

SYCAMORE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



2009 ANNUAL REPORT

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Sycamore Presbyterian Church STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We affirm that Sycamore Presbyterian Church is an evangelical church adhering to Reformed Theology, existing under the Presbyterian form of government, and committed to serving the growing community in which God has placed us.

We affirm the truth and the relevance of the following general purposes of the Church as set forth in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Chapter I, G-1.0200.

"The great ends of the Church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world."

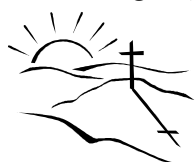
In light of the above general statement of the Church's purpose and the affirmation of our specific identity as a congregation, we hereby declare our specific purpose and mission:

1. To honor God and proclaim His Word.
2. To deepen personal and congregational relationships with Jesus Christ and to assist members to witness to their faith.
3. To welcome and provide for growth in membership in fulfillment of Christ's purpose for his church to aggressively extend the influence of His gospel.
4. To provide for and encourage participation in a ministry of compassion and reconciliation.
5. To provide for meaningful worship, educational, fellowship, and service opportunities, encouraging active participation by as many people as possible.
6. To provide suitable physical facilities, program resources, and leadership commensurate with our mission purposes and goals.
7. To be ready to expand our program opportunities to include new forms or extensions of ministry to meet the needs of members and non-member constituents.
8. To seek to be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit in the accomplishment of all aspects of our purpose.
(Adopted by the Session of Sycamore Presbyterian Church September 14, 1981. Revised and adopted, January 14, 1993)

MISSION STATEMENT: What is our purpose, why we exist, why are we here, our unique expression of the Great Commission.

MISSION STATEMENT: Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15

Our God designed, Spirit sustained mission is to be ALIVE in Christ!



- ✠ Acknowledge and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ✠ Live, model and imitate Him in serving others and loving one another
- ✠ Invite all to know Christ and have a living relationship with Him
- ✠ Value outreach and mission as we share Christ's Spirit with others
- ✠ Enhance our biblical and experiential knowledge and worship of God

CORE VALUES: Our attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and principles that guide us in prioritizing our decision making, and how we conduct business and interact with one another.

CORE VALUES:

We value:

- 1) **Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 16:31, Ephesians 2:8-10)**
Through faith in Jesus Christ and by His grace, we are saved and called to new life.

- 2) **Trust in the authority of God's Word (II Timothy 3:16; John 17:14-17; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12)**
The Bible is God's Word, authoritative and applicable to all parts of our lives. We study, teach and follow scripture as our guidebook for life.
- 3) **Worship (Jeremiah 7:1-7; John 4:23-24; Romans 12:1; Ps. 150:6)**
We are intentional, enthusiastic and joyful in our commitment to worshiping God according to God's Word. We express our love of God through inspirational worship that challenges the mind, touches the heart and lifts the spirit. Our purpose in worship is to glorify God with our very lives.
- 4) **Prayer (I Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; Gal. 6:2)**
God calls us to a life of prayer that is vital to our sense of community. Through prayer, we actively seek the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment.
- 5) **Sharing the Gospel and spreading God's love (Mark 16:15, Philemon 1:6)**
We are committed to spreading God's love, empowering people to express their faith confidently and naturally.
- 6) **A kingdom mindset (Romans 14:17-18; Mark 1:15; Galatians 5:16)**
God has a significant role for us as a church in the development of God's kingdom. We are committed to having the greatest possible impact for Christ, which will require a constant stretching of our vision and the taking of faith based risks. Recognizing that all we have belongs to God, we are committed to being good stewards of the resources of time, money and abilities God has given us.
- 7) **Servanthood as a way of life (John 15:16; Phil 2:3-8; Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:1-17)**
We are called to serve, to live out the reality of putting others first. We will practice genuine humility as it is the mark of God taking hold in our hearts. We are committed to serving God and God's people everywhere as active participants.
- 8) **Spiritual growth, both individually and as a community (Romans 8:6, Philippians 1:8-11)**
We are committed to grow spiritually through worship, prayer, education, fellowship and service.
- 9) **Unity forged by unconditional, loving relationships (John 13:35; John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:15; Phil 2:1-2; James 5:16)**
God longs for us to be united in spirit and purpose. The Lord intends for us to live life honestly, being truthful and kind to one another. Unity is created and preserved when we are not afraid to admit our flaws and fears and when we are willing to speak the truth in love. We are committed to building one another up in the body of Christ.
- 10) **Fellowship (John 10:16; James 2:8)**
We are committed to loving our neighbor and to welcoming everyone into fellowship with us.
- 11) **Excellence with integrity (Ps. 78:72; Colossians 3:17, 23; Proverbs 17:17)**
God's work demands our best. Anything less does not honor God. Regular evaluation and review is an essential part of excellence.
- 12) **Teamwork (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16; I Peter 4:8-11)**
God gives vital spiritual gifts to every believer. The discovery, development and exercise of these gifts are the primary instruments of Christ to minister to His body. We are committed to helping people serve each other according to their spiritual gifts so that all might become mature in Christ. We work together as one team to fulfill our mission.

VISION STATEMENT: What we want to become, birthed by the leaders and owned by the congregation; stretches and challenges us; sets expectations; defines priorities. To be reviewed every 3 – 5 years as progress towards the vision is made.

VISION STATEMENT:

Seeking to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our Mission Statement, with the Holy Spirit's leading, SPC will:

- Worship God in everything we do and welcome all to praise and glorify God
- Transform individuals into empowered disciples of Jesus Christ by helping them identify, develop and utilize their God given spiritual gifts to serve and glorify God
- Effectively train, equip and develop staff and lay leadership

- Serve God by actively serving with others in the community doing God's work and directly serving those who are in need
- Be a faithful community of believers who hunger for spiritual growth through prayer, instruction, experiential action and small groups and exude a vibrant and contagious spirituality
- Be inclusive, flexible, embrace change and take faith based risks to meet the changing needs of our church and community without compromising our core values or our heritage
- Be responsible stewards of God's blessings, recognizing that ALL we have is God's. We will commit to financially support the ministry with our tithes and spiritual gifts as well as our labors of love, time and talent
- Evaluate our current ministries and programs in relationship to our stated core values and establish a holistic organizational framework. We will attempt great things for God that are built on our strengths and resources.
- Evaluate and coordinate establishing facilities designed to support our mission and ministries

PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF

"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:10

Dear Sycamore Friends,

We are here for the purpose of touching more lives with the love and hopefulness of Christ's committed care. Some of us are bottom line people who need the reassurance that numbers bring. So there is some clarity found when people hear things like 99% of the pledges being paid for 2009 and 2010 having a record number of pledges and pledged amount. Or, that attendance for the fall was up by 9%. I am personally grateful that these notations are facts, but even more heartened, in the words of one member, when someone can come through our doors and feel the positive energy of God's life swirling around them, and want to know it personally in their own life. That piece can never be accomplished without the Spirit of Our Lord driving the experience and being vitally present. And for these gifts, what can we say? Simply, "Praise God and thank the Lord."

Without seeking to do so, Sycamore has grown to be a much larger church. God has brought people here. Any minimal marketing pales before that wonderful commitment of people bringing people with them, to share the Good News that is incarnate in this place. With the joyous presence of many new people also comes a greater diversity in our life, a more dramatic range of interests, needs and talents, a greater capacity to serve, and more people to whom we will strive to be responsive. Nearly 600 people have affiliated with Sycamore in 5 ½ years, and our actual membership count, knowing that 200 people were removed by a rolls review during that time, still grew from 849 to 1124. And for these gifts, what can we say? Simply "Praise God and thank the Lord." Deep thanks to the many staff, officers and members whose efforts have opened our life and hearts to the movement of God's spirit in our midst. Do you know that over 100 members use a 1 or 2 year Bible each day? Consider that gift...call me if you want one.

Nothing will be more practical in the days ahead than how we think about our shared life and work...and that we exist with a clear purpose, to welcome and encourage people to have a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. For me, one of the distinctive flavors of our life is that we see ourselves as a big small church. Our scope of size is defined by a small church premium placed on a desire to be connected, to help people be acquainted, and to allow the warmth of our life to flow out of shared experiences. We often feel fragmented now with 3 services pushing the edge of our Sunday morning comfort zones, as we strive to maximize our use of space.

As we approach the coming day when we will formally say “yes” to a plan to expand our facilities, I encourage you to remain open to what that future life will look like, knowing that it will be driven by a desire to help more people be connected to our service and fellowship. It cannot be merely about having Sycamore remain as is, or preserving things for the sake of personal desire or convenience. If we share a mission, then we must also be willing to be remade in this process by allowing our congregation to live and breathe within some new models and ways of doing things. Throughout it all, may we honor those valued parts of our heritage while we stay agile to embrace God’s forward movement.

