to his change of heart: the problems with excluding groups of people and the insights into the Bible’s message that led him to recognize the fullness of God’s love for LGBT persons.”

Finally, you will find two additional titles in our new book section, and one in our picture book area:

How the Dustman Lost His Job by Ewen C.D. Todd “It is a tale of a young girl attempting to recall what her grandfather told her in that hot and dusty city of Babylon when she was a child, years later, as she struggles to discover her true identity growing up in a foreign land. She relives the story of Creation and Adam and Eve as her grandfather tells it with embellishments to keep this uppity preteen interested. Was she going to eat another forbidden fruit or be obedient to her faith and culture?”

Check out this book from our own PCO member Ewen Todd, and a review in the May 2026 Grapevine.

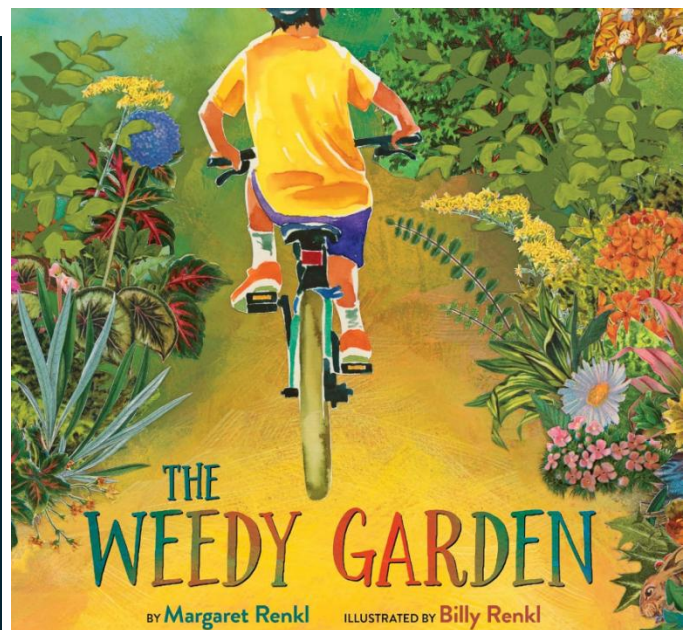
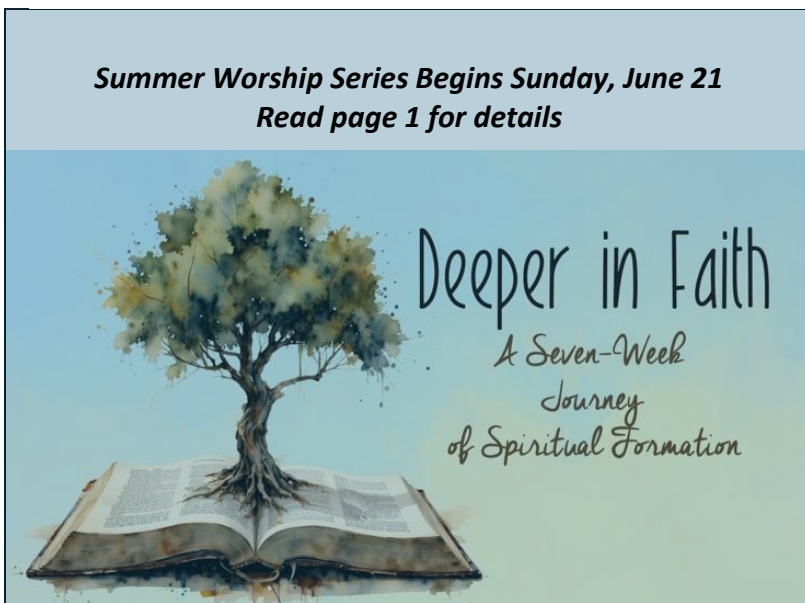
Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges by John Swinton “A call for the church to be an epicenter of compassion for those experiencing depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and related difficulties. That means breaking free of the assumptions that often accompany these diagnoses, allowing for the possibility that people living within unconventional states of mental health might experience God in unique ways that are real and even revelatory.”

The Weedy Garden by Margaret Renkl “Bestselling author Margaret Renkl invites readers to celebrate the beauty of nature and explore the interconnectedness of all species in this picture book that has been gorgeously illustrated with collages by her brother, Billy Renkl.”

I’m closing here with a reminder: when you return a book to the library, please place it in the returns basket on a lower shelf. This makes it clear to me and others that it is a returned book. Also, if you have had a library book for six months or more, it’s past time to return it. Let’s give everyone a chance to borrow a book. Thanks to all of you who help the library run smoothly.

