

Sylvan United Church – Council Highlights (March 12, 2026)

A friendly update from your Church Council

The Council met on March 12, 2026, with Rev. Susanna Bates opening the gathering in prayer. The meeting focused on preparing for the upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting, celebrating Lent activities, and continuing the steady work of caring for our buildings, finances, and community life.

Annual Congregational Meeting Preparations

Plans are underway for the ACM on **March 29 (Palm Sunday)**:

- Coffee will be served in the narthex before the meeting.
- Birdsong Nature School will be included on the agenda.
- Rev. Susanna will invite congregational feedback on “the way forward” for Sylvan.
- Janet Power has agreed to chair the meeting.

Minister’s Report – Lent & Community Connection

Rev. Susanna shared a hopeful update on Lent activities:

- The Lent theme, “**Tell Me Something Good,**” is guiding worship and reflection.
- A visual “tree of good news” is growing each week in the sanctuary.
- A Lent study group is meeting on Tuesday afternoons with 10–12 participants.
- A weekly “Sunday Note” is being emailed to about 15 people.
- Work continues on a **Photo Directory** to help strengthen community connections.
- Planning has begun for **Holy Week services**, including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

Office Administration

The annual report is being assembled, with a few team submissions still outstanding. Website updates are underway:

- Lent resources added to the homepage
- Rental calendars added to the events page
- A new **Archives** section will house council summaries and annual reports

The Photo Directory already includes photos of 27 members.

Finance

February's financial report highlighted:

- A significant drop in PAR donations over recent years
- Payroll budgeting needs adjustment
- A potential deficit of **over \$27,000** if trends continue

Council approved developing a **stewardship program**, possibly including a skills & services auction and other fundraisers. A **Spring Fling fundraiser** is scheduled for **May 9**.

Property & Environment

Lots of progress around the buildings:

- Final gravel loads have been spread; parking puddles are gone.
- Driveway potholes continue to be filled.
- Electrical work is nearly complete, including upgraded lighting.
- Furnace assessment suggests no immediate replacement needed.
- A new wall heater will be installed in Birdsong's area during spring break.
- Energy use is being monitored after noticing lights left on overnight.

Music

Artistry & Outreach concerts were a great success, including well-received performances in nursing homes and a lively concert at Sylvan.

Hospitality

The **Shrove Tuesday pancake supper** was a joyful gathering despite stormy weather, with about 30 attendees. Hospitality volunteers continue to support Sunday mornings with warmth and care.

Outreach

A standout month for Outreach:

- **Coldest Night of the Year** was Sylvan's most successful ever:
 - 13 walkers
 - **\$5,400 raised**
 - 2nd place overall in fundraising
- A **Food for Thought** potluck and film night is planned for **April 12**, featuring *Tea Creek*.
- Further outreach projects will be discussed later in March.

Worship

Recent worship highlights:

- A meaningful Ash Wednesday service
- Pulpit supply for Lent provided by guest leaders
- Communion celebrated March 1
- Holy Week services planned for April 2–5
- The new Affirmation Banner is now hanging in the narthex
- Attendance has been rising and is being tracked

M&P

A positive annual review was completed for Kelly Campbell. Rev. Susanna's weekly work pattern continues to be refined.

Nominations

Two new co-chairs have been confirmed: **Cassidy Marat and Kathy Sellers**. Recruitment continues for Council and team roles.

New Business

- A **covenanting service** to welcome Rev. Susanna will be scheduled for early May.
- Council decided to **delay an insurance appraisal** due to cost and lack of necessity.
- Nominations for the **Volunteer Award** are due by **March 15**.

Next Meeting

April 9, 2026 at 7 pm in the Fireside Room.