

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

Commitment Sunday is November 15.

Dedication of Pledges of Time, Talent & Resources

In 1 Kings 8, we read of the dedication of the great Temple in Jerusalem built by King Solomon. The last act of the building project was to place the chest containing the two stone tablets with the covenant the people made with God in the most holy place in the center of the Temple. Solomon then prays over the Temple and the assembled people, ending with these words in verse 61: "Now may you be committed to the Lord our God with all your heart by following God's laws and observing God's commands, just as you are doing right now." The people then celebrated with a 14-day festival, including bringing of offerings before God.

While we will not be having a 14-day festival to mark our dedication to God, November 15 will be a special Sunday in the life of our congregation as we mark our commitment to be **All In**. **All In** our ministry of worship, care for each other, outreach, faith formation, fellowship and the use of our facility. **All In** with our financial resources and our resources of time and energy. **All In** for embodying our **Journey to 2030** vision of being and becoming more fully:

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

Worship on November 15 will feature special music from the PCO Handbell Choir and the PCO Chancel Choir. Following worship, the Session has called a Congregational Meeting to hear and adopt a report from the Nominating Committee electing a slate of Deacons, Ruling Elders, and members of the Endowment Committee for the Class of 2030.

Stewardship packets will be available for pick-up on Sundays, November 1 and 8 in Fellowship Hall. Packets not picked up in person will be mailed out. The packet contains your 2027 pledge card and Time & Talent form and a brochure showing the impact of your giving in 2026. Included is information from the Stewardship Committee about the importance of being **All In** in 2027 with your financial gifts, as well as the many mechanisms by which you can financially support the church.

God calls us to be **All In with our Hearts, Hands, and Resources**. God calls us to be **All in for Our Future**. I invite you to be part of this exciting time in the church as we continue to grow into our vision of being a welcoming, partnering, and intergenerationally inclusive congregation.

ALL IN

PCO STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN
2026-2027

WE BUILD COMMUNITY TOGETHER

HELP US FULFILL
OUR JOURNEY TO 2030 VISION



CARE



CONNECTION



SERVICE

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Due Date for December Grapevine is
Sunday, November 22.

Happening In November



Harmony in Hard Times

2026 Fall Gathering
of the
Lansing Interfaith
Clergy Association of
Greater Lansing

Thursday, November 5
7:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
1701 E. Saginaw St.
Lansing, MI 48912

An offering will be taken for a
local charitable organization.

The Alternative Christmas Market is Here!

The PCO Alternative Christmas Market and Used Book Sale will be held on **Saturday November 14** from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Bread Bites will be there to provide lunch for purchase. Our PCO youth will be selling treats again.

The vendors will be some of your past favorites as well as a new one "House of Promise", a local non-profit organization that is involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of female victims of sex-trafficking. Jean Cymbalski and Jill Tribell will be selling their beautiful cards with their proceeds going to support the Simbolei Girls Academy. Our PCO crafters guild will be selling their lovely items to support the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Nyaka will be back selling lovely Ugandan Baskets made by grandmothers to support the orphanage there.

This year we will also have a booth selling used books with the proceeds going to U-Kirk, our Presbyterian partner at MSU. **The last day to bring books to the church is Sunday, November 8.**

Please come and enjoy this fun event and support many wonderful charities that serve those in need locally and also internationally. You can purchase many unique gifts for those on your Christmas list.

See you on November 14th!

November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

Join us this November as we recognize the extraordinary work of those that provide high-quality care to individuals and families facing serious illness. This month-long recognition is a chance to raise awareness, inform our community and reflect on the kind of care that honors the whole person.

At PCO, we're honored to celebrate this year's national theme "We See the Whole You." This year we are celebrating by inviting you to:

- [Register](#) and attend **Understanding Hospice and Palliative Care** an educational seminar on Nov. 2, 2pm, at the Michigan Athletic Club, [2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing, MI](#)
- Visit a table in fellowship hall on Nov. 15 to talk with PCO deacons regarding hospice and palliative care resources

Happening In November



Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.]



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF OKEMOS

Installation Service for the Rev. Aaron Punt Associate Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Okemos



Sunday November 22, 2026
2 pm in the PCO Sanctuary
2258 Bennett Rd., Okemos MI
Reception to follow service
Livestream at okemospres.org

PCO Out on the Town

The Peoples Church of
East Lansing Presents:

**10th Annual Henry & Annabel
Larzelere Memorial Lecture**

**Sunday, November 8th
12:45 p.m.**

Join fellow parishioners and community members for a timely topic. This event will feature Amanda Tyler, Executive Director of The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. Her lecture is titled *Practiced Religious Freedom: Opposing White Christian Nationalism*.

