

Session Highlights

The Session met in person on
February 18, 2026.

- Removed the names of Phyllis Jean Philabaum Johns (#112) and Aphrodite “Connie” Economides Lane (#579) from the roll of Sugar Creek Church due to their deaths. Active roll = 168.
- Reviewed the treasurer’s report that showed, through January, income was \$23,162 (which includes \$4k annual rent from the Presbytery) and expenses were \$24,401 yielding a deficit of \$1239.
- Heard & approved the Pastor’s Report
- Adopted a revised 2026 Budget due to an increase of ~\$10k in pledged income.
- Reviewed and revised the Wedding Policy
- Approved the following weddings to occur at Sugar Creek Church
- Members Elizabeth Worthen & Alex Polete on June 13, 2026 with reception in the Fellowship Hall
- Member Abigail Schultz & non-member Johnny Ou on September 5, 2026 officiated by Revs. Amy Duiker, John Skelly and Robert Wade.
- Conducted a visioning exercise
- Heard a report from Alexis Patterson, our commissioner to the 2/14 PMV meeting on Zoom

March 2026

Holy Week 2026

Scribe

PALM SUNDAY

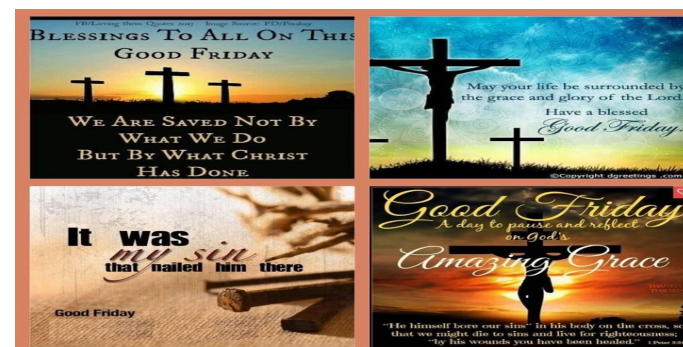


Palm Sunday, March 29, 10:30 am

Start Holy Week with palms and Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem as he faces the cross. We’ll celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper with a sung liturgy fit for the occasion. What does it mean to proclaim allegiance to a King who will be crucified?

Mauddy Thursday, April 2, 5:30 pm, in person only

In John’s gospel, Jesus accompanies the Last Supper with the washing of his disciples’ feet, an act of service and humility. As we contemplate his new commandment (mandatum, where we get the word “Mauddy”) to love one another, we will model Jesus with a ritual foot/hand washing.



Good Friday, April 3, 5:30 pm

Using music and dramatic reading, we will enter Jesus’ passion and death in John’s gospel, contemplating what his sacrifice means for us.

Easter Sunday, Resurrection Day, April 5 10:30 am

The dark of night gives way to the dawn of Easter Light. He is risen! Bring your whole family (and your friends and neighbors) to celebrate our risen Lord and the life he gives to the world! We’ll celebrate with our Chancel Choir, Memorial Handbell Choir, a brass quartet, and of course, a Sugar Creek tradition – “Lift High the Cross”. Bring your own flower(s) to adorn the cross as we celebrate the triumph of Life over Death.



All services except Mauddy Thursday will be in person and livestreamed to our YouTube channel.

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A publication of Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church (USA)



Connecting in Christ's friendship
Growing in God's grace
Serving where the Spirit sends

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Session

Class of 2026

Donna Courtney
Wallace Neikirk
Nora O'Toole
Vacant
Sue Weber

Class of 2027

Tom Milligan
Marge Morgan
Terry Mundhenk

Class of 2028

Betty Hughes
Alexis Patterson

Deacons

Sue Weber, Moderator
Dennis Bova
Steve Craig
Dave Hatfield
Lois Milligan
Vicki Penn
Irwin Roberts

Stephen Ministry

Irwin Roberts, Leader
Pam Schultz, Leader
Lois Milligan, Minister
Dennis Bova, Minister
Nancy Hoover, Minister

