

The Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OKEMOS

From Pastor Lisa Schrott

All In - Committing to God and Each Other

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. – 1 Kings 8:61-63 (CEB)

I shared this scripture in the August Grapevine as we looked forward to last month of summer and anticipated the fall program year. I share it again as I invite you to be **All In** as we fall Back into the Rhythms of the program year. We have some exciting worship, education, mission and fellowship opportunities on tap for September.

Fall Kick-Off Sunday will be September 13.

We will finish the *Deeper in Faith* worship series we began earlier this summer as we consider the gifts we have been given by God to be Co-Laborers in creating a world that reflects God's love, grace, justice and mercy. The Chancel Choir will return from summer hiatus. Make sure to check out the note from Shelby about the new rehearsal time on page 2. We will also be commissioning our 2026 Confirmation Class. And Parish Life will be hosting an Ice Cream Social after worship. This is a great Sunday to reconnect to the church if you have been away for the summer. It is also a great time to invite a friend or two to join us.

September Worship

Aaron will preach on September 6 and 20, lifting up the ways we are called to repentance and reconciliation so that we can live rightly and in joyful relationship with others. On September 27, the MSU UKirk College Ministry will be leading our worship service, serving as the liturgists and preachers. We are blessed to be in partnership with this important and life-giving ministry through our Mission Committee.

September Education

Our education hour will return on September 20. Elementary Education will be led by Barbara Fretwell-Cooke and Jane Detorre. Middle School education will meet twice a month and be led by Kathi Cook.

We have some special programs lined up for the end of September for adults and older youth. On September 20, Ellen Hoekstra will lead a discussion with PCO members who have visited the Simbolei Academy in Iten, Kenya. The Mission Committee is planning a trip next June and all are invited to learn more about the work of Richard and Andrea Kaitany and the trip details. On September 27, members of the MSU UKirk College Ministry will share more about their programming and their work in distributing books to the community. Please note that an Intergenerational Bible Study for High School Youth and Adults will begin in October and be led by Aaron. Stay tuned for more details.

I hope you can join us in being All In this September as we fall back into the rhythms of the church year.



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**Due Date for
October Grapevine is
Tuesday, September 22**

Fall Back into Rhythm

Sunday, September 13

Worship @ 10:00

Deeper in Faith Week 7

Chancel Choir Returns

Commissioning of the 2026

Confirmation Class

**Ice Cream Social Following Worship
sponsored by Parish Life**

Women's Dinner Out in September

At our last Women's Dinner Out, it was decided that, due to the Labor Day holiday, we will move this month's gathering back a week and have our next Women's Dinner Out on **Monday, September 14 at 5:30 p.m.** We will meet at Everyday Authentic Chinese at 1375 East Grand River in East Lansing.

Please let Judi Harris know if you can come. The best way to inform her is during fellowship hour at church where she can write it down. Hoping to see you there!

Used Book Collection Begins

Beginning in September, we are collecting your gently used books to sell at the PCO Alternative Christmas Market in November. All proceeds from the book sale will go to support UKirk's book distribution program for community children and youth. UKirk at Michigan State is the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Please look through your personal libraries for books that you would like to contribute to the used book sale. We're looking for all kinds of books, including fiction, non-fiction, and children's books. We are not looking for textbooks or magazines. This is your chance to go through that stash of books!

You'll find bins or other containers in the coat room where you can leave your used books. Thank you for your participation in the market and the book sale. Watch for more details as we get closer to November.

For more information, see Kathi Cook.

Join the Chancel Choir

Our first rehearsal is **Thursday, September 10** with a new rehearsal time of **7:00 – 8:30 p.m.** Our first worship service singing will be **Sunday, September 13.**

We're looking forward to another wonderful season of making music together!

If you have questions, please contact Chancel Choir Director Shelby Laird at *shelbylaird at okemospres dot org* (standard email setup).

Simbolei Updates

Following the worship service on **Sunday, September 20**, all are welcome to a presentation about the Simbolei Academy for Girls in Iten, Kenya. The presentation will include information about previous mission trips and the future trip planned for June 2027.

Right now, the school is responding to a financial challenge. A regional drought destroyed all of their maize crops, used to help feed the girls and the dairy cows kept to provide milk for students.

UKirk Leading Worship

UKirk MSU is scheduled to lead the worship service at PCO on **Sunday, September 27.**

UKirk at Michigan State is the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in East Lansing, established as part of the 1001 New Worshipping Communities Movement. PCO continues to partner with UKirk by hosting trivia nights in the church building.

Conversation and Contemplation

The C&C group meets each **Wednesday** from 10:00-11:30a.m. on Zoom #905-709-104. Our first meeting will be on **September 9**.

