

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Supporting our Journey to 2030 Vision Through Our Facility

Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given skill, everyone whose heart was stirred to come to do the work, and they received from Moses all the offerings that the Israelites had brought for the work of constructing the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, so that all the skilled workers who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task being performed

– Exodus 36:2-4

It has been two years since the Session approved our Journey 2030 vision statement which is shaping our ministry at PCO. On April 19 we celebrated the call of the Rev. Aaron Punt to be the Associate Pastor of PCO. The job description and Ministry Discernment Profile for the Associate Pastor were shaped by the Journey to 2030 vision. The Session is currently in a restructuring phase to better support our vision (<https://www.okemospres.org/our-mission/>). In this issue of the Grapevine you will see Save the Date information on our Intergenerational Mission Week (June 4 -9) and the Meridian Township Pride Festival (June 6) that spring from the vision. An abbreviated version of the vision:

Journey to 2030: Guided by the Holy Spirit and looking to the future, PCO is and will be:

- A welcoming congregation where meaningful connections are made.
- A congregation that is intergenerationally inclusive.
- A congregation actively building partnerships.

Over the last year, a group of faithful PCO members has been meeting to assess the infrastructure of our PCO facility. In addition to investigating areas which require ongoing maintenance, we have assessed capital improvements that will enhance our ability live into our Journey to 2030.

On Sunday, May 31 the Infrastructure Planning Group will host a Town Hall following worship and fellowship time communicating some specific plans and some general directions for actions. We will also be sharing the ways we will be funding the following:

- Intergenerational Space: creation of a larger multiuse space for education, fellowship, and meetings by combining the Multimedia Room and Room 108 (Adult Ed) and shifting the functionality of other rooms
- Roof: a new 40-year roof for the full building
- Lighting: LED lighting in the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and the Kehde Chapel; new lighting control system for the sanctuary

Cont. on next page



In This Issue

- *Message from the APNC—pg. 2*
- *Handbell Happenings—pgs. 2 & 3*
- *Opportunities for Fellowship & Education—pg. 4*
- *For the Young and Young at Heart—pg. 5*
- *Missions—pg. 6*
- *New Novel from PCO Writer—see review on pg. 7*

**Deadline for the June Grapevine is
Friday, May 22nd.**

Pastor Lisa's message cont. from pg. 1

- HVAC Systems: maintenance and replacement of furnaces and additional air conditioning systems
- Technology: expanding our ability to share multimedia resources in the sanctuary
- Shared Resources: support of our ministry and mission partners through facility enhancements

Please plan to join us on **Sunday, May 31** for an important presentation on how our facility can better support our Journey to 2030 vision.

Pastor Lisa



May 3, 2026

10 a.m. Worship Service

25th Anniversary of the Handbell Choir
All former members invited to be recognized
Special music throughout the worship service



A Message from the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

We are all very excited to have Rev. Aaron Punt joining PCO as our next Associate Pastor! It was lovely to have so many from the congregation greet and welcome the Punt family when they visited in April.

Rev. Punt will begin work in mid-July and, until then, he and his family have very full plates as they look for a home, finish the school year, say goodbyes and help the kids with the grief and excitement of change, and finish his work with his current congregations.

While there are questions for and about Aaron and how he will work with various groups, I would like to remind everyone that **he is not on staff at PCO yet and, thus, should not be contacted by anyone except the APNC**. When he arrives, he will have a good deal of learning to do, about the community, congregation, facility, and committees, and we ask everyone to give him some space, grace and time to acclimate during the standard July committee pause for this learning.

Until then, let's pray for Aaron, Elsie, Atticus, Edmund, and Marilla as they end one chapter to begin another.

Laurin Gierman, Chair, APNC

New Member Class
Sunday, May 17, 2026
11:30 a.m.
following worship



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

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

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

Congratulations to Rebecca Mattern

Last month, the historic Jonesborough Presbyterian Church in Jonesborough, Tennessee called Rebecca to serve as their Pastor. Rebecca will be ordained at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Durham, North Carolina on May 31. She has been under care of the Session of Westminster throughout her ordination process. Rebecca will be installed as Pastor in Jonesborough this summer. The services will be livestreamed. Stay tuned for links to watch the services.