March Birthdays

Matthew Excoffon	03/01
Fred Schenck	03/02
Cora Mattingly	03/05
Natalie Suppo	03/05
Kathryn Graham	03/06
Doug Courtney	03/07
Rev. Angie Schenck	03/08
Rebecca Courtney	03/09
Linda Roberts	03/11
Stanley Aultz	03/13
Grant Neikirk	03/14
Maxwell Neikirk	03/15
Carole Misenko	03/21
Andy Dickerson	03/21
Michael Penn	03/22
Nora O'Toole	03/24
Bob Manley	03/28
Tanya Taulbee	03/30

April Birthdays

Lora Michigan	04/02
John Welch Jr.	04/04
Alicia Secondo	04/08
Ruth Gordon	04/08
Emily Suppo	04/09
Susan Graham	04/11
Aaron Gouge	04/11
Irwin Roberts	04/13
Bracy Elton	04/13
Colton Dickerson	04/15
Nora Dickerson	04/15
Ethan Marcus	04/19
Dale Berry	04/20
Ruth Secondo	04/20
Mike Rhinehart	04/22
Gabe Peters	04/23
Claire Duiker	04/29
Patti Barrett	04/30
Maxx Patterson	04/30

March

Anniversaries

George & Tish Lamb	03/08/1958
Larry Hollar & Rev. Karen Cassedy	03/28/1998

April

Anniversaries

Shaun & Christina Suppo	04/05/2008
Mark & Jane Jolly	04/19/1969
Tony & Kendra Peters	04/26/1997

Church Office Hours

Monday—Thursday 8:30 am—4:30 pm

Youth News



Youth Summer Mission Trip @ Kirkmont Center

Sunday, June 28-Friday, July 3

CHAPERONES NEEDED (ONE MALE AND ONE FEMALE)

This year, our youth have elected to serve at a place near and dear to their hearts and the hearts of many Sugar Creekers (and near in location!). They'll work at Kirkmont Center for a week this summer, repairing structures and beautifying the grounds, while enjoying God's creation through Kirkmont's recreation activities and wide open spaces.

The youth and members helping plan the week's activities alongside Kirkmont and Sugar Creek staff, and we are looking for opportunities for any and all Sugar Creekers to serve, so stay tuned. The biggest need now is to identify chaperones for the trip. We need one male and one female for the week. Do you love Kirkmont and enjoy spending time with our youth? Please prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to serve the church this way. Here's a few things to know as you consider:

- the plan is to lodge at Dunaway – no cabents!
- It's only an hour drive
- staff will be on hand to lead work projects
- Kirkmont can provide devotion material and devotions can be planned and led by a combination of youth, chaperones, Kirkmont, and even Sugar Creek staff
- If you want to serve but cannot take off work the whole week, the closeness to home makes it a lot easier to share the week with another chaperone, if needed (though this isn't our preferred choice)
- Talk to Pastor Amy if you'd like to chaperone, or if you'd like more information.



A Letter from the Pastor



Dear Church,

As I write this, it's a breezy, partially sunny day in the mid-60s...in February. There are still patches of snow outside my dining room window, and while the sky is blue and fluffy white clouds are floating by behind the trees, the trees themselves are bare, brown sticks. This week, I have been able to open a window and hear birdsong for the first time in a long time.

This time of year, I start gathering signs of spring like a squirrel gathering nuts. I am hungry for signs of new life after a winter that has been cold, dark, and harsh. God's creation always seems to teach me lessons about life. This winter I have been forced to confront the reality that not every season is a growing season. Dormancy is a necessary part of the life cycle of many plants, a mandatory resting period to conserve resources and prepare the plant for new growth and blooming. This rhythm feels foreign to me – and even unfaithful! – in our 24/7/365 world. I have gotten caught up in the lie that if we are not actively bearing fruit then we are actively dying. I know that life and growth are far more complex than that.

I have said more than once that this has been a challenging start to the year for many people, including me. As I look at the mashup of winter and spring outside my window, I am reminded that every season has its purpose. The snow that overwhelmed us in January will provide lifegiving water to growing plants soon enough. The weather and even the illnesses and injuries that forced us to rest will give us time to gather resources and energy for later growth. So much of what growth requires is unseen, and we are unaware and unappreciative until God reveals the beauty of the blossom.

