

Session Highlights

The Session met in person on
March 18, 2026.

- Removed the name of Shirley Ann Grenz Suhr (#116) from the roll of Sugar Creek Church due to her death on February 16, 2026. Active roll = 167.
- Reviewed the treasurer's report that showed, through February, income was \$41,720 (which includes \$4k annual rent from the Presbytery) and expenses were \$54,429 yielding a deficit of \$12,709.
- Heard & approved the Pastor's Report
- Approved "Living the Word" for use as the Lenten curriculum for youth.
- Approved the wedding of members Elizabeth Worthen & Alex Polete on June 12, 2027 with reception in the Fellowship Hall (correction to date)
- Elected elders Marge Morgan & Sue Weber to serve on the Nominating Committee
- Had a first reading of a revised Child, Youth & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- Continued the visioning exercise from last month

April 2026

Holy Week 2026

Scribe

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 "Maundy") to love one another, we will celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper and model Jesus with a ritual foot or 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, 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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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

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

May Birthdays

Susanne Morgan	05/05
Owen Duiker	05/06
Dave Hatfield	05/13
Sherry Baker	05/22
Ann Cunningham	05/26
Tim Myers	05/27
Amy Mundhenk	05/27



April

Anniversaries

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

May

Anniversaries

Mike & Jeanne Rhinehart	05/03/1975
Mark & Sue Weber	05/10/1980
Dave & Karen Johns	05/27/1995

Church Office Hours

Monday—Thursday 8:30 am—4:30 pm



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 are 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 are a few things to know as you consider:

- the plan is to lodge at Dunaway – no cabents!
- It's only an hour drive
- Kirkmont 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.



Dear Church,

This Lent, I have been addressing some beginning signs of burnout in my own life and journeying through Henri Nouwen's beautiful reflection on the Eucharistic Life, *With Burning Hearts*, with a number of you in the congregation. Simply put, a Eucharistic life is a life lived in gratitude. I believe, with Nouwen, that Jesus gives us resources (the Word and Sacraments, community and communion with God and one another) to enable us to choose gratitude in every season. But some seasons are easier than others to be grateful for. Nouwen, reflecting on the story of encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35, says, "The story, which is also our story...has shown that gratitude is not an obvious attitude toward life. Gratitude needs to be discovered and to be lived with great inner attentiveness. Our losses, our experiences of rejection and abandonment, and our many moments of disillusionment keep pulling us into anger, bitterness, and resentment. When we simply let the 'facts' speak, there will always be enough facts to convince us that life, in the end, leads to nothing and that every attempt to beat that fate is only a sign of profound naiveté."

Nouwen and I believe that worship and the worshipping community open our eyes to Truth (rather than mere facts) and encourage and enable us to choose gratitude, and to live it with "great inner attentiveness." This Lent I have needed to shift my focus a bit to attend to gratitude. It has been my normal practice to read the daily local and national headlines and get caught up on personal email *before* I feel "awake" enough to turn to my quiet time with God. A few weeks ago, recognizing that I could and should begin my day differently, I brewed my first cup of coffee immediately and sat down to God's word and some prayer before I focused on anything else. My nervous system has noticed the difference. A 20 minute shift has changed how I approach my whole day. Instead of thinking about how tired I am and all I *have* to do, I feel more ready for what I *get* to do with God's help.

Regardless of what season you are in right now, what are you grateful for? How are you attending to your gratitude day to day? In challenging seasons, I find I have to start very small. One day, I am only truly grateful for that first cup of coffee, but that tiny gratitude is an opening, an invitation to Jesus to come in and transform more and more of my life.

Here's my starter kit for living a eucharistic life:

- Do not neglect worship and your worshipping community – especially when you are filled with grief and resentment! This is always more important than we think.
- Each day, make a list of what you're grateful for. Start very small. Start with one thing.
- Challenge yourself to list at least one new thing you are grateful for every day. No repeats!
- If you're drowning in loss and resentment, offer it up to God. Ask God to take it, to transform it. Keep asking. Be honest.
- Keep doing each of these and watch what God will do.