Rebecca served at PCO as Interim Director of Faith Formation and then as Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Youth Ministry from October 2023 through April 2025.



Sunday, May 17, 2026

4:00 PM

Presbyterian Church of Okemos

Featuring

Brenda Austin

Director of Embellish

And

Carla and Larry Sue

Nationally known duet ringers

Solo, duet, and trio performances by

handbells, organ, piano, harp, cello, violin, trumpet, flute, and soprano.

More about Kaleidoscope: A Collage Concert

This event will include handbell choir members from the following churches and groups: The Presbyterian Church of Okemos, Edgewood United Church of Christ, University United Methodist Church, The Peoples Church, First United Methodist Church of Eaton Rapids; Portage United Church of Christ; Kalamazoo Ringers; Capital City Ringers; and the Capital Area Community Bell Choir.

Among those performing will be names familiar to PCO members and friends: Marlene Brewbaker on the organ, Laurie Harkema on the piano, Micah Laird on trumpet, Amira Coleman soprano, and a youth string trio comprised of Lizzie Conroy-Krutz, and Connor and Evan Haskel.

The event is free and open to the public. A free will offering will be collected for Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties (CCIEC) Immigration Law Clinic.

Please join us and invite your friends!

Save the Date...
June 6, 2026
PCO at the Meridian Township PRIDE

Worship Service 11 am
Pride Festival 5 - 9 pm

The complex block is a rectangular graphic with a rainbow-colored border. It contains text and a logo. The text is in purple and black. The logo is the word 'Pride' in a colorful, stylized font with small starburst icons.

Conversation and Contemplation

The C&C Class meets each Wednesday morning from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom 905-709-104. Sharing joys and concerns, meditation, prayer, spiritual development and Biblical study are focused on each week. Pastor Lisa will be our facilitator on May 6 and all are welcome to join us. The remaining three weeks of May will be led by various members as we revisit the Spiritual Disciplines we studied the past two years.



Women's Dinner Out

The next Women's Dinner Out is scheduled for **Monday, May 4** at 5:30 p.m. at the Irish Pub, 1910 West Saginaw in Lansing. Please RSVP to Judi Harris (*info in the directory*) if you plan to attend.



Birthday Cake Sunday

We will celebrate our May Birthdays on **Sunday, May 17**. If you were born in May please check the list posted on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall and add your name by Sunday, May 10 if it is not already there.



Retirees in May

The Retiree Group will meet in Fellowship Hall on **Monday, May 18 at noon**. Please bring two or three of your favorite quotes to share with the others. If possible, please send them to Jane Bobay prior to the meeting and so she can bring copies for all. You can also bring them to the meeting that day and Jane Detorre will compile them and email them to all.

If you would like, bring your own sack lunch to enjoy.



Caregiver Support Group

The Zoom meeting of the caregivers will meet on **Wednesday, May 27** at 5:00 p.m. Our group offers support to each other, shares resources and experiences and assists others through their journey in many ways. Please join us on Zoom 892-3955-1708.

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— May meeting is **Sunday, May 3**.

Birthday Cake Sunday—3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be on **Sunday, May 17**.

Women's Connection— *Is going on hiatus early for the summer. We will see you in September!*

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out— 1st Monday unless otherwise noted. This month's dinner is scheduled for **May 4**.

Retirees – Regularly scheduled on the 3rd Monday of the month at 12:00 noon in person at PCO. This month's meeting is Monday, **May 18**.

TUESDAYS

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

PCO Crafts Ministry— Monthly, 1st Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall. Next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, May 5**.