By God’s grace, we will not be allowed to be static, nor do we want to be. Requoting my favorite missionary, Dr. David Livingstone, “I will go anywhere provided it be forward.” May God bless our next steps.

Lawrence W. Kent

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

I must begin my annual report on a spiritual note born out of the writing of the Apostle Paul in his phenomenal expression of the strength of the church.

In Ephesians 3:20, following a descriptive and magnificent view of the impact of the Christian’s redemption and the power of inner strength, Paul passionately reveals that our Lord and God is able to do far more abundantly in and through us as the church than we even dare ask or think. God is able to accomplish more than we can imagine because there is a power of redemption that works within us, the inner person. Paul expresses it in the beautiful imagery of the glory He receives in the church and in the His Son Jesus Christ.

This glory, this beauty, this power is to be shared and passed on to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Such a sobering truth calls us to never be content with average or less than our best. It is not difficult to lose our sense of spiritual strength and vision to be God’s people, especially in these trying times of confusion, spiritual weakness, secular influence, and uncertainty.

Nevertheless, we must rise to the occasion of God’s glorious provisions for our lives, His desire is to demonstrate His power over the things of the world, and the witness and ability to inject His spirit of perfecting good works (Philippians 1:6) in us and to all who follow us (new believers, our youth, and our children). The world cannot have its way with the church. We have great things to do, and it is a joy to be a part of that to which God has called us.

The Glory of God has been revealed by the excellent pastoral care offered this past year through the ministry of the Deacons. Being a deacon is most assuredly a chosen calling and we have been blessed by the best. Our deacons are a sensitive, caring, committed group of God’s people who know how to get ministry done.

The Glory of God has been revealed in the stewardship of mission’s allocations and hands on involvements of the Missions Committee. The Missions Committee has been able to respond to local, national, and international needs. The Missions Banquet helped improve awareness of supporting orphan children in a distant land (Russia). The slow yet needed and necessary long term commitment of help for hurricane recovery on the Gulf Coast continues to make the recovery process successful.

The Glory of God has been experienced in the outstanding new member classes that have secured a sense of connectedness with new comers to the life of SPC provided by the Membership Committee.

Let us understand the great challenge before us and the superb calling we, His people, have accepted. We are His instruments. We are people of faith and not fear. We believe God is in control of the future and is able to provide more than enough resources to continue His Kingdom’s work.

We do not worship the past but we do let the past strengthen our vision for the future. We are aware of the current uncertainties but are not overly influenced by them. We know the future belongs to God and that He is faithful. So, here we come 2010. We do not need to get ready for the future. The future needs to get ready for us. Thanks be to God.

Dr. Jerry W. Pitman

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF ADULT MINISTRY

What a great year! What a blessing and joy to minister and serve in the midst of so many possibilities. Adult Ministries is looking to the future, building on the foundation of the past.

I arrived in Cincinnati, Saturday, November 29, 2008, assisted in worship on Sunday, November 30, the first Sunday of Advent, directed the movers who arrived on Monday, December 1 in snow, attended 4 Christmas Eve Services and kept right on moving into 2009.

Some of the delightful highlights of 2009 for me:

- Speaking and leading worship for the Coffee and Conversation Day of Renewal in February, 2009.
- Attending WINK as a dinner guest and WINK worship
- Teaching 3 Lenten Classes, 1 Advent Class, 2 classes on The Shack, leading an overview of the Bible
- Participating in the first Camp-In for Family Ministry - tents, sleeping bags and everything!
- Navigating through a year in the life and ministry of Sycamore...WOW!
- Preparing worship for Thanksgiving Eve Service and grateful for all the folks who helped make it happen
- Being the liturgist for the 4:00 pm worship on Christmas Eve
- Meeting so many great cooks and gifted artisans in the church
- Being on a faith journey with so many dedicated people
- Learning to rubber stamp and make cards for the deacons ministry
- Giving time to make quilts from blue jeans and flannel "for people who fall between the cracks"
- Workcamping in Jamaica with the youth of this church... Awesome!
- Going to some neat places with the singles and sharing our lives on this pilgrimage
- Watching the chapel transformed and renewed for a new chapter of ministry
- Putting names, faces and families together, with moderate success ☺
- Rejoicing in the choices and challenges that God has given this church through growth
- Grateful for the opportunity to live, grow, minister in a new place, in a new home, with new folks
- So very humbled to be serving with such a great church staff; they are extremely gifted and talented; and we are so blessed!

Blessings and grace, joy and kindness, Reverend Shirley Hutchins

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

- ✓ The job of the team is to provide comprehensive ministry to children from birth through sixth grade through Biblical training, education, and support of families.
- ✓ Our vision: *The Children's Ministries Team will facilitate the building of Christian relationships and provide a loving, nurturing environment in which children can develop their faith.*

Some highlights:

- Began a new staffing concept for Sunday School this year. Teams of 3-4 teachers worked together to teach many of the grades making it possible to provide an enriched relationship between the team of teachers and the children and freeing up parents who in the past needed to assist one time a month to serve in other areas throughout the church. This type of teaching format cut our volunteer base almost in half.

- Provided each family with children in preschool-6th grade with “The 12 Days of Christmas” Advent project. Components in the booklet included many varied activities including reading a Christmas themed book each day. Children’s books were available at the CMT table and some of the local libraries for families to borrow during the Advent season
- CMT EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY was emailed to families enrolled in Sunday School, inserted in the monthly newsletter, Sunday bulletin and posted on the web in an effort to assess the effectiveness of the program.
- Children and their adult prayer partners met for breakfast and BINGO in an effort to strengthen intergenerational relationships.
- 124 blankets were made and presented to the Linus Project.
- Children participated in ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING –theme “Where the Heart is, There Your Heart Will Be Also” (Matt.6:21). Families were provided with mini treasure chests including treasure hunt card sets, that encouraged daily Bible verses meaningful giving.
- With designated Funds, we were able to purchase six (6) wall mounted televisions with DVD’s to enable teachers to utilize the new curriculum’s video component as an enrichment to the printed curriculum. Worship bags were developed for use by children when they stay in the sanctuary or chapel for worship. “Young Readers Bible Trivia Games” were purchased for each of the SS classrooms for occasional use by the teachers.
- Vacation Bible School was themed “Camp E.D.G.E”. A total of \$4400.67 was raised for this year’s VBS mission...Camp Ability. Children raised: \$1334. Mission Committee matched the \$1334. Free will offering at Friday’s Program and Sunday was \$1732.67. In addition, some of the classes made items that were particularly helpful to autistic children like visual schedules, sit-upons, and tactile toys. All these will be donated to the Center for Autism.
- Began WINK (our Wednesday night LOGOS Program) this fall with 31 students. Following feedback from parents on the time commitment to direct the program, the planning committee was redesigned utilizing the talents of 5 people overseeing each of the four parts of the LOGOS program as well as the kitchen.
- Continued our partnership with ProKids. Our biggest assistance to them was at Christmas when we collected 55 pajamas and 47 hooded sweatshirts for the CASA workers to give to their kids at Christmas.
- Provided the WINK children with gifts of time and talent from members of the congregation as they shared their interests with the kids in 3rd-5th grade in mini-workshops throughout the WINK program year.
- Moved our worship service on Wednesday nights during WINK to the chapel, utilizing the updated technology as the children of WINK tried on the different roles of worship as we explored all the different components of worship.
- Presented children in third grade with their Bibles.
- Utilized teams of 2-3 adults to teach 4 week segments for Summer Sunday School.
- Encouraged time spent as a family with other Christian families by providing a Fall Festival
- Fifth and Sixth graders continued to provide the Welcome Center with coffee cups filled with hot chocolate to visitors in the winter and lemonade tumblers in the summer.
- Individual birthday cards were sent to each registered child on their birthday with a “free donut” coupon enclosed.
- Personal thank you notes sent to all Sunday School volunteers and assistants in an effort to show great appreciation for all they do.
- Participated in Compassion Sunday highlighting the need for sponsors for children in the Compassion International program. Sunday School students continue to support our own Compassion International child through their offering, letter writing, and prayers.
- Celebrated our Compassion International child’s birthday with a birthday party in Harper Hall with all the Sunday School children invited. This year children brought slightly used children’s footwear wrapped as their “gift” to Eric. Those items were passed along to Mary Lou Horn in coordination with Maineville Methodist Church to be given to children in orphanages in Haiti.
- Used African Palms again this year for Palm Sunday, which supports nine villages near Tanzania.

Respectfully, Jan Ferris, Director of Children’s Ministries

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

2009 flew by and left us with fond musical memories - most recently the Christmas concert/ services and the Christmas Eve services. The beauty of the season made its way into our hearts through the ministry of the Chancel Choir, Chancel Bells, various soloists, small groups, and even the children in the Christmas Eve musical. The many dedicated and talented musicians of Sycamore have blessed us richly this past year.