The Peoples Church is located at 200 W Grand River in East Lansing. Admission to the lecture is free.

For more information call The Peoples Church at (517) 332 – 5073 or email the church at office@thepeopleschurch.com (standard email setup).

A Message from Sally Belloli

As some of you know, I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer one year ago. Your many thoughts, prayers and cards have been so thoughtful and appreciated. Because of these prayers, the medical traditional and alternative doctors who have treated me, my loving family and my dependence on and guidance from God, I now believe that I am in remission.

I thank God each and every day, along with your support and prayers as I continue to stay strong and move forward with my healing.

God is Good.

Thanks to my wonderful church community.

TRIVIA NIGHT

NOVEMBER
15TH
5:00PM

\$150 PER
TABLE
(TEAMS OF 6)

SUPPORT UKIRK CAMPUS MINISTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION: UKIRKMSU.ORG

Women's Dinner Out

We will meet on **Monday, November 2 at 5:30 p.m.** at Taste of Thai at 2838 East Grand River Avenue, #2, in East Lansing. If you plan to attend, please let Judi Harris know in person at church on Sunday so that she can write your name down.

Conversation & Contemplation

The C&C group meets each **Wednesday from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom #905-709-104.** This month, we will alternate Lectio Divina (11/11) with our book discussion of *Heart Storming: Creating a Place God Can Call Home*. There is also a meditation offered each week. Leadership of our discussions is facilitated by members of the group.

We welcome newcomers to our class. Join us for the Lectio Divina sessions based on the week's Lectionary and/or the book discussion. The book is available online or can be ordered.

There will be no class on November 25.

Retirees

The **third Monday of the month (November 16) at noon in PCO Fellowship Hall** is the next gathering of Retirees. The good news is that you don't have to be retired to join us! Our topic for discussion is the 250th celebration of our country.

November is also the month we vote, celebrate Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving. How do these events touch your life as a Christian? What do they mean to our country? Are they celebrated in a way that is meaningful to you? What would you like to see done differently?

Caregivers Support Group

This support group meets monthly, usually the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:15 p.m. on Zoom #892-3955-1708. *Since Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve fall on the fourth Thursdays, the November and December dates will be changed. Please check the announcements and church calendar of Activities for the dates.* This group shares joys and concerns, offers ideas, resource suggestions, and support to one another.

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 – This month's meeting is **November 1.**

Birthday Cake Sunday–3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be **November 15.**

Women's Connection – 4th Sundays unless otherwise noted at 12:30 p.m. This month will be **November 15** due to Pastor Aaron's Installation.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out – 1st Mondays unless otherwise scheduled, 5:30 p.m. This month will be **November 2.**

Retirees - 3rd Mondays at 12 noon in person at PCO. This month will be on **November 16.**

TUESDAYS

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

PCO Crafts Ministry – Twice each month on Tuesdays in Fellowship Hall. This month will be on **November 3 at 6:00 p.m. and on November 10 at 4:00 p.m.** *Note different times for each date.*

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

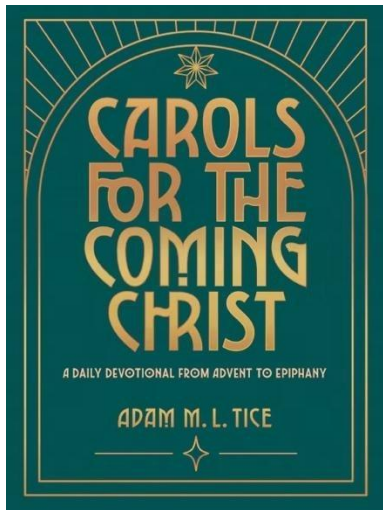
Caregiver Support Group – 4th Wednesdays unless otherwise noted at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom 892 3955 1708. Watch the e-Announcements for November's date.

THURSDAY

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



More Happenings at PCO



Advent to Epiphany Devotional Book: *Carols for the Coming Christ*

The devotional will parallel our Sunday worship for the Advent and Christmas season. It will be available beginning **Sunday, November 22**. Suggested donation is \$5.00.

Journey through the seasons of Advent and Christmas with a devotional by Adam M. L. Tice rooted in beloved and new hymns of Advent and Christmas. Each entry pairs a song text with scripture, thoughtful commentary, and reflection questions. Creative response prompts throughout encourage deeper engagement through writing, music, and visual art. Five weeks of reflections running from December 1 through Epiphany on January 6 explore the stories behind the songs allowing us to experience familiar carols anew and be inspired by carols new to us.