In Christ,

Pastor Amy

Stephen Ministry

For those who have suffered a loss or who are going through a difficult time, Easter can be a time of painful loneliness and emptiness. If you are smiling on the outside but full of pain on the inside, and the joy of Easter seems far away, help is available.

Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, and pray with and for you. Stephen Ministers have been specially trained to meet your emotional and spiritual needs; male Stephen Ministers are always matched with men, and female Stephen Ministers are matched with women.

God works in and through them to bring hope and healing. If you are feeling lonely, experiencing a crisis, struggling through a difficult time, or simply stressed by everyday life, talk with one of our Stephen Leaders.

If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders: Irwin Roberts or Pam Schultz. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!



Hebrews 13:2

Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Fellowship & Hospitality



Join us after worship on Sunday, April 19th.

We're delighted to welcome back Tony Peters—whose long connection with our church makes his visits especially meaningful—for a lively time of musical entertainment right after worship.

Light refreshments will be served as we enjoy music and time together.

Christian Nurture

GRADUATE and RETIREE RECOGNITION

Are you or someone in your family graduating from high school, trade school, college, or grad school this year? Is someone a new retiree (or retiring before the end of summer)?

We would like to honor any graduates, retirees, and scholarship recipients Sunday, May 17th. If they would like to be included in the slideshow to be viewed in worship that Sunday, please submit 10 - 20 digital or scanned photos via email of the graduate/retiree (at a variety of ages if possible) to Erin Dickerson no later than May 1st.

Please also include:

- Where they are graduating/retiring from
- What their plans are following graduation/retirement
- Any other distinguishing information you would like to have possibly included (scholarships received, graduating with honors, work accolades, etc.)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Erin.

All pictures must be **emailed** to edickerson@sugarcreekchurch.org no later than May 1.

Appreciate - to grasp the nature, worth, quality, or significance of; to value or admire highly; be fully aware of; to recognize with gratitude.

This year's Generations Summer Camp is inspired by Jill J. Duffield's book *Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion*. Join us June 1-4 from 5:45 - 7:45 for dinner, music, scripture, reflection, and activities as we practice the act of appreciation. Sign-ups are coming soon.



Save the Date

Generations Summer Camp – June 1 - 4



Thank you for your donations of aluminum cans. We collected \$36.40 to support our youth ministry.





COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

Are you a current college student or is your child(ren) a current college student? We would like to send care packages to our college students ahead of finals weeks. We will be assembling care packages during GIFT on April 8. Please contact me with current mailing addresses for yourself or your college student(s) by April 1 to receive a care package.

Would you like to help provide items for the care packages? Items we will be collecting include:

- Granola bars, protein bars, dried fruit
- Microwave popcorn
- Gum or mints
- Chapstick, lotion, mini packs of tissues
- Pens, pencils, notepads, sticky notes, note cards
- Stress or fidget toys

Please supply 8-10 of the item you are donating and drop them off to the church no later than April 6.

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

1 Tim 4:12

SCHOLARSHIPS

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.



A View From the Bench By Stephen Estep

April is going to be piano-heavy, since this is my busiest season of the year and organ practice time is limited. And the postludes will be a little lighter, a little less intense than they were in Lent, where they portrayed the increasing uncertainty and turbulence leading up to Christ's crucifixion. One little gem that just came my way is 'Butterfly Dance' by Michael Nicht. Mikey is a talented pianist and composer from Cincinnati who is working on his B.A. at Cedarville University. He's fluent in classical and jazz and likes poking around in the forgotten corners of the piano repertory, so we nerd out about that. His current interest outside of music is collecting Pokémon cards. If the stars align, I'll have another guest musician toward the end of the month: Dr. Chet Jenkins. Chet is a classmate from my undergraduate days and the saxophone instructor and band director at Cedarville. 2026 marks 30 years of me collaborating with him, and we're putting on a recital of three of the most exciting and beastly pieces in the sax rep on April 21 at 8 PM at Cedarville University; it's free, and you're all invited.

The Good Friday prelude will be a longer piece, but one that is very familiar from its use in film soundtracks: the 'Agnus Dei' by Samuel Barber, best known as his *Adagio for Strings*. It is originally a movement from his string quartet, which he arranged for string orchestra; he later made a choral version of it with the Agnus Dei text, and from that comes this organ setting. Also from the choral world is an arrangement of the 'Third Word' from the *Seven Last Words of Christ* by Theodore Dubois, his famous 1867 oratorio. The sung text is "Woman, behold your Son".