At Lawn Fete we rededicated the newly renovated chapel. This worship space offers beauty, reverence, and modern technology. Our volunteers have enjoyed making musical praise in an intimate space. With the addition of the chapel service, most of our church musicians have had to change warm-up times and their personal schedules to accommodate the new worship schedule. I really appreciate their flexibility and willingness to sacrifice for the ministry of God in our church life.

Our Chancel Bells continue to offer their ringing praise in worship about once each month. Additionally, they have reached out to the community through playing at Music Hall and other venues. Alex Mendelsohn has begun a refurbishing of the bells by replacing some of the mechanical parts of the larger bells. The project will continue through 2010 as Alex progresses to the smallest bells. Through careful attention to maintenance and repair, the bells will ring in optimum condition for years to come.

The vision of the music ministry is to offer the Lord our best musical praise while offering God's people an opportunity to use their talents for God. If you would like to participate in an existing group or offer your musical talent as part of a small group come see me after church or contact me via email.

Respectfully submitted by Joe Dilley

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES

In spite of challenges, the Student Ministries team delivered another exceptional year in 2009 and helped positively impact the lives of our 7th-12th grade students. In addition to significant fun and fellowship, we helped many kids grow in their faith by reaching students, connecting them to our family of believers, helping them mature in their relationship with Christ, equipping them for ministry so they are worshipping God with their lives.

Student Ministries began 2009 with no Director of Student Ministries. However, the church had hired a part time Student Ministries Assistant in Wendy Grethel and a teaching Intern in Meredith Reuscher. John Shaw and Barb Konerman played point as Session Members in welcoming and on-boarding both staff members. There were thirteen other volunteers assisting in the teaching, programming, trips and other details necessary in sustaining a functioning student ministry. In April, Meredith Reuscher was hired full time as the new Director of Student Ministries. Then, as the 08-09 school year came to a close, about five of the volunteers stepped down or shifted their service in the church to other areas. Mark Bennett and Michele Reece agreed to step in. 2009 ended with a full time Director of Student Ministry, a part time Student Ministry Assistant and seven adult volunteers. In addition, we had great support from a number of parents and other adults at various events throughout the year.

Programming Led Weekly:

- Jr. High and Sr. High Sunday School (Jr. Avg. 16; Sr. Avg. 18)
- Jr. High and Sr. High Youth Group (Jr. Avg. 12; Sr. Avg. 15)
- WALK- a Sr. High guys small group Bible study (Avg. 6)
- BABES- a Sr. High girls small group Bible study (Avg. 4)
- Confirmation Class from January to April (13 students)

Missions & Community Service Projects:

- A Summer Mission Trip to Eden, Jamaica (Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf & Blossom Garden Children's Home) involving twenty-one students
- 30 Hour Famine- we raised \$2,027.70 for World Vision

- Box City & cleaning the IHN house
- Shoe Box Ministry- packed shoe boxes of toys and toiletries donated by a member of the congregation as well as made a \$392 donation to help ship the boxes internationally
- Souper Bowl of Caring- we raised \$714.67 for Back to Back Ministries & 44 canned goods
- Sent an extra \$1500 to the Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf to support their staff
- Made bracelets and wrote letters to the students of the Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf

Social & Outreach Events:

- Church Based Socials: Big Game Party, Harvest Fest, Movie Nights, Game nights, Euchre party
- Outings: Ski day at Perfect North, Canoe Trip, Reds Game
- Sr. High Retreats: Sr. High Shenanigans and the Winter Retreat
- Jr. High Retreat: Midnight Madness
- Rob Bell talk with the WALK and BABES Bible studies
- Ichthus Music Festival
- Guys event at Dave & Busters
- Girls event at the Alexoff's house
- Jr. High Christmas Party
- Sr. High Progressive Dinner

Church Involvement:

- Christmas Caroling to Sycamore Shut-ins with the Singles Ministry
- Lawn Fete- set up, tear down and booth workers
- Sr. High Sunday
- Worship Assistants during the Worship Services- including Christmas Eve
- Guides for VBS
- 7 Gables Clean out and renovation- clean, paint, replace furniture, etc.
- Rake N Run
- Babysitting event

Meredith Reuscher, Director of Student Ministries

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Change (chānj) verb. “: to give a different position, course, or direction to;” “to put fresh clothes or covering on.”

Friends, like it or not, change is upon us and the Lord is moving Sycamore in a direction that is both exciting and unsettling.

For many of us, we seek the familiar...we take comfort in what has always been...we look to what we have grown accustomed to with a sense of well-being and normalcy. So much so that when the winds of change come we are blown slightly off-kilter and out of that zone of comfort that we are used to.

But the “familiar” is our Lord in whom we can all find that sense of security and peace in those times of change when we’re “just not sure.”

This just-completed second year in my neck of the Sycamore forest has seen much change already.

I have taken on more of the role that my position was crafted to assume and this change has been unsettling to some who have, for so many years, been faithful, hands-on servants. Several committees with which I am tasked to support have seen their traditional duties begin to change as they become more oversight in nature and a little less hands-on. Unsettling for some, to be sure. But also exciting and challenging as new opportunities for service present themselves and their talents and commitment are utilized in different, but critical ways.

Our Board of Trustees, ably chaired by Don McGill, continues to provide oversight to the facilities of the church. As my role continues to develop, assuming responsibilities that have typically been performed by the Trustees, this group will become more visionary, discerning the needs of the facility and property many years down the road, while providing oversight and wise counsel to my position and the fiduciary responsibilities entrusted to it by the Session. I truly appreciate this group of caring and committed individuals and look forward to serving with them in 2010 and to the continued development of our unique roles.

In 2009 our staff changed as we saw our weekend custodian, Rick Ware, leave the church and as we welcomed Reggie Chatman in his stead. We also welcomed Larry Stockdale to our weekday evenings as Sherry Kendle went off to tend to the care of a relative. The Joint Personnel and Administration Committee, on which I serve, have worked very hard to represent SPC to its fullest and I am grateful for the chance to serve with them and to learn from them.

This year the Facilities Development Team secured the services of Michael Schuster and Associates, Architects to begin to put ideas to paper in an effort to deal with the growth and programmatic changes that we are being given. It is my pleasure to serve with this team in the same capacity that I served in my previous church when change was in the wind for them. Be sure to follow this committee's work on the SPC website.

Changing financial times have impacted every one of us in our personal lives, and many in their professional lives. This congregation stepped up courageously and admirably in these tough times to keep our programs alive and our church financially healthy. It is a joy to serve with the members of the Joint Finance Committee...a group of dedicated and focused individuals.

Although small at this particular time, our Endowment is up and running. What a wonderful program this will be in the years to come as it grows. And what a wonderful opportunity to leave a gift that will serve the church and its programs in perpetuity. I truly enjoy the time I am able to spend working with this committee.

I do stay connected with a number of my colleagues, both locally and nationally and, as you might imagine, we converse...sometimes at length...about how our churches are progressing. I have no hesitation in saying that, as a result of these conversations, it is clear to me that we have one of the most talented and committed church staffs around. Each is gifted with years of experience in their respective areas providing leadership to each other and to our committees. And as church committees change their membership, it is the staff that provides much of the programmatic and directional continuity from year to year. I am incredibly fortunate to be a very small part of this team.

Professionally I continue to serve my national association on its Governance Committee, a group that provides guidance and counsel to the Board of Directors relative to the manner in which it governs our association. This summer I will be presenting two workshops at our national conference on the subject of policy governance, components of which I have introduced to various committees and groups here at SPC. I also stay active in our local NACBA chapter.

2010 will see the continued progression of the changes that we are being given to manage. Unsettling, unnerving, uncomfortable...exciting, challenging, rewarding!

What a ride the Lord has in store for us in 2010!

Jack L. Taylor, FCBA, Director of Operations

ADULT MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Thank you to all the many volunteers and participants who have been part of our adventures this year. We are grateful for your support, guidance and attendance.

This was a year of new opportunities:

- Financial Peace University Classes offered with 41 participants meeting for 13 weeks. A class for Winter, 2010 is in the works. Thanks, Neil Gartner for your leadership!
- Family Ministry was created through the efforts of Mindy Patton, Kim Hueil, and Alyssa Schmeling. This group held the first ever winter camp-IN in Harper Hall with a dozen+ tents and happy campers of all ages!
- The InBetweeners first gathering had an overwhelming response; the gatherings continue to be creative, delicious and “something to look forward to.” Thanks Joyce Kent and Melanie Rathman!
- The Sycamore Singles now meet twice a month and host a meal during IHN week.
- With the assistance of the congregation, 200 sets of twin sheets were sent to Germany to barracks for single soldiers returning from deployment. Thanks to all for helping us meet the challenge.
- Family Ministry hosted “Movie Under the Stars” on a hot, August evening along with snacks, beverages and popcorn!
- Rubber Stamping began as a Lenten Service Project to make cards for the deacon card ministry and has evolved into 50 something folks being involved in making almost 800 cards for the church. Thanks, Michele Reece!
- Advent Workshop took a different twist and moved to Sunday afternoon, served a pizza supper, a number of small treasures were made by excited participants from 20 months on up to “grand” ages.
- Blue Jean Lap Top Rag Quilts were another Lenten project that involved 50 different folks who made quilts that were given to people “who fall between the cracks”. Over thirty blankets were made and donated.
- An evening with the Pops was joy at Riverbend in July.
- A discussion of the popular book, The Shack, was offered on Sunday and is still the topic of a weekly study.