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 unless otherwise noted. This month will be **May 27** 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>

*Mothers' Day is
Sunday, May 10*

For the Young and Young at Heart

PCO YOUTH CALENDAR

MAY 2026

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED

- **MAY 3: DINNER IN MY HOME @ 5PM, VARIED LOCATIONS**
- **MAY 10: NO YOUTH GROUP
CELEBRATE THE MOMS IN YOUR LIFE!**
- **MAY 17: KALEIDOSCOPE COLLAGE CONCERT @ 4 PM
DINNER FOLLOWING**
- **MAY 24: NO YOUTH GROUP.
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND**
- **MAY 31: END OF SCHOOL YEAR PICNIC, S'MORES & GAMES**



Family Camp Registration Due by May 8

Time is running out to register for Family Camp, which takes place this year from Friday, May 22 through Sunday, May 24. Campers are heading to Camp Skyline in Almont, MI, where we will experience hiking, boating, catch & release fishing, archery, yoga, gardening, campfires, s'mores, and outdoor educational activities. For more information or to register visit:

<https://campskyline.org/family-camp>

Graduate Recognition Sunday is May 17th

We want to congratulate PCO members and friends who are completing the next level of their educations.

If you'd like the church to recognize someone who is graduating from high school, college, a university or trade school this spring, please let the church office know before Friday, May 15.



Save the Date:

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

Missions & More

The Refugee Development Center
Purchase tickets at:
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/thrive--2026>

Thrive 2026
Resilience. Resolve. Community.



Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Time: 5:00-8:00pm
5:00-6:30 Dinner, Drinks, Tours
6:30 Special Ribbon Cutting, Awards
Location: RDC Newcomer Center
5509 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
Lansing, MI 48911



PCO recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month



Be on the lookout for emails from Pastor Lisa on Wednesday afternoons in May sharing information and resources!

Policy Report by Ellen Hoekstra

In addition to many PCO members participating in the Path to Palm Sunday, five of us took part in the Advocacy Day on food insecurity to meet with our own state legislators, thanking them for past support to combat hunger and encouraging continuation of the current funding levels, including for food banks, in next year's budget. We were pleased to deliver the many letters signed by other members to their legislators. A survey of the approximately 300 attendees indicated that 67% would like to return next year and 33% said "maybe" to returning.

In April, the Lansing State Journal ran a lengthy article regarding problems with the data from courts on the Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO), the "red flag law." One significant problem is that they do not indicate what kind of incident caused each ERPO to be approved. We do know that ERPO's have been issued on several minors, including one six-year old, and that the Detroit Police Department has issued four on its own officers. Roughly 80% of requests for orders filed were granted by a judge.

In other news:

- One trend of concern is that at-risk Michigan youth are increasingly being sent to residential treatment centers out of state, due to the closure of in-state programs. The number has more than doubled in the past two years and makes it more difficult for families to visit these youth.
- In some Michigan communities, including Eaton County, their share of the settlement money to fight the opioid crisis has yet to be spent. Although there has been a steep drop in Michigan overdose deaths (thank you, Narcan), more Michiganders die from drugs than from automobile accidents.
- Last year, Michigan licensed only 2800 foster homes, a steep decline from 4000 in 2023. The MDHHS says that the most frequent reasons for the drop include caregiver burnout, families choosing to focus on their own needs, and families adopting the foster children placed with them.
- Following the decline in federal support for solar power, some Michigan neighborhoods are organizing "solar parties" to buy rooftop panels in bulk for discount rates.
- Michigan's public colleges and universities, along with others in the nation, will soon need to comply with a new Department of Justice rule under the ADA requiring that all digital content—including websites and learning materials— be accessible to blind students. This new regulation reflects a change from reactive accommodation (sometimes following legal action by the student) to proactive compliance requiring screen reader compatibility.

BOOK NOOK

By Ron Dorr

How the Dust Man Lost His Job

by Ewen Todd

In his original novel, How the Dust Man Lost His Job, Ewen Todd tells two stories. The first is the entertaining relationship between an orthodox Jewish grandfather and his sassy granddaughter. The second is an illustrated version of Adam and Eve's disobedience of God.

Flannery O'Connor once said that a short story must have meaning and muscle and that the meaning should come in the muscle. By page 9, I knew who the "dust man" was: Adam. I inferred that the meaning was Adam and Eve's "fall" in disobeying God. How Ewen explained that "fall," however, kept me interested all the way to the end of the story.