Commitment to Composting

The Green Team has decided to use the services of Eastside Compost to both broaden and simplify handling compostable items at PCO. Eastside will take all compostable plates, silverware, cups, etc. – food waste included. They also accept dairy, meat and bones so no scraping of plates is necessary.

The bottom line is we can compost more materials and do it in a simpler way. Eastside Compost will pick up a 5-gallon bucket every other week from PCO for \$20 per month which will be paid for by the Green Team.

Look for the posted flyer with more specifics.

For more information about Eastside Compost, visit <https://eastsidecompost.com>

Simbolei Trip Update

Five PCO members, including one youth, have committed to take the mission trip to Iten, Kenya, in June of 2027 to volunteer at Simbolei Academy. Other members have raised questions about the trip, such as:

Isn't the weather extremely hot in June there?

No, actually, it will almost certainly be cooler there than here, due to the very high altitude. Africa has 25% more land mass than North America, and the climate varies, just as it does in North America.

Are the girls at Simbolei at risk of being kidnapped?

The horrific kidnapping of schoolgirls was in Nigeria, on the west coast of the continent. Kenya is on the east coast, and Iten is a peaceful rural community.

What about the risk of Ebola?

Ebola is a terrible disease, spread by bodily fluids and close contact with those who are infected. The disease is widespread in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in part because of burial practices.

So far there have been 7 cases in Kenya, the first brought in by a man who'd been in the DRC. Of the other cases, three were health care workers who cared for him and another, a close associate. All current cases are in quarantine, but we will but we will continue to monitor this issue very carefully to avoid risk to participants.

Women's Connection

We will meet **Sunday, November 15 at 12:30 p.m.** (3rd Sunday rather than our usual 4th) Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for fellowship, lunch, and to hear our **speaker Elsie Punt**. Pastor Aaron's family is eager to get to know us, and this is a great opportunity to get to know Elsie as she shares stories of her life and faith journey.

All women are welcome and encouraged to invite friends.

Clothing Needed

The Community Center at Cristo Rey Catholic Charities distributes limited clothing from their Clothing Closet daily. Currently, of great need are the following: Men's warm clothing, jeans, belts, shoes, boots, coats, hoodies, hats, gloves, and backpacks or small suitcases.

Children's items sized 4-18 are also needed.

You can drop items off at Cristo Rey at 1717 North High Street in Lansing, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or contact Jane Bobay (*info in the directory*) and a pickup or car-to-car loading at church can be arranged.

YOUTH CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2026

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED

SUNDAYS, NOV. 1 & 8: YOUTH GROUP FROM 5 – 7 PM

**SATURDAY NOV. 14: ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET
FROM 10 AM – 2 PM.**

SUNDAY, NOV. 15: UKIRK TRIVIA NIGHT FROM 5 – 7 PM

**SUNDAY, NOV. 22: PASTOR AARON'S INSTALLATION SERVICE
AT 2 PM; NO FORMAL YOUTH GROUP**

**TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24 – 25
8 PM – 8AM LOCK-IN AT THE CHURCH**

Mission Committee Seeks New Members

If you would like to become more involved in helping your neighbors, consider joining the PCO Mission Committee. This committee meets 11 times a year, including a special retreat early each year and meetings from 6:00 -8:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of most months. Meetings can be attended virtually.

Being a member means learning more about PCO's mission partners, such as Edgewood Village and Communities in Schools, Michigan. It also means helping plan donations from PCO and activities for members, and taking part in mission activities of your choice—no expectation that members will participate in all of them.

Youth and adults of all ages are welcome. If you have questions? Ask Kent Workman, Chair, or any other committee member. Or—just show up at PCO at 6:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday. All are welcome!



***Working at Cass Community Social Services
in Detroit last month.***

Mission & More



A Note of Appreciation

*Hi Volunteers,
Thank you so much for coming back to volunteer at Cass again last month. We appreciate your willingness to help organize our main building. We always look forward to seeing your group on our schedule.*

Thank you again for serving with us in Detroit.

**Rev. Faith Fowler
and the Cass Community
Social Services staff.**



Policy Report by Ellen Hoekstra

Items of Note across our state:

Health:

\$173 million in federal funding for rural health is being distributed in Michigan. Rural medical professionals have stated that the amount is not enough to replace the loss of critical Medicaid funding to rural hospitals. Other concerns expressed include that the total funding is below than other comparable Midwestern states, like Indiana, and that too much of the funding is going to entities providing more peripheral services than hospitals. Throughout the state, federal changes have resulted in a large drop in people, including children, enrolled in Medicaid, with no indication that many have any other source of coverage.