This March, I'll be looking around for the ways our lives are shifting from dormancy to the first fragile green shoots of life and growth. I hope to give thanks to God for each subtle shift that moves us from one season to the next, trusting God to give the growth.

*In the bulb there is a flower, in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise, butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

In Christ,
Pastor Amy

* In the Bulb There Is a Flower, verse 1; words and music by Natalie Sleeth

Mission Outreach

Stay Connected to Our Mission Partners Near and Far

Wondering what our mission partners at St. Vincent de Paul or Missionary Air Group are up to? Sign up for their newsletters to get regular updates and stories about how these ministries that we support are making a difference.

Missionary Air Group (MAG)

Missionary Air Group utilizes AIRCRAFT to deliver MEDICAL care, relief, and ministry services to REMOTE people groups - showing genuine COMPASSION, after the example of JESUS.

Visit <https://www.flymag.org/contact> to sign up for their newsletter and find out what Rev. Carmen Garrigan, her family, and the MAG team are up to.

St. Vincent de Paul of Dayton

The **vision** of St. Vincent de Paul Society in Dayton is to improve the lives of people in need in the Miami Valley.

Their **mission** is to, with Christian purpose, accompany those in need one person at a time by focusing on shelter, food, and clothing.

Their **core values** are unconditional service, hospitality, stewardship, and gratitude.

Visit <https://stvincentdayton.org/signup/> to sign up for a monthly newsletter with 2-3 stories of hope and transformation in our community.

Unmasking Christian Nationalism:

Faithful Witness in the Face of Exclusion and Harm

Saturday, March 21, 2026, 1:00-4:00 PM

[Covenant Presbyterian Church, Springboro](#) and online

Christian nationalism is an ideology that seeks to merge Christian and American identities. It suggests that to be a “true” American, one must be Christian in a particular way—often white, conservative, and politically aligned with nationalist values. It confuses loyalty to God with loyalty to country, and uses religious language to justify systems of power, racial exclusion, and cultural dominance. This is not the same as patriotism, nor is it about expressions of personal faith in public life. Rather, Christian nationalism insists on a narrow, state-supported expression of religion that marginalizes others and undermines core Christian values such as compassion, justice, and humility.

As part of our commitment to dismantling systemic injustice and affirming the image of God in every person, the [Committee on Representation and Diversity](#) (CoRD) of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley is hosting a series of events that will engage pastors, congregations, and local leaders in faithful, courageous, and practical conversations around this critical issue.

The March event is for anyone involved in our community of congregations in the PMV and will be led by the **Rev. Marciana Bain** and **Dr. Miranda Zapor Cruz**.

Listen in to a conversation between these two friends and colleagues and bring your own questions and concerns as they help us explore and reflect on what Christian Nationalism is, what it isn't, how it operates and harms, and how any and all disciples can learn and respond faithfully. **Watch for registration information coming soon.**

Christian Nurture

Graduate / Retiree Recognition– May 17

Please join us after worship to congratulate the graduates and the Retirees.

Details coming soon!



Save the Date – Details coming soon!

Generations Summer Camp – June 1 - 4



Backward Bites & Board Games

Sunday, March 8; begins after worship @ church

Pick-up at Schultz House @ 3:30 pm

Youth and friends are invited to a regressive dinner (that's a progressive dinner but with dessert first!) and a board game at each stop. They'll start at the church with dessert and a game, head to the Martins' house for the main course and a game, and end with apps and a game at the Schultz house.

RSVP to Pam Schultz.



Presbyterian Women

Dorcas Circle



The membership is made up of widows and friends. The purpose of this group is to offer support and assist in coping with the reality of their losses, to the complex emotions that are within, and to form new relationships and social participation. Members of the Dorcas Circle assist the PW with various projects throughout the year. They meet the second Saturday of the month (unless otherwise noted) at 11:30 am for lunch at restaurant of choice. If you have any questions, contact Judy Halsall.

Naomi Circle

Naomi Circle meets the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00 am, September through May.

The purpose of this group is Christian fellowship, Bible study and mission support. This year's study will be *"The Older Woman"* by Elizabeth George.

For more information, please contact Denise Manley.

Christian Nurture

Applications for both the McKelvey and Aultz Scholarships are available outside of Erin's office in the hanging file holders. Applications are due by Sunday, April 26 and are open for high school seniors and college / university students who have not already received the scholarship.