There will be a time for introductions and sharing our summer experiences. Our book study will be discussed; a book will be chosen to help us in our faith formation and a sign-up for group leadership will be available. Bring your ideas to the meeting to be considered. We will also look at the lectionary for the fall and discuss Lectio Divina. Newcomers are always welcome to join.

If you have questions or are unable to attend but would like to share ideas, please contact Jane Bobay, Jill Schaberg, Jennifer Gordon, Barbara Dorr or any group member.

Retirees

The Retiree Group meets the third Monday of each month at noon in the PCO Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendar for **Monday, September 21**. All are invited to join us whether you are retired, semi-retired, contemplating retirement or taking a lunch break from work! Feel free to bring a snack, drink, or lunch to enjoy during our meeting.

Topics vary and are decided upon by the group. Our first meeting of the fall will focus on what programming might be helpful in retirement and interests for the upcoming year.

Caregivers Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group will meet on **Wednesday, September 23** from 5:00-6:00 p.m. on Zoom #892-3955-1708. Monthly meetings are the fourth Wednesday of the month. Whether you are a caregiver for a loved one or a support person for caregivers, you are invited to join us. Discussions vary, depending on the needs and interests of those attending each month. Sharing experiences, resources, successes and bumps in the road are often the starting points of our time together. Offering support during the meetings, and those times in-between meetings, is what makes the group meaningful to each participant.

Women's Connection

All women are invited to reconnect after summer hiatus on **Sunday, September 27** at 12:30 p.m. We will gather in Room 108 for time of fellowship, lunch, and a presentation by one of our members.

Watch church announcements for details.

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 – September meeting is **September 6**.

Birthday Cake Sunday–3rd Sundays following worship unless otherwise noted. This month will be **September 20**.

Women's Connection – 4th Sundays at 12:30 p.m. This month will be **September 27**.

MONDAYS

Women's Dinner Out – 1st Mondays unless otherwise scheduled, 5:30 p.m. ***This month will be September 14 due to Labor Day.***

Retirees - 3rd Mondays at 12 noon in person at PCO. This month will be on **September 21**.

TUESDAYS

Men's Group – Weekly at 8:00 a.m. on Zoom 813 7514 8286. Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom) this month is **September 1**.

PCO Crafts Ministry – Monthly on 1st Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. This month will be on **September 1**. An additional meeting is scheduled for **September 8**, time to be determined.

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

WEDNESDAYS

Conversation & Contemplation – Resumes on September 9th 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. This month will be **September 23**.

THURSDAY

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



YOUTH CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2026

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL COMBINED 5 – 7 PM

SEPTEMBER 6: NO YOUTH GROUP; LABOR DAY WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 13: CROP WALK T-SHIRT PREPARATION

SEPTEMBER 20 & 27: TRUNK OR TREAT PLANNING

**HOMEWORK & HANGOUT WILL RESUME IN MID-SEPTEMBER
STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS!**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OCTOBER:

OCTOBER 3: INTERGENERATIONAL CASS MISSION IN DETROIT 9AM-6PM

OCTOBER 11: LUNCH & CROP WALK 1:30 PM

OCTOBER 25: TRUNK OR TREAT AT OKEMOS COMMUNITY CHURCH 4- 6 PM



Several PCO Youth hiked in the mountains of North Carolina at the Montreat Youth Conference this summer. September will bring them new adventures!

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars! PCO is joining Okemos Community Church (OCC) for a Halloween Trunk or Treat on **Sunday, October 25 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.** at OCC.

In addition to bringing your kids or grandkids to the event, there are opportunities to volunteer and help out. And there are opportunities to decorate your truck or car "trunk" and distribute candy or other goodies.

Stay tuned for a link to register your "trunk."



Coming Up This Autumn

*Fall calendars fill quickly. The calendar at PCO is no exception.
This page includes dates in October with opportunities for fellowship, service and fun.*

Sunday, October 4, 2026
What does the Lord require of you?
...to love kindness
Micah 6:8

World Communion Offering has been a catalyst for love for over 75 years.
Every gift makes a difference in the life of the most vulnerable of God's people. We are the Church, together.

 **WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING**





Greater Lansing CROP Hunger Walk

An annual tradition at PCO, this year's walk is scheduled for **Sunday, October 11** beginning at Grace United Methodist Church, 1900 Boston Boulevard in Lansing. Watch for times and sign-up information from the Mission Committee or visit

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/lansingmi>

From there, you can sign up to participate or donate funds.

Another way to support the local CROP Walk is to visit Culver's Restaurant – Okemos South at 5140 Times Square Drive in Okemos on **Monday, September 28 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Culver's will donate a portion of sales to the Friends of CROP to cover costs for local printings, postage, informational flyers and other administrative expenses.

Please join the fight against hunger in our own community and support programs that increase food security around the world.