Also of interest, the state has just opened Southeast Michigan Psychiatric Hospital to serve adults and youth. This more up to date facility will replace the Walter Ruether psychiatric hospital.

Human services:

A recent audit of MDHHS's foster care program highlights insufficient oversight for the care of Michigan's 9200 foster care children. The audit points out a lack of plans to address caseload issues for case workers, including no consideration of added assignments when caseloads are calculated. As a side note to the audit, only 1% of foster care kids earn associate degrees or bachelors degrees by their 21st birthdays.

Governor Whitmer has recently signed legislation aimed at discouraging middle school and high school aged kids from using nicotine or cannabis, including THC. The legislation uses the mechanism of requiring schools to inform parents of the dangers of using these products. It also requires schools to include parental education in how to recognize signs of THC poisoning and steps to take if poisoning occurs.

Education:

Only 23.5% of Michigan students are ready for college, based on SAT data, down by 10% from a decade ago. "College ready" is defined in this analysis as having a 75% chance of getting a "C" in first semester coursework. 80 school districts are using state funds to expand their offerings in career tech. In addition to what a previous generation called "shop" classes, "career tech" includes classes such as accounting and the health professions.

Environment:

Michigan's Attorney General and various organizations and individuals have criticized Consumer Energy's plan to sell 13 Michigan dams, built a century ago, to a private equity company, saying that the plan risks dams falling into further disrepair.

PCO Library News

The PCO Library welcomes November with a lineup of new books:

Live, Laugh, Love: The Secret History of White Christian Women and the World They Made by Kristin Kobes Du Mez “From the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Jesus and John Wayne*, a revelatory history of white Christian womanhood in the United States. Du Mez uncovers the roots of today’s glittering, Instagram-ready culture of white Christian femininity.”

Holy Disruption: A Manifesto for the Future of Faith Communities by Amy Butler and Dawn Darwin Weaks “A bold call to reimagine Christian community for our time. Through compelling stories, you’ll meet holy disruptors – pastors, entrepreneurs, and everyday leaders – creating healing, hope, and sustainable ministry in unexpected places. These pioneers aren’t clinging to outdated models; they’re living the gospel in fresh, faithful ways.”

Vulnerable God: How Jesus Upends Our Assumptions About God and Shows Us How to Be Human by Kenneth Tanner “Tracing the events of Jesus’s life as told in the Bible and the rhythms of the church year, Tanner invites us to recapture our wonder that God has become human – to discover what Christ’s vulnerability reveals about the heart of God and how the full humanity of Jesus transforms our lives.”

American Hagwon: A Novel by Min Jin Lee “An unforgettable panoramic novel where the bonds of family and of memory twist and fray, but rarely break, and where willful self-sacrifice – for the benefit of loved ones and even strangers – becomes a kind of prayer.”

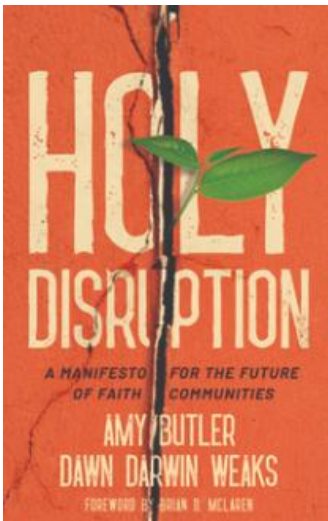
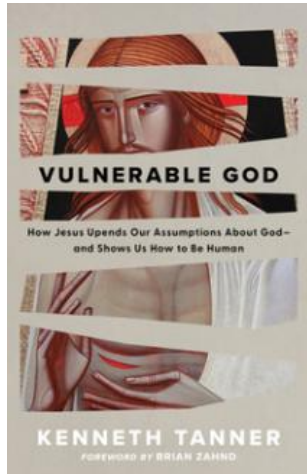
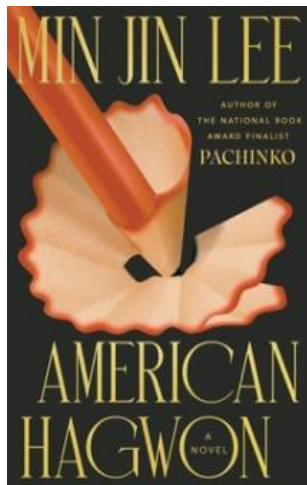
How We Disappear: A Personal History of Information by Thomas S. Mullaney “A brilliant foray into the nature of information, of history, and of making meaning in the face of death and decay. Lyrical and poignant, the book offers inspiring and eye-opening insight on the miracle of existence, and on what it means to forge meaning from a chaotic universe.”