Kathi Cook

Summer Worship Series Begins Sunday, June 21
Read page 1 for details



Book Nook

by Ron Dorr

Now Comes Good Sailing: Writers Reflect on Henry David Thoreau

Edited by Andrew Blauner

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. . . I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms.”

Henry Thoreau’s words from Walden provide the seed for Andrew Blauner’s collection of 26 essays, Now Comes Good Sailing. The book appeared in 2021, shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic upset the world. “Have we ever been confronted more, in our lifetime, with the charge to know what it means to live deliberately?” Blauner asks. Five themes emerge: “Excursions Near and Far,” “Deliberate Living,” “Directions of His Dreams,” “Practicalities,” and “At Walden.”

In section one, “Excursions,” Lauren Groff re-reads Walden slowly, closely, and intimately during the summer of 2020. She eats wild apples, walks and runs in the woods, pays more attention to nature, and discovers the gift of singularity. She becomes more like Thoreau. “There are many ways to read Thoreau,” Pico Iyer says, “but none of them will ever be so deep as the ways he reads us.” Both Iyer and Megan Marshall sit with Thoreau in Japan.

In section two, Kristen Case first disliked Thoreau and then in graduate school studied his *Kalendar*, or charts of seasonal phenomena. “He took seriously the question of how to live, . . . answered in practical, material terms, . . . but kept finding new ways, both to live and tell about it. . . . What does it mean to try to tell our life, to take it in and put it back out again” in writing? “It is a tender question: What is sharable?” Alan Lightman calls us to a Thoreauvian “slower life.” “We have been living too fast. We have sold our inner selves to the devil of speed, efficiency, money, hyper-connectedness, ‘progress.’ “Covid “freed us from the prison of our time-driven lives.” To rebuild a broken world, “deliberate living requires an enduring change of lifestyle and habits.” Case’s “Following Thoreau” and Lightman’s “To a Slower Life” are among the most pertinent essays in this book.

Section three sent me in new directions in studying Thoreau. In “Thoreau in Love,” James Marcus focuses on Thoreau’s relationships when he lived with the family of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau, Lidian, and the Emersons’ son endeared themselves to each other. Edward: “Mr. Thoreau, will you be my father?” “The thought of you will constantly elevate my life,” Henry wrote Lidian in 1843. In 1848, he continued: “I cannot tell where you leave off and I begin.” Was she a close friend? sister? soulmate? or all three?

In “Thoreau and the Art of Science,” Michelle Nijhuis corrects the mistaken view that Thoreau hated science. From November 8, 1850, on, he took his daily walks “to see what I have caught in my traps which I set for facts.” Natural facts carefully noted in his journal became the record of his love. On September 7, 1851, he wrote: “My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature—to know his lurking places. We are surrounded by a rich and fertile mystery. May we not probe it, pry into it, employ ourselves about it, a little?” Thoreau was an early ecologist as well as an American Transcendentalist.

Pay attention in section four to Celeste Headlee’s essay on Thoreau’s improving pencils, excellent surveying, and balancing “occupation and spiritual exploration.” Sections four and five, however, are the weakest part of Blauner’s book. They stray too far from Thoreau and his writing style—straight and clean like a furrow plowed in rich soil.

Remember the dying man’s words to his aunt Louisa’s question, “Have you made your peace with God?” “I did not know that we had ever quarreled, Aunt.” Or his last complete sentence: “Now comes good sailing.” Or among his final words: “Moose. Indians.”



**Literary agent &
anthology editor
Andrew Blauner**

Watch the e-Announcements for more info. Everyone is welcome to share their time and energy this week!
Previous years' participants can attest to the fun and fellowship that is found when working together.

Intergenerational Mission Week
Thursday, June 4 - Tuesday, June 9
Opportunities for all ages! More Details to Come!

Organized around the Path to Palm Sunday Promise:

We want the world to know:

We stand with Jesus Christ in his love for all.

We will feed, welcome and heal.



Worship Service on Sunday, June 7 will feature an All-Church Service Project
as the sermon.

Church picnic to follow worship!

Partner organizations include: Greater Lansing Food Bank, Lansing Humane Society
Refugee Development Center, Global Institute of Lansing (GIL) Graduation
and PCO Church Facility

GREATER LANSING
foodbank



CAPITAL AREA
**HUMANE
SOCIETY**
New Home. New Hope.



refugee development center



**PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF OKEMOS**



Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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