This was a year of learning and growth:

- Triple L, Living, Longer and Liking It, hosted a variety of programs and events on the church campus and through travel. Some traveled to Mackinac Island, others to Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta, OH. Sonja Stratman, a Nazi Germany survivor told her story at the Christmas luncheon. Thanks! Dr. Pitman, Joyce Kent and Nancy Casner for making all of this happen!
- Many friends contributed a devotion to the Advent Booklet, a long standing favorite of the congregation. THANKS!
- The Men’s Breakfast continues to meet the first Sunday of every month for prayer, an inspirational devotional message and fellowship. This group sponsored a Red’s baseball game to support the Sons of Sycamore when they sang the national anthem. Another backpacking trip was hosted by Dr. Larry Kent, and he also led a discussion for men on the book Wild at Heart.
- Coffee and Conversation programs included mission work with Habitat for Humanity and Horsepower with Citycure, as well as the February day of renewal and Mother-Daughter Picnic in May. Over 300 individuals attend these gatherings throughout the year.
- A study on prayer using Philip Yancey’s book, Prayer Does It Make Any Difference? was offered by Dr. Jerry Pitman.
-

This was a year of supporting on-going Biblical learning:

- Adult Education classes expanded to offer a variety of programs during the 9:45 and 10:45 worship hours. Bible study and small groups meet throughout the year, from Sunday morning, before the sun is up on Wednesday and after the sun goes down on Tuesday.
- One and Two Year Bibles are available through Adult Ministries, as well as monthly devotions and family devotions.
- Seasonal studies were offered for Lent and Advent; God Is Closer Than You Think by John Ortberg was studied during Lent and The Advent Conspiracy was offered in preparing ourselves for Christmas.

The Rev. Shirley Hutchins' leadership has helped expand and develop the Adult Ministries program during her first year at Sycamore. Her enthusiasm, ideas, and unending effort have led to numerous innovative projects: craft workshops, a diverse singles' ministry, integrated programs amongst different interest groups, etc. Shirley - for your willingness to think outside the box, for your guidance and your leadership, we thank you.

Thank you also to the Adult Ministries committee members for your ideas, time, creativity and hard work. The 2009 Committee Members were: Peggy Behlen, Jean Brinsmaid, Jane Nocito, Mike Fealko (deacon rep), Dan Reece, Kim Reinhart, Nancy Moore, Barb High, Alyssa Schmeling,

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Buckman and Kim Hueil, Adult Ministries Co-chairs

ARCHIVES

Sycamore Church has been called "The Enduring Church." It has endured since its founding in 1795 and official organization in 1798. It has served in four locations and its present Chapel has been on its present location since 1848.

The church's long history is preserved in its records which are kept in the Archives room. Minutes and reports from church boards and committees are kept there and represent what the church has been and is. Faithful record keeping is very important. Our records are a history of Christian witness.

The Annual reports of what has taken place at Sycamore Church in 2009 will be preserved in the Archives.

Delores Hester and Nancy Casner ably assist with the archive work and their time and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Lewise Kalsbeek

BOARD OF DEACONS

The office of Deacon is set forth in scripture as one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need: to the sick, to the friendless, to those requiring support and encouragement and to any who may be in distress. In 2009, the Board of Deacons was privileged to serve the members of Sycamore and those in the community in many different ways.

Deacons in 2009 were: Gary Ahlfeld (moved away during year), Barb Askren (Session Representative), Barb Davis, Janet Dimitt (Co-Moderator), Dee Eberhard, Michael Fealko, Don Fender, Gordon Fournier (Vice Moderator), Gary Hester (Co-Moderator), Karen Hagerty, Beth Hueil, Karen Kerns, Jan Nagel, June Purcell, Nancye Rascov, Laurie Robertson (Secretary), Tamara Saling, Susie Shaw (Treasurer), Robyn Stickles, Irene Strong, and Jerry Pitman (staff).

The following are some of the many ways in which we served both inside and outside the church:

Inside the Church:

- Funeral coordination, funeral greeters, and funeral meal receptions
- Homebound/care facility visitations and communion
- Prayer Chain
- New Member Care - contacting all new members and helping to assimilate them into the church
- Recruitment of greeters for Sunday Services
- Mailed greeting cards and notes of encouragement to church committees and individual members
- Knitting ministry (see separate report)
- Audio recording of Sunday services

- Delivery of baby roses to member families
- Mailed Sunday bulletin to homebound
- Provide flu shots and blood pressure checks
- Coordination of church Ministry Fair
- Provided meals for members who have had surgery, accidents, etc. via “Cooks on Call”
- Established a Congregational Care Team to assist members who are experiencing a need
- Provided representatives to Nominating, Mission, and Adult Ministry Committees
- Provided a recognition coffee for prayer chain members
- Maintained a monthly column in the newsletter, “Deacons Doings”
- Maintained a ‘Transportation’ function to help members as needed

Outside the church:

- Provided Christmas baskets for 103 families and gifts for 324 children, the largest numbers yet for Sycamore. The congregation donated over \$14,500 to the Christmas Basket program. This along with the Deacons Christmas account of \$958 allowed the Deacons to 1) Purchase \$11,400 worth Kroger cards used to accompany Christmas Baskets to New Life Ministries, St. George Food Pantry and Symmes Elementary Families; 2) Purchase an additional \$1,850 worth Kroger cards for New Life Ministries; and 3) Provide additional funds of \$2,236.76 to the St. George Food Pantry. The Deacons were also able to help several IHN families with Christmas baskets and Kroger food cards.
- Collected and prepared items for 308 Easter baskets for New Life Ministries. The congregation once again provided supplies and funds for this effort. The Preschool also helped with donations, the Jr. High evening group helped fill eggs, and the Deacons filled the baskets. It was truly a church wide effort. The Deacons delivered the baskets to New Life Ministries in Adams County. Also delivered were Kroger food cards totaling \$2,163.04 to help those in need to purchase an Easter meal. (\$1,380.46 was from donations from the congregation and \$782.58 came from a Valentine Cookie Bouquets fund raiser performed by SPC members.
- Provided volunteer support and financial resources for F.A.I.T.H. (program run by 8 churches to help the needy in Deerfield Township/Mason area)
- Provided volunteer support, financial resources and school supplies for N.E.E.D.S. (program run by multiple churches to help the needy in northeast Hamilton County)
- Assisted people in financial need through the church HELP Fund (gas, food cards, heating oil, etc)

The Board would like to express appreciation to our adjunct Deacons- Jean Rahn and Jeannette Miller, prayer chain; Bereavement coordinator, Kate Camp; Knitting ministry, Joan Broersma; Chuck Lowe, homebound bulletin mailings; and Sandy Bowie, flu shots and blood pressure checks. The Deacons would also like to thank members of the congregation who have stepped forward to volunteer as a part of the new Congregational Care Team. This team is in place to help those in our own church family when there is a need.

The Prayer Chain is composed of faithful servants who pray for the special requests of friends and family of our congregation. These individuals are: Jan Bartos, Betty Blong, Sandy Caney, Joyce Clark, Alice Cook, Karen & Clay Daniel, Barb Davis, Ruth Drennan, Joyce Dunham, Bee Esler, Ruth Gantt, Janet Gittinger, Mitzi Green, Beth Hahne, Lenore Henninger, Dee Hester, Beth & Chuck Hueil, Shirley Hutchins, Mike and Ronda Jones, Lewis Kalsbeek, Larry Kent, Nancy Levine, Chuck Lowe, Jeanette Miller, Merial Miller, Nancy Moore, Nancy Natorp, Jennifer Otto, Jerry Pitman, June Purcell, Jean Rahn (coordinator), Viola Reinhart, Ann Ross, Gail Sargent, Connie Smith, Jeanne Stevens, Joan Taylor, Tina Vargas, Rhonda Vickers, and Myra Washburn.

The Congregation Care Team consists of: Laura Alexoff, Ceil Allard, Jerie Anderson, Don Bang, Barb Davis, Janet Dimitt, Dee Eberhard, Doug Gausman, Scott Henniger, Gary Hester, Peggy & Larry Jacobs, Ronda Jones, Karen Kearns, Merial Miller, Jan Nagel, Nell Nichols, Robyn Stickles, and Rhonda Vickers.

