

**Eastern Area Churches
of the
Cincinnati Presbytery**



Eastern Area Church News!

Jan./Feb., 2026

Introducing ...

**Rev. Mike Hughes
Pastor, Seaman United Presb. &
EAC Moderator, 2025-26**



Hello all! I'm Rev. (Michael) Mike Hughes. Currently, God is blessing me to serve as pulpit supply at Seaman United Presbyterian Church. As it is for many people, my faith journey has been an interesting one.

For most of my adult life, I was an atheist, not concerned about eternity and thinking I was in control of my life. In the meantime, my wife, Karen, was praying for me. Every day. For 21 years. Many in my family and in the Winchester Church of Christ in Christian Union were also praying. My life now is a direct result of the power of prayer and the amazing grace of a merciful God! Giving my life to Christ on October 28, 2001, was the greatest thing that has ever happened to me.

My call to ministry came later and was nearly equal in its convicting force. I understood the expectation to grow in faith and had been actively seeking God's vision for my life. In God's perfect timing for me, our denomination developed a Ministerial Studies program through the denominational college, Ohio Christian University. I finished the studies in three years and met the experience requirements to be ordained. I was ordained on June 24, 2018. I even wore a suit to ordination, and we have the pictures to prove it!

I've been with Seaman Presbyterian for 7 years and I am very grateful for a congregation that was willing to take on a person from another denomination with very little preaching experience. I like to think we have grown, and continue to grow, closer to God and to each other. If you were to ask them, they would hopefully tell you that we do our best to live out our love. Karen and I plan to continue serving God's children through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Not long after I started at Seaman Presbyterian, Barbara Jean Havens asked me to become part of the Eastern Area Churches Steering Team. Since the team consisted of several people I had already met through our monthly pastor meetings, I took the bait. Then Barbara Jean told me the Team needed a Treasurer, and since I had decades of corporate and government budget and financial experience, I took the bait (you may see a theme developing).

After a few years of service, Barbara Jean asked me to serve as Vice Moderator for the Team, with the thought that I would serve as Moderator for this year. I took . . . well, you know. The truth is that I enjoy serving the Team and the denomination in whatever capacity God equips me. I believe we are all here to love God and love people through our service to Him and the people of this world. Bill Hybels was fond of saying, "Everyone we ever lock eyes with needs Jesus". Yes. Yes, we do.

John 14:6 is my favorite scripture, because it concisely defines who Jesus is, and it defines our mission: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' ". Evangelism is a contact sport. Make contact. Take the bait.

We Need Your Help!

From Barbara Jean Havens

EAC Mission and Vision Statements

Mission - To be inspired by Christ to love, grow and empower the Body.

Vision - The power and guidance of the Holy Spirit within our communities will have enhanced the proclamation of the Word through relationships, discipleship and outreach.

I would like to invite you to reflect deeply on the meaning of our Mission and Vision Statements, and what they could mean for you and for your church. After such reflection, our EAC Steering Team concluded that we need a representative from each church to attend our meetings with voice and vote.

There are so many positive benefits from this, like improved and easier 2-way communication, fresh ideas, and new friendships between congregations, just to name a few.

Please seriously consider becoming the representative for your church, or naming someone in your congregation to accept this call. We meet monthly on the 3rd Wednesday at 10:00 am at Mowrystown PC

Call or text Barbara Jean with questions at:
513-218-4396.

News from Cherry Fork...

From Brenda Shupert & Norine Behm

December is upon us with many activities, decorations, music specials, baking, caroling, presents, and who knows all the different family traditions. We need to remember what is important in the midst of all the hustle and bustle.

Over 2000 years ago none of these things were on Joseph and Mary's minds as they traveled to Bethlehem. It is amazing that one small baby could change the world! With God all things are possible!

Speaking of hustle and bustle, Cherry Fork has been busy from Thank Offering Sunday with speaker Taylor Staggs throughout the Advent season with other special speakers while Pastor Norine recuperates from hip replacement surgery. Everyone is so kind with calls, cards, food and visits. I am blessed!

The Christmas boxes for Samaritan Outreach were delivered to be sent somewhere in our world for children who are waiting.

On December 3rd, Dinah Carroll and Jane Dreger hosted our women's annual Christmas party. We found out who our 'Secret Sister' was for 2025 and enjoyed a great time of delicious food, great fellowship, fun games and sharing gifts.

On December 5th 11 women went to the Music Hall to hear the "Messiah". It was beautiful! Our own Matthew Leonard sings in the choir and we are so proud of him!

Our annual Christmas Eve service will be December 24th at 9:30 pm and communion will be served. There will be special singing and 'The Bell Choir' will be ringing. All are welcome.

Join us on Sunday, December 28th for a worship service of Christmas music, featuring special music by individuals and group singing by everyone. The 'Bell Choir' will be performing.

May you all be blessed!

Mark Your Calendars for
Ash Wednesday

Wed., Feb. 18, 2026

It's hard to believe that, in this season of celebrating the birth of our Savior, it's time to mark our calendars for the upcoming Easter season, yet ... here we are!