Presbytery of The Miami Valley

Save the Date

Women's Spiritual Nurture Retreat April 24-26, 2026

Women of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley are invited to mark their calendars now and plan to attend the 2026 Presbytery Women's Spiritual Nurture Retreat April 24-26 at Kirkmont Center, Zanesfield. The retreat is sponsored by Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

Women of all ages are invited to this two-day sabbath retreat. Participation will connect you with other women throughout the presbytery and beyond through Bible study discussions and activities to renew your spirit and deepen your faith, while providing a time to recharge in God's miraculous creation.

There will be laughter and prayer, games and singing, worship and study, all within an atmosphere which honors each participant's needs and personality. A relaxed schedule allows participants to choose to participate in all arranged activities or do just what interests them. If you cannot commit for the weekend, a Saturday only option will be offered. Cost for the full weekend including 2 nights lodging and 5 meals is \$225. Cost Saturday only is \$100. Scholarships are available.

Further details on retreat topics, leaders, and registration cost will be forthcoming.
Questions? Email Rachel Kelley at rmkrotz.kelley@gmail.com

At Kirkmont Center

Stephen Ministry

An important theme of the Lenten season is the humanity of Christ. In Jesus, God became human and fully experienced the wide range of emotions we all encounter in life. Jesus experienced times of loneliness, sadness, hurt, anger, disappointment, grief, and abandonment. That is part of being human. Another part of being human is needing help from each other. God never intended us to be completely self-sufficient. Part of God's plan is for each of us to turn to others for help when we need it.

So when you are experiencing difficult times, don't struggle alone. Our Stephen Ministers will walk with you, listen to you, encourage you, pray with you, and provide confidential one-to-one care to help you through tough times. Stephen Ministers can bring the love of Jesus back into your life. To learn more about Stephen Ministry, talk to one of our Stephen Leaders: Irwin Roberts and Pam Schultz. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you!



Financial Resources

2026 Per Capita

The Per Capita contribution for 2025 is \$54.66 per member. Below is the breakdown:

General Assembly	\$11.26
Synod of the Covenant	\$ 3.40
Presbytery of the Miami Valley	\$40.00

Per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Last year, Sugar Creek members generously supported this request for funding for General Assembly, the Synod of the Covenant, and the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. These contributions are used to connect our congregation with the work of the wider church. Examples include staff support for General Assembly committees and commissions, gatherings for training, support for churches in crisis, and connecting with ecumenical partners worldwide. These contributions help connect us to resources for mission, education, and ministry.



By Jane Jolly

The Easter Cross

Second of Three Columns

As recounted in the February Scribe, the Easter Cross originated in 1988 as a part of a Lenten series by Rev. Sherm Skinner. The Sunday after Easter was his last day as pastor at Sugar Creek.

Lenten and Easter services in 1989 were during the interim pastorate of Rev. Wendy McCormick followed by the pastorate of Rev. Allen Mosiman from 1990 through 1995. Rev. Janice Hilkerbaumer was the interim pastor during the 1996 and 1997 season. The church archives do not mention any specific use of the cross during these years but there is a photo of the Spring Gathering of the Miami Presbytery Women in 1992. The Gathering was held in the church sanctuary and the Easter Cross is visible in the southeast corner. *If you have memory of the Easter Cross from 1989 through 1997, the History Committee would appreciate adding your information to the archives.

Rev. Julia Wharff began her pastorate May 1997. On Wednesday, September 10, 1997, fire started in the lower level beneath the sanctuary, destroying much of it and heavily damaging the sanctuary as well. The Christian Education portion, church offices and fellowship hall sustained smoke damage. Sunday, September 14, 1997, the City of Kettering loaned bleachers, a few chairs were rallied from the fellowship hall, the congregation brought lawn chairs and worship was held in the lower parking lot. The Easter Cross survived the fire and helped to create a "sanctuary without walls".



Spring Gathering - 1992



"Sanctuary Without Walls"
September 14, 1997

History Commission

Stanley Aultz	Susie Berry	Jane Jolly
Ann Moore	Judy Halsall	Mike Moorhead