The Deacons established a Deacons page in 2009 on the Sycamore web site. This page displays current activities, upcoming events, all of the various Deacon ministries, Deacons of the Month, and how members of the congregation can get involved in the various Deacon Ministries.

The Deacons had the privilege in 2008 of supporting several very important ministries within and outside of the church. The following monies were distributed:

F.A.I.T.H. - \$2,250.00

N.E.E.D.S.-\$2,250.00

HELP FUND- \$3,642.66 (food and gas cards, propane gas, rent, etc.)

CHRISTMAS BASKETS - \$958 added to monies collected by congregation for Kroger Food Cards to New Life Ministries, St. George Food Pantry and Symmes Elementary.

Once again, the Deacons thank the congregation for their continued support of our many programs. It is our privilege to serve the Lord and our Sycamore family.

Respectfully submitted, Gary Hester and Janet Dimitt (Co-Moderators), Board of Deacons

KNITTING MINISTRY/DEACONS

From the knitting needles of many caring women come gifts of love, hope and comfort.

As knitters, we gather, we knit, we pray, we give away, and we receive. 2009 marked the completion of the fourth year of the Knitting Ministry.

The opportunities for fellowship, new friendships, the creation of something tangible with loving hands, and prayer is all part of the ministry. Two meetings are held monthly to accommodate schedules; the second Thursday evening and the fourth Tuesday morning. Items are knit with prayers for comfort and healing, and blessed and prayed for by the group before being distributed. Our efforts in 2009 have resulted in: 72 prayer shawls, 19 Guideposts Knit for Kids sweaters, 15 baby caps for Bethesda North, 1 pair booties for SPC newborns, 11 blankets for the Linus Project, and 8 military helmetliners and gators. Prayer shawls were given to: church members and friends in times of grief, surgery and illness; nursing home residents, and friends and family of the knitters. Shawls are occasionally given during transitional life changes. Our thanks to Deacon Karen Kerns who delivered the prayer shawls along with our pastors and members of our group.

The Knitting Ministry is a subgroup of the Deacons and is generously financed through the Deacon's budget with additional yarn and monetary donations from others. We give thanks to God in that the craft of knitting has allowed us to minister to a variety of people. In blessing others with our efforts, blessings have come back tenfold. New people are always welcome and lessons are given to non knitters.

Many many thanks to the dedicated knitters:

Nancy Ahlfeld, Barb Askren, Pam Barbe, Peggy Behlen, Ann Braden, Jean Brinsmaid, Winnie Cairns, Kim Demmerle, Charma Feintheil, Betty Gegllein, Janet Gittinger, Marian Gosey, Claudia Gross, Barbara Harrison, Dee Hester, Mary Ann Hoffman, Gladys Lamendola, Rhonda Malott, Alma Melvin, Marilyn Moore, Barbara Patterson, Nancye Rascov, Marlene Roeper, Susan Scheib, Rena Taylor, Bette Venseret, Myra Washburn, Emily White, and Elaine Williams.

In addition, we welcomed into our group this year: Winnie Cairns, Sondi Davis, Ann Fournier, Judi Gentry, Martha Hammer, Diana McNally, Merial Miller, Glenys Merriman, Betty Robinson and Carol Saar.

Respectfully submitted, Joan Broersma, Coordinator

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Sycamore Presbyterian Church has an Endowment Fund to encourage members and friends to advance the Kingdom of God on earth by and through gifts, devises and bequests. Each Committee member signed a statement acknowledging their fiduciary responsibilities in serving on this committee.

The Endowment Program was formally presented to the congregation in February 2008. Since then the Committee evaluated ways to provide estate planning education to the Congregation. We also evaluated ways to provide guidance to potential donors who had estate planning questions and interviewed representatives from several investment firms.

During 2009 we continued to invest Endowment funds in the Vanguard Wellington Fund. We chose the Wellington Fund because:

- it is aligned with our Investment Policy Statement – including matching our target asset allocation criteria of ~65% equities / 35% bonds
- it is a no-load fund from a fund family known for low expenses
- Wellington is a highly rated fund, as rated by services including Morningstar

The economic downturn which began in 2008 and continued through 2009 significantly impacted the overall stock market, and had an impact on our Endowment Fund investments. The bounce back in the stock market since the spring of 2009 has helped the fund return to its original principle amount. The Vanguard Wellington Fund return in 2009 was +22.15%.

The Wellington Fund is still a 5-star (top) rated fund by Morningstar. It ranks in the top 10% of funds in it's category (moderate allocation) for 3, 5 and 10 year performance.

2009 Endowment Fund Summary:

January 1, 2009 Balance	\$25,139.25
Gifts Received in 2009	6,455.00
Amounts Disbursed	-
Dividends/Income	1,122.28
Investment Gains (Losses)	5,781.17
December 31, 2009 Balance	\$38,497.70

Respectfully submitted, Lowell Bowie, Pat Breen, Rhett Francisco (chair), Neil Gartner, Mike Jones, Ernie Tong

LAWN FETE REPORT

The sun shone in the blue sky over the 102nd Lawn Fete experience. The back parking lot served as the new location for our outside activities. (Many thanks to the Grounds crew for all the planning it took for the relocation and their ideas for improvements for next year!) The traditional activities like the Trinkets & Treasures, Kids Korner, Book Bay, Sycamore Marketplace all opened on schedule with awaiting crowds represented by church members and friends in the local community.

Our committee developed several new ideas which sparked great interest from the day's participants. Here are a few examples:

- Steve and Linda Dean provided embroidered samplers of Dr. Larry Kent's weekly benediction of which some were framed by a small group of brand new friends led by Barb Davis and Susie Mahan. The benediction artworks, which were sold at the Sycamore Marketplace, Silent Auction, and Basket Raffle, were some of the first items to sell out!
- We hope you were able to experience the camaraderie during the church committee Corn Hole tournament organized by Kevin Dolan. There were nearly 20 sets of boards lined up side-by-side as the teams competed. Great job by all!

- Under the shady backyard trees of the Manse at noon time on the entertainment stage, first, Joe Dilley sang as he played the keyboard and gave a testimony of his faith, next The Sons of Sycamore sang a capella, followed by Craig Nagel on guitar and Greg Johnson on drums. The applauding crowd munched on Snack Booth food as they enjoyed the afternoon music.
- Shirley Hutchins worked with the Singles Group to decorate small Christmas trees around such different themes as: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, shells and flamingos! Shirley's new idea for the Silent Auction provided many fun, competitive bids!
- Doug Gausmann's Country Auction group began the day early by selling pre-priced auction furniture items, which have not sold for fair prices in recent years. In 2009, the sales for the pre-priced items were quite profitable. As we had planned, the Country Auction was over early, as well as their clean-up, largely because of all the early morning activity with the pre-priced items and their close proximity to the Storage Building.

The third year for the car cruise-in attracted 55 cars. Many of the show's participants are from the wider community which helps to acquaint many new people with our celebration and with the members of our church. Irene Strong has a story or two to tell as to how the cruise-ins have attracted new members to come to church and to join the church.

The traditional, delicious Chicken Dinner served nearly 500 meals. The fellowship was overwhelming in Harper Hall and outside overlooking the beautiful lake. The service from the dining room servers was fun, inviting and a step-up from restaurant grade!

Four hundred friends and members of the congregation took the opportunity to work the day of the 102nd—a two hour shift to all day, to all week. The resale areas, of course, began meeting weekly the first of May to sort and price items. We were thankful for those who contributed gift certificates, pies and cakes, quilts and other artwork, game sponsorship, or items for Trinkets & Treasures... So many people participated in the day! Lawn Fete offers A GREAT fellowship opportunity to renew old friendships or meet new friends, so on Sundays you recognize more folks! The ripple effect of Lawn Fetes--within the church, to the local and wider community—will never be known.