Mowrystown News

From Deb Tissott

This is a busy time of the year for the Mowrystown Presbyterian Church!

We hold a monthly Euchre party for anyone who wishes to join us for an evening of appetizers and fun. We also held a chili cook-off in November where we had several different versions of chili to enjoy.

December brings Christmas activities like the Mowrystown Parade where we have a float for the children to ride and pass out candy. Our children presented a program which featured various adults being drafted to perform this year. This was followed by our annual Christmas Party with a special guest passing out the children's gifts. We will be fixing cookie trays to distribute to members of the community who cannot get out or are in nursing homes.

The end of the year brings our participation in the community Christmas service and our own Christmas Eve service which features "Carols and Lessons".

Euchre on the last Saturday of December, then starting the New Year and trying to remember to write 2026 on everything!

*The day is Yours, and Yours also the night;
You established the sun and the moon.
It was You who set all the
boundaries of the earth;
You made both summer and winter.*
Ps. 74:16-17

CROP WALK RESULTS!

From Barbara Jean Havens

On Sunday, September 21, a group from our various churches met at Adams Lake for an early carry-in dinner and to turn in the funds they had collected. We raised a total amount of \$ 1,986 for Church World Services!

The top three churches were:

Winchester	- \$ 710
Mowrystown	- \$ 624
Cherry Fork	- \$ 228.

A big THANK YOU to each person who contributed with donations and food, and to each church that participated in this worthy cause. These funds go all over the world helping to provide wells, food, livestock and more in places that are in extreme need due to natural disasters, wars, and droughts.

And 25% comes back to support food pantries in our own Eastern Area!

You are doing exactly what Jesus told us to do:

"Feed the hungry,"

"Love your neighbor..."

"Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me."

From the Pastor's Pen ...

From: Rev. Mike Brazelle

People often ask, "How can we grow our church"? There is no end to answers to that question. A Christian bookstore is likely to have an entire section devoted to this topic. And we love to approach it as a topic, because we love to think about it, because thinking about it is almost like achieving it. The brain can be fooled into thinking that thinking is doing or having done something. All the brain needs is a sense of completion. This is why writers don't talk too much about something they have to write.

Acts 16:5 describes growing churches. It says, "So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day". If you study the early church as described in Acts all it says is that they met together for prayer in the temple, listened to the Apostle's teaching, and met together in one another's homes for meals. You might sum it all up by saying they became a community of people who included God.

Add to this what Jesus told us to do - go into all the world and make disciples - and you have to conclude that church growth is not as complicated as we might like to make it. It's just that it is hard. It is hard because it requires taking risks. All the "world" we have to go into is really just outside the doors of our churches. But we might not really want to know all about all that is going on right out there. I read about it when I look at the Sheriff's report for Highland County, and I'm amazed at how close some of what is going on is to me.

When we think of missions we think of foreign lands, but our Book of Order says that a church is a local unit of mission.

If we took this seriously, and got ourselves involved with people as they are, we would force ourselves to grow in our faith. Acts says something strange about attendance at Church. In 2:47 it says, "*And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved*".

Some Winter Inspiration ...

- "The very fact of snow is such an amazement." - Roger Ebert
- "I love the snow, but I hate the cold. This is a weird relationship I have with winter. - Rachael Ray
- "My favorite winter activity is going back inside and putting my pajamas on." - Unknown
- "Without Valentine's Day, February would be ... well, January." - Jim Gaffigan
- "Love is a lot like a toothache. It doesn't show up on x-rays, but you know it's there." - George Burns
- What did the paper clip say to the magnet? I find you very attractive.
- Do you have a date for Valentine's Day? Yes, it's February 14.
- Who always has a date on Valentine's Day? A calendar.

EAC Leadership Team 2025-2026

Moderator/Treasurer	Rev. Mike Hughes
Vice Moderator	Rev. David Choate
Secretary	Linda Watson
Past Moderator	Sue Fulton
Member	John Martin
Member	Rev. Mike Brazelle
Member	CP Norine Behm
Honorary Lifetime Member ..	Rev. Dr. Ruth Dunn
Coordinator	CP Barbara Jean Havens

Mark Your Calendars!

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|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ♦ Christmas Candlelight Svc. | - Winchester Presb. | - 12/21 @ 7 pm |
| ♦ Christmas Candlelight Svc. | - Seaman United Presb. | - 12/23 @ 7 pm |
| ♦ Christmas Eve Svc. | - Cherry Fork Presb. | - 12/24 @ 9:30 pm |
| ♦ Christmas Eve Svc. | - Mowrystown Presb. | - 12/24 (<i>contact for time</i>) |
| ♦ Steering Team | - Mowrystown Presb. | - 01/21 @ 10 am |
| ♦ Valentine's Day | | - 02/14 |
| ♦ The Vine articles due | | - 02/16 |
| ♦ Ash Wednesday | | - 02/18 |

NEXT TIME!

Articles & Photos due for Mar./Apr., 2026 edition:

Mon., Feb., 16th

Tell us your Spring & Easter plans!