After Easter, one prelude will be Shepherd Moons by Enya, the New Age artist that I have a major soft spot for. Fun fact: she got her start with her family members in the Irish group Clannad, which is the only major Celtic folk band I can think of that didn't have fiddle or bagpipes of some kind. Marianna Martines is a new discovery for me: she was a Viennese composer who lived from 1744 to 1812. She studied with Haydn and was friends with Mozart, who wrote four-hand piano music to perform with her. She was an excellent singer, and her piano writing has bursts of filigree that resemble vocal writing; it's an interesting, refreshing change from typical Classical-era writing.

Two other women will make appearances during communion on 4/12: the atmospheric 'Dusk' from *African Sketches* by Nkeiru Okoye, an African-American composer who also wrote an opera about Harriet Tubman. Kate Loder (1825-1904) was an English pianist and composer who hosted the first performance in England of Brahms's *German Requiem*, as one of the two pianists playing the orchestral reduction.

Ottorino Respighi is best known for his tone poems, *The Pines of Rome* and *The Fountains of Rome*, but he did write some organ music; three of the offertories in April will be short preludes by him. The temptation to play 'Jailhouse Rock' on the Sunday when the reading about Paul and Silas's jailbreak was well-nigh irresistible, but Gilbert Martin's 'My Comfort by Day, My Song in the Night' felt like the more prudent choice, and it ties in with the prisoners' singing songs until the walls came down. Christ is risen, and we are set free!



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.

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



Volunteer Opportunities at St. Vincent de Paul

You may know that our congregation serves dinner at the Women's and Family Shelter (120 W Apple St) on the first Tuesday and the fourth Sunday of each month. If you'd like to occasionally serve with the church, contact Mark Hughes to get information and next steps.

Did you know that St. Vincent's also has opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help with different needs? You can help at the front desk, launder linens and other laundry, help with lunch or dinner on your own (with other individual volunteers), sort or price in the thrift store and more. They have opportunities to work with children and participate in special events. If you have a couple extra hours occasionally or regularly, you can visit <https://stvincentsdayton.org/volunteers/> and fill out the "Individual Volunteer Form" and someone will contact you about next steps. Then you can sign up to serve whenever it suits you! We are blessed to be a blessing to others.



By Jane Jolly

The Easter Cross

Third of Three Columns

April 12, 1998, worship was in the fellowship hall while the sanctuary and the level beneath were under renovation from the 1997 fire. This was Rev. Julia Wharff's first Easter with Sugar Creek. Adding mesh material to the cross, the congregation was asked to bring fresh cut flowers to adorn it. It was the first known "flowering of the cross."

February 21, 1999, the renovations were complete and Sugar Creek returned to the sanctuary with two services every Sunday. On Easter, April 4, 1999, flowers were brought to both services. As the 2nd service closed with the hymn, "Lift High the Cross", this symbol of the Resurrection was carried for the first time through the sanctuary and placed outside the front door for all to observe. This custom carried forward through the end of Rev. Wharff's pastorate in 2014.

This now beloved tradition continued in 2015-2016 during the interim pastorate of the Rev. Dr. John Skelly and from 2017-2019 with Rev. Brad Dardaganian. Coming to Sugar Creek in the Fall of 2019, Rev. Amy Duiker's first Easter service was April 12, 2020, in the early days of Covid. Service was held on line, the cross was placed outside the front door and the congregation was invited to come throughout the day to place a flower, paying attention to social distancing guidelines and leaving space for families to do this one at a time. In 2021, the cross returned to the sanctuary but with a limitation of 50 socially distanced worshipers and overflow in the fellowship hall with live streaming. Covid restrictions finally lifted, services of 2022-2025 resumed tradition.

Sugar Creek will once again fill the empty cross this Resurrection Day, carry the cross through the sanctuary to the outside to witness to all who pass that "Christ has risen indeed." Hallelujah!



Easter Sunday 2021



Easter Sunday 2025

History Commission

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