The following table highlights the financial results from the 2009 Lawn Fete:

Activity	Amount	Recipient	Amount
Silent Auction	\$ 14,775	Net Proceeds were distributed as follows:	
Country Auction	7,872	50% Chapel renovations	\$ 16,827
Sycamore Market Place	5,356	16.67 % Comfort Foundation	5,609
Treasures & Trinkets	5,338	16.67% City Gospel Mission	5,609
Dinner receipts	4,701	16.67% Mission - SPC Student	
Game receipts	3,501	Ministries national mission trip	5,609
Snack Bar	2,927	Two truckloads of material to	
Kids' Korner	2,241	Helping Hands	<u>Priceless</u>
Book Bay	1,452		
Cruise-in, Antique Appraisals & Other	750	Total net proceeds	<u>\$ 33,654</u>
Total Receipts	48,914		
Less-expenses	<u>(15,260)</u>		
Net Proceeds	<u>\$ 33,654</u>		

Those who participated in the management team of Lawn Fete are as follows:

Name	Committee	Name	Committee
Aileen Eckert	Co-Chair	Brad Leffler	Games
Jane Nocito	Co-Chair	Larry Thomas	Grillin' Chickens
Alan Mabry	Antique Appraisal	John Zimmerman	Grillin' Chickens
Lenore Henninger	Book Bay	Tom Fisher	Grounds
Irene & John Strong	Car Cruise-In	Bob Johnson	Grounds
Shannon Zimmerman	Chicken Dinner	Connie McCowan	Kids Korner
Robin Thomas	Chicken Dinner	Bob Schmeling	Kids Korner
Kevin Dolan	Corn Hole Tournament	Carl Alexoff	Marketing/Publicity
Doug Gausmann	Country Auction/ Treasures & Trinkets/Trustee Rep	Ernie Tong	Marketing/PR
Dave Sperry	Country Auction	Jenny Parrish	Marketing/In-House
Carol Burnett	Decorating/Dining Rm Mgt.	Bob Stevens	Permits
Debby Mabry	Decorating/Dining Rm Mgt.	Janie McCormick	Sign-up Sheets
Craig Nagel	Entertainment	Julie Hinshaw	Silent Auction
Mark Nocito	Finance/Session Rep	Bob & Joan Broersma	Snack Booth
Hal & Kim Demmerle	Games	Michele Reece	Sycamore Marketplace

Respectfully submitted, Aileen Eckert & Jane Nocito, Co-chairs

CHURCH LIBRARY FINANCIAL

Expenditures:

\$ 94.95 Magazine Subscriptions
 \$414.32 Books
\$ 28.96 DVDs
 \$538.23 TOTAL

The library was not funded by the Church budget in 2009. Rather, funding was obtained from a Bernice Wulfhorst bequest, and also from a Kay Stevens Memorial Fund. The Kay Stevens Fund was used to purchase books recommended by members of the Church Staff, along with other new books.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard L. Walthour, Librarian

CHURCH LIBRARY

A computer has been purchased for the library from funds bequeathed to the church library from the Bernice Wulfhorst estate. Initial effort is underway to enter each of the approximately 3500 books into the system. This will replace the existing file card system, and will significantly reduce the amount of work in processing and accessioning books. We are indebted to Vivian Morgan, a new member of the Library Committee, who is doing much of the data entry, as well as to Kim Hueil, who initiated the effort and remains a part of it.

Total circulation for the year was 426, a decrease from 516 in 2008. This consisted of 319 books and 107 videos. Books were only down slightly from 333 in 2008. Most of the decrease was in videos.

26 books and 4 DVDs were purchased during the year. 39 donated books were also accessioned, for a total of 65 books added to the library. We give thanks to all who have made donations during the year.

In regard to donated books and other items not accessioned to the library, we continue to donate items to Mary Lou Horn's Appalachian ministry, Friends of the Public Library, and the Lawn Fete. An ongoing effort continues to selectively remove older books to obtain shelf space.

The library renewed subscriptions in 2009 to: Christianity Today Horizons

To be renewed in other years are: The Presbyterian Outlook, Guideposts, Biblical Archaeology Review

Respectfully Submitted,

The Library Committee: Richard Walthour, Joan Broersma, Vivian Morgan, Beverly Walthour

MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Working closely with the program staff, the Ministry Development Team (MDT) completed its first objective, that of reformatting the Sunday morning worship schedule to include a third (middle) service. This addition has met with excellent support from the congregation, offering a more informal, relaxed venue which has resonated with many of our people. The change from pews to chairs, coupled with the new color scheme, carpeting and audio-visual set up, has resulted in a warm, welcoming environment that is really satisfying to many in our congregation. That service is full nearly every Sunday.

Having said that, the MDT is reminded that this schedule is meant to be but a temporary arrangement designed to relieve the problems of overcrowding while offering a different worship style that would better meet the needs of some of our families. At the same time, this schedule puts an additional burden on the staff that would not be healthy in the long haul. So the MDT continues to address the greater ministry needs of Sycamore; needs that grow and change as we receive new members who provide us with a paradigm shift looking to the future. This new vitality, in many cases, changes the facility requirements necessary for its support. The MDT continues to work very closely with the Facilities Development Team as we define our ministry needs for the future and assess the space requirements necessary to support those ministries. New data brings new questions that need to be dealt with in a logical, thoughtful manner. The Team has grown to appreciate the dynamics of Ministry Development and is excited about following where the Lord will lead us in 2010. But we are also committed to taking the time necessary to make the very best decisions possible for the future of Sycamore.

The Ministry Development Team

Bob Broersma, Joan Broersma, Nancy Casner, Don Dunham, Dr. Kent, Mindy Patton, Bob Stevens, Chair, Rhonda Vickers, John Vogel

MISSION COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Patty McLean, Nancy Natorp, Sandy Fender, Sandy Anderson, Chris Crawford, Kay Stevens, Renee Walker-Tong, Tim Lana, and Suzanne Smith; Session Reps: Jim Blaylock and Barb Askren; SPC Staff, Rev. Jerry Pitman;; IHN Rep, Don Bang.

The Mission Committee continued to try to prayerfully discern Sycamore's mission emphasis and make recommendations to Session regarding involvement in and support of mission projects believed to have universal support by the congregation. We continued the conscious effort to keep the number of missions supported to a manageable number so a greater positive impact could be attained. Details of the 2009 disbursements made by the Committee can be found in the Mission Committee Financial Report for 2009.

Support to PC (USA)

55% of the Mission budget went to support PC (USA) General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery Missions and the Theological Education Fund.

The remaining budget was contributed to the following ministries and organizations as continuing support and discretionary funding:

Continuing Support:

Campus Crusade	Wycliffe Bible Translators – Rudy & Laurie Klaas (Senegal)
City Gospel Mission (Homeless)	Crossroad Health Center - Over-the-Rhine
Eastside Coalition of Habitat for Humanity (HFH)	IHN Expenses

Discretionary Funding

The school system of Pass Christian, MS was maintained as a focus and will continue to be supported in 2010. Scholarship money was once again provided for grants to graduating seniors, thanks to the generosity of those who contributed to the scholarship fund drive. Rev Jerry Pitman and Elder Jim Blaylock went to the Pass Christian Senior Night to represent the church and present the scholarships. Additionally, funds were provided for the continuing upgrade of the science programs for the Grade School and Middle School.

The Comfort Foundation, an organization based in the US, working with providing schooling and shelter to homeless children in Russia until they reach adulthood was again the recipient of funding as well as a shipment of socks and underwear requested by the Foundation and contributed by the Congregation. In addition the committee hosted five of the workers from Russia in a visit to the church and held a Congregational Dinner to honor them.

Other ministries supported included:

The Texas City Mission sponsored by the Presbytery to support relief for victims of Hurricane Ike.	
Christmas in July, sponsored by IHN for children in that program.	
City Cure Extreme Outdoor Adventure program for Inner City Children	
City Gospel Challenge to Change	Pro-Kids
Deacon’s Emergency Fund	The Nora Graves Fund
Cincinnati Center for Autism (VBS Match)	Ingles Family (Home Sweet New Home)
Project Linus	Christian Community Works
Mayerson Center	Heifer International
Circle Tail	

Special Offerings – The committee coordinated the publicity surrounding the collection of four special offerings of PCUSA: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peacemaking and the Christmas Joy Offering. The 40% of the Pentecost offering designated for a local mission project for children at risk was given to the Mayerson Center while 25% of the Peacemaking Offering went to ProKids.

Lawn Fete Proceeds –In cooperation with the Lawn Fete committee, 50% of Lawn Fete 2009 proceeds were designated for mission projects. The Mission and Lawn Fete Committees recommended, with Session approval, the following recipients: City Gospel Mission, Comfort Foundation, and the Student Ministries Mission Trip.

The Committee looks forward to increased opportunities for benevolence and hands-on service by members of SPC and thanks the Congregation for the unselfish support that allows us to support spreading the Good News of the Gospel locally, nationally and internationally.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Blaylock, Chair, Barb Askren, Co-Chair

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

At the Congregational Meeting held on November 15, 2009, the following officers were elected:

Session: Laura Alexoff, Nancy Buckman, Julie Hinshaw, Paul Poe, John Shaw, Rick Stickle
 Trustees: Tom Fisher Sr., Doug Gausmann, Chuck Hueil, Janie McCormick
 Deacons: Ceil Allard, Eugene Burnett, Joyce Dunham, Don Fender, Joy Wallace, Ron Wickert
 Financial Officers: Barry Harrison – Financial Secretary

Don Borisch – Assistant Financial Secretary
Don Venseret – Church Treasurer

The members of all other committees were approved as a group.
The Nominating Committee expresses its sincere appreciation to those members who so willingly stepped forward in service to Sycamore Presbyterian Church.