A Note of Thanks

Thank you for the cards, calls, and prayers following my surgery. They certainly brightened my day, and the prayers have helped with the healing process. I look forward to being back in church in the next few weeks!

Laurin Gierman

Annual Mission Trip to Cass

PCO has long supported Cass Community Social Services in Detroit. Cass' stated mission goals are fighting poverty, creating opportunity, and building community.

The church's annual mission trip is scheduled for **Saturday, October 3**. We generally carpool from PCO, leaving between 8:30 & 9:00 a.m., work on a project assigned by Cass until afternoon, have dinner in Detroit, and return to PCO around 6:00 p.m. Assigned projects are suitable for adults and youth in middle and high school. Past projects have included painting indoors and out and sorting recyclable paper.

Sign-up sheets will be on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall. If you have questions, you can speak to Ellen Hoekstra, Beth Layhe, or another member of the mission committee. For more information about Cass, visit <https://casscommunity.org>



PCO Library News

After a laid-back summer, the PCO library is back in action with nine new books on a variety of topics:

Joyful, Anyway by Kate Bowler “Experiencing joy does not depend on everything getting better. Drawing on a decade of living with serious illness and a lifetime studying America’s obsession with progress, Kate Bowler shows why people so busy chasing happiness miss out on actual joy.”

When Church Stops Working: A Future for Your Congregation beyond More Money, Programs, and Innovation by Andrew Root and Blair D. Bertrand “What if the solution for the decline of today’s church isn’t more money, people, programs, innovation, or busyness? Using clear steps and practices, the authors invite church leaders to stop the endless cycle of doing more and rather to simply ‘be’ in God’s presence.”

Reading the Bible on Turtle Island: An Invitation to North American Indigenous Interpretation by T. Christopher Hoklotubbe and H. Daniel Zacharias “The authors delve deeply not only into the stories of Scripture but into the stories of Indigenous communities, including the complicated colonial history in North America. This book offers us a fresh reading of Scripture that celebrates the assets, blessings, and insights of Indigenous interpretation that speak invaluable lessons to all of God’s people.”

Dear Marty, We Crapped in Our Nest: Notes from the Edge of the World by Art Cullen “This is the right book at the right time. We have fouled our nest over the past half century in a way that was almost unavoidable, given our history of seeking domination – first over the Indigenous people of the Western World, then over their land. We simply cannot go on like this, washing our soil down the river while the planet bakes, ignoring our own immigration story.”

Art is How God Loves Us: The Sacred Beauty of Created Things by Meredith Hite Estevez “A radiant exploration of art as a spiritual gateway. Estevez beautifully illustrates how a spiritual perspective on art guides us toward our Creator and our most authentic selves.”

Wonder: 52 Conversations to Help Kids Fall in Love with Scripture by Meredith Miller “Instead of simply presenting Bible stories as a children’s Bible would, this book actually equips grown-ups to talk about the stories with children. Each story is accompanied by historical, literary, and cultural background.”

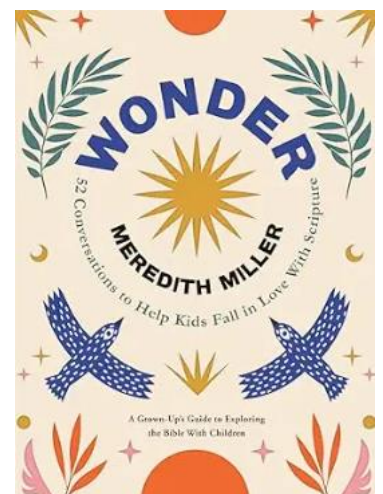
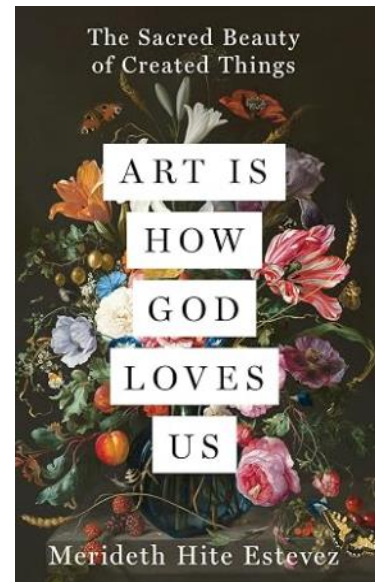
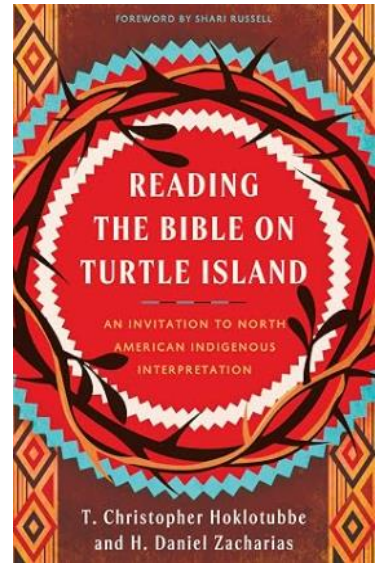
American Idolatry: How Christian Nationalism Betrays the Gospel and Threatens the Church by Andrew L. Whitehead “Reveals the theological and spiritual costs of Christian nationalism for the American church. It also illuminates expressions of Christianity that confront Christian nationalism and offer a faithful path forward.”