My Disability Is Divine: A Joyful Witness That Defies Ableist Nonsense by Amy Kenny “Drawing from history, nature, and disability culture, Kenny explores ways that disability reveals divine creativity and presence, how Scripture celebrates disabled body, minds, and why access, interdependence, and joy are central to the community of creation.”

All quotations are from the publishers.

As always, we invite you to borrow these books, and others, from the PCO Library.

Kathi Cook



Book Collection Ends Sunday, November 8

There's still time to bring in your gently used books for the Used Book Sale at PCO's Alternative Christmas Market. Please bring in your fiction and non-fiction books for adults, youth and children by **Sunday, November 8**. Collection bins in the coat room. *No textbooks, magazines, or audio-visual materials, please.*

All proceeds from the book sale will go to support UKirk at MSU's book distribution program for community children and youth. Thanks for your participation!

Questions? See Kathi Cook.

**Getting extra
calendars for 2027?
Instead of tossing
them, let's share
with each other. Put
any extras on the
cabinet underneath
the nametags.**

Book Nook

by Ron Dorr

Abraham Lincoln's Proclamations of Thanksgiving and Fasting

On October 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a Proclamation of Thanksgiving to the citizens of the United States, eventually leading to an annual national holiday. During the American Civil War, Sara Josepha Hale, the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, had been urging the President "to have the day of our annual thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival." The proclamation in 1863 was also the result of several proclamations of thanksgiving and fast days that Lincoln had begun issuing on August 12, 1861.

In 1863, Lincoln encouraged U. S. citizens at home, at sea, and abroad "to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." Three recommendations followed. Citizens should ascribe to God "such singular deliverances and blessings," which Lincoln had outlined earlier in the document. "With humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience," citizens should also commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged." And they should ask "the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purpose to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

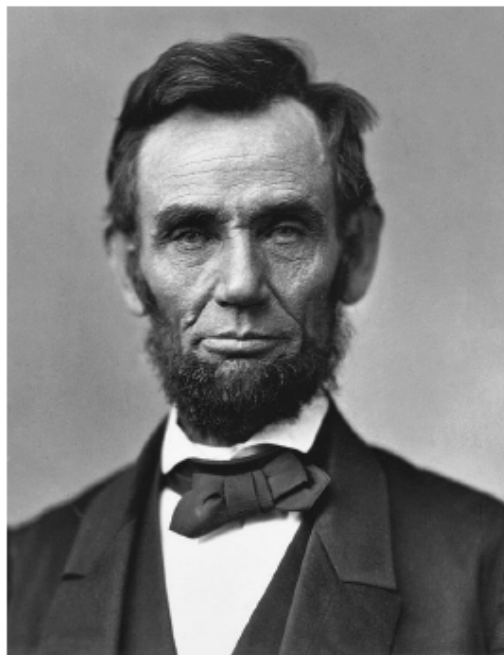
In the first half of the proclamation in 1863, Lincoln stressed the gratitude and blessings "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity." Military necessities "have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship." Population, settlements, and mining have "steadily increased." "Augmented strength and vigor" have marked the Union. All these developments "have been the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy." Such acknowledgment of bounties and blessings continued, especially in the Proclamations of April 10, 1862, July 15, 1863, May 9, 1864, September 3, 1864, and October 20, 1864. Those six proclamations usually followed Union victories in battle. The last one also acknowledged increased population due to immigration and emancipation of enslaved people.

Religious language permeated much of the proclamations for national fast days and a day of prayer. For the first "day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting," scheduled for September 26, 1861, Lincoln thought it was "fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offences."

The Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day for April 30, 1863, was even more explicit. "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. . . . But we have forgotten God. . . . Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." The Proclamation of a Day of Prayer for August 2, 1864, urged all citizens to go to public places of worship, among other reasons, "to implore [God] in His infinite goodness to soften the hearts, enlighten the minds, and quicken the consciences of those in rebellion, that they may lay down their arms and speedily return to their allegiance to the United States."

Whatever the varied language for God, whatever the Biblical allusion, whatever the occasion, gratitude for God's blessings went hand in hand with confession, penitence, and renewed lives. According to Kathryn Schulz, "and-ness" is "built into the basic facts of our existence." Even Abraham Lincoln's proclamations of thanksgiving and fast days demonstrate such "and-ness."

The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Roy P. Basler, contain the full texts of these proclamations.



*16th President of the United States
Abraham Lincoln*

Presbyterian Church of Okemos

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Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.

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