2009 Nominating Committee Members:

Carl Alexoff, Sandy Caney, Larry Crawford, Stacey Gill, Mitzi Green, Rhonda Jones, Kate Camp, Boyd Patton
Marilyn Poe, Nancye Rascov – Deacon Representative, Doug Gausmann – Trustee Representative,
Errol Everson – Session Representative

Respectfully submitted, Errol Everson, Chair

SYCAMORE PRESCHOOL

The Sycamore Presbyterian Preschool continues to be an important part of Sycamore Presbyterian Church's mission outreach in fulfilling the commandment of Jesus, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them."

The Sycamore Presbyterian Preschool's mission is to provide a Christian based program that is developmentally appropriate in a loving and caring environment which is supportive, nurturing and responsive to each child's individual needs.

The members of the Board of Directors for 2009 were:

Katina Peters - Congregation member (Chair)
Katy Pardue- Congregation member (Vice Chair)
Jamie Coston- Preschool Director
Susan Galloway- Preschool Treasurer
Tom Galloway - Trustee representative
Dave Sperry - Session representative
Heather LeLoup– C.M.T. representative
Gina Guertin - Parent Auxiliary representative
Heather LeLoup- Parent Auxiliary representative
Nancy Thomsen - Teacher representative

Jamie Coston continues to faithfully serve as the director of SPP. The preschool has been blessed with a most dedicated staff. Currently, in the 2009-2010 school year, there are 15 teachers serving approximately 117 children in 10 classes. We have 134 spots, and have been struggling with enrollment this year, as have other area preschools. We continue to actively pursue ways to draw in new families to our wonderful program.

Sycamore Presbyterian Preschool offers a Christian based and developmentally appropriate program for children ages 3 through 5. The goal of the Board and staff has been to provide an outstanding program that would bring glory to God and be a blessing to the children. If the laughter, smiles and love that can be found in the classrooms are any indication, we are being very successful.

In order to remain a top preschool in the area, we must keep our program and facilities in top shape, improving them whenever possible. Due to low enrollment, we are being extra careful with funds this year, making only necessary improvements. The Noelle Braun Foundation sponsored the fall field trip to Schappacher Farm again this year and we are grateful for the Braun family's continued generosity to our school.

Our preschool's Parent's Auxiliary continues to be very active. Over the past year, they have had several fundraisers and have provided additional programs for the children and their families. The annual Holiday Raffle is a favorite for both preschool families and the congregation. The entire SPP staff has worked very hard again this year to maintain their 3 star rating in the state program, Step Up to Quality. Due to the dedication and commitment

to excellence on behalf of Jamie and the staff, SPP was awarded high scores on all their visits and evaluations during the school year.

Sycamore Presbyterian Preschool would like to take this opportunity, once again, to thank you, the members of Sycamore Presbyterian Church, for your continued support and prayers as we work to make our church's preschool the best it can be for the children we are privileged to serve.

Respectfully submitted in Christ's name, Katina Peters, Chair, Board of Directors

REPORT OF THE SESSION

The main function of the Session is to provide oversight of the congregation and to provide for congregation's spiritual development. The Session is dedicated to providing, as we are blessed, for local and worldwide missions and attempts to lead by modeling Christian commitment and involvement among the members. The following is a brief review of some of the actions and events with which the Session was involved in 2009. Most of these items depend greatly on the involvement of the staff, the Boards of Deacons and Trustees and the various Committees of the church, for which the Session is very appreciative:

1. Monitoring the budget and working with the Board of Trustees to expend only what we receive. Working with the Trustees and the Facilities Development Team (FDT), we approved funding for the conversion of the chapel into a multi-purpose room, which is primarily used for our newly added 9:45 worship service; approved funding of a search by the FDT to secure the services of an A/E firm to develop preliminary plans to meet our physical and program needs. This search was concluded with the hiring of Michael Schuster & Assoc. in November.

The Session continues to work closely with the Facilities and Ministry Development Teams to discern the physical and program needs of the congregation.

2. Work in conjunction with the Board of Deacons to provide care for our members and surrounding community. Through the Deacons, our church supported over 100 families this Christmas season.
3. Formally installed Rev. Hutchins during the 10:30 AM worship service held on April 26, 2009.
4. Approved the Lawn Fete Committee recommendation that the net proceeds of the Lawn Fete be distributed 50% to benevolence or mission and 50% be used for church needs.
5. Participated in New Member Training Sessions in February, June, October and December that led to 89 new members joining our church and the oversight of the Confirmation Class resulting in 13 young adults professing their faith.
6. Continued our support of the work of the Deacons and our members, led by the Mission Committee, including continued support of our friends in Pass Christian, Mississippi.
7. A yearly review of the Active and Inactive Rolls of the church so that we have an accurate reporting of our members and control of the denominational assessment costs. The Session also set the dates for serving communion and baptisms for the upcoming year.

The Session is committed to providing an atmosphere where our members can grow in their faith and provide an outlet for their service to His church. The Session wishes to express its gratitude for all of the support and help the church staff, the various boards, committees and individuals have provided throughout the year

Respectfully submitted; Frederick W. Slack, Clerk

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

This year's theme of "*Giving Makes our Living Count, For Today, For Tomorrow, For Eternity*" was introduced to the congregation in our fall campaign starting with testimonials and visitations to various committees. The stewardship team recognized the importance of the highly dedicated people who are currently serving on all the boards, standing committees, and key groups. The Stewardship Committee, in teams of two, met personally with each group to help explain the stewardship message and to hear questions and feedback. This effort was well received and we appreciated our warm welcome from each group.

The stewardship committee appreciates the generosity of the congregation in 2009. Even though the unfavorable economic conditions during 2009 confronted many in our congregation, the number of pledges increased along with an overall dollars pledged increase. As of December 31, \$1,030,000 was pledged to the church for 2010. The pledge campaign's success during these economic conditions demonstrates this congregation's commitment to continuing serving Jesus with monetary contributions.

As we look back on 2009, we are very thankful to the congregation for the time and talent of our volunteers. In the past year we have made this a stronger church, more able to serve our community and all of the lives we touch. Our ministries and programs continue to grow while we endeavor to model Christ in serving others.

We hope all these efforts helped convey that it's not just the money, but that the money is a tool that we can use to further God's work among us and in the community we serve. We also emphasized that Sycamore would be working on a balanced budget in 2010 and that the allocations for personnel and programs would be structured based on the available funds. The following shows the growth in stewardship for the past five years.

Pledge Year	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	Change <u>2009-2010</u>
Total Cards Returned:	309	299	337	363	377	+3.7%
Total Dollars Pledged:	770,540	779,500	924,604	1,001,829	1,030,000	+2.8%
Dollars per Pledge:	\$2,494	\$2,650	\$2,744	\$2,760	\$2,732	-1.0%

The Stewardship Committee wishes to thank everyone for their generosity, loyalty and their continued support of the mission and programs here at Sycamore. We ask for your continued prayers as we prepare to address the opportunities and challenges before us in 2010.

Your Stewardship committee, Bill Barnhill, Gordon Fournier, Rhett Francisco (chair), Drew Hagerty, Tom Deyo, Bob Sand, Ellen Shively and Don Stuart.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2009 was a busy year for the Trustees and the many volunteers that support the maintenance of the church and the grounds. Tom Galloway and Dave Carter ended their terms in 2009. Thank you to Tom and Dave for all your years of dedicated service to SPC. Chuck Hueil and Janie McCormick began a 3 year term in January 2010. Officers for 2009 were Don McGill, President, Tom Fisher, Vice-President, and Doug Gausmann, Secretary.

Projects Completed by the Men's Landscape Team:

- Painted Harper Hall
- Installed Sound System with equipment already owned
- Painted Vogel Hall, Kitchen Hallway and Office Hallway
- Painted outside walls of church near Harper Hall
- Made flower boxes for preschool playhouse
- Spring Clean up day
- Weekly yard maintenance in spring, summer and fall

- Maintenance of preschool playground area
- Coordinated with garden group the purchase of a shade tree and boulder
- Chapel Renovation: removed pews, dry walled, filled joints and smoothed, finished carpentry and painting

Total Volunteer labor Hours 2,060 Cost Savings \$50,750

- Electric Water heater installed in preschool
- Exterior wood trim painted on outside of church

Board of Trustee Long Term Maintenance Purchases

- Shirley Hutchins office furniture
- Split-rail fencing at north end of pond
- Lawn tractor
- Installed Vogel Hall keypad for preschool security
- Purchased carpet cleaner
- Contributed towards gutter/fascia on Chapel
- Bought a new, bigger network server
- Electrical and sound improvements in chapel

Total Cost \$27,178

LAWN FETE Funds spent on the renovation of the exterior of the chapel

- Employed an arborist to trim and fertilize oak tree overhanging chapel
- Painted Exterior of Chapel
- New landscape around chapel and parking circle
- Replaced gutters and fascia board

THE GARDEN GROUP/TRUSTEES

“She who plants a seed beneath the sod, and waits to see, believes in God.” Last summer’s morning glories on the gazebo are a testament to that saying. From tiny seeds to the late summer daily display of bountiful heavenly blue flowers we were witnesses, and give the glory to God! He provided the right growing conditions for an enriching 2009 growing season. Beginning with the pansies and bulbs in the spring to the, daisies, zinnias and mums in late summer, we hope you experienced some of the beauty.