Shadows of the Republic: The Rebirth of Fascism in America and How to Defeat It for Good by Omer Aziz “What is driving the rise of fascism – and how can we stop it? With astringent clarity, Aziz traces the flaring up of fascist ideas in both American history and our current moment.”

Antisemitism: An American Tradition by Pamela S. Nadell “At a time when prejudice, discrimination, and hate against Jews is flaring across the country, this momentous work reveals how antisemitism – and resistance to that hatred – endures, representing not a rupture from America’s history, but a centuries-old legacy.”

These brief descriptions (quoted from the publishers) allow for just a peek into these new books. Please stop by the library for a better look!

Kathi Cook



Book Nook

by Ron Dorr

With September comes schooling—in primary, secondary, and higher education. Because of its tone, coverage, composition, and photographs, Common Bonds, by Andrea Hinding, is one of the finest books about university education that I have ever read. It is brief, bountiful, and beautiful—a model for universities to emulate.

The tone of the author and the book is unusual. It is elevated, endearing, and people-centered. Hinding goes beyond the usual cheerleading, carping, and emphasis on sports that often take place at a university. She has stressed the enduring connections, the common bonds: the love of learning, the advancing of knowledge that makes a difference, the transmitting of a heritage that lasts long after a person has left the university. A university at its best does include a sense of integrity and fidelity, of work well-done, of love's labor lost and not lost, among people well-known and little-known. According to Rutherford Aris, a professor of chemistry, in a university "there should live on a sense of the unity of knowledge and of the juice and joy of its continued discovery and refreshment."

At the same time, Hinding is aware of the tensions and shortcomings of university education. Yes, college experiences can change, enlarging and elevating the individual and the group, surpassing expectations, binding together in adversity. But university experiences can also limit and disappoint and fail both in aims and results. "Acknowledging failure, limitation, and terrible loss," Andrea Hinding reminds us, makes history more accurate and human beings more humane and complete. In her book, the haunting picture of John Berryman reminds us not only of the brilliant poet reading his poems but also his jumping off the bridge over the Mississippi River to his death in 1972.

Hinding sets the scene well, by considering the university not only as a physical place but also as a land-grant college, a state university, and "a place of memory." Titles of the 12 chapters reveal the range and outlook. The chapters are (1) Wellsprings of the University, (2) Teaching and Learning, (3) Seeking Knowledge and Understanding, (4) Extensions, (5) Preserving Heritage, (6) Backbone of the University, (7) Student Lives, (8) Physical Education, (9) Rules and Rituals, (10) Great Performances, (11) Discontinuities, and (12) The Soul of a University. A brief introduction precedes nine to 34 photographs in each chapter. (Contrast the 16 pages given to "Physical Education" here with the three pages given to "Academic Success: A Way of Life" and 58 pages given to "Spartan Sports Success" in the beautifully colored history, The Spirit of Michigan State, published by J. Bruce McCristal in 2004.)

In each of the 12 chapters, black and white photographs often support what the author writes in her introductions. Chapter six, for instance, focuses on workers and staff members. George Yerkes was a janitor at Old Main who was "a friend of every student." He is typical of people who "shovel coal, fix broken water pipes, answer reference questions, write software programs, keep accounts, and greet visitors to our campuses." They are people who make the university run but often don't get the credit they deserve. "No Palm without the Dust of Labor," the motto for the class of 1912, captures this emphasis on the working class.

The chapter, "Extensions," takes us to four branches of the state university in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Waseca, Minnesota, and to a children's book fair in Bologna, Italy, in 1985. And chapter seven, "Student Lives," combines the curricular and extracurricular activities of students with the constants of being a student at college: "being young," trying to find one's place in the world, and "trying to find a way to make a living and a life." The attention paid to youth, women, native Americans, and Afro-Americans in this book is exemplary.

Andrea Hinding was an archivist, celebrated editor of Women's History Sources, and author of Proud History: A History of Pictures of the Y. M. C. A. in the United States. The subtitle of Common Bonds is A Memoir in Photographs of the University of Minnesota. Like "the soul of a university," the book is a work of great "commitment, integrity, courage, generosity, and imagination."



Author and archivist Andrea Hinding is also a historian. She served as the curator of the University of Minnesota Elmar L. Anderson Library and was elected a fellow of the Society of American Archivists in 1977



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