The suspense that a good story requires in this case comes from the two principal characters, the pert 11-year-old Jewish granddaughter and her grandfather in exile. The latter knows how to jazz up a story about man, woman, the ambiguous negotiations between two such human beings, the origin of sin, and the consequences of disobedience to God.

That granddaughter is complex. On the one hand, she is awed by, attentive to, and grateful for her grandfather. On the other hand, she is mischievous, brazen, sassy, saddened, and feminist. "I am going to be my own woman, and I will marry whom I please." She has more than a pinch of rebellion. Overall, she says that she is "not that bad-ass of a kid." At the very end, she parts with her grandfather "with glee" and a youth's "indifference."

The grandfather obviously loves his granddaughter. In general, he does what she wants. He appreciates her interest in Jewish stories. He imagines and creates more appealing features than the rabbis do. But he is fearful of who his granddaughter may turn out to be—marrying someone outside the Jewish faith. He doesn't want her to visit the boys ogling the prostitutes near the temple. He too can be impish: "And where did the Serpent come from, I wonder?"

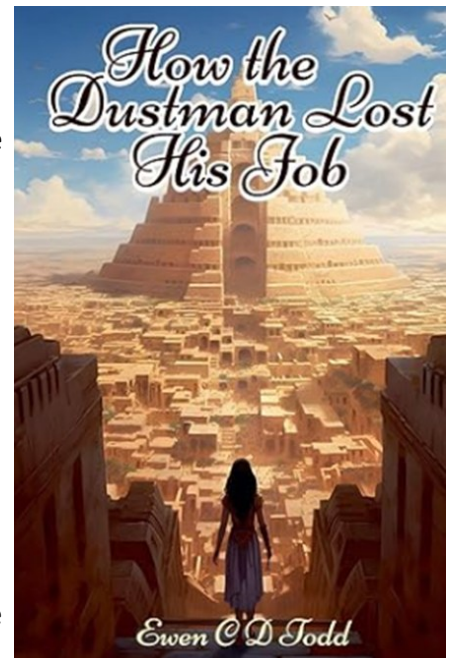
In the second story, Adam and Eve are also complicated. Their early comfort and joy with each other are wonderful to behold. The illustrations of the couple, naked without shame, are discreet, pleasant, and fitting. Instead of euphemisms such as "slept together" for sexual intercourse, commonsensical phrasing appears: "come together in union that was pleasurable." Neither Adam nor Eve is romanticized. The ambiguities of human personalities and relationships continue throughout the story. Emotions such as jealousy, guilt, shame, alienation, aggression, and estrangement crop up like growing weeds. Such realistic portraits of human imperfection are appropriate, even necessary. Both Eve and Adam want to be like God. The result, then, is the fall from bliss, harmony, and right relationships with God.

The Jewish grandfather stresses to his granddaughter that Eve and Adam disobeyed God. Both tried to be like God, and both tried to be more powerful than the other partner. The grandfather as well as the Biblical story is sexist. This story of the origin of sin is quite different from the story of "co-creation" told in William James's book on pragmatism and the Hasidic story of "tikkun," or restoration of the shreds of God's goodness, told by Annie Dillard in her book, For the Time Being.

I appreciated the character sketches and ambiguities in this short novel. Good literature is built upon and brimming with such ambiguities, tensions, doubleness, and multiple meanings. Descriptive writing also benefits from such figurative language as "symphony of sweet and sour." Narratives need to move fast because readers want to know the outcome of the story. Short sentences such as "Adam confesses" say so much so concisely—in contrast to four consecutive sentences of 39, 72, 45, and 56 words. The illustrations greatly enhance this novel. And the brief introduction helps, too.

In the back cover of this book, I wish the publisher had provided more information about Ewen Todd's skillful puppetry, teaching of the Bible, writing in The Grapevine about books of the Bible, experiences in Lebanon, and superb knowledge of the Middle East.

Ewen's book is available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other booksellers.



**The cover of PCO member
Ewen Todd's new novel.**

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

JACOB MELAND, MEDIA SPECIALIST

Phone: 517-349-9536

<https://instagram.com/okemospres>

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

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

Email: office@okemospres.org