As gardeners, we tend the church grounds for others’ enjoyment and our own pleasure, gathering on Thursday mornings throughout the growing season to plant, weed, prune, and water, and additionally, enjoy fellowship one with another. Anyone with willing hands is always welcomed whether you are able to do a little or a lot.

New plantings this year included a Swamp White Oak to replace the maple near the chapel lost in the 2008 hurricane, pink and white dogwoods, flowering crabapples, Globe Blue Spruce, viburnums, Oak Leaf Hydrangeas, Knockout roses, boxwood, and ornamental grasses. Funds from Lawn Fete were available for some of the new plantings along with a design from Natorps. The oak and a large boulder were gifts donated by church members.

Thank you so very much to the following people for their commitment and faithfulness throughout the season: Lois Borisch, Aileen Eckert, Claudia Gross, Mary Ann Hoffman, Merial Miller, Lenore Henninger, Sue Ramsay, Joan Taylor, and Emily White.

Thank you, also, to the Men’s Landscape Team for their assistance, to the Trustees for providing budgeted monies, and others for providing monetary special gifts.

Respectfully submitted, Joan Broersma, Coordinator

USHERS

With the start of the new middle service, two new teams of ushers were added for the 9:45 service. These two usher teams also will serve as the greeters for the 9:45 service. The usher teams for the other two services remain largely unchanged. Thanks to all of the ushers who served the church in 2009.

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Worship & Music Committee is a standing committee charged by Session to assist the Pastors and the music staff. Our mission is to be ALIVE in Christ. We accomplish this mission by helping to provide inspiring corporate worship which includes preaching the Word, celebration of the Sacraments, prayer, special events, inspiring music, and an inspiring environment all of which are designed to meet the spiritual needs and contribute to the spiritual development of the congregation.

2009 has been a year of growth and looking forward. This has challenged us to review our worship services and determine how we can serve the growing needs in a way that will enhance the worship experience of all of the members of our congregation. Following are some of our activities for the year 2009:

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- To help alleviate overcrowding, Session approved worship service time changes in order to add a service. The new times being 8:45, 9:45 (in Chapel) and 10:45. Through Rev. Kent's creativity, Jack Taylor's technical knowledge and a music team headed up by Joe Dilley, we have created a "more relaxed" service in the newly renovated Chapel. The end result has been a well attended service which serves the spiritual needs of many in our church family.
- Joe Dilley spoke to the need of an audio/visual ministry which would involve both youth and adults. The Committee followed up and ministry has begun. More volunteers are needed, but we now have a base on which to build.
- A rather sensitive issue was broached to reduce the noise in the Sanctuary before worship services. We did not want to detract from the friendly atmosphere, but did want to respect the needs of worshipers to prepare for the service. This was achieved by the Choir, the Pastors and Worship Assistant arriving a little earlier and by adding the following short comment at the beginning of the worship order: "*BEFORE worship, SPEAK TO God in prayer; DURING worship, listen to God speak to you; AFTER worship, speak to one another.*"
- Several years ago the Committee began an inventory of the "precious to us" items (both old and new) of our Church. This project grew to taking a picture of each item and then to having a narrative (written by Lewis & Ted Kalsbeek, as well as Dee Hester). We also included a listing of all building projects and renovations since 1798 and a listing of all of the Pastors since 1848. The "TREASURES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT" booklet is almost complete and will be available for purchase soon. The price will be \$5 which will cover the printing cost.
- Hearing Assistance Devices were purchased for the Sanctuary and are available through the Ushers.

WORSHIP SERVICES

- Prepared and served communion on the scheduled dates. Planned a 2009 Communion Schedule of servers. Recruited volunteers to bake bread and wafers. Trained additional people to prepare communion. Thanks to Marilyn Poe for her leadership and to those who served Communion and those who baked the bread and wafers.
- Provided scripts and recruited participants for Lenten wreath lighting and the Advent wreath lighting. Many thanks to Roger Barbe, Ann Fournier and Martha Hammer.
- Assisted in special services on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Thanksgiving Eve, and Christmas Eve.
- Provided Worship Assistants each week being intentional in our efforts to include children, youth, staff, Elders, Deacons and members of the congregation. Thanks to Ann Fournier for her leadership in this area.
- The Church was decorated for Christmas by members of the congregation. Thanks to Susan Johnstal and Nancye Rascov for their leadership.

VISUAL ARTS

- Bulletin Board in Harper Hall was beautifully designed and kept current by Hei-Kyung Shin.

- We continued to display most of the banners which have been lovingly made for the Sanctuary over the years. Many thanks to Barbara Steele for coordinating these efforts.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Participation in the Deacon’s Ministry Fair was very beneficial again this year, providing a number of sign-ups by people interested in our worship and music programs. A big thank you to Alice Cook for handling this and for her efforts as Secretary of the Committee.
- We were able to assist the Choristers Choir by changing the rehearsal time to Sunday morning so that more children could participate.
- Welcomed visiting musical groups Conundrum and Jubilant Singers thanks to the great coordinating efforts of Ed Chambers.

A special thank you to Rev. Larry Kent and Joe Dilley for their helpful input at each meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Verna L. Pfingstag

EUNICE CIRCLE TREASURER

Bank Balance – 01/01/09	\$1649.26
Receipts	\$1432.51
Expenses	<u>\$1194.62</u>
Bank Balance 01/01/10	\$1887.15

Respectfully submitted, Jerrie Anderson

Statistical Report of the Clerk of Session for 2009

	2009	2008
<i>Number of members at the beginning of the year</i>	1049	1008
Increase by Profession of Faith	15	14
Increase by Reaffirmation of Faith	35	40
Increase by Certification from other churches	52	44
Increase by Restoration from Inactive Roll	2	4
TOTAL INCREASES	104	102
Members removed by Transfer to other Churches	(13)	(11)
Members removed by Death	(7)	(18)
Members dropped from roll or removed at their request	(7)	(6)
Members transferred to Inactive Roll	(2)	(26)
TOTAL DECREASES	(29)	(61)
<i>Active members at the end of the year</i>	1124	1049
<i>Inactive member total at the beginning of the year</i>	94	72
Members added to the Inactive Roll	2	26
Inactive members removed from the Inactive Roll	0	0
Inactive members removed by death	0	0
Inactive members restored to the Active Roll	(2)	(4)
Inactive members transferred to another church	0	0
<i>Inactive member total at the end of the year</i>	94	94
Number of Adult Baptisms during the year	2	2
Number of Infant Baptisms during the year	17	21
Session Meeting held during the year	15	14
Congregational meetings during the year	3	4
Joint Board Meetings during the year	0	1

RECORD OF MEMBERSHIP 2004 - 2009

Year	Year End Total	Profess., ReAffirm. or Restored from IA	Transfer to SPC	Total Rcvd.	Total Decreased/ Moved to IA	Transfer from SPC	Removed	Deaths	Baptized Adult	Baptized Child
2004	849	57	45	102	68	30	43	16	1	14
2005	900	68	40	108	57	8	12	9	6	26
2006	939	55	39	94	34	8	5	8	0	19
2007	1008	48	41	89	1	7	1	11	6	8
2008	1049	58	44	102	26	11	6	18	2	21
2009	1124	52	52	104	2	13	7	7	2	17

SUNDAY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE 2008 – 2009

	2008				2009				
	9:00	10:30	11:45	Total	9:00	10:30		Total	
January	215	321	26	562	228	314		542	
February	227	309	26	562	212	316		528	
March	215	281	19	515	216	324		541	
April	214	317	24	555	257	330		587	
May	212	298	20	530	236	297		535	
June	237	305	*	542	264	239		502	
July	199	301	*	500	258	275		533	
August	217	300	*	517	211	308		519	
September	218	349	7	574	8:45	9:45	10:45	Total	
October	219	305	14	538	Sept.	210	83	318	611
November	230	312	12	554	Oct.	177	111	286	572
December	235	345	12	592	Nov	206	102	266	574
					Dec.	214	104	309	627

COMPARATIVE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE 2008 – 2009

	Average	Low	High	Average 8:45/9:00	Average 10:30/10:45	Average Chapel	Average Summer
2008	545	500	592	220	312	18	520
2009	556	502	627	224	299	100	518